

Supplementary Agenda



Special Meeting of Cultural Committee

Date: Monday, 18 March 2019

Time: 10:00

Venue: Council Chambers,
Town Hall, Dumbarton Road, Clydebank

Contact: Craig Stewart, Committee Officer
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Dear Member

Item to Follow

I refer to the agenda for the above special meeting of the **Cultural Committee** which was issued on 5 March 2019 and now enclose a copy of the undernoted item which was not available for issue at that time.

Yours faithfully

JOYCE WHITE

Chief Executive

Note referred to:-/

Note referred to:-

4 EVENTS UPDATE

3 – 8

Submit report by the Strategic Director – Regeneration, Environment & Growth providing an overview of existing events and to consider the merits of allocating scarce resources to develop new events across West Dunbartonshire.

Distribution:-

Bailie Denis Agnew (Chair)
Provost William Hendrie
Councillor Karen Conaghan (Vice Chair)
Councillor John Millar
Councillor Brian Walker

Chief Executive
Strategic Director of Transformation & Public Service Reform
Strategic Director of Regeneration, Environment & Growth
Chief Officer of West Dunbartonshire Health & Social Care Partnership

Date of issue: 13 March 2019

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WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Strategic Director – Regeneration, Environment & Growth

Committee: Cultural Committee

18 March 2019

Subject: Events

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to provide the Cultural Committee with an overview of existing events and to consider what scope there might be for increasing the number of events held in West Dunbartonshire. The report will also discuss the merits of allocating scarce resources to develop new events across West Dunbartonshire.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** The Committee is asked to note the content of this report.

3. Background

- 3.1** At present the Council has an events programme which has been in place for a number of years.
- 3.2** When West Dunbartonshire Leisure Trust (WDLT) was established existing event management was transferred. West Dunbartonshire Council still control the event programme and WDLT provide the operational delivery of those elements not directly provided by WDC (cleansing, roads management etc.) or managed by the event sponsors.

- 3.3** The core events over the year comprise of:

Pro-am Golf at Dalmuir Golf Course. Delivered in partnership with the Scottish Professional Golfers Association and attracts 35 to 40 teams each made up of three amateurs and one professional golfer.

The Scottish Pipe Band Championships at Levensgrove Park is delivered in partnership with the Scottish Pipe Band Association and attracts 140 bands and approximately 20,000 non-paying spectators.

Loch Lomond Highland Games at Moss O'Balloch is delivered in partnership with the Loch Lomond Highland Games Committee and attracts approximately 8,000 spectators who pay an entry fee on the day.

Fireworks Displays at Dalmuir Park and Levensgrove Park which attract approximately 5,000 non-paying spectators at each event. Local residents come to enjoy the great family atmosphere and watch the spectacular 20 minute firework displays.

Christmas Lights switch on in Alexandria and Dumbarton which attracts approximately 2,000 non-paying spectators to each event.

- 3.4** All of the above events are subsidised by the Council. In total the Council has a budget to support these events of £123k. The reduction or removal of this budget was one of the savings options developed during the current budget process.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1** The current programme operates well and offers a range of activities across the authority for both residents and visitors. It is not currently designed to generate a surplus.
- 4.2** Although there is no evidence of any public demand for new events, the Culture Committee may wish to consider whether it wishes to allocate resources to explore a number of other potential events. Given the budget constraints facing the Council the fundamental principle should be that such events should be designed to be at least self-financing, where the Council would operate as a facilitator to outside organisations wishing to bring a range of bespoke events.
- 4.3** The Council does not have a large number of available venues for commercial independently promoted paid audience concert style events nor does it have any venues designed for that purpose. Venue options would be determined by the work done on the feasibility and scale of any given event. It is far from clear that any of the Council venues could deliver events on an affordable and economically viable scale.
- 4.4** However possible venues would be:

Clydebank Town Hall offers the theatre-style Grand Hall for between 150-300 people. To date interest from promoters has been limited and approaches are typically linked to tribute acts. Even these require an upfront fee running into several thousand pounds or a small percentage share of ticket sales. The new Town Hall management team is currently prioritising weddings, conferences and dance shows as sources of secure and profitable income. The events business comes with financial risk and given the lack of experience within the team or wider Council of running such events there is a desire to build slowly at this stage. It is recognised there is the potential to attract more events and performances to the Grand Hall, but this will also require a building of a target audience over time, and developing the skills and knowledge of the team. Comparisons have been made to the success of the Kelvingrove Bandstand but it should be recognised that this is a 2,000 seater

venue in the heart of Glasgow with a significant local population, good transport links and established visitor amenities nearby. Better comparison might be the Glasgow Concert Hall and Glasgow's Old Fruitmarket although even these are both 1,000+ seater venues, benefit from established annual festivals and resident orchestras, and have recognised visitor amenities nearby. It should also be borne in mind that the refurbishment of the Town Hall will mean that it will not be available for most of next year.

Civic Space, Church St Dumbarton. This space has designed to be flexible for modest events such as exhibitions or conferences, for which WDC might charge a fee, but has yet to be used for that purpose. For a variety of logistical and practical reasons (toilet & catering capacity, access control, need for availability for Council Business) it is unlikely to be suitable as a more general paid events space for commercial use.

Moss O'Balloch, Balloch is already used for the Balloch Highland games, but has no infrastructure for larger scale, audience style or pre ticketed events. It is completely weather dependent.

Balloch Park. This has been used for events in the past but is no longer deemed suitable for Health and Safety reasons. It too has no infrastructure in place for managing large public or ticketed events. It is completely weather dependent.

Levensgrove Park is used for the Armistice commemoration in Dumbarton. The park has recently been redeveloped with better drainage and a new pavilion. As with the other parks it has no infrastructure for large scale ticketed events and is completely weather dependent.

