

Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	Cabinet	Date:	10 January 2024
Subject:	Events and Festivals Report on 2023 & Plan for 2024-25		
Report Of:	Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure		
Wards Affected:	All		
Key Decision:	No	Budget/Policy Framework:	Yes
Contact Officer:	Philip Walker, Head of Culture and Leisure Services		
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Appendices:	1. Review of Festivals and Events activity 2023		
	2. Proposed Civic and Cultural Events & Festivals 2024-25		
	3. Funding Processes – Festivals & Events		
	4. Outdoor Events Fund – Recommendations for Funding 2024		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide a Review of Festivals and Events activity 2023.
- 1.2 To agree the Proposed Civic and Cultural Events & Festivals events and budget 2024-25.
- 1.3 To set out the approach taken to funding festivals and events activities.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that the:
 - (1) review of festivals and events activity 2023 be noted;
 - (2) proposed events for 2024 subject to full Council approval of budget for 2024-25 be approved;
 - (3) approach taken to funding festivals and events be noted;
 - (4) funding allocation of the Outdoor Events Fund for 2024-25 be approved, subject to full Council approval of budget for 2024-25.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

3.1 Overview of 2023 festivals activity

The programme of outdoor festivals and events that took place in 2023 was bolstered by civic celebrations for the Coronation of King Charles III and a return of the Men's Tour of Britain stage which had been cancelled in 2022. The prestigious Three Choirs

Festival came to Gloucester in June and opened with civic parades and a lunch event in Blackfriars Priory. After two years of planning the Hi! Street Fest event took place in July encompassing a significant number of community participants and workshops which resulted in giant puppets parading through Kings Square and the gate streets alongside small performances throughout the city. Regular annual events such as Gloucester Goes Retro and Gloucester Day had developed creative content featuring new areas with animations in Kings Square. The Bright Nights programme has also seen developments incorporating three community led events into one day to maximise on the offer and consolidate resources for the events and partners. A further programme of Bright Nights activities is in the pipeline but is yet to be announced for February 2024. (A full review of events is detailed in Appendix 1).

3.2 Civic Events 2023

A successful programme of Civic Events took place with the addition of a presentation of the Lamprey pie for the Coronation as well as Union Jacks flown across the gate streets, which were both funded and supported by the council. Civic dignitaries from the three counties were invited to the opening of the Three Choirs Festival where they paraded from the Guildhall to the Cathedral and back to Blackfriars where a lunch was provided.

3.3 Support of other activity in 2023

The council supported a range of other festivals through funding and financial contributions and other means in 2023 including: Jamaican Independence Day, City Voices, Gloucester Day, Gloucester History Festival, Pride In Gloucestershire, Three Choirs Festival and Strike a Light. The New Projects and Commissions fund distributed £25,820 to support new activities that without the support of the city council would not have been delivered.

3.4 Festivals and Events budget for 2024-25

The anticipated revenue budget for the delivery of the 2024-25 city events programme is £215,000 (subject to full council approval of 2024-25 budget). The costs of the programme are higher than this budget, however, with a mixed-model of public investment and private sponsorship, careful business-planning, strategic commissioning, exploiting commercial opportunities and working collaboratively across the city and beyond means that an ambitious city events programme is still achievable.

Specifically, part of this budget (£150,000 per year, for 3 years) has been identified as crucial match funding for an application to Arts Council England (ACE) Project Grants – Place Partnership strand. As an ACE Priority Place Gloucester is in a strong position to be successful in this application. The bid is being submitted by Gloucester Culture Trust, and if successful, would lever an additional £500k of funding over three years into the city. The council will administer and retain the match funding amount, with the activity the events' team delivers becoming part of a wider programme of work with partners across the city. See 3.7.

The Festivals and Events budget is managed by the council's Cultural Development team and includes an income target to help off-set costs. It includes funds allocated to the city's flagship events – Tall Ships Festival, Gloucester Goes Retro and Bright Nights. The breakdown of allocation of the funds is shown in Appendix 2.

3.5 Civic Events 2024-25

There is a Civic Events budget of £5,000 allocated to support the annual programme of civic events in 2024. This will include a Flag Raising event for Armed Forces Day & lighting the beacon for D-Day Commemorations, Gloucester Day, Remembrance Sunday, Mayor's Christmas Party, and the Mayor's Annual service

3.6 Proposed calendar of civic events for 2024-25 (where dates are known)

Date	Event
6 th June	D-Day Commemorations
29 th June	Armed Forces Day
7 th September	Gloucester Day
10 th November	Remembrance Sunday
16 th November	Christmas Lights Switch on
December	Mayor's Christmas Party

3.7 Together Gloucester (Place Partnership Bid)

As mentioned in 3.4, £150,000 of the annual Festivals and Events budget for the next three financial years has been identified in a funding application to Arts Council England Project Grants – Place Partnership strand. This application is led by Gloucester Culture Trust with GCC named as key strategic partner and is our main fundraising activity for 2023-24. The application is for a three-year city-wide programme called Together Gloucester.

