

Report to Council from the Executive Member for Culture, Leisure & Communities

Since being appointed to the Executive for this portfolio, I have tried to be as open as possible, to meet as many organisations as possible and to push forward with the new administration's ambitions within Culture, Leisure and Communities.

On 23rd July, I reported to the Children, Education and Communities Scrutiny committee about progress in this portfolio. I have tried where possible to avoid repetition, and focus on what has changed since that report. My July report is available at <https://democracy.york.gov.uk/mgChooseDocPack.aspx?ID=11377>. I am as ever happy to answer questions, clarify and expand on any points where members wish – please do get in touch.

I would like to thank Charlie Croft, Laura Clark, Andy Laslett, Paul Ramskill, Ian Cartwright, Angie Padfield, Simon Brereton and Will Boardman for their assistance in compiling this report.

Community Venues and Hubs

Since taking on this portfolio, I have visited a number of community venues and met the wonderful volunteers who have taken on the responsibility of managing these buildings from the Council. These community venues are providing the backbone to some exciting development projects and activities across the city.

The new Community Venues Coordinator is now in post, and continues to support the voluntary groups that do an excellent job running the centres and hubs. The sustainability of community venues is a key focus for us and I am pleased to see how effective the Council's small grants process is at empowering the management committees to make investments and deliver projects. This balanced with commercial lettings gives the venues a solid financial basis moving forward.

At my Decision Session on 22 November I approved the report *Connecting People and Places - A Community Hub Approach*. The development of community hubs as a vehicle for supporting and

engaging with York's communities is a priority for the Council. The 4Community Growth Area-Based Financial Inclusion Project (4CGY) tested out a particular approach to developing community hubs over a 30 month period from 2017 onwards. This paper highlighted the learning from that project and applied that learning in order to deliver a wider programme of developing community hubs over the next two years.

Through intervening early and recognising the power of 'people and place' we will continue to build new relationships with communities and citizens and reform public services. Critically residents are at the heart of this process, and are being supported to lead change on the ground and to create more resilient communities.

Human Rights and Equalities

I again chaired the Human Rights Board on 2nd December. We received the final report on the board's first piece of work, on young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). The report draws on the voice of young people, as well as employers and professionals who work in this area. The report makes a range of recommendations aimed at ensuring that all young people should be able to access suitable education, training and employment.

The board also received four updates on work strands related to homelessness in the city, all of which explore homelessness from a human rights perspective.

I had the pleasure of meeting Laura Mingins, Head of Stakeholder Engagement at Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). Among many matters, we discussed how as a Council we are promoting human rights and how we can work more closely with EHRC on delivering projects and sharing best practice from York.

On 28 November, Executive approved the *Refreshing the Council's Approach to Equalities* report. The report aimed to set the scene for a renewed vision, pushing forward to ensure York is a beacon of equality, where human rights are championed and seekers of sanctuary are welcomed.

In order to further strengthen the Council's approach to equalities, the report set out an action plan, it endorsed the key elements of York's

equalities system and noted progress against the Council's equality objectives. The report also resolved to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism. This resolution was in part as the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government wrote to local authorities asking them to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition of antisemitism. This definition is a tool for public bodies to understand how antisemitism manifests itself and to demonstrate a commitment to engaging with the experiences of Jewish communities and supporting them against the contemporary challenges they face.

Leisure Facilities

The following are a few highlights of leisure facilities across York in the last few months. In the summer, GLL replaced the All Weather Pitch surface and shock pad at Energise, which was due for replacement. Customer feedback has been excellent and the investment welcomed by regular pitch users.

GLL have been working hard to implement its Energy Management strategy which includes replacing 40 main pool hall lights at Yearsley Pool to new LED low energy lighting, installation of a pool cover and other LED lights at Energise.

GLL continue to reach out to communities by hosting 'Community Foundation Workshop' training to promote the foundation and crowdfunding model to seven external organisations, please see www.gll.org/b2b/pages/community-foundation for more information on this.

