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MEETING	LEARNING & CULTURE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE	28 JANUARY 2010
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS LOOKER (CHAIR), BROOKS (VICE-CHAIR), ASPDEN, CRISP, HOGG, TAYLOR, WAUDBY AND B WATSON (AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR CLLR DOUGLAS)
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLOR DOUGLAS AND MR W SCHOFIELD

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### **31. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

At this point in the meeting, Members were asked to declare any personal or prejudicial interests they might have in the business on the agenda or any other general interests they might have within the remit of the Committee, other than those standing interests listed in the agenda.

No interests were declared.

### **32. MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Learning and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee, held on 10 December 2009, be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

### **33. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

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

### **34. ATTENDANCE OF EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR LEISURE, CULTURE AND SOCIAL INCLUSION AND CHAIR OF YORK@LARGE**

Members received an update from the Executive Member for Leisure, Culture and Social Inclusion on the work taking place within his remit. The Chair asked him to provide information on long term strategic plans and to specifically address the issues below which had been put forward by Members. The Executive Member and Assistant Director (Leisure and Culture) provided the following information.

#### University of York Pool

A meeting had taken place with representatives from the University to look at ways to address the funding gap which was approx £4m and different options were discussed including the availability of external funding, talking

to private sector partners and looking at alternative governance structures, such as a joint venture, which could open up other types of borrowing.

### Barbican

With regard to the process and timescales set out for applications to buy and develop the Barbican, they advised that the deadline for receipt of pre-qualification questionnaires was 17 February 2010, after which 6 parties would be selected who would have a further 6 weeks to elaborate on the proposals, following which 2 parties would be invited formally to tender. The benefits of this process to the Council are that it should attract more interest due to less financial risk being involved in the early stages and proposals could be adapted through discussion with parties throughout the process.<sup>1</sup>

### Ice Factor

With regard to securing a site for future years, Members were advised that discussions had taken place with the operator who had made it clear that he required a city centre site in a prime location with a historic backdrop and good footfall. Members discussed financial issues around the Ice Factor and briefly looked at potential sites and risks associated with those sites such as flooding. They noted that all other outdoor ice rinks in the country received some public subsidy.

### Events Protocol

The Committee expressed their interest in carrying out a scrutiny review of the Council's current policy and requested a briefing paper on this be brought to their next meeting.<sup>2</sup>

### 2012 Olympics

It was reported that the City of York Council, in conjunction with Active York, the city's sport and Active Leisure Partnership, was driving forward York's involvement in the Olympics. Partners include York St John University, who will be hosting a delegation of athletes from the Gambia, supported by Yorkshire Forward. Sports facilities in York include a sports stadium, York Community and Gymnastics Foundation and facilities provided by the University of York, York St John University (Sports Science) and York College.<sup>3,4</sup>

### Social Inclusion

With regard to a query on whether the Council is doing enough to improve accessibility (including physical access and access to information) and so increase the rating in the area of Social Inclusion across all strands in York, the following positive examples were cited:- the new Council Headquarters; Changing Places toilets; improvements to the Council's website and intranet; the YorOK website and the award of green flag status for work with disabled children. Members were also advised that the Valuing People Partnership Board had set up a task group and Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) were being undertaken.

The Chair welcomed the Chair of York@Large, one of the Without Walls partners, to the meeting. She explained that [York@Large](#) is the council's Cultural Strategic Partner, comprising 11 Members who represent cultural

and sporting organisations across the city. She detailed their aims and objectives and explained that as they receive no funding, their remit is largely advisory. With input from the Assistant Director (Leisure and Culture) she answered Members queries in relation to specific issues, including the cultural quarter and City Festivals and made the following points:-

- many of the strands being pursued are in relation to sport – not able to strongly support culture as there is no LA indicator on culture.
- membership broadly covers all cultural sectors with the exception of heritage
- membership is reviewed on an annual basis
- workplan is being updated with objectives being revisited in light of new strategic plan <sup>5</sup>
- York @ Large has annual plan but needs a 3-5 year plan
- Current issues - Lack of clear vision and purpose on what York @ Large is trying to achieve, lack of fit to LA indicators, and issues around its fit with the Community Strategy and the Council's Corporate Strategy
- Active York is a subgroup of York@Large – feeds into Without Walls but only one sports representative therefore unbalanced. More support needed if sport is to remain with York at Large.
- Hope is to bring more sporting events to Yorkshire with support from Visit York and individual partners.

The Chair thanked the Chair of York@Large for attending the meeting.

RESOLVED: (i) That the update from the Executive Member for Leisure, Culture and Social Inclusion be noted.

(ii) That the update from the Chair of York@Large be noted.

REASON: (i) In order that the Committee is kept informed on work within the remit of the Executive Member and so that Members can made a contribution to this portfolio area.

(ii) In order that the Committee is kept informed on work with the remit of York@Large.

