
Meeting	Learning & Culture Policy and Scrutiny Committee
Date	15 September 2015
Present	Councillors Taylor (Chair), Fenton (Vice-Chair), Dew, Looker, Jackson, K Myers, Wells and Dr Dickinson (Co-opted Statutory Member)
Apologies	Mr Thomas

18. Declarations of Interest

Members were asked to declare any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests, any prejudicial interests or disclosable pecuniary interests which they might have in respect of the business on the agenda.

Cllr Looker declared a personal non prejudicial interest in agenda item 5 that she is a member of York Theatre Royal.

Cllr Myers declared a personal non prejudicial interest in agenda item 6 and 9 that he is a member of Friends of York Walls, Make it York and York Heritage Group.

Cllr Taylor declared a personal non prejudicial interest in agenda item 9 that he is also a member of Friends of York Walls.

19. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the last meeting of the Learning and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 29 July 2015 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

It was noted that in the resolved section of item 17, point (iii), bullet point 2, the York Museum Trust charging item would not be added to the workplan as the Executive were now considering this.

20. Public Participation

It was reported that there had been one registration to speak at the meeting, under the Council's Public Participation Scheme on matters within the remit of the committee and agenda item 6.

Mary Broadhead expressed her concerns regarding wasted income spent on building then demolishing the toilets in Parliament Street and the homeless persons refuge on Stonebow. She highlighted her concerns regarding the removal of the Fountain in Parliament Street and confirmed she had great difficulty in finding any individual costings on projects done during the regeneration of York City Programme. She suggested the Fountain could stay and be used as a seating area which would incur very little expense. She felt the city centre lacked inexpensive public toilets and that the car parking was too expensive. She also questioned why Newgate Market had been renamed York Market.

21. Attendance of Executive Member for Education, Children & Young People's Services - Briefing on Priorities & Challenges for 2015/16

The Executive Member for Education, Children and Young People was in attendance and highlighted the following areas as her challenges and priorities for 2015/16:

- Budgetary savings
- Moving all schools to OFSTED rating good or outstanding.
- Managing the academisation of schools in York including the idea of 'the York School'
- Narrowing the gap in attainment
- The new sector-led school improvement model
- More availability of school places
- Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation
- Maintaining appropriate numbers of Looked after Children.
- The development of the Children's Centre model
- Refining the Early Help Strategy

In answer to Members questions the Executive Member confirmed that:

- As York was a low funded authority, she planned to lobby in Westminster for additional funding.
- Since the introduction of free school meals for reception to year 2 children the pupil premium figures had been affected.
- Schools would be campaigning and encouraging parents to register their child, if eligible, to enable schools to receive the maximum funding allocation.
- The current number of Looked After Children was around 190 and it was anticipated that early intervention would allow this figure to drop.
- To respond to the insufficient places available in some York schools, the space available in schools would be measured to help optimise the use of that space.

- The Council would maintain their partnership with all schools regardless of their status.

Members suggested the Executive Member considered the Free School Meals Scrutiny Review reports and resolutions when campaigning.

The Chair thanked the Executive Member for her update and offered support if required, in preparing for Westminster.

Resolved: That the Executive Member update be received and noted.

Reason: To ensure that the Committee is kept updated on the Executive Member's priorities and challenges.

22. York Theatre Royal: 2014/15 Bi-annual Performance Update

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

The Chief Executive gave an update and confirmed:

- York Theatre Royal's major refurbishment started in April 2015 and was now due to re-open in spring 2016.
- Performances had taken place in the De Grey Ballroom, at the Signal Box Theatre in the National Railway Museum (NRM), at the Imphal Barracks and at 16 other venues across the city as part of the York International Shakespeare Festival.
- Partnerships with York Schools, York College, York St John College and the University of York continued enabling seven cluster schools to perform extracts from Henry IV and V.
- York Conservation Trust had taken ownership of the Theatre and had made a significant financial contribution to replace the roof.
- A range of activities to engage older people continued to take place.

In answer to Members questions the Chief Executive confirmed:

- they were currently working with seven schools across the City, covering different aspects of the curriculum.
- they used funding from the research council to work with York St John's College.
- that following the reduction in funding from City of York Council the Theatre raised income through ticket sales, reducing staff, investments and contributions.

