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Meeting	Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee
Date	1 November 2021
Present	Councillors Crawshaw (Chair), Fenton (Vice-Chair), Hollyer, Orrell, Musson, Pearson (from 5:35pm) and Rowley
Apologies	Councillors Baker and Norman

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## **28. Declarations of Interest**

Members were asked to declare, at this point in the meeting, any personal interests, not included on the Register of Interests, or any prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests they may have in respect of business on the agenda.

None were declared at this stage but during agenda item 4, Cllr Pearson declared a personal non prejudicial interest in that he worked for LNER and during agenda item 6 Cllr Crawshaw declared a personal non prejudicial interest in that his mother maybe a member of the Digital Inclusion Steering Group.

## **29. Minutes**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2021, 6 September 2021 and 11 October 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

## **30. Public Participation**

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

## **31. York Central Quarterly Update**

Members considered a report that updated them on the progress of the York Central Partnership, as the scheme moved towards delivery.

The Director of Housing, Economy & Regeneration, the Head of Transport and the Project Director for York Central (Homes

England and Network Rail) were in attendance to provide an update and answer any questions.

During discussion of the item, particularly on the York Central partnership and governance arrangements, the contractual arrangements and the statutory roles undertaken, Members were informed that:-

- City of York Council (CYC) would lead on the delivery of the riverside path improvements.
- A master plan had been developed that proposed to reorganise highway and public realm areas to the front of York Station.
- The Station Gateway Project would be delivered in collaboration with Network Rail (NR) and London North East Railway (LNER).
- The Housing Delivery Programme team had worked with landowner partners (Homes England and Network Rail) to undertake a feasibility study that would support the delivery of housing alongside other community uses.
- CYC would continue to encourage productive inward investment onto the York Central site.
- There had already been significant public engagement at all stages of the master planning process and this would continue.

The Project Director then provided a presentation on York Central. It highlighted the current position, the master plan, the existing site, what the market was perceiving for York, the project delivery and the schemes and infrastructure, particularly related to Homes England and Network Rail.

In answer to Members questions, Officers confirmed:

- The demand for Grade A flexible office space in big strategic locations was still there.
- It was an aspiration to ensure the construction methods used for the commercial space was the same sustainability ambition as the residential sites.
- The outline planning application would be used to ensure housing developers built upon that and the infrastructure would be flexible to enable various power sources to be used.
- The Carbon Trust had considered the district heating on York Central but found it would be less efficient than using

air source heat pumps or ground source heat pumps, so this was not an option in the outline planning application.

- The utility diversions off Queen Street Bridge would take place early 2022 and then the bridge could be demolished to create space for the improved interchange at the front of the station.
- An update on York Railway Station Gateway would be considered by Executive on 18 November 2021.
- The building cost inflations were constantly reviewed and considered.
- It was an aspiration to ensure the car parking opportunities integrated well with all the transport systems.
- The outline planning application created a replacement highway following the stopping up of Leeman Road and it had always been an aspiration of the outline planning application to not create another arterial route into the city that replaced one of the existing ones.
- Officers would aim to drive car usage down on the York Central site and would encourage green car usage and electric hyperhub charging points.
- The section 106 agreement that came with the development had the flexibility to improve certain routes and junctions for public transport and to integrate the active travel network. The substantial improvements on York Central would be tied into the general networks across the whole city.
- The jobs offered within the government hub would create full and varied career opportunities within the Civil Service for people that live in York and the surrounding areas.
- The jobs within the rail hub would continue the City's rail history and officers were pitching for Great British Railways to be headquartered in York.

Officers were thanked for their comprehensive update.

Resolved:

- (i) That the report and presentation outlining the current and potential governance arrangement for York Central Partnership be noted.
- (ii) That the presentation be circulated to Committee Members.

Reason: To keep Members updated on the developments of York Central.

## 32. Digital Inclusion Update

Members considered a report and presentation that provided an update on:

- The digital connectivity landscape in York for both residents and businesses.
- Development of a digital inclusion partnership led by Explore York and the council and its key priorities.
- The current position with council online access to services and the related My Account facility originally envisaged as a portal for engaging with the council and its services.

The Director of Customer & Communities and the Head of ICT were in attendance to provide an update and answer any questions.

