
**Decision Session – Cabinet Member for
Leisure, Culture and Tourism**

27th March 2013

Report of the Assistant Director (Communities, Culture and Public Realm)

York Museums Trust Partnership Delivery Plan 2013 - 2018

Summary

1. This report is brought to the Cabinet Member to seek approval for the Partnership Delivery Plan between City of York Council and York Museums Trust for the period from April 2013 to March 2018.

Background

2. In 2002 the Council entered into a partnership agreement with the newly constituted York Museums Trust (YMT) in order to ensure the long-term stability and prosperity of the City's museums and collections. The background to the decision to create YMT was the need to turnaround the business performance of the museums which had been losing an average of 37,000 visits every year over the previous ten years and were costing around £120k more to run each year.
3. A business plan was agreed for 2003 to 2008 and this was updated for 2008 to 2013. YMT's key achievements against the main outcome areas agreed with the Council have been:
 - **Stabilising visitor figures:** Visitor numbers have risen from 387,000 in the first full year of operation to 660,000 currently.
 - **Delivering new income streams:** YMT has increased the diversity of their income streams and their overall income. In 2002 the Council's grant accounted for over 50% of YMT's income; by 2011 it reduced to less than 30% of income with admission charges, *Renaissance in the Region* funding, and other trading income making up the remainder. YMT has subsequently been successful in gaining Arts Council revenue funding as one of only sixteen Regional Museum Development leads.

- **Developing new exhibitions and interpretive service:** There is now an excellent programme of activities at all the sites managed by the Trust. Partnerships with the Arts Council: England, The Tate and the British Museum have not only brought the best of national collections to York but have also shown York's collections regionally and nationally. The Trust's Learning support team have won awards and plaudits for their interpretation and informal learning programme. The Trust contributes to wider city initiatives including Illuminating York and the Viking Festival and, in 2012, it is one of the partners delivering the York Mystery Plays.
- **Upgrade the building assets:** YMT has so far raised approximately £7m which it has invested in the Council's buildings, gardens, public programmes and collections. Further investment is shortly to be made into the City Art Gallery.
- **Increase use and involvement by residents:** Visits by York residents, free of charge, reached 112,000 last year. Of this figure 6,000 were from York school children from over 50 state and independent sector schools. A volunteer programme introduced in 2009 has over 200 active volunteers at any one time, and working with the H.E. sector the trust hosts over 20 student placements annually. They have an active inclusivity programme supported by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Arts Council: England and Renaissance in the Regions.
- **Achieve high visitor satisfaction:** The Trust has successfully retained the Visitor Quality Assurance standard and their own visitor survey show that visitor satisfaction is consistently above 96% with an average 98% of visitors willing to recommend the visit to others.
- **Ensure the cataloguing of the collections:** The agreed programme of retrospective documentation is on target. The Trust team has also developed an acquisitions programme to reflect the history, science and culture of the city and region.

4. Funds raised have been used to:

- Completely refurbish art gallery space, increasing visitor numbers by 100,000 p.a. The collection of British Studio Ceramics in York is now the largest outside London and represents around 3,500 pots plus an important archive of 20th century potters

- Create a vibrant museums education provision with 3 new learning posts
 - Tackle the problems in collections management through a new Directorate of Collections
 - Strengthen the curatorial team with new posts in archaeology and natural history
 - Re-fit the entrance to the Castle Museum, resulting in a much more appealing space and a higher retail spend per visitor
 - The Castle Museum has been re-displayed in part. Film and voice based on real people powerfully tells the stories of the Debtors prison and the 1960s exhibition has brought the social history remit of the museum up to date. Kirkgate has been refreshed with new interpretation with sound and light
 - Yorkshire Museum has had a 3.2m refurbishment with an entirely new lay out and a redisplay of the museums collections. A specially commissioned History of York Video is now available to all visitors in the Tempest Anderson Hall. The display space now has a much lighter and more open and flexible feel and visitors can appreciate the grandeur of the building itself
 - Yorkshire Museum Gardens: YMT have started a programme of investment in the planting and labelling, to restore the botanical garden and to open up the garden for more sustainable and flexible use. The hutments to the rear of York Art Gallery have been removed to provide a new public green space. In 2012 the Museum Gardens played host to the York Mystery Plays and Illuminate York
 - Develop a new contemporary art venue in the city at York St Mary's showcasing the best of international contemporary artists and developing a programme of events to support major festivals in the city.
 - Achieve accreditation for all of YMT museums, an important marque of quality within the sector
5. The Trust recently employed independent assessors DC Research to undertake an impact assessment of their business. This found that:
- YMT injects at least £6.4m annually into the regional economy supporting 100 full time equivalent jobs for York people

- The economic impact of visits to YMT venues is worth at least £15.5m per year to the York economy, the equivalent of 196 full time jobs supported in the York economy
 - This represents a 'return on investment' of around £10 of impact for every £1 invested by City of York Council
6. Through bi- annual reports to the Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee the Council has been kept formally informed on YMT's progress.

