

ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO AND DECISION OF ECONOMIC COMMITTEE ON 12 OCTOBER 2021

SUBJECT: Proposed Sussex by the Sea Festival, Littlehampton

REPORT AUTHOR: Denise Vine – Group Head of Economy
DATE: August 2021
EXTN: 01903 737846
AREA: Directorate of Place

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Council would like to invite expressions of interest from a suitably experienced festival operator to deliver an annual public event on the Greens and / or surrounding areas at Littlehampton seafront.

It is proposed that the Council contributes to the operation of the event in the first three years to enable it to be established.

This report is asking the Committee to support this proposal in principal and for officers to tender this opportunity for an external provider.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that:

1. The Committee supports the proposal to invite expressions of interest and tenders to deliver an annual festival event on the Greens and / or surrounding areas at Littlehampton seafront.
2. Funding is identified in the annual budget for three consecutive years to establish the festival.
3. Officers prepare and issue a tender specification for the event.

1. BACKGROUND:

As the Arun economy starts to recover from the economic impacts of the pandemic, the Council wishes to facilitate and support initiatives that will aid this economic recovery and grow its potential as a tourism destination.

Events and festivals are a proven way of boosting the economy. They attract visitors to a place who spend money which boosts the local economy both on and off the festival site. Events bring more people to a town, provide attractions/ interest for the local community, and also raise the profile of a place.

Events can include a range of themes such as sport events, cultural festivals, enthusiast events such as classic cars, or food festivals etc. They bring economic benefits to the places they are hosted. There are a number of locations in Arun that have the potential to hold reasonably sized events.

The Council would like to invite expressions of interest from suitably experienced festival operators to deliver an annual event on the Greens and / or surrounding areas of the seafront at Littlehampton. The event is likely to be over two or three days and would run for three years initially. As such an event is new to Littlehampton the Council may make a contribution to the running costs of the event to enable it to become established, with the expectation of it becoming financially self-sustainable in future years. The scale of any contribution by the Council is uncertain, prior to the proposed procurement exercise. However, Officers will identify a sum in the 2022/23 budget.

The Council is open to the type of event that could be provided and would be guided by the responses to the expression of interest as to what may be deemed feasible and viable in this location and that clearly supported the councils aspiration to support the local economy and develop Littlehampton as a visitor destination.

Planning for such events can take up to 18 months and the procurement exercise would precede this. The Council does not have Officers who run events. Therefore, if Council support is required, following the procurement exercise, some of the identified budget may be required for additional Officer support, depending on the experience of the Organiser of the proposed event. If the Council were to embark on a smaller scale, simpler event, then the pre-planning period can be reduced to nearer 12 months.

Use of the Greens would need to be with the agreement of the stakeholders regarding the restrictive covenants.

The Council's role will be to initially facilitate the event but not to lead on its delivery. The event organiser will be responsible for all liaison with stakeholders and relevant Council services.

Ideally the timing of the event will be to maximise summer visitor numbers but consideration will need to be given to other events being held in West Sussex to avoid a clash of dates and other localised regeneration activity such as the improvements to the town centre public realm in Littlehampton.

The Organisers must be able to evidence experience of larger events planning (including neighbours management, crowd management, traffic management, H&S etc) and operations.

The Council will also require to see the 'Green' credentials of the event and how this aligns with the Council's policy and vision.

2. PROPOSAL(S):

The Council would like to invite expressions of interest, from a suitably experienced festival operator, to deliver an annual public event on the Greens and / or surrounding

areas at Littlehampton seafront.

It is proposed that the Council contributes to the operation of the event in the first three years to enable it to be established.

This report is asking the Committee to support this proposal in principal and for officers to tender this opportunity for an external provider.

3. OPTIONS:

1. To support the proposal
2. To not support the proposal

4. CONSULTATION:

Has consultation been undertaken with:	YES	NO
Relevant Town/Parish Council		No
Relevant District Ward Councillors		No
Other groups/persons (please specify) The Leader of the Council and the Chair of the Economic Committee	Yes	
5. ARE THERE ANY IMPLICATIONS IN RELATION TO THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL POLICIES: (Explain in more detail at 6 below)	YES	NO
Financial	Yes	
Legal	Yes	
Human Rights/Equality Impact Assessment		No
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime & Disorder Act		No
Sustainability		No
Asset Management/Property/Land	Yes	
Technology		No
Other (please explain)		

6. IMPLICATIONS:

1. Officers will be required to develop the proposal brief ready for requesting expressions of interest and tender documents.
2. Officers will need to lead on the procurement exercise.
3. Officers will be required to commit a limited amount of time to assisting with the proposal during planning and delivery stages.
4. Grant funding may be required for up to 3 years to enable the festival to be established. This is a growth item and would need to be identified in the annual budget.
5. Stakeholders will need to be supportive of the proposals regarding the restrictive covenants.

7. REASON FOR THE DECISION:

A festival will support the economic recovery of Littlehampton. A quality and well-organised event could attract new visitors to the area. If this were to happen secondary spend is very likely and this would enhance the local economy. The Public Realm work in Littlehampton Town centre (that is taking place in 2022) will cause some disruption and an event near the beach/river could help to reduce some of this disruption.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None