

Notice of meeting of

Executive

To:	Councillors Waller (Chair), Ayre, Steve Galloway, Moore, Morley, Reid and Runciman
Date:	Tuesday, 18 January 2011
Time:	2.00 pm
Venue:	The Guildhall, York

AGENDA

Notice to Members - Calling In:

Members are reminded that, should they wish to call in any item on this agenda, notice must be given to Democracy Support Group by:

10:00 am on Monday 17 January 2011, if an item is called in *before* a decision is taken, *or*

4:00 pm on Thursday 20 January 2011, if an item is called in *after* a decision has been taken.

Items called in will be considered by the Scrutiny Management Committee.

1. Declarations of Interest

At this point, Members are asked to declare any personal or prejudicial interest they may have in the business on this agenda.

2. Minutes (Pages 3 - 10)

To approve and sign the minutes of the Executive meeting held on 14 December 2010.

3. Public Participation

At this point in the meeting, members of the public who have registered their wish to speak regarding an item on the agenda or a matter within the Executive's remit can do so. The deadline for registering is **5:00 pm on Monday 17 January 2011**.

4. Executive Forward Plan (Pages 11 - 14)

To receive details of those items that are listed on the Forward Plan for the next two Executive meetings.

5. Annual Audit Letter 2009/10 - Audit Commission (Pages 15 - 34)

This report presents the Annual Audit Letter 2009/10, prepared by the Audit Commission, together with the Council's response.

6. Final Report of the Newgate Market Scrutiny Review (Pages 35 - 40)

This report presents the final report arising from the Newgate Market Scrutiny Review.

Note: copies of the A5 booklet style final report have been distributed with this agenda to Members only. The final report can also be viewed on-line.

7. School Travel Plans Ad Hoc Scrutiny Committee - Final Report (Pages 41 - 48)

This report presents the final report of the School Travel Plans Ad Hoc Scrutiny Committee.

Note: copies of the A5 booklet style final report have been distributed with this agenda to Members only. The final report can also be viewed on-line.

8. Review of Casual Play Opportunities - Final Report (Pages 49 - 58)

This report presents the final report arising from the review of Casual Play Opportunities undertaken by the Learning & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Note: The annexes to the final Scrutiny report have not been included in the printed agenda pack and are available to view on-line only.

9. Race Online 2012 (Pages 59 - 66)

This report seeks approval to sign up City of York Council as an official partner in Race Online 2012, and for the Council to work with partners to inspire, encourage and support as many people as possible to get online.

10. Revised Income Policy (Pages 67 - 80)

This report presents a draft revised Income Policy, setting out the guiding principles to be followed by the organisation in ensuring it uses consistent and best practice principles in generating and collecting income, and invites Members to recommend the policy to Full Council for approval.

11. Urgent Business

Any other business which the Chair considers urgent under the Local Government Act 1972.

Democracy Officer:

Name: Fiona Young

Contact details:

- Telephone – (01904) 551027
- E-mail – fiona.young@york.gov.uk

For more information about any of the following please contact the Democracy Officer responsible for servicing this meeting:

- Registering to speak
- Business of the meeting
- Any special arrangements
- Copies of reports

Contact details are set out above.

About City of York Council Meetings

Would you like to speak at this meeting?

If you would, you will need to:

- register by contacting the Democracy Officer (whose name and contact details can be found on the agenda for the meeting) **no later than 5.00 pm** on the last working day before the meeting;
- ensure that what you want to say speak relates to an item of business on the agenda or an issue which the committee has power to consider (speak to the Democracy Officer for advice on this);
- find out about the rules for public speaking from the Democracy Officer.

A leaflet on public participation is available on the Council's website or from Democratic Services by telephoning York (01904) 551088

Further information about what's being discussed at this meeting

All the reports which Members will be considering are available for viewing online on the Council's website. Alternatively, copies of individual reports or the full agenda are available from Democratic Services. Contact the Democracy Officer whose name and contact details are given on the agenda for the meeting. **Please note a small charge may be made for full copies of the agenda requested to cover administration costs.**

Access Arrangements

We will make every effort to make the meeting accessible to you. The meeting will usually be held in a wheelchair accessible venue with an induction hearing loop. We can provide the agenda or reports in large print, electronically (computer disk or by email), in Braille or on audio tape. Some formats will take longer than others so please give as much notice as possible (at least 48 hours for Braille or audio tape).

If you have any further access requirements such as parking close-by or a sign language interpreter then please let us know. Contact the Democracy Officer whose name and contact details are given on the order of business for the meeting.

Every effort will also be made to make information available in another language, either by providing translated information or an interpreter providing sufficient advance notice is given. Telephone York (01904) 551550 for this service.

যদি যথেষ্ট আগে থেকে জানানো হয় তাহলে অন্য কোন অর্ধাতে তথ্য জানানোর জন্য সব ধরনের চেষ্টা করা হবে, এর জন্য দরকার হলে তথ্য অনুবাদ করে দেয়া হবে অথবা একজন দোআবী সরবরাহ করা হবে। টেলিফোন নম্বর (01904) 551 550।

Yeteri kadar önceden haber verilmesi koşuluyla, bilgilerin terümesini hazırlatmak ya da bir tercüman bulmak için mümkün olan herşey yapılacaktır. Tel: (01904) 551 550

我們竭力使提供的資訊備有不同語言版本，在有充足時間提前通知的情況下會安排筆譯或口譯服務。電話 (01904) 551 550。

اگر مناسب وقت سے اطلاع دی جاتی ہے تو ہم معلومات کا ترجمہ مہیا کرنے کی پوری کوشش کریں گے۔ ٹیلی فون (01904) 551 550

Informacja może być dostępna w tłumaczeniu, jeśli dostaniemy zapotrzebowanie z wystarczającym wyprzedzeniem. Tel: (01904) 551 550

Holding the Executive to Account

The majority of councillors are not appointed to the Executive (40 out of 47). Any 3 non-Executive councillors can 'call-in' an item of business from a published Executive (or Executive Member Decision Session) agenda. The Executive will still discuss the 'called in' business on the published date and will set out its views for consideration by a specially convened Scrutiny Management Committee (SMC). That SMC meeting will then make its recommendations to the next scheduled Executive meeting in the following week, where a final decision on the 'called-in' business will be made.

Scrutiny Committees

The purpose of all scrutiny and ad-hoc scrutiny committees appointed by the Council is to:

- Monitor the performance and effectiveness of services;
- Review existing policies and assist in the development of new ones, as necessary; and
- Monitor best value continuous service improvement plans

Who Gets Agenda and Reports for our Meetings?

- Councillors get copies of all agenda and reports for the committees to which they are appointed by the Council;
- Relevant Council Officers get copies of relevant agenda and reports for the committees which they report to;
- Public libraries get copies of **all** public agenda/reports.

City of York Council

Committee Minutes

MEETING	EXECUTIVE
DATE	14 DECEMBER 2010
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS WALLER (CHAIR), AYRE, STEVE GALLOWAY, MOORE, MORLEY, REID AND RUNCIMAN
IN ATTENDANCE	COUNCILLOR CRISP

128. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were invited to declare at this point in the meeting any personal or prejudicial interests they might have in the business on the agenda. No interests were declared.

129. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Executive meeting held on 30 November 2010 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

130. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION / OTHER SPEAKERS

It was reported that there had been three registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme, and two requests to speak from trades union representatives.

Eammon Keogh, the first registered speaker, commented on agenda item 6 (Affordable Housing Viability Study), on behalf of York Property Forum and York Chamber of Commerce. He expressed concern regarding some of the assumptions in the viability model, particularly the land values, which he felt had no evidential support, but would be happy to continue dialogue with Officers to resolve these issues.

Mark Warters, the second registered speaker, commented on agenda item 7 (York Local Investment Plan). He expressed the view that the relationship between the Council and the Joseph Rowntree Trust was too close and raised concerns about the inclusion of the Turf Tavern site in the development proposals within the LIP.

The third registered speaker did not attend the meeting.

Jayne Smith, of the GMB, spoke in relation to agenda item 9 (The Reablement Service in York), on behalf of staff working for the service. She questioned the capacity of the independent sector to provide properly trained and qualified staff, and the assumptions in the report concerning

the need for, and costs of, expanding the service. She urged Members to reject the recommendations and keep the service in-house.

Heather McKenzie, of UNISON, also spoke on agenda item 9 on behalf of staff. She submitted a petition in support of keeping the Reablement service in-house and urged Members to defer their decision to allow time to carry out a proper consultation process and to assess the in-house option.

131. EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN

Members received and noted details of those items currently listed on the Forward Plan for the next two Executive meetings.

132. MINUTES OF WORKING GROUPS

Members considered a report which presented the minutes of the meeting of the Local Development Framework (LDF) Working Group held on 1 November 2010 and the meeting of the Equality Advisory Group (formerly the Social Inclusion Working Group) held on 11 November 2010. An updated version of the report had been published with the agenda on 3 December 2010.

Members were invited to respond to any advice offered by the Groups in their capacity as advisory bodies to the Executive. Specifically, they were asked to endorse the proposal of the LDF Working Group to retain the existing draft Green Belt (Minute 23 in Annex A) and to approve the appointment to the Equality Advisory Group of two new, non-voting co-opted members - Simon Rodgers and Hann Bunn, representing the LGBT Forum.

Having noted the comments of the Labour Group Spokespersons on this item, it was

RESOLVED: (i) That the draft minutes attached at Annexes A and B to the report be noted.

(ii) That the proposal of the LDF Working Group to retain the use of the existing draft Green Belt as a basis for finalising the LDF Core Strategy submission document, in line with citywide consultation responses, be endorsed.

(iii) That the specific recommendation of the Equality Advisory Group to appoint the two non-voting co-opted members nominated by the LGBT Forum, as set out in paragraphs 7 and 8 of the report, be approved.¹

REASON: In accordance with the requirements of the Council's Constitution in relation to the role of working groups.

Action Required

1. Inform the new members of their appointment

JC

133. AFFORDABLE HOUSING VIABILITY STUDY

Members considered a report which presented the results of further research on the Affordable Housing Viability Study brought to the Executive meeting on 5 October 2010 and sought approval for the Viability Study as a means of negotiating lower affordable housing targets. It was noted that the report originally published with the agenda was a draft version; the correct version had been published and circulated on 9 December 2010. A supplementary note had also been circulated to Members before the meeting (*this has now been published on the Council's website as Annex 3 to the report*).

Since 5 October, agreement had been reached on many assumptions within the Study, but unresolved differences remained on the treatment of land values and developer profits. Results of the research, with Officer comments and recommendations as to whether each assumption should be changed or retained, were set out in Annex 1 to the report.

Re-running of the recommended revised assumptions produced an amended target of 35% affordable on greenfield sites, but no effect on the brownfield sites target of 25%. There was an additional opportunity to reduce these targets to 21.5% and 31.5% respectively if a minimum 25% developer profit were required to unlock finance. As this was an area of contention, it was recommended that the onus be placed on developers to prove that nothing less than 25% would be accepted on individual sites, for lending reasons.

Having noted the comments of the Labour Group Spokespersons on this item and the comments made under Public Participation, it was

RESOLVED: That the Viability Study and its (current) 25% brownfield and 35% greenfield affordable housing targets, as set out in Table 1 in the report, be approved for development control purposes, including a lowering of the targets by a further 3.5% if a 25% developer profit can be justified, or a lower target by individual negotiation following a site-specific viability appraisal.¹

REASON: So that the Affordable Housing Viability Study can be used as part of the Local Development Framework evidence base, avoiding delays to the production of the Core Strategy, and for Development Control purposes as a material consideration to assist in the delivery of affordable housing in York now.

Action Required

1. Take action to introduce the new targets

RW

134. YORK LOCAL INVESTMENT PLAN

Members considered a report which presented for approval York's Local Investment Plan (LIP) for the period 2011-2015.

The LIP, attached as Annex 1 to the report, sought investment of nearly £41.5m from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), to deliver 609 affordable new homes, bring 5,349 private sector homes up to decent homes standard and adapt 625 homes to support independent living. These proposals were summarised in Table 1, paragraph 19. The LIP been developed in accordance with guidance published by the HCA and informed by a robust evidence base, as detailed in Annex 2. Members were invited to approve the LIP (Option 1) or make amendments prior to its submission to the HCA.

It was noted that the evidence base of the LIP was now out of date in parts and that the position in respect of the Turf Tavern public house site, previously highlighted for development, had changed, as the pub had since re-opened. A letter from Cllr Holvey concerning the Turf Tavern was circulated at the meeting.

Having noted the comments of the Labour Group Spokespersons on this item, the comments made under Public Participation and the comments contained in Cllr Holvey's letter, it was

RESOLVED: (i) That the contents of the Local Investment Plan (LIP) be noted.

(ii) That the LIP be approved for submission to the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), subject to the removal of the item relating to the Turf Tavern site, and that the evidence base of the LIP be updated in consultation with the Leader and the Chief Executive.¹

REASON: So that the LIP can be submitted to the HCA for consideration in order to inform York's Local Investment Agreement, and to take account of the changed position with regard to the Turf Tavern and of developments affecting the evidence base over the past six months.

