

COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Civic Review Implementation 13th September 2007

Report of Head of Democratic Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report provides an update of the work completed to date on the Civic Review which was agreed by Council in December 2006 and requests the views of members on a number of items before further action is taken.

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That the action taken to date and completion of items 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 22, 24, 27, 33 and 46 in the implementation plan be noted.**
- (2) That in respect of item 4, the views of other Lancashire Authorities be noted and it be accepted that the holding of a Civic Tour should be the decision of each individual Mayor of Lancaster, and held in accordance with their wishes and within available budgets and the intention to promote the tourism potential of this event in accordance with item 30 in the plan be noted.**
- (3) That no further action be taken to develop a link between the Mayor's Charity and staff charity events, but it be noted that Mayoral events will continue to be advertised on Outlook, allowing those members of staff who wish to support the Mayor's Charity the opportunity to do so.**
- (4) That in relation to Annual Council and Mayor-Making:**
 - (a) Schoolchildren continue to be encouraged to attend the Mayor-making ceremony and in addition an information note about Annual Council and Mayor Making be prepared and sent with all school invitations to give an awareness of the event and its purpose, with additional information that the Mayor can visit schools at their invitation by prior arrangement with the Mayor's Office.**
 - (b) for 2008, 5 members of the public, each with a guest (i.e. total of 10), be invited to attend Annual Council and the celebration afterwards, chosen by ballot from those applying via the local press.**

- (5) That, in relation to Mayor's Sunday:
- (a) the parade on Mayor's Sunday be reinstated with effect from May 2008
 - (b) the inclusion of multi-faith prayers at the Mayor's Sunday Service be extended to include song and verse as appropriate and in consultation with each individual Mayor
 - (c) no further action be taken with regard to inviting the Civic Heads of Lancashire to attend Mayor's Sunday.
- (6) That subject to any adverse comments from the Universities, the format of the former Overseas Students' Reception be amended for 2007/08 to include all first year students and that it be held on a date to be agreed in April 2008 (avoiding the Easter break), details to be considered in consultation with the University representatives.
- (7) That with regard to the Mayoral at Homes
- (a) no further action be taken with regard to the proposal to arrange an additional Mayoral At Home.
 - (b) commencing in 2008/09, 2 Mayoral At Homes be held in the existing Council venues towards the end of the Mayoral Year, with one of the events being held on a Saturday on an experimental basis by agreement with the Mayor.
- (8) That the Head of Democratic Services be authorised to continue investigating the possibility of a civic presence at the Community Festival currently held in Williamsons Park and a similar event in Happy Mount Park with a view to developing this as an alternative to a Community Festival and Parade on the Saturday of Mayor-making.
- (9) That, it be noted that progress reports on the above and items currently listed as pending in the Implementation Plan will be submitted to this committee in due course.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Council, at its meeting on 06 December 2007, made a number of recommendations designed to review and update the civic function of the City Council. Attached to this report is a copy of the implementation plan which details all recommendations, together with action undertaken and progress to date.

2.0 Proposal Details

- 2.1 The implementation plan can be divided into three main sections; those recommendations which have been implemented (marked as completed and indicated by dark shading), those recommendations which are currently pending (indicated by light shading) and those on which some progress has been made but which are not as yet complete.
- 2.2 In many instances initial investigations or actions on this final category have thrown up obstacles or highlighted other opportunities and the report below includes a

number of issues where Members are requested to consider some alternative suggestions.

2.3 Each element of the original recommendations from Council is numbered on the implementation plan for ease of reference and shaded to indicate their status.

2.4 **Completed** – indicated by darkest shading.

The following numbers refer to those elements of the plan which are considered complete:

1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 22, 24, 27, 33 and 46

Recommendation:

That the action taken to date and completion of items 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 22, 24, 27, 33 and 46 in the implementation plan be noted.

2.5 **Pending** – indicated by medium shading.

The following items, which have been classed as pending, are those items which require further investigation of the feasibility and/or impact on the Civic budget or on which it has not been possible to allocate the necessary time to progress, bearing in mind the busy calendar in 2007 to date:

12, 13, 28, 29, 35, 36, 37, 38, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 47 and 48.

