

STRATEGIC EVENTS AND FESTIVALS FUND – PROJECT UPDATE

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to ask members to give consideration to a Round 3 Strategic Events and Festivals Fund for 2021/22, and to provide an update on the Round 2 (2020/21) events, as agreed by Policy and Resources Committee on 17th December 2019.

1.2 A third round of grant funding would support strategic events and festivals that are to be held in 2021/22. The process adopted for Round 2 proved to be robust and successful and as such would be adopted for any subsequent rounds. Should a Round 3 be supported, it is intended to issue a call for applications in autumn 2020, for consideration by Policy and Resources Committee in winter 2020/21. However this timeline will be continually reviewed in light of Covid 19.

1.3 The Round 2 events, planned to be held between June and December 2020, face a set of extraordinary circumstances and challenges brought about by the coronavirus198700fd ()1 9817 0 Td (However)Tj 47.3500061 0 TdoOVID-850o5Tj 134.77

- 1.6 In acting in such a responsible manner, a significant strain is imposed on the sustainability of each event, and in some cases there is a genuine risk to the continuance of these events in the future.
- 1.7 Strategic Events and Festivals Funding is currently conditional on events taking place and as such, in cases where an event has been cancelled there is no requirement to make payment of grant. The unprecedented situation and resultant difficulties faced however warrants the consideration of adoption of a more flexible position. This paper

Events and Festivals Fund, relating to events to be held in 2021/22, and approve a third round budget allocation of £90,000;

- b) Agree that the Round 3 2021/22 call for applications

An update on the current status of each can be found as follows:

Event	Status	20/21 Grant	Scheduled For:
William Fife Regatta	Cancelled	£4,500	June
Bute Noir	Cancelled	£3,500	July
Mull of Kintyre Music Festival	Cancelled	£11,000	August
Oban Games (Argyllshire Gathering)	Under consideration	£5,000	August
Cowal Highland Gathering	Cancelled	£30,000	August
Jura Music Festival	Cancelled	£5,000	September
Tiree Wave Classic	Under consideration	£5,000	October
Mull Rally	Going ahead	£21,000	October
Helensburgh Winter Festival	Going ahead	£5,000	November

- 4.7 Grant is conditional on an event being held, so in cases where events have had to be cancelled there is currently no requirement or method to make payment from the Strategic Events and Festivals Fund. The loss of any event from the area is likely to have significant impact on the local economy, especially those events which are longstanding. The cancellation of events will in some cases also have a serious impact on the financial stability of the organisation that runs the event, which in turn jeopardises the ability of the respective event to continue beyond this year. The set of unprecedented circumstances however warrants the adoption of a more flexible approach to offer support towards event costs in such difficult times.
- 4.8 On discussion with event organisers it is clear that expenditure has been incurred in the early part of this year in preparation for summer events, and organisers have voiced their concerns about the sustainability of events going forward. The COVID-19 pandemic has created an exceptional set of circumstances for the organisations that could never have been predicted and therefore it is acknowledged that some organisations will have legitimately incurred expenditure in relation to their now cancelled event.
- 4.9 In order to support the organisations who have cancelled their event, it is recommended that the Council pays a grant to cover costs incurred by the organisation, up to a maximum of 75% of the original grant award. The costs incurred should take into consideration any funding that has been received from the COVID-19 responses by the UK and Scottish Governments.
- 4.10 For those events that are still going ahead as planned the grant will be paid out as per existing arrangements, and against eligible items only. If any events are rescheduled, and are still proposed to be held in financial year 2020/21, it is

proposed to honour the grant, given the special circumstances and the fact that this would still allow for any commitment to be drawn down during the period of the Round 2 Fund.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 As the impact of the coronavirus, COVID-19 pandemic is still unknown, the status of the events may continue to change. The loss of any event from the local economy will be significant, and as such in an effort to support the economic recovery it is recommended that where organisers have incurred legitimate expenditure to date, that the Council pays a grant to cover costs incurred, up to a maximum of 75% of the original grant award.

5.2 The provision of a Round 3 fund for 2021/22 would provide much needed hope and continuity in such challenging and uncertain times.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Policy – The Council's Economic Strategy supports the value of events and festivals for their positive impact on the economy.

6.2 Financial – £90,000 in grant has been made available for a second round of Strategic Events and Festivals Funding for 2020/21. At the time of writing five of the nine successful events will not be held in 2020. This paper asks that

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APPENDICES

None