GLL are continuing to work alongside York City Football Foundation to deliver walking football which is growing in popularity, and additionally GLL's Sports Foundation continues to raise its profile with over 20 local athletes benefiting from this national scheme (see www.gll.org/b2b/pages/about-the-gll-sport-foundation)

After £2.45m investment by CYC, the Burnholme Sports Centre will open to the general public from 8 January 2020, please see website for details: www.better.org.uk/leisure-centre/york/burnholme. Burnholme boasts a 25 station gym with a range of state-of-the-art Technogym equipment. Two fitness studios will offer classes such as circuits, group

cycle and each studio will also offer virtual classes. There are outdoor pitches for either training or matches. The sports hall will host a range of activities such as gymnastics.

Explore Libraries

This is a fantastic time for our city's libraries and archives service, with the appointment of the new 15-year service contract to Explore.

Since being appointed, I have visited York Explore, Acomb Explore, Clifton Explore, Poppleton Library, Bishopthorpe Library, the Centre@Burnholme, Rowntree Park Reading Café, the Haxby Mobile Library and have even had a ride in the Mobile Library. That still leaves eight Explore sites to visit, which I intend to do as soon as possible. It's clear when visiting York's libraries just how much residents love what they offer, and how integral they are to the communities they serve.

I am very optimistic about the future of libraries in York with the focus on co-locating libraries at the heart of our communities to create hubs, which provide vital advice and information to those who need us most. The vision that was co-produced with residents is clear, simple and one that will see our library service become stronger in the future.

The "On the Drawing Board' Archive" project has just been completed. The collection includes thousands of plans from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries deposited by the Architects' and Engineers' Office of the City of York Council making them readily available to staff currently working on our streets as well as the public.



I had the privilege of cataloguing a couple of the historic plans on a visit to the see the volunteers in action at the old Tang Hall Library site.

The Council has made commitments to improve the Library Learning Centre's at Acomb and Clifton. Similar to the Centre@Burnholme, this is

likely to involve co-locating with other like-minded partners to provide centres with multiple services.

This commitment took a great leap forward on 24th October when Executive approved the Future Libraries Investment Programme report. As part of the report, Executive approved the approach, scope, and governance arrangements for the programme, as well as approving a budget of £150k to appoint a project manager, an operational budget for the first two years of the programme and commissioning of the required professional services. I'm proud that at a time when library services across the country are being cut, this administration is investing millions into producing world-class facilities that will make a real difference in our communities.

Our successful partnership with Explore provides us with an opportunity to bring our existing library facilities even closer to communities by locating them with other local services, while the Gateway libraries will be enhanced, to continue to provide a gold standard for library provision in York.

Looking ahead, I am excited to note that two new library facilities will be opening in the next 12 months:

The York Community Stadium, Community Hub - This will be an innovative type of library aimed at attracting individuals and groups who would not traditionally use libraries, and giving users access to books, IT equipment, free Wi-Fi and a range of learning opportunities, whilst enjoying a drink or snack from the community hub café.

It will be based alongside other community partners in the Community Hub, which is a large atrium in the East Stand that links the stadium to the new leisure centre entrance.

Explore have already started working closely with the York City Football Club Foundation and York City Knights Foundation and have secured a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund of £57,500. This will fund a one-year joint project based around the importance of sport to our communities.

Haxby and Wigginton Library - I am pleased that we are close to securing a partnership with the 2nd Haxby and Wigginton Scout Group to develop and extend the scout headquarters building to include a new reading café, looking out onto Ethel Ward play park and playing fields. I

feel this will provide residents with a fantastic new facility and be as successful as other reading cafés in York.

A few figures from Explore to demonstrate continued success:

- The summer reading challenge was again massive success, 16% of local children took part in the Summer Reading Challenge which made Explore joint top of the Yorkshire region once again.
- Footfall is up across all libraries (Apr-Nov 19 vs Apr-Nov 18), and is particularly strong at Explore libraries with newly appointed managers: Huntington +13% & Strensall +15%.
- Volunteer hours YTD (Apr-Nov) are +17% up compared with 2018.

As a last note on libraries, I would like to once again wish Acomb and Clifton Explore Centre's very happy 50th birthdays. Many thanks to all the staff, volunteers and residents over the last 50 years who have made these libraries the successful and vibrant spaces they are today.

York Learning

York Learning continues to deliver a range of learning programmes to support people into employment, to improve their skills and to support their personal development.