Action Required

1. Amend the LIP and submit to the HCA; update the evidence base in consultation with Leader & Chief Executive SW

135. 2011-12 BUDGET UPDATE II - GRANT FUNDING

Members considered a report which provided an update on the 2011-12 budget process, with emphasis on the latest information available regarding funding and how this might affect the Council's provisional grant settlement, due to be announced during December.

The latest information on the government's Spending Review indicated that:

- At least 22 grants, previously delivered as Specific or ABG, would be rolled into Formula Grant in 2011-12;
- A further 38 Specific / ABG grants could be perceived as 'at risk', having had no announcement on their continuity or delivery;
- Grants feeding into the refined Dedicated Schools Grant and Early Intervention Grant were still to be announced.

It was considered likely that the government would give some protection to those councils which currently received a high proportion of their funding from Formula Grant, at the expense of those (like York) which did not. York should therefore be prepared for a funding reduction of around 15%, or £8.2m, instead of the 10.7% previously announced. Officers were working to identify mitigation strategies and options to address this. Representations had already been made to Central Government in order to fight York's cause, and work was continuing via the More for York programme to ensure the production of a balanced budget in February 2011.

Officers provided an update at the meeting following the announcement the previous day of the actual grant reductions, which for York would amount to 13.3% in 2011-12.

Having noted the comments of the Labour Group Spokespersons on this item, it was

RESOLVED: That the current position, and the ongoing work being conducted in relation to developing the 2011-12 budget, be noted.

REASON: So that the 2011-12 budget process can be completed in a timely manner.

136. THE REABLEMENT SERVICE IN YORK

Members considered a report which advised them of the opportunities offered by a remodelled reablement service, as part of a wider strategy to meet the challenges of changing demographics within the City.

An in-house reablement service had been established in York's Adult Social Care department in 2008. It was designed to be of short duration and aimed to promote independence and reduce dependency on long-term packages of care, helping customers to fend for themselves again. However, the existing service was not large enough to deliver the expected benefits.

To access the resources needed to expand the service, it was recommended that it be outsourced to the independent sector, with a transfer of all staff under TUPE. The expected Year 1 costs of expansion under this option (Option B2) were illustrated in Table 3, paragraph 28 of

the report, compared with the equivalent costs of the following alternative options:

- an expanded in-house service (Option A);
- independent sector delivering a full reablement model (Option B1 – included for illustrative purposes only, as it was not a viable option);
- independent sector with costs associated with dismissals for business efficiency (Option B3).

The results of consultation with Trades Unions, staff, Health partners and older people on the proposals were summarised in paragraph 7 of the report.

Having noted the comments of the Labour Group Spokespersons on this item and the comments made by union representatives at the meeting, it was

RESOLVED: (i) That it be noted that, at a time when the number of elderly residents needing the reablement service is increasing, the Council needs to examine how the number of hours of the service can be increased, whilst also recognising the pressure on all budgets at this time.

(ii) That, after considering the City of York Council reviews, the changes that have happened to the in-house service in terms of unit costs and contact time, and after benchmarking these against the costs of local independent providers of the same service, agreement be given to:

- a) progress purchasing the ongoing entire expanded reablement service from the independent sector, with staff to be offered the *option* of voluntary severance for business efficiency reasons, in addition to TUPE, as outlined in paragraphs 19-26 and 50-53 of the report;¹
- b) review any further changes that may be need to the in-house service in order to maintain that provision;¹
- c) request Officers to update the Executive on progress with the procurement process, the outcome of ongoing consultations, and the production of tables comparing the costs of provision of services (in-house and independent sector) and consequent outcomes;²
- d) request Officers to provide details of the Equalities Impact Assessments of any changes to the service.²

REASON: To allow the City to increase the scale of home-based support to older people in a way which is financially deliverable, provides employment security for staff and which seeks to maintain for as long as possible the independence of local residents.

Action Required

1. Take action to examine both these options AB
2. Schedule an update report on the Executive Forward Plan, to include EIAs AB

137. ESTABLISHING A TRANSITION BOARD FOR LIBERATING THE NHS

Members considered a report which sought agreement to the Terms of Reference for a Transition Board to oversee the changes anticipated as a result of the government White Paper, *Liberating the NHS*.

On 5 October 2010, the Executive had agreed to the establishment of a Transition Board under the direction of the Chief Executive, and had asked that the Terms of Reference be reported back for approval. The draft Terms of Reference, attached as an annex to the report, had been developed jointly by the Council and the Primary Care Trust (PCT).

Having noted the comments of the Labour Group Spokespersons on this item, it was

RESOLVED: (i) That the Terms of Reference for the Transition Board set out in Annex 1 to the report be approved.¹

(ii) That authority be delegated to the Chief Executive to make any minor modifications to the Terms of Reference that may arise from discussions by the North Yorkshire and York PCT Board.

REASON: To ensure that the Council and its partners are able to address the challenges and changes that *Liberating the NHS* brings in a planned way, and maximising the opportunities for partnership and integrated working.

Action Required

1. Take any action necessary to implement the Terms of Reference, subject to any minor amendments by the NY&Y PCT KC

138. 2010 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENTS: ADULT AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Members considered a report which presented the outcome of the 2010 assessments, carried out by the respective regulatory bodies, of the performance of adult and children's services within the City of York. Some of this information had been under embargo until 9 December 2010, so the report had not been added to the published agenda until that date. The assessments were attached to the report as annexes 1 and 2 respectively.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) had judged York's adult social services as 'performing well' overall and 'performing excellently in 'making a positive contribution', which was one of the seven key outcome areas. The individual judgements showed a significant improvement on the previous year, although the overall judgement was the same.

With regard to children's services, the assessment of the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) had concluded that York had retained its 2010 rating of 'performing excellently'.

Members thanked all staff involved in achieving these high assessment ratings and, having noted the comments of the Labour Group Spokespersons on this item, it was

RESOLVED: That the contents of these key assessments be noted and that the outcomes described and the further improvement work planned be welcomed.

REASON: To support the continued improvement of services for the people of the City.

A Waller, Chair

[The meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 3.20 pm].

EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN (as at 14 December 2010)

Table 1: Items scheduled on the Forward Plan for the Executive Meeting on 1 February 2011		
Title & Description	Author	Portfolio Holder
<p>Minutes of Working Groups</p> <p><i>Purpose of Report: This report presents the minutes of recent meetings of the Young People's Working Group, the LDF Working Group, the Social Inclusion Working Group and the Mansion House and Mayoralty Advisory Group and asks Members to consider the advice given by the groups in their capacity as advisory bodies to the Executive.</i></p> <p><i>Members are asked to: Note the minutes and to decide whether they wish to approve the specific recommendations made by the Working Groups, and/or respond to any of the advice offered by the Working Groups.</i></p>	Jayne Carr	Executive Leader
<p>Low Emission Strategy Update</p> <p><i>Purpose of Report: To update the Executive on potential measures to be contained within a low emission strategy and on related actions to improve air quality.</i></p> <p><i>Members are asked to: Approve the actions to be taken forward in the Low Emission Strategy.</i></p>	Mike Southcombe/ Elizabeth Bates	Executive Member for City Strategy

Table 2: Items scheduled on the Forward Plan for the Executive Meeting on 15 February 2011		
<p>Treasury Management Monitor 3 and Prudential Indicators 2010/11</p> <p><i>Purpose of report: To update the Executive and Full Council on treasury management performance for 9 months of the year 10/11, the Prudential Indicators and compare against the budget taken to Council on 25 February 2010.</i></p> <p><i>Members are asked to: Note the performance of the treasury management activity for monitor 3 2010/11.</i></p>	Keith Best/ Louise Brandford White	Executive Leader

<p>Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Prudential Indicators for 2011/12 to 2015/16</p> <p><i>Purpose of report: The purpose of this report is to ask the Executive to recommend that Council approve:- an integrated Treasury Management Strategy Statement including the annual investment strategy and the minimum revenue provision policy statement: the proposed Prudential Indicators for at least 3 years 2011/12 to 2013/14; the revised Treasury Management Policy and Treasury Management Practices of the Treasury Management Scheme of Delegation</i></p> <p><i>Members are asked to: Recommend that Council approve the above.</i></p>	<p>Keith Best/ Louise Brandford White</p>	<p>Executive Leader</p>
<p>2010/11 Capital Programme Monitor 3</p> <p><i>Purpose of report: To present the projected outturn position of the 2010/11 Capital Programme and updated budget position for 2011/12 -2014/15 following the monitor amendments.</i></p> <p><i>Members are asked to: Note the monitoring position and the funding of the capital programme and recommend to Council the requests for slippage and adjustments where appropriate.</i></p>	<p>Ross Brown</p>	<p>Executive Leader</p>
<p>Third Performance and Financial Monitor 2010/11</p> <p><i>Purpose of report: To provide details of the headline performance and finance issues from the period 1 April 2010 to 31 December 2010.</i></p> <p><i>Members are asked to: Consider the issues highlighted.</i></p>	<p>Peter Lowe/Janet Lornie/Nigel Batey</p>	<p>Executive Member for Corporate Services</p>
<p>The Education White Paper: City of York Response</p> <p><i>Purpose of report: The Schools White Paper : “The Importance of Teaching” was published on the 24 November. This paper describes the steps that have taken place between the Local Authority and the school community to respond to the direction of travel described in the document.</i></p> <p><i>Members are asked to: Consider the recommendations</i></p>	<p>Pete Dwyer</p>	<p>Executive Member for Leisure, Culture & Social Inclusion</p>

<p>Decoration Voucher Scheme Allowances & Disturbance Allowance - Tenants Choice</p> <p><i>Purpose of report: Options for the future value of decoration vouchers and disturbance allowance awarded, in order to achieve improved value for money and contractor performance.</i></p> <p><i>Members are asked to: Consider the options in relation to the decoration/disturbance voucher scheme allowances.</i></p>	Steve Waddington	Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and Housing
--	------------------	---

This page is intentionally left blank



Executive

18 January 2011

Report of the Director of Customer & Business Support Services

Annual Audit Letter 2009/10 - Audit Commission**Summary**

1. This paper introduces the Annual Audit Letter 2009/10 (see annex A) prepared by the Audit Commission together with the council's response.

Background

2. The District Auditor reports annually his independent opinion of the council's arrangements based on an annual programme of work agreed by officers and members. This programme of work must meet the standards set out in the Code of Audit Practice and gives an opinion on the corporate governance arrangements at the council focused across 2 main areas:
 - the opinion given on the council's annual Statement of Accounts (including the Annual Governance Statement);
 - assessment of arrangements to achieve value for money in the use of resources
3. The Letter also provides details of the 2009/10 audit fee and a commentary from the Audit Commission on the current and future challenges facing the Council.

The council's response

4. The key messages contained in the Annual Audit Letter (AAL) which relate to the Financial Statements, were presented in detail to the Audit and Governance Committee on 29th September 2010 as part of the Annual Governance Report. The AAL notes the continued improvements in the quality of both the financial statements and supporting working papers, and states that work to implement new international financial reporting standards (IFRS) is progressing as planned. In terms of the issues identified through the audit relating to the Fixed Asset Register, this will become a primary focus of improvement in 2010/11, together with the implementation of the significant changes required under IFRS.

5. The AAL confirms that The Council has satisfactory arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources (VFM). The Council's performance was assessed against criteria specified by the Audit Commission and arrangements were assessed adequate against each of the criteria. Paragraphs 21 to 25 of the AAL outline the strengths and improvements identified by the Audit Commission . Specifically the Audit Commission has identified sustained strength in:

- Risk management;
- A strong anti-fraud culture;
- Delivering services that represent good value for money

Improvements were also noted in:

- Medium Term Financial Planning;
- The strategic efficiency programme delivering all key year 1 targets in 2009/10;
- Progress in implementing data quality policies;
- Arrangements for performance management, specifically around benchmarking and target setting resulting from comparison with others;
- Effective procedures in place for procurement and asset management, and the Veritau shared service arrangement receiving national recognition

The Letter does draw attention to some inconsistencies in terms of workforce planning and management, and these issues will be addressed as part of the development of the centralised HR function.

6. In assessing the current and future challenges facing the Council, the AAL notes the financial pressures facing the public sector generally, and highlights the potential level of savings of £50m which could be required over the medium term. The report reflects that the Council's Transformation Programme (More for York) has already been developed as strategic approach to delivering the financial strategy.

Consultation

7. Not relevant for the purpose of the report.

Options

8. Not relevant for the purpose of the report.

Analysis

9. Not relevant for the purpose of the report.

Corporate Priorities

9. This report contributes to the overall effectiveness of the council's governance and assurance arrangements.

Implications

10. There are no financial, HR, equalities, legal, crime and disorder, IT or property implications arising from this report.

Risk Management

11. By not responding effectively to the matters contained in this report, the council will fail to properly comply with legislative and best practice requirements.

Recommendations

12. Members are asked to:

a) note the contents of this report and the Annual Letter itself, attached as the annex to this report;

Reason

To comply with the statutory requirements for the external audit of the council .

Contact Details

Author:

Keith Best
Assistant Director (Financial Services)
Telephone: 01904 551745

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Ian Floyd
Director of Customer & Business Support Services
Telephone: 01904 551100

Report Approved

Date

Specialist Implications Officers

Not applicable

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

Annual Governance Report – Audit and Governance Committee 29th September 2010

Annex

Annual Audit & Inspection Letter 2009/10

Annual Audit Letter

City of York Council

Audit 2009/10

The Audit Commission is an independent watchdog, driving economy, efficiency and effectiveness in local public services to deliver better outcomes for everyone.

