

APPENDIX D

Organised Festivals and Events Review

1. Background and context

As part of the outline review of services provided by the Regeneration and Planning Service, Cabinet (5th November 2013) resolved to review the provision of the council's festivals and events. This report has been prepared by the Assistant Head (Communications) and covers two main areas:

- An analysis of the Council's role in festivals and events and the rationale for this involvement;
- Consideration of how this could change given the council's financial position; and
- Outline options for change.

The report assumes that there is no disagreement that the visitor economy is an integral and growing part of the district's wider economy and should be supported and developed wherever possible.

2. Festivals and Events Role and Contribution

Quality festivals and events are seen as a key element of the district's tourism offer. Extensive research has identified the importance of cultural events and activities to add vibrancy to places and provide reasons for people who might otherwise shop online to come into towns and cities. It is becoming increasingly clear that people come to towns now because they want an experience which includes cultural as well as retail and catering experiences.

It is clear from other successful visitor destinations e.g. Durham, York, Lincoln, Carlisle, Lytham etc that festivals and events are an important part of the visitor offer. Many local authorities continue to play a key role in leading the overseeing and festival provision and are increasingly working alongside the private sector, arts partners and other stakeholders.

Locally, in 2012 the three core council organised and funded events (Sandcastle, Seaside and Fireworks) attracted a total of 47,000 visitors generating £355,341 of additional income (figures exclude local spend from those within district and visitors already on holiday here). These events also result in significant positive publicity both within and outside the district.

3. To what extent does the Council engage in events?

This can be broken down into two main headings – Strategic and Funding/Delivery

Strategic

In terms of strategic activities the council currently does the following:

- i) Leads the strategic overview of district wide festival provision and requirements, working alongside partners and stakeholders.

- ii)* Identifies and attracts funding to support these and partner events
- iii)* Liaises with partners to co-ordinate events that complement the brand (What's On marketing campaign) and charring partnerships. The marketing and events team also connect partners to support event delivery.
- iv)* Ensures that appropriate marketing is undertaken.
- v)* Work with other agencies to provide expert safety advice for festival co-ordinators.
- vi)* Supports other council services to develop and (in some cases) deliver events. This includes venues such as The Storey and The Platform and major activities such as The International Youth Games and forthcoming 20:20 Vision exhibition in Morecambe.

Directly funds and delivers events

- i)* Co-ordinates and provides £3,200 funding for the Bands in the Park (series of Brass Bands in Happy Mount Park).
- ii)* Provides £2k funding to the Catch the Wind Festival.
- iii)* Through marketing budgets, advice and operational expertise, supports other events e.g. Vintage by the Sea (Midland Hotel's 80th celebrations), Lancaster Music Festival, Lancaster Unlocked.
- iv)* Directly delivers a small number of high profile events;
 - Sandcastle
 - Seaside
 - Fireworks
 - Heritage Open Days
 - Velocity
- iv)* Leads national events in the district e.g. Olympic Torch.

4 The net cost of running events is detailed below

The draft net core event delivery budget for 2014/15 is £45,500 and the cost for the 1.5 fte staff directly involved is £44.6k in 2014/15 (including on costs).

In addition, other members of staff regularly support the creative and strategic development resilience, planning and training for events. . For the bigger events, e.g. Fireworks, a range of officers get involved in the planning and delivery. All receive TOIL for this work. In total, in 2013/14, officer time spent developing and delivering events was estimated at £56,100 (including £9,500 for TOIL). Based on Option 1, below, this could potentially reduce to somewhere in the region of £32,500 (including £3,400 for TOIL).

5. Options

The options presented take the following factors into consideration:

- The Council's financial challenges;
- That changes need to be cognisant of plans for the two centres; and
- Already reduced staffing resources, skills and expertise

Short term options

This option identifies immediate/short term savings which could be implemented from 1st April 2014

Longer term options

This option uses the coming months to examine more radical longer term options that could be implemented from 1st April 2015 and which could affect significantly the type of service and who provides it.

6. Option 1 – short term

This option includes:

- continuing to provide the strategic and co-ordinating functions to encourage and support the development and effective delivery of events within the district and within services; and
- reducing the number of events the council delivers and, where it continues to deliver, it does so in partnership, reducing the amount of staff resource required.

Essentially this would be two core events for the district that will be delivered and funded in partnership. These are the events that will create the biggest profile, fit closely with the destination brands, raise the profile of each destination, attract new and staying visitors that match the visitor profile we seek to attract, have the greatest economic impact and minimise the amount of staff resource required from the city council:

Hemmingway's Vintage by the Sea (replacing Morecambe Seaside Festival). A strong and popular branded festival that will be delivered in partnership with Hemmingway Design and creative company, Deco Publique and supported with £15,000 of MTC funding.