The service continues to be funded almost exclusively from external contract funding and fee income. For the academic year 2018/19 this is in the region £3.1m, an increase of about £300k on the previous year. Partnership and sub-contractor working is strong and has good development routes for learners into and from the programmes, enabling the service to meet a wide range of learners interest and needs.

Over the past 12 months York Learning has been working with North Yorkshire County Council and East Riding County Council. This was first formalised during the academic year with the Head of Service being seconded to North Yorkshire for 4 days a week, to support service developments and to enhance collaboration.

On 23rd September 2019, I was pleased to approve the *York Learning: Future Direction* report at my Decision Session. York Learning's

Strategic Service Plan, approved at my decision session in July, included the objective to *Consolidate partnership working with North Yorkshire County Council and agree a strategy for future collaborative working*. This reflects the view of both services that the two services would be stronger, more capable of taking a strategic approach, and better able to respond to change and deliver service improvement if there were in place formal arrangements for wider collaboration in the management of the two services. It was therefore proposed that the new, joint Head of Services was asked to investigate the potential for further sharing of management functions. There is no proposal at this stage to join the two services, they will remain separate, continue to be accountable separately to their respective authorities and retain separate Skills Funding Agency contracts.

I'm pleased that the new Head of Service, Harriet Serra is now in post and has made a flying start to the role in the last few weeks.

The Family Learning team were invited to lead on the community strand in the Social Mobility project which is running in the west of the city. This is aimed specifically at closing "The Word Gap" between disadvantaged children's outcomes and their peers at age 5, which has been a persistent problem in York. The service has been successful in securing a grant of £50,613 over three years from Shine, an education charity based in Leeds. York Learning propose to build capacity by identifying and training "Community Learning Champions" such as mid-day supervisors and TAs as well as "experienced" volunteers and Family Learning learners. The service will be providing them with networking opportunities and basic IAG (information, advice and guidance) training. This will promote engagement with families, recruiting them onto bespoke Family Learning provision and other appropriate learning paths.

York Learning has been successful in a funding bid relating to Digital Inclusion from the Good Things Foundation to target low digital skills and entry level skills into the workplace. The award is for £10,000, and will fund 250 learners for the programme.

Ward Committees

A report '*Refresh of Ward Committees*' was approved by the Executive in August setting out, amongst other things, how the additional funding provided to wards is to be allocated.

The next four years will be an exciting period for ward committees. From implementing the Safer Communities Fund to additional litter bins, I'm keen to see continued innovation in this area, learning from other authorities and ensuring greater power and decision making is devolved to communities.

I'm pleased that many wards have already had their first ward committee meetings since the May election. I'd welcome any feedback from members on what their thoughts are on the ward committee structure and implementation. I had the pleasure of attending the Haxby & Wigginton Ward Committee meeting this September. It was great to see how residents and local organisations fed into local decision making, ensuring that local issues are higher on the agenda at the Council.



Cllr Hollyer speaking at the Haxby & Wigginton Ward Committee

The *'Refresh of Ward Committees'* report approved by Executive in August set out the future direction of ward working. This report and recommendations aim to reduce and remove unnecessary bureaucracy and delay in the council's processes whilst ensuring that effective governance, clarity of role and accountability in the use of public money are in place. The recommendations aimed to:

- Empower local communities by devolving more budgets to wards.
- Introduce a Safer Communities Fund to meet residents' expressed priorities.
- Give wards more control of spending on highways to ensure that residents' priorities are met within wards.
- Ensure timely delivery of Housing Environmental Improvement Schemes (HEIP).
- Engage local residents so that their views shape the council's priorities.
- Supports the local community and voluntary sector investing in its capacity as a source of expertise and as service providers.
- Enables ward members, as informed community champions, to lead ward teams in delivery of well-informed local priorities.
- Gets residents increasingly involved in local initiatives and volunteering, increasing local pride.

- Creates strong links to service and partner organisations e.g. Residents Associations and Parish Councils.
- Increases community capacity so that all communities are able to take up the opportunities open to them.

