

**Cabinet**

**18 November 2020**

**Lumiere 2019 - Evaluation**

**Ordinary Decision**



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## **Report of Corporate Management Team**

**Amy Harhoff, Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth**

**Councillor Joy Allen, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Transformation, Culture and Tourism**

### **Electoral division(s) affected:**

Countywide.

### **Purpose of the Report**

- 1 The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet of the results of the Lumiere 2019 evaluation.

### **Executive Summary**

- 2 Lumiere 2019 was the landmark 10<sup>th</sup> edition and saw the positive impact of sustained investment in cultural activity by Durham County Council, and stimulated significant cultural experiences by visitors and residents.
- 3 Lumiere 2019 generated substantial economic returns for Durham, with the total economic impact valued at over £11.5 million.
- 4 The overall Return on Investment from Lumiere for Durham County Council was 1,925%.
- 5 While extreme weather conditions affected attendance numbers, turnout was significant
- 6 The results of the evaluation demonstrate the value of the Authority's commitment to culture-led economic growth.
- 7 Images from the 2019 event can be seen here <https://www.thisisdurham.com/inspire-me/lumiere>

## **Recommendation(s)**

8 Cabinet is recommended to:

- (a) note the evaluation;
- (b) note the early plans for Lumiere 2021.

## **Background**

### *Lumiere 2019 Overview*

- 9 Following the extremely successful festivals in 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015 and 2017, Artichoke was again commissioned by Durham County Council to produce and deliver a sixth festival in 2019 as part of a series of events supported by Arts Council England through Durham's status as a National Portfolio Organisation (NPO).
- 10 Whilst commissioned by the Council, the festival was supported by over eighty partners and funders, including Arts Council England, Durham University and Durham Cathedral. A wide range of service departments is involved in delivering the festival. Artichoke is the event artistic director and our primary partner, responsible for content and programme curation as well as generating the non-Council income for the festival.
- 11 The previous festivals have a proven record in encouraging visitors to both Durham City and the wider County. Businesses had also witnessed first-hand the significant financial benefits and there was an overwhelming eagerness to become involved in the 2019 festival.
- 12 The popularity of Lumiere has grown dramatically since the first festival held in 2009. It is now considered to be a key event in the North East cultural landscape and is considered to be the the UK's largest and most successful light festival.
- 13 Lumiere 2019 followed the highly successful format of the previous events taking place over four nights, from Thursday 14 to Sunday 17 November. In addition to the four-day programme, work across libraries, schools and community groups was delivered in advance of the live event.
- 14 The 2019 festival consisted of 37 light installations and projections across the City, placed in and on a variety of venues. A number of works was created specifically for the festival in response to Durham's unique environment and heritage by national and international artists. Other existing pieces were reimagined and adapted to work with the City's natural and built landscape. As the 10th anniversary of the event, a number of the most popular installations from previous years was brought back.
- 15 There is a considerable professional element to Lumiere, and festival and event directors from around the world attend the event.

## 2019 Evaluation

- 16 As part of a programme of evaluation across the Council's whole Festivals and Events portfolio, Culture, Sport & Tourism has been working with Marketwise Strategies to roll-out an effective evaluation model across all events. This not only provides an evaluation independent from delivery partners, but also enables the Council to make reliable comparisons between its investment into key festivals and events across the programme.
- 17 The 2019 evaluation report concludes that Lumiere 2019 was a considerable success. While attendance numbers were down because of extremely poor weather, 2019 saw significantly increased economic impact due to the substantial value of media coverage received. This in turn saw a considerable return on investment for the Council.
- 18 A mixed methodological approach was utilised incorporating both face-to-face and online interviews. The following provides some key outcomes and the following sections summarise the main points of the event evaluation:
- 19 Festival Audience: The festival's audience saw a fall due to extremely bad weather on three of the four evenings of the event. Despite persistent torrential rain, the attendance figure for 2019 was 165,000. In 2017 it was estimated to be 240,000; with 2015 as 200,000; 175,000 in 2013 to 150,000 in 2011 and 75,000 in 2009.

