

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 2 SEPTEMBER 2014
title: EVENTS IN CLITHEROE CASTLE GROUNDS
submitted by: JOHN HEAP, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
principal author: MARK BEVERIDGE, HEAD OF CULTURAL AND LEISURE SERVICES

1 PURPOSE

1.1 This report outlines a request to hold a large music event in the Castle Grounds next year for up to three days. It also seeks member approval for officers to seek a number of large-scale events in the Castle Grounds over the summer period each year, to complement existing events in the Borough.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities

- Community Objectives – To sustain a strong and prosperous Ribble Valley
- Corporate Priorities - To encourage economic development throughout the borough, with specific focus on tourism
- Other Considerations – To develop, with relevant partners, measures to support the visitor economy

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Castle Grounds have been used for a range of events in the past, including fun fairs, bonfire, and music events, both on Castlefield and in the bandstand. The latest request is to stage a music festival for up to three consecutive days in the summer of 2015.

2.2 The event would be based around artists from the 1980s and 1990s, and could attract up to 7,000 people per day.

2.3 The Council would need to work with the promoter to ensure access issues were addressed, as well as the disbursement of such a large number of people. The lessons learnt from the Food Festival and bonfire would be useful background.

3 ISSUES

3.1 The promoter will need to provide a comprehensive operational plan for the event, taking into account the health and safety of those attending, as they have considerable experience of these types of festivals that is not seen as an issue. The event itself would be ticket only; the promoter is planning to sell all available tickets in advance of the event.

3.2 An event of up to three days would clearly have a significant economic impact for the town and the wider area, bringing in many people who may have not visited previously, which provides an opportunity to sell the many attractions of the Borough to them.

- 3.3 It is not anticipated that there would be a need for road closures to stage the event, though obviously there would be some traffic management arrangements to get the infrastructure on to the field area, these would form part of the event plan.
- 3.4 The proposal would, if approved, see the promoter begin the marketing campaign and release of artist names before Christmas to establish the date and the event in the festival calendar for next year. It would also help them to start ticket sales early.
- 3.5 The promoter envisages this becoming an annual event if the first year is a success, which bodes well for the area, given the success of other large scale events, such as the Food Festival and Beat-Herders, for example.
- 3.6 Clearly, the location of the Castle Grounds, surrounded as they are by residential properties, would mean that there would be an impact on local residents. The promoter is aware of this and would, as part of their plan, take steps to mitigate this. However, it would be naïve to think that there would be no impact, as the sound will carry across the town depending upon the wind direction. The nature of the artists is such that the type of sound is not heavy rock music or bass heavy dance music, which, combined with a finish time of around 10 pm, would mean the audio impact would be reduced but not removed.
- 3.7 The value of the event to the town and the area will depend on the stature of the artists and the drawing power they have. The promoter is planning to have original and well known bands, who will attract an audience primarily, though not exclusively, from the 30 plus age group. Working with local accommodation providers, it is anticipated that people could be encouraged to buy weekend passes and, therefore, stay in the area. The on-site provision of food would be sourced locally, further benefiting the local economy.
- 3.8 The Castle provides an iconic backdrop for events, and officers are also in early discussions with companies who are interested in staging other activities around the Castle Grounds and the town. Therefore, it would be helpful for officers if there was agreement whereby a limited number of events could be encouraged in the Borough, across the year to complement those such as the Food Festival and other established events that are already held. A mixture of events appealing to a range of audiences would be the ambition to achieve, thereby helping both tourism providers and the wider visitor economy. As well as providing events for local people to see and be involved with, it is not necessary that all such events would need to levy a ticket charge to see them, though it will be important that any event has limited if any risk for the Council in terms of reputation and financial implications.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

The approval of this report may have the following implications

- Resources – The events discussed would not be underwritten by the Council, nor promoted as such, they would be on Council land, in most cases, and the Council would help to facilitate them.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – Events by their nature have some impact, any ideas for event will need to have consideration of the impact it will have on local residents

- Reputation – Tourism is an integral part of the Borough's offer, and events that are well run and of high quality will help to promote the Borough and the businesses based within it.

5 **RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE**

- 5.1 Approves the staging of the music festival next year, subject to the normal licence approvals and confirmation by the Ribble Valley Safety Advisory Group of the promoters' arrangements.
- 5.2 Delegates authority to the Director of Community Services to work with other event operators to provide a range of annual events in the Borough to achieve a positive economic impact, and help to promote the area from a tourism perspective, as well as providing local residents the opportunity to see these events within their Borough, without having to travel significant distances.

MARK BEVERIDGE
HEAD OF CULTURAL AND LEISURE SERVICES

JOHN HEAP
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

For further information, please ask for Mark Beveridge 01200 414479

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