

**AGENDA ITEM**

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**28 OCTOBER 2010**

**REPORT OF CORPORATE  
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

**CABINET DECISION**

**Leader of the Council, Councillor Lupton  
Arts, Leisure & Culture - Lead Cabinet Member - Councillor Mrs Womphrey**

**STOCKTON INTERNATIONAL RIVERSIDE FESTIVAL 2010**

1. Summary

2010 was the 23rd Stockton International Riverside Festival and 20th Stockton Riverside Fringe and another extremely successful year. SIRC presented the largest programme for many years with over 200 performances by 32 companies from 7 European countries. The Community Carnival was the largest yet with over 1,350 participants and the Fringe presented fantastic headline acts alongside our local musicians. We have continuing high visitor satisfaction ratings, positive impact on Stockton's image and significant economic benefits for the town.

2. Recommendations

To note the success and feedback of this year's Festival and accept the proposal to increase the use of charging in future Festivals.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

To celebrate the successes and improvements of this Festival and support the event's future development

4. Members Interests

Members (including co-opted Members with voting rights) should consider whether they have a personal interest in the item as defined in the Council's code of conduct (**paragraph 8**) and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with paragraph 9 of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest in the item, he/she must then consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest (**paragraphs 10 and 11 of the code of conduct**).

A Member with a prejudicial interest in any matter must withdraw from the room where the meeting considering the business is being held –

- In a case where the Member is attending a meeting (including a meeting of a select committee) but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under statutory right or otherwise, immediately after making representations, answering questions or giving evidence as the case may be;
- In any other case, whenever it becomes apparent that the business is being considered at the meeting;

And must not exercise executive functions in relation to the matter and not seek improperly to influence the decision about the matter (**paragraph 12 of the Code**).

**Further to the above, it should be noted that any Member attending a meeting of Cabinet, Select Committee etc; whether or not they are a Member of the Cabinet or Select Committee concerned, must declare any personal interest which they have in the business being considered at the meeting (unless the interest arises solely from the Member's membership of, or position of control or management on any other body to which the Member was appointed or nominated by the Council, or on any other body exercising functions of a public nature, when the interest only needs to be declared if and when the Member speaks on the matter), and if their interest is prejudicial, they must also leave the meeting room, subject to and in accordance with the provisions referred to above.**

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### **STOCKTON INTERNATIONAL RIVERSIDE FESTIVAL 2010**

#### **SUMMARY**

2010 was the 23rd Stockton International Riverside Festival and 20th Stockton Riverside Fringe and another extremely successful year. SIRF presented the largest programme for many years with over 200 performances by 32 companies from 7 European countries. The Community Carnival was the largest yet with over 1,350 participants and the Fringe presented fantastic headline acts alongside our local musicians. We have continuing high visitor satisfaction ratings, positive impact on Stockton's image and significant economic benefits for the town.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

To note the success and feedback of this year's Festival and accept the proposal to increase the use of charging in future Festivals.

#### **DETAIL**

1. 2010 was the 23rd Stockton International Riverside Festival and 20th Stockton Riverside Fringe and another extremely successful year. SIRF presented the largest programme for many years with over 200 performances by 32 companies from 7 European countries. The Community Carnival was the largest yet with over 1,350 participants and the Fringe presented fantastic headline acts alongside our local musicians. We have continuing high visitor satisfaction ratings, positive impact on Stockton's image and significant economic benefits for the town.
2. SIRF 2010 presented an excellent creative programme of UK and international shows, justifying SIRF's position as one of the finest street arts festivals in Europe: We commissioned new work, largely through the Without Walls consortium of UK street arts festivals; We introduced European companies to the UK and we participated in a cultural exchange programme with a festival in France, introducing UK companies to Europe. We have an inclusive Community Carnival, one of the largest is the UK.

3. This year's annual SIRF Visitor Survey was commissioned by Corporate Communications using a different methodology from that of previous years. The survey included face to face interviews during and after the Festival, self completion questionnaires, and discussion groups. The new system makes exact comparisons with previous years harder, but provides a more rounded picture incorporating more information than was the case in the past. Analysis of the substantial body of data is ongoing but the initial report reveals the following headline statistics:
  - > 98% of visitors think that SIRF is a good thing for Stockton Borough.
  - > 93% of visitors think SIRF is good for promoting Stockton Borough as a place to visit
  - > 92% of visitors think that supporting SIRF is a good use of Stockton Borough Council's resources.
  - > A quarter of businesses experienced a 50% or greater increase in turnover during the Festival
  - > SIRF and Fringe generated £1.9m of income for the Borough
  - > 1,351 participants and 62 groups participated in the Community Carnival, with every ward in the borough represented.
  - > 26 new community groups were involved.
  - > SIRF and Fringe combined presented more than 300 performances to estimated audiences of over 160,000 people.
4. On the whole, SIRF 2010 was well planned and executed. As in previous years, the various internal and external partners collaborated to create an experience for the visitor that was unified and coherent.

