

CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

3 NOVEMBER 2011

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET DECISION

Arts, Leisure and Culture– Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Dixon

STOCKTON'S MAJOR EVENTS SUMMARY 2011 AND PREPARATIONS FOR 2012

1. Summary

The spring and summer of 2011 saw the expansion and improvement of some of our key culture and leisure events, including the River Rat Race, Triathlon, Cycling Festival and Stockton International Riverside Festival (SIRF). In addition there was a fundamental change to the Stockton Riverside Fringe which became the Weekender Festival. We also maintained a range of popular local events and celebrated a number of significant dates.

With an emphasis on SIRF as our highest profile Festival, this report highlights the outcomes and impacts of the 2011 events and looks at the opportunities and challenges arising from the coincidence of the Queens Diamond Jubilee, the London Olympics, and the 25th anniversary of SIRF in 2012.

2. Recommendations

1. To note the success of SIRF and the other signature events in 2011
2. Endorse proposals for an enhanced event programme in 2012 associated with the Diamond Jubilee, London 2012 Olympics, and 25th SIRF.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

To update Members on the successes and improvements of the major events/festivals in 2011, highlighting in particular the achievements of SIRF and support the events' 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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DETAIL

1. In 2011, a full entertainment and events programme returned to Preston Park following the installation of a much needed drainage system on the main field. These improvement works meant that visitors to the park were able to utilise the main field throughout the year, giving us a high level of confidence in delivering events such as the Summer Show, Fire Engine and Vintage Vehicle Rally, Tees Valley Garden Show and Halloween Fright Night
2. SBC has also supported a number of celebratory, community and charity events during the year including the 90th anniversary of the British Legion, Billingham and Thornaby Shows, Britain in Bloom, Centenary Celebrations for the Transporter Bridge and Looked After Children celebration events to name a few.
3. The spring and summer programme saw the expansion and improvement of some of our key culture and leisure events, including the River Rat Race, Triathlon, Cycling Festival and Stockton International Riverside Festival (SIRF). Further details of the major events are provided in the following paragraphs.

Infinity Festival

4. The Infinity Festival incorporated the Tees Regatta for the first time and introduced a new 'Community Boat Challenge'. The Challenge pitted novice rowers against one another on rowing machines in time trial knockout competition. The winning 2 teams of 4 rowers were then coached over a period of weeks by Tees Rowing Club members to race on the water in front of the crowds on the day of the Regatta. The Regatta was a well run and well attended event. In the evening performances featuring fire drawings, hanging fire baskets and illuminated water cascades animated the Infinity Bridge. The images were beautiful and resulting on-line and media promotion was considerable.

Cycling Festival

5. The first Stockton Cycling Festival was promoted in collaboration with Velo 29, and attracted hundreds of riders for a range of levels of competition and participatory community events. The 'Sportive' took riders on grueling 30, 60 or 90mile routes across the North Yorkshire Moors, securing very positive coverage in serious Cycling journals and general press. The 'Elite Criterium' races gave spectators a chance to see fast, closed-road circuit racing with start and finish on the Riverside Road. Despite prolonged torrential rain the event was exciting to watch and enjoyed by the competitors who praised the organisation and location.



Triathlon

6. 2011 was the second year of Stockton Triathlon staged in collaboration with Trihard. With Mini, Sprint, and Standard distances it attracted over 560 competitors - double the 2010 levels. The spectacle of 400 swimmers racing in the Tees on a bright afternoon illustrated the value of the Tees as a leisure resource and the value of events as a means of making people look differently at familiar places.



Take to the Tees

7. Take to the Tees presented a weeklong opportunity for people to experiment with water sports and water based leisure. Nearly 600 people had a go at everything from rowing, paddle boarding, kayaking and waterskiing to riding as passengers in the exhilarating Thundercats. The programme was made possible by the support and involvement of a number of clubs and groups, including the Tees Rowing Club, Tees Wheelyboat Association, Tees Watersports Centre, and Tees Active Ltd.



