

Meeting	Learning & Culture Policy and Scrutiny Committee
Date	24 May 2016
Present	Councillors Taylor (Chair), Fenton (Vice-Chair), Dew, Looker, K Myers, Wells and Mason (Substitute) Dr Dickinson (Co-opted Statutory Member)
Apologies	Councillor Jackson

62. Declarations of Interest

Members were asked to declare any personal or prejudicial interests or disclosable pecuniary interests which they might have in respect of the business on the agenda.

Cllr Taylor declared a personal non prejudicial interest on item 5, York Theatre Royal Service Level Agreement Performance Bi-annual update report, as his work venue, City Screen, showed the York Theatre Royal's production of Railway Children twice.

Cllr Mason also declared a personal non prejudicial interest on item 5 that he had accepted some free tickets to various productions at the National Railway Museum and he had paid to hold his wedding reception in the De Grey Rooms.

63. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the Learning & Culture Policy and Scrutiny Committee held on 21 March 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair and that the minutes of the York Museum Trust SLA Scrutiny Review Task Group be approved as a correct record and signed by the Task Group Chair.

64. Public Participation

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

65. Attendance of Chair of Learning City

Members considered a verbal update from the Chair of Learning City who was in attendance to provide an update on how the organisation had worked with the Council and other partners to delivery joint services.

The Chair stated that the 2013-16 Skills Strategy was concluding and she gave an update on their achievements made against their priorities set out in the strategy and confirmed:

- A considerably amount of activity had been delivered and achieved regarding skills for business growth but some Key Performance Indicators (KPI) were a bit uneven and had not been met.
- York was listed the 12th city outside of London to achieve a level 4 qualification in adults and although this was an excellent result it had not met their KPI of achieving a top 5 position.
- The KPI had not been met for improving adults with no qualifications but significant changes and improvements had been made.
- Officers would continue to focus on employee reported skills gaps and skills for employment. Their KPI aimed for 5% higher than the national average but was currently sitting at 2%.
- Unemployment had reduced and apprenticeship start ups had risen.
- Qualifications achieved by young people had improved especially level 2 at aged 16 and 19 and level 3 at aged 19.

Officers confirmed their targets were ambitious and although they had achieved good results they would continue to work on improving these measures. They highlighted how some priorities could change throughout the year and commended their partner organisations for supporting them in their achievements and for finding employment opportunities that provided job progression.

In answer to Members questions officers stated:

- That some targets were not met due to factors that could not be foreseen including some funding cuts.
- They were working on the importance of travelling to work and encouraging young people to look further a field for opportunities.
- They were encouraging individuals to invest in their careers long term, especially in those job sectors that had employee skills gaps.

- Work was continuing on retraining adults and loans were available to support this.
- Consultation with the construction industry, to ensure any skills gaps were filled, was ongoing.
- Support to develop digital skills with students and young people was taking place.
- The school curriculum was not their responsibility but a school Headteacher was on their Board and they would use this avenue to flag concerns.
- The curriculum for all post 16 education had been reconfigured to include work related learning to give young people more employability and entrepreneurial skills.

Members considered the York Skills and Employment Plan for 2016-2020 that included key employment and growth sectors, graduate interns and apprentices, strategic drivers and levers. It was suggested that the new draft skills strategy should be brought back to this Committee for consideration.

Members thanked officers for their update.

Resolved: That the update be noted.

Reason: To keep the Committee updated on the delivery of joint services.

66. York Theatre Royal - Service Level Agreement Performance Bi-annual Update Report

Members considered a report that informed them of the progress and performance of the York Theatre Royal under the current Service Level Agreement (SLA).

The Chief Executive of the York Citizens Theatre Trust was in attendance to give an update of delivery against the SLA and confirmed they had met all their conditions between the period September 2015 and April 2016 by providing:

- A year round programme of work which included in house productions, a pantomime, youth theatre productions, touring drama productions and hiring out to local amateur companies.
- Sign language interpreted and audio described performances and touch tours.
- A regular Youth Theatre for at least 250 young people.

- Educational activities related to each main house production, including special matinees, talks, teachers' packs, workshops and visits to schools.
- A range of activities to engage older people in activities connected with the Theatre.
- A new programme for The Studio including promoting new and culturally diverse work.
- Student placements and careers advice to support the development of a strong local creative sector.
- A creative production hub for the city through the De Grey Complex and the Theatre.