2.6 **Ongoing** – indicated by white background. Progress has been made on these recommendations but the proposed action has not yet been completed. Set out below is the action taken to date, the progress made and any issues on which further member views are requested at this stage before any additional progress is made:

2.6.1 **Numbers 4 & 30 – Visit by Civic Heads of Lancashire**

At the request of the Council, all Lancashire authorities were asked for their views on the reduction of the annual visits to the Lancashire authorities. These visits are generally held for a full day and provide an opportunity for the hosting Mayor to “show off” their district.

On the whole, the idea of reducing Civic Tours to one every other year for each authority was not supported. As is the case in Lancaster, in some authorities the tour is an important event in the annual calendar and a budget is set aside for the visit within which all costs have to be met. However, some Mayors who do not have a Tour as an annual event have opted to hold a tour and cover the cost themselves (eg. Chorley, Fylde), or some authorities may hold a tour and cancel another event as a consequence (eg. Rossendale). In each instance it is considered to be the Mayor’s decision whether or not to hold the event but on the whole the events are deemed an opportunity to showcase the area and are generally very successful and enjoyed by those taking part.

In 2007, the Tour of Lancaster took the form of a visit to the Williamson Park, the Grand Theatre, lunch at Lancaster and Morecambe College and a tour of Lancaster Town Hall. As a result, children’s parties were booked at Williamson Park, tickets were booked for performances at the Grand Theatre, and a reunion of the “Chain Gang” for 2006/2007 will take place in Lancaster in the future.

Recommendation:

- (1) **That the views of other Lancashire Authorities be noted and it be accepted that the holding of a Civic Tour should be the decision of each individual Mayor of Lancaster, and held in accordance with their wishes and within available budgets.**
- (2) **That the intention to promote the tourism potential of this event in accordance with item 30 in the plan be noted.**

2.6.2 Number 11 – Linking of the Mayor’s Charity with the Council’s Staff Charity programme.

A meeting of the Officer Charity Fundraising Committee has taken place, and it was felt that there should be no link between the charities supported by the Mayor in his/her Mayoral year. Mayoral events often involve the purchase of a ticket and are in the evenings or at weekends, whereas staff events are designed to take place during the working day and to support a range of charities which staff wish to offer some level of support to. It was also felt that Mayoral events and staff events are targeted at two very different audiences. The first is intended to attract the maximum number of participants and raise substantial amounts of money, whereas the second is an opportunity for small scale fundraising within a working environment. Staff charity fundraising is still under development, so this situation may change in time but a link is unlikely to develop at any point in the near future.

Recommendation:

That no further action be taken to develop a link between the Mayor’s Charity and staff charity events, but it be noted that Mayoral events will continue to be advertised on Outlook, allowing those members of staff who wish to support the Mayor’s Charity the opportunity to do so.

2.6.3 Numbers 19, 20, 21 & 23 – Annual Council and Mayor Making

- (a) The date of Annual Council was changed from Wednesday to Friday in 2007, which had little effect on the organisation of the event.
- (b) Invitations are already issued annually to all primary and secondary schools and voluntary organisations with which the Council has contact for other events (e.g. Remembrance Day). The take up of the invitation has increased in recent years, especially by schools.

Although it is a positive move to see an increased number of school children present in the Gallery, the addition of a talk to the children will pose some difficulties in identifying suitable accommodation in the Town Hall and in relation to the availability of staff. Annual Council utilises the Banqueting Suite, the Ashton Hall and the Council Chamber, and on many occasions Committee B is also booked for meetings unconnected with the civic event. Even if this room were to be made available there is room for only a limited number of people to be present for a talk or for the children to eat lunch (bearing in mind that the event is held over lunchtime for most schools). From a staffing point of view, those members of staff with the experience and knowledge to provide such a talk are fully occupied with the arrangements for the Council meeting and subsequent reception.

Consideration has therefore been given to alternative ways in which the rationale behind this decision could be progressed in different ways and it is suggested that schools can still be encouraged to bring a party of schoolchildren to attend but that the background information could be provided in advance for teachers to relay to the children in preparation for their attendance. This can be supplemented by an arranged visit to any school by the Mayor once they have taken office, whether the children have been able to attend or not.