River Rat Race

8. Stockton River Rat Race, presented in collaboration with Rat Race Adventure, marked the end of the Take to the Tees Festival. Following a fantastic inaugural event in 2010 which attracted 750 participants, River Rat Race 2011 saw just under 1000 people run, swim and crawl around the 10k course. The technical challenges presented by a 30% increase in participants were handled brilliantly thanks to the detailed planning and close collaboration of all the parties involved. The Channel 4 broadcast coverage presented a very positive image of Stockton as an event location and visitor destination.



Billingham International Folklore Festival (BIFF)

9. Bingham International Folklore Festival (BIFF) is the largest traditional international dance and music festival in the UK run by volunteers. 2011 was the 47th Festival presenting a diverse mix of concerts, workshops and costumes by performance groups from all over the world. This year the organisers took a new approach in developing and presenting the Festival to make it more appealing to a wider and younger audience whilst respecting BIFF's heritage. Alongside the traditional performances, the organisers engaged professional contemporary dancers and musicians as part of the programme. A professional choreographer worked with the international groups and UK artists to produce performance pieces featuring a combination of dance and music styles. This was made possible by a grant from Arts Council England. The Festival organisers are extremely enthusiastic about this new approach and we hope this becomes the format for the future

Stockton International Riverside Festival (SIRF)

10. This years' SIRF presented a programme of over 125 shows by 34 companies from 14 countries across the globe. In addition, the Community Carnival was a vibrant mix of colorful costumes and giant characters with over 1,130 participants. The Festival began on Thursday with a spectacular launch event at night, the Community Carnival took place on Saturday and the Festival reached its peak with a spectacular finale on the Sunday night.
11. SIRF 2011 focused on a concentration of differing scale shows utilising Stockton High Street, the stunning Spiegel Tent and small scale shows on Parish Gardens, culminating with the Finale on North Shore.
12. The weather was not kind to us this year and, for the first time in many years, we had to cancel several shows on the Saturday afternoon and evening, however we were able to finish Saturday night with our scheduled show.
13. This year's SIRF Visitor Survey was undertaken by SPIRUL Intelligent Research for the second year. We have not yet received the full analysis of data collected but have received the following headline statistics:
 - 97% of visitors think that SIRF is a good thing for Stockton Borough.
 - 93% of visitors think SIRF is good for promoting Stockton as a place to visit.
 - 92% of visitors think that supporting SIRF is a good use of Stockton Borough Council's resources.
 - 32% of visitors have attended SIRF 20 times or more.
 - Estimated income of £1.3m was generated within the Borough as a result of the festival.
 - 1,133 participants and 56 groups participated in the Community Carnival,
 - 16 groups were new to carnival and 40 groups had taken part in the carnival previously. The large number of repeat groups demonstrates the local community's continued commitment to the event
 - SIRF presented more than 125 performances to estimated audiences of over 65,000 people.
14. In the report, 3% of visitors describe themselves as disappointed with the Festival. We will be looking at the comments provided to understand why people were disappointed with a view to learning from them.
15. It should be noted that respondents were drawn from general public in the Town over the period in question, including people who were not necessarily Festival visitors.
16. The economic impact assessment shows a drop in visitor spend compared with 2010, from £20.62 per person to £13.76, generating a total visitor spend of £1.3million in 2011 compared to £1.9million in 2010.

17. 41% of businesses questioned in the survey reported an increase in customers compared to a normal weekend, despite the torrential rain on the Saturday afternoon. However, only 24% of those businesses reported an increase in turnover.
18. Because of the nature of SIRF, it is impossible to count actual visitor numbers but we estimate that audiences were 20% down on the aggregate of previous years. We believe this is primarily due to the rain on the Saturday resulting in the cancellation of all shows between the noon Carnival and the 9.30pm Nutkut show.
19. Over the last 5 years the costs of presenting SIRF have increased. The weak currency exchange rates and rising costs for hire of equipment and services, such as stewarding and security, has put pressure on budgets over the years. We have managed to maintain the quality and diversity of the Festival but we have not been able to sustain the critical mass of activity as much as we would have liked. We believe this is reflected in people's experience of the event and the slight decline in satisfaction and attendance.
20. SIRF 2011 presented an innovative and creative international programme, justifying SIRF's reputation as one of the finest street arts festivals in Europe. From anecdotal evidence and recorded visitor feedback the most popular highlights are provided below.

