

Committee: COMMUNITY AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item

Date: 25 OCTOBER 2005

5

Title: DIVERSITY FESTIVAL

Author: Gaynor Bradley, Leisure Manager, 01799
510348

Item for decision

Summary

This report advises Members that the first multi-agency Diversity Festival was held on Sunday 18 September 2005 and recommends that Members, Officers and partner agencies should review the Festival to decide whether or not the event should be repeated and, if so, whether the format should be changed and the frequency to be adopted.

Recommendations

1. That Members, Officers and partner agencies review the Festival and consider whether or not this event should be repeated, the level of resources required, and the possible format and frequency of the event.
2. Members and Officers to undertake further work to decide where the responsibility should lie within the Council for production of such a Festival and the work required to continue to develop methods of engaging with hard to reach groups.
3. That a report be brought to a future committee to advance the development of the agenda for working with hard to reach groups.

Background Papers

Background papers relating to the project and a compilation of feedback received are available from the author of this report.

Impact

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Communication/Consultation | Members will be aware that the district does not have a number of organisations dedicated to groups of ethnic minorities. However, through consultation the involvement of local restaurants was sought. Organisations serving people with disabilities were also involved as well as a range of statutory and voluntary agencies providing services for all sections of the community. A multi-agency approach secured the involvement of county-wide organisations. |
|----------------------------|---|

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Community Safety | Apart from engaging with those members of the community deemed to be hard to reach the event provided an opportunity for the Police, Fire Service and the Army to demonstrate their commitment to both serving and recruiting from the local community. |
| Equalities | This was the first Festival of this type that aimed to encourage people who might feel disadvantaged or unwelcome to participate in an enjoyable afternoon and be aware of how to access services. |
| Finance | <p>The Council committed £5,000 towards the cost of this event and fund-raising was undertaken to achieve a total budget of approximately £17,000.</p> <p>At the time of writing this report the final figures were not available but Members will be provided with the final figures as soon as possible.</p> |
| Human Rights | Every effort was made during the planning of the Festival to ensure that services would be accessible to all local people regardless of their age, creed, colour, gender, sexuality or disability. |
| Legal implications | None. |
| Ward-specific impacts | The major impact was on the Audley Ward as the event was held at Audley End House and Gardens. Therefore there was some disruption to traffic and noise, although only one complaint was received. |
| Workforce/Workplace | The event was produced under the banner of the Uttlesford Cultural Partnership a multi-agency group established to address how to engage with hard to reach groups. However, in reality, the event was largely organised by Council Officers. This was in addition to the normal workload planned for 2005 and inevitably involved a considerable number of additional staff hours and some disruption to existing areas of work. If the same approach were to be taken again it would be necessary to ensure that the planning, organisation and |

| | |
|--|--|
| | operation was resourced to a more realistic level. |
|--|--|

Situation

3. Uttlesford Members were keen to explore how the Authority might find a way of engaging with hard to reach groups and it was suggested that organising a Festival might be a way forward. The Council's Leisure Team were asked to undertake organising the development of a multi-agency partnership to progress this initiative.
4. The following agencies joined together to form the Uttlesford Cultural Partnership:

Uttlesford District Council, Uttlesford Council for Voluntary Services, Essex Racial Equality Council, the Rural Community Council, Essex Police, Essex County Council, Stansted Airport Chaplaincy, Uttlesford Access Group, and Uttlesford Primary Care Trust. English Heritage joined the group at a later stage when the use of the grounds of Audley End House and Gardens was provided, free of charge, as the venue for the event.

Council Officers drafted the terms of reference for the Partnership and the initial planning document for the event.

5. The objective was to find a way of encouraging hard to reach groups to engage with local agencies and the District Council. Given that we do not have a number of specific groups to approach it would have been impossible to identify targets for this particular aspiration. However, we approached BAA and local restaurants, as we knew that there were members of ethnic minority groups working in those areas. One of the successes was to have secured involvement from these restaurants in the event. It was encouraging to note that all of the restaurant proprietors immediately grasped the point of being involved in a community event and providing opportunities for their staff to participate with other restaurants and sections of the community. Therefore, from that point of view, the positive feedback obtained and the fact that it is estimated that between 2,000 and 3,000 people attended the event It would appear to have been successful for a first event of this nature.
6. It was decided that cards should be printed in order to obtain feedback from those attending the Festival regarding their views on the event, to find out what ethnic group they regard themselves as belonging to and whether or not they would be interested in finding out more about a diversity forum. The results from that exercise have been collated and are currently being analysed. The information obtained from the completed cards is available for inspection from the author of the report. The analysis will be reported verbally to Members at the Committee meeting.

