

Cabinet

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Commissioning a 2013 Lumiere Festival



Report of Corporate Management Team

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Purpose of the Report

1. This report provides further information on the evaluation of the 2011 Lumiere programme. It outlines some of the outcomes from a range of discussions and concludes that there is support and enthusiasm for commissioning a 2013 Lumiere Festival amongst a cross section of individuals and organisations. Much of the feedback acknowledges that the Council is facing significant budget pressures but suggests that this proposal is generally seen to be a justified investment which produces a quantifiable gain for the residents of County Durham. Finally it recognises the need to learn lessons from the past events and to engage in planning the future programme carefully.

Background

2. On 18th April 2012 Cabinet considered a detailed evaluation report on the 2011 Lumiere Festival which had been produced by Miller Research Evaluation Consultation, an independent organisation with a proven track record who have evaluated other Durham festivals. The report concluded that the festival had been a considerable success. It particularly highlighted: the significant beneficial economic impact; the substantial value of media coverage and the high profile enjoyed by Durham as a consequence; the high satisfaction amongst people who had filled in questionnaires; and the considerable return on investment for the Council. Some of the main findings were:
 - 82% of respondents to surveys undertaken by Miller were extremely positive about the festival
 - The value of media cover generated was worth £2,250,000 and the festival received positive coverage as far away as Vietnam and Australia
 - The total economic impact was £4,333,628
 - The County Council's return on investment was 983%
3. As well as accepting the report Cabinet agreed a number of steps aimed at publicising and debating the evaluation. In full Council the Leader, Councillor Henig, also requested that people should write to him to express their views on

whether the Council should commission a further Lumiere event for 2013. Many people have done so but in some cases, letters have been sent to senior officers. This report attempts to capture information from all of the routes into the Council.

Consideration by Durham Partnerships

4. The County Durham Partnership Board considered the evaluation of the 2011 programme at its meeting on 26th April. 2012 The Board includes representation from public, private and voluntary sector organisations. It discussed the topic again at its meeting of 31st May when the Board unanimously expressed support for a recommendation to re-commission the event for 2013. Senior representatives from the Fire Service and the Police spoke in support of the Board's endorsement and expressed the support of their own organisations.
5. The County Durham Economic Partnership debated the success of the 2011 event and the commissioning of an event for 2013 at its meeting on 30th April 2012. It concluded by recording its support for commissioning a further event for 2013. The Chair wrote to the Leader of the Council: "First Lumiere involves many of the County's residents, particularly young people, and creates the opportunity for them to develop skills, raise aspirations and broaden horizons. Second there can be few opportunities that generate such benefit to the local economy and the business community".
6. The County Durham Cultural Partnership Board received a presentation at its meeting on 24th May 2012. Its independent chair has subsequently written to express the Board's keen support for the Council to re-commission the event to take place in 2013: "The Partnership believes that Lumiere brings added benefit to the cultural sector and communities in County Durham, increasing the number of people who experience and are inspired by the arts. We believe it also provides a powerful attraction to participants and visitors across the region and indeed the UK".
7. Some important stakeholder organisations have also chosen to write separately expressing their support, in addition to being involved in partnership endorsements. Some examples include letters of support from the Very Reverend Michael Sedgrove Dean of Durham on behalf of the Cathedral, from Professor Chris Higgins, Vice Chancellor writing on behalf of himself and the University and from Anne Isherwood Principal Chief Executive of Bishop Auckland College. Professor Higgins explained that: "The University was particularly pleased to enable Lumiere to use its land and buildings, including the World Heritage Site, and to organise alumni events around the festival to bring people back to Durham from far and wide". Anne Isherwood wrote: "I would urge you to consider the very significant benefits that the event provides for both the City and the surrounding areas....I fully understand the challenges associated with operating in such difficult times but I do hope that this event can be saved for the City".

Area Action Partnerships (AAP)

8. Oral presentations have been given at 10 of the AAPs. The remaining 4 AAPs received the report together with a written request for comments. The AAPs were asked to comment on the key findings of the evaluation and to consider whether as an AAP they would like to be involved in community projects associated with a future event.