Spiegel Tent

21. This large, elegant wooden framed tent hosted a programme to attract audiences of all ages. The free daytime family entertainment was selected and hosted by The Chipolatas, and was an eclectic mix of performers from around the globe, blending traditional and contemporary circus, music and storytelling.
22. The paid for night time programme was Teesside's popular Brutus Gold Love Train and from Australia, The Dirty Brothers Dark Party. The Dirty Brothers' show was aimed at our audiences who love Circus of Horrors. They describe themselves as the kamikaze clown princes of sideshow, mixing silent comedy with sketches and some eye watering stunts and they didn't disappoint!
23. The Spiegel Tent was popular with visitors although ticket sales were disappointing and evening show percentage occupancy rates were lower than those achieved previously for Circus of Horrors.

gi20

24. Gone in 20 Minutes was a new national showcase for UK artists at the outset of their careers developed and delivered by SIRF in partnership with CREATE, the cultural festival for the five London Boroughs hosting the 2012 London Olympic and Paralympic Games.
25. We gave 10 companies the chance to present new work to audiences in London and Stockton and to compete for 2 cash prizes, one awarded by a panel of judges and the other by the audience. Audience voting was by text and over 120 people voted. The winner of the audience vote was a show called The Hide by Tangled Feet where the audience sit in what appears to be a bird watching hide and observes the human activity on the streets, trying to work out who are actors and who are passersby. Gone in 20 Minutes was extremely popular with audiences and we plan to present another showcase for 2012.

Ragroof Theatre (UK) and Compagnie Vendeval (France)

26. The two companies collaborated to present *Bridges y Puentes* which explored the experience of migration. The companies interviewed migrants from Stockton and Mulhouse in France and their stories and experiences were integral to the show. The audience was taken on a journey to share the experiences of migrants, from the painful leaving of their homes to the challenges of integrating into new communities. A beautiful show of spoken word, song, music and dance including a performance by Stockton's Diaspora Vocal Collective.



Bagditos Theatre (Germany)

27. Bagditos Theatre returned to SIRF to present *Stuntshow*, a crazy comedy daredevil show that involved 2 performers showing what mad stunts they could get up to with their Volkswagon Beetle and mini-me motor bike. Great fun!

28. **Bunny Me** by Reial Companyia de Teatre de Catalunya (Spain) was a tongue in cheek show about a job creation scheme for young people performed in Debenhams's shop window! The performers played two unemployed people who dressed up as rabbits and put themselves up for sale as pets in a shop window. A fresh and original show with a very current theme.

29. **Nutkhot (UK)** returned to SIRF with *Sari Sari Nights*, a beautiful and colorful night-time procession through the centre of the town inspired by Indian sari shops and the glamorous sari clad shop window mannequins. An iconic mannequin paraded through the streets, accompanied by tailors on bicycles interacting with the audience, a beautiful lotus flower float, dancers and trailing saris, all accompanied by Bollywood music. The dancers in the show included several local young people who worked with the company in the week before the show rehearsing their performance.

We were delighted by the number of people who turned out after going home because of the rain and pleased by the good turn out by South Asian communities.



Community Carnival

30. Stockton Community Carnival 2011 was the culmination of weeks of hard work by artists, community groups, dancers and musicians who created a vibrant and stunning parade of wonderful costumes, giant structures, amazing choreography, drumming and music which filled the High Street from north to south. The Carnival culminated on Trinity Green with an entertaining finale performance.
31. The theme for the carnival was *Dare to Dream* and it explored both the dreams we have whilst we sleep and our dreams and aspirations for the future. *Dare to Dream* was chosen as the winning entry to our successful People's Choice competition, which gave local people the opportunity to choose the theme and title for the parade.



32. Carnival statistics include:

- 1133 participated in the Carnival.
- 56 school/youth/community groups took part, plus a healthy number of volunteers.
- 16 groups were new to carnival and 40 groups had taken part in the carnival previously. The large number of repeat groups demonstrates the local community's continued commitment to the event.
- 8.7% of groups defined themselves as diverse:
 - 3 groups were disabled-led
 - 1 was an LGBT group
 - 1 was a group of older people
 - 6 groups were early years and 5 groups were family groups. This is a good indication that carnival brings people of all ages together and provides opportunities for families to work together creatively.

