

**BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL
CABINET
4th October 2012**

REPORT TITLE: Entente Florale

Ward(s) affected by this report: Citywide

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**Report signed off by
executive member:** Cllr Gary Hopkins

Purpose of the report:

A report for information on the success of Bristol in winning the Gold Award for Entente Florale 2012.

RECOMMENDATION:

For information only

Background:

This year Bristol was invited to enter for the Entente Florale Europe awards, based on the city's track record in achieving Britain in Bloom regional and national awards over the past several years.

The European Entente Florale competition is now in its 27th year. It officially recognises and celebrates those cities, towns and villages across Europe that successfully embrace horticulture, tourism and care for the natural environment as part of their social, cultural and economic development.

From submitting the application in December 2011, the team had 7 months to plan and prepare for the judging which took place on 31 July 2012. The judges, 12 judges from 11 European countries, arrived in Bristol and over the course of 7 hours toured the city, visiting our major centres and visitor attractions including the Create Centre, Bristol University Botanical Gardens, the SS Great Britain, Ashton Court, the Central Business District and much more.

Bristol's success at winning Gold was announced at a special ceremony in Venlo, Holland on Friday, September 14. The judges' comments are attached at Appendix 1.

Bristol was the UK's city entry and was joined by Rustington Village in West Sussex, the UK's village entry. The UK was the only county which received a gold for both its entries.

The Gold award recognises Bristol's outstanding environmental and horticultural strengths and Bristol's success in achieving and maintaining high quality of life standards across the board, directly benefiting residents and visitors alike.

This award recognises our investment in the city, including: the care paid to our parks and open spaces; how we deal with waste and recycling; promoting tourism and our strategies to champion best practice in ecological, environmental and green development. This is a reflection on the pride of place shown by our diverse communities.

Bristol has been asked to be the Host city for the Award in 2014.

Public Sector Equalities Duties

The assessment process for the award took in consideration of access to and enjoyment of the city across all communities. The team were able to demonstrate the high level of involvement of communities across the city in environmental improvements.

Eco impact assessment

As this report is for information purposes, no formal Eco impact assessment is required.

a. Financial (revenue) implications:

The cost of entry and preparation for the judging was about £40,000 and Environment & Leisure Services covered this.

The financial implications of being the Host City for 2014 are not yet known.

b. Financial (capital) implications:

None

c. Legal implications:

There are no legal implications.

Entente Florale Jury Report.

BRISTOL.

The judging of Bristol took place on 31st July, 2012. The purpose of this report, is not necessarily to highlight all that was good, [although an overview is offered], but rather to suggest areas where improvement could still be made. This does not detract from the high standards achieved by Bristol overall.

The planned development approach was well covered and explained in presentations and documentation. The jury appreciated the planning talk given at the beginning of the tour, the green dimensions of development, and the strategic vision of the City were well explained.

Throughout the tour, examples were also noted of action plans by voluntary bodies and co-operation between the public and voluntary sector. Particular note was made of the setting up and relationship of Bristol in Bloom with the city, a first class initiative.

Concerning actions taken to conserve the Natural Environment, excellent examples were demonstrated throughout the tour of complete commitment. The "Create" centre must be highlighted as a superb facility, and the Local Authority's policies and actions demonstrated throughout clear results of the vision becoming reality. Superb!

Concerning the Built Environment, the Jury were impressed by the care, conservation and maintenance of buildings throughout the city, from historic to new build. Putting historic buildings such as the tobacco warehouses to new uses, was applauded. For new build excellence, particular note must be made of the Central Business District, and much of the new development along the Floating Harbour.

However, some concern was expressed over the latest developments at the harbour where building design and spatial arrangement of new department blocks could be queried when seen in context with the rest of the harbour.

Care needs to be taken that standards are not allowed to drop. The policy of putting new car parking underground was also applauded, and when possible, a high priority needs to be given to the unsightly existing multi-story car parks which detract in the overall cityscape.

Cleanliness throughout the city was excellent, at least, everywhere the jury went. The view was expressed it was a shame the jury were not able to walk down the main shopping centre- they hoped that the high standards they had seen were demonstrated everywhere else?

Concerning the Landscape, geographically this was well explained, and the huge amount of green space, countryside corridors, and natural parkland in the city was practically demonstrated during the tour and by the unique map in the "~,Shed." Facilities like the Downs and Ashton Court are superb, and nature conservation, the protection of

biodiversity very ably demonstrated.

For open green spaces, the jury were amazed by the huge number, and size of parks. Their management was of the highest order, the city is so fortunate to have such a heritage. The jury were however disappointed not to see some examples of children's play provision whilst on the tour.

Concerning permanent plantings, again the City has a wonderful heritage of trees, and particular note was made of the very high standards of maintenance. A full professional approach was ably demonstrated.

Concerning the use of perennials, whilst some were seen in some public areas, the jury felt more use could be made of these type of plantings where appropriate. Concerning seasonal plantings, these were excellent particularly in the city centre and College Green. Flower colour and form combinations were particularly well demonstrated and considering the poor summer, quality was high.

Concerning environmental education, this was a highlight of the tour, whether in the Create Centre encouraging ways to reduce energy, on the Downs studying flora and fauna, or in the Parks, enjoying the natural environment, or in the Botanical Gardens, ample proof was given that the whole population take their green environment seriously.

This was so ably demonstrated that it was not even necessary to visit a school. Very well done indeed.

Concerning effort and involvement, it is clear that all three sectors, the public, private and voluntary sectors are fully supportive and committed. It was good to meet the community groups demonstrating that particularly at "grass roots" level, the public are involved.

Concerning tourism, the jury appreciated the presentation provided, and noted the professional approach adopted to this important economic activity. The strong link between the city's environment and tourism was ably demonstrated. The jury particularly liked the signage system around the city for visitors, and the SS Great Britain and the M Shed were highlights.

However with such a high profile on tourism, the jury were slightly alarmed to note that the Tourist Office itself had no sign to publicise its presence to the "passer by. Presentation was excellent across the board, clearly this takes a high priority to involve the general public and the press, in environmental and "Bloom" activities. Concerning the presentation to the jury, particular note must be made of the excellent portfolio, and guide book provided.

Besides a small hiccup at the beginning of the tour over time, the whole tour was also very professionally planned and executed. As stated at the beginning of this report, its purpose is to give a general overview and suggest improvements. Suggesting improvements has not been easy to do, because of the very high standards demonstrated as the judging proceeded.

As a result the jury have no hesitation in awarding Bristol a GOLD AWARD!! Very many congratulations to all concerned and it is really appreciated that so many people worked so hard to finish with this result. Well done indeed! A wonderful result for a very special city.