

York

Area Assessment

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oneplace

for an independent overview
of local public services

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York at a glance

This independent assessment by six inspectorates sets out how well local public services are tackling the major issues in York. It says how well they are delivering better results for local people and how likely these are to improve in future. If, and only if, our assessment shows that the following special circumstances are met in relation to a major issue, we use flags to highlight our judgements. We use a green flag to highlight where others can learn from outstanding achievements or improvements or an innovation that has very promising prospects of success. We use a red flag to highlight where we have significant concerns about results and future prospects that are not being tackled adequately. This means that local partners need to do something more or different to improve these prospects.

Green flags - exceptional performance or innovation that others can learn from

 Green flag: Working together for disabled children

Red flags - significant concerns, action needed

No red flags have been identified for York

The local area

York has been a centre of government, religion, education, commerce, entertainment and transport for 2000 years. The City and its surrounding area include the historic walled city, the suburbs and a large area of countryside. Four million visitors each year bring wealth into the area as well as disruption and congestion.

The total population is 195,400, 4.9 per cent of which come from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities. The proportion of people from BME communities doubled between 1991 and 2001 and is expected to grow further in the next few years.

York's population is growing and is projected to rise by 4.2 per cent between 2001 and 2011 and by a further 8.3 per cent up to 2021. The four institutions of further and higher education bring the total number of students in York to around 20,000 (or approximately one-tenth of the population). York's four million visitors each year boost the local economy but place significant demands on the transport system.

The next section tells you how York's public services are doing in each of their local priority areas.

How is York doing?

The City of Culture

Local partners want to inspire residents and visitors to free their creative talents and make York the most active city in the country. They plan to achieve this by providing high quality cultural and sporting activities for all. Public satisfaction with museums and art galleries and parks and open spaces is among the highest in the country.

Four million tourists visit the city each year, attracted by a number of the city's cultural attractions including York Minster, the National Railway Museum and the Yorvik Viking Centre. These facilities are well regarded by both visitors and residents of the city, and a City of Festivals programme provides year-round cultural activities for local people.

However, local people are less satisfied with the quality of local sports centres. York is home to a large variety of sporting organisations, with around 350 sports clubs based in local communities. Public sector partners are working with these sports clubs to provide activities for local people, particularly those in the poorer parts of the city, although there is a lack of public sports and recreation facilities to meet the needs of local people.

The Healthy City

Partners want York to be a place where residents enjoy long healthy and independent lives. The city's strategic partnership - Without Walls - plans to achieve this by supporting people to make healthy lifestyle choices. They also want to develop health and social care services quick to respond to those that need them.

York is a healthy city. Life expectancy is high and the number of early deaths from heart disease, strokes and cancer has reduced significantly in recent years. However, there are differences across the city with people in some poorer parts of the city dying up to five years earlier than in more well-off areas.

Several other issues are becoming more significant. Adults are not as physically active as they should be and this is contributing to increasing obesity. Binge drinking is also increasing and has resulted in an increase in alcohol-related hospital admissions. The number of teenage pregnancies has increased. Drug misuse in York is above the national average and more needs to be done to tackle the problem.

The standard of general health care is good, although the quality of care for adults with mental health problems, whether in hospital or in their own homes, needs to be improved. Social care services perform well but there are plans to improve these further.

The Inclusive City

Local partners want York's citizens to feel included in the life of the area. They plan to achieve this by improving prospects for all, tackling poverty and exclusion and making services and facilities easy to access.

York's community is changing, with an increasing number of people from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds coming to live in the city. Although most local people think York is a pleasant place to live people from BME communities are much less positive about the city. Public sector partners are taking action to develop their understanding of the issues facing BME communities and have recognised that more needs to be done to meet the needs of this group of people.

The needs of other groups, such as older people, children and young people, and people with disabilities, are more likely to be met. And much work is going on to ensure people from the less well-off parts of the city are not disadvantaged. Public sector agencies are working together to help people from these neighbourhoods into employment and make sure they get the benefits they are entitled to.

York is an expensive place to live and home ownership is beyond the reach of many local people. Increasing the supply of affordable housing remains a major issue for public sector partners. Some progress has been made but, because of the current economic downturn, it is unlikely that targets for the next two years will be met. Homelessness in the area is higher than elsewhere, particularly for young people.

The Learning City

The city's strategic partnership - Without Walls - wants to make sure that local people have access to world class education and training facilities and provision. Partners want people to develop the skills and aspirations they need to play an active part in society and contribute to the life of the city.

York's children and young people can take advantage of good quality education in the city. Most of the city's schools perform well and the city's universities and further education colleges have a good reputation.

