



Report of the Leeds Civic Trust

Outer North East Area Committee

Date: 5th July 2010

Subject: Heritage Open Days

Electoral Wards Affected:

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Council
Function

Delegated Executive
Function available
for Call In

Delegated Executive
Function not available for
Call In Details set out in the
report

Executive Summary

'Celebrate Your Community' is English Heritage's open invitation to be part of Heritage Open Days either as visitors or hosts. This annual 'free-of-charge' event held every September is co-ordinated in Leeds by Leeds Civic Trust with support from Leeds City Council.

Whilst activities take place in many areas throughout Leeds' Metropolitan District, the Trust is keen to ensure all areas have the opportunity to be represented and would ask Area Committee Members to introduce potential participants to Leeds Civic Trust and help to promote Heritage Open Days in their area.

The event has links with 2010 being 'Year of the Volunteer' and the 'Cultural Olympiad' being planned as part of the 2012 Olympics.

Purpose Of This Report

1. In trying to widen the focus of Heritage Open Days throughout the city, Leeds Civic Trust is approaching all 10 Area Committees to seek their assistance, to help identify potential participants from within the local community, who may host one or more events in their area. This year's 4-day event takes place between Thursday 9th – Sunday 12th September.

Background Information

2. Heritage Open Days aim to give local people the chance to 'get behind closed doors', for example by providing access to buildings rarely open to the public, or walking through hidden or usually forbidden areas, or perhaps seeing specially mounted exhibitions or demonstrations – all for free and mostly run by volunteers.
3. The scheme is part of a Europe-wide initiative which began 15 years ago through a partnership with the Government's Department for Culture, Media and Sport delegating its administration to English Heritage. In Leeds, it is co-ordinated by Leeds Civic Trust with support from several City Council departments. In 2009, nationally over 4100 properties and events were registered, attracting over 1 million visits over the 4 days. In Leeds we had 75 properties/events with an estimated 7 thousand visits.
4. 2010 has been designated 'Year of the Volunteer' and since the majority of events are run by volunteers, Heritage Open Days provide a showcase for volunteering as well as providing opportunities for recruitment to the hosts' groups. The 'Cultural Olympiad' is being developed in the lead up to and then to run parallel to the 2012 Olympics Games. English Heritage is working to have Heritage Open Days as a major event within the Olympiad, it being celebratory and offering unique attractions for visitors from home and abroad.

Main Issues

5. Heritage Open Days is an annual celebration of local architecture, history and culture. It can be concluded from the statistics above that there is potential in Leeds for more events and certainly more visitors. Through the Area Committees, Leeds Civic Trust is keen to publicise Heritage Open Days directly to more areas of the City and to groups within those areas.
6. Historical societies, church and residents groups, building owners and individuals with local knowledge, are examples of from where people may be found to host events. Involvement is flexible within the 4 days. Any interested parties should be directed to Leeds Civic Trust, who would be pleased to supply more information if needed.
7. Publicity for Heritage Open Days will be available during August, including, we expect, a full listing of all events in the Yorkshire Evening Post and copies of this year's leaflet will be sent to each Area Committee

Implications For Council Policy and Governance

8. There are no implications for Council policy and governance. Leeds City Council is already a partner in the running of Heritage Open Days.

Legal and Resource Implications

9. Members should seek permission from potential hosts before passing on contact details to Leeds Civic Trust. Those details will be passed onto English Heritage. Both databases will be used exclusively for the Heritage Open Days initiative. No resources are being asked for other than Members' support to promote the initiative and identify potential local participants.

Conclusions

10. Heritage Open Days is a celebration of our city. It generates a 'feel-good factor' both for hosts proud to show off their building, exhibition or walk area and for visitors who have experienced something new, perhaps on their own doorstep often for the very first time. Leeds Civic Trust hopes Members feel able to support this initiative and would be pleased to hear from any potential participants.

Recommendations

11. Area Committee members are asked to:
 - Note the contents of this report
 - Consider if there are any local groups, organisation, societies or charitable organisation within their area, who may wish to become 'hosts' to an event.

