

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S
REPORT TO**

Cabinet
07 June 2022

Report Title: Newcastle under Lyme 850th Year Celebrations in 2023

Submitted by: Executive Director Commercial Development and Economic Growth

Portfolios: Leisure, Culture and Heritage

Ward(s) affected: All

Purpose of the Report

This report updates Cabinet in relation to the work being undertaken by the Council to plan for the Newcastle under Lyme Borough 850th Year anniversary celebrations in 2023. It recommends the appointment of a Councillor as Heritage Champion to oversee the preparations.

Recommendation

That Cabinet

1. Notes the progress made on the preparations to date.
2. Appoints Cllr Simon White (Deputy Mayor) as the Council's Heritage Champion to oversee the development of the plans going forward on behalf of Cabinet.
3. Receive a further report setting out a costed programme for consideration at a future meeting.

Reasons

The council wants to celebrate the 850th Anniversary of the Charter that established the Loyal and Ancient Borough of Newcastle under Lyme, in 2023.

As a major milestone in the Borough's history, it is proposed to celebrate throughout the year with a programme of cultural and heritage events and activities.

As a mark of the importance of the Anniversary, it is proposed to appoint a Heritage Champion to advise and support the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Heritage, by overseeing the preparations for the Anniversary celebrations.

1. **Background**

- 1.1. In 1173 Newcastle was first recorded as a town and borough and around this time was granted its first charter protecting the rights of its people. The charter itself is lost but its existence is confirmed by later charters. In 1973 the borough held 800th anniversary celebrations, attended by the Queen.

1.2. In 2019 the Heritage Cabinet Working Group was established to look at how the council along with partners and the community could celebrate the Borough's 850th anniversary. The group met bi-monthly and partners were invited to present ideas. The final meeting was held on 11 November 2021.

2. Update and Proposals

2.1 The Heritage Panel considered options for securing funds for activities to mark the anniversary, with either a single, Council led funding application, or a series of smaller applications led by a mix of community partners and the council being considered. A critical piece of work to now conclude will be finalising a programme of activities and determining the funding strategy for these.

2.2 The Panel undertook some preliminary work to map out potential events as set out below. These, together with any additional proposals which emerge, now need to be worked up into a costed programme for consideration by Cabinet:

2.3 **Celebrate Newcastle's Medieval Heritage Week**, Saturday 28 May 2023. This would include a collaboration with "Appetite", a medieval re-enactment event in the park and invitation for a Royal visit. Positive initial discussions have been held with the Museum, Streetscene and Appetite to prepare for the 2022 and 2023 events. Permission to apply for a 2023 royal visit has been given by Staffordshire Lord Lieutenant.

2.4 **Create an 850 logo**. In partnership with schools and Britain in Bloom it is suggested that an 850 Logo be created in 2022 to launch the Year and create a 'Brand Awareness' for the Anniversary Year.

2.5 **Medieval Dance classes**. This programme of activity would be provided through the Historical Dance Society with classes scheduled to start June 2022 at Brampton Museum;

2.6 **Celebrate Newcastle people from the Past and Present**. This would be a year-long programme of activity with monthly museum activity themes to be selected to celebrate famous and influential past and present residents of Borough. The activities could include film showings, talks, online content and spotlight gallery displays. Research has begun on the 12 influential past and present figures. Speakers for suitable monthly talks are being approached The Staffordshire Film Archive will be running a monthly "Saturday Matinee" film showing linked to the monthly themes, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

2.7 **Conservation of Newcastle Charters and Museum Exhibition** - A formal conservation survey has identified work needed to conserve and safely display the charters in May 2023.

2.8 **Commissioned theatre or dance performance** – covering the history of the Borough

2.9 In order to develop and cost a final programme for the year a working group of officers will be required, drawing from across the Council and, from time to time, involving partner agencies. Recognising the importance of the Anniversary, it is proposed to appoint a Heritage Champion to specifically oversee the preparations for the Anniversary celebrations, support officers in the development of the programme and to seek sponsorship support to meet the costs of the programme.

2.10 In addition to the emerging programme, it will be desirable to engage further with local heritage organisations to ensure that they are able to play an active part in the celebrations, and to ensure

that historic assets, such as the Guildhall, have significant prominence. Consideration could also be given to topics such as the closure of the Knotty railway line which has its centenary also in 2023.

4. **Reasons for Proposed Solution**

4.1 The council wants to celebrate the 850th Anniversary of the Charter that established the Loyal and Ancient Borough of Newcastle under Lyme, in 2023.

4.2 As a major milestone in the Borough's history, it is proposed to celebrate throughout the year with a programme of cultural and heritage events and activities.

4.3 As a mark of the importance of the Anniversary, it is proposed to appoint a Heritage Champion to advise and support the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Heritage, by overseeing the preparations for the for the Anniversary celebrations.

5. **Options Considered**

5.1 Not celebrating the Anniversary was considered but not did not seem appropriate as it is a major milestone for the Borough. It was considered best to celebrate whilst attempting to maximise external funding to promote and deliver the events and activities.

6. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

6.1 Section 2(1) of the Local Government Act 2000 permits local authorities to do anything they consider likely to promote or improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of their area.

7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

7.1 The nature of the project is intended to seek benefits for all people across the Borough and to support the economic and social health of Newcastle town centre as a destination.

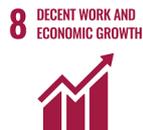
8. **Financial and Resource Implications**

8.1 Currently there is no budget allocated to marking the 850th anniversary. A critical task for the officer group and the Heritage Champion will be the working up of a fully costed programme for the 850th celebrations. Once in place funding bids can be submitted to secure external funding. Future reports to Cabinet will set out the financial implications in full.

9. **Major Risks**

9.1 As with all funding applications success is never guaranteed. The programme will need to be shaped according to the resources available.

10. **UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG)**



11. **Key Decision Information**

11.1 This is not a Key Decision

12. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

n/a

13. **List of Appendices**

13.1 None.

14. **Background Papers**

N/a