

Meeting	Learning & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Date	17 September 2014
Present	Councillors Reid (Chair), Fitzpatrick (Vice-Chair), Scott, Potter, Gunnell, Brooks and, Taylor Mr E Thomas (Co-opted Statutory Member) and Mr A Pennington (Co-opted Statutory Member)

19. 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 interest or disclosable interests which they might have in respect of the business on the agenda or any other general interest they might have within the remit of the committee. Councillor Fitzpatrick declared a personal non prejudicial interest in agenda item 4 (York Theatre Royal: 2013/14 Part Year Performance Update) as she was a trustee of York Theatre Royal.

20. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the last meeting of the Learning and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday 22 July 2014 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

21. Public Participation

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

22. York Theatre Royal: 2013/14 Part Year Performance Update

Members received a report that informed them of the progress and performance of the York Theatre Royal under the current Service Level Agreement (SLA).

The Chief Executive of York Theatre Royal reported that the organisation had had a successful six months with many performances, high audiences and high participation figures. In terms of sustainability into the future, during this time the organisation had been successful with two significant things, firstly they had been able to confirm their three year funding with the Arts Council for 2015-18 and secondly they had been successful with an application to their capital lottery funds for £2.9m to support their £4.1m capital investment in the theatre for the next year. This left them only about £450,000 short of their target which, with many other applications in to trusts and foundations, was considered manageable.

The Chief Executive confirmed that the plan was to close the theatre in March 2015 and reopen in time for the pantomime later that year. Members asked whether closing the theatre for eight months would impact on any other funding or outreach work and work with the youth theatre. The Chief Executive advised that a full business continuity plan was in place and confirmed that the planned works would not impact on funding and that work with existing groups would continue although some would be relocated. The theatre would be going into residence at the National Railway Museum during this time and several productions were planned to take place there.

Resolved: That the report be noted and members' comments be taken into consideration.

Reason: To fulfil the Council's role under the service agreement.

23. Single Equality Scheme Update and Refresh

Members considered a report which informed them on the refresh of York's Equality Scheme and asked for their comments on the draft priorities detailed in annex 1 and the draft measures relevant to this committee as table in paragraph 9 of the report. Members were asked to confirm whether these should form the area of focus in the revised equality scheme or whether any others should be considered.

The Assistant Director, Communities, Culture and Public Realm, confirmed that once the areas of focus were agreed as being correct, the tables in the reports would be populated with data which would enable the committee to determine if there was anything they wished to scrutinise.

Members made the following suggested changes::

- Paragraph 8 of report/Annex 1 – Add young carers and service families to those listed under Learning and Educational Wellbeing (reducing the numbers of people with no formal qualifications and improving educational attainment). Also add other ethnic groups and LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transexual).
- Annex 1 – Add older people and people of different religions to list of people under the sub- heading “Community Wellbeing focuses on”
- It would be useful to see some comparative data on educational achievement of boys and girls separately.

Members raised concerns at the use of long sentences in annex 1 as they felt this lead to a loss of clarity and focus and they asked officers to take this into consideration.

Resolved:

- (i) That the progress made in the refresh of York’s Equality Scheme be noted.
- (ii) That members comments on the draft priorities and draft outcomes be noted as well as the suggested amendments put forward.
- (iii) That agreement be given that these should be the areas of focus in the revised Equality Scheme.

Reason: To help ensure that relevant equality issues are reflected in the revised Equality Scheme.

24. 2014/15 First Quarter Financial Monitoring Report

Members considered a report which analysed the latest performance for 2014/15 and forecasted the financial outturn position by reference to the service plan and budgets for all of the relevant services falling under the

responsibility of the Director of Communities & Neighbourhoods and the Director of Children's Services, Education & Skills.

The Finance Manager of Children's Services, Education and Skills, advised the committee that the council, at this stage, were looking at a projected overspend of approximately £100,000 and explained that this was a significant reduction on the projections which were reported at the same stage in the year during 2013-14. The Finance Manager responded to queries raised by members regarding the information contained in the report.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To update the committee on the latest financial and performance position for 2014-15.

25. Update on Parks Development

Members received a presentation by the Head of Parks and Open Spaces on recent developments and future plans for parks and open spaces across the city. A copy of the presentation was included within the agenda papers.

The Head of Parks and Open Spaces provided an update on work taking place in West Bank Park, Rowntree Park, Rawcliffe Country Park, Glen Gardens and Hull Road Park and within other open spaces across the city.