Together Gloucester aims to put citizens at the centre of cultural decision making, so that local people have a say in what happens in their city and ensure cultural events reflect Gloucester's identity. The programme is formed through a partnership between cross-sector organisations including Gloucester Community Building Collective, Active Gloucestershire, Gloucester BID, Gloucestershire Gateway Trust, University of Gloucestershire, The Music Works, Gloucester Voices and Young Gloucestershire.

Co-creation will underpin the delivery of three interconnected strands of activity designed to:

- Develop a year-round programme of activity
- Establish city wide hubs
- Invest in community talent development

The overall aim of the project is to transform the city's approach to collaboration and create a lasting impact by fostering partnerships with communities and cross-sector organisations, implementing open, accessible processes, build community confidence and contribute to city placemaking.

For Festivals and Events, this means grants programmes and major events which align with the ethos of Together Gloucester will become part of this programme. We will develop our grant funding process to involve a Citizen's Panel and involve more members of the community in shaping and contributing to the Festivals and Events activity, creating more opportunities for local talent.

3.8 Global Streets

We have committed to be a partner, alongside Strike a Light, in a national touring programme that brings international outdoor work to different cities and towns in England, led by Festival.org. We have funded the previous iterations of this initiative on a project-by-project basis, but moving into this phase will work alongside Strike a Light in selecting work and being a partner in the programme, to ensure maximum benefit to the city and residents, improved knowledge of national touring networks and better opportunities for staff development. We will make an annual contribution of £10,000 towards this programme in 2024-25 and 2025-26.

3.9 Tall Ships Festival 2024

For 2024, the Festivals and Events Team will be producing the event in-house by engaging a team of freelance contractors to cover the creative content, tall ship programming, production and infrastructure roles. Marketing and PR will be done by an external company, but the event will use the new in-house ticketing system, Ticketsolve, recently installed for the Cultural Service. The Festivals and Events Team will manage the budget, contracting, contractors, services, stakeholder & partner liaison, business and resident communications and liaise on additional entertainment and site activation across city venues and spaces. The aim is to have tickets on sale by in early 2024 and for the event to take place from 25-27 May 2024.

3.10 Outdoor Events Fund

The Outdoor Events fund was open for festivals and events organisations to apply for activity taking place in 2024-25. For 2024-25 there is a sum of £47,000 available for applicants, part of which has been identified as match funding for the Place Partnership application for Together Gloucester (see 3.7). The applications were scored against funding criteria and were assessed by a panel of staff from the council and Gloucester Culture Trust based on criteria that supported the city's Cultural Strategy. The eligibility criteria were expanded to allow for organisations in the South West with a demonstrable partnership agreement with a Gloucester-based organisation to apply.

The fund opened for applications on 18th September and closed on 30th October 2023. 14 applications were received. Those recommended for funding are shown in Appendix 4.

3.11 New Projects and Commissions Fund

5 projects were successfully funded in 2023 with grants of approx. £5,000 each. Applicants were able to request between £5,000 - £10,000 and were required to demonstrate that any funding provided by the council would be matched, so the council's contribution is not more than 50% of the total project cost. There are two opportunities in the year to apply (Jan-Mar / Aug-Oct) The first round received more

applications than the second round and very few projects requested more than £5,000.

There is £25,000 available for new commissions in 2024-25. This has been used as match funding for the Place Partnership application for Together Gloucester (see 3.7).

3.12 Community Events Fund

Designed to support smaller events in Gloucester we propose to set up a funding scheme for organisations to apply for grants of up to £1,000. The application process will be a simplified version of the Outdoor Events Fund process. Applicants will need to identify how their event meets one of the cultural strategy objectives but overall, the application will involve fewer questions and less requirement for match funding from other sources. The intention is to support smaller events to become more sustainable and better resourced while aligning with the Cultural Strategy for the city.

3.13 Gloucester Goes Retro

Following on from the success of the 2023 event we are looking to develop the programme for Gloucester Goes Retro in 2024. We have identified that our key focuses will be to streamline planning by using the new Ticketsolve system for car registrations. We will continue to evolve the event space in Kings Square, with a desire to increase the amount of entertainment across the whole event and expand the offer to attract diverse audiences.

3.14 Bright Nights Festival

Bright Nights programme started with a combined Lantern Procession & Christmas lights switch-on. There will be a further programme of events in February 2024. The Bright Nights budget of £40,000 is used to leverage additional funds with the Place Partnership bid in 2024-25. Gloucester BID also support the programme financially.

