

Cabinet

Thursday, 8 APRIL 2021

Report of The PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURE

Arts and Events Relaunch

Exempt Information

None

Purpose

To update Cabinet on the proposed Arts & Events relaunch programme for 2021, for the Assembly Rooms, Castle and outdoor events and to approve an additional budget to support the staffing of these events.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. That Cabinet endorse the proposed event programmes and dates.
2. That Cabinet approve the relaunching of all events, giving consideration to the potential loss of income.
3. That following the evaluation of the proposed events plan proposals to continue are considered as part of budget process for 2022/23.

Executive Summary

This report presents a programme that will re-launch Arts and Events for the wider Tamworth area, including the Assembly Rooms, Castle Grounds, and town centre. A brand new programme of events for the Castle is also included, which is the first of its kind since the Arts & Events Team commenced delivering events within the Castle.

This programme was drawn up taking into account a number of assumptions:

1. All Government guidance and roadmap in regards to dates will remain the same.
2. The public appetite for events continues to rise.
3. Delivery is dependent on the support of the new staffing structure.

With this in mind the figures included in the report are estimated based on the assumptions above.

Assembly Rooms

The Governments Roadmap to Recovery permitted educational activities to restart from 8th March. From 21st April the venue will be hired out for educational classes, which to date there are 20 pencilled in.

From the 17th May, Government guidance allows the re-opening of the venue with 50% occupancy with social distancing. During this time the venue has two previously booked children's theatre shows, as part of national tours. With two shows a day and at 50% occupancy.

Allowing these shows to go ahead will also begin the appetite for live shows at the venue; provide live entertainment for children who have been the most severely affected with pantomimes having been cancelled. It will also enable the venue to begin to operate again at steady pace allowing staff and resources to build up to full occupancy.

From 21st June, full occupancy is permitted, still with social distancing, however it is our intention not to re-open with live shows until the **27th June at 75% occupancy**, building up to 100% over the next few weeks, dependant on customer appetite and infection rates decreasing. A slow steady programme will be implemented, building to a full programme by end of summer and into the autumn.

A programme of commercial events will also run alongside the entertainment programme, to support the income stream and help establish the catering offer. Excluding our Christmas/December programme, to date commercial events have an expected income of £10,000(subject to customer appetite/confidence and Government restrictions).

In addition, from 17th May onwards, the Assembly Rooms will be launching a cinema programme to smaller audiences with the equipment have been funded from the Arts Councils culture recovery fund.

It is predicted that these shows will still be financially viable, however the Governments Roadmap to Recovery, Guidelines and public appetite may impact this further.

Outdoor Events

2020 saw a programme of sporadic events able to take place between lockdown and restrictions. From April 2021 the Council will present a more structured programme (detailed at Appendix 1) that will take into account social distancing, new restrictions, online resources and more untapped but useable spaces with the town: these include the Castle stables and the activity centre, (old outdoor swimming baths).

The biggest change in 2021 will be St Georges Day. The usual event attracting up to 10,000 people will not be possible, so the event will move online. Workshops, classes and activities all based around the medieval theme will be available online, with a full programme launched before the event to gain maximum engagement.

Other initiatives include our popular Bandstand concerts, featuring more professional groups this year. 2021 see's the launch of our '*Under the Stars*' Season which

include movies, theatre, town ghost walks/tours and music. Based in various locations within the castle grounds, Castle and public realm outside the Assembly Rooms it is a programme of professional live events supported by an ever changing food and drink offer.

The Arts and Events team are working in partnership with Tamworth Library to present a summer reading challenge in the castle grounds for children. In collaboration with the publishers of the award winning Julia Donaldson books, the team have also secured a 'Family Trail' based on one of her books, ('*Gruffalo*', '*Room on the Broom*'), which have proved very popular within Forest of England sites.

A further new initiative this year is a regular food festival, combined with live music, making use of the public realm space outside the Assembly Rooms. The street food offer will change on a regular basis, and will enable the bars of the Assembly Rooms to be capitalise on the event. A live comedy show or music will also be programmed to capture an audience that will feed into both events.

Tamworth Castle

A brand new programme of events has been drawn up for the Castle (detailed at Appendix 2), which will be delivered by the Arts and Events team. The events are a mixture of stand-alone shows and those that involve the Castle in those already occurring within the town. There is an eclectic mix of movies in the courtyard, workshops, seasonal activities, murder mystery evenings, and theatre. One new opportunity is an Escape Room, located within the Castle stables that will run over a period of 12 months.

Resource Implications

The new events programme has been costed and the income generated above 60% sales will offset the required budget for the new Castle events.