### The Audience

Total Audience of Lumiere, across four nights	165,000
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### Where Visitors Were From

% of Visitors from County Durham	58%
% of Visitors from the rest of the North East	27%
% of Visitors from the rest of the UK	15%
% of Visitors from overseas	<1%

Audience size from community projects	2,116
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### Intentionality and Visitor Experience

% in Durham specifically for Lumiere	92%
Overall experience, rated 'Good' or 'Very Good'	87%

### Economic Impact and Return on Investment

NET visitor spend	£2,875,807
Value of contracts placed in County Durham	£196,303
PR value (AVE)	£8,475,165

Total NET economic impact:	£11,547,275
Durham County Council investment	£600,000
Durham County Council Return on Investment	1,925%

- 20 Compared to 2017, the higher PR Value for 2019 (as reported by Flint PR) resulted from: a larger volume of coverage before the Festival took place, as promotional activities for Lumiere Durham 2019 began earlier (in November 2018) than they did for the previous Festival. Due to this longer timeframe, more placements were possible in publications with higher value advertising. There was also a longer timeframe in which media sources were monitored (the 2017 figures were based upon coverage between September 2017 and November 2017 (three months), and the 2019 figures were based upon coverage from November 2018 to November 2019 (12 months).
- 21 Lumiere appeals across ages, genders, and social classes. Just over two-thirds of festival visitors (71%) were female; approximately half (49%) were aged 45 or older; visitors tended to come with others (95%), with the average group size being 3.85 people. Most were concentrated in the higher level skill bands (professional and administrative) with a relatively high proportion of retired people and students
- 22 Almost three quarters of respondents (71%) had attended at least one previous Lumiere, indicating the levels of continuing interest and the enthusiasm that the festival inspires. Of those, 84% had attended in 2017.
- 23 Almost all visitors (99%) lived in the UK. Over half (58%) of the total sample lived in County Durham, 27% in the rest of the North East, and 15% in the rest of the UK. The countries of residence of the 20 survey respondents who did not live in the UK were: Italy, Germany, USA, Switzerland, Croatia, France, Spain, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Thailand and Poland.
- 24 Around 92% of respondents were White British, 3% were 'other white background', 1% were Irish and 1% were Chinese. There were also small numbers of respondents (less than 1% each) from other backgrounds. Around 9% of visitors identified as a D/deaf or disabled person or had a long-term health condition.
- 25 Customer Satisfaction: Festival visitors rated the overall quality of Lumiere 2019 highly, with 87% rating it very highly. The majority (90%) rated the quality of the light installations themselves as 'very good' or 'good'.

- 26 Of all festival-goers, 96% said Lumiere was 'good for Durham's image' and 93% felt it 'makes a positive contribution to Durham's cultural offer'.
- 27 Some visitors felt that the quality and availability of information, maps and signage could be improved.
- 28 These issues will be discussed in future Steering Group meetings with Artichoke in the planning of future festivals.
- 29 Community Outreach Programme: A number of longer-term community, educational and outreach projects were undertaken across County Durham by the festival's producers, Artichoke, and was the biggest community programme so far. Linking with the DCC Community Arts Team, and local Area Action Partnerships, the community and participation programme reached a total of 2,116 participants of all ages, and from different communities, who were directly involved in the following projects:
- Are Atoms Alive?
  - Bottle Festoon
  - Keys of Light
  - Lift Off - Apollo 50 Legacy
  - The Next Page
  - Start Programme
- 30 Of particular note was the Peterlee Apollo project. Artichoke was commissioned by DCC to produce a light installation to celebrate 50 years of the Apollo Pavilion in Peterlee. It worked with Berlin-based collective of artists and architects, Mader Wiermann, to create an installation that reflected the Brutalist architecture of the Pavilion. The installation took place over two nights from Friday 22 March - Saturday 23 March, 2019 6pm - 9.30pm.
- 31 The event was seen as one of the most important visual arts events in the region, and the local community were overwhelmingly supportive, with comments such as '*Absolutely stunning and jaw dropping. Love it. Has brought it to light in a different way A real coup for East Durham. Marvellous to see the Apollo Pavilion centre stage.*'
- 32 A short video is available here <https://vimeo.com/330059187>.
- 33 From those taking part, almost all participants (94%) agreed that taking part in a Lumiere project had been 'an enjoyable experience'. The community and outreach work was seen as important by the artists involved, and also rated highly by teachers for the activities undertaken in terms of their organisation and the connection to learning outcomes.