Sport and Active Leisure

➤ Active Lives Survey

Sport England's latest Active Lives Survey published in October 2019 shows that York again has one of the highest percentages of people who are achieving the Chief Medical Officers guidelines for 150 minutes physical activity a week. In April 2019, 73.1% of the York adult population met these guidelines; this has increased to 74.9% this October, compared with the national figure which has increased from 62.6% to 63.2% and regionally from 60.6% to 65.1%.

York has reduced the numbers of the adult population doing less than 30 minutes of activity per week from 14.4% in April to 14.2% in October compared with the national figure which has dropped from 25.1% to 24.8% since April and regionally from 26.9% to 23%. This ranks York as one of lowest in the country.

➤ Burnholme Sports Centre

The team have continued to manage the sports facilities at Burnholme Sports Centre, offering continued access in the evenings and at weekends throughout the year. Works to the sports centre started in March this year.

The new sports centre is being developed around the former school sports hall and gym on the Burnholme site. This will complement the facilities at the new Community Stadium, Energise Leisure Centre and Yearsley Swimming Pool. I had the pleasure of visiting the site under construction on the 16th October.

The works were completed and the Council received the site back from the contractor on 2nd December 2019, it will have a new gym with 25 pieces of cardiovascular and resistance fitness machines, upgraded

changing for indoor and outdoor activities, a refurbished sports hall, as well as 2 new studios for spinning classes and aerobic fitness classes.

The multi-use games area (MUGA) has also seen the surface infilled with rubber crumb and the football goals. The site will be worked on by GLL throughout December and will transfer to them on 1 January 2020, with the site opening the week after. The relayed and drained grass sports pitches will be available for use from September 2020.

➤ **Community Health Champions**

There are currently 76 volunteer Community Health Champions registered with the programme that are actively having 'healthy conversations' across the city. A number of these Champions have also developed health promotion activities within their respective local communities. Examples include a walking group set up in partnership with Kyra Women's Project to get women who have had to overcome serious challenges to be more active, The Big T - a community meal for those that may be suffering from loneliness and isolation, a Mental Health Top Tips booklet and 'Food of the Fortnight' – a project to raise awareness of healthy eating at the Red Tower Food Bank.

Capturing the impact of this programme is a priority for the team. There is initial evidence that the programme is having a positive effect on the health of both the volunteers and beneficiaries as anticipated. A powerful example is one Champion who joined the programme because she wanted to support other parents who were dealing with children with mental health issues. When her daughter reached crisis point she knew how to help because of the training she had received through the programme. Her daughter now has the help she needs and this has had a significant impact on both their lives; *"Health Champions is such a positive thing in my life, it's been life changing"*. It is estimated the programme has already helped over 1300 people across the city to improve their health and wellbeing.

➤ **Community Sports Development**

Successful sports development depends largely on effective partnership and networking with a wide range of community groups. The Council's sports development officers have been working with community groups generating interest and increasing participation in sports.

Learn to Ride: During the summer, the team supported a 4 week learn to ride in partnership with United Bikes at York Mosque, this group was well attended each week and the participants are now riding confidently around the City of York.

Swimming: During these sessions women involved discussed wanting to swim, and many had teenage daughters and felt that as the girls had learnt to swim while in infant school many have not continued due to modesty issues and the girls do not engage in any form of physical activity outside of school. The sports development officers took away a list of the barriers preventing the ladies attending swim sessions and worked with GLL to see how these barriers could be broken down. A final meeting was arranged with a group from the Mosque, GLL and officers to visit Energise to view the facilities. The first swim is due to commence next week.

Sporting Memories: The Community Sports Development Officers have been engaging The Sporting Memories Foundation (funded by Sport England) to introduce them to other partner agencies in York. This work aimed to set up and deliver a dedicated sporting reminiscence and physical activity session to support older people with dementia, depression and loneliness by engaging them socially and helping to recall memories of watching or playing sport. Sporting reminiscence groups have run for many years, but with support from Sport England's Active Aging Programme, they are able to get more people over 50 physically and mentally active and fit. Working in partnership with the sport and active leisure team and JRHT, there is now a commitment to train volunteers and staff to deliver this programme in New Earswick and Foxwood starting in the new year.

