

**Cabinet**

**16<sup>th</sup> July 2014**



**Durham County Council's Festivals and  
Events Programme Development**

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**Report of Corporate Management Team**

**Terry Collins, Corporate Director Neighbourhood Services**

**Councillor Neil Foster, Portfolio Holder for Economic Regeneration**

**Councillor Maria Plews, Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Libraries and  
Lifelong Learning**

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**Purpose**

1. The purpose of this report is to review the current position regarding the Council's involvement with festivals and events and to provide a framework to ensure the best use of existing resources to create a vibrant and diverse programme of events and festivals.

**Background**

2. Events and festivals have an important role in raising the county's profile and have a direct positive economic impact on the county. These events and festivals can also play a role in boosting local pride, providing opportunities for both individuals and communities as well as raising aspirations.
3. Until recently the Council's event programming, content and delivery was spread across a number of service areas. As a result, events and festivals emerged from a number of individual initiatives including the City of Culture bid. Whilst in many instances these festivals and events addressed the economic needs of the county, in ongoing austere times it is recognised that a programme that offers best value for the Council's investment is required.
4. This report focuses upon the development of a coherent structure for activity within the available resources and proposes a framework of three programmes of work. This should lead to a clearer plan and process for the future development of festivals and events.

**Current Programme/Offer**

5. The Council currently supports a range of events across the county through a mixture of direct delivery, commissioning and partnering arrangements. These events constitute the Council's event programme. Although individual events have been added to the programme since local government reorganisation, mainly on a sound economic benefit basis, to date no consideration has been given to the overall programme and its coherence as a collective offer.

6. In 2013/14 the Council's 'Year of Culture' was made up of a range of festivals and events that the Council had a financial interest in either supporting or leading. A list of these festivals and events is attached at Appendix 2.
7. The existing programme contains a range of cultural, sporting and community based events that are currently distributed unevenly across the calendar and are made up of both annual and one-off events. Details on the nature of these individual events are attached at Appendix 3.
8. Whilst this report focuses on events that receive, or may receive, direct or indirect support from the Council, it should be recognised that there is a separate programme beyond this including events such as the Great North Festival of Transport; Durham Dales Walking Festival; Christmas at Beamish and Durham City Christmas Festival amongst others.

### **Current Resources**

9. The Council has historically deployed a number of resources in delivering a programme of festivals and events. These are essentially: -
  - a. Direct revenue support to specific festivals and events
  - b. Direct support services to the delivery of events
  - c. Indirect support
10. Direct Revenue Support: The Council spent £960,000 on delivering a programme of festivals and events in 2013, which brought in a contribution from external funders in excess of £1.5m.
11. Direct Support Services: The main support resource is the Corporate Events Team (CET), which currently has five officers dedicated to the delivery of events and festivals. The team was established in 2010 to ensure that events are delivered consistently, safely and professionally. In addition to the CET, a number of employees from within the Arts team contribute to the delivery of festivals and events.
12. The following is a breakdown of current staffing resources allocated to festivals and events:

<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Number of Staff</b>	<b>Budget</b>
Corporate Events Team	5 FT staff + casual budgets	£217,000
Arts Team	3.5 FT staff (1 FT fixed term to Jan 2016)	£131,000
Total		£348,000

13. It should be noted that although employees within the CET are wholly dedicated to the delivery of festivals and events, the Arts team undertake other functions with the exception of one temporary post.
14. The total financial resource available from the Council for events and festivals has now been transferred into a single budget. As budgets reduce, it has been beneficial to create a single budget from which a programme can be developed.
15. Indirect Support: Whilst monetary values can be easily attached to the direct support given to events, it should be recognised that the authority also deploys a

range of resources for which specific costs are more difficult to identify. This includes officer time given to marketing and promoting events particularly within Visit County Durham, specifically the Councils Corporate News Team and Culture and Sport. Many events also demand input from Direct Services, Health & Safety Teams and Highways.