Ofsted has rated the City Council's services for children and young people as performing excellently. A review in 2008 by the Audit Commission and Ofsted rated the city's arrangements for keeping the city's children safe as outstanding. Exam results for York's schools are consistently among the highest in the country.

But children from the poorer parts of the city do not do as well as other children, and this gap is wider than in many other parts of the country. This also applies to a small number of pupils from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds.

Fewer of York's young people from poorer backgrounds go on to higher education than in other parts of the country. However, most young people do go into education, employment or training when they leave school and opportunities for adult education are improving.

Skill levels in the city are high in comparison with local areas in Yorkshire and Humberside and among the highest nationally. But more needs to be done to enable all local people to gain the skills they need to take advantage of the new industries arriving in the city. Partners in the city know this and are working together to tackle the problem.

The Safer City

The Without Walls Partnership wants to make York a safer city with low crime rates and high public satisfaction with the city's safety record.

York is a safe place to live. Overall levels of crime have fallen consistently in recent years although the fear of crime, though reducing, remains an issue for local people. Youth offending rates are low when compared to other areas, although the number of young people who re-offend is relatively high.

Drug and alcohol misuse continues to be a significant contributory factor to crime in the city. One issue of particular concern in York is the level of cycle theft - particularly as the city is nationally recognised as a cycling city. There has been some success in improving road safety, particularly in more rural areas, which has resulted in a fewer road casualties.

The Sustainable City

York's partnership (the Without Walls Partnership) is aiming to reduce its impact on the environment while maintaining York's special qualities and enabling the city and its communities to grow and thrive.

Good work by local organisations is making York a greener more sustainable place to live, work and visit. Recycling rates have improved because of this strong partnership working and are now among the highest levels of performance nationally.

Investment in park and ride and developing cycling routes through the City is reducing traffic and giving people healthier choices for travelling into the City. The City was recently awarded Cycling City Status in recognition of its progress.

There's a strong focus on reducing the CO2 people in York produce as they go about their lives. Partners are working well together to plan for the increasing risk of flooding that will go with climate change.

The Thriving City

Partners aim to support York's economy to make sure that employment rates remain high and that local people benefit from new job opportunities.

Despite job losses in recent years from the loss of traditional industries such as the railways and chocolate making, York's local economy remains strong. Levels of unemployment are below national and regional averages and weekly pay levels are high. The tourism industry remains buoyant despite the

recent economic downturn and new jobs, many in science-related industries, are being created.

The main challenges facing the city are to help local people to weather the recession and to make sure that local people have the training and skills they need to get the newly created jobs. The number of people with formal qualifications is higher than many other cities nationally, but the challenge is to make sure those qualifications are relevant to the new jobs being created as the local economy changes. The need for new economic development in the city also has to be balanced against the need to preserve the historic nature of the city, which is one of the main attractions for tourists.

About York

A recent survey shows that in York 87 per cent of people are satisfied with their immediate local area as a place to live. This is higher than the average for similar areas and higher than the national average of 81 per cent.

Covering an area of 105 square miles, the district of York comprises an urban area centred on the historic city surrounded by many small rural and semi rural settlements. For many it provides a great standard of living. Schools are good as is healthcare. The City is popular with students and both its universities are growing. Until recently the economy has been strong with well-paid jobs in financial services as well as many other opportunities in tourism. Despite the recession for most York residents unemployment is a risk that seems remote.

But some people are still not sharing the benefits that living in York brings. Owning their own home is out of reach of many residents on average incomes. Residents are dissatisfied with the choices for recreation available to them. Some in York do not have the skills and qualifications that will help them get good jobs in the new businesses coming into the City. A fifth of York's people live in poverty. This poses a major challenge to its hope of being an even more inclusive city.

Population growth and a decrease in the average number of people in a household is placing pressure on housing. 'Affordable' housing is in particularly short supply and house prices are well above the regional average. Given the historic nature of the city's built environment, planning and development are highly sensitive issues.

York is a relatively affluent city but this masks pockets of deprivation. There are low levels of unemployment in the city, but high levels of relatively poorly paid jobs, most associated with the tourist sector. Over the last few years, the city has responded to the relative decline in employment in traditional local industries (such as chocolate manufacturing and railways). Traditional industries have been replaced by a high-tech and science based industrial sector linked to the universities. The Council and partners see Science City York as playing an increasingly important part in the development of the city.

Educational attainment in York is high, with achievements that are significantly higher than both the Yorkshire and Humber and England averages. Adults in York have better skills levels than adults in most other areas but a minority, often from poorer areas, do not. Partners in the City

know this and are working on the problem.