National Sportspeople: We have launched the Free Access for National Sportspeople (FANS) programme, giving opportunity for free training for national sportspeople at either Energise Leisure Centre or University of York Sports Village. So far, there have four people supported through the scheme, whose sports include duathlon, triathlon, athletics and Ultimate Frisbee.

Grants scheme: The Sport and Active Leisure grants scheme has opened. The first option is the £500 small grants fund and the second is the £1000 hub club. We are currently advertising the funding pots through all networks. As part of the funding application we are encouraging sports clubs to sign up to support the mental health

recreation alliance charter, to encourage more people who suffer with mental ill health to get into sport and physical activity.

Disabilities: In December there is Disability Awareness Week in which the team are hosting several different sports in New Earswick and Acomb. Boccia tasters, indoor bowls, danceability, swimming and walking football are all taking place as part of the programme. At the New Earswick Folk Hall the team have worked in collaboration to set up some new chair-based exercise classes starting in the new year.

Volunteering

York's decision to adopt the internationally recognised Cities of Service impact volunteering model has continued to help us to address shared city priorities including loneliness and social isolation, health and wellbeing and young people achieving their potential. The cross sector 'People Helping Partnership' is embedding social action across the city, through volunteers helping to augment the design and delivery of public services. Our city-wide approach to catalyse greater levels of impact volunteering has in particular enabled us to address loneliness and is demonstrating measurable results.

Building on the success of the pilot Community Health Champions project and funded through the Nesta Connected Communities Innovation Fund, we are now entering year two of the programme. Please see evidence above in the Sport and Leisure section of my report, on the benefit and number of volunteer Community Health Champions.

York is taking part in the "Enabling Social Action Programme" as part of our programme of growing volunteering in the city. This is a partnership between the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and the Universities of Sheffield and Hull in collaboration with local authorities to support them to design and deliver services with local people, service users, and civil society organisations. In York, we have been working with others on ways of measuring our progress through the development of a "Good Life Scale" which invites people to think about where they are against a number of statements including "I feel connected to my community", "I am able to cope with life's ups and downs", and "I am helping other people in my community".

The Environment and Community team have launched a new Volunteer Leaf Clearer role for York residents and businesses. The purpose of the role is to clear leaves on council owned, or maintained, land to keep pavements and paths slip free, keep gullies clear to reduce localised flooding and to reduce leaf mould buildup. The team have run a series of training sessions for everyone wanting to get involved and have provide insurance and equipment.

Make It York

I continue to work with Make It York on their strategic priorities:

- City positioning and profile-raising to strengthen York's brand
- Attracting new business and inward investment
- Ensuring an exciting city-centre
- Delivering the cultural strategy

I am pleased that Helen Apsey has been appointed as the Head of Culture and Wellbeing, a newly created post that is jointly funded by the Council. Helen will be in post from mid-January.

In the area of tourism, Make It York are currently in the final stages of a new destination management plan for the city, building on the successful initiatives taken last year, including the *Only in York* campaign. As the council undertakes a refresh of its economic strategy, I will be working with Make It York to develop this work into a full tourism strategy for the city.

Since being appointed to the Executive, Cllr Waller and I have increased the frequency and structure of our client meetings with Make It York.

Tourism



The excellent Northern Lights event gives York Minster their best October on record

The latest Visit York analysis for November shows that visits to big attractions continue to go down (-4% vs October 2018), while small attractions still report an increase, by 1% vs last year. Year to date the results are still very polarised, with big attractions down -7% and small attractions up 11% vs 2018. York Minster has seen a significant increase in visitors due to a hugely successful Northern Lights event, making it as the best October on record. Visits to attractions with the York Pass have gone down by -19% vs October 2018.

The number of hotel room nights sold continue a growing trend with 5% increase vs October 2018, the result of room occupancy and the number of available rooms both growing by 3% and 2% respectively year-on-year. This equates to almost 4,450 more hotel room nights in October and almost 48,000 more for the whole year to date. Average room rates were very slightly down vs 2018, to £106.90, but remain 2% up YTD.

Sessions on the VisitYork website continue to show positive results with 12% increase compared to October 2018. From September, the Christmas webpage continues to be the most visited page on the whole website. Last Year VisitYork has gained a significant number of new followers across all social media channels and especially Facebook with the success of the Christmas Facebook event.