Members noted that the Theatre reopened following a £6 million capital investment on 22 April 2016 and that the partnership with the National Railway Museum (NRM) during the refurbishments was well managed and the transition was a huge success.

In answer to Members questions it was confirmed:

- A Council representative would continue to have a place on their Board.
- Funding from the National Arts Council would continue.
- The refurbishments had received very positive responses from users.

Members thanked the Chief Executive for her update and congratulated the Theatre on their redevelopment and the programme of work they delivered at the NRM. Members encouraged them to continue the excellent work with children and young people including the outreach projects.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To fulfil the Council's role under the Service Level Agreement

67. Explore Libraries and Archives Mutual: Performance Update, 2015/16 Half Year Report

Members considered a report that updated them on the performance of Explore York Libraries and Archives Mutual Ltd (Explore) during the second 6 months of 2015/16.

The Chief Executive of Explore York Libraries and Archives was in attendance to give an update on their performance. She confirmed:

- A new reading cafe would be set up in the Homestead Park.
- Their new website was now live and had been designed by York Mix.
- They were entering their third year of independence and had secured charitable status allowing them to raise money through donations.
- A bid to the Arts Council had been successful and would generate £97,000 over three years to develop York Explore as a cultural hub in the city centre.
- A new Executive Assistant had been recruited and work was underway to develop Explore as a strong and sustainable organisation.
- They were working with the Workforce Development Unit to deliver a two year plan to develop staff.
- Active borrowers was up by 21% but visits had fallen by 4.4% over a two year period and officers were instigating a more rigorous system of monitoring and intervention to improve these figures.

In answer to Members questions the Chief Executive confirmed:

- the toy library would be utilised more and options to support families who would welcome this service would be considered.
- work had taken place to encourage more users to utilise the digital opportunities in libraries across the city.
- she would verify the number of users who visited Explore for digital use only.
- new internal signage would be completed in York Explore shortly and the external signage was still with planners.
- options to increase internal and external funding was being considered.
- libraries in Tang Hall, Huntington and New Earswick would be improved.
- they would be developing their philanthropy strategy.

Members thanked the Chief Executive for her update and the Chair encouraged Members to send a tweet on Friday 15th July at 11am to promote York Flash Read at #yorkflashread.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To help monitor the service received under the contract.

68. York Learning - Strategic Plan Update and Progress Report 2015/16

Members considered a report that presented performance data for York Learning and provided an update and progress report against the service's strategic plan.

The Head of York Learning confirmed the service had undergone a short Ofsted report in February 2016. The thorough inspection covered two judgements, the safeguarding arrangements and whether their service continued to be judged as good, and Ofsted concluded that was the case.

Officers found this particularly encouraging as the result confirmed their service had continued to maintain a good standard of provision despite significant changes in funding and a number of reorganisations over the last 5 years.

Members noted the service plan actions for 2015/16 and officers confirmed:

- The European Structural and Investment Fund bid had been delayed but York Learning remained in a strong position and results should be announced soon.
- They were on target to hit £90K to maximise learning loans for aged 24+ by expending and developing new programmes for those seeking to improve their skills
- They had exceeded the targets expected for students enrolling on non qualification bearing courses.

In answer to Members questions, it was confirmed:

- The 24+ loans came from a government student loan company and the loan must be used on an approved qualification that was delivered by a permitted provider.
- All staff had been trained on safeguarding arrangements which were robust and very affective.

Members thanked the Head of York Learning for his update.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

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

69. Learning and Culture Policy and Scrutiny Committee Draft Workplan for 2016/17

Members considered the committee's work plan for the 2016/17 Municipal year.

It was noted that a number of membership changes would be made to the Learning and Culture Policy and Scrutiny Committee which would include a change of Chair to the Committee and the Tour De France Task Group.

Members agreed the following changes to the workplan:

- Attendance of the Executive Member for Education, Children & Young People's Services be slipped to the 13th July meeting.
- That the Tour De France Task Group would aim to present their draft final report at the 13th July meeting.

Members were invited to put forward any topic ideas to be considered for the next municipal year.

The Chair noted that Cllr Looker would be standing down as a member of the Committee and thanked her for all her contributions over the years .

Resolved: That the work plan be agreed subject to the amendments detailed above.

Reason: To keep the committee's work plan updated.

Cllr Taylor, Chair

[The meeting started at 6.15 pm and finished at 8.00 pm].