Health is generally good and life expectancy is greater than the national average. However, there are pockets of poor health in more deprived areas of the city. Levels of crime are below regional and national averages. Congestion is a significant issue in the area as York remains a major tourist destination in the UK.

The Without Walls - WoW - partnership brings together local private, public and voluntary organisations to work on the most significant issues facing the city.

How well do priorities for York express community needs and aspirations?

The needs and aspirations of York's people are reflected to a great extent in the priorities the Without Walls Partnership (WoW) is working on. The partnership has a clear shared set of ambitions for the City for the next 20 years or so. The local area agreement and Sustainable Community Strategy are based on a good understanding of local needs. The local area agreement has 35 national and 13 local indicators within the priority themes for the City.

The City's priorities are based on a clear vision and challenging ambitions, underpinned by priorities which have been influenced by the views of local people. The preparation of the sustainable community strategy involved an extensive consultation exercise, a robust assessment of current performance and analysis of the issues facing the city. Partners are ambitious for the City and all its people.

It was informed by a wide ranging consultation such as the 'Festival of Ideas' which used approaches such as radio debates, conferences and neighbourhood consultations and targeted communities of interest, such as older people, people with disabilities, representatives from BME communities and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) residents.

Local communities are getting increasingly involved in decision making through neighbourhood management with local action plans setting out the ambitions and actions for local areas. A more comprehensive approach to engagement with local communities has recently been adopted. The impact of this is not yet clear. Before its introduction the results of consultation were not being shared in a systematic way. Partners did not know whether all groups in local communities have had a chance to contribute.

The City of Culture

The City's cultural heritage is a key element of its attraction to tourists and makes a significant contribution to the local economy. Four million tourists visit the city each year generating around 11,000 jobs for local people and bring some £350 million into York. Partners in the City focus strongly on preserving and improving the city's built environment and Visit York, the local tourism

partnership, has made good progress in raising the profile of the city's attractions since its inception in April 2008.

The city is the home to notable national and regional attractions, such as York Minster, the National Railway Museum, Yorvik Viking Centre and York Racecourse. These are well used and regarded by visitors and residents alike. The city's Museums Trust, which manages a number of museums and galleries across the city, runs many events designed to involve visitors and local people in cultural activities and is increasingly using museums for educational purposes for local schools. The city's racecourse is the venue of major race meetings which provide an additional attraction for people within the city and across the region.

The level of public satisfaction with these facilities is understandably high - significantly higher than in most other parts of the country - and many local people participate in cultural activities. York's residents participate in the arts more than those in any other city in the region. At 53.5 per cent, participation is also well ahead of the national average. The proportion of local people who visit museums is also much higher than the national average, and York schools have the highest level of achievement of "Culture Mark" of any authority in the country.

Another important feature of the cultural life of the city is the City of Festivals programme. This year-round programme includes a range of events dealing with different cultural activities such as dance, drama, food and drink, literature and sport. Local people are heavily involved in the festivals and they are highly valued by residents and visitors alike.

However, the situation regarding facilities designed specifically to meet the needs of local people is less positive. Although the number of visits to public libraries is relatively high, public satisfaction with them is low. The City Council has recognised this and is part way through a programme to make them more attractive to local people and place them at the centre of local communities.

There is a lack of public sports and recreation facilities that meet the needs of local people. Only about one in three local people are satisfied with the quality of sport and leisure facilities. This places York in the bottom 20 per cent of cities in the country. The gap between what people need and want and what is available now is great. This applies to indoor activities such as swimming and badminton, and external facilities such as football and rugby pitches. Some facilities are seeing more use though, for example, the redeveloped Oaklands Sports Centre. York's people's dissatisfaction with these gaps may also be contributing to falling numbers of people taking part in exercise.

Action is being taken to tackle these problems. For example, the 'Fit as a Fiddle' programme for older people is increasing the numbers of people taking exercise. York is home too to a large variety of sporting organisations, with around 350 sports clubs based in local communities. Public sector partners are working with these sports clubs to provide activities for local people, particularly those in the poorer parts of the city.

We want to look more deeply at how partners in the City are working together to ensure that all York's people get to benefit from the City's status as an important visitor destination.

We will also want to know more about how the city is going to close the gaps in what sport and leisure facilities are on offer. We will be following this up in our work ahead and report what we find next year.

The Healthy City

There is a lack of public sports and recreation facilities to meet the needs of local people. The gap between what people need and want and what is available now is great. This applies to indoor activities such as swimming and badminton, and external facilities such as football and rugby pitches. York's people are dissatisfied with these gaps which may also be contributing to falling numbers of people taking part in exercise. Some facilities are seeing more use though, for example, the redeveloped Oaklands Sports Centre.