Our work across local government, health, housing, community safety and fire and rescue services means that we have a unique perspective. We promote value for money for taxpayers, auditing the £200 billion spent by 11,000 local public bodies.

As a force for improvement, we work in partnership to assess local public services and make practical recommendations for promoting a better quality of life for local people.

Contents

Key messages	4
Financial statements.....	4
Value for money.....	4
Audit fees.....	4
Current and future challenges	4
Financial statements and annual governance statement	6
Overall conclusion from the audit	6
Errors in the financial statements	6
Significant weaknesses in internal control	7
Tackling fraud and corruption	7
Preparations for IFRS	7
Value for money	8
2009/10 use of resources assessments	8
VFM conclusion	8
Approach to local value for money work from 2010/11.....	10
Current and future challenges	11
Financial pressures.....	11
Improving performance.....	12
Future developments	12
Closing remarks	13
Appendix 1 – Audit fees	14
Appendix 2 – Glossary	15

Key messages

This report summarises my findings from the 2009/10 audit. My audit comprises two elements:

- **the audit of your financial statements (pages 7 to 8); and**
- **my assessment of your arrangements to achieve value for money in your use of resources (pages 9 to 10).**

Financial statements

1 The Council has faced complex changes to local government accounting requirements in 2009/10. Overall officers coped well, and the quality of the financial statements and working papers has improved since last year. Action is needed to improve fixed asset records as some significant amendments had to be made to the accounts originally approved by Members.

2 Work to implement new international financial reporting standards by the due date of 31 March 2011 is progressing as planned and Members have received regular progress reports on this issue.

Value for money

3 All of the relevant value for money criteria specified by the Audit Commission have been met. The Council has improved its financial planning and performance management processes this year, whilst at the same time continuing to deliver services that represent good value for money for the public.

Audit fees

4 2009/10 audit fees are set out in Appendix 1. There have been no changes to fees previously agreed with you.

Current and future challenges

5 The scale of financial pressures facing public bodies in the current economic climate is unprecedented in recent years. The Council is reformulating its spending plans in the light of recent Government announcements, and estimates that budget savings of up to £50m could be required between now and 2014/15.

6 A comprehensive strategic efficiency programme, 'More for York' has been developed to identify potential savings, and is well under way. Given the scale of the savings required, it seems unlikely that these can be made without changes to front line services and established models of service provision.

7 At the same time, the absence of a nationally determined framework for comparative information and assessment will put the onus on the Council's own performance management processes to:

- implement improvements; and
- maintain the quality of public services.

8 Against this background, demands placed on management will be significant and capacity inevitably stretched. Members will need to:

- provide strong and focussed leadership;
- make difficult decisions;
- ensure that deliverable forward plans are in place; and
- develop robust monitoring procedures to ensure that these are delivered.

Financial statements and annual governance statement

The Council's financial statements and annual governance statement are an important means by which the Council accounts for its stewardship of public funds.

I gave an unqualified opinion on the Council's 2009/10 financial statements on 30 September 2010, in line with statutory requirements.

Overall conclusion from the audit

9 The Council was faced with complex changes to local government accounting requirements in 2009/10. The areas most affected were fixed asset and agency accounting, and new disclosures for senior officer remuneration. Overall officers coped well with the new requirements, and I gave an unqualified audit opinion and certificate by the due date of 30 September 2010.

10 The quality of the financial statements and working papers had generally improved since last year. However, action is required to improve fixed asset records as some significant amendments had to be made to the accounts originally approved by Members.

Errors in the financial statements

11 The following issues were identified during the course of our audit work, and officers agreed to make the necessary amendments to the accounts:

- Capital expenditure on voluntary aided schools had been included in fixed assets but should have been treated as 'revenue expenditure funded by capital under statute' because such schools are not within the Council's control.
- The value of the Energise centre had been double counted in fixed asset balances.
- Depreciation and impairment charges had been incorrectly treated in the fixed asset register.
- The draft accounts included equal and opposite entries in the balance sheet relating to voluntary additional debt repayments in 1999/2000. These balances were written out of the accounts to reflect current accounting practice.

12 Officers also agreed to make a number of presentational and disclosure changes to the accounts.

Significant weaknesses in internal control

13 In my July 2010 audit progress report I highlighted that bank reconciliations had not been carried out on a regular basis during the year. I am pleased to report that this issue has now been resolved, with a full bank reconciliation prepared at 31 March 2010.

Tackling fraud and corruption

14 The Council takes a proactive stance to tackling fraud and corruption. During 2009/10 it participated in the Audit Commission's National Fraud Initiative, and the 'Red Card' anti-fraud campaign attracted national recognition. 327 instances of proven benefit fraud were identified during the year (total value £340,000) with appropriate recovery or prosecution action taken in each case.

Preparations for IFRS

15 A major challenge for all local authorities is the move to International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). Changes to the accounting treatment for PFI schemes and agency arrangements have already been implemented. Issues to be addressed in 2010/11 relate to:

- leasing;
- employee benefits; and
- valuations and disclosures in respect of property, plant and equipment.

16 At City of York Council work in respect of all these areas is well in hand and Members have received regular progress reports. The next key stage for officers is to restate the 2009/10 opening balance sheet position and devise a skeleton set of 2010/11 accounts. We intend to review these early in 2011.

Value for money

I considered whether the Council is managing and using its money, time and people to deliver value for money.

I assessed your performance against the criteria specified by the Audit Commission and have reported the outcome as the value for money (VFM) conclusion.

2009/10 use of resources assessments

17 At the end of May 2010, the Audit Commission wrote to all chief executives to inform them that following the government's announcement, work on CAA would cease with immediate effect and the Commission would no longer issue scores for its use of resources assessments.

18 However, I am still required by the Code of Audit Practice to issue a value for money conclusion. I have therefore used the results of the work completed on the use of resources assessment up to the end of May to inform my 2009/10 conclusion.

VFM conclusion

19 I assessed the Council's arrangements for achieving economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of money, time and people against criteria specified by the Audit Commission. The Audit Commission specifies each year, which Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE) are the relevant criteria for the VFM conclusion at each type of audited body.

20 On 30 September 2010 I issued an unqualified conclusion, confirming that the Council had satisfactory arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. A summary of my findings is set out below.

Criteria	Adequate arrangements?
Managing finances	
Planning for financial health	Yes
Understanding costs and achieving efficiencies	Yes
Financial Reporting	Yes
Governing the business	
Commissioning and procurement	Yes
Use of information	Yes
Good governance	Yes
Risk management and internal control	Yes
Managing resources	
Strategic asset management	Yes
Workforce	Yes

21 The Council has maintained the strengths we identified last year in relation to:

- risk management;
- displaying a strong anti-fraud culture; and
- delivering services that represent good value for money for the public.

22 We have also noted a number of improvements. In particular:

- Medium term financial planning has been improved through a combination of detailed risk assessment, analysis of demographic trends, financial modelling, and extensive consultation
- To tackle its medium term funding gap the Council has developed "More for York", an ambitious, 3 year strategic efficiency programme which delivered all key year 1 targets in 2009-10;
- The Council has made significant progress in implementing data quality policies, and in developing comprehensive performance reports in a format that focuses on priorities and supports decision making at strategic and operational levels by integrating financial and performance information;
- There have also been noticeable improvements this year in respect of performance management arrangements – piloting Challenge and Innovation Panels, more use of benchmarking and more challenging target setting as a result of comparison with others.

23 Good procedures are in place for procurement and asset management, and the Veritau shared service arrangement has received national recognition. Plans are in place to explore more innovative delivery models as part of the More for York programme.

24 Workforce planning and management have traditionally been managed on a departmental basis and were assessed against value for money criteria for the first time in 2009-10. The Council can demonstrate very effective arrangements in some departments, but a more corporate approach is needed to bring all service areas up to the standard of the best.

25 Our work also highlighted that the Council's workforce is not fully representative of the community it services, with comparatively few BME and disabled employees.

Approach to local value for money work from 2010/11

26 Given the scale of pressures facing public bodies in the current economic climate, the Audit Commission has been reviewing its work programme for 2010/11 onwards. This review has included discussions with key stakeholders of possible options for a new approach to local value for money (VFM) audit work.

27 As a result, the Commission aims to introduce a new, more targeted and better value approach to our local VFM audit work. This will be based on a reduced number reporting criteria, concentrating on:

- securing financial resilience; and
- prioritising resources within tighter budgets.

28 I will determine a local programme of VFM audit work based on my audit risk assessment, informed by these criteria and my statutory responsibilities. I will no longer be required to provide an annual scored judgement relating to my local VFM audit work. Instead I will report the results of all my local VFM audit work and the key messages for the Council in my annual report to those charged with governance and in my annual audit letter.

Current and future challenges

Financial pressures

29 The scale of financial pressures facing public bodies in the current economic climate is unprecedented in recent years. These pressures represent a combination of:

- increased demand for benefits and council services;
- reductions in central government funding;
- an increased risk to cash collection from delays in payment or inability to pay; and
- reductions in income generated locally from fees and charges

30 City of York Council was amongst the first wave of local authorities to recognise that a strategic response was necessary. The 'More for York' programme was established in 2008 as a council wide initiative to generate £15m savings by 2012 without compromising the quality of front line services.

31 The Council has also improved its general ability to meet financial challenges. Strategic planning and budgetary control have improved, with balances set aside to cover unforeseen contingencies. Realistic treasury management strategies are in place, and 'More for York' projects are currently on track to deliver £6.95m savings in 2010/11 and a further £2.5-3m next year.

32 But financial pressures are increasing. At a local level the Council is coping with the combined effects of an ageing population and increasing numbers of looked after children. The Government's recent spending review has also indicated that:

- there will be on average a 7.1 per cent cut in local government revenue funding each year until at least 2014/15;
- capital funding will fall by up to 45 per cent in the same period; and
- interest rates on PWLB loans are expected to rise.

33 A radical overhaul of the welfare system has been announced, although it is not yet clear how this will impact local authorities in terms of benefits administration and subsidy.

34 Officers have estimated that recent financial announcements could require budget savings of up to £50m and the Council is reformulating its financial plans accordingly.

Improving performance

35 The Government has recently announced the abolition of:

- CAA and Use of Resources;
- National indicators; and
- Local area agreements and stretch targets.

36 Many welcome this as an opportunity for local government to set its own agenda and focus on locally determined priorities and objectives. The absence of a nationally determined framework for comparative information and assessment however raises important questions about how local councils will continue to identify and implement improvements in the future.

37 The Council improved performance management arrangements in 2009/10. It needs to continue this impetus to meet the changing circumstances. This is likely to have a particular impact on the role of Members, especially those charged with governance and scrutiny roles.

Future developments

38 The Council is focussed on delivering 'More for York' as a comprehensive, strategic approach to improving services and reducing costs. The following are examples of the detailed work streams included in the project, which will be reviewed by us as part of audit work next year:

- a move to new office accommodation;
- creating a 'commercial hub' to help develop more strategic change through procurement; and
- the joint waste project in partnership with North Yorkshire County Council.

39 The cultural change engendered through 'More for York' will become even more important in the future, with a 'Council wide' approach to identifying and delivering savings; and redeploing efficiency gains.

40 The Council has recognised the need to review performance management and monitoring processes in the absence of a nationally determined framework for comparative information and assessment going forward. This is reflected in the corporate risk register and the structure of the recently established 'Office of the Chief Executive'.

Closing remarks

41 I discussed and agreed this letter with the Director for Customer and Business Support Services, and presented it to the Audit and Governance Committee on 6 December 2010. A copy has been provided for all Members.

42 Full detailed findings, conclusions and recommendations in the areas covered by our audit were included in the reports I issued to the Committee during the year, as set out below. Members have also received a number of verbal reports on emerging issues.

Report	Date issued
2009-10 Opinion Audit Plan Summary report on grant claims work	February 2010
2009-10 External Audit Progress Report	July 2010
Annual governance report Auditor's report giving an opinion on the financial statements External audit opinion on Whole of Government Accounts Return	September 2010

The Council has taken a positive and helpful approach to our audit, and I wish to thank City of York Council staff for their support and cooperation during the course of our work.

Steve Nicklin
District Auditor

November 2010

Appendix 1 – Audit fees

	Actual	Proposed	Variance
Financial statements and annual governance statement	£153,480	£153,480	0
Value for money	£94,920	£94,920	0
Total audit fees	£248,400	£248,400	0
Certification of claims and returns	£43,520	£43,520	0
Total	£291,920	£291,920	0

Appendix 2 – Glossary

Annual governance statement

Governance is about how local government bodies ensure that they are doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner.

It comprises the systems and processes, cultures and values, by which local government bodies are directed and controlled and through which they account to, engage with and where appropriate, lead their communities.

The annual governance statement is a public report by the Council on the extent to which it complies with its own local governance code, including how it has monitored the effectiveness of its governance arrangements in the year, and on any planned changes in the coming period.

