
Meeting	Children, Education & Communities Policy & Scrutiny Committee
Date	23 July 2019
Present	Councillors D Taylor (Chair), Webb (Vice-Chair), Daubeney, Fenton, Fitzpatrick, Heaton and Hollyer

9. **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Taylor declared a personal non prejudicial interest as he was a non-Executive Director of Make it York.

Cllr Daubeney declared a personal non prejudicial interest in agenda item 5, York Museums Trust Report Against Core Partnership Objectives January to June 2019, in that he was a Trustee of York Museums Trust.

10. **Minutes**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 25 June 2019 be approved as a correct record and then signed by the Chair.

11. **Public Participation**

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

12. **Attendance of the Executive Member for Culture, Leisure and Communities**

The Executive Member for Culture, Leisure & Communities was in attendance to provide an update on his priorities and challenges for the 2019/20 municipal year.

The Executive Member highlighted key points around his portfolio area and he thanked council officers and Heads of Service for supporting him in his new executive role. He expressed gratitude to the Head of Community and Equalities,

who had recently taken up a new role outside of the council, and confirmed that the recruitment of an interim Head was in place.

Members noted that:

- The Executive Member had received an excellent introduction to his portfolio area and had enjoyed visiting a large number of organisations across the city.
- Ward committee working was a particular priority.
- The new budget proposals agreed at Council outlined significant investment within the Executive Members portfolio area.

Members thanked the Executive Member for his detailed report and as a result of questions raised he responded and it was noted that:

- The Safer Community Fund total was £250,000 and it would be devolved to Ward Committees allowing ward councillors, in combination with local partners, to determine their own priorities to make their wards a safer community.
- Consultation was still in process to deliver a new library in Haxby.
- Increased partnership working would support young people who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) and would ensure better provision in the future.
- Community centres could bid for up to £4000 from the council's grants fund.
- The 100k budget allocated from central government to support local authorities to develop connections with communities most impacted by EU exit, would be used to fund a post and resources.
- GoodGym had done some excellent work and do maintain appropriate measures regarding safeguarding.
- Park and open spaces crossed Executive Member portfolio areas.

Members thanked the Executive Member for his update and the Chair congratulated Professor Chris Bailey and his colleagues for developing York as a City of Arts, for building a relationship with Unesco and producing a report that received the highest rating possible.

Resolved:

- (i) That the update from the Executive Member on his portfolio area be received and noted.
- (ii) That the reason for the delay on repairing park facilities within Millennium Park be investigated and emailed to the Ward Member.

Reason: To update the Committee on the challenges and priorities within the Executive Members portfolio areas.

13. York Museums Trust Report Against Core Partnership Objectives January to June 2019

Members considered a report that updated them on York Museums Trust (YMT) core partnership objectives between January and June 2019.

The Chief Executive of York Museums Trust was in attendance to present the report. She highlighted their key objectives and Members noted that the 2018/19 financial year had been very challenging.

Members noted that:

- The Rose Theatre had lowered its hoardings this year so the impact on visitor numbers to the Castle Museum had not been affected.
- The planning for the redevelopment of the Castle Museum and the Castle Gateway continued in close collaboration with City of York Council and the Castle Gateway Masterplan.
- Prices had increased slightly including charging for children but this charge did not apply to children who resided in York.
- Burton Green Primary School had curated its own exhibition and it was on display in the Art Gallery.
- The Ruskin, Turner and the Storm Cloud Exhibition had doubled visitor numbers at the Art Gallery.
- The number of active volunteers had improved.
- The Viking: Rediscover the Legend exhibition was still on loan to Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery, which had enabled a successful partnership with the British Museum.

The Chief Executive answered Members questions regarding revenue opportunities in the Museum Gardens, engagement with schools, online ticketing, gift aid and their relationship with English Heritage.

Members thanked the Chief Executive and Head of Strategy, Finance and Corporate Services for their update and welcomed the excellent exhibitions held at the Art Gallery.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To keep the Committee updated on the work of YMT.

14. 2018/19 Finance and Performance Outturn Report - Children, Education and Communities

This report analyses the latest performance for 2018/19 and forecasts the financial outturn position by reference to the service plans and budgets for all of the services falling under the responsibility of the Corporate Director of Children, Education & Communities.

The Finance Manager was in attendance to give an update and he highlighted the finance and performance headlines and Members noted that the finance position showed a draft outturn overspend of £896k which represented a small improvement of 47k compared to the position at quarter 3.

He brought to Members attention some significant financial pressures in children social care, particularly within the special educational needs (SEN) element of home to school transport, dedicated schools grant and the high needs budgets supporting alternative provision and SEN.

Members raised concerns regarding the significant home to school transport overspend and it was noted that this was a challenge nationally and officers were considering options to address this pressure. Some Members suggested that this concern could be a potential scrutiny review topic but officers felt it would be more appropriate to revisit next year following the Inclusion Review.

The overspend on placement costs were also addressed and the independent foster carer agencies were a concern to Members as they appeared to be favoured routes for carers,

rather than the local authority, due higher payments made by independent agencies. Officers confirmed that the challenge in recruiting foster carers was a national issue and they were working on ways to improve this and would be providing a more intense training and support package to foster carers as well as improving recruitment and marketing campaigns.