7. Councillors Morson and Murphy made contact with local groups on behalf of the Partnership and Councillors Morson and CM Dean visited the Managing Director at Stansted Airport in an effort to engage with the ethnic minority section of the Airport workforce.
8. The Cultural Partnership met on a regular basis to discuss the progress being made on the planning and organisation of the Festival.
9. The production of this event involved:
 - Production of a planning document.
 - Identifying funding organisations and submitting applications.
 - Writing to local businesses to seek financial support.
 - Writing to local restaurants and meeting with the proprietors to agree food, and equipment provision, charges for food, number of tables and kitchen requirements. Liaising with Environmental Health regarding food hygiene regulations.
 - Obtaining a licence for the event.
 - Identifying and booking entertainment, writing contracts and checking public liability insurance for the acts. Liaising with the Stage Company to devise the entertainment running order.
 - Sourcing, negotiating and booking marquees, a mobile kitchen and chiller unit, main stage, toilets, tables, chairs, ice cream vendor and purchasing soft drinks for sale.
 - Negotiating with companies used by English Heritage to supply water, electricity and car park management.
 - Writing to Schools and securing their involvement in a fancy dress parade and appearances on the stage.
 - Inviting agencies and organisations to provide stands, planning and negotiating space.
 - Securing the involvement of the Police, Fire Service, Army and St John's Ambulance.
 - Purchasing plastic plates and cutlery, coat racks etc., for the dressing room marquees.
 - Arranging for, and liaising with Stansted Airport regarding, a balloon release.
 - Preparing a site plan, risk assessment, health and safety document and timeline for the arrival and departure of all facilities on site.
 - Securing cancellation and public liability insurance.
 - Pegging out the site for the arrival of the marquees
 - Organising vehicular access to the site (including standing in the road and stopping traffic for the large delivery vehicles)
 - Sourcing and purchasing gas containers.
 - Sourcing additional hand-washing facilities.
 - Devising publicity material and visiting shops and other premises in the district to request that posters and leaflets be displayed.
 - Cleaning the mobile kitchen and ensuring the toilets were returned in good condition.

- ❑ Physically setting up the site with tables and chairs, gazebos etc and packing away equipment.
- ❑ Arranging for litter picking to be carried out on the day and undertake litter picks before finally handing the site back to English Heritage.

This list is not exhaustive, there were more menial tasks that had to be carried out but it is necessary for Members to be aware of exactly what was entailed in organising this event.

Targets

10. One of the targets was to achieve involvement from ethnic minority groups and those with disabilities in the event and this was certainly achieved.
11. Officers have also received telephone calls, emails and letters etc., stating that the Festival was both successful and very enjoyable.
12. A meeting of the Cultural Partnership is planned to review the process and consider whether or not this approach should be pursued again in the future.

Options

13. Additional funding has been secured to employ someone on a part-time basis to follow up contacts made during the Festival and to explore other ways of engaging with hard to reach groups, this will now be implemented.
14. However, it will be necessary, as stated previously in this report, for Members and Officers to establish which service should undertake responsibility for this work and to determine the strategy for addressing the diversity agenda in the future.

Pay-Offs/Penalties

15. Officers have received some minor criticism concerning this event but the overwhelming response has been extremely positive.

Risk Analysis

16. The following have been assessed as the potential risks associated with this issue.

| Risk | Likelihood | Impact | Mitigating actions |
|--------------------------|------------|--------|---|
| That further work is not | Low | Medium | It will be necessary to ensure that appropriate |

| | | | |
|--|--------|--------|---|
| undertaken to follow up on the success of the Festival. | | | mechanisms are in place within the Council to enable further development regarding working with hard to reach groups. This is a requirement under the Comprehensive Performance Assessment process. |
| If such an event is produced in the future appropriate staffing and financial resources may not be available. | Medium | Medium | Both the District Council and local agencies would need to ensure financial and staffing commitments to the planning of a future Festival. |
| Local people may not engage with this type of event again if it cannot be demonstrated that contacts are followed up in order to improve access to services. | Medium | High | It will be necessary to demonstrate that communication established with hard to reach groups is built on for the future. |