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Meeting	Corporate and Scrutiny Management Committee (Calling In)
Date	31 October 2014
Present	Councillors Galvin (Chair), Aspden (sub for Cllr Runciman), Burton, Fitzpatrick (sub for Cllr Fraser), Horton, Hyman, King, McIlveen, Potter, Steward and Taylor (sub for Cllr D'Agorne)
In attendance	Councillors Brooks, Doughty, Reid, Richardson and Watson
Apologies	Councillors Fraser, Runciman and D'Agorne

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#### **17. Declarations of Interest**

At this point in the meeting, Members were asked to declare any personal interests not included on the register of interests, any prejudicial interests or any disclosable pecuniary interests which they might have in respect of the business on the agenda.

Councillor Taylor declared a personal non prejudicial interest in relation to the called-in item, as a life member of the York Civic Trust, in respect of the Trust's interest in the Castlegate premises.

#### **18. Public Participation**

It was reported that there had been eight registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme and that three Members of the Council had also requested to speak.

Heidi Haywood, spoke as manager of the Door 84 Youth Club, to express her concerns at the proposed changes to the services currently provided at Castlegate. She referred to the proposed move to West Offices, which would be the first point of contact for vulnerable young people, and highlighted the unsuitability of the building. She requested members not to

support the proposed changes and support relocation to a building dedicated to young people.

Dr Stephen Wright spoke as a local resident and early intervention psychiatrist referring to the successful work undertaken at Castlegate. In particular he referred to the need for more outreach work with young people around mental health issues and to future problems if any barriers were put in the way of young people gaining access to help when required. He highlighted the need for agencies to work together, combining resources to provide early assistance and for further consultation.

David Smith referred to his campaigning over mental health issues in the city over a number of years. He referred to Castlegate, a service set up by the Council specifically to meet the needs of young people, a popular, safe and effective place. He highlighted the inappropriateness of West Offices and referred to references, both in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and from the Health and Wellbeing Board in which they recommended improvements in mental health in the city and the need for early intervention. He also referred to a lack of consultation with those affected which included the Clinical Commissioning Group and the Voluntary Sector.

Hannah Jobling, spoke as a Lecturer in Social Work at the University of York, highlighting the specialist work provided by Castlegate. She referred to the breadth of knowledge available, and to the lifetime of savings the service provided from a small investment in young peoples services. She reiterated the need for early intervention and to a holistic approach provided with partners asking that young people should not bear the brunt of the cuts.

Lara Foster spoke in support of the Castlegate petition, pointing out that the centre provided a lifeline for young people. She referred to her experiences of using Castlegate, to the services it offered and to the invaluable help it had provided. She pointed out that the centre had enabled her to turn her life around and the debt she owed the service.

Dawn Moores spoke to ask Members to reconsider their decision in relation to the Castlegate Centre and its services. She confirmed that staff were looking at alternative plans for the provision however this would prove to be difficult prior to the 31

March 2015 deadline. She referred to numerous strategies and plans which all promoted the need for a holistic and wraparound approach to dealing with young people's services.

John Walker spoke on behalf of York Action on Young Homeless. He circulated copies of the 22<sup>nd</sup> edition of the Young People's Survival Guide to York, a booklet produced by Castlegate but in conjunction with many other bodies. He highlighted the usefulness of the guide to young people and to the possibility that this would not continue following the proposed changes. He referred to the need to invest in prevention and asked the Committee to listen to young people and continue with the swift holistic interventions.

Councillor Richardson expressed his support for the work carried out at Castlegate and to the unique services offered to young people. He highlighted the trust built up between young people and the youth and community workers which he felt would not be possible in the setting of West Offices. He requested the Committee to find similar alternative premises or retain Castlegate.

Councillor Brooks spoke to confirm that many of her points had been covered by earlier speakers. She pointed out that Members should no longer be in any doubt about the excellent services provided at Castlegate and to the inadequacy of West Offices to provide a confidential and personal setting in which young people could gain advice. She referred to the lack of consultation, pointing out that any budget savings made from the changes would result in additional costs in the future.

Councillor Scott had also registered to speak at the meeting but, in his absence, Councillor King read his comments. As the Children's and Young People's Champion, when Castlegate had been opened, Cllr Scott referred to the extensive consultation carried out in order to gain the views of young people on facilities at Castlegate. He indicated that a suitable alternative city centre location for the service needed to be found as West Offices would be a barrier to vulnerable young people gaining access to these vital services. He requested referral back of the recommendations to allow Cabinet to reconsider the decisions made.

## 19. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of meetings of the Committee, held on 26 September and 8 October 2014 be approved and signed by the Chair as correct records.

## 20. Called In Item: Rewiring of Public Services: Business Case for Children's Services

Members received a report which asked them to consider the decisions made by the Cabinet, at their meeting held on 9 October 2014, in relation to the Children's Services, Education and Skills Transformation Programme. This included approval of the Business Cases for Early Years, Services to Young People and the School Improvement and Skills Service but in particular the proposals for the services run from Castlegate.

Details of the Cabinet's decision were attached at Annex A to the report and the original report to the Cabinet meeting, attached at Annex B.

The original decision had firstly been called in by Councillors Brooks, Douglas and Doughty on the following grounds:

- The current location of Castlegate is far less imposing than for example West Offices and the move would therefore be worse for young and especially disengaged people
- It is at odds with the Health & Wellbeing Strategy & Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and their emphasis on the greater need for counselling as a preventative service.
- It flies in the face of the government parity of esteem for mental health services.
- There has been inadequate consultation with the most affected groups.
- The budgetary savings may not materialise if, as a result of the change of location, the current uptake of the service is not maintained and the number of Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETS) rises.

