

Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	Cabinet	Date:	19 July 2017
Subject:	City Events Programme 2018 375th Anniversary of the Siege of Gloucester 1100th Anniversary of the death of Aethelflaed		
Report Of:	Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure		
Wards Affected:	All		
Key Decision:	No	Budget/Policy Framework:	No
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Appendices:	1. Proposal for Marketing Gloucester Ltd		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 A Notice of Motion, agreed at Council on 29 September 2016, acknowledged the Administration's manifesto commitment to stage a major history festival in 2018 to celebrate the 375th anniversary of the Siege of Gloucester and the 1100th anniversary of the death of Aethelflaed.
- 1.2 This report presents proposals, developed by Marketing Gloucester Ltd (MGL) for events and activities to mark the two anniversaries. If approved, the proposals would form part of the 2018 City Events programme delivered for the City Council by MGL.
- 1.3 In the context of the establishment of the Gloucester Culture Trust (GCT), the delivery of the Cultural Strategy and the ambitions set out in the successful Great Place bid, Cabinet is also asked to consider the extent to which this proposal and future City Events programmes should be led by the GCT and whether the GCT should be invited to consider what further activity might be commissioned to mark the two anniversaries.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that
 - (1) The proposals received from MGL for events and activities to mark the two anniversaries in 2018 are welcomed and endorsed.
 - (2) GCT is invited to consider what they could add to the proposals as part of a wider consideration of how the events could fit within a broader programme of activity in 2018 which would optimise the availability of Great Place funding, deliver key cultural strategy objectives and make a significant contribution towards Gloucester's ambition to be City of Culture in 2025.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 2018 marks the anniversary dates of two events of major, national historic importance; the 375th anniversary of the siege of Gloucester and the 1100th anniversary of the death of Aethelflaed, Lady of Mercia who was buried at St Oswald's Priory in Gloucester, which she founded with her husband Aethelred.
- 3.2 MGL has submitted proposals to mark the two anniversaries in 2018 with a series of events and activities. Aethelflaed would be marked in early June with a week long festival culminating on 12 June. The Siege of Gloucester celebrations would commence with Gloucester Day in September 2018 and form part of that year's History Festival. Details of the proposals are set out in Appendix 1 to this report.
- 3.3 In previous years proposals of this type would come to the Cabinet for consideration and comment and, if approved, would be included in the relevant year's calendar of planned city events. Funding would usually come from the events budget provided annually to MGL by the City Council or via a mix of City Council funding, sponsorship and marketing and other funders.
- 3.4 Receipt of these proposals from MGL provide a useful and timely prompt to consider the extent to which the recent establishment of GCT might change how the City's programme of events and festivals is considered, developed, commissioned and funded in future.
- 3.5 The Council's Cultural Vision and Strategy 2016/26 talks about the need to recognise that the City Council cannot, alone, deliver the cultural regeneration of the City and that Gloucester Culture Trust (the name the organisation will be known as) will be instrumental in delivering the aspirations set out in the Vision and Strategy by harnessing the efforts of a broad and collaborative partnership of individuals, organisations and groups.
- 3.6 The Strategy goes on to refer to our ambitions to develop artistic and cultural capacity in the city, encourage grass roots community arts activity, support Gloucester based arts organisations, commission high quality outdoor arts events, develop audiences, invest in the creation of new events with potential to grow into nationally significant signature events – all with the potential of making Gloucester a credible candidate for City of Culture in 2025.
- 3.7 In this context the opportunity to deliver two nationally significant historic anniversaries in 2018 is an important one and consideration needs to be given to whether the proposals from MGL should be referred to GCT with an invitation to GCT to consider what could be added to the proposals.
- 3.8 To help Cabinet, GCT Director, Hollie Smith-Charles has indicated that if given the opportunity GCT might
 - 3.8.1 Use the anniversaries as an opportunity to support the development of the independent creative and cultural sector in Gloucester. Recognising that MGL are an important, but not the only, curator of this kind of work. The Trust could put out an open call and commission work from artists and arts organisations in Gloucester (or involving Gloucester locals) to create and deliver work. This would ensure as much of the anniversary budget as possible goes to artists and arts organisations and gives them an opportunity to strengthen their practice as part of a big, local project.

