

CABINET

LIGHT UP LANCASTER – FIREWORKS EVENT 27 May 2014

Report of Chief Officer (Regeneration and Planning)

| PURPOSE OF REPORT | | | |
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| To provide Cabinet with an update on the 2014 Lancaster Fireworks event and to provide options for event management. | | | |
| Key Decision | | Non-Key Decision | Referral from Cabinet Member |
| Date of notice of forthcoming key decision | N/A | | |
| This report is public | | | |

RECOMMENDATIONS OF CHIEF OFFICER (REGENERATION AND PLANNING)

It is recommended that

- (1) External event management support is procured to provide formal event management for the Lancaster Fireworks event in November 2014
- (2) That delegated authority be given for the Chief Officer (Resources) to update the General Fund Revenue Budget to reflect indicative additional costs for event management, of around £6,000 to £16,000, as indicated by the market testing exercise, subject to confirmation of final costs as part of the procurement process and sufficient savings being identified from existing budgets.

Introduction

1.1 Light Up the Skies (Lancaster's Firework Spectacular) is part of Light Up Lancaster, a two day festival which will take place across the city on the 7th and 8th November. Last year the total estimated audience for the Light Up Lancaster Festival was over 19,000 with around 12,000 attending the fireworks night alone. For 2014 the programme will consist of the following events:

- **Light up the Streets** will take place at locations throughout the city centre. Performances and exhibitions of visual arts will be commissioned and delivered by the Lancaster Arts Partnership.
- **Light Up the Skies** is Lancaster's annual fireworks event, which has for the past two years been organised in a different way, with a limited number of wristbands available for entry to designated viewing areas, where additional entertainment and refreshment stalls are available.

1.2 Delivery arrangements for the Fireworks event in previous years utilised a large number of council staff outside of the core events team in providing strategic development & planning, events control, zone control and stewarding. This in kind contribution had a total value of £56,100 (including £9,500 for 'time off in lieu') across all of the council's major events, including the Fireworks event. However, some of this capacity has now been taken as savings related to posts that are no longer filled following a number of significant restructures across the council. Remaining staff resources are difficult to access as they are related to mainstream service areas where capacity is now much more limited. Specifically, the reduction in backfilling costs and possible overtime for the council's events are part of the considerable savings achieved as a result of the council's large scale restructures. As the staff resources required for events is no longer available other delivery options need to be considered. A market testing exercise was conducted to assess the level of private sector interest in delivering this event and also to gain indicative information on possible costs.

1.3 The council's existing budget for this event, not including staffing and marketing, is currently **£24,000**.

1.4 Conclusions from the market testing exercise suggest the following:

- **Level of interest**

Although the market testing exercise was limited to approaching a select number of companies, there was interest in tendering to deliver the fireworks event. With wider advertising and use of the Council's Chest Procurement System it seems likely that the response would increase, providing a greater choice, although November is a busy time of year for many event management companies.

- **Costs**

Indicative costs for providing a like for like event range from **£29,300 to £40,000**. These costs must be treated with some caution as the full detail will only become available when the procurement exercise is complete.

2.0 Proposal Details

2.1 That the Council procures event management services to organise and deliver the Fireworks event for 2014 on a similar basis to the 2013 delivery model.

2.2 The council would still provide strategic support for the event, including contract management/monitoring, liaison re: events safety, road closures and premises licence responsibilities, marketing and business engagement.

2.3 In addition, as the event is part of Light up Lancaster it will be important for the council to ensure that, as new arrangements are developed, links with the Arts Partners, the Arts Council and the Business Improvement District are supported and match funding requirements are met.

2.4 Any new arrangements for 2014 can be fully evaluated and used to inform the sustainable development of any approach for future years in the context of the Council's overall approach to events in the District.

