

CABINET

Medium Term Resources Strategy Festivals and Events Programme, 2011

Report of Head of Community Engagement

PURPOSE OF REPORT				
To inform Cabinet of the outcome of the review of 2010 festivals and to bring forward proposals for the 2011 Festivals and Events programme within the framework of the medium term financial strategy and Corporate Plan objectives.				
Key Decision	X	Non-Key Decision		Referral from Cabinet Member
Date Included in Forward Plan	August 2010			
This report is public				

RECOMMENDATIONS OF HEAD OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- (1) That Cabinet notes the review of 2010 festivals and events
- (2) That Cabinet review the current plans for the 2011 programme of events and considers whether to commit funding now to allow progress towards festivals and events for 2011.
- (3) In considering funding and to allow for flexibility the budget for festivals and events the 2011 budgets be a general budget and not tied to specific core events
- (4) Should recommendations 2 and 3 be supported, the revenue budget and budget projection be updated.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 In 2004 it was agreed that the programme for events would be reviewed each year, in the autumn, to enable officers to plan for the subsequent years and that this review and plan should be approved by Cabinet.

This report therefore updates Cabinet on 2010 festivals and events and the council's approach to festivals and events generally. It also sets out plans for 2011.beyond..

2.0 Proposal details

2.1 The council has a tradition of supporting festivals and events which directly support two council priorities:

- Economic regeneration supporting our local economy - *Heritage and Cultural Tourism for the district*

- Partnership working and community leadership

2.2 Festivals and events have a direct impact, attracting more visitors to a destination, raising the profile of a place, creating a sense of wellbeing, providing a platform to raise awareness and communicate positive messages, and can help attract residents and investment.

2.3 This year's festivals and events net budget is £43,500 (excluding marketing) and has supported the following events:

- Sandcastle
- Oh I Do Like to be Beside the Seaside
- Fireworks Spectacular
- Summer Series of Bands in the Park (Happy Mount Park)

Within the total festivals and events budget available an allocation of £2,000 is also provided to More Music for the Kite Festival.

2.4 Following restructuring the core festivals and events delivery staff has reduced from three to one officer.

Resources to support and deliver events are still very much required but following restructuring a new approach has resulted in stronger inter-service working across Communications and Well Being. This new way of working has not only supported but enhanced the delivery of core events. This includes marketing, communications, engagement, VICs, leisure development, play rangers, sports centre and active health all working closely together. It has resulted in more effective and efficient working practice integral to the core work of the Council...

2.5 Officers have also examined best practice and opportunities to contribute towards the effective and efficient delivery of events and festivals throughout the district for future years. This includes exploring alternative methods of delivery/organisation of events, sponsorship and ensuring effective involvement of a variety of partners and where possible the development of partnerships.

2.6 This new approach is proving extremely effective. Analysis of people attending the Sandcastle event showed a high percentage of visitors from outside the district (66%), many first time visitors which were there specifically for the event. A snapshot survey on the day revealed the majority of traders reporting increased trade and acknowledgement of the increased profile for the business and the resort.

2.7 47% of festival goers surveyed said they were motivated to come to Morecambe by the event itself. The economic impact of this relatively small scale and low budget event has been analysed by the Blackpool and Lancashire Tourist Board and they estimate this to be in excess of £200,000.

2.8 In addition, in terms of destination profile raising, the event attracted enormous

amounts of publicity including significant coverage in a national newspaper with a readership of 1.9 million. The total equivalent advertising value for event (based solely on the Lancaster Guardian, The Visitor, Blackpool Gazette and Lancaster and Morecambe Reporter) was £9,682.

- 2.9 The impact of September's Seaside Festival is still being analysed in detail. However, snapshot surveys with business and visitors, together with feedback provided since, reveal this was a popular event with visitors and local people and was valued by many local businesses. The manager of the Midland Hotel wrote to the council to say the increase in revenue experienced over the weekend was 'significant', adding that he believed the positive publicity gained as a result would have long term benefits and assist regeneration.
- 2.11 The Council is developing new relationships with a range of local public, private and charitable status bodies in order to enhance partnership working and this is assisting in the delivery of an even greater range of festivals and events and cross marketing but at no extra cost to the authority.
- 2.12 There is a separate festivals and events marketing budget, as part of the overall marketing budget. Members will be aware of a required savings target of £61,000 against this budget in this financial year. More effective use of marketing channels have reduced marketing spend compared to previous years and marketing spend on festivals and events will reduce by £3,000 contributing 5% to the overall savings target.
- 2.13 By necessity the process to ensure the effective planning and marketing of festivals and events in future years has already begun. Marketing materials for the visitor market are already being developed. Approaching potential sponsors to generate income towards 2011 events also needs to be undertaken as soon as practically possible .