9. 13 out of the 14 AAPs were supportive of the Council deciding to commission a Lumiere 2013 event. In a number of instances the AAPs had been able to take the views of their forums as well as those of the Board members. Mid Durham AAP, for example, received a message confirming that Brandon and Byshottles Parish Council had considered the report and “agreed that the festival had been a great success and had been of great benefit to the region’s economy”. Teesdale Action Partnership was the only AAP not to actively support the decision to re-commission. A number of the comments from Teesdale Board members were supportive of the event but some expressed the view that Lumiere had done little to directly benefit Teesdale.
10. 12 of the AAPs were supportive, or potentially supportive of being actively involved in a future event. “The participation of the young people from East Durham in the workshops, parade and opening night was fantastic and if it should happen in the future the AAP should be involved again” (quote from a discussion at a joint meeting of the Board and Forum).
11. 3 of the AAPs made specific requests for their area to have a satellite installation in their part of Durham although one of them recognised that this would potentially add to the cost.
12. All of the AAP discussions raised some concerns about the planning and running of the event and many included suggestions which they believed might offer improvements for the future.

Press coverage generating statements of support

13. Cabinet’s consideration of the evaluation report on the 2011 festival itself generated significant regional press coverage. In the main it focussed on the success of the event and the question of whether to re-commission. The press reported on calls to business leaders to “step in and offer financial backing for an event that boosted their own coffers and brought a welcome fillip to the region” In its ‘comment’ column the Northern Echo wrote “ ‘Does the North-East want the Lumiere light festival to return in 2013?’ So begins our story on Page 18 as Durham County Council begins three months of consultation. The answer must surely be a brilliantly illuminated ‘yes’ – although there are plenty of lessons that must be learned”.
14. A number of businesses and individuals wrote in to express their support following the press coverage:
 - The proprietor of a Weardale Bed and Breakfast business stated “I am writing to you to put the point of view of a Weardale business that did very well out of it- and who is therefore keen to see it happen again”. He pointed out that a local taxi business also gained as a result of the special offer he put on for the festival and that he sources “most of our ingredients and services locally, to the benefit of the local economy” A similar business based in Chester le Street wrote “As a longstanding and sustainable local business, 25 years in County Durham.....I would urge you to re-commission the Durham Lumiere Festival for future years. Delivering creative, original and innovative events is critical to the tourism industry in County Durham and the North East, which in turn supports the local economy by providing jobs and growth - £4.3 m is a fantastic return on investment and a hugely significant boost for the county’s economy especially in the quieter season”.

- The owner of a Durham City restaurant wanted “to voice my support for the event.....I said in a letter to the Durham Times that Lumiere2011 was the greatest cultural and economic boost to the City since the building of the cathedral . I’m sure some will disagree and call that hyperbole but it takes imagination to realise that we need projects such as this in County Durham; not least in these difficult economic times”.
- Residents who wrote in were equally supportive and enthusiastic:” We need to prove that the Northeast is not stuck in a time warp and the staging of Lumiere did just that. I am sure that other places like Newcastle and Sunderland and the like are just waiting to pounce should it look as though Lumiere is not welcome in Durham”.
- The founding Chairman of the Baltic wanted to “dwell upon the benefit the region gained in terms of global image and the cultural potential that can be accrued for the future.....I have never had any doubt that the Lumiere can become as big, in terms of reputation, as the Venice Bienalle which over the years has become a magnet for art lovers throughout the world. That is what Durham has the opportunity to become and there is little doubt that the spirited and progressive people of Durham have a voracious appetite for this to happen and to compete on an international stage with other well known venues”.
- The Director of Corporate Affairs for Northumbrian water watched coverage of Lumiere in Hong Kong. “An event of such prominence has an enormous positive effect on the economy of the city, with added benefits to the wider region, particularly on the smaller and medium enterprise businesses in the tourism and hospitality sector”.

Support from the Business Community

15. The Miller evaluation reported: “A very high proportion of businesses (86%) in Durham thought that Lumiere was good for the city and the region” In addition to the support from businesses linked to the various partnerships, above, and the letters sent in response to press coverage, many positive comments have been received from companies which participate in the ‘Strategic Account Management’ programme and other business networking events. A number of letters of support have been received from the business sector including from: the President and Chief Executive of the North East Chamber of Commerce, UK Trade and Investment, Northumbrian Water, NSK, Tallent Automotive Ltd, Caterpillar, Kromek, Ramside Estates Ltd, Ebac All of them are in support of the Council re-commissioning the event for 2013. A number of them were sponsors of the 2011 Lumiere and have given unsolicited indications of their willingness to fund again through Artichoke’s fund raising programme.

Matters identified as concerns which will require further planning and resolution

16. A festival of this sort cannot take place without some disruption to everyday life. The Miller evaluation report acknowledged “difficulties with crowd management, mainly as a result of large numbers of visitors attempting to navigate a compact and constricted City Centre”. There is no doubt that the 2011 festival was a victim of its own success and it is also likely that the negative press generated at the outset when the crowd management, arrangements were not working as planned, added to people’s concerns. Following the festival, a very detailed debriefing event

was held by the Safety Advisory Group which made a number of recommendations in relation to the planning and management of any future events of this nature. Nevertheless the legacy of people's concerns is real and will need to be dealt with.

