

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET

12 MAY 2015

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR – COMMUNITIES

URDD GOBAITH CYMRU NATIONAL EISTEDDFOD 2017

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to inform Cabinet of progress made by the organisers of the Urdd National Eisteddfod, scheduled to take place in Bridgend County in May 2017, and of the associated cost implications for the Authority.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 This report and proposal links to the following Corporate Priorities:
- Working together to develop the local economy
 - Working together to raise ambitions and drive up educational achievement
- 2.2 The report also links directly to the Council's Welsh Language Scheme and the Welsh Education Strategic Plan 2014-17 to:
- promote the wider development of pupils' Welsh language skills through specific activities and projects, in association with a wide range of partners

3. Background

- 3.1 Urdd Gobaith Cymru is now long established and recognised as the foremost body that promotes opportunity and activities for young people through the medium of Welsh.
- 3.2 The Urdd National Eisteddfod is a yearly festival which celebrates the Welsh language, culture and talents of the young people of Wales. It is one of Europe's largest youth cultural festivals attracting over 15,000 competitors and approximately 100,000 visitors over the six days of the event.
- 3.3 The Urdd Eisteddfod is a touring festival and is held in a different location in Wales each year. In 2015 the home of the Urdd Eisteddfod will be Caerphilly in South East Wales and in 2016 it will be held in Flintshire in North East Wales.

4. Current Situation / Proposal

- 4.1 In the autumn of 2014 the Director of the Urdd National Eisteddfod approached Bridgend County Borough Council as to its view on hosting the 2017 Eisteddfod within its county borough boundaries. The Urdd subsequently held an open public meeting in June 2014 at which the Urdd was invited to the County Borough in 2017 and from which a local committee has been formed to prepare for the event.

- 4.2 Currently the preferred site for the event is Bridgend College's Pencoed Campus.
- 4.3 Once a host authority is confirmed a Proclamation Ceremony is held approximately eight months prior to the festival itself.
- 4.4 At a strategic level hosting the Eisteddfod fulfills a number of the Council's aims with regards young people, developing the tourist economy and the promotional aspects of its Welsh Language Scheme.
- 4.6 Support of local people is paramount to the fund-raising effort with a broad indication that around £300,000 in funding would be required from this source and associated activities.
- 4.7 Whilst there is not an expectation for the Council to provide a direct financial contribution due to an existing agreement with the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), areas of expenditure and in kind support that the Council will need to consider in the lead up to and during the event include the following:
- Event Development Support through the Events Safety Advisory Group
 - Input into the development of a Traffic Management Plan for the event
 - Marketing and Communications support
 - Support for a Proclamation Ceremony parade through one of the County's Town Centres
 - Sponsorship of Official Urdd Reception
 - Structure (marquee) to house the Council's presence on site during the event
 - Promotional / merchandise to promote Council activity / objectives
 - Welsh speaking staff presence on site during weekend and bank holiday period of event
 - Road Closures within the Borough during the period of event.
- 4.8 The Urdd National Eisteddfod is estimated to contribute over £6m to the host local economy and generates wall-to-wall media coverage of the host area for a whole week. It should be noted that many of the 100,000 visitors will be staying locally and also visiting other attractions in the county borough, using local transport and shopping locally. This is therefore a unique opportunity to promote the County Borough to a national audience and strengthen the local economy.
- 4.9 Hosting the Urdd Eisteddfod will also boost the promotion of the Welsh language in Bridgend County Borough, open opportunities for children and young people and in particular support the Welsh medium and Welsh language education.
- 4.10. The Council would also welcome the opportunity to further promote the Welsh Language and culture in line with the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and we anticipate that hosting the event would help to raise the interest levels and perceived value of Welsh among pupils. The promotion of elements of culture such as traditional music, dance, literature, performance and visual arts is welcomed by both English and Welsh Medium schools across the borough.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules

- 5.1 This report has no effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

- 6.1 From the Initial Screening Equality Impact Assessment undertaken, there are a number of equalities issues to be considered in planning the Urdd Gobaith Cymru National Eisteddfod 2017. Whilst there will be a positive impact on the promotion of the Welsh language and culture, many of the issues present opportunities to positively impact the Community Cohesion Agenda and enable people from all protected characteristic groups to participate fully in the festival. A Full Equality Impact Assessment will be required within the next 12 months.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 As indicated in Section 4 of this report, there are financial implications associated with a decision to host the Eisteddfod both at a local economic level and directly to the Council through in-kind support.
- 7.2 The potential aspects that may require in-kind staff support without a financial contribution are:
- Event Development support through the Events Safety Advisory Group
 - Input into the development of a Traffic Management Plan for the event
 - Marketing and Communications support
 - Support for a Proclamation Ceremony parade through one of the County's Town Centres
 - Road Closures within the Borough during the period of event.
- 7.3 The potential aspects that may require financial contribution to an anticipated value of £25,000 are:
- Sponsorship of Official Urdd Reception
 - Structure (marquee) to house the Council's presence on site during the event
 - Promotional / merchandise to promote Council activity / objectives
 - Welsh speaking staff presence on site during weekend and bank holiday period of event
- 7.4 The potential sources of funding this level of contribution are as follows; The Communities Directorate currently holds a Strategic Events Fund which is used to support a number of key events in our town centres and throughout the County Borough as part of an annual events programme to attract people to visit our town centres and the wider County Borough.
- 7.5 If the Urdd Eisteddfod was to be prioritised for the use of this funding in 2017 it would inevitably mean that the rest of the events programme would be compromised for that year. In addition the County Borough is also already committed to hosting for a second time the prestigious British Seniors Open Golf Championship at Royal Porthcawl in the summer of 2017. This will mean that 'in kind' financial support will also be required for this event and it is not clear at this stage whether there would be sufficient funding at that time to adequately support both events, particularly as the Directorate will have to make further large scale cut backs to its overall budget by this point.

- 7.6 Alternatively a 'one off' bid for Corporate funding to offset these costs could be made on the basis of the strategic importance of the Urdd Eisteddfod. This option would also reflect that the full burden of costs to the Council should not fall wholly on the Communities Directorate for something that is very much a whole Council event.
- 7.7 Finally it is possible that commercial sponsors could be pursued to help fund some of the costs outlined in paragraph 7.3. This is not the usual process employed by Authorities hosting the Urdd Eisteddfod but potentially it is a more sustainable route to fund the event moving forward, but there is of course no guarantee that any efforts to secure sponsors will be successful.
- 7.8 It is suggested in view of the above that at this stage the Strategic Events Fund, within the Communities Directorate is earmarked as the initial source of funding to support the Urdd Eisteddfod in 2017 but that Cabinet note that it may also be necessary in due course to make an additional bid for Corporate support and/or to develop commercial sponsorship opportunities to help offset the full costs of the Council's hosting responsibilities. Cabinet should also note the impact this proposed course of action will have on the remainder of the events programme in 2017.

8. Recommendation

8.1 It is recommended that:

- a. Cabinet support and approve the hosting of the Urdd National Eisteddfod in the County Borough of Bridgend from 29th May to 3rd June 2017;
- b. Cabinet delegate authority to the Corporate Director - Communities as nominated lead Director to enter into further discussions with the Urdd National Eisteddfod organisers;
- c. Cabinet note the positive economic impact of the Urdd National Eisteddfod on the local economy and approve the allocation of in-kind and financial resources as outlined in Section 7 of the report.

Mark Shephard
CORPORATE DIRECTOR - COMMUNITIES
April 2015

Contact Officer: Ieuan Sherwood
Manager, Tourism and Countryside

Telephone: (01656) 815333

E-mail: ieuan.Sherwood@bridgend.gov.uk

Background documents:

None