- 3.8.2 Engage with the new Culture Forum to explore how the wider community in Gloucester might want to mark, create, participate and enjoy the two anniversaries.
- 3.8.3 Want to consider taking some bold decisions about putting artistic excellence at the heart of the proposals - alongside other factors, such as visitor numbers. If the City is aiming to become a cultural capital, there is a great opportunity (backed partially by Great Place funding) to see what happens if we cast a wide net, with an open call as suggested above, and explore what other ideas are out there. This could supplement the proposals put forward by MGL and act as a creative stimulus for new work for and about Gloucester.
- 3.8.4 GCT would be keen to work with a 2018 anniversary steering group with representatives from MGL, the History Festival, Heritage Forum, Civic Trust and the City Council to coordinate activity, assess proposals and commission a varied programme. MGL would also continue to play a pivotal role bringing it all together, promoting and delivering the content as suggested in their proposal.
- 3.8.5 Use this as an opportunity for the History Festival, Civic Trust and Heritage Forum to work together (with support from the new Great Place-funded Heritage Forum Community Engagement Officer) to build their professional experience too.
- 3.8.6 The Cultural Strategy has a strategic focus on the development of audiences and this should be at the centre of the proposals. This would be strengthened by a clear marketing plan which: identifies the target audiences (socio-demographically, as well as expected numbers of audience/visitors), considers the opportunities for the participation of Gloucester's communities, not just history enthusiasts and which dovetails with City Voices, via links to the History Festival committee and possibly Carnival too.
- 3.8.7 The fact that Aethelflaed ties in with the centenary of women's enfranchisement, feminism and women's rights might be good hooks to make the story of an Anglo-Saxon woman leader resonate with contemporary audiences. For example, Cheltenham Literature Festival are planning activities to mark the centenary of women's suffrage in 2018, which offers a neat opportunity for a co-programming partnership (History Festival in Sept; Literature Festival in Oct) to develop these wider links.
- 3.9 If Cabinet considers it appropriate to take the proposals forward in this way any Great Place investment could be used to build signature community events in 2018, celebrating the City's history and its impact on contemporary life with as much funding as possible going direct to the city's creative community.

4.0 Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Considerations

- 4.1 The City Council has been pivotal in the establishment of a Gloucester Culture Trust to harness the energy of a wide range of individuals and organisations with a stake in the cultural development of the City. Taking the opportunity to devolve

leadership of the development of the City's cultural offer to GCT is consistent with the City Council's approach to ABCD. In addition, taking advantage of the opportunity of the 2018 anniversaries to take forward aspects of the cultural strategy and the Great Place programme by seeking to promote creative activity, support the local arts community and develop local capacity support the principles of ABCD.

5.0 Alternative Options Considered

5.1 In previous years the Council has directly commissioned a programme of City Events from Marketing Gloucester. This report invites consideration of an option to invite GCT to comment and advise the City Council on the City Events programme, prior to a final decision by Cabinet, in order to strengthen the programme and ensure greater liaison with other cultural activity in the City and the strategic aims of the Board/Trust.

6.0 Reasons for Recommendations

6.1 MGL has submitted proposals for activity in 2018 to mark two significant historic anniversaries. Given the City Council's strategic cultural ambitions, the establishment of GCT and the availability of Great Place funding, it is proposed that the proposals from MGL are welcomed and supported and that GCT is asked to consider how they might form part of a wider programme in 2018 that maximises the opportunities to deliver against both our strategic and Great Place ambitions and helps our aspirations to be City of Culture in 2025.

7.0 Future Work and Conclusions

7.1 If the recommendations are approved the Culture Board/Trust will work with MGL to take forward the matters set out in this report.

8.0 Financial Implications

8.1 None at this stage. Any funding is anticipated to come from either existing Great Place funding or other funding streams (e.g. ACE/marketing/commercial activity/sponsorship). There are no proposals to drop or reduce elements of the existing City Events programme to divert funds to towards the two anniversaries.

(Financial Services have been consulted in the preparation this report.)

9.0 Legal Implications

9.1 None

(One Legal have been consulted in the preparation this report.)

10.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

10.1 There is a risk that either the level of funding being sought by MGL from the Great Place funds cannot be met or that the scope of the proposals do not fully address Great Place objectives, making the award of funding difficult.

10.2 There is a risk that broadening the scope of the programme and the range of participants might introduce complexity and delay which will need careful management and co-ordination.

10.3 There is an opportunity to maximise the timing of the two anniversaries to mark the delivery of a substantial programme of activity which helps deliver the City's strategic cultural objectives and significant elements of our Great Place programme.

11.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA):

11.1 The PIA Screening Stage was completed and did not identify any potential or actual negative impact, therefore a full PIA was not required.

12.0 Other Corporate Implications

Community Safety

12.1 None

Sustainability

12.2 None

Staffing & Trade Union

12.3 None

Background Documents: Appendix 1 - MGL Proposal