The New Partnership Delivery Plan

7. In return for funding from the Council York Museums Trust will provide the services outlined in the proposed Partnership Delivery Plan at Annex 1. The format of the Partnership Delivery Plan differs from those in previous years in recognition of the impressive progress YMT have made in addressing the need for long term stability and prosperity and also the recognition that the Council is now one of two major revenue funders with the other partner being the Arts Council of England. Specific actions in support of our corporate goals have thus been identified in the proposed Partnership Delivery Plan.
8. The Partnership objectives proposed are:
- To protect and conserve the collections, gardens and buildings
 - To promote access to the city's collections, gardens and buildings appropriate to the 21st century
 - To attract more visitors to all the YMT sites, increasing visitor numbers from 660,000 to 900,000 by 2018, thus contributing to the local and regional economy
 - To create learning opportunities and improve skills for all and develop innovative programmes springing from the collections, gardens and buildings
 - To network and collaborate with partners and contribute to the development of the economic and cultural life of the city and the region and support York's world class cultural offer
 - To raise substantial funds to realise these aims through the development of sustainable income streams and relationships with Grants and Trusts
9. The specific activities and outcomes are summarised under five main headings:

- Income improvement – to further develop YMT financial sustainability
- Capital Project – to ensure the delivery of key capital improvements to the YMT estate
- Public programmes – to promote the collections, buildings and gardens ensuring visitors and residents have leisure and learning opportunities
- Working in partnership – to delineate the specific areas where YMT support our corporate priorities
- Governance – to ensure the continued security of the collections and the appropriate governance of the business.

Consultation

10. The Chief Executive and Business Director of York Museums Trust have been working with the client officer for the Council throughout the process in agreeing the new priorities and the new funding conditions proposed.

Options

11. The options available to the Cabinet Member are:
 - Agree the Partnership Delivery Plan set out in Annex 1
 - Suggest amendments or alternatives to the outcomes set out in Annex 1

Analysis

12. Option 1 is recommended as it sets out ambitious targets for the development of the city's museum and gallery services.

Council Plan

13. The actions set out in the report contribute to the following corporate priorities as set out in the Council Plan 2011-15:
 - Building stronger communities - by encouraging and involving residents and users in the cultural life of the city. And, by supporting the voluntary sector and creating volunteering opportunities.
 - Creating Economic Growth – by supporting the growth and development of a stronger, more skilled and better networked cultural sector.

Implications

14. **Financial** – Budget Council in February this year set the funding level for the York Museums Trust at a reduced level for 2013/14 of £1,206,710 with a further reduction from 2014/15 onwards to £1,106,710.
15. The Council is also providing YMT with £510k of capital spread over 3 years to support the York Art Gallery and Museum Gardens expansion project. YMT have raised the possibility of requesting further capital support from the Council. Any such requests will be considered through the Council's capital allocation process (CRAM) in the normal way.
16. **Legal and Property** - Where specific projects have property implications e.g. repairs, lease or lettings Legal and Property Services will be involved in any arrangements.
17. **Equalities** – Included in the proposed Partnership Delivery Plan are specific requirements in the delivery of public body responsibilities. The context for this is the requirement of the YMT to deliver on the public sector duty, as outlined in the Equalities Act 2010, on behalf of the Council.
18. There are no Human Resources, Crime and Disorder, or Information Technology implications arising from this report.

Risk Management

19. The performance of YMT is subject to regular monitoring with twice-yearly reports on the SLA to Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee. The Council also has 2 councillors on the Board of Trustees of YMT. Regular monthly meetings take place between the client officer for the council and the senior directors of YMT.

Recommendation

20. The Cabinet Member is asked the Partnership Delivery Plan between the Council and YMT as set out in Annex 1.
Reason: To meet the ambitions of the Council Plan to promote a city of world class culture.

Annex: Partnership Delivery Plan 2013-18

Contact Details

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	Report Approved	✓	Date 27.3.13.
Specialist Implications Officer(s): N/A			
Wards Affected:	All	✓	
<i>For further information please contact the author of the report</i>			

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Background Papers: