WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Acting Executive Director of Housing, Environment and Economic Development (Land & Environment)

Council: 26 September 2007

Subject: Live at Loch Lomond Festival 2007

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the outcome of the Live at Loch Lomond Festival staged at Balloch Castle Country Park on Saturday 4 and Sunday 5 August 2007. The report also seeks Council approval for officers to enter negotiations with the promoter to develop this event with a view to staging the event in 2008 and 2009.

2. Background

2.1 A report "Balloch Castle - Music Events 2007" was submitted to the Community Safety and Environmental Services Committee of 2 August 2006. The report advised the Committee of an approach by a promoter wishing to stage a weekend festival at Balloch Castle Country Park in August 2007. The report contained the following recommendations, which were subsequently approved by Committee;

a) To note and approve the staging of the above event; and

b) To instruct the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services in consultation with the spokespersons for Economic Development and Protective Services and Education and Cultural Services to finalise arrangements for two other events set out in paragraph 3.5 of the report (namely, a one day concert in June 2007 and a weekend festival in September 2007) should the respective promoters indicate a wish to proceed.

2.2 In line with the Committee decision officers entered into discussion with the event promoter and other interested parties to plan the staging of the Live at Loch Lomond Event.

3. Main Issues

3.1 Prior to the festival taking place, the event was extensively advertised and promoted in the national press as well as being regularly trailed on Scottish Television, Radio Clyde and Your Radio. The Loch Lomond area therefore benefited from a continual media presence for weeks in advance of the event.

Additionally, T4 (the Channel 4 youth/music programme) brought their tour bus to the event on Saturday 4 August where an outside broadcast of their show was filmed and shown on the afternoon of Sunday 12 August to an audience of around 200,000 viewers.

3.2 The Live at Loch Lomond Festival was safely staged at Balloch Castle Country Park on the weekend of 4/5 August 2007 and attracted twelve thousand visitors on Saturday and fourteen thousand visitors on Sunday. The participating artistes were a mix of dance based acts and mainstream bands as shown on **Appendix 1**. The Sunday Mail rated the event as “five star” whilst other press reports were also very positive about both the event and the venue.

3.3 Although camping was not originally planned at the event, demand for this facility was such that the promoter, in collaboration with a local farmer and after gaining the required planning permissions from the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority, provided a combined camping and parking facility at Ballagan Farm on the A811 road north of Balloch. The campsite accommodated three thousand campers and was regarded by the Police and Environmental Health as being well organised and trouble free.

3.4 In light of the success of the event, the promoter is keen to stage the event in 2008, 2009 and 2010. Normally, it takes a number of years for festivals of this type to develop to their own identity and following. This event, however, has made an immediate impact on the Scottish festival calendar so much so that the promoter is keen to move as quickly as possible to procure more high profile and mainstream artistes for 2008.

3.5 On the back of the success of the 2007 event, the promoter has already lined up an advertising promotion with a major soft drinks manufacturer for a similar event in 2008, as well as having provisional agreement in place with a national radio station to both promote and cover the event in 2008.

3.6 The earlier the promoter can gain agreement from the Council to stage this event in future years, the greater the possibility of procuring well known mainstream acts and bands. The promoter’s aim is to develop the event into one which has the broadest appeal possible rather than create a “niche” event. In practice this would mean a smaller D.J./dance presence and a greater concentration on main stage and secondary stage acts.

3.7 In light of the success of the 2007 event yet also mindful of the commitment involved in agreeing a 3 year contracted term for such an event it is suggested that Elected Members may wish to consider agreeing to repeat events in 2008 and 2009 as part of a two year agreement; this subject to annual licensing arrangements for each event.

3.8 The benefit to the Council of agreeing to a two, or even a three, year event is that it offers the opportunity for officers to negotiate permanent improvements to the site venue rather than just imposing a requirement for the promoter to make a temporary upgrade for the event.

Such permanent improvements, for example, installation of an improved lighting infrastructure, would offer the added benefit of being in place for other events at the venue throughout the year.

