

## **Possible Future Scrutiny Reviews**

### **Summary**

1. This report presents Members with a draft work plan for the Committee and a response from the Director of Learning, Culture & Children's Services in regard to possible future scrutiny topics.

### **Background**

2. At their meeting on 3 April 2008, Members discussed the introduction of a work plan to support and inform the work of this Committee. The Chair and Vice-Chair agreed to meet in advance of this meeting to produce a draft work plan for Members consideration – see Annex A (to follow).
3. The Committee had also previously agreed to hold a formal discussion on possible future topics for review. This was scheduled to take place at meeting in March 2008 and the Director of Learning Culture & Children's Services was invited to attend.
4. Due to ongoing work at that time, the discussion on future topics was re-scheduled for this meeting, which unfortunately the Director of Learning Culture & Children's Services is unable to attend. He has therefore provided written information on two areas that may benefit from a scrutiny review:
5. Facilities for Young People  
Members will be familiar with the national evidence that suggests that the general public believes that there are not enough places for young people to go, nor things for them to do, outside of school hours - and that this in turn contributes to anti-social behaviour. Local surveys such as ResOp paint a similar picture, and the consultation recently conducted for the new Sustainable Community Strategy found young people themselves expressing similar views.
6. There is less of a consensus, however, on the best model for youth facilities. In fact the trend in recent years (both nationally and locally) has been to pull back from the old-fashioned model of a pool table in a church hall, and to target resources on more intensive activities with the most vulnerable young people. Recently, though, there has been a resurgence of interest in providing more universal facilities, especially those that have been driven by a deep understanding of what young people themselves really want.
7. There will be a number of opportunities in coming years to consider the provision of new young people's facilities in York. There is also a specific, short-term opportunity to bid into a new national pot, branded 'myplace', which will be investing capital via

the Big Lottery Fund over the next three years, into "world class youth facilities driven by the active participation of young people and their views and needs". The expectation is that capital sums will be invested in iconic new or refurbished facilities, particularly close to city centres.

8. The key Issues are:
  - In order to respond to opportunities such as that afforded by the "myplace" initiative, we need to be clear about our priorities in York.
  - What is the reality of current provision for our young people and how is it distributed across the city?
  - Is it what young people themselves are looking for?
  - What is the right strategic balance between universal facilities and targeted youth work?
  - If we are contemplating new facilities, should they be building-based or on an outreach basis - should it be a discrete facility, or integrated with other community provision?
  - What are the best governance arrangements - should it be community controlled, professionally supported, or some other model?
  - How can we secure additional revenue to support the running costs of new facilities?
  
9. Such a topic could be supported by evidence from both national and local research, and examples of best practice. The new, integrated Young People's Services (YPS) will have their own ideas to contribute. However, timing would be tight if we are to influence bids into the 'myplace' pot, as the closing date for these is September 2008.
  
10. The Use of New Technologies  
This would create a currently hardly touched opportunity for assessing the risks and shaping policy development in this important area. New technology brings great opportunities but also opportunities for misuse; parents are concerned about who their children may be communicating with on-line (is sufficient guidance and advice provided); nationally examples of misuse of new technology - cyber bullying/happy slapping (is this a problem in York); but also technology being used to aid communication e.g. texting parents on school attendance; questions have also been asked as to whether we should ban mobile phones in schools (some attempt to) on grounds that they are distracting from learning.
  
11. The key issues are:
  - What technologies?
  - What evidence of use and abuse?
  - What risks - how minimised?
  - What opportunities - how are they maximised?

## **Consultation**

12. Both the suggested topics, are a result of discussions with key managers within the Learning, Culture & Children's Services Directorate, and have been provided in the context of awareness of key issues/challenges and existing planning activity. They

are not in priority and indeed each one has sub-elements that alone may justify scrutiny consideration. It should be noted that the information provided is merely to provoke an early debate around these themes and it is not intend to take the place of a full feasibility study.

## **Analysis**

13. If members are interested in pursuing either of these topics, a full feasibility report will need to be produced which suggests a brief clear remit for the review, and a start date and timeframe for the review's completion. Members will also need to refer to the work plan, which is being considered and agreed at this meeting.

## **Options**

14. Having regard to the information provided within this report, Members may decide to:
  - i. Request the attendance of the Director of Learning, Culture & Children's Services and/or other key officers at the next meeting of the Committee to discuss the suggested topics in more detail.
  - ii. Agree that sufficient information has been provided in order to move forward and request a feasibility report on either/both the topics suggested
  - iii. Agree to retain either/both topics for progression at a later date.
  - iv. Amend and/or approve the draft work plan presented at this meeting

## **Corporate Strategy**

15. In regard to the topic on 'Facilities for Young People', Members might consider that a review would contribute to the following corporate Direction Statements:

'Our ambition is to be clear about what we will do to meet the needs of our communities and then deliver the best quality services that we can afford'

'We will listen to communities and ensure that people have a greater say in deciding local priorities'

## **Implications**

16. There are no known Financial, HR, Equalities, Legal, Crime and Disorder, IT or other implications associated with this report. Should Members decide to proceed with review of these topics, there will be associated resourcing costs dependant on the agreed remits.

## **Risk Management**

17. In compliance with the Councils risk management strategy, there are no known risks associated with the recommendations of this report.

## Recommendations

18. Members are asked to:

- Agree any changes to and/or approve the draft work plan presented at this meeting
- Agree how they wish to proceed in regard to both of the suggested topics for future scrutiny review

Reason: To ensure work can proceed in line with scrutiny procedures and protocols.

## Contact Details

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### Wards Affected:

All

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

**Background Papers:** None

**Annex A** - Draft Work Plan