
Meeting of the Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services and Advisory Panel

17 October 2007

Report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services

YORKSHIRE IN BLOOM

Summary

1. This report informs members of the outcome of our entry into the Yorkshire in Bloom competition 2007 and the work undertaken in relation to the entry.

Background

2. The Yorkshire in Bloom competition is an annual event, which York has not entered since 1998, when we won and were awarded the Rose Bowl prize for the small city category.
3. We have for the last 2 years had an in bloom committee to coordinate all our efforts in this area, which had seen major improvements during that period. Representatives from the following areas sat on the committee council officers, members, city centre partnership, York press, Askham Bryan College and volunteers from the public.
4. A decision was taken by the committee in March of this year to enter the competition as this linked closely with the Council's York Pride initiative. Since the last occasion that York entered the competition the criteria has changed significantly and the entrants are judged against a variety of criteria including local environmental quality, sustainability and publicity as well as floral displays and permanent landscaping and planting. Furthermore, the competition now involves two judging periods, one in the Spring, April and one in the Summer, July.
5. The decision to enter with such a short time period before the first judging date meant that, whilst we believed the City could demonstrate that we could meet the criteria for each section, we would need a person to coordinate the entry, bringing together all the good work being undertaken throughout the City. Liz Levett, the Council's Trading Standards Manager, took on this role working with the committee with particular support and guidance from Russell Stone, Head of Neighbourhood Pride Service and Dave Meigh, Head of Parks and Open Spaces.
6. A strategic approach was taken in delivering this project and our first task was to analyse what we needed to prove to the judges in each category. We then identified what was happening in the City in terms of the different criteria, including the gaps that had to be addressed before we

could put the route together. All in a very short space of time. A lot of networking, internet searches, phone calls, brain storming, photographs taken and visits were made so that we could get the spring route to the judges together with a four page brief on the City a week before their visit which was set for Thursday 5th April. Displays were put together, and our thanks go to all those people throughout the City who provided Liz with information, display material, photographs and ideas for the display she set up at the Eco Depot for the judges to see as part of their visit.

7. The Spring judging is just a taster for the Summer. More time and marks are allocated to the Summer judging, but this means more effort and more things to show the judges as evidence. Together with a 16 page portfolio on the City which must address the criteria and not just 'nice' activity/sites/photos. Certainly without the facility of a co-ordinator it would be very difficult to put together an entry that would stand any chance of success in the competition.

The Judging

8. There are two periods of judging, a spring and a summer. The spring judging went very well, with good feedback being given from the judges on the standards and diversity of our entry.
9. The summer judging took place on what turned out to be the warmest day of a miserable July. The judges spent 4 hours touring the city, including locations ranging from North Minster business park and Hartrigg Oaks to Rowntree Park and the City centre, including meeting residents and partners across the age range of 8 years to 89!. The day finished with a reception in the Mansion house with the civic party.
10. The outcome of our entry was an award of Silver Gilt, and excellent feedback from our judges, awards in our category were:

Gold – Sheffield

Silver Gilt – Barnsley and City of York

Silver – Bradford and Kingston upon Hull

Bronze - None

11. The judges wrote:

'An excellent tour of the City of York. The entrant had obviously studied the criteria and every aspect of the competition very well. The floral and sustainable planting clearly complimented the magnificent architecture of this wonderful city. The many diverse groups, individuals, local authority staff and personnel that we met during our tour enthused with civic pride. With such an excellent return to the Yorkshire in Bloom campaign and with a concerted effort reflecting the areas for future development, the City of York has all the attributes to achieve gold in the 2008 campaign and could easily aspire to a future national Britain in Bloom entry. (Please see annex 1 for full report)

12. A meeting has been held with the York in Bloom committee to give feedback from the judging and the lessons learnt from the process. It was agreed that York should re enter next year, and with the same level of support and commitment by all involved in both planning and on the ground, coupled with concentrating on the areas of improvement highlighted by the judges, we should be able to achieve the Gold award, which would be excellent for the city.

Consultation

13. The report is primarily an information report for Members and therefore no consultation has been undertaken regarding the contents of the report.

Options and analysis

14. The report is primarily an information report for Members and therefore no specific options or analysis are provided to Members regarding the contents of the report.

Implications

Financial

15. There are no financial implications regarding the contents of the report.

Human Resources

16. There are no specific human resource implications regarding the contents of the report.

Equalities

17. There are no specific equalities implications regarding the contents of the report.

Legal

18. There are no specific legal implications regarding the contents of the report

Crime and Disorder

19. There are no specific crime and disorder implications regarding the contents of the report

Information Technology

20. Therefore there are no specific information technology implications regarding the contents of the report

Property

21. There are no specific property implications regarding the contents of the report

Risk Management

22. There are no specific risk management implications regarding the contents of the report

Recommendations

23. That the Advisory Panel advise the Executive Member to note the contents of this report and congratulate all those involved in a successful entry.
24. That the Advisory Panel support the City of York's entry into the 2008 competition.

Reason: To support the committee of its entry to the competition which linked closely with the Council's York Pride initiative and support the entry for 2008.

Contact Details

Author:

John Goodyear
Assistant Director
Neighbourhood Services
Tel No.553104

Russell Stone
Head of Neighbourhood Pride
Service
Neighbourhood Services
Tel No.553108

Liz Levett
Trading Standards Manager
Neighbourhood Services
Tel No. 551527
Specialist Implications Officers

Financial: None

Human Resources: None

Equalities: None

Legal: None

Crime and Disorder: None

Information Technology: None

Property: None

Risk Management: None

Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers – Judges Comments and judging criteria
Attached Annexes

Annex 1
Annex 2