Finale

33. This year's Finale was one of the most spectacular ever staged. It was a stunning UK premiere performed by Argentine/Spanish company Voala. The show, *High!*, took its inspiration from the heady optimism of the 1960s and featured a giant psychedelic mobile suspended from an enormous crane with 13 extraordinary acrobats performing above a stage with uplifting rock music, a light show and wonderful pyrotechnics.



34. High Street and Trinity Green have been used for recent finales, but present significant space restrictions and safety challenges. This year the Finale was staged on the Homes & Communities Agency (HCA) development site on North Shore. We undertook some remedial work to make it accessible and safe for audiences and the artists. The site proved to be excellent for staging such a large show as it gave us sufficient space for an audience in excess of 15,000 to be combined with high level pyrotechnics. Thanks to continuing support of the HCA we are planning to use the space for SIRF and other events in the medium term until it has been redeveloped.

VIP Launch Event

35. Traditionally, SIRF's VIP started in the early evening, trying to catch guests straight from work. These were informal events with a buffet followed by short speeches. Our guests were then encouraged to go and enjoy some shows in the early evening before attending the one we had selected as the "VIP show" after dark. The events were always well attended but we were never sure how many people stayed for the main show, or came back during the rest of the Festival
36. This year we decided to change the format for the VIP event to start later and to be designed to demonstrate to guests the history, diversity, scale and impact of SIRF and other SBC significant events, as well as enjoy a true SIRF spectacular show.
37. We held the SIRF VIP Launch Event on Thursday night, 4th August, with over 200 guests from the public, private, independent and cultural sectors. The event started at ARC with a reception compared by an entertaining comedian and featured a showcase and showreel film of previous Festivals, demonstrating the scale and innovation of SIRF over the years. Guests were then accompanied to the High Street for '*As the World Tipped*' by Wired Aerial Theatre.
38. *As the World Tipped* was an ambitious and extraordinary piece of aerial theatre that told the powerful tale of ecological crisis. It combined dramatic film and visuals and breathtaking aerial performances. The show started on a huge stage, which literally tipped from horizontal to vertical while the performers were suspended above the audience in the night sky. As it tipped, the stage turned into a film screen and performance area for the stunning aerial dance and theatre.
39. The launch event was a great success and we received many messages of congratulations from our guests achieving our aim of demonstrating the scope, innovation and scale of SIRF to a wide range of people who may have known about SIRF but not fully experienced it.



Technical and Health and Safety

40. SIRF has an outstanding reputation for its technical expertise and health and safety record. 24 years of presenting SIRF has enabled us to build experience and expertise in successfully and safely staging complex events in quick succession, within a condensed space. In addition to presenting touring shows which require adjustment to local site characteristics, SIRF commissions a number of new shows every year. As the new shows evolve the technical specification can change dramatically, right up to the last minute, requiring change in site, orientation, equipment requirements etc. This year almost 60% of the programme was newly commissioned, including two large scale crane shows.
41. The biggest challenge resulted from our decision to present 'As the World Tipped'. Based on technical information and site visits by the producers, this was originally planned to be at the Dodshons Fountain end of the High Street. However, three weeks before the Festival, at the first public performance of the show at another event, the company's Production Manager became very concerned about wind loading and recommended additional ballast and anchoring to the structure for safety reasons, increasing its footprint. Our own Technical Production Manager explored every possible means of presenting the show safely without altering the layout but came to the view that the only place large enough to safely stage the show on the High Street was in front of the Town Hall, requiring 19 market traders to be displaced on Wednesday 3rd August.
42. We had the choice of cancelling the show or displacing the market traders, however by working closely with colleagues from Care for Your Area and Communications, we successfully informed the displaced market traders with no negative come back. The show was a stunning success.