Audit opinion

On completion of the audit of the accounts, auditors must give their opinion on the financial statements, including:

- whether they give a true and fair view of the financial position of the audited body and its spending and income for the year in question;
- whether they have been prepared properly, following the relevant accounting rules; and
- for local probation boards and trusts, on the regularity of their spending and income.

Financial statements

The annual accounts and accompanying notes.

Qualified

The auditor has some reservations or concerns.

Unqualified

The auditor does not have any reservations.

Value for money conclusion

The auditor's conclusion on whether the audited body has put in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of money, people and time.

If you require a copy of this document in an alternative format or in a language other than English, please call:
0844 798 7070

© Audit Commission 2011.

Design and production by the Audit Commission Publishing Team.

Image copyright © Audit Commission.

The Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies issued by the Audit Commission explains the respective responsibilities of auditors and of the audited body. Reports prepared by appointed auditors are addressed to non-executive directors, members or officers. They are prepared for the sole use of the audited body. Auditors accept no responsibility to:

- any director/member or officer in their individual capacity; or
- any third party.



Audit Commission

1st Floor
Millbank Tower
Millbank
London
SW1P 4HQ

Telephone: 0844 798 3131

Fax: 0844 798 2945

Textphone (minicom): 0844 798 2946



Executive18th January 2011

Report of the Assistant Director Governance & ICT

Cover Report – Final Report of the Newgate Market Review**Summary**

1. This report presents the Executive with the new A5 booklet style final report arising from the Newgate Market Scrutiny Review. This is attached at Annex 1 to this report. At a meeting of Scrutiny Management Committee on 6th December 2010 it was agreed that a new, more digestible and simplified final report format be trialled as part of making the scrutiny process more appealing to both Members and the public alike.
2. Councillor Scott, Chair of the Committee will be in attendance to present the report, the key findings and the recommendations arising from the review.

Background

3. In coming to a decision to review this topic the Economic & City Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee recognised certain key objectives and the following remit was set:

Aim

4. To investigate possible ways of improving the existing stall market and its surrounding area currently occupied by Newgate Market as a contribution to the Renaissance Team's work and the Footstreets Review, enabling them to recommend new designs and roles for Newgate Market and the associated public realm.

Key Objectives

- i. To receive information from the Renaissance Team about its work plan; particularly in relation to Newgate Market
- ii. To investigate comparators to Newgate Market (what makes a good market, what constitutes good practice)
- iii. To investigate potential, immediate, short & long term development of, improvements to and usages of this area
- iv. To look at the income generated by Newgate Market

Summary of Recommendations Arising from the Review

5. Between December 2009 and December 2010 the Committee gathered information in relation to the review and this resulted in them making the following recommendations:
 1. To improve the general cleanliness of the market. This can be achieved in the short term by:
 - i. Early implementation of the Service Level Agreement (SLA) with a review after 3 months
 - ii. Closing the market one day per quarter for deep cleansing (the first instance to be before Easter 2011)

And in the medium term by:

 - iii. Exploring the possibilities of storing waste underground – possibly in St Sampson’s Square or by exploring other suitable options
 2. To improve the public realm – this can be achieved in the short term by:
 - i. Working with landlords and lessees of buildings surrounding the market to improve their general appearance
 - ii. Trialling ‘sculpted style’ stalls along Jubbergate with a view to implementing this throughout the market in the medium term
 - iii. Looking at ways of preventing unauthorised parking in Silver Street and the Market
 - iv. Providing additional market stalls along Silver Street
 - v. Improving the lighting in the area
 3. To begin to improve the early evening economy in the short term. This can be achieved by undertaking a trial of a fixed closing time of 5pm for the market. It would also require all market traders to agree to trade until 5pm. The closing time to be reviewed in accordance with any other trading initiatives in the city centre.
 4. In the short term, to improve and make more attractive all entrances to the market This can be achieved by: -
 - i. Looking at the positioning of stalls
 - ii. Improving the lighting in the area
 - iii. Improving general cleanliness
 - iv. Making the Snickleways leading from the Shambles more inviting and recognisable as permissible routes to Newgate Market
 5. In the short term to encourage more open access from the Shambles and other properties that back onto the market. To encourage pavement cafes and ‘walk through’ premises where possible.
 6. To improve the market stalls; this can be achieved in the short term by:

- i. Replacing the existing canopies on the market stalls at an approximate cost of £200 per canopy
- ii. To reduce the number of stalls in the market to enable freer footfall

And in the medium term by:

- iii. Exploring the type of stall that would be most suitable to the marketplace
7. In the medium to long term to look at using the rear of the market for a new store for the market equipment.
8. That a programme of reinvestment in the marketplace should be undertaken. To this end it is recommended that there is a 5% reinvestment of income generated by the market per annum.

Consultation

6. Relevant officers within the Economic Development Unit, Property Services and Communities and Neighbourhoods have been consulted as part of the review process. North Yorkshire Police were consulted in relation to crime in the area.
7. A representative from the National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA) addressed the Committee at a meeting held on 24th March 2010 and the discussions arising from this are detailed within this report.
8. The aim of this review was to feed into the work already being undertaken by the Renaissance Team. The Committee, therefore, decided not to consult with traders and users of the market, as they understood that this was being done as part of the CCAAP and the Footstreets Review.

Options

9. Having considered the findings contained within the final report the Executive may choose to support or reject the implementation of the recommendations arising from the review.

Analysis

10. Members fully analysed all the information received as part of the review and this was used to inform their recommendations.

Corporate Strategy 2009/2012

11. The Scrutiny Topic on Newgate Market is linked with the Thriving City theme of the Corporate Strategy 2009/2012:

'We will continue to support York's successful economy to make sure that employment rates remain high and that local people benefit from new job opportunities.'

Implications

12. **Financial** – Various potential financial implications have been identified during the course of this review. However, the Committee were aware that any refurbishment undertaken at the market would have a cost. The market is successful and brings in an annual income of approximately £450k. There is a budgetary requirement for the market to earn £476k and any shortfall on this target stands as a budget pressure. The market does make a profit and is required to do so. If the market made profits over and above budget levels then there is no reason why Members could not agree a mechanism for reinvestment. Members should also be aware of a potential small loss of income should they choose to support the decrease in the amount of stalls at the market; this is not considered to be material to the overall budget levels.
13. The costs of new stalls, of varying descriptions, ranges dramatically. New canopies for the existing stalls would cost approximately £200 each, which would equate to approximately £20,000. However there is a recommendation to reduce the number of stalls so the exact cost may be less. It is unlikely however, that more than 10 stalls would be removed in the short term. This could be funded from a one-off growth and this could be considered in the budget process.
14. To purchase four “sculpted” stalls as a trial in Jubbergate would cost approximately £19k plus a further £5k design. This could be funded from a one-off growth and this could be considered in the budget process
15. A new storage facility for market equipment has an initial quote of approximately £21k. Unfortunately additional budgets would be required for these and given the current economic position it is acknowledged that this is not a short-term proposition.
16. In terms of the Service Level Agreement regarding cleansing – whilst we work with Communities and Neighbourhoods to change cleaning regimes the charge in itself is notional. By reducing the charge it doesn't provide any significant savings in itself to the Council or Newgate Market. A budget to cover the cost of any proposed quarterly 'deep cleansing' would also need to be identified.
17. The Committee discussed further financial implications with the finance officer and came to the conclusion that they would like to see a programme of reinvestment in the market place with the targets for the market being achievable and budgets being set in a fair and transparent way. To reinvest 5% of total income back into the market would mean a recurring growth requirement to the market of £24k.
18. The financial implications of the short-term recommendations would be for the council as part of its budget setting to set aside £20k one-off funding for the replacement of new canopies, £24k one-off funding for “sculpted” stalls and a further recurring £24k for re-investment into the market. This could be considered as part of the budget process however it would mean finding equivalent additional savings across other council services at a time that the council is facing severe financial pressures.

19. **Crime & Disorder** – At a meeting held on 15th November 2010 a representative of North Yorkshire Police indicated that there were no significant crime problems in the Newgate Market area.
20. There are no other known implications associated with this report.

Risk Management

21. Whilst the market is successful and generates approximately £450k per annum for the city; there is a risk that the market will continue to fall short of meeting its income target if improvements are not made. There is a risk that doing nothing could lead to this area being considered visually detrimental to the city centre which could in turn lead to an income loss for the city.

Recommendations

22. Executive are asked to consider the attached final report and associated recommendations and decide whether to support the recommendations arising from the review.

Reason: To address the concerns raised when this topic was originally suggested.

Contact Details

Author:

Tracy Wallis
Scrutiny Officer
Scrutiny Services
Tel: 01904 551714

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Andrew Docherty
Assistant Director Governance & ICT

Report Approved Date 21.12.2010

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

Financial

Patrick Looker
Tel: 551633

Wards Affected: Guildhall

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

These are available via the Council website or by contacting the Scrutiny Officer

Annexes (online only)

Annex 1 A5 version of the final report arising from the review

This page is intentionally left blank



Executive**18 January 2011**

Report of the Assistant Director Governance and ICT

School Travel Plans Ad Hoc Scrutiny Committee – Final Report**Summary**

1. This report presents the final report of the School Travel Plans Ad Hoc Scrutiny Committee and asks the Executive to approve the resulting recommendations. Councillor Potter, Chair of the Ad-hoc Scrutiny Committee, will be attendance to present the report.

Background

2. In coming to a decision to review this topic, the Committee recognised certain key objectives and the following remit was agreed:

3. **Aim**

To identify an integrated approach to travel plan development that recognises the relationships between active travel and health, sustainability (particularly air quality and climate change issues) and traffic congestion and community cohesion.

Objectives

Having regard to the impact of traffic congestion (based on external evidence and those measures already implemented in LTP1 or proposed in LTP2), recommend and prioritise specific improvements to:

- i. Understanding what works and what doesn't work in York, and best practice elsewhere.
- ii. Understanding the costs and challenges, in order to identify how the council, schools and their communities can do school travel planning better.
- iii. Identifying the best way to support schools with travel planning, either through the role of School Travel Plan Co-ordinators (subject to available funding being provided/identified), or providing support to schools through an alternative mechanism.
- iv. Identifying any key messages for wider travel planning in York

Consultation

4. Officers from the council's Transport Planning Unit (TPU) provided support throughout the review and officers from Planning, Network Management and Development Control were consulted.
5. In addition, the Committee invited a representative from Sustrans¹ to attend a meeting to provide advice on national best practice, and members of the Committee visited a number of schools to meet with Head Teachers, other members of staff responsible for school travel plans, and pupil representatives.

Options

6. Having considered the findings contained within the final report and its annexes attached, Members may chose to support all, some or none of the recommendations shown in paragraph 9 of this cover report.

Analysis

7. In regards to the aims and objectives of this review, the School Travel Plans Ad-hoc Scrutiny Committee analysis of all of the information gathered, is shown within their final report at Appendix 1.
8. In December 2010 the final report and recommendations were considered by the Scrutiny Management Committee. Members stressed the importance of ensuring that the recommendations were actioned and gave examples of several near-miss incidents that had occurred in the vicinity of schools.
9. Overall, they agreed with the recommendations but suggested that in respect of recommendation 11, more than one exemplar School Travel Plan should be made available on-line, and that the final report would benefit from some more detailed financial implications information. As a result of their comments, the financial implications have been reassessed as requested and additional information has been incorporated into this cover report.

Summary of Recommendations Arising from the Review

10. The Ad-hoc Scrutiny Committee agreed the following recommendations:

Recommendation	Executive Comments
1 - Improve collaborative working across service areas and Directorates to allow for improved forward planning in Schools	
2 - Include in best practice guide for schools - 'encourage year 6 pupils to cycle/walk to	

¹ Information on Sustrans can be found in a foot note in the Final Report attached at Appendix 1.

secondary schools on induction days to build pupil/parent confidence, in time for starting at secondary school' (Linked to Rec.10)	
3 - Instruct officers to investigate sources of sustainable funding for initiatives and incentives for future financial years	
4 - Instruct officers to investigate the introduction of a 'one-off' cycle allowance for use in purchasing a bicycle and equipment and/or a loan scheme for bicycles and equipment, in place of free bus travel for those that want it and are eligible	
5 - Reprioritise the work of Civil Enforcement Officers to allow for an increase in the amount of time they can spend enforcing the parking restrictions outside schools	
6 - Instruct Communities & Neighbourhoods Parking Services to investigate and provide future report to the Executive on the use of a CCTV car and sharing the costs with other local authorities and/or public agencies	
7 - Revise council policy to ensure Development Control can only accept an STP in support of a school planning application if it adheres to the DfT minimum standards contained within the 'School Travel Plan Quality Assurance - Advice Note' issued by the DfT & DCSF in 2007. In cases where an STP does not meet those standards, instruct Development Control to make it a condition of planning consent, or successor documents.	
8 - Identify a clear strategy for resolving inter-directorate issues to ensure enforcement of conditions of planning consent relating to STPs	
9 - Include in best practice guide for school 'that a Travel Plan Champion be identified within the school' (Linked to Rec.10)	
10 - Transport Planning Unit to develop and issue a best practice guide for York schools, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a toolbox of measures for schools to pick and choose from when producing/revising their STP 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promotion of the involvement of all relevant parties i.e. governors, parents, children and staff champions • Information on what has previously proved successful in York and what has not, to inform school's choices (in support of objective (i)) • a school travel plan template 	
<p>11 - To support the work of the Transport Planning Unit, the following to be made available online via the forthcoming schools portal (referred to in paragraph 73 of the final report):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best Practice Guide (see Rec.10) • exemplar School Travel Plan 	
<p>12 - Identify framework for reviewing and monitoring STPs</p>	
<p>13 - Recognise the value of the work and transferable skills of STPCs through the forthcoming budget process to ensure the continuation of the post for the year 2011/12</p>	
<p>14 - Promote safe routes to school through schools and Best Practice Guide (see Rec.10)</p>	
<p>15 - Provide access to information on safe routes to school (or links to external sites providing that information) via the new Education Portal</p>	
<p>16 - Increase publicity by emphasising within existing/future schemes the health benefits of walking and cycling</p>	

Corporate Strategy

11. This review related to a number of the themes within the Council's Corporate Strategy e.g. that the Council will make York a Healthy and more Sustainable City.

