

Committee:	Executive	Agenda Item No.:	14
Date:	26 th January 2009	Status	Open
Category	1. Key decision included in Forward Plan		
Subject:	Discretionary Services Review Report for Arts & Cultural Events, Community Development & Welfare Services and Grant to Junction Arts.		
Report by:	Leisure Operations Manager		
Other Officers Involved	Director of Strategy		
Director	Strategy		
Relevant Portfolio Holder	Social Inclusion		

RELEVANT CORPORATE AIMS

Strategic Organisational Development

Continue to monitor, review and improve the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of all Council Services.

TARGETS

Cashable efficiencies would contribute to NI 179

VALUE FOR MONEY

The report results from members review of certain discretionary services and proposes savings & efficiencies

THE REPORT

As part of the Authorities Best Value Discretionary Services Review undertaken recently, there were a number of services/items reviewed that form part of the Leisure Services portfolio of activity.

These were:

- Arts and Cultural Events
- Community Development and Welfare Services
- Grants to Voluntary Organisations

The following is a breakdown of the information regarding the above areas that the review panel had in order for them to undertake their review.

ARTS & CULTURAL EVENTS

Background

The Council's annual events budget is £38,500 (excluding events officer post & Hire & Loan costs) and historically the majority of the budget has been spent on one or two large scale events with only a limited amount allocated to the many local community events that take place each year.

Events Officer post

This post is 18.5 hours (part time permanent) currently unoccupied, however, some of the money has been used to pay other staff and contractors to deliver the events programme since the last occupier of the post left in 2007. The main duties of this post holder was to organise the Fireworks event, assist the Parishes with their events & manage the hire & loan scheme.

The cost of this post is approx. £15,000 including on costs.

Bolsover Fireworks

The Council's annual fireworks extravaganza is held in the grounds of Bolsover Castle and Bolsover town centre on the last Saturday in October. Now in its 20th year the concert attracts a capacity 6,000 crowd with hundreds more watching from the streets outside the castle.

A two hour themed stage show precedes the fireworks which are professionally choreographed to light effects and music. A funfair in the town centre, street entertainers and a range of concessions inside the castle help to ensure a carnival atmosphere is created.

N.B. English Heritage have expressed that they do not wish to continue with the event at the castle after 2008 on that date (last Saturday in October).

The event costs approximately £50,000 to organise and £31,500 is recovered in income from ticket sales, sponsorship and concessions.

Derbyshire Food and Drink Fair

The Derbyshire Food and Drink Fair is a weekend event held annually at Bolsover Castle. Now in its 7th year the event is used to showcase and celebrate Derbyshire's food and drink. Producers, merchants and specialty retailers from across Derbyshire exhibit their goods and produce. Food and drink is a national tourism priority and the event helps to strengthen the Derbyshire food brand as well as encourage Derbyshire businesses to work together.

The event is organised and managed by Derbyshire County Council with support from a range of partners, including Bolsover District Council, and was

originally staged in response to the negative impact that Foot and Mouth was having on the County's tourism industry, especially its food and drink businesses.

Over 60 exhibitors & 12,000 people attended the 2007 event which included celebrity cooking demonstrations, family entertainment and a large Arts and Crafts marquee. This has helped establish the food and drink fair as a popular regional event.

The event costs approximately £55,000 to organise and the District Council makes a financial contribution of £10,000.

Community Parish Events Programme

The community parish events programmes is a small grants scheme run by the Authority aimed at supporting parish council events in each of Bolsover district's fourteen parishes. Each Parish has the opportunity to request up to £750 cash from this programme to support their local Parish events portfolio, examples of this are; Shirebrook Town Council fireworks display, Old Bolsover Town Council Christmas festival etc.

The scheme costs approximately £10,500 per year to operate.

Bolsover School Choir Competition

This event has been run for a couple of years now and has been held at Kissingate Leisure Centre. Both events have been very successful and this year saw 21 schools from in and around our district compete with over 700 attendances on the day.

The event costs approximately £1000 to stage (funded through Arts & Business funding secured) + officer time + lost opportunity of 1 day sports hall income at Kissingate.

Bolsover Brass Band Competition

This event has also been run for a couple of years now and has also been held at Kissingate Leisure Centre, however, as with the above event – this could be rotated around the district year on year i.e. South Normanton Community Centre, Frederick Gents School etc.. This event has also been very successful, the last event having over 500 competitors participating.

The event costs approximately £1750 to stage (funded through Arts & Business funding secured) + officer time + lost opportunity of 1 day sports hall income at Kissingate. However this event does generate approx. £650 of bar income throughout the day that we would not have otherwise had.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & WELFARE SERVICES

Background

Hire Equipment Loan Programme (HELP)

Organisers of community events and celebrations such as flower festivals, well dressings, school galas, village fetes and carnivals can apply for free use of the Council' stock of events equipment (bouncy castles, marquees, bunting, tables, chairs etc).