## **Material Considerations**

### **Future Funding:**

16. Culture & Sport's 2013/14 Medium Term Financial Plan identified savings of £300,000 directly from events commissioning. This will severely restrict the support given to events and festivals unless a different approach to funding is adopted. The next round of Arts Council NPO funding is due for renewal in 2015/16. An application to the Arts Council of England has been made. In addition, some current posts are temporary and due to end on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.
17. General opportunities to steer the Council's resources into festivals and events is diminishing. For example the Performance Reward Grants will no longer be available for events in 2015 onwards. There is also a risk of future reductions in resources to the Council's Event Team. Future opportunities to attract resources need to be considered in how we shape any future offer.
18. The newly created Culture and Sport revenue budget for events incorporates all festival and events related costs. This identifies a total resource of £698,000 for 2014/15, which is split between direct delivery and support, £350,000 and £348,000 respectively.

### **Programme and Content:**

19. Event Criteria: Essentially, this report focuses on events and festivals that are *predominantly* outward-facing and aimed at either raising the profile of the County or having a demonstrable economic impact. In order to assess if an event meets this aim it is proposed that activities within the programme should broadly aspire to contribute to as many as possible of the following:-
  - a. Appeals to Durham's target visitor audience.
  - b. Enhances Durham's profile as a cultural destination both regionally, nationally and internationally.
  - c. Overtly encourages overnight stays by providing activity over multiple days and evenings.
  - d. Demonstrably aims to increase dwell-time of day visitors.
  - e. Generates a significant Return on Investment and maximises the economic impact for the festival location and wider County.
  - f. Generates visits outside of the main season either by placing the event at the beginning or end of the peak season or entirely off season as well as generating repeat visits.
  - g. Be able to leverage investment from outside agencies, sponsors and via income

- h. Be rooted in Durham and/or have the potential to present Durham in an appealing way for visitors, bringing alive the built and natural landscapes and heritage in a manner that will attract new audiences.
- i. Demonstrates a high standard of artistic/cultural integrity.

20. Programme Shape: It is evident that the nature and scope of individual events differs significantly. Whilst there are a range of annual events, there are also those that are one-offs or of such a scale that they would be beyond any existing or future revenue capacity. It is therefore proposed that any future programme (and funding) be developed on the following basis:

- a. Annual Programme: This is a group of events that would be funded on an on-going basis and are anticipated to occur annually. Whilst such a list may change over time, it would represent a 'core offer' that residents and visitors would be familiar with. An initial annual programme is proposed at Appendix 4 and at this stage incorporates the following existing festivals and events which would receive direct revenue and events team support.

i. Bishop Auckland Food Festival	£40,000
ii. Durham Streets Festival	£40,000
iii. Durham Regatta	£1,000
iv. County Durham Cycling Festival	£40,000
v. BRASS	£100,000
vi. Miners Gala	£4,000
vii. Durham Book Festival	£75,000
viii. Take Off Theatre Festival	£10,000

It is proposed that the annual programme is allocated a budget of £310,000 from existing Culture & Sport resources.

- b. Investment & Development Programme: These events would, essentially, be one-off or short series. Historically, these have proved difficult to fund as they can be relatively high numbers but have no funding attached. As part of any future arrangement it is proposed that an element of event funding be identified to manage medium scale one-off events as and when they occur. Previous examples of such events would include A4's at the Locomotion Museum at Shildon, the Ashes Test Matches at Durham County Council's Cricket Ground and other opportunistic events.

It is further proposed that this resource is also utilised across a wider scope of activity to include support to major exhibitions in the county as well as developing the infrastructure and resilience of events delivery across the county.

The use of this resource will be key to respond to wider partners as well as providing opportunities to research and pilot future activities.

It is proposed that this programme has a budget of £40,000 per annum and is managed within an events cash limit by the internal Culture Board, which is chaired by Terry Collins, Corporate Director of Neighbourhood Services.

- c. Signature Festivals and Events: The County will, from time to time, be afforded the opportunity to participate or stage events of a scale that are unachievable from on-going revenue resources. It may be necessary on such occasions to seek corporate funding from outside the cash limits should the Council be minded to support/provide the event. Examples of such events include Lumiere, Lindisfarne Gospels and the Olympic Torch Relay.

It is likely that signature events will be large scale with high costs and will therefore need to demonstrate the significant beneficial impact they would have for County Durham. It is important to recognise that events of this nature would require corporate support.