Recommendation:

That schoolchildren continue to be encourage to attend the Mayor-making ceremony, and in addition an information note about the event be prepared and sent with all school invitations to give an awareness of the event and its purpose, with additional information that the Mayor can visit schools at their invitation by prior arrangement with the Mayor's Office.

- (c) The Annual Council meal is chosen each year by the Mayor from a number of menus provided to them from local caterers. Each Mayor has for a number of years had the opportunity to choose the format of the meal and the menu available, but each has so far chosen to have the more formal three course seated lunch. The cost is met from the overall budget available for Mayoral hospitality within which it is for the Mayor to determine where their priorities lie. Cost is therefore considered but does not necessarily determine the final outcome.
- (d) Members of the public were not included in the 2007 event as the timescale for organisation was extremely tight after the Elections. Members of the public were, however, included in the celebrations for John McGuinness' Freedom Ceremony in June 2007, and feedback from those who attended indicated that the opportunity to be a part of the event was appreciated and the hospitality gratefully received. It is intended to involve a small number at the 2008 Annual Council which will then determine the way forward for future years.

Recommendation:

That for 2008, 5 members of the public, each with a guest, (i.e. total of 10) be invited to attend Annual Council and the celebration afterwards, by ballot from those applying via the local press.

- (e) In accordance with the wishes of the Council, Members attending with a guest in 2007 were charged the cost price of the meal. This was done by deduction from allowances for those in attendance. The introduction of this practice had no overall effect on the number of Councillors attending the event and will be continued into future years.
- (f) Availability of alcohol at the 2007 Annual Council was limited in quantity to an average of that suggested rather than the specific amount being poured for each person due to the additional cost which would have been involved in providing that level of waiter service. Individuals were therefore left to take personal responsibility for their level of consumption. No adverse reports were received but the situation will be monitored in future years.

2.4.4 Numbers 19, 25 & 26 – Mayor's Sunday

Mayor's Sunday 2007 went through a number of changes. The first was the decision to change the date to a Sunday in June to avoid a clash with Morecambe FC's

appearance at Wembley. A number of individuals and Councillors were unable to attend as a result. However, the Church was full with the support of the Mayor's local community and there were representatives from a number of organisations in the congregation.

In order to begin to make the changes described in number 25, it was decided this year to dispense with the parade to and from the Church. The decision proposes that the Sunday parade would be replaced with a parade on Saturday which would be part of a large scale community event. It was an opportunity this year to assess the effect of having no parade and to analyse feedback received as a consequence.

On the whole, Members missed the parade and a number of complaints were received on the day and after the event, as were letters from members of the public. In each case, it was suggested that the parade be reinstated as it was felt that having a procession with a band through the Town is a special time for the Mayor and is a tradition that they would wish to see remain for future years regardless of whether the proposal to hold a Community Festival style parade on the Saturday comes to fruition.

There was also a change to the format of the Service this year with a number of children taking part in the Service and the addition of a section of multi-faith prayers. The inclusion of children was welcomed by all present and was seen as a way of encouraging young people to become aware of the Mayoralty. In addition, the addition of multi-faith prayers has also brought with it further suggestions for the inclusion of song or verse from other cultures during the Service.

The recommendation also suggested that Lancashire Mayors be invited to the Service. This was not done for 2007 as investigations were underway into whether we should consider reducing the invitations to visit the district. At a recent networking meeting of Civic Officers invitations to Civic Sundays were discussed and it would seem that an increasing number of Mayors tend to decline such invitations in favour of events in their own districts. It is unlikely therefore that any new invitations to other Mayors would be accepted. Those who do currently send invitations to other Mayors to their Civic Sunday tend to be only to their neighbouring authorities, rather than Countywide.

Recommendations:

- (1) That the parade on Mayor's Sunday be reinstated and that the suggestion of a parade on the Saturday be reconsidered as part of the considerations of the Community weekend event in relation to item 39 on the Implementation Plan (see 2.6.8 below).**
- (2) That the inclusion of multi-faith prayers at the Mayor's Sunday Service be extended to include song and verse as appropriate and in consultation with each individual Mayor**
- (3) That no further action be taken with regard to inviting the Civic Heads of Lancashire to attend Mayor's Sunday.**

2.6.5 Number 31 – Students Reception

The Reception for Overseas Students has been an annual event in the Civic Calendar for many years with the intention of providing a welcome to the City for

students from overseas who have chosen to study at Lancaster University and St Martins College (now the University of Cumbria).

