
Meeting	York Museums Trust SLA Scrutiny Review Task Group
Date	14 March 2016
Present	Councillors Dew, Fenton and Looker (Chair)

1. Declarations of Interest

Members were asked to declare any personal or prejudicial 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. No interests were declared.

2. Public Participation

The Vice President of Friends of York Art Gallery spoke on item 3 York Museums Trust SLA Scrutiny Review – Draft Final Report. He confirmed that the Friends group had concerns when charges for all visitors were introduced but did understand why the Art Gallery had to charge residents. After receiving a large funding cut from City of York Council he believed the York Museums Trust had done their best to make the gallery accessible to residents. He confirmed that the Friends membership had grown since the charges were implemented but with a fall in visitor numbers to the Art Gallery, he felt the charges should be dropped to allow attendance figures to rise.

3. York Museums Trust SLA Scrutiny Review - Draft Final Report

The Task Group considered a report that presented information gathered to date in support of the review and asked them to consider the options brought forward to meet the scrutiny review objectives.

The future legal relationship between the Council and YMT was discussed and having considered the information provided, the Task Group agreed that it should be based on the following key building blocks that would replace all the current agreements and leases:

- A funding agreement which would govern how the Council would fund YMT.
- A charity with a governing document or scheme, which would set out how the buildings and collections would be managed.

The Task Group considered the funding agreement and agreed that it should be made up of the following four core elements:

- i) Common Partnership Objectives for Museums Provision
- ii) Reporting Mechanisms:-
The Task Group agreed that it would be appropriate for YMT to report back to the Learning & Culture Policy and Scrutiny Committee twice a year. The report should cover the activities of both YMT and the Council, highlighting development and challenges against:
 - The Core Partnership Objectives
 - The Long-Term Financial Plan
 - The Capital Development Plan
- iii) A Long-Term Financial Plan
- iv) A Projected Capital Development Plan

The Scrutiny Officer tabled a number of email responses to the press release that was issued in support of the review and confirmed that members of the public would also have the opportunity to speak at Learning and Culture Policy and Scrutiny Committee on 21 March 2016 and Executive on 28 April 2016 when both committees would be considering the Task Groups recommendations.

The Chief Executive of YMT was in attendance and confirmed that the Arts Council was opening a portal in August 2016 to give organisations the opportunity to apply for a 4 year financial funding plan. She stated that the Arts Council would consider the funding they received from City of York Council (CYC) and suggested an outline long-term forward financial plan from CYC would further support their application.

Officers suggested that in considering how best to establish, maintain and update the Funding Agreement, an annual discussion with YMT should take place between August and September, and in support of that discussion YMT would need to provide their

refreshed 5 year financial plan and an updated capital development plan.

In considering the current management arrangements for all of the heritage and cultural assets, the Task Group agreed that a more consistent model of stewardship would be beneficial, as it would put a double-lock protection on the assets so that neither YMT nor the Council could dispose of or use them outside of the terms of the governing document or scheme without the other's consent and would also:

- Provide clarity and consistency of approach regarding the long-term use and management of the assets.
- Reassure potential donors to the collections regarding the long-term security of their donations.
- Reassure potential funders, legacy donors and others regarding the long-term security of their contributions.
- Demonstrate the long-term commitment of both the Council and YMT to a partnership approach to protect, preserve and enhance the assets for the public good.

The Task Group agreed that a charitable scheme similar to the one currently in place for the Yorkshire Museums and Gardens would be the preferred option with CYC as custodian trustee and YMT as managing trustee.

They noted how the free resident's festival in January had been a great success for the Art Gallery and queried if any other free events would take place. The Chief Executive confirmed that they would not want to undermine the YMT Card but would be offering free entrance to residents for one weekend in June.

The Task Group congratulated YMT on the work they do to engage the public and the continuing links they have with York schools.

Resolved:

That the following review recommendations be agreed:

- In regard to the Council's financial contribution to YMT:
 - i. A Funding Agreement be developed and maintained consisting of four elements: Common Partnership Objectives for Museums Provision; Reporting Mechanisms; A Long-Term Financial Plan; A Projected Capital Development Plan.

- ii. A 5 year rolling financial plan, with commentary to support the Council in its consideration of its contribution to maintaining YMT's core business.
- iii. YMT to provide a long-term capital development plan to inform the Council's consideration of its support of YMT's capital development programme.
- In regard to future custodianship arrangements:
- iv. A consistent charitable framework be implemented for all assets and collections, which addressed the objectives identified by the task group and which together with the proposed Funding Agreement, replace the various current legal agreements.
- To ensure YMT can operate as an effective business-like charity:
- v. The Common Partnership Objectives for Museums Provision be endorsed as the partnership's long- term shared intentions.
- vi. That YMT report back bi-annually to the Council via Learning & Culture Policy & Scrutiny Committee on developments and challenges with respect to the Common Partnership Objectives, the Financial Plan and the Capital Development Plan as the basis for discussion on shared opportunities for the partnership between the Council and YMT.

Reason: To inform the future renewed agreement between YMT and the Council and to conclude this review in line with scrutiny procedures & protocols

Cllr Looker, Chair

[The meeting started at 4.00 pm and finished at 5.10 pm].