Despite the popularity of this service the number of applications that the Authority is currently able to support is very limited. The scheme supports on average 15 local events per year (on average) and has cost approximately £1,500 per year to operate, however last year we had around 25 local events which pushed the staffing costs up to around £3,000.

REVIEW OF JUNCTION ARTS GRANT

Background

Historically, with no dedicated arts officer post, the arts activity/direction within the district was mainly via Head of Leisure and Junction Arts as a strategic partner. Junction Arts is a major participatory arts organisation based in Shirebrook but with a regional reputation for their work. JA is core funded by Bolsover District (amongst others) for which the district gets in return a participatory arts programme implemented across the district.

Around 3 years ago the first dedicated arts development post was created at Bolsover & around 18 months ago the funding was sought to produce an arts strategy for the district. It was thought that specialist knowledge would be required to produce the first arts strategy – with a view to the Arts Development Officer receiving some training and mentoring alongside the strategy production to facilitate future in-house strategy development.

Evidence suggested that an arts strategy could:

- Improve access and opportunity for the districts residents to good quality arts activities/products/venues/productions & such like
- Ensure residents and businesses take advantage of the economic benefits which creative sector growth can provide
- Provide a mechanism for evaluating effectiveness, efficiency and value for money of District Council activity in the creative sector –by measuring and monitoring additional levered in resources into the district for example.
- Demonstrate the Councils clear commitment to the creative sector and the benefits it brings – i.e. local people, regional and national bodies and to government.

Since the strategy adoption this year, clear aims, objectives and priorities have been established/identified and an accompanying action plan for the Arts Development Officer has been produced.

The strategy and action plan has provided a framework for the Arts Development & other Officers to plan and deliver a manageable work programme against which they can assess the value of new opportunities which arise during the life of the strategy.

ISSUES/OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

Arts & Cultural Events – is it a time for a change?

Due to the Authority's current financial position it is unlikely that additional funding will be made available during the short to medium term so any changes to the events management service will have to be financed from within existing resources.

Whilst the fireworks extravaganza and food and drink fair are popular events with a regional appeal the Authority recognises that most of its current events activity focuses on Bolsover Castle which is beneficial in terms of tourism but is less beneficial in terms of community engagement and participation.

In addition to the positive contribution that these two events make to the local economy, event goers tend also to repeat visit at a later date bringing even more tourism spend into the area. These events also showcase the district to potential visitors, the profile and interest generated by these two events across the region is considerable and the marketing value, in terms of positive publicity, is estimated to run into many tens of thousands of pounds.

However there are other cultural venues like Hardwick Hall and Creswell Crags that aren't given the opportunity to host Council events yet are equally as important in terms of tourism, prestige and cultural identity.

In addition the fireworks, for all its popularity and profile, in real terms only offers three hours worth of entertainment to a relatively small number of people, yet the financial risk to the authority resulting from a weather affected event is considerable.

Activity	Options	Pro's	Con's
Bolsover Fireworks Display	Continue at the castle but on a different date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great event - lots of kudos • Established venue – recognised risks etc. • In town centre – great knock on opportunities for the local economy • Continue 21 year tradition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In same place every year – perception that the South of the district does not benefit • Venue is restrictive in terms of numbers • English Heritage appear reluctant partners for the future • A change of date has lots of down sides – supplier availability, clashing with other events etc.
	Options	Pro's	Con's
	Look for an alternative venue for the event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sense of spreading the benefits of such an event • Chance to increase attendances by not having a restrictive size of venue • Could reduce the cost of the event by increasing ticket sales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning for the event would require more resources • Securing suppliers who fit the requirement would need to be established • Accessibility issues would need to be considered
	Options	Pro's	Con's
	Stop the event all together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Save the cost • Save officer time • Could re-direct funding into other areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lose a well respected and highly attended event • Could spark public criticism • Bolsover would lose an excellent tourism promoting event

Activity	Options	Pro's	Con's
Derbyshire Food & drink Fair	Continue to offer support funding as we do at present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support of a regionally recognised event that benefits the district & Bolsover specifically 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs the authority £10k which could be used elsewhere may be to better effect
	Options	Pro's	Con's
	Reduce the level of funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support of a regionally recognised event that benefits the district & Bolsover specifically • Could save the authority some of the previous £10k 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would still cost the authority £an amount which could be used elsewhere may be to better effect
	Options	Pro's	Con's
	Stop the funding all together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Save £10k 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could see event moved from the district
Activity	Options	Pro's	Con's
Community Parish events programme	Continue to offer the support funding as we do at the moment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enables us to support a range of Parish events across the district • Many people across the district benefit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs the authority £10k which could be used elsewhere • Many Parishioners are unaware of the District councils contribution
	Options	Pro's	Con's
	Reduce the level of funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enables us to support a range of Parish events across the district • Many people across the district benefit • Could save the authority some of the previous amount 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would still cost the authority £an amount which could be used elsewhere • Many Parishioners are unaware of the District councils contribution

	Options	Pro's	Con's
	Stop the funding all together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Save the authority £10k 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parish Councils could find it more difficult to put on smaller community events
Bolsover School Choir competition & Bolsover Brass Band competition	Both are funded through arts & business schemes – cost neutral to the authority		
Other options could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> use of the current events budget to fund a programme of smaller community events use of the current events budget to fund a mobile resource that could support smaller parish events around the district i.e. event roadshow type of product 			

Community Development & welfare – is it a time for change?