During discussion on digital connectivity, the Head of ICT noted that:

- Work was continuing with telecommunication providers to explore the opportunities and to action the improvement and expansion of York's digital infrastructure and connectivity layers.
- Over 60% of premises had the potential to be connected directly to a pure fibre based broadband service, which was around three times the current national average coverage position.
- Access to the free child friendly public WiFi service within the city centre had been expanded and the coverage now included the Coppergate Centre and within the Community Stadium.
- Access to full fibre services had been provided within key and historic parts of the city centre, including The Shambles and Stonegate.
- Current activity included:
  - Infill areas and upgrading of the core network to enable and sustain future expansion, and further future proofing of some of the City's essential connectivity landscape;
  - Using the government's Rural Gigabit Connectivity Voucher Scheme to secure funding to provide access to ultrafast broadband services.
  - Early feasibility work was underway regarding the opportunity to use a similar approach that was taken to provide improved connectivity to The Shambles and Stonegate within other city centre areas.

In answer to questions raised, the Head of ICT confirmed:

- The improvements to the CityFibre network should provide residents with more options when choosing a service provider to connect with.
- CityFibre were redesigning their core network and would aim to fill suburb areas that weren't particularly covered well before extending into other areas later next year.
- The roadmap of the development would be published on the council's website.
- The fibre network cables were laid within verges or pavements and although the initial works could be disruptive, the infrastructure used should be future proof for advancement in technology.
- CityFibre would be revisiting some private roads as part of the infill work.

The Director of Customer & Communities then provided an update on the development of the digital inclusion partnership, where Members noted that:

- Explore York Libraries and Archives, in partnership with City of York Council were leading a collaborative partnership approach.
- A digital Inclusion workshop facilitated by Citizen's Online brought interested organisations, community groups, charities, businesses and individuals together to begin the conversation. There was a real shared ambition to ensure everyone had the opportunity to gain digital confidence.
- Priorities raised from the workshop included:
  - The establishment of a formal partnership in York and to find the resource to support that partnership.
  - Agree and implement a triage and signposting system.
  - Access to more devices.
  - Find funding to provide data and WiFi packages.
  - Create a network for existing digital champions and
  - Improve web accessibility.

Members noted the digital York workstreams that had been established and the progress on actions, as highlighted within the report and the Director confirmed that digital skills would also be added to the agenda.

In answer to questions raised, the Director confirmed:

- The methods used to identify who required digital support was discussed regularly and tended to come from intelligence on the ground. Citizens Advice York had completed a study on inclusion and they identified that older people in the more rural areas of York had started to reduce their access to services.
- The partnership would continue to:
  - work on understanding communities;
  - identify pockets of exclusion;
  - reach digitally excluded groups and
  - understand non-digital standards for those that could not access digital options.

The Director then highlighted the future and use of My Account, including the different aspects to digital development and access to online services in the council.

Following discussion around the My Account review options, Members agreed to digest and consider which elements they would like to consider through scrutiny and would welcome periodic reports on the digital inclusion partnership, its work and impact to assess whether excluded groups/deprived areas were being reached and that their needs were being met around connectivity, skills and social interaction.

Officers were thanked for their update.

Resolved:

- (i) That the report be noted.
- (ii) That Members consider which elements they would like to consider through scrutiny and then inform the Chair.
- (iii) That digital inclusion be included in the internal and external organisation development update.
- (iv) That an update be received at a future meeting.

Reason: To keep Members updated on the digital inclusion activities.

### **33. Ethical Asset Disposal Policy Update**

The Committee considered a verbal update from the Vice-Chair on the ethical asset disposal policy.

He confirmed that in September 2020, at a Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee Calling In, it was resolved that a request be made for the appropriate scrutiny committee to undertake scoping work with a view to developing a strategy for the council on the ethical disposal of its assets.

Members noted that the working group (Cllr Fenton, Cllr Pearson and Cllr Norman) were currently meeting with a number of officers to identify the protocols and processes in place.

Resolved: That a scoping report be received at a future Committee meeting.

Reason: To keep the Committee updated.

**34. Work Plan 2021/22**

The Committee's work plan for the 2021/22 municipal year was considered.

In answer to questions regarding public scrutiny committees the Head of Civic and Democratic Services confirmed no immediate changes were expected to the current schedule of meetings/forums and the Chair confirmed that commission slots were also available to hold public scrutiny sessions.

Resolved: That the work plan be streamlined and noted.

Reason: To ensure that the Committee continued to have a plan of work for 2021/22.

**35. Closing Remarks**

At this point in the meeting concerns were raised regarding the room temperature and the Chair agreed to discuss this further with the relevant officers.

Councillor Crawshaw, Chair  
[The meeting started at 5.30pm and finished at 8.08pm].

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