- 34 As part of the 2019 programme, Artichoke also repeated 'Brilliant', an open call-out for artists from the North East. This provides local artists with a vital national and international platform to exhibit their work and opportunities to further develop their skills. Many local artists commissioned through the Brilliant scheme have gone on to exhibit their work at other festivals in the UK and abroad.
- 35 As in previous years, an international conference ran alongside the festival. Entitled 'Learning Curve: Syllabus for the Future' the conference attracted speakers from around the world and delegates from across the country. A conference of this standing continues to strengthen Durham's reputation with the arts sector, both nationally and internationally.
- 36 Festival Makers: In 2019 the festival once again included a team of 353 volunteer Festival Makers who provided invaluable support in the running of the festival as the friendly face of the event for visitors.
- 37 The commitment to recruiting and supporting Festival Makers by the Culture, Sport & Tourism Service is an important part of its work in the community, and the approach developed for Lumiere has provided a springboard for volunteering for other events across the County by creating a legacy team of volunteers.
- 38 Festival Makers were well-regarded by festival-goers, with a number of respondents praising the quality and friendliness of the team and reporting that they enhanced their Lumiere experience.
- 39 Economic Impact: Lumiere 2019 generated significant economic returns for Durham; the total economic impact was over £11.5 million.
- 40 The estimated NET direct spend reported by Lumiere visitors was £2.88 million. The average visitor spend was £23.27 per individual. Broken down by location, the relative net impacts per visitor according to where people came from varied: County Durham visitors' net spend was £9.70; visitors from the rest of North East spend was £15.03; and £81.34 for visitors from the rest of the UK.
- 41 Total Advertising Value Equivalency (AVE) generated by Lumiere 2019 amounted to £8,475,165, which is almost £4 million greater than in 2017. This higher PR Value for 2019 resulted from: a larger volume of coverage before the Festival took place, as promotional activities for Lumiere Durham 2019 began earlier (in November 2018) than they did for the previous festival; more placements in publications with higher value advertising - which was possible due to the longer timeframe; a longer timeframe in which media sources were monitored.

- 42 The overall Return on Investment from Lumiere for Durham County Council was 1,925%.
- 43 The overall response of local businesses to Lumiere 2019 was good. Over half of the businesses (59%) generally felt either 'very positive' or 'positive' about Lumiere taking place in Durham.
- 44 There was a sense of acceptance about the practical issues of the festival which can cause disruption, and a general appreciation that Lumiere is good for the city and for the region. The majority of businesses questioned (78%) thought that it had a positive impact on Durham City in terms of the city's reputation and public profile.
- 45 Visitors were asked if they were aware of, or had seen, information about County Durham's Year of Culture 2019, and/or the #Durham19 branding, and positively, around 23% of respondents had done so. Among the Visitors who were aware of this, almost a third (32%) said that this had led them to attend at least one event that they would not otherwise have attended.
- 46 The current round of NPO funding runs for four years, meaning Lumiere will receive ACE support for the 2021 event.
- 47 In line with this funding, in July 2018, DCC's Cabinet agreed support for Lumiere for the 2021 edition.

### **Lumiere 2021 and Beyond**

- 48 The evaluation sets out the impact of the event, its popularity with audiences and its role in increasing Durham's national profile. Its ambition sets it apart from other events in the region, and is recognised as the only world-class festival in the region as well as the premier light festival in the UK. Recent conversations with Arts Council England confirmed that the world class nature of Lumiere reflects its aspirations for the NPO funding that supports it.
- 49 However there is further work to be done to increase the diversity of artists involved, as well as embedding it more firmly within local communities across the county.
- 50 In addition we must ensure that as commissioners we support Artichoke to produce highly innovative artwork in order to raise the international standing of the event.
- 51 Large scale festivals have and will continue to be significantly impacted by COVID-19. The Berlin Festival of Lights took place with reduced capacity in September 2020. Signal Festival in Prague due to take

place 9-11 October was cancelled less than 48 hours before it was due to begin.

- 52 All known autumn outdoor festivals in the UK have been postponed or cancelled. Festivals due to take place in Spring 2021 are considering their plans, although research by Outdoor Arts UK shows that audiences will return to outdoor events sooner than to enclosed performances in buildings.
- 53 The scale of Lumiere requires significant advance planning. The large scale technically complex artistic commissions and substantial fundraising programmes have long lead-in times.
- 54 Conversations with significant artists are at a relatively advanced stage, but adaptability will be built into any commissions at this stage.
- 55 DCC and partners Artichoke will consider a number of different scenarios in the coming months. While it's impossible to predict the status of the festival/live events sector in 12 months time, Lumiere is an innovative festival with a substantial track record, and so has more capacity to reimagine delivery than many other events.
- 56 In this context the planning for Lumiere 2021 will continue to focus on an approach that carefully balances covid safety and cultural experience, recognising that the operating environment may change rapidly.

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Legal Implications**

Not applicable.

### **Finance**

Funding for Lumiere 2021 is within the current allocation of NPO funding.

### **Consultation**

Not applicable.

### **Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty**

Creative case targets regarding diversity are being monitored and action taken accordingly. Brass and Durham Book Festival are making progress in this area.

### **Climate Change**

Events and festivals will adhere to Council wide protocols regarding sustainability. Festivals will align with policies regarding supplier commitments to sustainability.

### **Human Rights**

Not applicable.

### **Crime and Disorder**

Not applicable.

### **Staffing**

Not applicable.

### **Accommodation**

Not applicable.

### **Risk**

Not applicable.

### **Procurement**

Not applicable.