Action is being taken to tackle these problems. For example, the 'Fit as a Fiddle' programme for older people is increasing the numbers of people taking exercise. York is home, too, to a large variety of sporting organisations, with around 350 sports clubs based in local communities. Public sector partners are working with these sports clubs to provide activities for local people, particularly those in the poorer parts of the city.

We want to know more about how the city is going to close the gaps in what is on offer. We will be following this up in our work ahead and report what we find next year.

York is a healthy city. Average life expectancy at birth is increasing and, at 83 for women and 78 for men, is higher than both regional and national averages. Early deaths from heart disease and strokes and from cancer have reduced significantly in recent years and are below the national average. Deaths from smoking are also below the national average, as is the number of smokers. York's babies and young children are more likely to live than in other areas. Babies born in the City are also more likely to be the right weight than is the case across the country as a whole. Expectant mothers are smoking less and breastfeeding rates are improving.

More needs to be done to deal with health inequalities and encourage local people to develop healthy lifestyles. Life expectancy varies across the city, with people in more deprived parts of the city dying five years earlier than in more well-off areas. Local GP surgeries provide a way to promote better health with other projects to encourage more healthy lifestyles.

The number of people taking part in physical activity is low and falling. Latest data shows that only one in five adults exercise three times a week compared with one in four in 2007/08. This is contributing to an increase in the number of obese adults. Partners across the city have recognised the problem. They are working together to improve access to more sport and leisure facilities. They have also developed programmes aimed at specific groups, such as the over 55s and people with a disability, to increase participation.

The number of children and young people participating in physical activity is high, with almost all school children taking part in at least 2 hours PE and school sport a week. This is well above the national average. However, childhood obesity is becoming more of an issue. Although not high when

compared with other parts of the country, 8.4 per cent of children at age 5 are obese and this figure increases to 15.6 per cent when they reach eleven years of age.

Alcohol and drug misuse in the city is a concern. Estimated levels of binge drinking are high, affecting almost one in four adults compared with one in five nationally. As a result, the number of alcohol-related hospital admissions is increasing. Although still below the national average, the number is expected to rise further. Drug misuse in York is also above the national average, and actions to reduce drug and alcohol related harm have also been inadequate, resulting in intervention from the National Treatment Agency. Good evidence about the scale of drug misuse among the adult population is not available.

The number of teenage pregnancies has increased by a quarter since 1998. However, the rate of teenage pregnancy remains one of the lowest rates in the Yorkshire and Humberside region and is lower than the national average, although partners recognise the need to do more to address the issue which provides an additional health risk to both mother and child.

Most patients feel the quality of health care is good, although there are some issues about the quality of care for people with mental health problems. The Healthcare Commission has assessed the quality of hospital services for people with acute mental health problems to be weak - in other words, not meeting minimum requirements and the reasonable expectations of patients and the public. The proportion of adults with learning difficulties and mental health problems who are helped to live at home is low and declining, as is the number of households receiving intensive homecare.

Dental health in the city is good, with the average number of decayed, extracted or filled teeth in young children being significantly lower than the national average. However, access to NHS dentists is a major issue and local health organisations have recognised the need to make it easier for local people to get dental treatment, particularly those in less well-off areas.

We will continue to monitor the impact of actions taken to improve the health of local people, particularly about reducing inequalities in health and in encouraging people to develop healthy lifestyles.

The Inclusive City

Green flag: Working together for disabled children

Strong partnership working, including the involvement of parents, is having a significant and positive impact on the lives of children with disabilities in York. In early 2009, parents of disabled children in York gave the city's quality of health, education, social care and support for their children the highest score in the country. Meeting the needs of disabled children, young people and their families is a strategic priority for the city. Strong partnership working in the city is giving children and families personalised services across health, education and the voluntary sector.

An inspection in 2008 by Ofsted and the Audit Commission judged the City Council's services for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities as

outstanding. These services are making real differences to the lives of children. For example, Council services, a voluntary agency and the parent forum are working together to provide a pioneering service of personalised mentoring. This is giving children support that matches their needs tailored to their problems. Another outcome from joint working is increased access to and take-up of leisure opportunities by children with disabilities. Families value these opportunities for the difference they are making to their children's lives.

Innovation is strengthening the joining up of services. For example, 'end to end' care and support is now provided. Children and young people are supported through the significant challenges that they face in their lives when they move from school into further education, employment or independent living. A new multi-agency Transitions Team supports young people aged 14-25. This nationally recognised team provides independent travel training, children and adults social care support, participation support and provision of shared and independent housing. Support is seamless - its focus is on the child or young person not on the particular organisation providing the support. It successfully puts the customer at the heart of what partners are doing.

