
Meeting	Impact of Arts and Culture Sectors on the Economy of York Scrutiny Task Group
Date	20 December 2016
Present	Councillors Looker (Chair), Cullwick and K Myers

1. Declarations of Interest

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 may have in respect of business on the agenda. No additional interests were declared.

2. Public Participation

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

3. Impact of the Arts and Culture Sectors on the Economy of York Scrutiny Review Update Report

The Chief Executive of City of York Council and the Assistant Director Communities and Equalities had been invited to the meeting to contribute to the review. They raised the following issues:

- Traditionally the Council had had a defined leisure and culture function with a dedicated team delivering these services. This was no longer the case and its role was now as a participant and collaborator – influencing and linking into the networks that were in place.
- The opportunities offered by Make it York and its role in developing a cultural strategy for the city. This should include identifying core priorities for the city and how these should be presented to bodies such as the Arts Council.

- The emergence of a Cultural Leaders Group as a vibrant collective of the cultural sector.

Members questioned officers about the Cultural Leaders Group, and whether it was difficult for the group to take a strategic role because they were competitors. Officers explained that the cultural sector in York was, as in other cities, quite competitive. Developments had, however, been made in areas such as the sharing of data. It may not be realistic for the Cultural Leaders Group alone to set a shared vision - the Council also had a role to play, for example its professional advisors sat on Make it York for that purpose.

Members stated that they were interested in identifying the Council's role within the sector, even if this role was no longer as a grant giver. The Chief Executive stated the importance of the Council providing a strategic steer for the city. It had signed up to the York Economic Strategy, of which this was a part. The Council could influence and needed to be clear about the priorities for the city. The difficulties in measuring the benefits and outcomes of this sector were, however, acknowledged.

Members were informed of the partnership review that had been instigated, which would include consideration of the client role. The Chief Executive explained the role of Make it York and the need to evolve the Council's service level agreement with this body. Productive discussions were taking place on this issue.

Members asked officers whether they believed that Make it York was the best mechanism for driving inward investment. The Chief Executive stated that a number of regeneration projects were planned, including York Central, where inward investment would be crucial. There were different models of inward investment throughout the country. The focus of Make it York was attracting tourism – it was more about supporting local businesses. Anchor tenants needed to be found for York Central but it was not the responsibility of Make it York to achieve this, although they would contribute to elements of the delivery. There may be a need to consider different models as projects moved forward.

The Chief Executive stated that she had also been having discussions as to whether the city could do more to maximise the benefits of working on a regional basis to promote tourism. This could involve consideration as to how York joined up with

Hull, Harrogate and other destinations and how it could benefit from major events on offer in other cities. It was noted that Leeds would be bidding to be the European Capital of Culture for 2023.

The Chief Executive stressed the importance of maximising opportunities for working with others, for example the Leeds City Region LEP. They had significant skills which could be utilised. It was important to look at the drivers for inward investment. There would also be opportunities offered through the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding LEP, which was looking at the tourism offer. It was important to utilise the benefits of models not previously used, including the devolution model and its benefits, for example in respect of infrastructure.

Members were informed that Make it York had been established following the Tourism Strategy 2012/13. The core message had been that “York was the brand” and there was a need to work in collaboration. It was, however, important to recognise that it was not a single brand and that there were opportunities for greater collaboration, for example through the links that the universities had established with China. When Make it York had been established the view had been that culture was central and there was a need to sell York as a single voice. There had been a critical need to improve quality. A conference had taken place and there had been a strong view that the key was to tie together modernity and the contemporary cultural offer with the city’s heritage. This was evidenced by initiatives such as UNESCO, Mediale and the development of digital arts. Officers suggested that the Task Group may wish to consider the Tourism Strategy as part of their review, to ascertain whether the brand and product had developed and were working well together.

The Chief Executive stated that the Council also had to show leadership through the design and master planning of the regeneration projects, for example in respect of the public spaces. The Council had a strong custodian role to ensure that the quality product was not lost.

Members were also reminded of the huge potential to develop the early evening economy. Members suggested that there were also aspects of the city’s heritage which could be better promoted including the city walls, St Leonard’s Hospital, an

exploration of York's Roman history and further initiatives to increase footfall on the Micklegate side of the river.

The Chief Executive was asked to comment on a view that had been put forward during the review that the variable quality of festivals held in the city undermined the brand. She confirmed that this was an issue that should be considered and stated that the city could attract world class events. There were also events being held across Yorkshire in which York could play a part. It was important to look at the opportunities to be gained through the Yorkshire brand without losing York's own brand. Events were now being held in Yorkshire that had not been previously and it was important to embrace these and consider how York could be part of these if appropriate.

The Chief Executive of City of York Council and the Assistant Director Communities and Equalities were thanked for their attendance at the meeting and their contribution to the review.

Members considered the Interim Report which provided the Task Group with all the information gathered to date in support of the scrutiny review into the Impact of the Arts and Culture Sectors on the Economy of York. Members were asked to note the information, indicate any additions to previously agreed consultees and agree an updated timetable.

Members were pleased to note that the review had generated a considerable amount of interest and that several organisations had indicated that they would like to contribute. It was agreed that the committee would hold an open session prior to the conclusion of the review to provide an opportunity for any interested party to put forward their views if they had not already had the opportunity to do so. Written contributions would also be welcome.

Members agreed that representatives from the following organisations should also be included in the list of consultees:

- BID Board representatives(it was agreed that it would be useful if they could attend the same meeting as the representative(s) from the Chamber of Commerce if possible)
- English Heritage/Historic England
- The Arts Council
- Creative England and Screen Yorkshire

- Visit England (to ascertain if they had comparative data re tourism in other cities)
- Centre for Cities to be contacted to ascertain if they had data available which would be useful to the Task Group

The Task Group agreed that two meetings should be convened prior to the Economic Development Policy and Scrutiny Committee meeting in March 2017 (suggested dates Wednesday 11 January and Wednesday 25 January 2017).

Resolved: (i) That the report be noted.

- (ii) That, to further the work of the Task Group, the consultees listed above be invited to contribute to the review.

Reason: To enable the Task Group to proceed with work on the agreed scrutiny review.

Councillor Looker, Chair

[The meeting started at 10.40 am and finished at 11.55 am].