- they had always made allowances for the Archaeology work but it had proved greater than anticipated and some structural work and asbestos found had also contributed to the delays.
- a quantity of funding for the roof had come from the York Conservative Trust but 4.4million was still needed for the internal projects.
- the Council no longer owned the Theatre but the relationship between the two was still strong.

Members congratulated the Theatre on their new residency at the NRM and some Members confirmed they had enjoyed 'In Fog and Falling Snow', the Shakespeare project and The Railway Children.

Resolved: That the report be noted

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

23. Scrutiny Arrangements Around Make it York

Members considered a report that informed them of their role in scrutinising Make it York (MiY).

It was highlighted that Make it York would participate in citywide partnerships relevant to business growth, visitor economy and culture, and the development of York's Economy & Place Strategy, including elements around tourism and culture. Members noted that MiY was less than 6 months old and would report to the Shareholders Committee, the Executive and two scrutiny committees, Economic Development & Transport Policy & Scrutiny Committee and Learning & Culture Policy & Scrutiny Committee.

MIY would administer various areas including Economic Development, Inward Investment, Science City York, York Markets, City Centre Management and Visit York so Members agreed it did require views from a number of directions.

It was noted that Make it York required time to compose and consider its agenda and Members suggested a bi annual report be received on issues that affected the Learning & Culture Policy & Scrutiny Committee. In particular, the Committee requested an update on the removal of Parliament Street Fountain, and feedback on the implementation of the recommendations that arose from the previous Night Time Economy Scrutiny Review.

Members thanked the Chief Executive for his update.

Resolved: (i) That the contents of the report be noted.
(ii) That a bi annual report be received.
(iii) That a future update be provided on the removal of Parliament Street fountain.

Reason: To inform the Committee of the respective roles of the Executive, the Shareholder Committee and this Committee in relation to Make it York.

24. 2014/15 Finance and Performance Year End Report

Members received a report that analysed the financial outturn and performance data for 2014/15 by reference to the service plan and budgets for all of the relevant services falling under the responsibility of the Director of Communities and Neighbourhoods and the Director of Children's Services, Education and Skills.

Officers gave an update and confirmed:

- that the year end position of the draft outturn overspend was around £600k
- the number of children in care and children subject to child protection plans remained stable throughout 2014/15.
- child protection plans (CPP) continued to be robustly monitored and quarter one results showed that children on CPP's was stabilising.
- The percentage of care leavers who continued in education or training had dropped and officers would continue to monitor this.

In answer to Members questions officers stated that:

- they were in the process of developing a new in-care strategy which would enable them to know more about care leavers aged 19, 20 and 21.
- the vacant posts within Educational Psychology had not affected the service provided and it still continued to generate an income.
- the under spends on nursery places had improved and was now at the expected levels.

Members thanked officers.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To update the committee on the latest financial and performance position for 2014-15.

25. 2015/16 First Quarter Finance & Performance Monitoring Report

Members considered a report which analysed the latest performance for 2015/16 and forecasted the financial outturn position by reference to the service plan and budgets for all of the relevant services falling under the responsibility of the Director of Communities & Neighbourhoods and the Director of Children's Services, Education & Skills.

The Finance Manager of Children's Services, Education and Skills, advised the committee that the council, at this stage, were looking at a projected overspend of approximately £1.3m for services in 2015/16. He discussed some of the current pressures including the overspend from 2014/15 in children's social care.

It was confirmed that the number of Children Looked After (CLA) was unlikely to reduce and that York's unit cost per CLA was already the lowest of all 150 Local Authority's nationally. Opportunities to reduce budgets would continue but options elsewhere within the directorate would need to be considered.

The Finance Manager and Director of Children's Services, Education and Skills responded to queries raised by members regarding the information contained in the report.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To update the committee on the latest financial and performance position for 2015/16.

26. Learning & Culture Policy & Scrutiny Committee Work Plan 2015/16 and new Scrutiny Topic

Members considered the Committee's work plan for the 2015/16 municipal year and discussed the scrutiny topic submitted on York Walls.

Resolved: That the following be received:

- (i) A feasibility report on York Walls.
- (ii) An update report from Make it York on Parliament Street Fountain.
- (iii) An update on York 300 including the performance figures regarding Narrowing the Gap and an update on the Scrutiny recommendations.

Reason: To keep the Committees workplan updated.

Cllr Taylor, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 7.45 pm].

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