

Meeting	Learning & Culture Policy and Scrutiny Committee
Date	29 July 2015
Present	Councillors Taylor (Chair), Fenton (Vice-Chair), Looker, Jackson, K Myers, Richardson (Sub for Cllr Dew), Wells and Mr Thomas (Co-Opted Statutory Member)
In Attendance	Councillors Ayre, Crisp and D'Agorne
Apologies	Councillors Dew and Dr Dickinson

9. Declarations of Interest

Members were asked to declare any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests, any prejudicial interests or disclosable pecuniary interests which they might have in respect of the business on the agenda.

Councillor Richardson declared a personal non prejudicial interest in agenda item 4, Attendance of Executive Member for Culture, Leisure & Tourism in relation to discussion in respect of works at Yearsley Pool and his employment as a pump engineer.

10. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the last meeting of the Learning and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 22 June 2015 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

11. Public Participation

It was reported that there had been six registrations to speak at the meeting and that one Member of Council had also requested to speak, under the Council's Public Participation Scheme, on agenda item 5, York Museums Trust Funding.

Don Phillips spoke as a Heworth resident confirming his opposition to the imposition of charges for entry to the Art Gallery. As a local artist he expressed concern at the effect charges would have on access to the gallery by young people and retired residents.

Stuart Maule referred to the Government's strong focus on access to the arts. He referred to issues with figures in the report and pointed out the effect ending free access to the gallery would have on young people's social inclusion and citizenship.

Helen Graham spoke as a lecturer in Museum Heritage, referring to national research which had shown a decrease in visitors to arts venues from lower socio economic groups and the need to reverse this trend. She questioned the information received which informed the recommendation for charging and suggested that consideration should be given to other options.

Charlotte Dawson spoke as a community artist and the organiser of a petition signed by 800 residents, in less than a week, opposing charging for entry to the Art Gallery. Signatories felt that the imposition of charges would create further barriers to the introduction of children to the arts.

Brian Watson spoke as a local resident also expressing concern at the intention to implement a charge for entry to the gallery which he felt would lead to a drop in attendance figures. He questioned the implementation of previous scrutiny recommendations in relation to Museums.

Jay Sillence spoke as an artist, referring to government cuts to the arts and questioning the justification for a £7.50 entry charge to the Art Gallery. He suggested that revenue could be created elsewhere as he felt a charge for entry would result in residents and visitors moving to view free local independent galleries.

Councillor Derbyshire confirmed that there had been no suggestion of charging for the Art Gallery or Castle Museum to support the deficit, when the funding application had been made by the York Museums Trust. She questioned what other measures had been considered by the Trust as any charge would make the Gallery exclusive rather than inclusive.

12. Attendance of Executive Member for Culture, Leisure & Tourism

The Executive Member for Culture, Leisure & Tourism was in attendance to provide an update on his priorities and challenges for the 2015/16 municipal year. He circulated a copy of his report, a copy of which has been attached to the online agenda, covering following the following areas;

- The Community Stadium Project
- Volunteering and Equalities
- Sport and Active Leisure
- Older People's physical activity programme
- The GP referral programme (HEAL)
- Community sports
- Make it York
- Explore York Libraries and Archives Mutual
- Parks and Open Spaces, including community management of sites and improvement projects

Members questioned the Executive Member on his report and portfolio area, the main points being;

- Resiting of Haxby Library, confirmation that the move was not imminent and that arrangements would be made for Explore York's Chief Executive to update ward members
- The options explored to reduce the Yearsley Pool subsidy, it was noted that a report regarding the Community Stadium and the City Leisure Contract was due for consideration by the Executive in August
- Suggestions for publicity to promote local sports clubs, rewards and membership terms
- First year of Active York Sports Awards and future improvements
- Roll out of amateur sports groups involvement in community development
- Completion of the Shambles Market, confirmation that all outstanding issues were being pursued
- Parliament Street fountain, confirmed that a report on the future of the fountain and use of the space was due for consideration in September
- The use of suspended banners on city entrances for future events
- The Committee expressed their interest in being consulted on the new Volunteering Strategy, once drafted, and asked that it be brought to a future scrutiny meeting,

Resolved: That the Executive Member update be received and noted.

Reason: To ensure that the Committee is kept updated on the Executive Member's priorities and challenges.

13. York Museums Trust Funding

The Committee considered the proposals set out in Annex A of the report which highlighted proposed changes to charging for York residents at the city's museums and gallery. Members noted that the York Museums Trust's (YMT) proposed charging plans were designed to ensure their long-term sustainability. Copies of submissions by Councillor Gunnell and Janine Taylor, a York resident, raising concerns at the Museums Trust's proposals to implement charges for residents, were circulated at the meeting.

Officers presented the report highlighting details of the YMT's business plan prepared in response to previous grant reductions in their funding and to future significant financial challenges.

Janet Barnes, Chief Executive and Michael Woodward, Facilities Manager of the YMT attended the meeting and reported details of the funding reductions experienced by the Trust, over recent years. They also referred to proposed Council grant reductions up to 2019/20, which had necessitated their decision to implement charges to ensure the long term sustainability of the Art Gallery. They highlighted the scale of the challenge and the management of their portfolio of buildings, gardens, objects and collections around the city. They also confirmed details of the proposed charging arrangements, including a YMT membership scheme, reductions and discounts.

