

COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Special Council Meeting 2007 28th June 2007

Report of Head of Democratic Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek Members consideration of a proposal for the Special Council Meeting 2007.

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That the meeting of Council on 31st October 2007 should be designated as the special council meeting for 2007.**
- (2) That the Head of Democratic Services be authorised to make appropriate arrangements for the 2007 Special meeting on the lines set out in section 2 of the report, in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee and other Group Administrators as necessary.**
- (3) That a progress report be submitted to Council Business Committee in September setting out further details of the proposed event and any financial implications.**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1** As part of the democratic modernisation proposals, Council has agreed that one meeting a year shall be designated as a special council meeting with the following remit:

That one of the existing autumn meetings of Council, shall be selected by the Council Business Committee and re-designated as a 'Special' Council meeting for any of 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

It has been previously recommended by officers and agreed by Council Business Committee that the meeting of Council on 31st October 2007 should be designated as the special council meeting for 2007.

The Special Council meeting was piloted last year and provided an opportunity for both officers and members to consider how the Special Council meeting might operate and how it could be improved and enhanced in the future.

During the last few months Overview and Scrutiny support officers have been considering the Overview and Scrutiny work programme and following some initial suggestions from Members had begun to scope a piece of work around the issue of a vibrant district. During the course of this work it became apparent that the issues which were emerging could provide the basis for and would benefit from discussion at a Special Council meeting. The proposed concept is set out below.

2.0 Proposal Details

2.1 Concept

Local Produce, Local Hospitality, Local Entertainment, Local Choice - (*Working title*)

A themed event that looks at the promotion and potential of the district and what it has to offer as a place to visit, a place of recreation, culture and entertainment, in the context of the districts unique identity and character and in terms of what makes the district distinct in terms of location, attractions, produce and music etc.

2.2 Context:

The Corporate Plan 2007 states:

“Promoting city, coast and countryside, we will achieve lasting opportunities for all in a safe and healthy district that’s proud of its natural and cultural assets.”

In Morecambe this means a seaside town recognised as vital and vibrant in an exceptional natural setting with a sustainable economy and a stable resident community.

In Lancaster this means being recognised as a nationally and internationally important University City with an envied quality of life, rich heritage, strong economic opportunity and social cohesion.

In our Rural Areas this means a sustainable quality of life that protects communities and precious landscapes while providing the economic opportunity to flourish.

Why do people want to live, work and visit our district? What makes it attractive? What makes it special? Over the last few years the already strong and distinct character of our district has once again begun to rise to the forefront and beginning to assert a new vibrancy and optimism.

For example:

Local Produce – there has been a development and growing prominence of local producers e.g. Lancaster Brewery, Port of Lancaster Smokehouse, a growth in farmers markets, featuring of Morecambe Bay Potted Shrimps by top chefs.

Local Music – The district has successfully hosted a top international band ‘Arctic Monkeys’ and more events are planned such as a performance by the up and coming band ‘The Holloways’. The district has a vibrant local music scene, from local bands and performances in locations as diverse as pubs, churches and libraries to music

promotion through More Music in Morecambe. The district hosts Jazz and other music festivals, concerts at Leighton Hall, bands in the park, lunchtime concerts and performances by the Haffner Orchestra as well as new initiatives such as Music Alfresco.

Local Culture – The district has rich heritage and culture from theatres to art galleries guided walks, festivals, many drama groups. Venues such as the Gregson, the Platform, Williamson Park and Storey Institute which provide programmes of cultural events throughout the year. In addition there are festivals such as the maritime and kite festivals. There is a strong sense of heritage with Lancaster Castle, the Priory, Roman remains, historic churches, railway heritage at Carnforth and the Winter Gardens at Morecambe. All producing a historic district of important historical significance.

Local Environment - From city to coast and countryside the district has some of the most beautiful and contrasting scenery in the United Kingdom. With canals, rivers, panoramic views over Morecambe Bay and the Lake District. The district also has many parks, open spaces and areas of natural beauty and interesting built environments including villages, towns and city. Many people are attracted to the area to live or visit. The district has attracted cycling demonstration town status and is a popular destination for cyclists and walkers due to the facilities it has to offer.

Local Hospitality – There are many places to eat and drink within the district from country pubs to restaurants. In the last few years there has been an increase in the number of outlets serving and promoting local produce providing a warm welcome. There are also many hotels and guest houses attracting both national and international visitors.

Local Entertainment – With museums, amusements, theatres and cinema there are many things to entertain visitors and residents to the district. There are a thriving number of clubs and societies and community led activities such as Panto in the Park, music festivals and one of the largest independent beer festivals in the UK. There are many things to see and do.

It is important that in its community leadership role Lancaster City Council considers how it can best support, develop and promote these activities in the district in order to create a vibrant district, which a place of choice for people to live work and visit.

2.3 Participants:

It is suggested that the following participants should be invited to attend event as participants:

- Councillors
- MP's
- A specially invited stakeholder audience from the community, business, interested groups, voluntary sector,
- Panel of 'experts' (e.g. tourism, academic, music and hospitality),
- Public
- Media

2.4 Format:

It is proposed that the event should be comprised of the following components:

- An all day/afternoon 'Expo' exhibition with stalls in Banqueting Suite from stakeholders (as suggested out in Section 2.2 of this report), open to the public and delegates.
- Teatime buffet and networking for delegates
- Opening facilitated plenary session in Ashton Hall
- Workshops for delegates on themes as set out in Section 2.2 of this report, with the additional workshops on infrastructure, facilitated by a suitable Councillor, Officer or stakeholder).
- Feedback from workshops
- Plenary session facilitated debate on key issues and themes
- Concluding session on outcomes, action planning and objective setting.

2.5 Further Work:

It is proposed that Council will consider and shape some future elements of work which will be carried out by Task Groups set up by Overview and Scrutiny on emerging themes with their final reports reported back to Council.

2.6 Other Arrangements

It is suggested that the event is managed by Democratic Services with support from other services such as Corporate Strategy, Property Services and Economic Development and Tourism. The event would require external facilitation and it is suggested that a local media personality would be best placed for this role.

3.0 Details of Consultation

3.1 At this the concept stage no consultation has taken place.

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

4.1 The options available to the Committee are to approve the proposal as set out in this report, to amend the proposal or to propose an alternative. Whilst there are few risks attached to this proposal it is important that work begins on planning the special council meeting as soon as possible in order that a suitable and successful event can be achieved.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 It is the view of officers that the proposal as set out in this report provides a suitable subject for the special council meeting, on an issue of interest to Councillors, the public and stakeholders and is achievable given the timescales involved.

5.2 Work will need to be done to ensure that the event is sufficiently focussed and relates to the Corporate Plan, emphasising the Council's community leadership role in promoting local procurement.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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

Whilst there are no implications arising directly from this report, there are clearly issues relating to diversity, sustainability and rural proofing that will need to be addressed in both planning the event and the topic under consideration.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

All financial expenditure must be contained within existing budgets. At this conceptual stage costings have not been obtained. Subject to approval at this meeting officers will fully cost the event, however it is believed that the event as envisaged is achievable within existing budgets.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

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

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Legal Services have been consulted and have no comments.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Deputy Monitoring Officer has been involved in the preparation of the report and has no comments to add.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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