Secondly the decision had been called in by Councillors Aspden, D'Agorne and Runciman who were opposed to the

decision to close Castlegate and re-locate the remaining services to West Offices for the following reasons:

- When Castlegate opened 2007, it brought together a number of agencies and different funding streams to offer a comprehensive support service for young people in a user-friendly, accessible and flexible location.
- Through offering effective support and advice the centre has an outstanding track-record of helping keep young people safe, healthy, off drugs, out of the criminal justice system, in suitable accommodation and in work.
- This effective early-intervention is crucial in many areas, including mental health where half of all diagnosable conditions start by the age of 14 and 75% by the age of 21.
- The closure of Castlegate, cuts in services, and the re-location of remaining services to West Offices jeopardises all this work and abandons the commitment to effective early-intervention.
- West Offices – a large, public and corporate building – is not a suitable location for the services which will remain.
- This decision has been taken with little consultation or prior notice and without properly considering alternatives.
- We would urge Cabinet to withdraw the proposal and, at the very least, delay the closure of Castlegate in order to ensure that other options, such as suitable co-location with another service, can be considered.

The Chair referred to the following additional information which had been circulated at the meeting:

- Email from Dr Louise Barker, Mental Health clinical lead for the Vale of York Clinical Commissioning Group, expressing her concern regarding the closure of Castlegate. In particular in relation to the knock on effects on health services, particularly primary care and psychological therapies, when there were already capacity problems.
- Statement from Heather McKenzie, on behalf of UNISON, confirming their support for a review being taken of the

decision and requesting proper consultation with service users, staff and other stakeholders.

Councillor Doughty addressed the meeting on behalf of the first group of Calling In members. He confirmed their principle concern related to the suitability of the alternative venue and young people's access to services. He highlighted the need for early intervention and questioned how the proposed changes would support the new Health and Wellbeing Strategy. He also expressed concern at a reference, in the Fairfax House newsletter, to a bid by the York Civic Trust to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the purpose of acquiring Castlegate, the adjacent property. To ensure transparency he requested the Committee recommend that further consideration of the proposals be deferred to allow full consultation with all concerned and to examine alternative venues for the service.

Councillor Reid, addressed the meeting on behalf of the second group of Calling In members. She referred to the high level of concern raised by professionals, residents and users of the Castlegate services and to the value everyone put on the services they provided. She highlighted the benefits of early intervention work saving money in the long term. She also asked members to support Option b and recommend withdrawal of the proposed changes in order to allow Officers to bring forward alternative proposals and funding.

Councillor Williams, as Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance, confirmed that *there had been no discussions although discussions were held about asset transfers with interested parties all the time, there had been no deal* with Fairfax House regarding the sale of the Castlegate premises. He highlighted the need for the authority to make £23m savings over the next few years and of the need to ensure that any services provided aligned more closely with the public's requirements. He confirmed that the services would not stop with the move to West Offices, just a service relocation and that works would be undertaken to ensure that access was more user friendly. However, in view of the concerns raised, he confirmed that Cabinet would re-examine the proposals, undertake further consultation but asking members to note that alternative budget savings would have to be made.

Councillor Looker, as Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Young People, confirmed that, with the removal of budgets,

the changes proposed for Castlegate had not been an easy decision. She referred to additional work which would be carried out jointly between the Clinical Commissioning Group and Adult Mental Health services to support young people. She also asked Members to note that, if West Offices was difficult to access for vulnerable young people then this would also apply to vulnerable adults, this was therefore an opportunity to improve accessibility for all.

The Director of Children's Services, Education and Skills spoke to clarify details of the proposals for the three interlinked services and the financial costs. He confirmed that the authority were required to provide the Connexions service for 13-19 year olds and for those young people not in education, employment or training (NEET's) together with those at risk of becoming NEET's, no changes were proposed to these services. No changes were also proposed to the Counselling services for 16-25 year olds. Changes would however impact on the generic advice provided for the 19 to 25 year old group, this service would be relocated to West Offices and included support in respect of housing, housing benefit, education and health needs. He confirmed that alternative buildings around the city had been investigated however, none had been adequate for the provision. West Offices would, he confirmed be adapted to ensure that it was accessible and welcoming to all.

All Members acknowledged the range of issues raised and thanked all the earlier speakers for their comments and input into the meeting.

Councillor Potter then moved and Councillor Horton seconded, that Option b be approved and that the decision be referred back to Cabinet for reconsideration together with suggestions for alternative funding.

Following further discussion, Councillor Aspden confirmed his support for the reference back, subject to the addition of the following specific recommendation, *'that Cabinet withdraw the proposals and delay the closure of Castlegate in order to allow time for Officer's to bring forward a report detailing all options, including a suitable location and alternative funding options and for these options to be properly considered and consulted upon.'*

It was then

Resolved: That Option B be approved and that the decision of Cabinet be referred back with a recommendation that Cabinet withdraws the proposals and delays the closure of Castlegate in order to allow time for Officer's to bring forward a report detailing all options, including a suitable location and alternative funding options and for these options to be properly considered and consulted upon.

Reason: In accordance with the requirements of the Council's Constitution.

*[As amended by CSMC (Calling-In) on 19 January 2015]*

Cllr J Galvin, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.00 pm and finished at 6.50 pm].