#### Action Required

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| 1. Timeline for Barbican to be circulated to Committee Members                    | CC |
| 2. Briefing paper on the council's current Events Policy for the next meeting     | CC |
| 3. Timeline for work in respect of Olympics to be circulated to Committee Members | CC |
| 4. Assistant Director to provide further info on partnerships in York             | CC |
| 5. Current workplan for York@Large to be circulated                               | CC |

### 35. INFORMATION REPORT ON REFURBISHMENT OF THE MAIN LIBRARY

Members received a report from the Head of Libraries and Heritage which informed them of the work currently being undertaken to refurbish the main library in York and transform it into an Explore Centre. She reported that contractors were now in and brought Members up to date with the work which had already been undertaken. She explained, with the aid of drawings, how the Explore Centre would look when completed and the benefits it would bring to the people of York. She made the following points and answered Members queries in relation to specific issues which were raised:-

- Demolition of partition walls have opened up the building and allowed in a large amount of natural light
- Due to order furniture – intention it to maintain a tradition feel in a contemporary way – ie using modern oak shelving
- Self issue system to be introduced – benefits include freeing up staff time to deal with enquiries, provide assistance and keep library tidy.
- Removing large checking in/out desk will also provide more space – with a small reception desk for enquiries.
- All shelves in central area to be on wheels so they can be pushed back out of the way – will create auditorium for 200 people
- Other areas to include individual learning rooms, ESOL centre and Community Media Centre (which will encourage young people into the library) and Children’s library.
- Increased opening hours to allow more flexibility for visiting the library.
- All books are being re-catalogued and organised by subject to make searching easier.
- There will be more books available than before, including more paper backs as requested.
- Working with City Strategy to look at ways of making Library Square more user friendly.
- Intention to host events – brings in additional source of income
- Looking at alternative income schemes to issuing fines for late returns which can be seen as social inclusion issue
- Introduction of e-books
- Café Area – possibility of including tables on lawn in summer.

The Chair thanked the Head of Libraries for her detailed update.

**RESOLVED:** That the contents of the report and annexes be noted.

**REASON:** To ensure that Members are fully aware of the ongoing work being carried out by the Council, that falls within the remit of the Committee.

### **36. INFORMATION REPORT ON RENAISSANCE TEAM**

Members received a report on the recently formed Renaissance Team which has been set up to work on a City Centre Action Plan.

With reference to a report on the Economic Masterplan and the Renaissance Team which had been presented to the Executive in November 2009, the Head of City Development and Principal Development Officer explained the key elements of the programme for the renaissance of the city and provided information on each area and answered Members queries in relation to specific issues.

He explained that the programme encompassed the following 3 main elements

1. Development of the economic masterplan – funded by Yorkshire Forward
2. Creation of a York Renaissance Team - 6 additional posts – majority funded by Yorkshire Forward with part funding of one post from English Heritage
3. Development of a renaissance academy for purpose of training and development – funded by Yorkshire Forward.

Members were advised that interviews for the Head of Renaissance post were currently underway and the successful candidate should be in post by April 2010 with the remainder of positions being filled by June-July 2010.

In response to a query on the architect's post, officers explained that their role would be to provide a source of expertise and advice to the team to ensure any developments coming forward were right for the city.

The Chair thanked officers for a useful and interesting insight into the work of the team.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the report and annexes be noted.

REASON: To ensure that Members are fully aware of the ongoing work being carried out by the Council, that falls within the remit of the Committee.

### **37. REVIEW OF CASUAL PLAY OPPORTUNITIES - INTERIM REPORT**

Following an informal session held on 21<sup>st</sup> January, to look at possible areas of the city to focus their review on, Members decided who would visit each of them visit the schools in those areas to talk to parents about play opportunities in their vicinity. The Head of Play circulated a questionnaire to Members of the Committee to use as a prompt when undertaking these visits.

Finally, Members agreed to hold a further informal meeting to consider the findings from the 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> 'Tell Us' survey and to meet with the Head of

Plan and a representative from Playspace to look at different sites across the city where play could be undertaken. <sup>1</sup>

- RESOLVED:
- (i) That the review should focus on St Pauls (central), Fishergate (suburban) and Deighton (village).
  - (ii) That Members agree to visit schools and meet with parents to gather their views on play opportunities.
  - (iii) That a further informal meeting be held to progress the work of the review

**Note:** *Following discussion of this item, Councillors Aspden, Brooks and Crisp left the meeting in order to attend another City of York Council meeting.*

Action Required

Scrutiny officer to arrange the informal meeting

MC

### **38. WORKPLAN AND EXTRACT FROM EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN**

Members considered their work plan for the civic year 2009-10 and a summary of items which were listed on the Executive Forward Plan for decision by the Executive Member for Children and Young People's Services and the Executive Member for Leisure, Culture and Social Inclusion.

The Chair stated that, in order that formal meetings are conducted efficiently and profitably, the majority of work on reviews should be undertaken outside formal meetings and any decisions taken would be ratified at the next available formal meeting.

Members noted that a visit had been organised for Members to see the refurbishment work being undertaken at the Yorkshire Museum but that not all Members had been aware of this.

- RESOLVED:
- (i) That the work plan be updated in consultation with the Chair.
  - (ii) That Substitute Members of the Committee be invited in future to take part in any visits associated with the current review or other work being undertaken by the Committee.
  - (iii) That a further visit to the Yorkshire Museum be organised, in order that Members who had not already visited, could do so to see the refurbishment work in progress. Action: for Mel to arrange

- REASON:
- (i) To progress the work of the Committee.
  - (ii) In order that Substitute Members are kept informed about the work of the Committee.

Cllr J Looker, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.00 pm and finished at 7.45 pm].