

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

**York Museums Trust: Core Partnership Objectives Update - 2015/16 end of year report**

**Summary**

1. This report updates Members on the current activities of the York Museums Trust (YMT) against the agreed core partnership objectives.

**Background**

2. YMT was set up as an independent trust in order to achieve a business turnaround of the museums and art gallery and to enhance the cultural provision within the city. It successfully addressed its initial targets which were concerned principally with: stabilising visitor numbers, delivering new income streams, creating new exhibitions and interpretative services, creating an education strategy, increasing use and involvement by residents, and cataloguing of the collection.
3. New objectives were agreed by the Executive on 28 April, on the recommendation of this scrutiny committee, to be the long-term shared objectives of the partnership between the Council and YMT:
  - Creation of museum and gallery provision capable of contributing to positioning York as a world class cultural centre
  - Provision that is a source of inspiration and enjoyment for all and a stimulus for learning and skills development
  - The protection and conservation of the collections, gardens and buildings for future generations including improved storage
  - Promotion of the city's museums and collections through a varied range of activities which could include exhibitions, displays, community

projects, volunteering opportunities, formal learning for schools, informal activities for families, and adult learning

- Increased access to the city's collections, gardens and buildings and increasing visitor numbers, especially young people
  - Recognition of the special significance of the museums and gallery for York residents through the maintenance of pricing incentives for York residents and opportunities for free access
  - The facilitation of access for those most likely to be excluded through a range of outreach activities and pricing mechanisms
  - Excellent customer service and visitor experience
  - Improved public realm through capital investment and imaginative interpretation schemes
  - Active international partnerships to enhance public programmes, to increase YMT's and the city's reputation, and to raise funds
  - Retention of registered museum status and development of the designated collections to ensure maximum public benefit
  - The maintenance of the Museum Gardens on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest maintained and the register of botanical gardens
  - Public access to the Museum Gardens daily (except relevant Christmas / New Year holidays) unless closure is necessary for reasons of public safety
  - Effective, open and transparent governance including an effective access and equalities policies covering trustees and staff recruitment practices
4. The Executive agreed that twice-yearly reports be made to this committee, covering the activities of both YMT and the Council, and highlighting developments and challenges against:
- The Core Partnership Objectives set out above
  - YMT's Long-Term Financial Plan
  - YMT's Capital Development Plan
5. Although these arrangements were only agreed in this financial year it makes sense to report against them retrospectively for 15/16, in respect of the core partnership objectives, in order to begin the new reporting system.

Reports on the Financial Plan and the Capital Development Plan will be made during 2016/17. The report from YMT is attached at Annex 1.

6. On the Council's side, legal advice has been commissioned, in consultation with YMT, to address this committee's recommendation that a consistent charitable framework be implemented for all museum assets and collections, to replace the various, current legal agreements. Our legal advisor will shortly be producing a work plan to schedule the necessary work. A report will then be taken to the Executive Member for Culture, Leisure and Tourism with appropriate recommendations.
7. With regard to agreeing the Council's future financial support to YMT this committee recommended that:
  - An annual discussion take place between YMT and the Council during August-September each year
  - In support of that discussion YMT will provide their refreshed 5 year financial plan and an updated capital development plan

The appropriate arrangements are being put into place to implement this.

### **Options**

8. This report is for information and there are no options to consider.

### **Corporate Objectives**

9. YMT contributes to a number of corporate objectives including developing opportunities for residents and visitors to experience York as a vibrant and eventful city, improving opportunities for learning, and in strengthening York's economy through investment in the tourism infrastructure.

### **Implications**

10. **Finance:** The Council makes an annual grant to YMT. In 2015/16 the grant was £607k, a reduction of £500k compared to 2014/15. The grant remains at the same level for 2016/17.
11. The report has no implications relating to: Human Resources, Equalities, Legal, Crime and Disorder, Information Technology, Property.

## Risk Management

12. This report is for information and there are no risks to consider.

## Recommendation

13. That the Committee comments upon the activities of the York Museums Trust.

Reason: To fulfil the Council's role under the agreed partnership arrangements.

## Contact Details

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	<b>Report Approved</b>	✓	<b>Date</b> 6 June 2016
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All		✓
<b>For further information please contact the author of the report</b>			

**Background Papers:** None

### Annexes:

**Annex 1:** York Museums Trust report for the period to 31 March 2016

### Abbreviations found in either the report or annex:

CoCA - Centre of Ceramic Art  
CYC – City of York Council  
SASH – Safe and Sound Homes  
YMT – York Museums Trust