Implications

12. **Financial** There are financial implications associated with recommendations 3 – 6, 13 & 16.
13. **Recommendation 3** - The overall cost of carrying out the initiatives carried out this financial year (2010-11) was £24,255. £16,655 of that sum came from external sources such as Cycle City, and £7,600 was provided by the council (this included a one-off set up cost for 'Walk with Wilf' event of £3,800).

14. The cost to the council of carrying out the same initiatives in future years would therefore be £3,800. No formal budget existed for the financing of those initiatives and therefore the money was accumulated by drawing from other budgets elsewhere within City Strategy (mainly from the road safety budget). Due to the minimal costs involved, it would be possible for City Strategy Directorate to absorb this pressure within their base budget.
15. **Recommendation 4** - The idea of moving pupils from buses to bikes is something that the Access & Community Transport Team would support in principle and there are good examples of where this type of approach could be trialed. However, the current position in York (based on 09/10 data) is that 1632 pupils are transported by dedicated contracted home to school bus/coaches. This means the Access & Community Transport Team do not purchase individual passes but contract a number of vehicles to transport these pupils on a day to day basis. Moving these pupils to bicycles would mean the Access & Community Transport Team purchasing a bicycle voucher but not necessarily reducing the number of contracted vehicles. So this may mean rather than reducing costs it could result in an increase in costs.
16. Potential savings could be made for the 411 pupils that the Access & Community Transport Team currently buy bus passes for (from the likes of First, & Pullman etc). By moving these pupils to bicycles, it would reduce the cost as a bicycle voucher would be cheaper than a bus pass. We currently spend about £151k a year on bus passes. (The average cost per child per year of being transported on a dedicated home to school transport bus or being provided with a bus pass to travel on a public service route to a mainstream school is £495).
17. To make it financially viable to the council, there may need to be a minimum period set before pupils could go back to a bus pass, say 12 months or 24 months. There may also be a financial impact in regard to the administration of any scheme and staff training, and this would need to be identified as part of the investigation work, should the recommendation be approved.
18. **Recommendation 5** – Last year 30 Penalty Charge Notices were issued around York schools which is a higher number than some other authorities. Any change to the amount of time spent enforcing parking restrictions elsewhere in the city (i.e. not outside schools) may effect the number of Penalty Charge Notices issued. At this stage it is not clear what effect this will have on the amount of revenue gathered annually from these.
19. **Recommendation 6** - The cost of providing a CCTV vehicle and the necessary staffing is likely to be between £50,000 and £100,000. However, at this stage the scrutiny committee are only recommending that this be fully investigated and have suggested that sharing the use of a vehicle or hiring a suitable vehicle for a limited time, maybe be a possibility.
20. **Recommendation 13** – Since 2004 the Government has financed the initiative to deliver STPs in all of the nation's schools. During that time, the onus has

been on local authorities to deliver and promote STPs, and in York this money (£40k per annum) has funded one full time equivalent member of staff (usually, as at present, two members of staff on a job-share basis). This cost could be reduced by half if a decision was taken to reduce the post to part time.

21. For 2010/11, the area based grant was reduced by 25% and is set to continue until March 2011. The provisional settlement has confirmed that the grant for School Travel Advisors will cease from 1st April 2011 therefore there is no future funding available for the posts.
22. York's third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) is intended to shape transport policy for the next twenty years with an action plan which will set specific, deliverable, objectives for 2011-2014/16. This delivery will be within the context of a greatly reduced Capital budget which means there will be reduced funding for infrastructural schemes. As a result LTP3 is likely to include more low cost schemes and initiatives demonstrating value for money to influencing travel behaviour, as this is likely to be high up the coalition government's agenda.
23. Therefore, in recognising that the current area based grant used to fund the STPC post will cease at the end of March 2011, and at a time when resources are become increasingly scarce, the Scrutiny Committee recognised that the future of York's STPCs may well be in question. However they recognised the transferable knowledge, skills and expertise of the post holders and identified that there is still sufficient work for the post holders to warrant the funding of the post for another financial year, particularly in light of the changing focus of LTP3 from infrastructural schemes to low cost initiatives designed to influence travel behaviour.
24. For this to be financially viable, the committee agreed the focus of the STPCs work could be expanded to include working with schools within the context of the wider community. For instance, working with local businesses to encourage and promote sustainable travel for residents e.g. how parents can walk their children to school then continue to walk, cycle or take the bus to their place of work. Their work could also support other key drivers in the city. For example, the council has set a target to reduce carbon emissions by 40% by 2020 and 80% by 2050. As the 'school run' contributes 20% of the vehicles on the road during term time, it is clear that by encouraging more walking and cycling to school and onwards, could play an important part in reducing carbon emissions through transport and contribute to a low carbon lifestyle.
25. The financial implications of the recommendation would be for the council as part of its budget setting to set aside £40k one-off funding for the financial year 2011/12. This could be considered by funding from reserves for one year however it would not be prudent to reduce reserves at a time that the council is facing severe financial pressures.
26. **Recommendation 16** – The majority of funding sources for publicity have been either cut or withdrawn. The funding from Cycling City has been very beneficial in relation to cycling publicity and initiatives. The cessation of this grant support will limit any future activity.

27. **Human Resources** – There are HR implications associated with recommendations 4 & 5
28. **Recommendation 4** – the Access & Community Transport Team would need to carry out the proposed investigation of a bicycle scheme. If a decision was subsequently taken to implement the scheme, staff training would be required. However, is unlikely to result in a significant impact on their workload as it would reduce the work currently being undertaken to administer the issue of bus passes.
29. **Recommendation 5** - Communities & Neighbourhoods Parking Services Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) undertake the enforcement of parking restrictions throughout the City. These include loading restrictions, bus stops, cycle lanes and traffic routes, designated parking spaces including Respark, car parks and paid on street parking, yellow lines and specific scheduled schools patrols. Parking restrictions are applicable to 38 schools in the local authority area. These are scheduled at 2 patrols per week given current resources and duties of CEOs. Additional enforcement patrols and responses to parking hotline calls relating to particular problems are also carried out. In 2009/10 the average number of specific school patrols was between 3 and 4 per week.
30. CEOs - of which there are 22 - cover the City between 7.45 am and 9.30 pm 7 days a week - working in shifts to cover those hours. In effect this means that Monday to Friday, the early shift will be comprised of a maximum of 8-10 CEOs and the late shift a maximum of 6 CEOs at anyone time. Any increase in the number of schools with enforceable parking restrictions or any agreed increase in the number of patrols outside schools, could not be accommodated with the current enforcement resources and duties, without effecting the patrols elsewhere across the city.
31. **Equalities** – In regard to Recommendations 10 & 15, a mechanism will need to be identified that enables individuals to request information provided either direct by the Transport Planning Unit or via the Education Portal, in alternative formats subject to their individual needs, and be made accessible for parents who have no access to the internet.
32. **Legal** – In regard to Recommendation 4, legal issues related to the introduction of a Bicycle Voucher/Loan scheme would need to be addressed as part of the investigative work undertaken, should Recommendation 4 be approved.

Risk Management

33. There are no known risks to the Council associated with the recommendations arising from this review.

Recommendations

34. The Executive are recommended to approve the recommendations arising from the School Travel Plans Ad Hoc Scrutiny Review.

Contact Details

Author:

Melanie Carr
Scrutiny Officer
Scrutiny Services
Tel: 01904 552063

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Andrew Docherty
Assistant Director Legal, Governance & ITT
Tel: 01904 551004

Report Approved



Date

30 November 2010

Specialist Implications Officer(s):

Financial – Patrick Looker

Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: N/A

Appendix 1 – Final Report

Annex A – DfT Paper - 'Making School Travel Plans Work: Effects, Benefits and Success Factors at English Schools'

Annex B – 'School Travel and Evidence data - Case Studies August 2010: A) Examples of LA wide mode shift improvements'

Annex C – Information on Pilot Cycle Voucher Scheme from Hull City Council

Annex D – Examples of Best Practice in York

Annex E – Feedback from School Visits



Executive**18 January 2011**

Report of the Assistant Director of Legal, Governance & ITT

Review of Casual Play Opportunities – Final Report**Summary**

1. This report presents the final report arising from the review of Casual Play Opportunities undertaken by the Learning & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee in 2010 (as shown at Appendix 1). As Chair of the Committee, Councillor Looker will attend this meeting to present the report.

Background

2. In coming to a decision to review this topic, the Committee agreed the following aim and key objectives for the review:

Aim

To participate in the consultation on the revisions to CYC's Play Policy, and carry out a comparison of the play opportunities for 5-13yr olds, within a number of residential areas/wards (one city centre, one suburban and one village)

Objectives:

- i. to understand the different types of provision suitable for each type of area
- ii. to assess the potential space within the identified areas/wards that could be utilised for play
- iii. to recommend a strategy for the provision of suitable play opportunities within the identified areas
- iv. To be consulted on the revisions to the Council's play policy and if appropriate, the Local Development Framework (LDF)

Consultation

3. The Head of Play & Young People's Cultural Entitlement provided support to the committee throughout the review. The Head of Parks & Open Spaces also participated in the review and in April 2010, the Committee held an informal meeting to consult with representatives from Playspace.
4. In addition, members of the committee carried out a number of informal visits to schools to gather the views of parents on the opportunities for casual play in their area.

Recommendations Arising from the Review

5. The Committee recommend that the Executive authorise officers to:
 - a) support the introduction of a pilot scheme by working with the new 'Taking Play Forward' Strategic Board to:
 - identify 3 diverse areas within the 'area based service delivery' pilot area which would benefit from such a scheme
 - identify all the relevant parties from within the council, external organisations, and from within the identified area of the city to participate in the scheme
 - draft a framework for the scheme for the Executive's consideration
 - b) encourage ward committees, parish councils and residents associations to promote the value of outdoor play and take up any opportunities for encouraging community buy-in to play opportunities in their locality

Reason: To increase access to casual play opportunities and conclude this review in line with scrutiny procedures

Options

6. Having considered the final report and its annexes attached at Appendix 1, the Executive may chose to amend and/or approve, or reject the recommendations arising from this review.

Corporate Strategy

7. The review of this topic supports the Council's corporate aim to inspire residents and visitors to free their creative talents and make York the most active city in the country, by providing high quality cultural and sporting activities for all.
8. It also supports the Council's aim to make York a 'Healthy City' by improving the provision of facilities for children and teenagers to participate in active play.

Implications Associated with the Recommendations Arising from the Review

9. There are no known significant Financial, HR, Equalities, Legal Crime & Disorder, Property or Other implications associated with the recommendations from this review. However, there may be some minimal administrative costs associated with introducing a pilot scheme as recommended below.

Risk Management

10. There is no known risks associated with the recommendations arising from this review.

Recommendations

11. The Overview & Scrutiny Committee ask the Executive to:
- i. note the contents of the final report attached and its annexes
 - ii. approve the recommendations as shown at paragraph 5 of this cover report.

Reason: To fully inform the Executive of the outcome of the review of Casual Play Opportunities

Contact Details

Author:

Melanie Carr
Scrutiny Officer
Scrutiny Services
Tel: 01904 552063

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Andrew Docherty
Assistant Director Legal, Governance & ITT
Tel: 01904 551004

Report Approved**Date**

01 December 2010

Specialist Implications Officer(s): N/A**Wards Affected:**

All

**For further information please contact the author of the report****Background Papers:** None**Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Final Report and associated Annexes

Committee Members

Councillor J Looker (Chair)
Councillor J Brooks (Vice-Chair)
Councillor K Aspden
Councillor S Crisp
Councillor H Douglas
Councillor K Hogg
Councillor D Taylor
Councillor I Waudby

This page is intentionally left blank



**Learning & Culture Overview & Scrutiny
Committee**

5 October 2010

Casual Play Opportunities Scrutiny Review – Final Report

Background

1. In coming to a decision to review this topic, the Committee recognised certain key objectives and the following remit was agreed:

Remit

To participate in the consultation on the revisions to CYC's Play Policy, and carry out a comparison of the play opportunities for 5-13yr olds, within a number of residential areas/wards (one city centre, one suburban and one village)

Objectives

- i. to understand the different types of provision suitable for each type of area
 - ii. to assess the potential space within the identified areas/wards that could be utilised for play
 - iii. to recommend a strategy for the provision of suitable play opportunities within the identified areas
 - iv. To be consulted on the revisions to the Council's play policy and if appropriate, the Local Development Framework (LDF)
2. At a meeting in January 2010, Members agreed to focus their review on St Pauls (central), Fishergate (suburban) and Deighton (village), and to carry out informal visits to those schools to gather the views of parents on the opportunities for casual play in their area.

