

REPORT OF ACTING CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

LOCAL DEMOCRACY CAMPAIGN 15-21 OCTOBER 2007

1 SUMMARY

This report sets out the proposed schedule of events for this year's Local Democracy Campaign which takes place 15-21 October 2007.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Area Committees are requested to note and comment on:-

- (1) the proposed programme of events for this year's Local Democracy Campaign;
- (2) the specific arrangements for Councillor Cafes.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Members may already be aware that each year the Local Government Association runs a national campaign to promote local democracy and that once again this year they aim to:-

- make councils more relevant and useful to young people;
- encourage young people to 'take part take power';
- make Local Democracy Week bigger and better than before;
- increase Councillor involvement in citizenship teaching in schools;
- get council's to devolve power wherever appropriate to local people.

3.2 At a local level, Nottingham City Council is seeking to build upon the success of last year's campaign which saw a more joined up approach to designing and delivering the events for Local Democracy Week, with different sections of the Council contributing to the preparation of the programme of events for the week. Alongside the promotion of local democracy, we will promote the importance of voter registration and voting itself. Whilst the local elections are behind us, the next local Youth Councillor Elections are due to take place in the Autumn and there is the possibility of a Parliament Election.

3.3 The City Council has taken part in the Local Democracy Week for the last four years with a varied level of success. Last year's campaign worked well with

good participation for most Councillor Café's, the Schools competition, and the Climate Change conference and themed Council debate.

Voter Registration, Return and Turnout

- 3.4 In the 5 years up to 2005, the City Council saw an overall decline in City households registering to vote and as a result the vote turnout was been low. We believe that last year's Local Democracy Week campaign helped to contribute to an increased level of voter registration in the City from 66% up to 81.25%. Turnout at the local election earlier this year was also slightly increased from the level recorded in 2003. The Local Democracy Campaign programme of events is to be a small phase of a wider registration campaign which commenced in August and runs until late November 2007. The personal canvass of those households who haven't returned Registration forms, commences Saturday 13 October, the weekend prior to the commencement of this year's Local Democracy Campaign.
- 3.5 The main external focus of the Democratic Services Department is *"to promote active citizenship amongst all sectors of the community through democratic processes, civic activities and Council House events"*. This national campaign provides the City Council with an ideal opportunity to promote democracy locally and to improve residents understanding and engagement.

4 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 Summarised below are some commentaries about each of the events/activities proposed.

Libraries Engaging City Schools - Competition

- 4.2 City Libraries propose to work with a limited number of secondary schools in the West Area, to devise and submit to the relevant Ward Councillors proposals for spending £5,000 in their local community. The competition rules have been written so that the individual schools could not benefit from the money themselves but encourage schools to submit proposals that link with the strategy - 'A safer, cleaner, ambitious Nottingham – a city we're all proud of'.
- 4.3 Once all the ideas are gathered together within the school, the pupils would then be asked to vote on which idea they most liked. They could do this by a show of hands or secret ballot. Their final choice would then be submitted as a proposal to the Council, with all the others from city schools and a winner picked by Councillors. The winning proposal would then be actioned.
- 4.4 This event would give young people practical experience of what it's like to debate local issues and make a physical difference to their area by getting the proposal actioned. It would provide them with a positive feel about democracy, councillors and the Council itself, and give them a chance to feel proud about their area, whilst also providing some publicity for the role of area working, which is a key strategic priority.

Youth Council Event

- 4.5 Youth Councillors are determining their own plans for an event at the Council House during the Local Democracy Campaign. They will be supported by the Youth Engagement Unit/Children's Services and Democratic Services to develop their plans and will be encouraged to create plans that have clear objectives and a wide impact.