Members questioned Officers and the YMT representatives on a number of issues including:

- Concern that consultation on the proposals had not been undertaken earlier
- Confirmation that there had been no earlier assurances made to the Trust regarding the ending of free entry to the Gallery for York residents
- Details of the number of Gallery visitors for the last 5 years
- Discount for York Card residents

- Background papers, confirmed that no background papers had been materially relied upon in the preparation of the report
- Key decision, confirmed that neither of the two criteria for a key decision had been met by the proposal

The Executive Member for Culture, Leisure and Tourism was in attendance to consider the views of the committee to enable him to take full account of them in his deliberations on the paper when he considered the report at his Decision Session, following the meeting.

Members then considered the options provided for the Executive Members consideration and following further discussion it was

Resolved: That the Executive Member be recommended to defer his decision, and in consultation with members of the Learning & Culture Policy and Scrutiny Committee to continue talks with the York Museums Trust. These should include the financial implications of free access for York Card holders or agreeing further concessions ahead of a financial decision being taken by the Executive in September.

Reason: To ensure that a fully informed decision can be made in relation to the proposed charging plans by the York Museums Trust.

14. Scrutiny Arrangements Around Make It York

Members received a report that provided information on their role in scrutinising Make it York (MiY).

Officers confirmed that, as the Chief Executive of Make it York had been unable to attend the meeting, following a recent change of meeting date, it was recommended that this report should be rescheduled to a later date.

Resolved: That the report be deferred to the Committee's September meeting.

Reason: To enable the Chief Executive of Make it York to attend the meeting to answer any Members questions in relation to the body.

15. Local & National Safeguarding Developments - Bi-Annual Update

Members considered a report that updated them on key local and national safeguarding developments since the last report to the Committee in December 2014.

The Assistant Director, Children's Specialist Services presented the report asking Members to note arrangements for cross border collaboration with the North Yorkshire County Council and Police in relation to Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation and the launch of the Its Not Ok website:

<http://www.yor-ok.org.uk/young-people/Its%20not%20okay/its-not-ok.htm>

Members made a number of points and questioned aspects of the report, including:

- Use of workshops across the city for parents and children in relation to the safe use of the internet etc - confirmed that an evaluation of the campaigns would be undertaken
- Need to refresh both existing and new Members of the Council in relation to local and national safeguarding issues
- Confirmation that safeguarding work was undertaken in both LEA and Academy schools

- Resolved: (i) That the report be noted.
- (ii) That Members view the Its Not Ok website via the above link.
- (iii) That a Responding and Managing Risk Challenge event with officers from Children's Social Care be considered.
- (iv) That an update on the refreshed Looked After Children's strategy be received at a future meeting.

Reason: To allow Members to be fully informed on key children's safeguarding issues in York and to support Member challenge in this area.

16. Update on Implementation of Children & Families Bill

Members considered a report that updated them on the implementation of the Children and Families Act 2014. It was noted that the introduction of new Education, Health and Care plans replaced the old statements of special educational needs (SEN) and that the new plans set out more holistically the needs of each child and young person to support improved planning and outcomes.

The Assistant Director, Children's Specialist Services and the Head of Disability and Special Educational Needs provided more details in relation to the implementation of the new responsibilities locally and reported on future challenges. They also highlighted that consultation had shown that the co-ordination of services was welcomed by parents.

Following further discussion it was

- Resolved: (i) That the progress in the implementation of the special educational needs and disability reforms and the plans to establish an integrated service (including social care, SEN specialist teaching service, specialist early years services and the SEN coordination team) be noted.
- (ii) That Members note the intention to make future assessment approaches proportionate to need with key working approaches to be expanded through the development of a family support role.

- Reason: (i) Parents are seeking easier access to services, with support for need, not limited by artificial barriers of service boundaries.
- (ii) These workers would coordinate services for those families where there is multiple agency involvement, proactively signposting them to activities/support to meet needs

17. Learning & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee Work Plan 2015/16

Members considered the draft work plan for the Committee for the forthcoming 2015/16 municipal year.

Officers confirmed that, as the Executive meeting in September coincided with the Scrutiny Committees next meeting, a suitable alternative date would need to be identified to enable the Executive Member for Education, Children and Young People, to attend as scheduled.

- Resolved:
- (i) That in view of the number of items on the work plan for the Committee's September meeting an additional October meeting be added to the work plan.
 - (ii) 24 September – Officers to identify an earlier September meeting date.
 - (iii) That the following be added to the work plan for the September meeting:
 - Report on 'Make it York & Attendance of Managing Director
 - YMT charging
 - (iv) That an appropriate future meeting date be identified to receive:
 - An update on the next Children & Young People's Plan
 - The draft Volunteering Strategy
 - (v) That the work plan be agreed subject to the above changes.

Reason: To keep the Committee's work plan updated and review the level of business for consideration at each meeting.

Cllr D Taylor, Chair
[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 8.30 pm].