

COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Civic Review – Citizens’ Award Scheme 12th March 2009

Report of the Head of Democratic Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report aims to provide options for the introduction of a Citizens’ Award Scheme in 2009.

This report is public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That consideration be given to the setting up of a Citizens’ Award Scheme in 2009/10 and should it be agreed to proceed with this proposal, subject if necessary to the Mayor’s decision on prioritisation of the available budget:

- (1) That a Panel comprising the Mayor, Chairman of the Council Business Committee and Father of the Council be established to implement a Citizens’ Awards Scheme in 2009.
- (2) That initially in 2009 two awards be presented, one for an individual and one for a Group.
- (3) That the success of the initial awards be further considered by the Council Business Committee early in 2010 prior to the launch of any further awards.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Council Business Committee, at its meeting on 18 September, considered the response to a request for members of the public to form a Citizenship Panel. It was decided that no further action be taken to progress a Citizenship Panel but that further consideration be given to the introduction of a Citizens’ Award Scheme as soon as possible.

2.0 Proposal Details

2.1 In the first instance a basic Awards Scheme needs to be established which allows any member of the public the opportunity to nominate a person or a group of people to be recognised by the City Council for the contribution they have made to the enhancement of the lives of people in their Community.

2.2 At the time of initial discussions about the creation of a Citizens Panel in 2007, this Committee gave its approval to an application form for the Awards, with the addition

of a 100 word maximum limit to each answer. There are no further proposed changes to this application form.

- 2.3 It would be appropriate for the Award Scheme to be launched in 2009, as this would enhance the celebrations for the 100th anniversary of the opening of Lancaster Town Hall and it had initially been intended to suggest that the Award Ceremony could be held at the end of 2009 to tie in to this celebration. Members will be aware however that Cabinet have recently agreed minimal arrangements to mark this anniversary at no additional cost and Council are also considering a substantial cut in the budget available for civic events in 2009/10 which will limit the opportunities to hold an appropriate awards ceremony. This could however be combined with a Council meeting or other civic event in order to keep costs to a minimum.
- 2.4 The Council Business Committee need to consider initially whether an Award Scheme should be launched in 2009, and if so make decisions on how many awards the Council should give and how many people will form the initial judging panel. It is proposed that two categories receive one award in each – one for the efforts of an individual and one for a group. The application form will be appropriate to both categories.
- 2.5 If the Scheme goes ahead it is proposed that the launch of the Award would take place shortly after the start of the 2009/2010 Mayoral Year, to be awarded during December 2009.
- 2.6 It should be noted that in order to manage the reduced budget for civic events it has been agreed that the Mayor should agree the prioritisation of events within the Civic Programme for 2009/10 and should it be agreed by Council that this scheme be established for the forthcoming municipal year, it will still remain subject to the decision of the Mayor elect as to which events are cut from the 2009/10 Programme.

3.0 Details of Consultation

- 3.1 None, aside from previous reports and discussions of the establishment of the Citizenship Panel and Award Scheme by the Council Business Committee.

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

- 4.1 Option 1 – to establish a Citizens' Award Scheme to be launched with immediate effect in 2009.
- 4.2 Option 2 – to agree that a Citizens' Award Scheme be established in the future but to defer the launch to a future year when funding is more readily available.
- 4.3 Option 3 - to abandon plans to establish a Citizens' Award Scheme at this stage.
- 4.4 Should Council agree Option 1 to establish the Award Scheme in 2009 the following options are available in relation to the details of the scheme. In each case it is proposed that two awards be given as previously suggested, one to an individual and one to a Group. Arrangements for the timetable for the publicity and judging the awards would be co-ordinated with the Panel members and Democratic Services.
- 4.5 Option 1a – That a judging panel be formed from the full membership of the Council Business Committee, with the inclusion of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Father of the Council. This would enable a Committee of 10 people to make a decision on the winners. With the sheer number of people involved it may be difficult to allow all

those involved to meet regularly and the full number may not be able to be part of the decision making process.

- 4.6 Option 1b – That the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council Business Committee, the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Father of the Council form the judging panel. This would reduce the number involved to 5 and may prove easier to co-ordinate.
- 4.7 Option 1c – That the Mayor, Chairman of the Council Business Committee and the Father of the Council form the judging Panel for the Citizens' Award. This Panel of three could meet on an as and when needed basis and would be easy to co-ordinate with individual diaries.
- 4.8 Should Members wish to continue with the establishment of a Citizens' Award Scheme in 2009, the Officer preferred option is Option 1c as this is more manageable from a practical point of view. Due to the smaller number of people involved meetings would be able to progress quickly and diary commitments will be easier to co-ordinate.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 The City Council has previously expressed a wish to establish a Citizens' Award Scheme and the centenary year is a good year in which to launch the scheme. However budgetary constraints for 2009/10 may mean that this is not the optimum time on which to embark on a new venture.
- 5.2 Should Members wish to proceed with the proposal, as soon as the Mayoral year for 2009/2010 commences, the scheme can be publicised with a view to a closing date in the autumn, the winners being announced in time to receive their awards during December, which will closely coincide with the 100th Anniversary of Lancaster Town Hall. Although the finer detail of the timetable would be decided by the Head of Democratic Services and the selected Panel, the application form will allow nominations to be received for both categories and can be available to the public as soon as the 2009/2010 Mayoral Year commences, with some advance publicity being possible prior to Annual Council.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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

None.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Costs associated with the establishment of the Citizens Award Scheme and any Award Ceremony would be met from the budget provided for Mayoral Functions and Hospitality. Budget allocation on civic events varies according to the requirements of individual Mayors to a maximum of that included in the budget each year.

A total of £15,000 was previously included in the 2009/10 draft budget, but proposals for savings to be considered by full Council on 4th March 2009 reduces this to £8,300. It will be for the Mayor to agree the prioritisation of this budget in terms of which events are cut for 2009/10 and which are funded.

Any unspent budget at the end of each year falls into balances.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The S151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Council Business Committee – Agenda and Minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2008.

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