Other actions are having a positive impact on the quality of life of children with disabilities. They include the City of York Charter for Disabled Children which sets out what children and their parents can expect from partners. This provides a way to hold partners to account to ensure they provide joined-up services to meet their specific needs. It is based around nine promises covering a range of issues. These include: involvement in planning and decision making, access to more places and activities, a wider range of short breaks, and better support in the transition into adulthood. All children have a single named contact to make sure that all service providers work together to deliver seamless services.

In early 2009, York gained the highest score in the country in a national survey that asked parents with disabled children to rate the quality of health, education, social care provision and support. The survey gives a way of finding out whether partners really are delivering on the ambitions set out in the national strategy - Aiming High for Disabled Children. Feedback to parents is done through a You Said, We Did booklet. This shows how services have been shaped and changed to meet children's and families' needs. This booklet has been recognised by government as an example of good practice.

The views of disabled children and their parents are at the heart of the way services are delivered. Disabled young people have completed accessibility surveys of leisure services and helped schools write their Disability Equality Schemes. The issues they raised have resulted in changes to the way services are provided. The long-standing parent forum, CANDI, (Children and Inclusion) is a dynamic group that has co-written, and jointly leads, two levels of unique disability equality training for all staff and universal providers. CANDI supports participation of parents and young people at every level and has helped to ensure parent and carer representation in strategic planning for services in the city.

Successful action is being taken to raise children's aspirations. In 2009, a ground breaking Opportunities Fair provided young people and parents with information, advice and guidance about the options available to them when they leave school. Participants received one to one advice, face to face contact with providers and workshop taster activities, designed to raise young

people's aspirations and support them in making decisions about their future. Young people, families and providers gave the Fair excellent feedback.

Partners in the City know that children with special educational needs do less well than their peers when they take their GCSEs. This is because York tries, whenever possible to avoid labelling children as having these needs. So York's pupils with special educational needs are those for whom an academic qualification will be unattainable. Nevertheless the work on inspiring children through mentoring and the other initiatives going on in the City give these children a real chance of making their own positive contribution to the City.

The Inclusive City

York's population is changing. It is getting older and the over 50s will make up an increasing proportion of York's people. At the same time people from a black and minority ethnic (BME) background are coming into the city in greater numbers. York experienced the second highest percentage growth rate in ethnic minorities of any city in the country in the period 1991-2001.

People from these communities believe that York is a less welcoming and tolerant place than people from other communities think is the case. Although more than half the population of the city feel they belong to their local neighbourhood, fewer than one in five people from BME communities feel the same way. Some of the needs of these communities are being met but organisations in the city know they don't yet fully understand the needs of the growing BME community. Public sector partners know they will need to alter the way they work to address these differences.

Partners in the city are working together to address inequality with many groups such as people with disabilities, children and young people and older people. Young people with learning difficulties or physical disabilities get good support in their transition to adult life. Such support includes encouraging independent travel and by providing shared and independent housing. Many programmes and activities provide support targeted at the most vulnerable children and their families. New arrivals from Eastern Europe and the Traveller community receive prompt and suitable support to help them settle into the life of the area. Changes have been made at some sports centres to make them more accessible to people with disabilities and a local library runs a computer club designed for older people and those with disabilities.

York is rightly seen as a well-off city (In 2007, York was ranked as the 242nd least deprived of 354 areas nationally, having improved its position from 219th least deprived in 2004). But there are pockets of significant deprivation in some parts of the city. One neighbourhood is in the 10 per cent most deprived in the country. Around a third of households are living on low annual incomes and around 1 in 8 of the city's children live in poverty. About 4,600 homes suffer from fuel poverty - their inhabitants are spending more and more of their money on keeping warm. This is better than in other areas regionally and nationally but it's still a real problem for the people involved. Some of the older houses in York are hard to heat and keep warm too.

The poorest area of the city is now the focus of joined-up working to tackle its long-standing problems. This is improving the lives of many people in this community. Some local people have been helped into work and others, many

of whom are elderly, have also been helped to claim the benefits to which they are entitled. Benefit payments to people in this neighbourhood have increased by £22,000. This project is now being rolled out into neighbouring communities.

Living in York is becoming more expensive, with house prices increasing by 38 per cent between 2002 and 2005, while earnings only increased by 16 per cent over the same period. York's average wage is around £19,000 while an average house costs a little under £200,000. Home ownership is out of reach of many York residents. There has been a drive to provide more "affordable" housing in the city through agreements with developers, and 151 such homes were built in 2008/09. However, the current economic downturn means that this is unlikely to be repeated in 2009/10 which places increased pressure on the social housing stock and housing waiting lists.