Consultation

3. The Head of Play & Young People's Cultural Entitlement provided support to the committee throughout the review. The Head of Parks & Open Spaces also participated in the review and in April 2010, the Committee held an informal meeting to consult with representatives from Playspace.
4. In addition, members of the committee carried out a number of informal visits to schools to gather the views of parents on the opportunities for casual play in their area.

Information Gathered

5. Members received an information pack before an informal meeting on 13 April 2010, to inform their discussions. The pack contained the following:
 - York Playspace 'Mobile Playspace Report 2009'
 - The results from the TellUs3 and TellUs4 survey
 - Feedback from the completed parents questionnaires
6. York Playspace

Representatives from Playspace discussed with Members their delivery of play opportunities for children throughout the city (in both urban and rural areas). Their Summer 2009 report gave details on the mobile and venue-based playschemes they provided during summer 2009, together with information on how these were funded, attendance levels and a summary of the feedback received from parents/carers and children. Many of the locations used by Playspace have been used for 14-15 years. These are well known and well advertised and therefore the take up is always high. Playspace recognise that when introducing a playscheme in a new area, the take up is likely to be poor at first, and that they will need to persevere in order to build a relationship with families in the area based on mutual respect and confidence in the play opportunities they provide. That is why one-off visits to a site are often unsuccessful e.g. Cleveland Street / Danebury Drive.
7. In regard to Deighton, Playspace confirmed they had previously worked with individuals in the area to identify a suitable space for children to play. The local Hall was deemed to be unusable due to its size and the lack of appropriate toilet facilities, and there is no suitable public outdoor space available. Local Farmers had been approached to ascertain if they were prepared to make available any small piece of land close the village centre but this had proved unsuccessful. Playspace had therefore suggested the village work with another village in the area i.e. Wheldrake, to perhaps pool their resources and provide some space for play that way.
8. Chill Out Zones (aimed at children aged 8-13) – unlike playschemes, Playspace provide these 46-48 weeks of the year, and they are venue based in three specific areas of the city – Tanghall Community Centre; 68 Centre; and Moor Lane Youth Centre. They provide children with open access to child led activities, in a safe environment. As well as receiving funding from the Play Team (40k), the Tanghall and 68 Centre chill out zones are also well supported by ward committee funding. The Moor Lane zone is not as well supported by the relevant ward committees, and therefore it is partly funded by a play grant from City of York Council. Feedback from parents shows that they are at ease knowing adults are on site supervising the activities.
9. Training of staff and volunteers – Playspace currently have funding from North Yorkshire Learning Consortium to provide training for their volunteers over the next six months. They have already trained five volunteers who are now actively supporting the three Chill Out zones across the city, and are hoping to train a further twenty. They would also like to develop this further by offering training to volunteers working with other smaller play organisations in the city.

10. TellUs Survey Results

Members had intended comparing the survey results from 2008-09 (TellUs3) and 2009-10 (TellUs4), in order to identify and investigate the reasons for any changes in the views of children and young people over the two year period. Unfortunately, the number of questions relating to play and out of school activities had been seriously reduced in the TellUs4 survey making it difficult to carry out such a comparison – see Annex B.

11. Parents Questionnaires

The responses from parents with children at St Pauls School and Fishergate School are shown at Annex C. Members recognised that the perceived barriers to play would need to be addressed to achieve a marked increase in the take up of casual play opportunities.

12. In response to the 'Barriers to play' identified in the completed questionnaires, the Head of Play provided information on a number of CYC initiatives currently ongoing and scheduled for 2010-11 which aim to address these issues of concern – see Annex D.

Analysis

13. Evidence gathered nationally shows a marked decline in the extent of outdoor play for children as their freedom to roam has been curtailed compared with previous generations. 71% of adults used to play near their home every day when they were a child compared to only 21% of children today. A recent nationwide poll showed that 83% of British adults think the next government should have policies that ensure children can play outside more.

14. With this mind, Play England and its partners have produced a 'Manifesto for Children's Play' calling for the next government to make play a priority (see copy at Annex E). It asks all political parties to make 3 simple pledges for all children and young people to have the freedom and space to play enjoyed by previous generations:

- To make all residential neighbourhoods child-friendly places where children can play outside
- To give all children the time and opportunity to play throughout childhood
- To give all children somewhere to play - in freedom and safety - after school and in the holidays

15. The nationally developed Playshaper training event held in York in 2009 brought together multi agency representatives including Play, Police, Housing, Parks and Open Spaces, the voluntary sector, City Strategy, Transport and Planning, all of whom have an impact upon children's quality of life.

16. The training focused on child-friendly design, planning and management of public space and enabled local authority colleagues and other stakeholders to consider how design, planning and management of public space can help deliver on a range of local priorities including community cohesion, health targets, regeneration aims and how addressing the needs of children, young people and their parents in the built environment can potentially reduce crime, fear of crime and accidents.

17. For York, there were a number of outcomes from the event which included:
 - Identifying new partners who pledged to assist in the development of play opportunities in the city
 - The formation of a new strategic board to ensure the development and implementation of the 'Taking Play Forward' policy
18. In carrying out the review, the Committee recognised that in some areas of the city there is a zero tolerance towards children playing in open spaces near homes. Members suggested that Ward Committees, Parish Councils and Residents Associations may be able to reach out to their local communities and work with them to encourage a more positive attitude. For example, the replacement of negative signage like 'No Ball Games' with positive signage like 'You Can Play Here'.
19. With this in mind and in order to recommend a strategy for the provision of suitable play opportunities within specific types of area within the city (in line with objective (iii) of this review), the Committee agreed to recommend that a pilot scheme be undertaken involving all the relevant agencies (as listed in paragraph 13 above), to include:
 - Working with children and parents through schools in the identified areas to identify what they perceive to be barriers to play
 - Holding a public meeting to gather the views of other residents, local businesses and other interested parties
 - Building on the school's travel plans to create a 'Safe Routes to Play' document for the area
 - Identify any improvements required to road crossings/markings to reduce the danger of traffic
20. Identifying the right pilot areas and communication with residents in those areas through their ward committee, was identified as being key to a successful pilot scheme.
21. Their ideas around the introduction of a pilot scheme were considered at the first meeting of the new 'Taking Play Forward' Strategic Board, which met for the first time late April 2010. They agreed with the suggested approach and as an outcome from their meeting, officers were asked to:
 - Send the board a draft version of the 2010 Taking Play Forward, play policy.
 - Gather relevant information to help inform the selection of a suitable pilot area in line with the outcome from the scrutiny review on 'Casual Play Opportunities - suggestions, included number of 5-13 years olds per ward, areas of deprivation etc - see attached
 - Invite other representatives to the next meeting including tenancy federation, disability and the play voluntary and community sector
 - Feed back to the YorOk Board about the Playshaper and new Play Policy
 - Arrange for a representative from Housing to participate in future meetings
 - Liaise with Police to work with the Police Architectural Liaison officers

22. CYC Draft Play Policy

As part of this review and in support of objective (iv), the Committee wanted to be consulted on the draft Play Policy that officers were working on earlier this year. Following the general election and the resulting change in government, the Play Team took the decision to wait for information before finalising their work on the draft policy, to ensure it properly reflected the expected changes to government policy. The Committee therefore agreed to conclude their work on the review and identified the recommendations shown at paragraph 31 below.

23. Subsequently in October 2010, the Committee received an update on the Playbuilder scheme and took part in the consultation process for the draft Play Policy. Overall they were happy that the policy reflected their views on the provision of play opportunities and therefore no further recommendations were agreed and they signed off this review.

24. Other Issues

The committee acknowledged that as part of the council's ongoing organisational review, officers were looking at a more joined up way of working around 'area based service delivery', involving all services provided by the council including the work of the Play Team and those CYC services identified in paragraph 14 above. They agreed with the idea of piloting this new working approach in one area of the city first, and the decision to carry out the pilot in a large section of the west of the city.

25. Finally the committee agreed that the pilot scheme being recommended as a result of this scrutiny review would benefit from being incorporated into this new organisational approach to service delivery, as officers from all of the relevant services will be involved, preventing any duplication of work. Also, the west of the city (as chosen for the pilot scheme referred to in paragraph 24) would also be suitable for, and benefit from, the scheme being recommended as a result of this review.

Options

26. Having considered all of the information contained within this report and its associated annexes, Members may amend and/or agree the suggested recommendations and identify any amendments required to the draft final report.

Implications

27. There are no known significant Financial, HR, Equalities, Legal Crime & Disorder, Property or Other implications associated with the recommendations from this review. However, there may be some minimal administrative costs associated with introducing a pilot scheme as recommended below.

Corporate Strategy

28. The review of this topic supports the Council's corporate aim to inspire residents and visitors to free their creative talents and make York the most active city in the country, by providing high quality cultural and sporting activities for all.

29. It also supports the Council's aim to make York a 'Healthy City' by improving the provision of facilities for children and teenagers to participate in active play.

Risk Management

30. There are no known risks associated with the recommendations arising from this review.

Recommendations

31. The Committee recommend that the Executive authorise officers to:
- a) support the introduction of a pilot scheme by working with the new 'Taking Play Forward' Strategic Board to:
 - identify 3 diverse areas within the 'area based service delivery' pilot area which would benefit from such a scheme
 - identify all the relevant parties from within the council, external organisations, and from within the identified area of the city to participate in the scheme
 - draft a framework for the scheme for the Executive's consideration
 - b) encourage ward committees, parish councils and residents associations to promote the value of outdoor play and take up any opportunities for encouraging community buy-in to play opportunities in their locality

Reason: To conclude the review in line with scrutiny procedures and protocols

Contact Details

Author: Melanie Carr Scrutiny officer Scrutiny Services Tel. 01904 552063	Chief Officer Responsible for the report: Andrew Docherty Head of Civic, Democratic & Legal Services
--	---

Interim Report Approved **Date** 2 July 2010

Specialist Implications Officer(s) N/A

Wards Affected: All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: None

- Annex A** – Playspace Summer 2009 Report
- Annex B** – TellUs Survey Results
- Annex C** – Parents Questionnaire Responses
- Annex D** – CYC Projects & Initiatives
- Annex E** – Play England's 'Manifesto for Children's Play'



Executive

18 January 2011

Report of the Director of Communities and Neighbourhoods

Race Online 2012

Summary

1. This report asks Members to agree:
 1. To sign up CYC to be an official partner in Race Online 2012.
 2. CYC to work with partners to inspire, encourage and support as many people as possible to get online

Background

2. The links between social disadvantage and internet take up are strong. Nearly 50% of adults living in households earning less than £11.5k do not use the internet anywhere. 48% of people with disabilities are not currently taking advantage of the benefits of being online. A key barrier to disabled people going online is access to the hardware.
3. Of the nine million adults in this country who are not online, four million are amongst the most disadvantaged people:
 - 39% are over 65. while only one in ten people aged 16 – 24 are offline that rises to 1 in 2 of those over 75
 - 38% are unemployed
 - 19% are families with children

Why Get Online?

4. Increasingly both the private and public sector are choosing to communicate with their customers online (offline households are missing out on average consumer savings of £560 a year). To not be online in the future will mean that you are disadvantaged and often out of pocket.
 - As national Government and Local Authorities attempt to deliver efficiency savings online transactions and communications offer much scope. It is estimated that each transaction with government switched online could generate savings of between £3.30 and £12.

- Accessing shopping and services such as water, gas and electricity is easier and often cheaper online. For instance, internet only banks and discounts on online rail bookings
- Being online is now a fundamental part of educational improvement
- Access to employment opportunities – many companies now only accept online job applications. People with good ICT skills earn between 3% and 10% more than people without such skills and good ICT skills are now seen as an essential skill for life
- Information is more easily accessible online for everyone
- Good for the environment – paperless bills and statements help to reduce paper waste

The Local Picture

5. There are some significant differences in internet take up in York as detailed in Annex one. The local picture shows that low internet access at home in York maps to:
 - Low income
 - Over 65s
 - Unemployed people

How are people supported to get online?

6. The council already supports digital inclusion in the following ways:

Library Service

- York Explore Centre is a UK Online Champion Centre and all libraries are UK Online Centres. A UK Online Centre offers two things. Free or low cost access to the internet and trained staff to guide people through their first steps online. Library staff run one to one starter sessions as well as longer beginners courses. They are also on hand at any time when the library is open to help out with queries
- There is an infrastructure of free access to the internet through the People's Network pcs across all libraries with WiFi in Acomb and York Explore Centres. This is a super fast broadband connection through the new city wide fibre optic network. It is used by 10,000 people a year. There are some accessibility options for people with disabilities
- There are four ICT suites in Explore Centres that are used for helping people online
- Partnerships including the BBC, IT Services and Aviva help the service to build capacity and expertise to offer more help to people
- York Explore holds the Community Media equipment which is available for hire to community groups to use. There is a radio station and TV studio as well as smaller video cameras. Workshops are held to enable groups to learn the digital skills necessary

Put simply, if anyone goes into any library they can be helped to get online, given an email account and provided with ongoing support all for free.