The new Liberal Democrat/Green administration is keen to listen to residents concerns in relation to how visitors contribute to the city, whilst acknowledging the benefits of a thriving tourism industry in York. From Purple Flag to exploring future consideration for a tourism levy/tax, this administration is taking an active lead in finding innovative ways to improve resident engagement, whilst also tackling the underlying challenges such as anti-social behaviour.

Cultural Strategy

The Cultural Strategy is a citywide plan that will see York's cultural infrastructure and its heritage assets transformed by 2025, with local residents proudly supporting and engaging in the diverse cultural life of the city.

The strategy sets out to evolve how York's cultural offer is experienced locally and perceived globally. It seeks to position York as a city where outstanding, internationally renowned heritage come together with a cutting-edge contemporary approach to creativity.

As mentioned under Make It York, Helen Apsey has been appointed as the Head of Culture and Wellbeing. Helen, alongside the Council and city actors, will drive forward and help implement the cultural strategy, alongside the devised working groups.

I look forward to the launch of the strategy. I am keen to ensure that all residents can see tangible ways in which this work will benefit them, from the 'every child an artist' aspiration feeding into the cultural passport work, to looking at how resident's weekend might evolve in the future to ensure wider and broader engagement in York's culture and arts.



I am pleased to say I have attended every Cultural Leaders Group (CLG) meeting since May, and I am confident that CLG will have a key role in ensuring the strategy continues to evolve, and that all residents will see the fruits of the hard work put in so far.

The Armed Forces Covenant

The Armed Forces Community Covenant Forum continues to be active and is progressing with the action plan development and implementation. Following detailed and careful research with our armed

forces community and partners, the action plan aims to meet the community's needs. This will include a focus on:

- Improving our understanding of our armed forces community and their needs
- Improving the training of our staff and partners in the business and charity sectors in order to better meet those needs
- Working with employers to encourage them to sign the covenant and encourage them to begin the journey through the employer recognition scheme.
- Working with our schools to better meet the needs of armed forces community families
- Working with health professionals and organisations to ensure suitable care packages are in place to meet the needs of the armed forces community and by encouraging GP practices to become members of the 'Recognised Armed Forces Accredited GP Practice Scheme'
- Continuing to improve our response to the housing needs of the armed forces community
- Helping to improve the transition from military to civilian life

As part of the development of the action plan, there was a development workshop for key partners and covenant signatories across York hosted by York CVS on 30th July. The workshop included group working, speakers from industry and the MOD, as well as a fish and chips supper for all delegates.

Armed Forces Day (29th June) was celebrated with a programme included free activities for the armed forces community including tickets to attractions, a family film showing and a meal for the armed forces community at the Mansion House hosted by the Lord Mayor. Free bus travel was provided and a range of other discounts. The Lord Mayor additionally hosted a reception at the start of the week at the Mansion House where we raised the AFD flag and presented the AFD standards to veterans.

I attended the North Yorkshire Armed Forces Covenant Conference on 11th October in Harrogate. It was good to share and learn from best practice, and it was great to see how City of York Council sets an example among North Yorkshire local authorities.

City of York Council were awarded Gold Award in the Ministry of Defence's Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS). The award is the top accolade an organisation can receive and acknowledges the contribution the authority makes in going the extra mile in support of the armed forces community. The Council is only the seventh employer in the whole of the Yorkshire and Humberside region to have won the award, which was launched by the Government five years ago.

There is an AFC business breakfast planned for Monday 20th April 2020 in the Hudson Room. The event is a partnership event between CYC and The RFCA. The ambition is that all the business in York who have signed the covenant, and those that have achieved the bronze, silver or gold award, will be invited to the breakfast and encouraged to bring a business who has not yet signed the covenant with them. The Chamber, FSB and our Business Friendly Council team will also be present.

On 21st October, the York Community Covenant Action Plan was approved at my decision session. The report agreed the new priority areas for action and approved the terms of reference for the Armed Forces Community Forum and for the new Delivery Group.

I am delighted that the city is continuing its close partnership with the armed forces.



Ian Cartwright (CYC) speaks about York and North Yorkshire's progress on the Covenant to a packed room of delegates at the North Yorkshire AFC conference