The quality of housing in York is improving. The number of houses failing to meet national decency standards has fallen significantly. Almost all council housing now meets basic decency standards, compared with almost 84 per cent four years ago. The quality of private sector housing is also improving, with less than one-fifth of private sector homes failing to meet decency standards compared with a national average of around two-fifths.

More housing is also being provided to meet the specific needs of older people. Recently 100 bungalows that could not be brought up to decent homes standards were demolished and are to be replaced by a 40-bed extra care facility for older people, with 60 new bungalows and 100 affordable general needs houses.

The number of homeless people, particularly young people, is high compared with many other parts of the country. In 2007/08, half the people accepted as homeless in York were 16 to 24 years old. A fifth of this group were 16 to 17 year olds - twice the national rate for this age group. However, partners have recognised the issue and have had some success in dealing with it. At the end of 2008/9, there were 167 households in temporary accommodation, which is a 20 per cent improvement on the 209 households in 2007/8. Specific action has been taken to help homeless young people. This includes joint action between the city council, Arc Light, the Salvation Army and the Peasholme Charity. Their work has reduced the number of rough sleepers in the city. Partners won external funding of £350,000 which has been used to deliver a Teenage Parent Housing Support Project.

There are some examples of how local people have been involved in issues affecting them, but this has not happened in a consistent way with different communities in the city. Partners have now agreed a comprehensive community engagement strategy. Turning this into action is an important priority for the City.

We will review the success of the Without Wall Partnership in putting its plans into action over the next year.

The Learning City

York is well known for the standard of education received by its young

people. This year, Ofsted has rated the City Council's children's services as performing excellently.

Most schools, children's homes, pupil referral units, nurseries and childminders are good or better. This means that almost all children and young people get good help and support. Ofsted's inspections of York's schools found most of them to be good or better - more in similar areas or nationally. No school in York is inadequate. Almost two-thirds of the city's primary and secondary schools perform above the average for England.

York Council's adoption and fostering agencies are outstanding and children's homes are good or outstanding. Most childcare is good or better. Nursery and primary schools in York perform better than in similar areas or nationally.

Ofsted and the Audit Commission looked in December 2008 at how York's children are kept safe. They said these arrangements were outstanding. The review also looked at the services children in the Council's care receive. These too, were outstanding. One serious case review has taken place since December 2008. (These happen to ensure that lessons are learned after instances of potential abuse emerge.) The review was judged by Ofsted as adequate.

Some of York's most vulnerable children and young people do not do as well as their peers. Most young people get services that are good or better but one of the City's special schools and one of its units for pupils with challenging behaviour are not so good and are rated as adequate. Also, children aged 11 who have free school meals do less well than the rest of their age group in the City. This gap is wider in York than elsewhere in the country.

A similar gap exists for young people at 16 who have special educational needs. A small number of young people from a minority ethnic background do not do as well as their peers at 16. More of York's teenage girls get pregnant than is the case nationally or in similar areas. Partners in the City know about these problems and are working together to tackle them.

The difference in achievement between the City's poorest and wealthiest continues into higher education. Fewer of York's young people from low-income backgrounds go into higher education than in most other parts of the country.

In November 2008, the QS-Times Higher Educational Supplement ranked the University of York 81st out of the world's top 200 universities - a rise of 43 places from 2006. York St John's University plays an important regional role and is particularly popular with mature students. Both universities continue to grow with significant building programmes. They are playing a significant role in developing science-based and high-tech industries which are replacing more traditional industries in the city and are a key element of the city's future economy.

Almost all adults in York have some form of qualification. But, although not high in comparison with most other parts of the country, there are a significant number of adults with no formal qualifications, and many people experience literacy and numeracy problems. Developing higher level, more diverse skills across the working age population is key for partners in the city.

York's people will need these skills to succeed in the knowledge-based industries replacing the traditional manufacturing industries on which the city was built. Good work is underway on this but partners in the city know more needs to be done.

The Safer City

York is a safe city. Overall, crime has fallen consistently between 2003/04 and 2007/08 and is below regional and national averages. Serious acquisitive crime has continued to fall and local targets have been achieved. Targeted action has resulted in significant decreases in crime and anti-social behaviour in some areas of the city. For example, an alley-gating campaign resulted in a 68 per cent fall in reported crime levels in the Clifton area in August and September 2008, compared with figures for the same period in 2006.

There has been an increase in the percentage of people who feel York is a safe place. But partners in the City are not complacent about this. Of 18 Neighbourhood Action Plans developed by local communities, 17 contain ambitions around the theme of community safety. However, a high proportion of local people feel that their views are considered in dealing with crime and anti-social behaviour and many feel these issues are being dealt with successfully.

