

CABINET

Referral from Overview and Scrutiny – Festivals and Events 31st July 2008

Report of Head of Democratic Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT				
To request the Cabinet to consider a referral from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with regard to Festivals and Events.				
Key Decision	X	Non-Key Decision	Referral from Overview & Scrutiny	X
Date Included in Forward Plan	9 th May 2008			
This report is public				

RECOMMENDATIONS OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

- (1) That Cabinet consider revisions to the Festivals and Events programme arrangements (as itemised below):
 - Lancaster City Council's Cultural Services to continue to offer direct and indirect support to Festivals and Events within the District, in accordance with the City Council's Corporate Plan Regeneration Objective; - "Attract visitors to the district by promotion of cultural events" or to support priorities within the Community Strategy.
 - The above addresses and resolves the concerns expressed in Paragraph 2.11 in the report of the Head of Cultural Services to Overview and Scrutiny Committee, (see Appendix A), as part of the original rationale for reviewing the Festivals Innovation Fund (FIF).
 - To provide a strategic forum within Cultural Services, responsible for developing and reviewing Festival & Events policy and programmes, based on the Council's Corporate Plan priorities.
 - To identify a lead officer responsible for the planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluating of the festivals and events programme, whether organised directly or "in partnership" (e.g. via FIF support) with Cultural Services.
 - To establish a forum responsible for developing partnership opportunities with the private and voluntary sector for other festivals and events.

- (2) That Cabinet notes that the revision of the Festivals and Events programme arrangements could be incorporated into the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme as a possible task group.
- (3) That Cabinet notes the recommendation of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that monitoring of the Festivals Programme be referred to the Budget and Performance Panel in accordance with their terms of reference and the recommendations of the Grants Task Group.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 At the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 9th July 2008 the Committee considered a report from the Head of Cultural Services in respect of Festivals and Events and was requested to support and recommend to Cabinet, a revision to the Festivals and Events programme arrangements.

The Committee had requested that this be added to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme following on from the Urgent Business Decision to allocate additional funding to the Maritime Festival which was reported to the Committee at its meeting on 5th March 2008 (Minute 46 refers).

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Tourism and Events also participated in the discussions.

2.0 Details

The Head of Cultural Services introduced a report which provided details of the background to the Urgent Business Cabinet Decision for additional funding to support the Maritime Festival including reference to the service restructuring and how this investigation had highlighted a number of issues. These included a lack of consistency and clarity regarding funding, either 'core' or external through Festivals Innovation Fund (FIF). It was noted that a review and evaluation of FIF was undertaken in 2006 and options were produced at that time to address shortcomings.

It was noted that there was greater linkage of recent events to the Council's Corporate objectives and that event organisation benefitted from a long lead up, especially as calendar and municipal years differed which could have an adverse effect on budgets.

The following recommendations were agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- (1) That Overview and Scrutiny Committee support and recommend to Cabinet, a revision to the Festivals and Events programme arrangements (as itemised below):
 - Lancaster City Council's Cultural Services to continue to offer direct and indirect support to Festivals and Events within the District, in accordance with the City Council's Corporate Plan Regeneration Objective; - "Attract visitors to the district by promotion of cultural events" or to support priorities within the Community Strategy.

- The above addresses and resolves the concerns expressed in Paragraph 2.11 in the report of the Head of Cultural Services to Overview and Scrutiny Committee, (see Appendix A), as part of the original rationale for reviewing the Festivals Innovation Fund (FIF).
 - To provide a strategic forum within Cultural Services, responsible for developing and reviewing Festival & Events policy and programmes, based on the Council's Corporate Plan priorities.
 - To identify a lead officer responsible for the planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluating of the festivals and events programme, whether organised directly or "in partnership" (e.g. via FIF support) with Cultural Services.
 - To establish a forum responsible for developing partnership opportunities with the private and voluntary sector for other festivals and events.
- (2) That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee inform Cabinet that the revision of the Festivals and Events programme arrangements could be incorporated into the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme as a possible task group.
- (3) That the monitoring of the Festivals Programme be referred to the Budget and Performance Panel in accordance with their terms of reference and the recommendations of the Grants Task Group.'

A copy of the Festivals and Events Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee, together with FIF Guidance Notes is attached to this report.

OFFICER COMMENTS ON THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1 supports the officer preferred option set out in 4.3 of the report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an addition at the end of the first bullet point:- 'or to support priorities within the Community Strategy.'

Recommendations 2 and 3 provide welcome "checks and balances."

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

Festivals and Events are an integral part of the Cultural Services 'offer' within the District and impact in terms of services provides for visitors and residents.

However, the Council's Corporate Plan includes the following priority :-

"To attract visitors to the district by promotion of cultural events".

There is a significant change of emphasis in the "*promotion*" of festivals and events rather than the planning, organising and delivering as set out in the recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny. The current priority is more in line with the previous Cabinet's decision, which is still in place, to support only a limited number of core festivals and events (and staff accordingly), and encourage the private sector and other community groups to take ownership of other events by providing financial assistance only through the Festivals Innovation Fund.

Little evaluation has been undertaken on existing festivals and events as previously requested by Cabinet, and no logs of officer time to support festivals and events are in place to assess how much they cost or if they provide value for money (2008/9 Corporate Plan priority No 1).

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

As per attached report to Overview and Scrutiny.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

As per Festival & Events Report to Overview & Scrutiny dated 9th July 2008.

It is intended that the Lead Officer, the Cultural Services Manager will assume the role of Responsible Spending Officer (paragraph 3.1) and there would be no additional financial implications.

At present there is no evaluation if the festivals and events programme gives value for money, or indeed the true cost of any individual event.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer commented on the original report to Overview and Scrutiny (see Appendix A). No further comments.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications relating to this report.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer commented on the original report to Overview and Scrutiny (see Appendix A). No further comments.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Overview and Scrutiny Minutes 5th March 2008, minute 46

Contact Officer: Liz Bateson

Telephone: 01524 582047

E-mail: ebateson@lancaster.gov.uk

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