



PORTFOLIO AREA: COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Date of Meeting: 18TH FEBRUARY 2002

Public

Key Decision: No

Recorded in Forward Plan: No

Inside Policy Framework

Title: CARLISLE FIRESHOW
Report of: DIRECTOR OF LEISURE & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
Report reference: LCD 5/02

Summary:

To consider a letter from Eric Martlew MP concerning the annual Fireshow

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Members note the details of the report and agree an appropriate response to Mr Martlew's letter.

Contact Officer: Rob Burns

Ext: 7352

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: None

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND OPTIONS

1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.2 The Mayor has received a letter (Appendix 'A') from Eric Martlew MP seeking a debate by the Council on moving the date of the Council's Annual Fireshow.

1.3 BACKGROUND

1.4 There are still a number of traditional local community and village bonfires held on 5th November each year. It was never the City Council's intention to compete with those, although some have finished as a result of our bonfire taking away their customers. Often bonfires are not only social gatherings, but also raise significant funds for the local groups who organise them.

1.5 Indeed the Council has occasionally given grants towards the costs of organising them and is often consulted for advice and information on how to organise a bonfire night safely.

1.6 We have also run courses, using professional operators, for organisers of firework and bonfire displays, on the safe handling and firing of fireworks.

1.7 The organisation of the Council's Fireshow, particularly on the Saturday and following Sunday, relies on significant numbers of volunteers or staff who work either for the Council or other organisations and they would not be available on weekdays. It could add £1,000 to the cost of the show if we had it on a weekday and we would lose the expertise and experience of the team of workers built up over the years.

1.8 It is believed that the potential attendance at the show is significantly higher on a weekend as many people come from out of town. They may also come for the day and shop in the City Centre and we are aware that some stay overnight as part of organised Fireshow weekend breaks.

1.9 Bitts Depot is extensively used as a base for storage and preparatory work over the weekend of the show and this would not be possible on a weekday, as it is fully occupied with staff and vehicles.

1.10 There is no evidence to suggest that moving the Fireshow date would have any impact on the itinerant firework vendors. Fireworks would still be on sale in the

shops for the same period and the problem with rogue fireworks is not at organised shows but on the streets. Indeed there is a growing demand for and availability of, fireworks for celebrations on a year round basis.

- 1.11 However, the Council might consider supporting the lobby for stricter regulations on the sale, control and use of fireworks

2. CONSULTATION

2.1 Consultation to Date.

2.2 Consultation proposed.

3. STAFFING/RESOURCES COMMENTS

N/A

4. CITY TREASURER'S COMMENTS

N/A

5. LEGAL COMMENTS

N/A

6. CORPORATE COMMENTS

N/A

7. RISK MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT

N/A

8. EQUALITY ISSUES

N/A

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

N/A

10. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

N/A

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members note the details of the report and agree an appropriate response to Mr Martlew's letter.

12. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

EUAN CARTWRIGHT
Director of Leisure & Community Development

6th February 2002

APPENDIX 'A'



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Cllr Mrs Doreen Parsons
Rt Worshipful Mayor of Carlisle
Civic Centre
Carlisle

3 January 2002

Dear Madam Mayor

I am writing to you regarding the Council's annual Fireshow event and may I initially compliment you on the excellent show put on year after year. The event is enjoyed by thousands of people and I warmly congratulate the Council for their efforts.

However, there seems to be a general growing problem of the tendency in the community to "extend" bonfire night. I have received numerous complaints from anxious parents of young children, many elderly people and from pet-owners regarding the use of fireworks, especially powerful "bangers" over quite an extended period around bonfire night.

The extended use of such powerful fireworks does cause a great deal of distress and whilst not wishing to curtail legitimate enjoyment of the event I hope that some steps may be taken to alleviate unnecessary suffering.

I feel it would be helpful if the City Council were to hold the Fireshow on 5 November rather than the nearest Saturday as it would provide the whole community with a wonderful display and would eliminate the extension of what is becoming bonfire week rather than bonfire night.

I should be grateful if you would raise this correspondence at the Council meeting on 15 January 2002, and give all councillors the opportunity to debate the issue.

With very best wishes for the New Year.

Yours sincerely

ERIC MARTLEW MP
Member of Parliament for Carlisle

DL

Copy: Cllr H Bradley