

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 13 SEPTEMBER 2011
title: CLITHEROE FOOD FESTIVAL
submitted by: JOHN C HEAP, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
principal author: CHRIS HUGHES, HEAD OF CULTURAL & LEISURE SERVICES

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To inform members of the outcome of the Food Festival, held on Saturday 13 August 2011.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions / priorities:

- Principle Aims – to be a well-managed Council, providing efficient and responsive services, based on identified needs and, more specifically:
 - to encourage economic activity;
 - to support the regeneration of Clitheroe as a sustainable service centre

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 In March, Committee endorsed the Council's role in facilitating the provision of the Food Festival for 2011.

2.2 The role of the Council in this was identified as:

- providing the market as the main festival site;
- providing event management / health&safety support;
- financial management;
- responsibility for contracting and managing dedicated event management support

3 CURRENT SITUATION

3.1 Overall, the conclusion was that the event was a resounding success, with over 15,000 people attending the various venues around the town.

3.2 More specifically, the key factors that made it successful were:

- the use of the market as a dedicated, off-street venue;
- use of satellite venues, such as The Grand, for chef demonstrations, and St Mary's, for the Pudding Festival;
- the Park & Ride scheme;
- the closure of Castle Street

4 ISSUES

4.1 As with any event, not everything went smoothly, although the negative aspects were relatively minor:

- some confusion over wristband sales
- increased traffic around town

- 4.2 The main issues revolve around the future of the event. At the de-brief meeting with company directors and officers, it was concluded that, given its success, it should become an annual event.
- 4.3 Given that, there are a range of issues to consider:
- **Date** – the same weekend next year would coincide with the closing ceremony of the Olympics. Given that 2012 would also see Preston Guild and Torchlight around the same time, consideration is being given to moving the event earlier in the year.
 - **Venue** – it was concluded that, although compact, the market was the most appropriate venue for the foreseeable future.
 - **Capacity** – although the intention is to grow the festival, it was concluded that, given the available resources, this would have to be modest in the short term, building on quality rather than quantity.
 - **Support** – when last reported to committee, it was envisaged that the Council would support the festival for this year, with the intention of the company taking over from next year. Given the level of resources needed for the event, it is likely that the level of Council support will remain high over the next two to three years, until the company can establish its own infrastructure.
 - **Finances** – although not yet finalised, it is envisaged that, once income from sponsors, stall holders and grants has been received, the festival will have more or less broken even. It is important to note, however, that this was helped significantly by the level of grant funding, and this is unlikely to be available at the same level next year. It will, therefore, be important for the organisers to begin developing the commercial side of the event to plug any future funding gaps.

5 RISK ASSESSMENT

Approval of this report may have the following implications:

- **Resources** – it will be important to establish the level of commitment required from the Council in future years, bearing in mind our own limited capacity, although, once again, this should be limited to in-kind support.
- Technical / Environmental / Legal - none
- **Political** – there is no doubt that the event was, and will be, a key tourist attraction for the Borough, but it should remain an independently organised event, supported by the Council.
- **Reputation** – the success of the event undoubtedly raised the reputation of the Borough as a fine food destination, so it is important that all parties work together to build on this strong foundation.

6 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE notes the contents of the report.

JOHN C HEAP
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

For further information, please contact Chris Hughes 01200 414479