

Council Business Committee

Councillor Community Leadership Conference 12th September 2013

Report of Chief Officer (Governance)

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To enable Members to consider a proposal for a Community Leadership Conference to be held in June 2014.

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That the Committee considers the proposal for a Community Leadership Conference in 2014 and how best to take this forward.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 On 14 March 2013, this committee considered a report on the outcomes of the Keep it R.E.A.L (Responsive, Efficient, Accountable and Local) project.
- 1.2 The Keep It Real project recognised the importance of the role of Ward Councillor, not only as an essential advisory service to constituents but in terms of local community leadership. Members will, of course, be aware that Community Leadership is one of the four priorities in the Corporate Plan 2013/14.
- 1.3 The role of Ward Councillor includes championing the interests of the ward and local people and working with the local voluntary sector, faith groups, resident and tenant groups, service providers and local businesses. This is particularly important at this time of austerity and chimes closely with the city council's Take Pride campaign, part of which aims to encourage communities and individuals to do their bit to support themselves and their communities.
- 1.4 The report considered by the Committee explained that one of the key themes from the Keep it REAL project was 'sharing councillor knowledge and experience'.

2.0 Proposal Details

- 2.1 To help Members take forward the Community Leadership Corporate Priority and address the main issue arising from the REAL project, officers have been looking at ways that Members might come together to share their knowledge and experience.
- 2.2 One of the ways this could be achieved would be holding a Community Leadership Conference for Lancaster City Councillors and inviting Councillors

from neighbouring authorities in Lancashire and South Lakeland along to share what they know about engaging with and leading their communities and how they interact within their own wards.

2.3 Community Leadership Conference

A Community Leadership Conference would provide Councillors with an opportunity to network, share knowledge, experience and expertise.

It is recommended that the proposed conference would take place on a Wednesday afternoon towards the end of June 2014 and would start with a networking lunch.

This timing would avoid the European elections when Democratic Services staff have a heavy workload and the summer holiday period.

Event feedback will determine whether this would be worth repeating at some point during the next 4 year term of office after the 2015 election and induction period has finished.

2.4 Content

The focus would be on Members talking to other Members and could include:

- Presentation on importance of community leadership and relevant skills
- Presentations of best practice case studies from Lancaster City Councillors and Councillors from other councils. For example the Sandylands Promenade Councillor/Community project.
- Presentation on Localism Act and planning issues (including community rights)
- Discussion/workshop on developing approaches to solving community issues
- Discussion/workshop on communication role in relation to future budget and service delivery challenges
- Discussion/workshop to identify future community leadership skill support
- Councillors could help to facilitate discussions/workshops

Feedback about any further support required would be used to inform the future Member Development Strategy.

Members of this Committee may wish to have detailed input into the content and format of the Conference. If so it might be helpful to establish an informal working group to meet and discuss further.

Members may also wish to put forward other options for events or actions that would address the theme 'sharing councillor knowledge and experience' which officers could take forward.

2.5 Attendance

Committee members will be aware of the ongoing low attendance issue for Councillor briefings and training. This report is coming to the Committee at an early stage because, if agreed, the date of the Community Leadership Conference will be included in the Meetings Timetable to encourage Councillors to put this in their diaries.

3.0 Details of Consultation

3.1 The Consultation and Engagement Officer and Democratic Services are working together on a number of actions from the Keep it REAL project including the proposed Community Leadership Conference.

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

	Option 1: Hold Councillor Community Leadership Conference	Option 2: Do not hold Councillor Community Leadership Conference
Advantages	<p>Provide an opportunity to celebrate achievements and share councillor knowledge, experience and expertise</p> <p>Provide a networking opportunity with councillors from neighbouring authorities</p>	<p>Saves costs of the conference including officer and Members time developing and planning the conference.</p>
Disadvantages	<p>Require office time to develop and plan</p> <p>May require some of Council Business Committee Members time to develop and plan</p> <p>Require councillor time to attend</p>	<p>Loss of an opportunity for councillors to share knowledge, experience and expertise and network with Councillors from neighbouring authorities.</p>
Risks	<p>Low councillor attendance</p> <p>Lack of examples/case studies</p>	<p>No risks identified</p>

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 The Committee is asked to consider the proposal for a Community Leadership Conference in 2014 and how best to take this forward.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT
(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

Supporting Councillor Community Leadership will assist councillors to engage with their communities more effectively.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None arising directly as a result of this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The proposed Councillor Conference will be financed from within the 2014/15 proposed Member Training & Development budget.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Human Resources:

None

Information Services:

Some support may be required depending on the conference content.

Property:

The Councillor Conference will be held in a council building.

Open Spaces:

None

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and her comments incorporated in the report.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

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

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Local Government Association 'Keeping it R.E.A.L.' Programme Council Business Committee Report - 14 March 2013

Contact Officer: Jennifer Milligan

Telephone: 01524 582268

E-mail: jmilligan@lancaster.gov.uk