### **SIRF Programme**

5. The format for 2010 was the same as in recent years, with a concentration of differing scale shows and walkabouts in the High Street, a second cluster on Trinity Green, including the culmination of the ever expanding Community Carnival and the Festival Finale, a Spiegel Tent and small scale entertainments in Parish Gardens, several shows on Church Road, the Fringe on the Riverside and in the Georgian Theatre and Festival Club at ARC. The Festival main programme began on Wednesday night, the Fringe ran from Friday to Sunday, the Carnival took place at midday on Saturday and the Festival culminated with a spectacular finale on the Sunday night.
6. An event space on the High Street, north of the Town Hall was designated at an early stage to ensure plenty of advance warning for displaced market traders. To have this planning certainty we have to exclude stalls from an area which at times may be larger than we need, but which we can be confident will not be altered as the technical details emerge in the few weeks before the event.
7. SIRF 2010 presented a large and diverse programme providing a great deal of choice for visitors of all ages. Visitor feedback and anecdotal evidence tells us that the most popular highlights were:

8. **Spiegel Tent**, a large, elegant wooden framed tent which hosted a programme to attract audiences of all ages and interests; daytime family entertainment included SIRF favourites, multi-talented musical clowns, The Chipolatas; at night, Circus of Horrors Freaks and Feathers, a fusion of cabaret, new burlesque, circus sideshow and contemporary vaudeville. The daytime events were free and the night show was paid for.
9. **Electric Hotel** was an intriguing large scale show which gave the audience, wearing headphones, a chance to watch and listen-in to the natural habits, unnatural fantasies and housekeeping of wildly varied quality in the 'do not disturb' lives of guests at the Hotel. The set was built on Bath Lane East car park out of six large shipping containers and looked perfectly at home in the setting. This was the show that really got audiences talking with many different views.
10. **Les Tonys**, by Compagnie Albedo from France, were a very irreverent and hilarious comical walkabout show who turned up everywhere at the Festival. Two bodyguards, twin brothers, **Tony** and **Tony**, were on a mission to provide security for Festival visitors, whether they wanted it or not!.
11. **Awakening** by Irish company Fidget Feet, was a stunning night-time aerial dance show in Trinity Church, which again demonstrated what a wonderful venue it is for evening events. The show was a beautiful mix of lighting, music, acrobatics and film projections.
12. **Atempo Circ**, a young company from Catalonia in Spain performing in the UK for the first time, presented "Atempo" on Stockton High Street. It was an exciting mix of music, dance and contemporary circus, featuring spectacular circus disciplines Chinese Pole, Cloudswing and Cyr Wheel
13. **SIRF Community Carnival**  
The Carnival was once again a highlight of SIRF. It was the culmination of a varied programme of creative activity over several weeks with Stockton's local school and community groups and exceeded our targets:
  - 1320 people participated in the parade and 1351 took part in carnival activity. This is an 11.3% increase in participant numbers from 2009. The target number of participants was exceeded by 12.6%
  - There was a record number of groups – 62 school/youth/community groups, plus a healthy number of volunteers. This demonstrates an increase of 7 groups on the previous year and an increase of 21 groups over the last 2 years
  - 26 of the groups were new to carnival and we worked with 36 groups who had taken part in previous years. The number of repeat groups that the carnival attracts each year demonstrates that the carnival has a dedicated following and that there is demand for the event from the local community.
  - 12.9% of groups defined themselves as diverse:
    - 4 groups were disabled-led
    - 2 groups were BME
    - 1 LGBT group
    - 1 group of older people
    - 10 early years/family groups

14. The title of the parade was 'I Spy...' and it explored the great outdoors including Stockton's urban and natural environments, local landmarks, hobbies, activities and relaxation in Stockton. We continued to improve the artistic quality of the parade, with more dance, music and giant costumes. For the second year, the carnival culminated in a finale performance on Trinity Green.
15. Following discussions with the Officers' Traffic Group around the issues arising from public transport delays in 2009, the route of the Carnival was changed and formal road closures were put into place on Church Road and Yarm Lane, keeping the Prince Regent Street roundabout open. Church Road was closed for 30 minutes whilst the Carnival passed onto the High Street. The parade went down the High Street as usual and straight down Bridge Road crossing Yarm Lane onto Trinity Green. Church Road was re-opened as soon as the parade passed onto the High Street and Yarm Lane closed whilst it crossed onto Trinity Green, carefully co-ordinated so that Yarm Lane did not close until Church Road re-opened. It was generally agreed that the changes all ran smoothly and were successful in minimising the disruption to bus services.
16. **ARC**  
SIRF used ARC for its Production Office, artists' changing rooms and artists and festival staff catering, which all proved very successful. Feedback from Festival staff and artists was that it worked well and they liked having all facilities and support in one place. ARC also hosted the after hours Festival Club and the end of Festival party
17. ***Stockton Riverside Fringe***  
The Fringe celebrated its 20th year and with huge acts such as The Human League, Lightening Seeds, Mercury Rev and Calvin Harris as well as showcasing the best of our local musicians and a great comedy and Georgian Theatre programme. The strong relationship between SIRF and the Fringe helped us achieve a critical mass of activity and multi-choice for audiences at all times during the Festivals.
18. The focus of the Fringe programme is on a more mature audience and retro line-up on the Friday night, a younger current pop and contemporary emphasis on the Saturday, and a family friendly mix on the Sunday. The variation in emphasis enables us to target different demographic groups for different days and different strands of the programme.
19. Thanks to Tees Music Alliance's year round work at the Green Dragon Studios and Georgian Theatre, local talent is nurtured and provided with sustained support and professional guidance. Riverside Fringe represents the top tier of that support. The scale and quality of the Fringe stage and infrastructure, and that of the Comedy Tent, gives emerging bands or solo performers the experience of performing with high quality technical production, on a large stage to a large audience, and the chance to be on the same bill as a major group.