4. Personnel Issues

4.1 A wide range of Council services were involved in the planning and staging of this event, namely; Events & Halls, Grounds Maintenance, Waste and Transport Services, Environmental Health, Risk Management, Legal and Administrative Services, Licensing, Roads, Public Relations, Building Standards and Health & Safety.

4.2 It is recognised that such commitment from services will have incurred costs in the form of staff time and impacted upon day-to-day business leading up to and during the event. Furthermore, it is recognised that the event would most probably not have been successful without this commitment from officers.

4.3 he Strathclyde Police (Dumbarton) event debrief meeting held on Thursday 30 August 2007, the Police, the promoter and other external agencies involved in the planning and staging of this event, such as Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue and the Ambulance Service, praised of the level and quality of co-operation, assistance and guidance delivered by Council services and the respective officers.

4.4 ould this event be staged in future years, a similar level of input will be required of these Council services, however they will have the experience and knowledge gained from the 2007 Live at Loch Lomond event.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 The Council received a fee of £25,000 for the hire of Balloch Castle Country Park.

5.2 The promoter requires to bear all costs for clean-up, policing, ground re-instatement, site set up etc. for the event.

5.3 It should be noted that the two other major events which are staged by the Council each year (Royal Scottish Pipe Band Championships and the Loch Lomond Highland Games) are held at a net cost to the Council.

5.4 Additionally, as the Live at Loch Lomond event has a potentially higher attendance than either the pipe band and highland games events, there is a probable higher level of positive economic impact in the local area.

5.5 The level of fee for hire of the event venue in future years will be subject to discussion with the promoter once Council agreement has been given to enter into negotiations with the promoter for future events.

5.6 As this event was not a joint production, the promoter bore the full financial risk for the event. It is worth noting that three other major festivals which took place in Scotland this year (Rock Ness, Tartan Heart and Connect) each received financial support from Event Scotland, Highland and Islands Enterprise and Highland 2007. In addition, the Connect Festival (at Inveraray) received funding from Argyll and Bute Council.

5.7 The promoter set ticket prices at £75 for the weekend and £42.50 per day plus booking fees. As outlined in para 5.3 above, the promoter bore full financial responsibility for the concert and therefore retained all income collected.

6. Risk Analysis

6.1 In staging the 2007 event, the promoter was required to produce a comprehensive event management plan which covered all aspects of event associated risk. This was developed to the satisfaction of the relevant Council sections, as well as the Police and other participating organisations, such as Strathclyde Fire and Rescue and the Scottish Ambulance Service.

6.2 There were a small number of casualties who required first aid treatment and around twenty persons who were reported to the Procurator Fiscal for minor event associated offences.

6.3 Strathclyde Police, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue, Scottish Ambulance Service and the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority have indicated that there is no reason why they would object to this event being staged in future.

6.4 It is recognised that improvements can be made to this year's event organisation and, should agreement be given for negotiations to commence for a 2008 event, all partners will work together to ensure improved arrangements and provision are incorporated at the event planning stage.

7. Conclusions

7.1 Live at Loch Lomond 2007 was a successful event in that it was staged safely and crowds of 12,000 and 14,000 attended on the Saturday and Sunday respectively; this not withstanding extremely poor weather on the Sunday.

7.2 The event has the potential to become bigger and better and to develop into an annual fixture on the Scottish festival calendar, as both T in the Park and Rock Ness have done.

7.3 The staging of this event, both in 2007 and in future years, is in line with the Council's Events Strategy and is likely to be of benefit to the area in economic, cultural and social terms.

8. Recommendations

8.1 It is recommended that Members:

(a) Note the success of the 2007 Live at Loch Lomond Event

(b) Acknowledge the request from the promoter to stage this event in 2008, 2009 and 2010; and

(c) Delegate authority to the Acting Executive Director of Housing, Environment and Economic Development (Land and Environment) in consultation with the service Convenor to undertake discussions with the promoter with a view to staging this event in 2008 and 2009 and report to a future Housing, Environment & Economic Development Committee.

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Date: September 2007

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Appendix: Appendix 1 – Line up for Live at Loch Lomond

Background Papers: Report to CS& ES Committee of 2 August 2006: West Dunbartonshire Council Event Strategy

Wards Affected All Wards