Light Up Lancaster (currently including fireworks). A significant and multi day arts and cultural festival bringing Lancaster's heritage to life, delivered in partnership with County, Lancaster University, Lancaster Arts Partners, BID and others.

As part of the funding bids submitted for match funding the city council has already given its commitment to support both these events (£20k for Vintage and £20k for Light Up) and match funding and grant funding may be lost if the city council withdrew.

For 2014 it is anticipated the overall amount of officer time required for the

Morecambe event will reduce further as the event is being delivered in partnership.

Light Up Lancaster was an incredibly successful event overall. Evaluation between partners will take place to ensure the 2014 event capitalises further. As part of this, consideration will be given to the fireworks element of the festival as part of the overall event.

It is also recommended, as part of option 1, funding for the Bands in the Park series (c£3,200) and More Music's Catch the Wind Festival (£2,000) be made available for 2014 but that discussions be held with both bodies regarding funding for 2015 and beyond.

Therefore, for 2014, Option 1 would not deliver the following:

- the event associated with the Heritage Open Days as this will fall too close to Vintage by the Sea
- Sandcastle Festival but instead look to work with partners to develop a programme of activities around a major outdoor exhibition coming to Morecambe and profiling the Bay.

This would allow a budget reduction for 2014/15 of £4,800. it would also reduce the costs of 'other' officer support and time to a value of approximately between £28,500 to £32,500.

Given the staff reductions that have already occurred in the Communications Team it would also slightly reduce the pressure on the current level of staff resources.

Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

Advantages	Disadvantages	Risks
Makes savings but maintains strategic direction and expertise to support events.	Small reduction in the number of festivals taking place	Potential adverse local PR
Acknowledges the already reduced council resources available to deliver events.	Potential for a small reduction in the profile for the district as a place to visit/stay	Potential perceived lack of support for destinations by partners
Encourages and supports partners in the delivery of events and secures external funding, match funding and resource		
Supports the delivery of effective and safe events		
Continued support and confidence to local businesses and potential investors		
Secures support of private events promoters such as Hemmingway Design and match and partner funding for other events.		

7. Option 2 – longer term

Use the coming months to examine more radical longer term options that could be implemented from 1st April 2015 and which could affect significantly the type of service and who provides it.

Options could include:

- a) No provision of events support or delivery;
- b) Strategic event support only;
- c) Strategic event support and commissioning;
- d) Strategic event support, commissioning and direct event delivery for ticketed events e.g. fireworks (covering cost of delivery).

a) No provision of events support or delivery

Advantages	Disadvantages	Risks
Potential staff and events budget savings subject to redundancy costs.	As in option 1 plus:	As in option 1
	Could deter private events promoters such as Hemmingway Design due to lack of professional support and funding	Ability to synchronise events and branding/regeneration activities reduced.
	Potential to attract external and match funding reduced.	
	Could have safety implications for non council run events	
	Potential negative impact on wider regeneration plans	
	Could reduce confidence of potential tourism business investors	
	Potential one off redundancy costs for current staff subject to redeployment	
	Negative publicity	

b) Strategic event support only

Advantages	Disadvantages	Risks
As 2a plus supports the delivery of effective and	As in 2a	As in 2a

safe events		
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c) Strategic event support and some commissioning

Advantages	Disadvantages	Risks
As in option 1	As in option 1	As in option 1

d) Strategic event support, commissioning and direct event delivery for ticketed events eg fireworks (covering cost of delivery)

Advantages	Disadvantages	Risks
As I option 1 plus some savings if events ticketed/paid for	Limited resources stretched further	Stretched resource and reduction in number of trained officers available brings risk to quality and safety of the event
	Ticketing would increase costs that might not be offset by income	Risk that even if charged for tickets, may not cover costs
		If done badly potential for some adverse PR for the council.
		If done badly potential for risk to health and safety

8. Officer Recommendation

The officer recommendation is to adopt the two stage approach outlined above. The benefit of this approach is to enable short term continued support for the provision of key events that most strongly reflect the branding, buy partnership support and assist wider services e.g. Platform, Storey. At the same time they would achieve a small amount of savings whilst developing options for for 2015 and beyond. The option avoids the potential risks to the wider economic development of the district.

In addition officers should be tasked with examining options around the delivery of Light Up Lancaster for 2014, particularly to support increased income and decrease the amount of staff resource required via the retained events.