Members were advised that the four tennis courts at Glen Gardens had been restored by City of York Council and transferred to Heworth Tennis Club, who now held responsibility for the management of the courts. Members raised concerns over the loss of what they considered a public facility, stating that transferring the courts to Heworth Tennis Club would take away the opportunity for casual players to use the courts without joining a club, which many would not be able to afford. They felt that as the council would no longer have any control over charges, there would be no way from preventing it from becoming unaffordable to the general public. In response to a question from Members, Officers confirmed that they had been approached by Rowntree Park Tennis Club regarding a similar arrangement but that they had not come to any agreement on this yet. The Committee asked to be involved in any consultation regarding this decision.

In view of reduced budgets, the Committee acknowledged the importance of community involvement in the city's parks and open spaces and the need to get community groups, friends groups and residents associations working with the council to improve these spaces. Officers advised that for the first time the council would be able to insure individual volunteers for grounds work/litter picking whereas before this had been limited to groups. They confirmed that training and equipment would be provided to volunteers.

Resolved: That the presentation be noted.

Reason: In order to keep members informed on developments in York's parks and open spaces.

26. Annual Report of the City of York Safeguarding Board 2013/14

Members considered a report which provided an indication of the key areas of progress in implementing actions from the previous annual report and business plan between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2014. The report identified areas for further improvement and key priorities for safeguarding across the city for 2014-15 and the Committee were asked to consider these priority areas in its scrutiny activities where appropriate.

The Independent Chair of the City of York Safeguarding Children Board explained that he had discussed the relationship between, the Safeguarding Children Board, this scrutiny committee and Children's Services with the Chief Executive and in terms of the reporting procedure for next year proposed that the Committee should first receive a report from the Safeguarding Children Board then at the next meeting consider a report from Children's Services. At the end of the year, the Chief Executive would attend with him to present the annual report of the Safeguarding Children Board.

The Independent Chair asked the committee to recognise the five priorities set out in the report as follows: Early Help, Neglect, child Sexual Abuse, Domestic Abuse, and Missing Children, and to consider these priorities when agreeing their forward plan as to whether they would like to receive reports on any of these areas.

With regard to progress around one of these key priorities, child sexual exploitation, the Independent Chair explained the important distinction between sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation. He briefed

Members on what work was taking place in order to provide assurances around historical issues of child sexual exploitation, noting that the way these were recorded and labelled historically would provide challenges, and also how they would look at current activity. The Assistant Director informed Members that an effective countywide strategic group had been established and was led by the police to investigate child sexual exploitation. Through awareness raising and information shared around the country, knowledge of child sexual exploitation had improved considerably. In the last 18 months, they had trained over 1100 professionals in child sexual exploitation and associated issues.

Resolved:

- (i) That the Annual Report of the City of York Safeguarding Children Board 2013-14 (Summary) be noted.
- (ii) That consideration be given to considering the safeguarding Board priorities set out on page 14 (Early Help, Neglect, child Sexual Abuse, Domestic Abuse, and Missing Children) in future scrutiny activity where deemed appropriate.

Reason: To allow Members to be fully informed on areas for further improvement and key priorities for safeguarding across the city.

27. School Improvement Update

Members considered a report which updated them on primary and secondary school performance in 2014 together with information about the position of York schools according to Ofsted judgements during 2013-14. The Senior Advisor, Early Years and Principal Advisor, 14-19 were in attendance, as well as the Director of Children's Services, Education and Skills.

With regard to primary performance, the Senior Advisor, Early Years, informed the committee that the percentage of pupils achieving a good level of development had increased by eight percent. This had been achieved across 12 areas of learning. The gap between Free School Meal (FSM) pupils and non FSM pupils had narrowed in reading and mathematics at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 with the gap closing

by 13 % in reading at KS2. The gap remained the same in writing at both Key Stage levels and progress in writing was a priority for 2015.

With regard to secondary performance, the Principal Advisor, 14-19 advised Members that the Key Stage 4 results were provisional at this stage and performance tables would be published in February 2015. However provisional figures were good and put York (along with North Yorkshire) in equal first position in the Yorkshire and Humber Region.

- Resolved:
- (i) That the update on primary and secondary school performance in 2014 be noted.
 - (ii) That the position of York schools according to Ofsted judgements during 2013-14 be noted.

Reason: To inform Members consideration of possible future areas for scrutiny review.

28. Learning and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee Workplan 2014/15

Members considered the Committee's workplan for the 2014-15 municipal year.

Members acknowledged the proposed change to the reporting procedure for Children's Services and the City of York Safeguarding Children Board for the forthcoming municipal year.

Resolved: That the workplan be agreed.

Reason: To keep the Committees workplan updated.

Councillor A Reid, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 8.20 pm].