
Meeting	Decision Session - Executive Member for Culture, Leisure and Communities
Date	2 February 2021
Present	Councillor Smalley (Executive Member)

1. **Declarations of Interest**

The Executive Member was asked to declare, at this point in the meeting, any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests or any prejudicial or discloseable pecuniary interest that he might have in respect of the business on the agenda. None were declared.

2. **Minutes**

Resolved: That the minutes of the Decision Session held on 14 October 2020 be approved and signed by the Executive Member as a correct record.

3. **Public Participation**

It was reported that there had been one registration to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

Cllr Myers spoke on Agenda Item 6, Ward Funding. He thanked officers for their report and commended all employees working in Communities for their work over the past year. He raised his concerns regarding the review of ward funding, the inequalities in service delivery and he highlighted how the ward funding allocation process could be improved to make it fairer and deliver greater benefits to the city.

The Executive Member thanked Cllr Myers for his comments.

4. **York Learning - Self Assessment Report 2019/20**

The Executive Member considered a report that presented a high level summary of York Learning's Self-Assessment Report (SAR) for the academic year 19/20.

The Interim Head of York Learning was in attendance to present the report and answer any questions. She confirmed that:

- Apprenticeships who had been reporting minimum standards had improved their achievement rate from 50.7% to 71.9% and were successfully now out of minimum standards.
- Tutors had responded quickly and positively during the pandemic to ensure learners could continue and engage with their learning online during lockdown
- Devices had been loaned to those learners that required IT equipment.
- A Governance Board had been developed to support the governance process.
- Provision for learners with High Needs was very good and York Learning continued to deliver education either face to face or online for those students with Education Health and Care plans (EHCP).
- A new booking and Management Information System (MIS) had been introduced but communication and development of staff knowledge and skills required to use the system had been particularly difficult with all staff working from home.
- Through lockdown daily learning challenges were shared via the hashtag '#communitylearningtogether,' a Family Learning Facebook page aimed at parents was made available for home schooling tips, 'call the tutor' and an ICT helpdesk was available for anyone struggling with IT equipment.
- The 16-18 study program had continued throughout the pandemic and was meeting the needs of some of the most vulnerable young people in the city. This was a full time programme which attracted those young people who could not attend college or other mainstream provision and although attendance was sometimes challenging, it was being well managed.
- Apprenticeships had been the only provision to still grow during the pandemic with increased learner numbers on last year and good success outcomes for learners.
- Retention rates had dropped significantly during the pandemic.

The Executive Member noted the strengths and challenges faced throughout the pandemic and the strength and areas for improvement highlighted by Ofsted.

In answer to questions raised by the Executive Member, it was confirmed that:

- Positive relationships with learners had continued to be fostered by tutors, which had helped to motivate, inspire & contribute to the social wellbeing of learners.
- Around 70 laptops had been loaned to learners to enable them to stay engaged.
- New apprenticeship offers would be considered and staff continued to work together to promote the service and encourage referrals but lack of face to face engagement was a barrier to this.
- The Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) would be considering the funding allocation for 2021/22, which worryingly could be significantly less due to the drop in numbers in all areas of learning since Covid hit (reduction of 442 learners and a reduction in 1122 enrolments).

The Executive Member commended all York Learning staff for their support and work during the pandemic and he thanked the Interim Head of Service for her update.

Resolved: That the findings of the service's self-assessment report be noted and the production and publication of the final report be agreed.

Reason: To help monitor the service and ensure robust governance arrangements.

5. Working with York's Minority Communities

The Executive Member considered a report that presented progress during the first year of the MYnority York project.

The Assistant Director of Communities and Culture and the Community Involvement Officer were in attendance to present the report and answer any questions.

It was noted that in 2019 Government had provided local councils with various funding amounts, in order to enhance their capacity and capability to aid Brexit preparations. Specific purposes for the use of this funding had included strengthening preparations and supporting communities and, in particular, helping vulnerable people apply to the EU Settlement Scheme.