Partners such as Morecambe Town Council, More Music in Morecambe, the Lancaster Retail Sector and Bay Tourism Association are already planning for 2011 and beyond and are seeking information about council events and approaches. It is acknowledged however that beyond 2011 will be subject to a review of priorities.

- 2.14 Having reviewed this year's events, and held discussions with partners, the festivals and events plan for 2011 is set out below:

City council core events:

July - Sandcastle Festival

September – Seaside Festival

November – Fireworks Spectacular

Summer – Bands in Happy Mount Park

Within and around these events there will be some changes and adjustments to reflect the feedback and findings and maximise the potential of each.

City council funded events:

Kite Festival

Partnership working

Morecambe Town Council

Morecambe Town Council has approached, Lancaster City Council with a proposal that the two organisations consider a partnership approach to facilitate a large scale event for the town.

Positive discussions between officers and the town clerk have been held and it was agreed the two organisations would continue to develop plans for a joint event, subject to city council funding for festivals and events 2011/12 and within existing council resources. At this stage discussions centre on enhancing and expanding an existing event that will incorporate old favourites as well as new features.

.Other partners

The city council has also supported a variety of other partnership events including those organised by Lancaster City Centre Retail Sector, Lancaster Unlocked and Lancaster Music Festival. This support is 'in kind', such as advice on event management issues and marketing.

- 2.15 One of the lessons learnt so far is that within the overall festivals and events budget there should be some flexibility to reflect the feedback from 2010 events which will help support the objectives of festivals and events for the city council. It is being recommended that the budgets for festivals and events are not specifically allocated to each core event but that a general fund is established to allow for that flexibility.

3.0 Details of Consultation

- 3.1 Surveys with businesses, festival-goers, feedback generally and liaison with partners.

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

Option 1: To commit funding now to allow progress towards festivals and events for 2011 - 2012.	Option 2: To delay any decision until budget council in March 2011.	Option 3; To reduce funding in light of the current budgetary position facing the Council.
Advantages		
Enables council to work with partners to develop a co-ordinated plan towards event delivery for 2011, take advantage of major regional, national and international events and explore sponsorship opportunities	Council is able to make decision as part of wider budget setting context	Makes a contribution towards the savings targets required by Council following on from the recent Comprehensive Spending Review

Opportunity to develop a joined up marketing plan for visitors and local people (reducing the plethora of separate marketing approaches and ensuring no event clashes)		
Disadvantages		
Decision taken ahead of wider budget setting context	Prevents the council working with partners to develop a co-ordinated plan towards event delivery for 2011 and risks an uncoordinated and less effective series of events.	Uncertainty amongst businesses and the media, leading to potential damaging publicity not just locally but further afield
	Less likely to achieve sponsorship and therefore income towards 2011 events	
	Uncertainty amongst businesses and the media, leading to potential damaging publicity not just locally but further afield	

5.0 Officer Preferred Option (and comments)

5.1 There is no preferred option

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 Cabinet needs to take a decision with regard to the Council's future commitments to festivals and events for 2011.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

- Corporate Plan priorities Economic regeneration supporting our local economy - *Heritage and Cultural Tourism for the district*
- Partnership working and community leadership

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

None- all events run directly by or supported by the Council will be in accordance with its policies in respect of Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising out of this report

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The existing festival and events budgets form part of the Council's existing budget projections, reflected within the current .Medium Term Financial Strategy and therefore confirmation of these budgets does not have any additional spending implications, other than it would require budget savings to be made from other areas.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**Human Resources:**

Festivals and Events team formed part of the most recent service restructurings. Increasing partnership and cross service working is providing improved levels of service with less dedicated resources

Information Services:

None

Property:

None

Open Spaces:

The districts parks, open spaces and beaches form the backdrop to these festivals and events

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

Operationally, it makes sense to make early decisions regarding any festivals and events and as the proposals are within the existing budget and policy framework, it is within Cabinet's remit to authorise progress.

That said, Cabinet is advised to consider carefully whether, in context of the Medium Term Financial Strategy update elsewhere on the agenda, now is the right time to guarantee the affordability of the existing festivals and events programme. In general terms and in current circumstances, the s151 Officer would advise Members to defer any decision to enter into new spending commitments and it is understood that operationally, some more time for decision-making is available. If it is considered that this should be an area for making savings, however, then an early decision is advisable.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

Contact Officer: Gill Haigh

Telephone: 01524 582178

E-mail: ghaigh@lancaster.gov.uk

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