

## **Local Democracy Week 2011**

### **Summary**

1. This report summarises the events and activities planned during Local Democracy Week between 10-16 October 2011, in support of raising awareness about the democratic process and the role of Councillors.

### **Background**

2. For the first time in October 2009, the Council ran a series of coordinated initiatives around Local Democracy Week. Those activities included an inaugural event about becoming a Councillor. That event was extremely successful and was run again as part of the programme last year, ahead of the May 2011 election, under the name "*A Councillor, Who Me?*". This evening session was designed to encourage enthusiastic, vibrant people of all ages, cultures and walks of life who want to make a difference in their local areas, to consider becoming a Councillor. This event was well received by those who attended.

In 2010 members of the public were also given the opportunity to take part in a guided "Corridors of Power" tour of the historic Guildhall and view the recently revealed Victorian Mosaic, under restoration at the time, as well as the spectacular Council Chamber. This tour was attended by around 50 people.

3. Members will recall that what Councils and Councillors do to demonstrate their commitment to holding community events in support of community leadership, is a contributory factor towards achieving Member Development Charter Status with the newly formed Local Government Centre (formerly I&DeA). The Council successfully achieved Charter status in September 2011.

## **Local Democracy Week Programme 2011**

4. The following events have been arranged for this years' Local Democracy Week taking place from 10 -16 October 2011:

### **Monday 10 October**

*Meet the Lord Mayor/Mock Council meeting in the Council Chamber.*

Key Stage 2 pupils from Carr Junior School and Headlands Primary School's new school councils will be visiting the Mansion House to meet the Lord Mayor, learn about the role as first citizen of the City and take a look around the Lord Mayor's official residence. The children will even be able to try on mini Lord Mayor and Sheriff's robes! The children will then spend some time in the Council Chamber where they will take part in a mini budget meeting, 'chaired' by the Deputy Lord Mayor, and have the opportunity to decide for themselves what to spend the Council's budget on.

### **Wednesday 12 October**

*Political Speed Dating* - A political speed dating event between members of the Youth Council and City of York Councillors has been arranged to take place on Wednesday 12th October between 5pm – 5:25pm, prior to the Youth Council's first meeting of the year. Young People will be given the opportunity to put questions to the Lord Mayor, Deputy Lord Mayor, Chair of Young Person's Working Group, Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Young People's Services, and Chair and Vice Chair of the Member Development Steering Group.

### **Thursday 13 October**

*Visits to Primary Schools* - As part of a year long programme in which the Lord Mayor will visit all primary schools to speak to pupils about the mayoralty in York, during Local Democracy Week he will be visiting Westfield Primary Community School and Tang Hall Primary school. He will be accompanied by the Sheriff.

### **Friday 14 October**

*'Corridors of Power'* – 2pm and 4pm - A guided tour and insight into the intriguing history of York's fifteenth century Guildhall. Originally a meeting place for the powerful merchant guilds that

effectively controlled the government and business climate of York the Guildhall continues to be the hub of local democracy with the majority of York's Council decision making taking place in this wonderful building.

Members of the public will be able to view the recently restored Victorian Mosaic as well as listen to a wealth of interesting historical facts about this hidden gem and it's meeting rooms including the spectacular Council Chamber. In addition, weather permitting there will also be a rare opportunity to venture down Common Hall Lane a vaulted walkway which runs beneath the Guildhall and down to the river. ***These tours are free tour to Members of the public on the day.***

**Thursday 13<sup>th</sup>, Friday 14<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> October**  
*Mansion House Tours* - at 11am, 12.30pm and 2pm. The Mansion House is an architectural masterpiece and one of York's great historic treasures. It is the official residence of The Lord Mayor of York who is Chairman of City of York Council and the first citizen of the city. Visitors will receive a guided tour and will be able to view key items from the civic collection on display including silver, paintings and furniture. ***Entry to the Mansion House is free to York Citizens and £5 to non-residents, no need to book.***

## **Consultation**

5. Democratic Services has linked up with Education and Children's Services in terms of the work both are doing to support Local Democracy Week. A poster has been commissioned for public display at the Guildhall to promote the activities taking place at the Guildhall and Mansion Hall, both venues being key to the history of democratic decision making in York.

## **Options**

6. At the time of receiving this report, it is largely for information given that this meeting is taking part in the middle of Local Democracy Week. Activities for the week are being publicised through the Marketing & Communications team.

## **Council Plan**

7. The aims of Local Democracy Week, in widening participation and involvement within and in the democratic process, accord with the underlying principles of the Council's Plan in making York an inclusive City, making sure that all citizens, regardless of race, age, disability, sexual orientation, faith or gender understand, feel included and can get involved in York's decision making.

## **Implications**

8. Staff resources will be required to support the events listed and will come from within Democratic Services, Electoral Services and the Mansion House.

## **Risk Management**

9. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy, the only risk associated with the contents of this report could be the failure to maintain Charter Status when it is reviewed if the Council were to be seen not to be demonstrating a commitment to supporting events which promote community leadership and raise community awareness about the democratic process.

## **Recommendation**

10. Members are asked to note the programme of activities for Local Democracy Week, initiated by Democratic Services, in furtherance of the commitment to Member Development Charter Status and to promote local decision making in York, particularly with 800 years of democracy in York approaching 2012.

## **Reason**

11. In order to comply with the requirements of the former I&DeA Charter and to actively raise awareness about the democratic process.

## **Contact Details**

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**Report  
Approved**



**Date** 7/9/2010

**Specialist Implications Officer(s)**

None

**Wards Affected:**

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**For further information please contact the author of the report**

**Background Papers:**

None.

**Annexes:**

None