
Report of the Director of City Development

Scrutiny Board (City Development)

Date: 18 November 2008

Subject: Light Night 2008

Electoral wards affected:

All

Specific implications for:

Ethnic minorities ☐

Women ☐

Disabled people ☐

Narrowing the gap ☐

Executive Summary

Light Night is a European Cultural initiative enabling audiences to experience a wide range of entertainment and performances over a single extended evening once a year in major cities. Since cities in West Yorkshire introduced the event to this country in 2005, Leeds has developed the event every year and is now the national leader.

Given the large number of agencies and venues participating, a comprehensive and accurate programme can only be printed at a late stage and collected on the evening. This worked very successfully this year and this report includes proposals to ensure that the initiative is given appropriate corporate publicity.

1.0 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report provides information about Light Night 2008 and specifically publicity for the event.

2.0 Background information

- 2.1 Light Night is a popular feature of the calendar in European Cities such as Amsterdam, Berlin and Paris. The format of the event is to utilise unusual performance locations alongside more traditional venues in an extended evening of innovative entertainment. The performances are usually free and the ethos of the initiative is to allow the audience to visit a variety of the many opportunities on offer throughout the evening. The range and variety of performers and performances is an integral part of the philosophy behind Light Night.
- 2.2 The initiative came to this country, specifically West Yorkshire in 2005 as part of the Urban Cultural Programme. The five cities provided various contributions but Leeds is the only city in the region that has continued to develop the event. Other cities in this country have now followed Leeds lead but we remain the most successful national organisers of the initiative.
- 2.3 The fourth Light Night in Leeds this year was the most successful to date with 68 separate events and venues and a recorded 42,000 visits to these events. This large scale partnership was co-ordinated within City Development and attracted visits from town and city centre managers in addition to European interest. The Home Office has subsequently requested the above statistics as a model of good practice in making city centres safe and welcoming places.

3.0 Main issues

- 3.1 In terms of publicity, information ahead of the event was disseminated via flyers (advertising the web site), press releases, listings, street sites and the internet. Following consultation with participating venues, agencies and previous years users, it was agreed that the full printed programme of events should be printed as close to the night itself to ensure that it was comprehensive, up to date and accurate. In the event, the entire print run was collected during the evening itself and used by the audience on the night. Not only did this maximize the quantity and accuracy of information available to the public, it also received very positive feedback from those attending. Many users had also down loaded the online version.
- 3.2 As a result of this strategy the brochure was distributed to Members as soon as it was available, obviously at a late stage. To overcome this problem in future Members will be contacted via e-mail in advance of the event to direct them to the web-site which will provide up to the minute information leading up to the event itself. Any advance flyers will also be distributed. Members who join in the event will be able to pick up the full printed programme if they wish on the evening.

4.0 Implications for council policy and governance

- 4.1 There are no implications for Council Policy and Governance

5.0 Legal and resource implications

- 5.1 There are no legal and resource implications

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 As Light Night in Leeds continues to develop, every effort will be made to ensure publicity is as widely available as possible.

7.0 Recommendations

- 7.1 Members of Scrutiny Board are invited to receive this report.

Background Papers

None used