

COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Civic Review Implementation Plan – Progress Report 14 January 2010

Report of Head of Democratic Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report provides a final update on progress to implement the decisions of Council made in December 2006.

This report is public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That progress and the action taken to date be noted.**
- (2) That in respect of the item relating to Freemen, a further report be submitted to Council once the implications of the Borough Freedom Act have been properly explored and viable options can be considered.**
- (3) That in respect of the Town Crier, the services of existing Town Criers be sought for future Civic events if appropriate should budget provision allow and no further action be taken with regard to establishing a new post of Town Crier at the present time.**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 At its meeting on 06 December 2006 Council made a number of recommendations designed to review and update the civic function of the City Council. Council Business Committee has regularly been updated on the progress of the plan, the last report being submitted in September 2008.

2.0 Proposal Details

- 2.1 With the agreement of the Council Business Committee in September 2008 only five items remained on the list and these are shown in the attached schedule. From these only two remain pending.
- 2.2 The City Council fully intends to modernise the application criteria for Freemen of the City and in addition look to change this criteria to enable people from across the District to apply. The Borough Freedom Bill has been making its way slowly through the Parliamentary process and regular updates are received from the Freemen of England and Wales who are supportive of this legislative change for the benefit of all Guilds of Freemen. The Act has recently been passed and is now being scrutinised to assess what changes will be permitted. A full report on the options will be brought back to this Committee in due course for recommendation to Council.

2.3 The City Council also asked that a Town Crier be re-established and recruited. The costs associated with the recruitment process for a Town Crier and the provision of a uniform will cost the Council over £2,000. Should the Council express a desire to employ the services of a Town Crier for a particular event or campaign, the services of an existing Town Crier could be purchased per event provided funding was available and Members are recommended to agree to this course of action rather than pursuing any establishment of new post of Town Crier at this time.

3.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

3.1 As previously, the options available to members are to note the actions taken to date, to accept progress made or to suggest modifications in relation to the proposals outlined above.

4.0 Conclusion

4.1 The civic function is under constant review and the practices and events taking place throughout the year are under constant scrutiny. Some of the proposals have proved popular, where others have struggled to take off and have been abandoned at this stage. However, work remains not only to maintain the traditions of the Mayoralty but also to modernise it particularly in the context of community engagement at a time when funding is at its lowest level.

4.2 Feedback is continually sought on every event in the Civic Programme with a view to making improvements, especially striving to obtain value for money.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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

None.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The total budget available to the Mayoralty for all aspects of expenditure during this year is £13,000 reducing to £8,400 in 2010/2011. This budget is allocated to events as required with the agreement of the Mayor in office who effectively provides the decision on how that budget will be spent. Quotes continue to be obtained to ensure that value for money is received.

Costs associated with any decisions made as a result of this report must be contained within this existing budget and if additional expenditure is proposed it may be necessary to identify matching savings.

A number of the decisions may therefore require further reports into the feasibility of their implementation and the financial implications of such proposals would be included in any subsequent reports prior to implementation. Should any additional costs be identified Members will need to consider these as potential growth items in considering future budgets.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

This report has no direct legal implications. Where specific actions have legal implications these will be highlighted and considered as part of subsequent implementation reports where appropriate.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

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

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

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