

REVIEWING THE ROLE OF LORD MAYOR AND CIVIC PARTY

Summary

1. This report looks at the current operational and constitutional role of the Lord Mayor and Civic Party, further to initial work undertaken by and comments made by the Advisory Group and, previously, by the Promoting York Group. It sets out some options for reviewing roles on paper and ultimately in practice, which the Group may wish to consider as a basis for future development.

Background

Civic Support

2. In the last 6 months, there have been some operational changes to roles within the Civic Office in order to create a more streamlined working environment. This will help the Civic Support Manager provide more dedicated support to the Lord Mayor and Civic Party during their year of office. Due to budget pressures, however, the team has lost a part time administrator post (18 hours).

Staff support to the Civic Party consists of:

- Full time civic support manager
- Part time (22 hours) civic administrator
- 2 x full time civic support officers
- 2 x relief (casual) civic support officers

This does not include Mansion House staff.

There has been no increase in the civic hospitality budgets in recent years. However, the Civic Support Manager has tried to make the budget picture clearer through re-alignment of the different budget heads.

3. Civic Induction

In 2009, a Civic Guide was created, providing a framework of induction and information for the incoming Civic Party. Since that time, work has started much earlier with the Lord Mayor Elect and incoming Civic Party to assist in understanding and developing their roles for the year ahead. Copies of the Guide have been provided in advance to all members of this Advisory Group. One section included an initial effort to define roles of the Civic Party more clearly and effectively. However, to create truly valuable, accurate and effective roles a dialogue with past and current postholders needs to be established.

Analysis

4. Current Constitutional Roles

The current constitutional role of the Lord Mayor and Sheriff is set out in the City of York Council's Constitution, Article 5, which is attached as Annex 1 to this report. It is suggested that this Group may wish to use this as a starting point for reviewing roles of the Civic Party. To assist in this process a slightly revised version, incorporating the outline role set out for the Deputy Lord Mayor in the new Civic Guide (see below) is attached at Annex 3 to this report. Further to the working roles defined within the Civic Guide for all members of the Civic Party, this Group may wish to consider whether these should also be constitutionally enshrined.

5. Working Roles in the Civic Guide

As referred to above, in an effort to broaden and clarify the roles of all members of the Civic Party, an initial outline of each role was included in the newly produced Civic Guide last year. The section setting out those outline roles is attached at Annex 2 to this report. Again, the Group may wish to expand upon those roles, using its collective knowledge, in order to create a more developed role both for the Lord Mayor and the entire Civic Party.

6. Raising Public Awareness

Whether or not the Group wishes to review any of the aforementioned roles, it is suggested that the respective roles of members of the Civic Party should be publicly clear and made available. Interested parties could be provided with details of operational roles so that they have an awareness of the significance of the roles involved.

The work plan for this Group includes a future item on promoting the

mayoralty, which will focus upon this in more detail, the Group, by then, having recommended and supported key role profiles.

7. Annual Civic Calendar

A template is held within the Civic Guide for an annual civic calendar, setting out all the events organised through the Civic Office and some of those which the civic party are invited to attend annually. Work is currently ongoing to build upon this calendar to create a number of standard events which the Lord Mayor will support in connection with their responsibility to promote and support business enterprise in York. Last year, the following events, held in the Mansion House, were added to the calendar as a result of networking with the business community:

- Annual Lunch with Chamber of Commerce (hosted by Lord Mayor);
- Annual End of Year Business Dinner (hosted by Lord Mayor)
- Restructured Lord Mayor Business Breakfasts sponsored by York England
- Quarterly Business Dinners (arranged through BNI network and hosted by LM)

This Group may wish to consider other events to incorporate into the civic calendar helping to build a template of activities which support and advocate defined roles for the Lord Mayor and Civic Party.

The current annual civic events list is provided at Annex 4 of this report.

8. Consultation

Consultation is initially taking place with this Group on how Article 5 and the roles of the Civic Party within the Civic Guide are reviewed and updated. In terms of trying to achieve wider engagement with civic roles and profile, it might also be appropriate to consult a range of the following:

- Civic party
- Economic Development Unit
- Council Management Team
- Visit York
- York Archaeological Trust
- York Civic Trust
- Former Lord Mayors

9. Options

This Advisory Group can choose to recommend any of the following to the

Executive and Council in relation to roles for the Civic Party:

- (1) no change to current Article 5 in the constitution or the provisions within it relating to the Lord Mayor and Sherriff
- (2) review and redraft Article 5 on the basis of clearly defining an operational and constitutional role for the Lord Mayor and other members of the Civic Party, as seen fit

In addition, this Group may wish to suggest changes to the definition of roles contained in the current Civic Guide for members of the Civic Party, including the Lord Mayor.

10. Corporate Priorities

The Lord Mayor and potentially, too, the Civic Party, has an instrumental part to play in promoting the ambitions of the Council's Corporate Strategy, as ambassadors for the City and Council.

Specifically, the Lord Mayor offers support to the cultural life in the city, to promoting inclusivity and to supporting a thriving business economy, acting as an ambassador for the city in supporting new business and opportunities.

11. Implications

There are no known human resource, equalities, legal or other implications directly associated with the recommendations in this report. Clearly, the budget available to support the Lord Mayor's civic hospitality will always affect the type and nature of events the Civic Office can support or organise.

12. Risk Management

Failure to carry out civic activities would have a significant impact on the Council's reputation in terms of undertaking its important civic functions. Moreover, failing to define appropriately the role of the Lord Mayor (as first citizen of York) and Civic party would impact upon the reputation of the City and the Council in terms of the value this can add.

13. Recommendations

The Advisory Group is asked to:

- (i) consider whether it wishes to review and update any of the following:

- Article 5 in the Constitution
- Current roles defined for the Civic Party in the Civic Guide
- Annual civic template/calendar of events

(ii) consider whether it wishes to publicly promote redefined roles to interested parties.

Reason: To ensure that the roles of the Lord Mayor and Civic Party are regularly reviewed and updated as necessary.

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Report Approved Date 14.04.10

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None

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

None

Annexes

Annex 1 – Article 5 in Constitution
Annex 2 – Civic Roles from Civic Guide
Annex 3 – Outline redraft of Article 5
Annex 4 – Annual civic calendar