The Executive Member noted the positive activity that had taken place over the last year and in answer to his questions, it was confirmed that:

- Most migrant residents in York were now aware of the settlement scheme and officers would be targeting particular sectors and partner organisations to ensure more awareness of the settlement scheme deadline.
- When possible, more face to face sessions would take place.

The Executive Member thanked the Community Involvement Officer for her comprehensive report and he commended her on all the work she had completed during this challenging period, including her support on the Hate Crime Working Group.

Resolved:

- (i) That the progress with the project so far be noted.
- (ii) That the issues raised in the report be noted.
- (iii) That the future priorities set out from paragraph 7 of the report be agreed.

Reason: To keep the Executive Member updated on the progress during the first year of the MYnority York project.

6. Ward Funding

The Executive Member considered a report that set out a review of the use of ward funding during 2020/21 and identified issues and opportunities for 2021/22.

The Assistant Director of Communities & Culture and the Communities and Equalities Manager were in attendance to present the report and answer questions.

The Executive Member expressed his thanks to the public speaker and noted that Ward Members were allocated funding proportionally through the population they represented and whilst the changes made to allocating by ward population brought subtle changes, these were relatively minor. He stated that as a response to Covid-19 there was a commitment that at a city level residents would receive the support needed. The

Executive Member confirmed that following the meeting he would respond further to the speaker and to a written representation he had received.

The Assistant Director confirmed that wards were making very effective use of their ward funding to meet local need and in particular were responding in innovative ways to identified ward priorities. He also highlighted how ward funding had been efficiently used to respond to issues arising from the pandemic and in support of the community and voluntary sectors.

The Communities and Equalities Manager responded to questions raised by the Executive Member and she confirmed that officers were considering future priority areas to support communities going forward and that the flexibility of ward funding offered the opportunity to test approaches that could influence and inform future strategic programmes or investment.

The Executive Member recognised the importance of ensuring Ward Members could use the ward funding process to respond to localised need and he thanked officers for their report. He commended the Communities and Equalities Manager and all the Community Involvement Officers for their work and commitment to support communities during the last year.

Resolved:

- (i) That the analysis of ward funding, set out in the report, be considered.
- (ii) That the success of ward budgets in responding to Covid-19 be noted.
- (iii) That the diverse range of effective ways in which ward funding was being used to support local communities be noted.
- (iv) That the potential priority areas set out in paragraph 17 of the report be recommended to Ward Members and be followed in order to focus support for residents deemed vulnerable, isolated, or in need of other essential help and to combat the worst effects of Covid-19.
- (v) That the effectiveness of ward funding to meet community needs, hearing the voice of the community and charitable groups that have utilised ward funding, be noted.

Reason: So that ward funding would be used effectively to:

- Engage residents in making better local use of resources.
- Enable ward members to deliver on local priorities.

7. York's Creative Future: A Culture Strategy for York, 2020-2025

The Executive Member considered a report that provided an update on the development of York's culture strategy for the period 2020 – 2025.

The Assistant Director of Communities & Culture was in attendance to provide an update and respond to any questions.

He confirmed that an extensive engagement and consultation exercise with York's residents, cultural organisations, artists and practitioners, had resulted in high quality responses to feed into the strategy.

The Executive Member welcomed the feedback received and noted that the full strategy was attached as an Annex to the report. He went on to thank those that had been involved in producing the strategy and agreed:

Resolved: That the Council be committed to adopt and enshrine the new York culture strategy (York's Creative Future).

Reason - So that:

- York would continue to be internationally recognised for its exceptional heritage and unique arts offer.
- Residents and businesses in York would benefit from York's unique cultural offer, leading to greater investment and participation across the city.
- The cultural offer for York's residents would be further expanded beyond the city centre.
- All citizens, irrespective of age or background, would be proud to be engaged with York's arts and heritage offer, which would include a wide range of inclusive opportunities.

Cllr Smalley, Executive Member

[The meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 10.59 am].