

COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Special Council Meeting 2012

15 March 2012

Report of the Democratic Services Manager

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To consider a suitable topic and other arrangements for a Special Council meeting to be held in October 2012.

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES MANAGER

- (1) That the Committee considers a topic, venue and any other arrangements for a Special Council meeting to be held in October 2012.**
- (2) That the Democratic Services Manager be authorised to commence arrangements and develop proposals for this year's Special Council meeting.**
- (3) That a progress report be submitted to the next meeting of this Committee setting out proposals for the event and any financial implications.**

1.0 Introduction

1.1 In 2006, Council introduced the concept of holding an annual 'Special' Council meeting in autumn specifically for the following purposes:

- Consideration of a single topic
- Hearing of an external speaker
- Meeting in assembly or forum
- Consideration of a local, regional or national issue

or other purpose to be determined by the Council Business Committee.

1.2 This was set out in the Council's Constitution (Part 4, Section 1, paragraph 4.1) and the terms of reference for this committee were amended to include agreeing the agenda and making the arrangements for these 'special' Council meetings.

1.3 Whilst considering the meetings timetable for 2011/12 at its meeting on 11 November 2010, Council Business Committee felt that these Special Council

meetings should be timetabled for alternate years and resolved that the next Special Council meeting be arranged for a date in October 2012. The date for this meeting has been included on the draft timetable (to be considered elsewhere on this agenda) as 17 October 2012.

2.0 Previous Special Council meetings

- 2.1 To give Members a flavour of the types of events that have taken place in previous years, brief details of previous special council meetings are provided below:-

Date	Title	Aims
1.11. 2006	Lancaster District Local Strategic Partnership.	Information session about the LDLSP and its work.
17.10.2007	City Coast and Countryside – celebrating our culture.	To consider feedback from a community event and a recommendation that the issues raised during the event be taken on board as part of the review of the Council’s Cultural Strategy “ <i>Bring Me Sunshine</i> ” and used to shape future elements of the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme.
22.10.2008	Children and Young People Engagement Strategy.	Consultation with Young People.
13.10.2010	Would you like to be a Councillor?	To promote the role of City Councillor and standing for election to local people.

3.0 Potential topics

- 3.1 Three topics have been suggested for consideration.
- 3.2 The first idea is a meeting bringing Councillors together with young people. The theme for the Special Council meeting in 2008 was consultation with young people on the Children and Young People Engagement Strategy. Feedback from those Councillors who attended suggested that the event was disappointing because there was insufficient opportunity for the Councillors and young people to talk and exchange views. In view of this, if this topic were to be taken forward in October 2012, the purpose would be to facilitate an opportunity to connect with young people, to listen to them and to give them a greater understanding of what Councillors do and the challenges they face.
- 3.3 Officers from Community Engagement have offered to work with Democratic Services to plan and facilitate such a meeting and some of the ideas they have put forward include councillor “speed dating”, the pupil power game or world café discussions focused on understanding how young peoples opinions can feed into the decision making process.

- 3.4 This idea would assist with the Council's Community Leadership priority, in making links to engage a section of the Community which often has little contact with the Council.
- 3.5 The second idea is for consideration of a regional issue, specifically the National Grid upgrade to connect six new energy projects to the national electricity network. This includes four offshore wind farms, a 850 megawatt (MW) combined cycle gas turbine (CCGT) in Thornton, on the Fylde coast, in Lancashire, as well as the proposed new 3.2 gigawatt (GW) nuclear power station known as Moorside near Sellafield, West Cumbria.
- 3.6 There is currently only a local distribution system around the peripheries of the Lake District National Park so National Grid is tasked with finding the best way to extend the national grid throughout Cumbria and North Lancashire to facilitate these connections. National Grid is currently carrying out a great deal of technical and environmental investigation work as well as talking to a consortium of local authorities. A consultation will start in April on the strategic route options.
- 3.7 National Grid is due to consider consultation responses by the autumn and decide which they will promote to full consideration of route corridors. October would appear to be timely for National Grid to talk to Council about their chosen option and describe what happens next. Lancaster City Council has taken a leading role with the County Council and several partner authorities in Cumbria in negotiations so far.
- 3.8 This option would assist Councillors awareness and understanding of issues linked to the Economic Regeneration corporate priority, particularly the Energy Coast.
- 3.9 The third idea is for a one-topic meeting to consider whether Council might wish to remodel itself from the current Leader and Cabinet arrangement to a new style of Committee system. This is an option afforded by the Localism Act 2011, which amends the Local Government Act 2000 to allow local authorities to operate the following forms of governance: executive arrangements; a committee system, or arrangements prescribed by the Secretary of State.
- 3.10 Such a meeting could explore what a Committee system might look like in 2012 (the option exists to include Overview and Scrutiny in a new style Committee system) and the pros and cons of the different frameworks of governance.
- 3.11 Members would be presented with information by officers, have an opportunity to ask questions and debate and form a resolution in the normal manner. However, as a one-topic meeting Members would have the chance to give this important matter more time and consideration than might be available at an ordinary Council meeting.

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

- 4.1 The options open to the Committee are:-

- Option 1 – to pick a topic from those suggested above for the Democratic Services Manager to progress.
- Option 2 – to choose a different topic, raised by the Committee at this meeting, for the Democratic Services Manager to progress.
- Option 3 – to choose not to hold a Special Council meeting this year.

4.2 It would also be possible for the Committee to pick more than one topic to be costed out and discussed at the next meeting for a final choice to be made with more detailed information.

4.2 The matter is for the Committee to decide at this stage and there is no officer preferred option. The idea relating to the National Grid would, of course, be dependent upon a suitable speaker being available on the date of the meeting.

4.3 Other matters which the Committee might wish to consider at this stage are the venue for the meeting and start time. Should the Committee be minded to take up the option for an event involving young people, this would be dependent on their release from local schools and the start time of the meeting would need to be earlier than the usual 2pm to match the end time of the usual school day, around 3pm.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 Members are asked to consider whether a Special Council meeting should be held later this year and, if so, to agree a topic to be worked up into a programme for the meeting.

<p>RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK</p> <p>As outlined in the report.</p>
<p>CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT (including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)</p> <p>None.</p>
<p>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</p> <p>There are no legal implications as a result of this report.</p>
<p>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</p> <p>There are no financial implications as a result of this report. The resource implications for any topic(s) or theme(s) suggested for the meeting would be fully costed and the details brought back to the Committee at its next meeting.</p>

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**Human Resources:**

None.

Information Services:

None.

Property:

None.

Open Spaces:

None.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

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

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

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

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Special Council meetings agendas and minutes 2006/7/8/10.

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