3.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

| | Option 1: Procure management and delivery of Lancaster Fireworks event 2014 | Option 2: Do not procure management and delivery of Lancaster Fireworks event for 2014 |
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| Advantages | <p>Allows the Fireworks event for 2014 to be delivered, meeting local expectations around this highly valued local event.</p> <p>Economic impact achieved as a result of high volume of visitors and attendees.</p> <p>Enhances the value of the Light Up Lancaster event as a whole, supporting the work of arts partners.</p> <p>Allows external funding to be maximised.</p> <p>Efficient model of delivery as in kind contributions from the council for key events staffing roles no longer required.</p> <p>Allows the council to focus its limited resources on marketing, business engagement, external funding and work with district partners.</p> <p>No impact on day to day business as a result of time off in lieu.</p> | <p>Provide an opportunity to make savings.</p> |
| Disadvantages | <p>Increase in the headline budget required to organise and deliver the event (to be mitigated either by utilising savings elsewhere or redirecting existing resources).</p> | <p>Fireworks will not be deliverable as resources required are not available.</p> <p>Jeopardises external funding of £58k, which Light up Lancaster has secured from Arts Council and BID by withdrawing match funding support.</p> <p>Possible reputational damage to the Council re public expectations and economic impact.</p> |

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| Risks | Quality of event - contract management arrangement will be in place to manage performance. Costs may be higher than estimated from the market testing - procurement processes will ensure Value for Money | That the fire service will possibly see an increase in call outs with the increase of more private firework displays being organised. |
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4.0 Consultation

4.1 Consultation with private sector providers has been undertaken as part of the market testing exercise. It will be important to communicate and work closely with arts partners and funders regarding any new delivery arrangements for the Fireworks event once these are agreed. Any company tendering successfully for the delivery arrangements for the Fireworks event will be required to present their event plan to the district's Event Safety Advisory Group (ESAG).

5.0 Officer Preferred Option

5.1 To approve the procurement and private sector delivery for the Lancaster Fireworks for 2014. This enables local communities to continue to benefit from an important local event, an economic impact to be achieved for the district and the continuing development of work with arts partners and funders for the Light Up Lancaster Festival 2014 as a whole.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 As previous delivery arrangements for the Fireworks event are no longer feasible, a new approach is recommended which will allow the Fireworks event to be delivered again in 2014. Although there is the potential for some limited additional costs, this is in the context of considerable savings gained as a result of service restructures. Timing is an important issue as a firm commitment will need to be made to an external provider as soon as possible in order to ensure that services are secured and sufficient lead in time is available.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Fireworks event is part of the Council's current range of Economic Development services and is consistent with the current Corporate Priority of Economic Growth.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, HR, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

Although the Fireworks event attracts large numbers of people into the city centre, this is carefully managed with the involvement of Police and Fire Services and is seen as a positive means of providing fireworks entertainment for local communities with much more manageable risks than a larger number of local and individual events.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Arrangements for tendering, procurement and contract management will be subject to the Council's Contract Procedures Rules.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Current budget provision for the Fireworks event is £24,000. Indicative additional costs identified as a result of the market testing exercise suggest that external event management will cost between £6,000 and £16,000 more than the previous delivery model. As highlighted in the main body of the report, however, in previous years the event has been supported by staff outside of the core team and this resource is no longer available.

The additional costs will need to be met from within existing Regeneration & Planning budgets, of which £6,600 has already been identified resulting from the new temporary management arrangements for the Platform. Should Members not allocate the remaining £4,600 Arts Development budget for the Dukes and Grand request covered under a separate item elsewhere on this agenda, then this could also be re-directed to the fireworks event.

Subject to the final procurement exercise and whether or not the remaining Arts Development budget is available, there is still a potential savings balance ranging from £4,800 to £9,400 for the Service to find. Any significant adverse service implications arising from identifying such additional savings would be reported back to Cabinet in due course for consideration if appropriate.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Human Resources:

The proposal to procure event management and delivery removes the requirement for the Council to provide staff for event control, zone control and stewarding on a Time Off in Lieu basis. Some very low level support is required to ensure that Salt Ayre and Williamsons Park sites are open as viewing areas.

Information Services:

None directly as a result of this report

Property:

Delivery of the Firework events involves the use of Council land and premises

Open Spaces:

Areas of the city centre are subject to a Premises Licence for which the Council has responsibilities. This is considered as a standard responsibility for events in these areas.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The s151 Officer has been consulted. This issue highlights the increasing pressures on service delivery as finances become tighter, and reiterates the need to appraise fully the resource / financial implications when planning various activities. There is an increasing propensity for this sort of scenario to arise in future, given the Council's financial prospects.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

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

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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