Adult and Community Education

- Provides a range of flexible and taught programmes helping people to develop the skills to get online. These range from short ICT taster courses through to programmes providing qualifications such as ECDL

Future Prospects

- Provides taster programmes and outreach ICT provision working with disadvantaged groups

7. These activities support just over 2,000 people a year to get online. We estimate the current number of people in York who are offline at about 57,000. So to make more progress we need to involve other partners

Race Online 2012 partnership

8. In March 2010 the Race Online 2012 partnership campaign was launched to join up existing community ICT infrastructures to help the 9 million adults in the UK who have never used the internet to get online. Led by the Government's digital champion, Martha Lane Fox, the initiative asks partners to pledge help to end digital exclusion.

Implications for signing up

9. Once signed up as a Partner to Race Online 2012, the Library Service and Adult Education will develop an action plan and take a lead role in encouraging other partners and organisations to sign up to the pledge, enabling a greater number of people to get online.
10. A significant start has already been made in building on an already nationally recognised private/public partnership with Aviva that transformed York Central Library into York Explore Centre. This partnership is going to focus on digital inclusion over the next year.
11. York will be submitting a UNESCO Creative City for Media Arts bid in 2011. The expansion of access to digital processes, the People's Network and the expertise within the media arts network will be supported by our digital inclusion offer. The ability of the wider community to be tied into the Creative City outcomes will be enhanced by the current proposals
12. In developing the plan a number of actions have already been identified:
 - Take the action plan to the WOW Partnership Board to link digital inclusion into the Sustainable Community Strategy
 - Promoting the benefits of being online by running a series of roadshows over the next two years, starting with the national Go Online event (17 Jan – 14 Feb)
 - Encouraging other organisations to sign up to the pledge

- Producing a map showing free and low cost WiFi access across the City
- Developing use of libraries as key access points to online national government and local council services
- Mapping provision of support and training from basic through to advanced digital skills

Corporate Priorities

13. A digitally inclusive York contributes to all of the Corporate Priorities. As mentioned above, the benefits of being online affects all areas of a person's life and well being ; from being better able to gain employment ; easier access to services and information ;helping the environment and improving communication for disadvantaged groups

More for York Programme

14. Improved digital skills for both residents and employees will support several strands of the More for York Programme – principally Channel Migration which involves more customer transactions taking place online such as paying council tax, taking part in surveys etc.

Implications

15. **Financial:** There are no financial implications. All training and support is provided within existing budgets.
16. **Human Resources (HR):** There are no HR implications
17. **Equalities:** Significant numbers of disadvantaged people lack internet access and the motivation and skills to go online. An enhanced Equalities Impact Assessment will be undertaken to ensure those most at need are included, using the guidance on this website <http://www.odi.gov.uk/odi-projects/digital-inclusion.php>
18. **Legal:** There are no legal implications
19. **Crime and Disorder:** There are no crime and disorder implications
20. **Information Technology (IT):** Increasing the number of people who are online will support CYC's channel migration plans. More people will have the skills and, through the library service, the infrastructure, to access services online.
21. **Property:** There are no property implications

Risk Management

There are no identified existing or potential risks associated with this report.

Recommendations

22. Members are asked to agree to:

- (a) Pledge to be an Official Partner in the Race Online 2012 Campaign
- (b) Libraries and Adult and Community Education to lead on developing partnerships to make York a digitally inclusive city

Reason: To inspire, encourage and support people to go online and enable all residents to secure the many benefits of being

Contact Details

Author:		Chief Officer Responsible for the report:		
Fiona Williams Head of Libraries and Heritage Communities and Culture CANS 3316		Charlie Croft Assistant Director for Communities and Culture		
		Report Approved		Date Insert Date
Specialist Implications Officer(s)				
ITT Roy Grant Head of ICT 1966		Equalities Evie Chandler Corporate Equality and Inclusion Manager 1704		
Wards Affected: List wards or tick box to indicate all				All <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
For further information please contact the author of the report				

Annex

1 Local take up of internet

Background Papers and Websites:

Manifesto for A Networked Nation – Race Online 2012 July 2010

www.raceonline2012.org

www.odl.gov.uk/odi-projects/digital-inclusion.php

This page is intentionally left blank

Annex 1

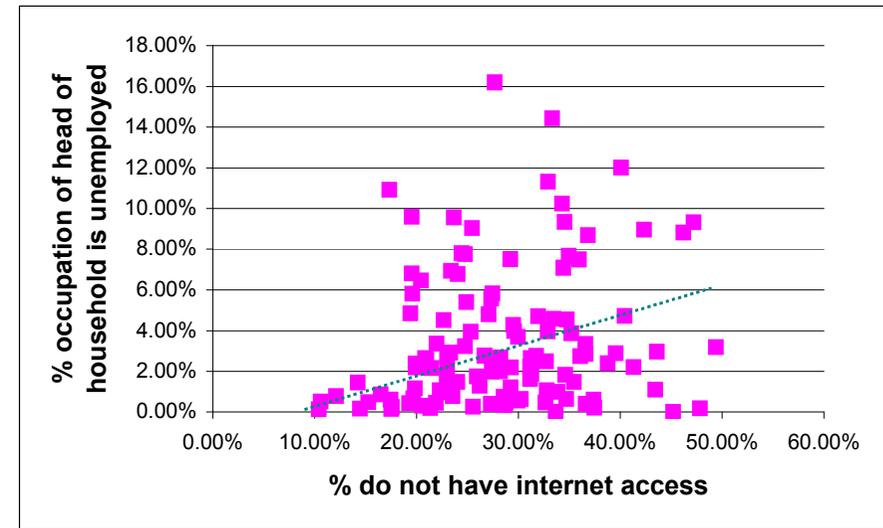
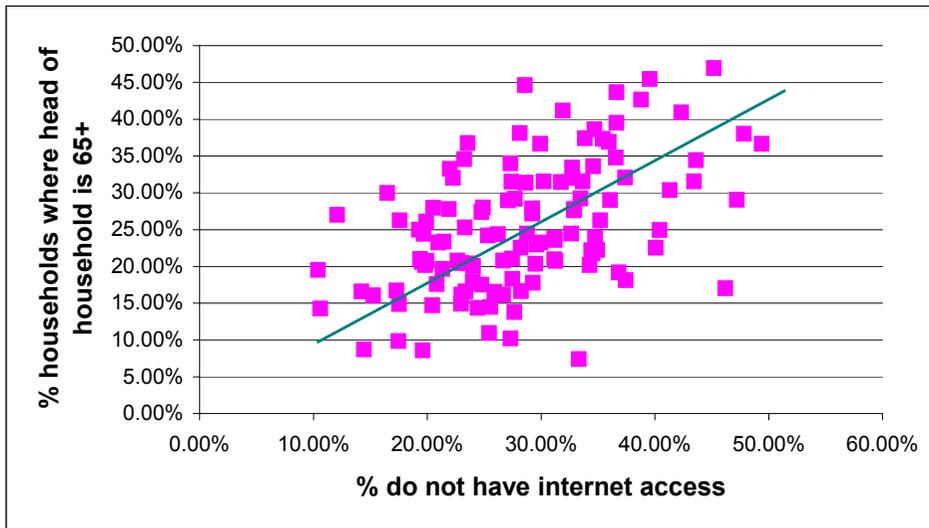
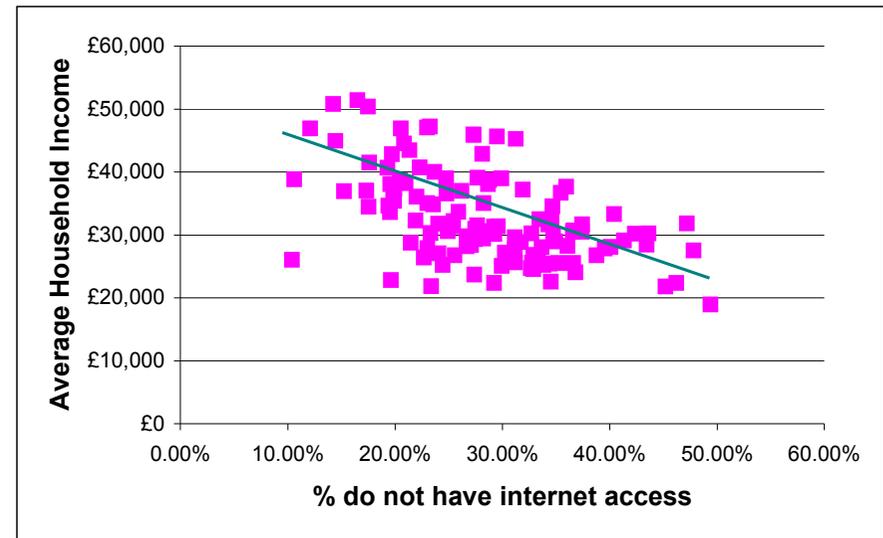
1. Internet Connectivity by Ward

Ward	% Do not have Internet connection
Bishopthorpe	42.69%
Heworth Without	35.78%
Guildhall	34.22%
Huntington and New Earswick	33.15%
Clifton	31.91%
Westfield	31.15%
Hull Road	30.21%
Micklegate	30.19%
Dringhouses and Woodthorpe	30.08%
Heworth	29.94%
Fulford	28.67%
Acomb	28.47%
Osbalwick	28.23%
Fishergate	27.70%
Holgate	26.84%
Derwent	25.78%
Rural West York	25.74%
Skelton, Rawcliffe and Clifton Without	23.13%
Strensall	22.47%
Haxby and Wigginton	22.21%
Wheldrake	15.55%
Heslington	10.40%

Source: Axiom - Lifestyle Data 2009 Computing, Telecomms & Television:Internet Usage:Connectivity: Penetrations

2. Correlating Internet Connectivity with other factors

These scattergraphs have a point for each of York's 118 Super Output Areas. They indicate that in York low internet take-up correlates with other factors. That is - internet take up is lower in areas with more older people, lower household income and to a lesser extent we can see a possible correlation with unemployment. Source: Axiom 2009.





Executive

18 January 2011

Report of the Assistant Director of Customer and Business Support Services
(Head of Financial Services)

Revised Income Policy

Summary

- 1 The purpose of this paper is to present to Executive for discussion and onward approval to Full Council the draft revised Income Policy. The Policy (Annex A) sets out the guiding principles to be followed by the organisation in ensuring it uses consistent and best practice principles in generating and collecting income.

Background

- 2 The council's current Income policy was approved on 1 October 2008 and forms part of the Constitutions policy framework along with the Corporate Debt Policy that was approved in December 2009. The purpose of the Policy is to provide the guiding principles to be followed by the organisation in ensuring it uses consistent and best practice principles in generating and collecting income.
- 3 The current policy has provided guidance to the council in relation to the key income principles over the past two years. However following the development of the Debt Policy there was an opportunity to align both policies to deliver a consistent and co-ordinated framework for generating and collecting income. To do this the original Income Policy required updating and reformatting into a clearer and more concise document complimenting the Debt Policy. Further to this the financial environment in which the council is now operating is very different to that of 2008 including the removal of cash payments following the introduction of allpay early in 2010 and the revised policy needed to reflect these changes.

The Policy

- 4 The purpose of the revised draft Income Policy (Annex A) is to provide a concise guidance document maintaining the key principles of the current policy but reflecting the increased payment channels available to customers and the changing financial environment in which the council is operating.

- 5 The revised policy is drafted with a formal index, clear subject headings and paragraph numbering providing concise and easy to use guidance. The revised policy should help facilitate improved consistency across all officers involved in setting, raising and collecting fees and charges at City of York Council.
- 6 The overall principle aim of the policy is to ensure that the council's fees and charges are set within a value for money framework, whereby financial, performance, access and equality are considered fully and appropriately, and decisions taken represent a transparent and balanced approach

Consultation

- 7 The draft revised Income Policy has been issued to all finance managers for consultation purposes along with other key officers across the council. In addition to this a copy of the policy has also been circulated to our key Third Sector partners for consultation purposes including:
 - Citizens advice bureau (CAB)
 - North Yorkshire Credit Union
 - Christians Against Poverty
- 8 The comments receive to date are from the CAB who are supportive of the key objectives of the policy. The main point that they have raised is in relation to ensuring that the policies objectives are reflect in the council's overall policy and strategy framework where income is involved. They are aware that this would need to be done overtime as the individual policies are reviewed.
- 9 The policy has also been through member consultation at Audit & Governance Committee on 6 December 2010. They have approved the policy for onward progress to Executive and Full Council.
- 10 The policy has been considered in a formal Equality Impact Assessment.

Options

- 11 There are only two options associated with this report:
 - a) Agree the revised Income Policy for onward approval at Full Council;
 - b) Retain the existing Income Policy.

Analysis

12 Not applicable to this report.

Corporate priorities

13 The implementation of effective Income Policy is critical in contributing to the delivery of an 'Effective Organisation' and helps to underpin and support all priorities that form the Corporate Strategy.