The civic review highlighted the need to update this event to make it more relevant to today's students and concluded that the reception should be opened up to welcome any students from home or abroad who have come to live and study in the Lancaster district.

Before making any firm plans on how to revise this event a report was submitted to the University Liaison Group to gain the views of university representatives. At the meeting, members of the Group expressed concern that opening the reception to all first year students could cause a vast oversubscription to the event. It was suggested that the timing of the event could be moved to a different time of the year, such as towards the end of the first year, and it be aimed at those students that were soon to move away from the University campuses. At this point the Council's Services would become more relevant and information could be provided on availability.

The Group asked for the establishment of a working group to consider the way forward for this event and the most appropriate use of such a reception, having first obtained the views of their students to see how relevant these ideas would be to them.

Although this initial meeting was held some time ago, arranging a working group meeting with both universities did not prove possible before the summer holidays began and is now unlikely to happen until at least October. The timescale for making any changes to the event for this year is now very tight and a decision is required as to whether the event due to take place in October/November 2007 should be postponed with the intention of looking at a date later in the year whether the event remains in the same format or not. The other suggestion is to continue with the reception for overseas students this year on the existing format and to look to a change for the 2008/2009 Mayoral year.

Both universities have been asked for their views on these alternatives and these will be reported to the meeting if received.

Recommendation:

That subject to any adverse comments from the Universities, the format of the former Overseas Students' Reception be amended for 2007/08 to include all first year students and that it be held on a date to be agreed in April 2008 (avoiding the Easter break), details to be considered in consultation with the University representatives.

2.6.6 Number 32 – Parish Reception

It has been suggested that the reception for Parish Councils be run more closely in conjunction with the LAPTC with information and representatives from all Council departments, County Councillors and MPs available to meet Parish Councillors.

The Head of Democratic Services is to attend the September meeting of LAPTC to discuss increasing the invitees to those suggested and to ask for their views on the format of the Annual Reception and how they feel it could be improved to their benefit. A suggested topic which may be of interest to the Parishes this year is Rural Neighbourhood Management.

Any further views or suggestions from Members for report to the LAPTIC are welcome.

2.6.7 **Number 34 – Mayoral At Homes**

The Mayoral At Homes are traditionally held in Lancaster Town Hall and The Platform at Morecambe on the two Wednesdays immediately following Annual Council. A Lancaster Mayor will hold the Lancaster event first, and a Morecambe Mayor the Morecambe event first. The number of people attending the event has dwindled in the last few years, which could be attributed to changes to working patterns and lifestyles.

A resolution was passed that asked for an additional Mayoral At Home to be held in the Mayor's Ward at some time during the Mayor year, and the feasibility of this has been discussed with Property Services.

The events at Lancaster and Morecambe are on Council owned premises and are principally staffed by Property Services and a small number of volunteers. Arrangements are made for cakes to be supplied by local supermarkets for each venue, both of whom have additional store supplies which can be easily accessed if demand is high.

Property Services, who are primarily responsible for the running of the event, have been consulted and have raised a number of concerns should the event be moved to an alternative location each year:

- Suitable premises registered with and approved by Environmental Health will need to be identified in the relevant Ward
- Flexibility in the provision of cake supplies will be lost in some instances, resulting in potential over or under supply
- Crockery may need to be transported to the venue
- Property services do not normally staff events away from council buildings – staff will need to be provided with transport and paid accordingly

Discussions have also been held as to whether using a local hotel or tea room could be an option, but the Council would have to book a minimum number of guests, incurring a minimum charge and there may not be sufficient flexibility to extend numbers indefinitely. The cost per head in this case would far exceed the cost of the events at Lancaster and Morecambe.