Marketing and Communications

43. This year we made two major changes to the SIRF communication plan; to use television advertising and increase use of the website and social media. Also, for the first time, the design and print for the Festival was undertaken by the in-house design team.
44. We chose to advertise on television as we felt that it was affordable and would help us reach a wider regional audience, particularly Tyneside. The TV advert was seen by 23% of visitors. Our market research tells us that there has been a significant growth in the online and social media promotion and communication of SIRF. Next year we will move away from dependence on printed publicity to operating year-round social media engagement with people.
45. Local and regional PR coverage before and during the event was once again strong with large features in the Journal's Culture Magazine and the Crack Magazine. BBC Look North, Tyne Tees and BBC Tees all covered the festival over the whole weekend.
46. Greater national press coverage was achieved this year than ever before, with references in the Sunday Times, Guardian, Guardian Guide and the Independent on Sunday. New look press releases with image inserts were sent by *mail chimp* and were well received by press and media.
47. We undertook significant development work to improve and expand the services provided by the Visitor Experience Team. Team members went through a comprehensive recruitment process and received induction/ training around the Festival programme and customer care and each had to sign a code of conduct. The process was very successful and below is a comment from an independent assessor on behalf of Arts Council England:

“Excellent helpful staff, both at the information points and also walking around town – easily identifiable. They remained cheerful, optimistic and appeared genuinely interested and involved in the work. They passed on information about cancellations and rescheduling well and seemed to genuinely delight in the work.”

48. The one area that was not so successful was our marketing of tickets for the shows in the Spiegel Tent with disappointing sales. This is a specialist area and our recommendation is that we should work more closely with ARC and other commercial promoters to undertake commercial ticket promotion and sales on our behalf.

Curatorial Progress

49. Frank Wilson has been Artistic Director of SIRF since its inception in 1988 and his reputation and influence is still extremely high nationally and internationally. As part of the SIRF development plan, Frank's role with the Festival will change in 2013, focusing on developing large scale commissioning opportunities and partnerships. The Arts Development Manager will become Artistic Director.
50. This year, in preparation for the changing roles, the Arts Development Manager assumed more responsibility for the direction of SIRF. She had greater influence over the programme, establishing good relationships with other festivals and international companies. She represented SIRF at a renowned street arts trade fair, and undertook research into different models of charging for outdoor arts events. She also viewed a lot of shows, observing the importance of seeing shows before selecting them as part of a programme; how they work in different spaces, the way the audience views the show, the quality of the work and its technical requirements.

SIRF 2011 Budget

51. This year the SIRF programme received financial support from several sources. We had our regular funding from Arts Council England, Arts Lottery funding through the Without Walls Consortium and Gi20 programme, European Cultural funding through the Meridians Network and support from Dance City Creative Partnerships. We haven't received the final outturn for the Festival but anticipate that it will be on budget. The total cost of SIRF is expected to be just over £500,000 with approximately half of that coming from grants, sponsorship and ticket income.

Stockton Weekender

52. The growth of the Riverside Fringe in recent years has helped our efforts to raise the profile of Stockton as a festival town. Over its 18 year run, Fringe had achieved a tremendous scale and popularity thanks to high quality staging and production, combined with an astute mix of emerging talent and high profile performers. However, the costs for both staging and performers fees have increased considerably over the period and the organisers, Tees Music Alliance (TMA), were faced with the choice of reducing the scale and quality, or increasing income. TMA took the decision, in collaboration with SBC to introduce ticket charges and make a clearer distinction between Fringe and SIRF.
53. The Fringe was rebranded as Stockton Weekender, and incorporated camping for the first time, at an adjacent site. The Friday and Saturday programmes were ticketed with a charge of £15 per day, or £25 for combined Friday and Saturday pass. There were family tickets and a range of concessions.

54. The Friday line-up included Newton Faulkner, Kitty Daisy & Lewis, and Young Rebel Set, culminating in a captivating performance by Seasick Steve. Saturday featured Django Django, Chapman Family, and Cast, with local legends Maximo Park topping the bill. The free Sunday programme included Suspiciously Elvis, and the ever popular Wildcats of Kilkenny.
55. A separate comedy tent presented over 30 established comedians including Danny McLoughlan, Richard Morton, and Justin Moorhouse, in a packed 3-day programme. Advance ticket sales were reasonable but anticipated walk-up sales were poor and a decision was taken on Friday afternoon to make the comedy tent free. Those who had purchased tickets were refunded.
56. Overall attendances were good, despite fears that audiences would object to paying for an event which had previously been provided free of charge. In particular the numbers for Seasick Steve were very positive, and Maximo Park attracted a strong loyal audience. Final attendance figures have not yet been released by Tees Music Alliance.