Members thanked the Finance Manager for his update and the Scrutiny Officer reminded Members that in order for a scrutiny review to be carried out Councillors must complete a scrutiny topic registration form outlining the reasons behind the need for the review. On receiving a completed registration form, the Scrutiny Officer would then produce a feasibility report in consultation with Councillors, relevant officers across the Council and where necessary relevant partner organisations.

Resolved: That the Committee be updated on the performance position for 2018/19.

Reason: To update the committee on the latest financial and performance position for 2018/19.

15. Refresh of Ward Committees

Members considered a report that sought their initial views on key issues concerning the council's approach to Ward Committees.

The Assistant Director of Communities and Equalities gave an update and confirmed that Members comments would help shape a forthcoming report to the Executive on 29 August 2019.

Members discussed the potential issues within ward funding, resident engagement, highway schemes, ward committee meetings and the value of ward working and made the following comments:

- **Safer Communities Funding:** Members advised that criteria for the funding should not be too prescriptive and that it was important that Wards demonstrated how their schemes contributed towards the creation of safer communities.
- **Resident Engagement:** It was felt that some Member sessions to exchange best practice on engagement and ideas on ward schemes would be helpful. It was also

suggested that Community Involvement Officers could produce updates for Members with examples of good practice and that the approaches used in recent financial inclusion projects be extended more widely.

- **Communication Methods:** It was noted that there was no longer any print communication with residents notifying them of ward engagement events. A new approach to contacting and engaging with residents, particularly hard to reach groups, was required.
- **Ward Highways:** A structure was required to ensure Ward Members had a good understanding of the funding available, the process and the timely manner of highway schemes. It was suggested that examples of schemes funded could be shared and that it should be noted that this funding could be spent on wider infrastructure than simply roads.
- **Sharing Good Practice:** Members agreed that case studies should be shared amongst wards and that new Members should receive a more detailed overview of their wards.

Resolved: That Members comments be noted on the key issues to be included in a forthcoming report to the Executive.

Reason: To help shape the Executive paper.

16. Food Poverty Scrutiny Review

This report invited the Children, Education and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee to nominate a Member to sit on an Ad-Hoc Scrutiny Committee established by the Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee (CSMC) to investigate food poverty in York.

The Scrutiny Officer highlighted the background to the proposals and confirmed that CSMC had agreed the following remit:

- Identify indicators and measures for York to monitor the impact of food poverty.
- Identify areas of best practice within these activities.

- Identify opportunities to coordinate activities to increase impact and carry out an assessment of current service provision and sustainability.
- Identify opportunities to target activities at the lowest income households to more effectively prevent food poverty.

Members confirmed that food poverty was an important issue that crossed a number of scrutiny committees and they discussed which Member should be appointed.

Resolved:

- (i) That the report and annex be noted.
- (ii) That the Chair investigate the political balance of the Ad-Hoc Scrutiny Committee investigating food poverty in York and nominate either Cllr Fitzpatrick or Cllr Hollyer or both should more than one nomination be permitted.

Reason: To understand and help tackle issues related to food poverty in York.

17. **Work Plan**

The Committee considered its draft work plan for the municipal year 2019-20.

Following discussion, it was noted that:

- Finance and performance monitoring reports were to be received on a bi-annual basis.
- The County Lines report expected on the 28 October 2019 Housing and Community Safety Policy and Scrutiny Committee agenda should also be circulated to Members of this Committee and that Members be invited to contribute to the County Lines discussion at that meeting.

Resolved: That the work plan be approved subject to the above amendments/additions.

Reason: To keep the committee's work plan updated.

18. Scrutiny of York Learning

Members considered a report that proposed strengthened scrutiny arrangements for York Learning through the establishment of a Stakeholder Governance Board to support the strategic leadership of the service.

The Scrutiny Officer gave an update and confirmed that the recommendations within the report were not constitutionally in line with the Children, Education and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee's remit so the report was just for noting. Members were informed that appointments to Committees were agreed at Annual Council and that Staffing Matters & Urgency Committee had the authority to deal with any in year changes and appointments to any Committees or outside bodies.

The Assistant Director of Communities and Equalities highlighted the background to the proposals and informed Members that the new Board would produce a report for this Committee to consider annually on the performance of York Learning and that Members could comment on the proposed terms of reference for the new Board.

The Acting Head of York Learning highlighted how the proposed strengthened scrutiny arrangements must demonstrate to Ofsted that it had secure and robust governance arrangements in place and that the new Board would help to support the strategic leadership and direction of the service by providing appropriate challenge on performance.

In answer to Members questions it was confirmed that:

- York Learning would report back to this Committee.
- The appointments to the new Board would be agreed at Staffing Matters and Urgency Committee.
- A self-assessment report would be considered by this Committee, before it was submitted to Ofsted
- The appointments made to the Board would be clear and transparent.

Resolved:

- (i) That the proposed strengthened scrutiny arrangements for York Learning, through the establishment of a Stakeholder Governance Board

to support the strategic leadership of the service, be noted.

- (ii) That Members be informed on the appointments made to the Board.

Reason: In order to be updated on the scrutiny arrangements for York Learning.

Cllr D Taylor, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 7.35 pm].

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