Councillor Cafés

- 4.6 Following the success of last year's Councillor Cafés, it is proposed to run these once again in all areas, but applying the lessons learnt regarding choice of location and timings. Based upon 2006 experience, high street locations generally worked best, making it easy for the public to engage with their Councillors on 'neutral' ground. Members of the public welcomed the opportunity to meet with Elected Members and talk about their views and feelings on any Council related matter or to use the opportunity to gain advice on City Council services. Many of the Cafés provided a positive platform for 'Your Choice, Your Voice' consultation with Neighbourhood Management.
- 4.7 Each event will be developed in liaison with local Councillors and the Neighborhood Management Teams who supported this initiative last year. The format for each may vary slightly depending on local preference and there will be one café per area. Tea, coffee and juice will be served free of charge from a promotional stand erected at the chosen location for this purpose.
- 4.8 An outline schedule of venues/dates is set out in Appendix 1 – specific details to be consulted upon at the meeting.

City Library 'Meet Your Councillor' Events

- 4.9 City Libraries are scheduling an event at each of their premises between 15 – 21 October to facilitate informal networking between the public and their Ward Councillors. Dates and times are currently the being determined with Councillors to complement other events taking place in libraries.

Related Activities

- 4.10 In addition to the programme of activities proposed for Local Democracy Week, a series of wider related events are to take place in the run up to the week that will involve and engage a wider section of the Community.

Broadway Cinema

- 4.11 Discussions are taking place with the Broadway Cinema to establish whether they would be interested in becoming involved with this year's Local Democracy Campaign activities. Last year Al Gore's climate change film 'An Inconvenient Truth' was screened complementing our Climate Change Conference and themed Council debate.
- 4.12 One of the benefits of partnering with the Broadway Cinema is that film is a great way to engage people, it could be a good means of creating debate that

relates to democracy and it could be linked to issues at a local level. There would be the added incentive of being able to advertise in their monthly leaflet that has a wide city circulation.

Council Debate

- 4.13 The Council Business Steering Group decided earlier in the year to reserve the October full Council meeting to hold a wide debate on a local/national issue, however this may now have been moved to November. The topic will be the 'Future delivery of Adult Services', looking at the impact of increased longevity upon care provision for the elderly, including children with a variety of impairments living longer and increasingly into adulthood. It is planned to make arrangements for keynote external speakers to attend the meeting and add to the debate. This form of debate will be a useful start to consultation regarding the shaping of future service delivery to meet these demands.
- 4.14 As last year, a morning conference will precede the formal debate in the afternoon; this will enable a wider audience to discuss the topic and help inform contributors to the debate. It is planned to involve key stakeholders in the conference – older people, young people with impairments, carers, relevant experts in the field, etc.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

It is anticipated that the costs of the 'Local Democracy Campaign' events could be met from existing Democratic Services budgets.

6 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None

7 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

This national initiative seeks to promote local democracy by actively engaging with all sections of the community.

8 RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

All activities and events will be appropriately risk assessed once locations, etc are finalised. All due precautions will be taken to moderate any perceived risks to ensure the safety of Members, staff, young people and all participants.

9 CRIME AND DISORDER ACT IMPLICATIONS

None

10 VALUE FOR MONEY

Democratic Services is significantly increasing the level of activity across the City around the Local Democracy Campaign whilst working within existing budgets.

11 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION

None.

12 PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT

None.

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APPENDIX 1

Area / Wards		Suggested location	Suggested dates / times (11am-3pm unless stated)
1	Bulwell Bulwell Forest	Bulwell Market	Tuesday 16 October Market Day
2	Basford Bestwood	Beckhampton Road Community Centre?	15,16, 17, 18, or 19 October
West	Aspley Leen Valley Bilborough	Market at pelican crossing, Bracebridge Drive, Bilborough	Thursday 18 October Market Day
4	Berridge Arboretum Radford and Park	Hyson Green Market	Wednesday 17 October Market Day
5	Mapperley Sherwood	A high street location to be determined?	15,16, 17, 18, or 19 October
6	St Anns Dales	Robin Hood Chase	Tuesday 16 October Market Day
7	Wollaton East and Lenton Abbey Wollaton West	Trowell Road Co-Op?	15,16, 17, 18, or 19 October
8	Dunkirk and Lenton Bridge	Crocus Café or Bridgeway Centre	15,16, 17, or 18 October
9	Clifton South Clifton North	Clifton Cornerstone	Friday 19 October Market Day
10	City Centre	Old Market Square	Saturday 20 October