A high number of offences in the city are carried out by a few persistent offenders. Although reoffending rates of young offenders supervised by the Youth Offending Team fell by 32 per cent in 2008, they remain at a level significantly above those for similar cities. The percentage of young offenders engaging in education and work is low compared with other similar areas. The number of first-time entrants into the youth justice system has fallen and young people in care who offend are well supported and few are involved in reoffending.

Preventive programmes such as the Youth Inclusion Support Programme (YISP) and targeted youth work are contributing well to continuing these low numbers. The Youth Offending Team has become the strongest performing team in the region, although the dependency on short-term funding presents a risk to keeping the current performance.

Partners have worked well together to improve road safety with a particular focus on the specific concerns of rural communities. This has had a significant impact, most notably in reducing accidents involving children, where a 50 per cent cut was achieved in six months in 2007/08.

However, some issues remain to be addressed. Despite overall decreases in crime, one issue of concern is the high level of cycle theft - particularly for a city recognised nationally as a cycling city. This issue has been recognised by partners and a programme of education and prevention is being carried out by the Safer York Partnership in parallel with the Cycling City programme.

Drug and alcohol abuse continues to be a significant contributory factor to offending within the city. Estimated levels of binge drinking are significantly higher than the national average, as is the drug abuse in the city. Local public sector bodies recognise the need to address these issues, but actions so far

have not been successful. This is strangely at odds with the views of local people. Few people feel that anti-social behaviour is a problem in the city, or that drunk and rowdy behaviour or drug misuse is a significant problem.

We have not had the chance to look in detail at the issues around alcohol and drug abuse this year. We will include these issues in next year's assessment.

The Sustainable City

York has been recognised for the actions partners have taken to protect the environment. In a national survey, the City was ranked 18th out of 324 towns and cities for the number of recycling centres, conservation groups and eco-friendly businesses. Partners have made good progress in balancing the needs of a vibrant city against protecting the environment.

The volume of household waste is falling, while the proportion of waste recycled and composted has more than tripled from a low base a few years ago. Almost half of York's waste is either recycled or composted - one of the highest rates in the country. Three out of four local people are satisfied with recycling facilities. This is also higher than most other parts of the country.

A major reason for this success has been involving local people and action from local environmental groups such as York Rotters who champion composting. Young people in particular are recycling more, with schools recycling 76,600 kg of paper and cardboard which has saved more than 101 tonnes of CO₂ emissions going into the atmosphere. There are high levels of public satisfaction with street cleanliness standards, which have continued to increase in recent years, although levelled out in 2008/09.

The standard of parks, play areas and public spaces is good. Three parks have been awarded Green Flag status and public satisfaction is high. Despite an increase in visitors to the city, overall traffic volumes have remained stable. More people are using the city's park and ride system and there are plans to develop it further. The first Car Free Day took place in the city in September. It was supported by the City Council and around 30 local businesses who encouraged their employees to leave their cars at home and use alternatives to get to work. Early signs are that it was successful in reducing the volume of traffic in the city centre.

An increasing number of people in the city walk or cycle, and York has been awarded national Cycling City status. This means government funding will be available over the next three years to improve opportunities for cycling and to build on the one-in-five residents who currently cycle to work. Work is already underway to make the city's roads safer and easier to use by cyclists and to expand the existing cycle network.

Many events have also taken place to encourage more people to cycle. A Biking Viking event involved 70 school children from 4 schools in York dressed as Vikings riding into the town centre for a Viking show and various competitions. The city also hosted its first Festival of Cycling in August which attracted around 10,000 visitors and was successful in encouraging local people to take up cycling. The city also hosted a stage of the Tour of Britain raising the city's profile as a cycling city.

Some early progress has been made in reducing carbon emissions across the city. City of York Council introduced a carbon management programme in April 2008, which is helping to reduce its carbon footprint, and other organisations and businesses across the city are looking to follow suit. Progress has been made to improve local biodiversity, although not as quickly as expected. This is because of lack of resources (money and people), the need to negotiate with private landowners and altered management practices.

In a city where the built heritage is so important it obviously has an important effect on where development can happen. Despite this, the area of previously developed land that has been vacant or derelict for more than 5 years is high and increasing. However, developments are well planned to make best use of the space available and most are found near to other services which reduces the need to travel.

Another challenge facing the city is the growing risk of flooding, which has had a major impact on the city many times in recent years. Work is underway to improve flood defences in and around the city. Action is also being taken to manage the flow of the river upstream of the city in North Yorkshire.

We will track progress on the city's plans over the coming year. Our work will include a look at two main areas. Firstly, what are organisations in the city are doing to reduce their carbon footprint. Secondly, the progress on working with others on managing flood risk.