3.15 Kings Square Programme

Kings Square has been regularly featured across a number of the city events and projects who were awarded funding in 2023 and planning continues for 2024. Maintaining a budget of £25,000 in 2024-25 will allow for more site-specific events & installations to be fostered alongside the city events programme. The budget is used to leverage additional funds with the Place Partnership application.(see 3.7).

3.16 City-wide co-ordination

The city-wide strategic events and marketing group continues to meet quarterly – this group consists of the main events and festival producers and organisations. The aim of the group is to agree the overall direction of programme and explore opportunities to collaborate to maximise the offer and where relevant and beneficial, pool funds and resources to create greater impact from city events. This consists of representatives of Gloucester Quays, the Gloucester Business Improvement District (BID), Gloucester Cathedral, Gloucester Culture Trust and the University of Gloucestershire among others and is convened by Gloucester City Council.

City Events meetings take place every two weeks with representatives from departments across the Gloucester City Council including Environmental Health,

Licensing, City Centre Management and Parks to review plans for upcoming events in parks and open spaces.

4.0 Social Value Considerations

- 4.1 Applicants for funding need to demonstrate how their festival or event delivers the Cultural Strategy, including the Social Value considerations. Local businesses are used as contractors and suppliers for events where possible, bringing in external companies if local companies are unavailable or unable to deliver the quality or ambition required.
- 4.2 The ambition for bringing Tall Ships Festival back into the management of the council's Festivals and Events team is to ensure that more local people, entertainers, contractors, services can be involved.

5.0 Environmental Implications

- 5.1 The environmental impact of festivals and events will become a key consideration of decision-making of which events and festivals to support in the city. There is an aspiration for the city to be net carbon neutral and so the Festivals and Events that take place in the city will need to work towards this common goal. The producer for Bright Nights is particularly interested in creating a sustainable light festival. This will include reusing and recreating assets owned by the city and targeting partners and funding with sustainable objectives.
- 5.2 In order to hold other third-party festivals and events accountable to these environmental sustainability targets, organisers will be expected to demonstrate clear policies and procedures and commitment towards sustainability. This will be a condition of funding issued by the City Council to any festival or event organiser and the Evaluation Criteria for funding from the City Council for events currently asks how the event considers the impact on the environment.
- 5.3 Internally steps are being taken to reduce the impact of events on the environment, everything from replacing plastic cable ties for signs with reusable string, assessing catering cartons and cutlery before contracting, to reducing the need for petrol or diesel-powered generators where practicable. Site litter clearance and recycling and the use of low-carbon materials will be encouraged in all third-party events.

6.0 Alternative Options Considered

- 6.1 None.

7.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 7.1 This approach builds on the strengths of the festivals and programme in the city, whilst introducing new opportunities for the city to strengthen partnerships and continue to raise its profile in line with the ambitions of the Cultural Strategy.

8.0 Future Work and Conclusions

- 8.1 The programme of events will be reviewed on an annual basis to review the 2024 programme.

9.0 Financial Implications

- 9.1 The main events programme detailed above is financed from the Council's Festivals and Events budget allocation of £215,000 of which £5,000 is allocated for Civic Events supplemented by external fundraising as outlined in Appendix 2.
- 9.2 Any shortfall in the external fundraising would lead to a budget pressure that would need to be managed by the Festivals & Events team.
- 9.3 Budget allocated within 2024-25 will be used to demonstrate match funding for bids to external funding sources.

10.0 Legal Implications

- 10.1 One Legal is assisting with the council's contractual requirements for the Tall Ships Festivals. The engagement of third parties for any services, goods or works need to be procured in accordance with the Council's contract rules.

Legal advice should be sought on the terms and conditions of any external funding awarded. Any funding given by the Council should be subject to appropriate terms and conditions and be compliant with the Subsidy Control Act 2022 (the Act). One Legal can assist with the preparation of the terms and advise on the applicability of the Act to the grants.

11.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

- 11.1 Risk 1 – financial support of festivals from third parties – e.g. sponsorship is reduced which may put some festivals viability in question. Mitigation: business plans for all festivals and events requiring funds will be scrutinised to ensure that there are adequate contingency plans in place.
- 11.2 Risk 2 – failure to meet income targets for events. Mitigation: reduce scale and consider reduction in programme in second half of the year.

12.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA) and Safeguarding:

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

13.0 Community Safety Implications

- 13.1 Events and Festivals follow a robust process via the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) meetings and following advice and permitted activity agreed at the point of issuing site permissions. SAG meetings are co-ordinated by the city council and are multi-agency meetings that challenge the organisers to produce effective plans that mitigate risks and ensure safety measures are considered, planned for and implemented.

14.0 Staffing & Trade Union Implications

- 14.1 None arising directly from this report.

15.0 Background Documents: [Gloucester's Cultural Vision and Strategy 2021-2026](#) [gloucester-cultural-vision-and-strategy-gct-gcc-min.pdf](#)