
Meeting of the Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services and Advisory Panel

15 October 2008

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 2008 and the work undertaken in relation to the entry.

Background

2. The Yorkshire in Bloom competition is an annual event, which York entered last year for the first time since 1998, and were awarded a silver Gilt, with the comments from the judges saying:

'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.'

3. We have for the last 12 months continued to build upon the excellent work which led to last year's results using the in bloom committee to coordinate all our efforts in this area, representatives from the following areas sat on the committee: council officers, members, city centre partnership, York press, Askham Bryan College, York St John University, volunteers from the public (ex council officers) and a representative from the Acomb traders.
4. As with last year we decided that whilst we believed the City could demonstrate that we could meet the criteria for each section, we would need a person to co-ordinate the entry, bringing together all the good work being undertaken throughout the City, so once again Liz Levett, our 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.

5. 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 taking on board comments made on areas for improvement from last year's judges, before we could put the route together. 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 Monday 14th 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, including an excellent presentation by our Waste Strategy Team.
6. 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

7. 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.
8. The summer judging took place on the 10th July on what turned out to be one of the few sunny days of the summer. The judges spent 4 hours touring the city, including locations ranging from North Minster business park and Joseph Rowntree School to Rowntree Park and the City centre, including meeting residents and partners across the age range of 15 years to 89!. The day finished with a reception in the Mansion house with the civic party.
9. The outcome of our entry was announced at the awards ceremony on the 16th September in Barnsley which was attended by the Civic Party and Russell Stone. We were awarded a Silver Gilt, as were all entries in our category (Barnsley, Kingston upon Hull, Leeds and Wakefield), with Leeds being the overall winners, and we received excellent feedback from our judges. Discretionary awards were also awarded to two locations on our summer judging route, Northminster Business Park received the Yorkshire Rose for Permanent Landscaping Award, Wheatlands Community Woodland received the Yorkshire Rose Award for Conservation.
10. The judges wrote:

'The York in Bloom entry was well planned to meet all the judging criteria, it was good to see that the local authority had embraced the competition

with such enthusiasm as the driver to inspiring greater community participation through out the city'

Areas that particularly impressed the judges included:

- *The quality of the floral features on the sponsored traffic islands, hanging baskets and flower towers in the city centre.*
- *The floral garden created by the students at Joseph Rowntree School*
- *The standard of maintenance of verges and features throughout the judging route.*
- *The planting and maintenance at Northminster Business Park.*
- *Wheatlands Community Woodland and their volunteers.*
- *The lack of litter and graffiti through out the judging route, and cleanliness of street paving in the city centre.*
- *The targeted marketing and promotion of the York in Bloom initiative.*

The Judges wrote in their summary

A very good entry which has great potential to expand out into the villages and townships around the city. The work undertaken by the York in Bloom city's council staff and volunteers have put the building blocks in place to move the city forward in the competition and raise the standards of public realm maintenance across the city, well done to all involved.

11. A meeting has been held with the York in Bloom committee to give feedback from the judging and the lessons learnt from the process, a further meeting will follow later in the year to look at planning for next years entry.

Consultation

12. 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

13. 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

14. A growth bid has been submitted to seek funding for temporary technical/admin support for the 2009 entry.

Human Resources

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

Equalities

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

Legal

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

Crime and Disorder

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

Information Technology

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

Property

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

Risk Management

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

Recommendations

19. That the Advisory Panel advise the Executive Member to note the contents of this report and congratulate all those involved in a successful entry.

That the Advisory Panel support the City of York's entry into the 2009 competition.

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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 – Spring and summer routes and judging criteria

Attached Annexes

Annex 1 Spring and Summer Judging Routes
Annex 2 Judging Criteria