A range of festivals and events which could take place in the county over the next four to five years and for which requests for resources may be required are detailed in appendix 4.

21. All festivals and events will need to demonstrate they fit the relevant event criteria.

### **Other Considerations**

22. Management and Governance: Following the merger of Sport and Leisure and Culture, Heritage and Libraries into a combined Culture and Sport service, the strategic development and delivery of events is now carried out by a single service.

23. A Festivals and Events Project Team has been developed to provide an overview of all activities. The structure of this team is set-out in appendix 5 and shows how the technical and delivery; content and programme and strategic development of the programme is managed. The Festivals and Events Project Team reports directly into the Culture Board which has representation at Director and Head of Service level from both Neighbourhood Services and Regeneration and Economic Development together with Visit County Durham.

24. Marketing and Promotion: Any events and festivals programme needs to be promoted to external audiences in a consistent, coherent and compelling way. This requires a single agreed approach and clear brand recognition.

25. It is proposed that the marketing and communications representatives from VCD and the Council's corporate communications team form part of the Festivals and Events Project Team structure and work collectively to develop plans with Culture and Sport to support the programme. Within the Council there are a range of specialist skills in areas such as destination marketing, and it is vital that they are utilised to best effect and play a major role in determining the approach both to individual events and as a collective programme. Consideration will also need to be given to the resource implications in supporting this work.

26. Evaluation: In order to understand the value of each event or festival there needs to be a robust and consistent evaluation framework. There are no common performance measures (social and economic) and currently each event commissions its own evaluation making it harder to compare the value of supporting individual events.
27. It is proposed that evaluation of events is centralised and an evaluation model developed via a single provider. This would allow for a range of indicators, social, economic, health etc that could be consistently applied to all events against pre-agreed outcome profiles. In order to achieve this, individual events would be top-sliced proportionately and the evaluation resource moved to a central pool in order to facilitate a single contractor appointment.
28. The development of such an evaluation tool would certainly be challenging given its breadth and the need to meet both the Council's and potentially external organisations requirements.
29. Annual Review: In order to ensure the Council maintains an overview of its Festival and Events Programme across it is proposed that an annual review is carried out. Given the nature of this programme and the need to plan in advance, consideration would need to be given up to five years in advance.
30. It is envisaged that an initial review will take place in time to agree a refreshed programme for 2015/16.

### **Financial Implications**

31. There are no direct financial implications from this report. The proposed budgets are to be achieved through the re-profiling of existing Culture and Sport resources.
32. The proposed approach to funding Signature festivals and events from outside the Culture and Sport budget will result in future requests to service grouping cash limits and corporate resources. These will be made on an individual case basis and will be subject to separate reports.

### **Equality and Diversity**

33. As the programme is developed, each event will have equality as a core objective embedded within the planning and implementation. The programme will be made up of many events, some of which will be attractive to specialist audiences i.e. cycling and some attracting a wider audience such as lumiere will be monitored to ensure that this objective is being achieved overall.

### **Conclusion**

34. The above provides an overview of the current programme of Council events and festivals. It is important to move forward in a strategic way to ensure that resources are allocated to events and festivals that deliver the most impact.
35. Development of the proposed three programming strands against the event criteria will provide a clear framework through which a more cohesive programme can be developed. The provision of the proposed governance arrangements, together with greater co-ordination of market and evaluation work, will also

strengthen capacity to develop and deliver a diverse and vibrant festivals and events programme.

## **Recommendations**

36. It is recommended that:

- i. The proposed budget alignment for the future delivery of Festivals and Events is approved.
- ii. DCC Festivals and Events programme is managed by the Culture Board under a framework of:-
  - a. Annual Programme
  - b. Investment and Development
  - c. Signature Events
- iii. The Festivals and Events Project Team continue to review and develop the programmes for consideration by the Culture Board.
- iv. Individual reports are prepared to bid against funding from outside cash limits for the Signature Programme of festivals and events as appropriate.
- v. An annual review of Festivals and Events is undertaken by the Culture Board to agree the continuation of the Annual Programme, approve the Investment and Development Programme and provide full evaluation feedback on the years activities.
- vi. A single evaluation process and provider for the Festivals and Events programme is established.
- vii. A marketing and promotion plan is established encompassing all Festivals and Events programmes.

