

COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Special Council Meeting 2007 13th September 2007

Report of Head of Democratic Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update Members on the proposals for the 2007 Special Council Meeting 2007, as agreed at the previous meeting of Council Business Committee.

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

(1) That the report be noted.

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 agreed by Council Business Committee that an extra meeting of Council on 17th October 2007 should be designated as the special council meeting for 2007.

This report provides members with an update on the proposal that has been further developed by officers.

2.0 Proposal Details

Promoting Culture in the City, Coast and Countryside

A themed event that looks at the promotion and potential of the district as a centre for culture in the widest context. In particular identifying what it has to offer as a place to visit, a place of recreation, heritage, culture and entertainment, in the context of the district's unique identity, location and character. The outcomes of which will feed in to the review and development of the district's Cultural Strategy.

It is important to note that the event will take place within Local Democracy Week and will provide the opportunity for the community and in particular young people to take an active part in developing policies that will shape the future for the district.

2.1 Context

The word "culture" means many things to many people. To some it refers simply to a narrow and exclusive range of activities such as ballet, opera and the performing arts. But for many others the term "culture" has a much broader definition, encompassing not only "high art" but also aspects of everyday life, such as sporting, leisure and learning activities and "popular" culture such as television, pop music and cinema.

The Council's four year Cultural Strategy "Bring Me Sunshine" agreed in 2003 aims to provide a co-ordinated framework that will define and underpin the development of cultural life within Lancaster district over the period. The Cultural Strategy is now due for review and it is intended that this event will contribute to this review.

In support of this, 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 and Heritage – 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.

2.2 Participants

It is suggested that the following participants should be invited to attend event as participants, approximately 120 people, which will culminate in a semi-formal meeting of Council to consider the issues raised.

- Councillors
- An invited stakeholder audience from the community, business, interested groups and voluntary sector within the workshop themes.
- Young People
- Public
- Media

2.4 Format

Venue: The Platform, Morecambe

4.00pm - 5.00pm An 'Expo' style fair which aims to showcase culture within in our district, including an informal buffet and an opportunity for delegates to network and fact find on what culture in the district is comprised of.

5.00pm – 5.30pm Welcome to delegates by event facilitator, followed by introductory comments from the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive on cultural strategy.

5.30pm – 7.15pm Workshops, delegates will sign up to workshops around the following four themes. Each workshop will be led by relevant City Council officers, with support from Democratic Services. Each workshop will receive a brief summary of our current cultural ambitions and achievements in the scope of their workshop and three key questions to discuss with regard to the future direction of the Cultural Strategy with regard to this.

- Workshop 1: Young People (Facilitated by Corporate Strategy)
- Workshop 2: Tourism, Events and Entertainment (Facilitated by Economic Development and Tourism and Cultural Services)
- Workshop 3: Improving and Regenerating our District (Facilitated by Community Engagement Team)
- Workshop 4: Health, Recreation and Sport (Facilitated by Cultural Services)

7.15pm – 8.00pm Feedback from Groups and facilitated discussion of emerging themes.

8.00pm – 8.15pm Council formally convenes to consider whether it wishes to resolve, that the review of the Cultural Strategy take on board the issues and themes raised at the meeting and if necessary 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 or alternatively referred to Cabinet to be taken forward in their budget and policy framework proposals.

2.5 Other Arrangements

An officer team from Democratic Services, Communications, Corporate Strategy, Cultural Services and Economic Development and Tourism, is in the process of being assembled to help deliver the event. The event will benefit from external facilitation and it is suggested that a local media personality would be best placed for this role, as well providing publicity for the event.

3.0 Details of Consultation

3.1 Initial consultation has taken place with Corporate Director (Regeneration) and Cultural Services.

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.

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.

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 for the event must be contained within existing budgets. It is envisaged the total costs, including buffet, publicity and facilitation will cost a maximum of £700 and can be met from the Democratic Representation budget for 2007/08.

Any proposals and outcomes arising from the event and the review of the Cultural Strategy would require consideration in the context of the overall priorities of the Council and the resources allocated to achieve these priorities. Furthermore, any such proposals involving budgetary growth in support of the Cultural Strategy would require consideration as part of the overall budget and policy framework proposals and the competing needs of the district.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

To support the above the s151 officer would advise that any such event includes a brief overview of the financial prospects for the Council, as context.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

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

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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