20. **SIRF Finale**  
The Finale, “Bombs per Minute”, combining explosive percussion with amazing fireworks, was performed by French company Les Commandos Percu on Trinity Green to an audience of around 12,000. It was a spectacular and surprising show of music and movement synchronised with pyrotechnics.
21. A Finale planning group was established, involving the police, stewards, Network Safety and Health and Safety Manager, to produce a robust management plan for the event. The plan went like clockwork with excellent communication between the Fringe and SIRF organisers to safely manage the crowds leaving Riverside and the end of the Fringe and walking up to Trinity Green. No major issues were reported.
22. **PingPong** – SIRF participated in a cultural exchange with the Cratere/Surface Festival of Ales in France. The artistic directors of both festivals selected five companies from their country to perform at each others festival. The specially selected companies that SIRF hosted were Le Muscle, Ex Nihilo, Les Ateliers Denino, Compagnie 1 Watt and Les Apostrophes. PingPong contributed £16,500 to SIRF and was a great opportunity to share experiences and ideas with colleagues from another festival.

### **Management and Delivery**

23. The management arrangements were the same as last year with the Arts Development Manager acting as Festival Co-ordinator, the Arts Development Team undertaking the administration for the event, PR and marketing through the Communication Team and the Artistic Director and Technical and Production Manager outsourced
24. The regular management, programme, technical and full group meetings were well attended with representation from residents, emergency services, bus operator and Council departments such as PR, Network Safety, car parking, town centre management, Care for Your Area, health and safety, risk management and insurance. We appear to have resolved previously difficult issues such as Markets, car parking and traffic management and had a real sense that the services involved have ownership and pride in managing the complexities of presenting a successful SIRF.

### **Marketing and Communications**

25. A great deal has been achieved this year with the following highlights:
  1. SIRF gained a lot of regional and national press and media coverage.
  2. SIRF advertised on the Castlegate screen for the first time.
  3. There was more TV and radio coverage than in recent years.
26. This year we had the advantage of two very visual shows being built early in the week and local TV came down on several occasions to film them
27. The main issues that visitors have raised have been the quality of the printed publicity and the lack of signage in the town centre.

28. There is a need for temporary directional signage in pedestrian areas within the town to help visitors find sites and performance spaces, and for temporary maps that illustrate the layout of the town and whereabouts of facilities like the TIC and toilets. In addition, there is a need for better signage on roadsides on the approaches to the Borough and to the town centre, to direct visitors arriving by car to the event sites.

### **Finances**

29. This year's Festival operated within very tight financial controls and was delivered on budget.
30. The potential for different delivery models and for increased earned income from ticket sales is being explored through the Arts Events & Tourism EIT Review. Previous Cabinet reports on SIRF and Fringe have indicated a need to explore opportunities for increased charging and it seems likely that the EIT Review will suggest that charging should play a significant part in the income profiles of future festivals.

### **VIP and hospitality**

31. The SIRF and Fringe VIP launch event took place in the Spiegel Tent on Parish Gardens on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> July. There was also the hospitality marquee overlooking the Fringe site courtesy of Tees Music Alliance. A system was put in place to invite people to the launch event and give some of them access to the hospitality marquee as well. Although our VIP guests, both Fringe and SIRF, were very positive in their feedback, we believe this is still an area for development. There is potential to provide a bespoke VIP launch performance event, ensuring our VIPs see work that is at the core of the SIRF/Fringe brand in a convenient form, in terms of time, location, and duration.

### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

### **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS**

Continued development and promotion of festivals and events will increase the profile of the Borough locally, regionally and nationally, as well as providing opportunities for families, children and young people from our communities to experience and participate in the arts.

The promotion of diverse cultural opportunities will contribute towards the creation of vibrant and successful Town Centres

### **EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed with a score of 80

SIRF is an inclusive festival which brings people together for shared enjoyment, experiences and participation in Stockton's public spaces.



## **CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS**

SIRF is underpinned by robust and wide consultation with Council Members, Council services, partners, stakeholders, businesses, resident and community groups,

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