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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**Finance** - There are no financial implications. Corporate funding may be required to support one off strategic events that meets the Council's priorities and thereby demonstrate value for money.

**Staffing** - There is a potential realignment of staff for which protocols from the Council's change management toolkit would be followed.

**Risk** - Failure to consider these proposals will result in no agreed approach to planning events and festivals, failure to have a clear plan, will reduce funding and opportunity.

**Equality and Diversity/Public Sector Equality Duty** - None

**Accommodation** - None

**Crime and Disorder** - None

**Human Rights** - None

**Consultation** - None

**Procurement** - None

**Disability Issues** - None

**Legal Implications** - None



## Durham County Council Year of Culture Events

## Appendix 2

i.	Bishop Auckland Food Festival April		Annual
ii.	The Cycle Tour Series	Annual	May
iii.	Durham Regatta	Annual	June
iv.	Festival of the North East (FNE)	One-off	June
v.	Take Off Fest	One-off	July
vi.	The Gospels	One-off	July/August
vii.	BRASS	Annual	July
viii.	Miners Gala	Annual	July
ix.	Streets of	Annual	August
x.	The Ashes	One-off	August
xi.	Book Festival	Annual	October
xii.	Etape	Annual	October
xiii.	Lumiere	Bi-Annual	November

**Durham County Council Supported Events**

**BRASS** Is a Council lead annual festival designed specifically for the County. Building on Durham's strength in brass-playing, it features international artists, challenging collaborations and contemporary brass playing. An extensive outreach and educational programme that engaged 20,000 school Children across the County.

**Durham Miners Gala** or 'The Big Meeting' as it is known affectionately by locals, is organised by the Durham Miners Association (DMA) with support from the Corporate Events Team. The Gala is the Counties largest event (audience 100,000+) and also one of its longest running events having been held for over 120 years.

**Durham Book Festival** is an annual celebration of the written and spoken word and runs over eleven days in October mainly within the City and is increasingly attracting national attention. The festival is now on an upward trajectory after a three year (12/13 -14/15) funding agreement from the Council and University was put in place. Further growth is planned in 2014.

**Lumiere** is Durham's bi-annual light festival – over four nights in November, Durham City is transformed by a series of light installations, projections and performances .created by regional, national and international artists. Delivered in partnership with Artichoke: 2009, 2011, 2013.

**Bishop Auckland Food Festival** is the counties premier food festival. The event originated from the Town Forum and has passed to DCC once it outgrew the capabilities of the team. C&S now lead on what is a 2 day event and have plans to grow the event into a major food festival over the next 3 years.

**Durham Regatta** is one of the longest running sporting events in the county, dating back to 1834. The Council currently supports the event by providing some welfare facilities and assistance at a cost of £1,000. The event has the potential to grow into a larger festival that would require substantial increases in funding.

**Streets Of Festival** for one weekend each year, the streets of Durham City are home to a line-up of Street Entertainers, Jugglers, Unicyclists, Acrobats, Clowns, Circus Artists and professional merrymakers. The festival also takes place within indoor venues.

**The Tour Series Cycle Race** is a televised closed circuit cycle race which takes place on the cobbled streets of Durham City. As part of a ten city tour of the UK, the event brings up to ten teams of elite professional cyclists to the region. The event is screened on ITV 4 the following evening and showcases the city as well as the race. Durham has a contract with Sweetspot for 3 races from 2012 -2014.

**Etape Pennines** is a 65 mile closed road cycle event, open to all. It was the first closed road mass participation cycle event in England. Following the success of Etape Caledonia (Perthshire, Scotland) the organiser IMG Challenger World approached DCC to host the Etape North Pennines.

**TAKE OFF Festival** of theatre for children and young people. Takes place in November and includes performances in venues right across the region with its main focus and heart in Durham and the Gala theatre. It attracts theatre companies from across the world to perform for children and families, offering amazing theatrical experiences in a wide range of venues.

Festival & Events Governance

