

## **WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **Report by Acting Director of Housing, Regeneration & Environmental Services (Housing & Regeneration Services)**

**Community Safety and Environmental Safety Committee : 7 February 2007**

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**Subject: Loch Lomond Highland Games – 2006 and beyond**

#### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to advise Committee on the outcome of the 2006 Loch Lomond Highland Games (LLHG) and seek approval for a proposed formal agreement between the Council and the LLHG committee which will secure the staging of the games in 2007 and develop the potential of this prestigious event.

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1** The Loch Lomond Highland Games have been staged for many years at the Balloch Castle Country Park event site. This annual event attracts thousands of visitors to the Balloch area and is arranged, managed and staged by the LLHG committee. This is the largest recurring annual event in the Balloch area and is significant in supporting the local tourist economy.
- 2.2** Over the past few years, the burden of staging the event has increased to the extent that the LLHG committee asked that organising and managing the event infrastructure should pass to the Council's Events & Halls Section for the 2006 event. A report was submitted to the Community Safety and Environmental Services Committee of 1<sup>st</sup> March 2006 where it was agreed:
- that a greater level of support should be provided; and
  - that a report be presented to Committee on the outcomes and arrangements for future years.

#### **3. Main Issues**

- 3.1** Acting on the above decisions, the Events & Halls Section worked with the LLHG committee to arrange and stage the 2006 Games. Both parties recognised that 2006 was a transitional year for the event and it was agreed that the event planning and management framework developed over many years between the Council and the Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association be applied as far as possible to the 2006 Highland Games with the LLHG committee being responsible for all activities within the games arena, including managing competitors, the preparation, storage and dispersal of prizes and prize money.

- 3.2** The Events & Halls Section was responsible for arranging all site infrastructure including traders, health & safety and environmental health issues, advertising and promotion, arranging equipment, and corporate hospitality.
- 3.3** The 2006 Highland Games took place on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> July. The weather was sunny and warm and the event drew in an estimated twenty five thousand visitors over the course of the day, this in spite of the games coinciding with Glasgow's "River Festival" event, which had free entry.
- 3.4** The LLHG committee considered that the advertising of the 2006 event was more effective than ever. Wider coverage was achieved with both local and national newspapers and the event was heavily promoted on Your Radio. A number of visitors to the event indicated that they had learned of the event through the Council's website.
- 3.5** The LLHG committee commented that the 2006 event was the most successful ever in terms of organisation and visitor numbers. The committee also commented that with the Council's additional involvement they were able to focus on the games arena.
- 3.6** The LLHG committee are keen for the event to continue but in a more defined manner, where they would supply the games, in the same manner as the RSPBA supply the pipe band championships.

#### **4. Personnel Issues**

- 4.1** There are no personnel issues or issues affecting staff.

#### **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1** It had been anticipated that the cost to the Council in assisting to stage the 2006 event would have been £9,000, comprising £1,000 of Events and Halls revenue expenditure and £8,000 in Grant monies.
- 5.2** As a consequence of the greater involvement of Events and Halls, the costs were kept to just over £5,000.
- 5.3** If the RSPBA model was applied the Council would retain all income except for competition fees but would require to pay a fee to the LLHG Committee for staging the games.
- 5.4** The LLHG Committee have suggested a fee of £22,000 which would allow them to cover their costs and retain an operating surplus for contingencies.
- 5.5** It is considered that, subject to final negotiations, Events and Halls could stage the event for a sum in the order of £7,000. The increase of £2,000 on 2006 could be absorbed within existing budgets.

- 5.6** The Committee is reminded that the net cost of the 2006 Scottish Pipe Band Championships was £17,024 and the fee paid to the Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association for the event was £30,000.

## **6. Risk Analysis**

- 6.1** If the Council fails to provide assistance to the LLHG committee as requested there is the risk that the Highland Games may not proceed in future years
- 6.2** There is also the risk that if the Games are organised as in 2006 the event will not achieve its full potential and further will be at a greater cost to the Council than in the past.

## **7. Conclusions**

- 7.1** The LLHG committee have performed admirably over the years to develop the event to the stage it is at today. However, they are now seeking assistance to maintain this high standard, without which it is possible that the event could either diminish or indeed fail to be staged at all.
- 7.2** The Games has considerable potential for growth, in scale, prestige and reputation. Development of this type of event is entirely in line with the Council's Event Strategy, as well as the Scottish Executive's Major Event Strategy 2003-2015 "Competing on an international stage".
- 7.3** The formalisation of an agreement between the Council and the LLHG committee, based on the RSPBA model, would do much to allow the event to be developed by the Council in terms of ;
- increasing visitor numbers to the area,
  - enhancing the area as a tourist destination,
  - expanding the marketing and promotion of the event,
  - reducing the cost to the Council of staging the event by maximising income opportunities

## **8. Recommendations**

- 8.1** It is recommend that Committee agree to:

- (a) the request by the Loch Lomond Highland Games Committee to enter into a formal agreement, similar to that existing between the Council and the RSPBA, for the staging of the 2007 Loch Lomond Highland Games;**
- (b) to delegate authority to the Acting Director of Housing, Regeneration & Environmental Services (Housing & Regeneration Services) to action recommendation; and**

- (c) that a report on the 2007 Games, including information on visitor satisfaction, and a proposal for arrangements beyond 2007 be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.

**Irving Hodgson**

**Acting Director of Housing, Regeneration & Environmental Services (Housing & Regeneration Services)**

**Date: 7th February 2007**

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**Person to Contact:** Billy McCabe, Section Head - Events and Halls  
Council Offices, Richmond Street, Clydebank  
Tel. No.: 01389 738548  
e-mail: [billy.mccabe@west-dunbarton.gov.uk](mailto:billy.mccabe@west-dunbarton.gov.uk)

**Appendices** None

**Background Papers:** "Loch Lomond Highland Games 2006" – Community Safety and Environmental Services Committee of 1<sup>st</sup> March 2006.

**Wards Affected :** All wards