- 4.5 By comparison, the Glasgow area already has a large number of established venues for a variety of events. All of these have a track record and are closer to centres of population, transport networks and other amenities. Events sponsors are unlikely to be willing carry all of the risks involved to take forward new events in what they would regard as new venues or locations. It is likely that events sponsors would seek to have the Council agree to underwrite events in the first instance. Depending on the event, the financial and reputational risks involved could be significant.
- 4.6 It should also be recognised that West Dunbartonshire does not have the population or levels of disposable income that would easily support large commercial events. The likelihood is that audiences would have to be drawn from further afield and by definition any events would therefore benefit audiences other than only West Dunbartonshire residents. If events were priced to reflect local incomes, their viability for promoters would be further eroded.
- 4.7 Such events in West Dunbartonshire would be in competition with alternatives closer to Glasgow City Centre and venues which are better equipped and

more accessible to that audience than those in West Dunbartonshire. This would reinforce promoters' perception of risk and expectations of subsidy.

- 4.8** It should be noted that the 2018 'Retro at the Rock' 2 day music festival proposed for Dumbarton FC's ground planned to sell 10,000 tickets. Although widely promoted locally, only 1200 were actually sold. The event was then moved to Glasgow's Barrowlands but was ultimately cancelled. There is no information available on what losses if any were incurred.
- 4.9** In the same way, unlike City Centres West Dunbartonshire does not have the density of visitor amenity (restaurants, bars, hotels) offer required to secure significant economic gain from events. It is unlikely that any credible events programme would reach the scale required to drive significant investment in the hospitality sector locally over any meaningful timescale.
- 4.10** It is however possible that West Dunbartonshire venues might 'piggy back' on City Region events such as Celtic Connections or the Glasgow Jazz, Comedy, or Film Festivals. Awestruck Academy social enterprise in Sylvania way Clydebank is holding a Glasgow Comedy Festival fringe event on 16 March 2019.
- 4.11** In the case of such events it is likely that audiences would use amenities in the City Centre and commute to and from events and spend very little locally. Because of rail links and travel time, attracting such audiences to Clydebank is far more likely than attracting them to any venues further West. However the risks from a promoters' perspective and the expected subsidy or guarantee would still be a factor.
- 4.12** Events are transitory and unlike new facilities they do not create any permanent asset. In terms of employment, as the number of events is not likely to be large they will not represent a source of sustainable jobs. Events organisations tend to have their own specialist staff and/or subcontractors for the provision of skilled or high value roles. Any local employment from an events programme is more likely to be low paid and on an ad hoc 'casual' or 'gig economy' basis, with the higher value benefit from the Councils investment leaking out to other areas.
- 4.13** The Council has no dedicated events team, nor does it have any staff with the skills expertise and experience to appraise, negotiate, secure and deliver events of this nature. There is also no budget to underwrite events. Such a resource would have to be secured through the budget process and, seen in the context of financial pressures and cuts to more essential services, would logically have a low priority. The uncertainty of any success should mean that should any budget be agreed it should be small and arguably be only on a strictly time limited experimental basis.
- 4.14** Once such a resource was in place exploration of any opportunities could be best delivered through short life working groups consisting of Members and Officers and then taken to Committee. A fully costed options appraisal and

risk assessment would be required in each case to comply with standing orders and ensure best value.

5. Options Appraisal

- 5.1** If nothing is changed the current events can be expected to continue subject to budgets or other policy decisions. The creation of a new resource without a budget would be unlikely to be able to respond to any opportunities that were identified. There is every possibility that the expenditure involved would generate no events and no return to the Council or West Dunbartonshire. The creation of both a post or posts and a budget would have to be quantified and justified compared to other service needs. As explained above, there is no certainty that the use of this budget would generate either a return to the Council or significant local benefit. If specific events were mooted an options appraisal would be undertaken on each of the proposals during development to consider the audience that will be targeted and the financial viability.

6. People Implications

- 6.1** As stated there are no dedicated Council resources associated with event development. Appropriate staff would have to be recruited and managed as part of the Culture team. If this was done it would be logical for that staff member to also assume responsibility for the oversight of the current events programme, and seek to move those events to a similar self-funding position.

7. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 7.1** At present the existing events programme is delivered through an approved General Services revenue budget which covers the costs of events.
- 7.2** The aim in delivering any new events would be to ensure they are self-financing or income generating. Funding may be required to provide employee capacity for exploration and delivery of events. This will be identified following a meeting of the member officer working group and if appropriate reported to a future Council meeting. As it is quite possible that no events are successfully secured, or that those that are make a significant loss, the staff costs and/or any support budget should be considered to be entirely at risk.
- 7.3** Should there be a requirement for any expenditure that is currently not budgeted this could be funded from the current cultural budget, or if this was insufficient a report would be brought to the appropriate Council meeting.
- 7.4** There have been no procurement issues identified at this time, but the selection of any events provider or promoter for any specific event would have to follow the procurement policy. Should new events be identified the procurement requirements will be considered.

8. Risk Analysis

- 8.1** There are no specific risks identified with merely exploring event opportunities other than the cost of new staff and of existing staff time which could otherwise be employed in the delivery of existing priorities. But actually delivering events carries a number of risks as described above. Any new events will be fully risk assessed as part of their development.
- 8.2** Full Risk Assessments are carried out for all existing events.
- 9. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)**
- 9.1** A screening report has been carried out and there are no specific EIA issues to be considered.
- 10. Consultation**
- 10.1** Consultation on any new events will be carried out through the Member/Officer working groups.
- 11. Strategic Assessment**
- 11.1** The current programme and development of any new events aim to meet the strategic objectives of the authority.

Richard Cairns

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Date: 4 March 2019

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Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	None
Wards Affected:	All Wards