

## **WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **Report by Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development**

**Cultural Sub-Committee: 9 September 2008**

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**Title: Scottish Pipe Band Championships Post 2009**

#### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1** This report outlines the Council's proposals to submit a bid to host the Scottish Pipe Band Championships from 2010 – 2012.

#### **2.0 Background**

- 2.1** The Scottish Pipe Band Championships were first staged within West Dunbartonshire at Balloch Castle Country Park in 1999. The event was hosted in Glasgow in 2000 and returned to West Dunbartonshire Council in 2001, where it has remained ever since. The event is generally staged on the last Saturday in May.
- 2.2** The Council presently has an agreement with the Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association (RSPBA) to stage the Scottish Pipe Band Championships at Levensgrove Park, Dumbarton from 2006 to 2009.
- 2.3** In 2004, Allied Distillers became the event's major sponsor. Following the takeover of Allied Distillers in 2006, the event has continued to be sponsored by Chivas Brothers (Paisley) under the 100 Pipers brand. The value of this sponsorship in 2008 was £10,500.
- 2.4** The event has grown to the extent that an average of 135 pipe bands participate in the event attracting, on a good day, an attendance of over 20,000 visitors to the area.
- 2.5** The event budget for 2008/09 was £25,000 and, whilst final accounts are still being prepared, it is anticipated that the net cost of the event will be comfortably within the £25,000 budget.
- 2.6** The fees paid to the Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association for the event under the current 2006/2009 agreement are as follows;
- 2006 - fee of £30,000
  - 2007 - fee of £32,000
  - 2008 - fee of £34,000
  - 2009 - fee of £36,000

### **3.0 Main Issues**

- 3.1** The RSPBA has recently written to the Council and to other interested parties inviting bids for the Scottish, British and European Pipe Band Championships for a period of one to three years. These bids (sealed) require to be submitted to the RSPBA at their offices at 45 Washington Street, Glasgow G3 8AZ by no later than **12.00 noon on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> October 2008**, thereafter to be opened at **10.00 a.m. on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> October** at a meeting of the RSPBA finance committee.
- 3.2** The Council's current Major Events Programme 2008-2011 indicates that the Council will seek to stage the European Pipe Band Championships from 2010 instead of the Scottish Championships. At the time of developing the major events programme it was considered that staging the European Pipe Band Championships would be a step up in prestige and generate the ability to attract greater visitor numbers. It is the case however that further research has shown that the European Pipe Band Championships are less popular than the Scottish Championships with the pipe bands themselves and do not attract higher numbers of either bands or visitors to the competition.
- 3.3** The Scottish Pipe Band Championship event held at Levensgrove Park has been extremely successful in recent years and the Department of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development is keen to seek to retain the Scottish Pipe Band Championships at Levensgrove Park and maintain the existing visitor base and market position rather than pursue the staging of either the European or British Pipe Band Championships.
- 3.4** In terms of the proposed submission to the RSPBA, it is recommended that the maximum period for continuous hosting of a championship event, namely 3 years, be submitted. This would mean that the proposed bid would be for the period 2010 to 2012 inclusive.
- 3.5** In respect of competition for championships, it is likely that Birmingham will again seek to host the British Pipe Band Championships whilst Belfast, recently frustrated in its bid to host the World Pipe Band Championships, will look to host the European Pipe Band Championships.

It is believed that competition to host the Scottish Pipe Band Championship event will be keen with Inverclyde, some other similarly sized local authorities and some private consortia from Grampians/Highland submitting bids. It is the case that bids may therefore be significantly higher than the fees paid in previous years and higher than the level of inflation.

- 3.6** Member/officer discussions have taken place regarding the level of fees to offer the RSPBA within the submission; these to be finally agreed within the next couple of weeks.
- 3.7** The finally agreed sums for each of the three years cannot be disclosed at a Cultural Sub-Committee meeting until after the closing date for sealed bids due to commercial sensitivity.

#### **4.0 Personnel Issues**

- 4.1** The submission of a bid to host the RSPBA Scottish Championships in 2010, 2011 and 2012 requires no additional staff resources. Should the Council successfully secure the staging of this event, it will be managed by the Events and Halls team as per previous years.

#### **5.0 Financial Considerations**

- 5.1** As outlined in Paragraphs 3.5, 3.6 and 3.7, it is likely that the Council will require to submit a bid to RSPBA in excess of current fees plus inflation however final sums have yet to be agreed.
- 5.2** It is hoped that through increased sponsorship and other income (programme sales, etc) the actual cost to the Council can be maintained at a similar figure to present (£25,000) although this cannot be guaranteed until funding/sponsorship has been secured.

#### **6.0 Risk Analysis**

- 6.1** If the Council was successful in securing a contract to stage the events in 2010, 2011 and 2012 and no sponsorship could be secured the Council would be required to pay the full fee to the RSPBA.

#### **7.0 Conclusions**

- 7.1** The RSPBA Scottish Championship event is one of the larger Pipe Band Championship events and is now a regular feature on the Council's events programme. The event has become well established and attracts over 20,000 visitors to West Dunbartonshire each year.
- 7.2** The continuation of this event at Levensgrove will ensure continued economic, social and cultural benefits to the area and its residents.
- 7.3** Over the years the RSPBA and Council have developed a close working relationship.

#### **8.0 Recommendation**

**8.1 Members of the Cultural Sub-Committee are asked:**

- a) to delegate authority to the Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development to determine, in discussion with the Council Leader, Chief Executive and Provost, a fee structure for staging the 2010, 2011 and 2012 Scottish RSPBA championships; and

- b) to instruct the Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development to submit a bid to RSPBA to host the Scottish Pipe Band Championships on the basis of fee structure in 8.1(a) above.

**Elaine Melrose**

**Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development**

**Date: 1 September 2008**

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**Persons to Contact:** Ronald M Dinnie – Head of Land and Environment  
Council Offices, Garshake, Dumbarton, G82 3PU  
Telephone: 01389 737601  
e-mail: [ronald.dinnie@west-dunbarton.gov.uk](mailto:ronald.dinnie@west-dunbarton.gov.uk)

Lynda McLaughlin – Manager of Commercial  
Operations  
Council Offices, Elm Road Dumbarton, G82 2RH  
Telephone: 01389 772097  
e-mail: [lynda.mclaughlin@west-dunbarton.gov.uk](mailto:lynda.mclaughlin@west-dunbarton.gov.uk)

**Appendices:** None

**Background Papers:** None

**Wards Affected:** All