However the income generated is problematic to predict as all events are subject to Government Guidance at that time and the appetite from the public to attend. The following table* shows the impact of anticipated sales percentages for the new Castle events:-

| Profit/Loss | Profit | Loss |
|--------------|---------|---------|
| 100% Income | £48,632 | |
| 70% Capacity | £9,900 | |
| 60% Capacity | | £2,998 |
| 50% Capacity | | £15,905 |
| | | |

*These income figures are in addition to the previously approved castle report. The above events should create additional sales/net income for the Council from food and beverages sales.

Each of these events will bring people into the town to support the local economy.

A report to Cabinet in July 2020 recommended the mothballing of the Assembly Rooms due to the impact of the pandemic which resulted in several staff being made redundant. In order to support the relaunch of all events including the Assembly Rooms, additional staffing will be required which was subject to a report to Appointments and Staffing Committee (6th April 2021).

The new structure will ensure the team is modelled to work collaboratively, and although each member retains their specific role and area of expertise and knowledge, there will more cohesion between them all.

The recent Castle Review recommended that all events at the Castle were delivered by the Arts & Events team. This has led to a more structured approach to staffing that will feed into events no matter where their location or genre. The specific inclusion of permanent Duty Managers will also allow events and hire's to be 'managed' by role specific staff rather than other team members taking it in turns.

The cost of the new structure is detailed below:-

| | 2021/2022 | 2022/2023 |
|--|-------------|-------------|
| Available Revenue Budget within Assembly Rooms and Arts and Events | £470k | £492k |
| Phased staff return | £497k | |
| Full establishment cost | | £611k |
| Shortfall | £27k | £119K |
| 50% funding for Heritage and Leisure Officer- see below | £15k | £21K |
| Reduced shortfall | £12k | £98k |

The additional cost of £12k can be met from the wages budget across all codes of the Arts and Events revenue accounts for 2021/22. For future years, it is anticipated that additional income will be received from the roll out the food and beverage offer to other areas of the Council, including weddings which should further mitigate the additional ongoing staffing cost but due to the current uncertainty cannot be quantified at present.

Subject to the above an additional budget of up to £98k will be required to fund these posts from 2022/23. It is proposed that there is a robust evaluation at the end of the events season to assess the continued financial viability of the programme as both Government Guidance is ever changing and Officers are uncertain as to the public appetite for events following the covid pandemic.

The phased reopening of the Assembly Rooms together with public appetite to return and social distancing requirements will have an impact of the income of the theatre. However, the indoor shows will be brought back on line incrementally and assessed against local infection rates to ensure both the safety of the audience and to continue to build customer confidence. Therefore, it is intended to carry out a staggered recruitment process and build to a full working team by end of the Summer 2021. This approach should limit costs to mitigate against reduced income levels arising from reduced demand or the risk of further restrictions.

Assembly Rooms Income Summary

| | Annual Budget Performers Fees £ | Annual Budget Income £ | Annual Net Income £ |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Annual Budget performers fees etc | 362,770 | (531,380) | (168,610) |
| Reduce by 3 month closed period | (90,690) | 148,200 | 57,510 |
| Revised Annual Budgets | 272,080 | (383,180) | (111,100) |
| 70% Capacity | 272,080 | (268,226) | 3,854 |
| 60% Capacity | 272,080 | (229,908) | 42,172 |
| 50% Capacity | 272,080 | (191,590) | 80,490 |

As detailed above the worst case model (at 50% capacity) would mean a net loss in income of £250k (£340k income less £90k saving in fees) when compared to the budgeted income of £531k / fees of £363k – offset by any further potential reduction in performers fees (i.e. where fees are capacity based) which cannot be estimated at this time.

Assembly Rooms Bar Income

| | Annual Budget Purchase etc | Annual Budget Income | Annual Net Income |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Annual Budget | 89,050 | (253,550) | (164,500) |
| Reduce by Period Closed | (26,880) | 63,390 | 36,510 |
| Revised Annual Budgets | 62,170 | (190,160) | (127,990) |
| 70% Capacity | 43,519 | (133,112) | (89,593) |
| 60% Capacity | 37,302 | (114,096) | (76,794) |
| 50% Capacity | 31,085 | (95,080) | (63,995) |

The worst case model (with income at 50% of budget) would mean a net loss in income of £100k (£158k income less £58k saving in costs) when compared to the budgeted income of £254k / costs of £89k.

This would mean that overall income levels (at 50% capacity) could mean a net loss in income of £350K for the year when compared to budgeted income.

Legal/Risk Implications Background