The Thriving City

Local organisations are working well to give York's people the help and support they need to cope with the effects of the recession. Events have been held to provide advice and guidance both to small businesses and to individuals hit by the recession. For example, York Enterprise Week included a range of events to help local residents and businesses through the credit crunch. It included an event called Thrive and Survive at the city's racecourse. The event covered many issues including skills and training, business support and doing business with the Council. Free workshops were also provided aiming at giving businesses and individuals practical help. The event was popular and attendees' feedback has shaped other work.

People who have lost their jobs have been targeted for extra help and support to give them the best possible chance of getting back into work. Targeted programmes in the most deprived areas of the city have been successful, with 367 people from such areas helped into employment or training over the last year. People with money troubles have also had services developed to help with their particular needs and a benefits take-up campaign has resulted in people claiming £22,000 more benefits that they were not claiming. A mortgage rescue scheme has also helped some families facing repossession.

There was a significant fall in the number of new business start-ups in 2008/09, although the percentage of established small businesses showing year-on-year employment growth has improved and remains among the highest in the country. An Enterprise Fund is now in place to help with business start-ups. So far six new local businesses are now up and running

after support from the Fund. Other support for new businesses has been provided through initiatives like the Phoenix Centre and Eco Business Centre. This provides accommodation tailored to the needs of new small businesses and is popular - almost all of its 60 units have tenants. The City Council is paying suppliers quicker to help their cash flow.

Support is also available to longer-standing businesses. This is being done within a clear vision of how partners think York's economy should develop. Partners in the City have commissioned research from the Centre for Cities that has helped shape the vision. Partners understand the strong base the City's universities, colleges and the Science City development give them in developing an economy that can take the City forward while making it less dependent on tourism. Joint work on the York Business Forum and the VisitYork brand supports the wider plans for other areas of the City's economy.

Traditional local jobs in the railways, sugar processing and chocolate manufacturing industries have reduced significantly in recent years and are being replaced by jobs which need different skills.

The city's status as a national Science City means that many new jobs are being created in science-related industries and in more high-tech, knowledge based industries. This will make it more difficult for some local people to find employment unless they are able to develop the new skills needed.

Training more people to technician level (NVQ 3 and above) will support the development of a knowledge-led economy. The number of local people with formal qualifications is relatively high in comparison with many other similar cities. But more needs to be done to make sure they have the qualifications and skills they need for the new kinds of jobs being created.

In a survey carried out in 2006/07, almost one-in-five employers reported skills gaps in their current workforce, which is higher than the national average. More recent figures suggest this situation is improving. In 2003 around 25,000 people (one in five of the working age population) had numeracy and literacy problems. In 2008 more than 7,000 people (6.8 per cent of the working age population) had no formal qualifications.

Progress is being made but more needs to be done. A 'Spotlight on Skills' Campaign involving a month long programme of events has been successful in encouraging local employers to invest in developing the skills of their workforce and in encouraging working age adults to participate in skills training. The programme involved 110 employers, 290 individuals and 33 local agencies, and has improved working relationships.

Other longstanding programmes have had a positive impact on peoples' lives. Future Prospects provides help and support to people looking to develop their skills, get back into work or deal with being laid off. The service offered by this organisation includes skills training as well as helping people work through what getting work will mean for their household income when their benefits change. Finding a way through the benefits system was identified as a barrier to getting into work in a survey of Future Prospect's clients.

There has been an increase in the number of adults achieving basic literacy,

numeracy and IT qualifications, and young people gaining vocational qualifications. People in the less well-off parts of the city are not as well qualified, although partners are targeting actions in these areas and the gap with the rest of the city is narrowing. Partners are focusing on helping young people into work as they are being hit hard by the recession. However, after a continued fall, the percentage of young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs) increased to 4.2 per cent in 2008/09. The increase has continued into the first quarter of 2009/10, although it remains lower than most other places in the country.

We will follow up the City's progress in achieving its priorities for the City's economy in the next phase of our assessment. We want to know how the advantages the City has are being used to help the more disadvantaged in the area.

CAA looks at how well local public services, working together, are meeting the needs of the people they serve. It's a joint assessment made by a group of independent watchdogs about the performance of local public services, and how likely they are to meet local priorities. From 9 December you will find the results of Comprehensive Area Assessment on the Oneplace website - <http://oneplace.direct.gov.uk/>

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Audit Commission, 1st Floor, Millbank Tower, Millbank, London SW1P 4HQ
Telephone: 0844 798 1212
Fax: 0844 798 2945
Textphone (minicom): 0844 798 2946
www.audit-commission.gov.uk



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