17. It is important to acknowledge that concerns about: crowd management, transport, timing, access, signage, and stewarding featured in the discussions at nearly every AAP. It is also the case that some of the correspondence made some reference to similar concerns. In many instances the comments also included suggestions as to how matters might be improved and difficulties overcome. In practice the detailed work needed to resolve these matters cannot be undertaken until a commitment has been made to commission a 2013 event. There is a great deal of evidence that there is a determination on everyone's part to resolve matters successfully. Artichoke wrote to the County Council recently to express their willingness to undertake an event in 2013 should they be invited to do so. Helen Marriage, the Programme Director wrote: "Obviously there are a number of issues that will need to be resolved before final plans are in place. The first amongst those is the question of crowd and traffic management. We feel that, having had the experience of growing audiences over the 2009 and 2011 festivals, we can further improve the experience for the visiting public, working in close collaboration with yourselves and the other statutory organisations that make the city work".
18. An initial equality impact assessment has been undertaken. The assessment concludes that there are potential impacts on all of the groups with protected characteristics. Access issues have featured in much of the feedback and these matters will need to be addressed in the course of developing final plans should the decision be made to accept the recommendations in this report.

Funding

19. The County Council's investment in the programme is a springboard which Artichoke are able to use to raise a much greater sum to fund the total event. Unlike many similar organisations they do not charge a separate management fee for their work. In 2011 the total cost of the event was around £1m or £1.5m if in-kind costs are included. Artichoke raised the funds from a wide range of sources including the European Commission culture fund, the Arts Council and a variety of trusts, sponsors and donors including the business sector. Artichoke have said: "We recognise that, in these times of stringent financial pressure, the decision to re-commission the festival is a serious one and we, more than anyone, are acutely conscious of the remarkable gesture DCC makes in its sizeable financial contribution to the costs of the event. We hope that Members think that the outcome of each festival represents good value for money in terms of the inward investment opportunity and the press and PR attention that is generated for the city and wider county. We are persuaded that we can deliver an equally spectacular event in 2013 without an increase in the DCC contribution. As in previous years, we would work with you and other Council officers to maximise the funding opportunities for the festival locally, nationally and internationally"
20. The County Council has identified the necessary funding for the 2013 event from within its existing culture budget. In its medium term financial plan, however, it has planned future savings against this budget at a level which would mean that any contribution to an event after 2013 would have to be found from a different source.

Conclusion

21. Cabinet received the Miller evaluation report at its meeting on 18th April 2012. The report concluded that the 2011 Lumiere festival had been a substantial success, measured in a number of ways. This wider consideration of the evaluation of the festival has re-enforced the conclusion that, whilst there are lessons to be learnt from the 2011 event and potential improvements to be made, there is a compelling case for commissioning a further Lumiere festival for 2013.

Recommendations

22. Cabinet is recommended to agree :

- To re-commission Artichoke to plan and programme a Lumiere festival, in consultation with relevant stakeholders.
- To make a contractual contribution to Artichoke, at the same level as that made in 2011, in return for their work.
- To delegate the finalisation of the terms of the contract to the Corporate Director of Neighbourhood services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Economic Development, Heritage and Culture.

Background papers

Cabinet Report- Evaluation of the 2011 Lumiere festival 18th April 2012.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance - The proposed fee is £400,000 and is available from base budget.

Staffing – Staff will need to be identified to assist with this work from the existing complement.

Risk - There are significant risks with public events which will be controlled through risk management processes and the SAG.

Equality and Diversity /Public Sector Equality Duty - All of the protected groups are potentially effected and the proposed planning will address their needs and identify and implement mitigations where possible.

Accommodation - There are minor temporary accommodation needs associated with running the event.

Crime and Disorder - Events attract unlicensed traders and there may need to be extra work undertaken using normal procedures.

Human Rights - Not applicable.

Consultation - The views reflected in the report were gathered, in part, through consultation.

Procurement – The project would be classified as a Part B service in the Public Contract Regulations and it is proposed to raise a Variation to Contract Procedure Rules and award the contract to Artichoke due to the special character of the work, and the requirement of specialist, unique knowledge and skills as set out in Section 3.2 of the Contract Procedure Rules.

Disability Issues - Will be addressed through the Equality and Diversity Impact assessment and the implementation of mitigations to avoid negative impacts wherever possible.

Legal Implications - None outside of normal contractual arrangements.