
**Meeting of the Executive Members for City Strategy
and the Advisory Panel**

11 December 2006

Report of the Director of City Strategy

City Centre Events Review

Summary

1. York City Centre Partnership, through the council's City Centre Operations team, has conducted a review of events taking place in the city centre's open spaces. The review's key aims were to examine and improve the content, quality, organisation and co-ordination of York's city centre events (both individually and as a whole programme) with a view to developing a high-quality programme of events for our city centre open spaces, which meets the needs of residents, businesses, participants and visitors to the city. A co-ordinated approach to events is desirable and the council is asked to consider the findings of the review and to formally endorse its proposed mission statement and recommendations for the future development of the events programme.

Background

2. The review has been conducted in response to the growing usage of York's city centre spaces for public events and the awareness of the importance of events and city centre vibrancy to both the economy of the city and the cultural well-being of its community. This is the first time a review of city centre events has been undertaken, with the current events programme having developed over a number of years without clear strategy or direction. It was felt that conducting the review would help ensure that city centre events would meet the needs of the city.

Consultation

3. Consultation with key stakeholders has been central to the review. The opinions of residents about the events taking place in the city centre, and what they would like to see in future, were obtained via on-street interviews, self-completion questionnaires and the council's Talkabout panel questionnaire. In addition, the views of the city's cultural quarter and the tourism industry were sought through direct consultation with the York@Large cultural consortium and the First Stop York Tourism Partnership's Product Development Group. The attached report summarises the key finding of the research and consultation.

Options

4. Members are asked to recognise the importance of events to the city for both residents of York as part of our cultural offer, and for visitors as a contributor to the overall experience.
5. Members are also asked to endorse the proposed Mission Statement for York's city centre events (p.11 of the attached report):
"York's city centre open spaces are a prominent platform reflecting York's diversity and vibrancy. They are an important vehicle for showcasing the city's lively events offer; for supporting community activities; and for bolstering the city centre's retail and visitor economies, by providing an additional draw into York city centre. City of York Council and York City Centre Partnership are committed to working with York's festivals and events organisers to achieve a balanced and varied programme of high quality, well-presented and safe events for York city centre which respond to the interests of both residents and visitors."
6. Members are asked also to endorse the recommendations for the future development of the city centre events programme (p.12-18).

Analysis

7. Formal recognition of the importance of events to York's city centre will help the council improve the events programme by demonstrating a unified support for the development of the events programme.
8. Endorsement of the Mission Statement will help focus the aims of the events programme and help establish a more co-ordinated approach to events in the city centre.
9. Endorsement of the Mission Statement and the other objectives listed will support council staff in:
 - Helping the council meet the desires of York's residents by expanding our current activities to offer more art exhibitions, a wider range of music and dance events, and fresh events, in response to the findings of public research;
 - Helping improve the general appearance of events by investing in better infrastructure and banners for events;
 - Improving the event information provision made for the public and enabling the council to demonstrate its own efforts in staging events in the city by providing visible information signage at events (working with the council's planning department) also informing on future events and in addition showing the council logo to demonstrate that activities are presented by the council;
 - Help improve the breadth of the cultural offer within the city by showcasing community projects and linking in with cultural organisations and venues across York to bring a wider cultural offer into the city centre as well as supporting festivals, community activities and helping to promote the programmes offered by the city's venues throughout the year;
 - The recommended approach to developing city centre events would also complement the improvements aimed for via the development of the Business Improvement District ('BID') through York City Centre Partnership. Although in the early stages of development, there exists the potential of additional future investment in city centre events via the

- BID process which could extend the scope of the improvements planned as a result of the review.
10. There are no perceived disadvantages to the recommendations of the review report.

Corporate Priorities

11. The recommendations of the review will support the council's work in:
- (i) reducing the actual and perceived impact of violent, aggressive and nuisance behaviour on people in York by strengthening community involvement and ownership of activities in the city centre
 - (ii) improving the lifestyles of people who live in York by improving their enjoyment of the city centre
 - (iii) improving our focus on the needs of both residents, visitors and businesses in developing the city centre events programme
 - (iv) improving the leadership and co-ordination of city centre events as a whole by bringing a clear consistent direction to the events programme
 - (v) improving the way the council works with its partners in delivering events to York city centre
 - (vi) improving the efficiency in running city centre events and the use of resources in delivering events.

Implications

- 12.
- **Financial** There are no significant financial implications in that any requirements for increased investment in the programme will be generated via an improved approach to the corporate hire of city centre spaces.
 - **Human Resources (HR)** There are no implications to HR.
 - **Equalities** There are no implications relating to equalities
 - **Legal** There are no legal implications
 - **Crime and Disorder** Increased usage should improve the atmosphere of the city centre and support work in reducing crime and disorder.
 - **Information Technology (IT)** There are no IT implications.
 - **Property** There are no implications relating to Property.
 - **Highways** A more co-ordinated approach will help Network Management be better informed of events impacting highways and assist in ensuring that external event organisers address any implications that their events may have on the city's highways.

Risk Management

13. There are no known risks associated with the recommendations of the report. Risk management relating to the operation of events in the city centre will continue as usual.

Recommendations

14. That the Advisory Panel advise the Executive Member to endorse the Mission Statement.

Reason: To show a unified approach to events and support for the council's future development of the events programme.

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Report Approved ✓ **Date** 29/11/06

Report Approved *tick* **Date** *Insert Date*

Specialist Implications Officer(s) *none*

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

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

1. Report of on-street interviews conducted
2. Report of self-completion surveys returned
3. Report of Talkabout Panel questionnaire no. 25 on arts entertainment and city centre events
4. Statement from First Stop York tourism partnership's Product Development Group
5. Extract from the York City Vision & Community Strategy - Chapter 4.3: 'York: A City of Culture'

Annexes

1. City Centre Events Review Report to York City Centre Partnership (September 2006)