Consideration has therefore been given to other ways in which the event could be revitalised and it is suggested that the At Homes be moved to the end of the Mayoral Year, in March or April. A new Mayor has had little or no opportunity to meet people and become known at the beginning of the Mayoral year, but by the end of their year in office a Mayor will have attended hundreds of events and has had the opportunity to meet thousands of people. The dates and times of the At Homes can be distributed with every letter or email sent in response to an invitation, and the Mayor will have the opportunity to make people aware of the At Homes at every event they attend.

It is also suggested that moving one or both of the events to a weekend may allow more people the flexibility to attend with their families and friends, outside work commitments.

Recommendation:

- (1) That no further action be taken with regard to the proposal to arrange an additional Mayoral At Home.**
- (2) That, commencing in 2008/09, 2 Mayoral At Homes be held in the existing Council venues towards the end of the Mayoral Year, with one of the events being held on a Saturday on an experimental basis by agreement with the Mayor.**

2.6.8 Number 39 – Mayor’s Day Community Festival and Parade

Members will note from the Implementation Plan that very little progress has been made towards developing a Community Festival and Parade on the Saturday between Mayor-Making and Mayor’s Sunday. This will require a significant piece of work in conjunction with Cultural Services to consider the feasibility of such a proposal and identify appropriate budgets for its implementation.

There are some concerns about the potential success of such an event following the demise of both the Morecambe and Lancaster Carnivals through lack of support and the availability of resources to guarantee the level of input which would be required from the Council to ensure its success.

Coupled with these concerns, feedback received from Members and the public on Mayors Sunday in 2007 showed that even if there were to be a Community Festival parade on the Saturday a Mayor’s Parade on the Sunday would still be favoured, and as a result officers have started to give some thought to potential alternatives. A Community Festival is currently organised in Williamson Park each summer and whilst it would not be on the weekend of the Mayor Making a civic presence at this already successful event may be worth considering.

Initial approaches have been made to those who currently organise the annual Community Festival in Williamson Park to see if a civic presence at this Festival would be welcomed should Members consider this a viable alternative and it is hoped to be able to report further on this at the meeting.

Since this event is primarily Lancaster focussed, if Members are of the view that this is worth pursuing investigations could also commence into staging a similar event in Happy Mount Park in Morecambe.

Recommendation:

That the Head of Democratic Services be authorised to continue investigating the possibility of a civic presence at the Community Festival currently held in Williamson Park and a similar event in Happy Mount Park with a view to developing this as an alternative to a Community Festival and Parade on the Saturday of Mayor-making.

3.0 Details of Consultation

- 3.1 Property Services have been consulted on the matters involving Mayoral At Homes and Annual Council. Lancaster University and Cumbria University have been consulted on the Students Reception.

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

4.1 At this stage, the options available to Members are to endorse the implementation of the decisions of full Council or to make amendments to the proposals as set out in this report where feedback or further investigation has indicated that the initial proposal requires modification.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 The review of the civic function within the City Council has provided an opportunity to update and review the practices and events, some of which have remained unchanged for many years. However, some of the proposals have proved either difficult to implement or unpopular with those who wish to maintain the tradition of the Mayoralty. Although there remains much more work to do on some of the major decisions made by Council, good progress has been made so far and most of the changes have been well received.

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

None.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The 2007/08 budget for civic and mayoral expenses comprises the following:

	£
Civic and mayoral functions	12,300
Printing and stationery	700
Floral decorations	<u>2,300</u>
Total	<u>15,300</u>

This budget is not divided into spend on particular events and each Mayor is consulted over the allocation of funds to events and hospitality during their year of office. Estimated costs for each event are available and each year quotes are obtained and choices made to ensure value for money with the available budget.

Any costs arising as a result of the actions implemented or proposed in this report can be contained from within existing budgets.

A number of the Council's decisions require further reports into the feasibility of their implementation and any financial implications of those issues will be included in subsequent reports. Should any additional costs be identified Members will need to consider these as potential growth items in considering future budgets. At this stage it is unlikely that sufficient progress will have been made to enable their consideration as part of the 2008/09 budget and any such changes will therefore have to be considered for 2009/10.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

Any future potential growth areas would need to be considered in the context of the Council's existing (and proposed) priorities, as well as its overall financial outlook.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

This report has no direct legal implications. Where specific actions have legal implications these were highlighted in the original report to Council and will be 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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