Implications

- (a) **Financial** – There are no direct financial implications associated with approving the policy.
- (b) **Human Resources (HR)** - There are no implications.
- (c) **Equalities** – The policy has been out for consultation with our third sector partners, Officers, Members and has an EIA (Para 7 – 10).
- (d) **Legal** - There are no implications.
- (e) **Crime and Disorder** - There are no implications.
- (f) **Information Technology (IT)** - There are no implications.
- (g) **Property** - There are no direct implications.

Risk Management

14 The organisation can expose its self to the risk of not maximising its income and collection if it does not have an effective and appropriate Income Policy that provides for proper principles and guidance to ensure value for money income arrangements. Losing income would be a critical risk to the council however there are no high or critical risks associated with approving the policy

Recommendations

- 15 Executive members are asked to:
- a) comment on the format and content of the revised Income Policy attached to this report at Annex A and recommend that it is sent for onward approval at Full Council.

Reason

To seek Executive members' views as to whether the draft Income Policy provides appropriate guidance in delivering value for money income arrangements across the organisation.

Author:

David Walker
Head of Financial Procedures

Ext 2261

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Keith Best
Assistant Director CBSS
(Head of Financial Services)

Report
Approved



Date 30/12/2010

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

Wards Affected Not applicable

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers

Draft revised Income Policy A&G 6 December 2010

Annexes

Annex A – Draft revised Income Policy



**CITY OF YORK
COUNCIL
INCOME
POLICY**

Contents

	Paragraph
Introduction	1 - 2
Vision	3
Policy Objectives	4
Policy Principles	5 - 6
Policy Application	7 - 8
Exceptions to the Policy	9
Definitions	10 - 12
Types of Charges	13 - 16
Setting the level of Fees & Charges	17 - 19
Determining Concessions	20 - 25
Collecting Fees & Charges	26 - 32
Choice and Options for Payment	33 - 35
Creating Debt	36 - 37
Cancellations and Refunds	38
Late Payment	39 - 40
Setting Income Targets	41
Performance Monitoring	42
Reporting	44 - 45

Introduction

1. City of York Council aims to be an exemplary organisation with regards to income generation and collection. This policy has been developed to provide an efficient, effective, consistent and coordinated approach to the generation and collection of income. The policy affirms the use of best practice methods providing high standards of customer service dealing with all customers in a fair and inclusive manner, whilst giving careful consideration to the needs of vulnerable customers.
2. This Policy demonstrates commitment to the council's Corporate Strategy priorities, and provides a seamless framework along with the Customer Strategy and Debt Policy in contributing to a single view of our customers.

Vision

3. The Income Collection Policy in conjunction with the Debt Policy has a clear vision:

“To maximise corporate income collection through the efficient and coordinated use of resources, delivered using consistent and well managed processes. Pre-payment and easy to access payment methods available through a range of channels will be a core priority to maximise income, minimise debt management activity and support financial inclusion “

The policy objective

4. The objective of the policy is to provide clarity and consistency in the way that income generation and collection to the Council can be maximised through embedding best practice methods. It supports prompt, effective and efficient billing and debt management through making best use of available resources. The key objectives are to:
 - ensure that charges reflect council's Corporate Strategy, service objectives and priorities, the Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement;
 - calculate fees and charges on a full cost or marginal recovery basis, depending on competition and any other relevant factors;
 - consider cost of collection to ensure that fees and charges are economic to collect;
 - maximise income for the council;
 - offer choice and minimise exclusion;
 - protect tax payers interests by minimising debt and late payment;
 - ensure equality and consistency when dealing with customers;
 - ensure compliance with legal and statutory requirements;
 - implement appropriate debt management.

The principles of the policy

- 5 The overall principle aim of the policy is to ensure that the council's fees and charges are set within a value for money framework, whereby financial, performance, access and equality are considered fully and appropriately and decisions taken represent a transparent and balanced approach.
- 6 The legal basis for charging has been clarified following the implementation of specific provisions within the Local Government Act 2003. In addition to existing statutory provisions, which expressly authorise charging, section 93 of the 2003 Act allows the council to charge for any services, which it has discretion to provide. Charges cannot be made for any services for which there is a duty to provide or where legislation expressly prohibits the charging for discretionary services. In exercising its charging powers the council is under a duty to ensure that any charges made do not exceed the full cost of providing the relevant service. However the reinvestment of any income generated in excess of the cost of providing the service does not represent a surplus.

Application of the policy

7. The policy applies to all council operations and activities. The key principles arising from the policy should also be applied to arms length organisations, including schools and partnerships, unless there are alternative regulations that govern these organisations.
8. The council's financial regulations set out the systems and procedures for managing income and expenditure. This policy sets out in more detail issues relating to income, but remains within the governance framework set out in the financial regulations.

Exceptions to the policy

9. Exceptions to the requirements of the policy should be dealt with in the same way as exceptions to standing orders and financial regulations, using appropriate delegated powers. A record should be kept of all decisions to grant an exception.

Definitions

10. **Discretionary service** – A service that the local authority does deliver, but is not statutorily required to deliver, and which could be discontinued if the authority chose to do so.
11. **Statutory service** – A service that the local authority is statutorily required to deliver and cannot withdraw, irrespective of whether or not there is a charge.

12. **Service that is essential for wellbeing** - A service that is not a statutory service, but which the local authority determines should be provided to improve the wellbeing of customers, irrespective of whether or not there is a charge.

Charges for services

13. The different types of charge that the council makes are as follows:
- Charges from statutory sources (such as Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates);
 - Charges which are set nationally by government (such as planning fees);
 - Charges for which there is a local choice about how much to charge, but which are restricted to recovering costs;
 - Charges for services that may be operated on a trading basis, or for which there is no guidance.
14. This policy covers all charges to some extent, but parts of the policy are specifically aimed at services where there is an element of local choice in the setting of those charges.
15. **Services restricted to recovering costs** - certain council services are restricted to recovering the costs of providing the service. Where this is the case, it is essential that the full service cost is identified and that all elements of cost taken into account are reasonable and justifiable. This is irrespective of the level of charge ultimately set.
16. **Services operated on a trading basis** - services that may be operated on a trading basis tend to be those that are not seen as essential for social wellbeing or that are discretionary. By their nature they may also be available from a number of providers, thereby offering customers choice. For these services, customer demand and competition will play an important role in deciding what the level of charge should be, although the cost of providing the service will also be relevant. The full cost of these services should be identified prior to setting charges.

Setting the level of fees and charges

17. The following factors must be taken into account in setting fees and charges which are non statutory:
- Structured to support the Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement;
 - Structured to support the councils overall objectives and priorities;

- Structured to support service objectives and priorities;
 - That they take into account market research, comparative data, management knowledge and any other relevant information to ensure that charges do not adversely affect the take up of services;
 - Demand for service;
 - Service availability and accessibility;
 - The cost of delivering the service and collecting the fee
 - Benchmarking
 - Alternative services and prices (Competition).
18. Fees and charges should be reviewed on an annual basis with the view to ensuring that the 'right' price is being charged for a service. This should not be simply a case of adding an inflationary increase to the previous years charge. When charges are reviewed all the factors set out above should be taken into account in order that the council may make informed choices on the level of charge to be set.
19. The review of charges should not be restricted to the current services for which a charge is made but should also consider the opportunity of potential new income.

Determining concessions

20. The council may wish to target certain services or specific groups of residents or visitors and in doing so it may decide to apply discounts or concessions.
21. The decision about whether and how to apply concessions must be taken with full information about the demand for the service and the contribution that the service makes to council and service priorities. In other words, there must be a reason why the concessions are relevant and a positive decision made that the concessions should be offered to specific customer groups. This decision should always be taken with a clear understanding of any budgetary implications and through full consultation with the Head of Financial Services.
22. Examples of customer groups that might be eligible for concessions in order to satisfy service priorities and objectives are:
- Children (of various age ranges)
 - Students (or people in full time education who are not children)
 - Young people other than children (of specific age ranges)
 - Homeless persons
 - People on low incomes (or people in receipt of benefit)
 - The over 60s (or other ranges of older customers)
 - People with particular disabilities
 - Ethnic groups
 - Residents

- Visitors
 - Commercial sector / small businesses
 - Employers
 - Staff
23. The list is not exhaustive, but in every case where a concession is granted, there should be a sound reason why the concession has been made. This will assist the council to achieve consistency, equality and inclusion in the delivery of services.
24. In some cases there may be nationally prescriptive concessions and where this is the case, there is often government support to help fund these (for example concessionary bus fares). However, these concessions should be subject to the same principles as all other concessions.
25. In other cases there is comprehensive government guidance on the financial assessments that need to be carried out to determine the contribution that customers should make towards charges, such as 'Charging for Residential Accommodation' (CRAG) guidance.

Collecting fees and charges

26. The way that income is collected and the timing of income collection both determine how quickly the income is recovered, the extent to which there is scope for non-payment and the costs of collection.
27. The greater the number of payment channels or opportunities to pay that the council provides will also have an affect on how efficiently the charge is recovered. The payment channels open to customers include:

Method	Council	Retailer*	Post Office*
Cash	No	Yes	Yes
Cheque	Yes	No	Yes
Debit/credit card**	Yes	Some	Yes
Bank Transfer	Yes	No	No
Direct Debit	Yes	No	No
Internet	Yes	No	No

*Using 'allpay' 66 retail outlets and 37 Post Offices in York

** Over the phone

28. The timing of income collection will depend on the nature of the service being delivered, the customer group and the service objectives and priorities. This should always be fully considered to ensure maximum recovery and minimum debt.
29. Where services are discretionary, they are likely to depend on the collection of income in order to be sustained, or they may contribute to the delivery of other statutory services. In these cases income should be collected in advance of, or at the same time as the delivery of service. This will help to ensure that the occurrence of debt is minimised.
30. Where services are delivered to commercial organisations in a competitive environment, income should be collected in advance of the service delivery in order to minimise debt.
31. If the service is statutory or essential for wellbeing, income should be collected in advance where practicable, but the delivery of the service may be such that the recovery of income can only take place after the service has been delivered. In these circumstances, there is always a higher risk that the income may not be recovered and that debt arises which is ultimately written off.
32. As taxpayers ultimately fund the write-off of bad debt, it is fundamental that the 'payment in advance' policy is adopted wherever possible and reasonable.

Choice and options

33. It is important to provide service users with a choice about the method of payment and / or the channel of collection, to help avoid inequity or exclusion of any particular customer group. However, the type of service and the service objectives and priorities will determine the scope of the channels available.
34. There are instances where certain choices may not be possible because they are uneconomic or because of the need to improve efficiency. Where one method or channel of payment is not possible, there will always be an alternative option that allows all potential customers to benefit from the service in question. For example payment of cash through allpay.
35. This applies equally to the timing of payment. If payment is required in advance, the preferred method of payment will be by electronic means, but customer may have the option to pay by alternative methods and alternative channels.

Creating debt

36. Services that do not require payment in advance are usually paid for by raising a bill that is sent to the customer for payment after the service has been delivered. This automatically creates a debt that the council has to recover. If debts are not collected they ultimately become bad debts and will be written off at a cost to the taxpayer. Payment in advance should always be considered and used where possible to minimise this happening.
37. The creation of debt needs to be effectively managed and full guidance is available within the council's debt policy.

Cancellation and refund

38. Some council services are responsive and require customers to make a request for a service. In many cases, payment will be required in advance of the service being delivered; otherwise a bill will be raised in respect of the service. There are occasions when customers subsequently need to cancel the service request and a refund of payment may be required. In these circumstances, the maximum notice period required to cancel the service must be explicitly set out and complied with in order to be eligible for a refund.

Late payment

39. When a bill or other request for payment is issued it should always contain clear and unambiguous information about the charges made so that the customer can understand the payment due. If payment is required in advance, but this is done by way of a bill, the bill should be sent out in sufficient time to allow payment to be made by the due date or within the timescales specified.
40. If payment is not received by the due date, it then becomes a late payment. Depending on the type of payment, a recovery process will be put into action once the payment is late by more than a prescribed time. The recovery process is governed by the council's Debt Policy.

Setting targets

41. In every case where charges are made and income is collected, income targets should be set and monitored and this should be part of the service and budget monitoring process. Targets are set for the total amount of income to be generated each year for each service in the budget setting process. Where income is significant, performance targets should also be set to monitor usage levels, collection information and debt levels.

Performance monitoring

42. Monitoring income collection performance is necessary in order to assess the success of charging for service delivery. The outcomes of this should be compared to council and service income targets, objectives and priorities. A clear distinction should be made in all reports between income that has been billed and that which has been collected.
43. Effective monitoring can only take place if clear targets are set and information is collected and analysed on a regular basis. Better performance monitoring will enable more accurate reporting of income and this in turn will improve the basis on which decisions about income generation, charging and collection are made in future.

Reporting

44. Where income generation is central to achieving service objectives and priorities, up to date reporting on income performance can help to identify and address related service issues. Finance and performance monitoring reports should include information on current performance against the income targets set for the service in question and identify whether performance has improved or is deteriorating. They should also offer proposals for dealing with poor performance, both short-term measures and longer-term proposals. This may include reviewing charges.
45. Annual fees and charges reports are a crucial element of income generation and charging policy as they set the level and scope of charges. They should include information about recent performance against targets and how income contributes to service objectives and priorities. This will assist the decision making process, particularly where there are proposals for significant changes to fees and charges.