The equipment we have at the moment will soon require refurbishment or replacement - can the authority afford to maintain/replace the stock? Should the authority provide such a service? As it stands at the moment the option to continue to run this scheme with no income and no refurbishment budget would ultimately bring it to a natural closedown due to health & safety reason within the next year or so. To introduce an income generating stream to sustain the product would give the product longevity and sustainability, however the essence of what the programme was created for could be lost.

Inventory

4 x 6mx3m Marquee pods	current value= £2000 each
1x bouncy Castle	current value= £1000
P.A. system	current value= £500
Several cones, ropes, bunting etc.	current value= £100
Several road closure signs	current value= £200

Activity	Options	Pro's	Con's
Hire & Loan Programme (HELP)	Continue with the Hire Equipment Loan Programme as is	Parishes and community groups etc. continue to benefit from the free provision of events support equipment which could not be afforded otherwise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costs the authority between £3-£4k pa to staff, repair & maintain

	Options	Pro's	Con's
	Put in place a charging formula to all organisations to cover costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will help fund the programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will detract from the purpose of the programme i.e. free support to voluntary organisations
	Options	Pro's	Con's
	Put in place a charging formula for commercial hirers or organisations outside the district to cover the costs of running the programme free for our events and celebrations such as flower festivals, well dressings, school galas, village fetes and carnivals within the district.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will help fund staffing and repairs etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will need investment to bring the kit up to commercial hire standard
	Options	Pro's	Con's
	Sell off or donate the equipment cease to run the programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will generate small capital receipt • Will save current costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community and voluntary orgs, will lose the current support for their events

Review of Junction Arts Grant – is it time for change?

Since the appointment of a dedicated Arts Officer and the adoption of the Arts Strategy, the role that Junction Arts plays in terms of the District Council will ultimately be a different one to that of 3 years ago. Whatever the future funding arrangement, it will be important to have in place an agreed SLA (service level agreement) with a programme plan that is both specific and measurable to ensure the Authority receives value for money.

Activity	Options	Pro's	Con's
Junction arts Grant	Continue with the Grant funding as is	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The authority will continue to benefit from a participatory arts programme that is district wide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costs the authority £19.5k pa
	Options	Pro's	Con's
	Reduce the level of funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The authority will continue to benefit from a reduced participatory arts programme across the district The authority will reduce its costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will still cost the authority £an amount Could threaten the existence of Junction Arts Net loss across the district in terms of participatory arts programmes
	Options	Pro's	Con's
	Remove the grant funding all together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The authority will save £19.5K pa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Could threaten the existence of Junction Arts Net loss across the district in terms of participatory arts programmes

THE FINDINGS/OUTCOME OF THE REVIEW PANEL

Following consideration of the information and options outlined above by the review panel, it is recommended that:

Arts & Cultural Events

- The Events Officer is not to be replaced.
- The fireworks event not to be staged as there is currently no venue for 2009.
- A different event to be considered some time in the future.
- Derbyshire Food and Drink Fair to continue, but a full post event evaluation to be prepared to explore its future and future venues.
- Community/Parish programme to stop in 2009/10.

- Schools choir and brass competitions to continue, but review of potential venues across the District to be carried out.

Community Development & Welfare Services

- Hire equipment – stop after last booking and take no new bookings. The equipment is to be retained if useful and disposed of in accordance with Financial Regulations if not.

Grants to Junction Arts

- The grant to continue for the next 3 years. The Portfolio member for Social Inclusion to meet the Junction Arts to confirm the 3 year limit and that after this the grant will be reassessed and this may affect the grant paid in the future.

IMPLICATONS

Financial: If all of the recommendations by the review panel are upheld then the following savings would apply:

Fireworks - £18,500 pa
 Parish events support programme - £10,000 pa
 Events Officer Post - £15,000 pa
 HELP scheme - £3,000 - £5,000 pa
TOTAL = £46,500 – £48,500

Legal: None

Human Resources: Non replacement of vacant post (events officer).

RECOMMENDATION(S)

That; (1) the report be received,

(2) the findings of the review panel be considered,

(3) if the finding not to replace the vacant event officer post is agreed – a report for the disestablishment of the post is taken to full Council

REASON FOR DECISION TO BE GIVEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONSTITUTION

To report the results of the discretionary services review process and seek approval of the changes.

ATTACHMENTS: Y
 FILE REFERENCE: None
 SOURCE DOCUMENT: Background papers held by Leisure Operations Manager