2012 Events

57. The coincidence of the Queens Diamond Jubilee, SIRF's 'Silver' anniversary, and the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics, presents an exciting set of opportunities to bring local people together and show visitors and the media what Stockton are capable of.
58. We are aiming for continued growth in the River Rat Race and Infinity Festival. We have the potential to secure 'Premiere Calendar' race status for the Cycling Festival which would guarantee national broadcast coverage of the race. We expect the Stockton Triathlon to attract ever increasing numbers and positive feedback to help us secure British Triathlon national qualifier status for the 2013 event.
59. Our 2012 Olympic Games related plans are extensive and ambitious. They include work around the anticipated Torch Relay presence in the Borough, involvement in the North East 'One Big Event' during national School Games Week, a local corporate games event, staging of a Community Live site for people to watch the Games in a town centre public space, and the use of the Olympic ideals as the SIRF Carnival theme. We are developing a unique project called 'Personal Podium' which would encourage people to strive to achieve a personal goal, in any aspect of their life, which they could then celebrate in Stockton town centre on special Personal Podium days.
60. We are investing in a programme of support to sport and active leisure clubs and groups, helping them to grow and strengthen so that they can play their part in inspiring people to get active and have fun, sustaining our Olympic legacy ambition of healthier, active communities.
61. In addition, to mark the Queens Diamond Jubilee we would like to commission a new piece of music to be performed by a youth orchestra at the opening of the second Tees Barrage White Water Course, alongside a range of other celebrations on the day. We expect to support our communities as they stage street parties and join the national 'Big Lunch'. We will also be joining the Diamond Jubilee Beacons project and creating at least 8 major fires at key locations as part of a nationwide sequence designed to unite the country.

25th SIRF

62. 2012 is the 25th Anniversary of SIRF. When it began in 1988 there was no other festival like it in the UK, and it has greatly influenced others that have followed. SIRF's stature within the street arts field is considerable and over the years SIRF has become a gateway to the UK for international companies.

63. We have great ambitions for our 25th anniversary and want it to be special in a number of ways:
- We want to celebrate SIRF's 25 year history by gathering local people's stories, images and film footage and using them creatively to produce exhibitions and present online programmes.
 - We want to commission a work of extraordinary scale that we've not had at SIRF before and one that would be a fitting tribute to SIRF's international stature and track record and would capture the national media's interest and imagination
 - We want to dress the town so that it looks and feels more festive leading up to and during SIRF. We would like to involve local artists to work with us to create street dressing works.
 - We want to produce a small range of SIRF souvenirs and merchandising. We plan to approach local colleges to ask students to design a range for us.
64. Officers are currently exploring options to ensure that SIRF 2012 programme is exciting, creative and innovative to mark the 25th anniversary.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

65. The increased demands of the 2012 Olympic and anniversary events presents a human resource and financial resource pressure.
66. Whilst some additional external resource has already been secured, and a number of grant applications are pending, the scale of investment required, maximising the 2012 opportunities will require an alignment of resources within the already agreed MTFP framework.
67. Having reduced staffing levels through the range of EIT Reviews, including for example the reduction of the Sports Development Team from 21 staff to 9, the demands on remaining staff teams will be considerable. For 2012 additional human resource will need to be deployed on events, and it is expected that this will be drawn from across a number of Service areas.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

68. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

69. 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 and to enjoy sport and active leisure.
70. The promotion of diverse cultural opportunities, and the animation of our town centre spaces, will contribute towards the creation of vibrant and successful Town Centres.

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

71. An equality Impact Assessment has been completed for SIRF, alongside detailed and repeated disability access assessments of the Festival. Every effort is made to ensure that all of the events are accessible to the widest possible range of people, and physical access assessments are carried out as part of event planning.
72. Given the enhanced nature of the plans for 2012, it will be the subject of a separate Equality Impact Assessment.

CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

73. SIRF is underpinned by robust and wide consultation with Council Members, Council Services, partners, stakeholders, businesses, resident and community groups. Market traders, bus operators, fixed retailers, and community representatives are directly involved in the planning of SIRF and our other large scale events.

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