

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

15 FEBRUARY 2018

**REPORT OF PLACE
SELECT COMMITTEE**

CABINET DECISION

Lead Cabinet Member – Arts, Leisure and Culture – Councillor Norma Wilburn

SCRUTINY REVIEW OF BILLINGHAM EVENT INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Summary

The attached report presents the outcomes of the Place Select Committee's review of Billingham Event Infrastructure.

2. Recommendations

The Committee recommend that:

- 1) For any potential future accommodation site solutions, BIFF need to fully consider the wellbeing of the performers, as well as their responsibilities around health and safety that have been outlined as part of this review.
- 2) In order to create safe temporary accommodation for its performers, BIFF should consider all elements within the summary of estimated infrastructure costs for various accommodation options devised as part of this review (including the sums of money emerging as part of this analysis). As a key contributor to the festival, SBC should satisfy itself that these requirements are being met.
- 3) Due to the likelihood of increased accommodation costs following the loss of the former Campus School sports block, BIFF may wish to build on existing, and identify new, funding streams that could assist them in providing appropriate accommodation solutions.
- 4) Subject to funding streams becoming available, BIFF and SBC should further explore the feasibility of using either John Whitehead Park or Sidlaw Road (former college site) as accommodation site solutions, and in the event that neither is suitable, should identify and explore potential solutions across a wider geographical area.
- 5) As an advocate of BIFF, and in recognising the benefits it provides for the town of Billingham, Billingham Town Council may want to consider enhancing its role and financial contribution in supporting the festival's future sustainability.
- 6) BIFF should ensure that any future accommodation site is overseen by suitably qualified personnel at all times, including during construction and deconstruction phases.

7) There is limited scope to reduce the accommodation costs by reducing the scale or duration of the event in a single year due to CIOFF requirements. In principle, BIFF could consider the frequency of the event in order to reduce the annual burden of the infrastructure costs.

3. Reasons for the Recommendation(s)/Decision(s)

The report presents the findings of the scrutiny review of Billingham Event Infrastructure which was an agreed addition to the 2017-2018 work programme.

4. Members' Interests

Members (including co-opted Members) should consider whether they have a personal interest in any item, as defined in **paragraphs 9 and 11** of the Council's code of conduct and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with and/or taking account of **paragraphs 12 - 17** of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest, as described in **paragraph 16** of the code, in any business of the Council he/she must then, **in accordance with paragraph 18** of the code, 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 and the business:-

- affects the members financial position or the financial position of a person or body described in **paragraph 17** of the code, or
- relates to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to the member or any person or body described in **paragraph 17** of the code.

A Member with a personal interest, as described in **paragraph 18** of the code, may attend the meeting but must not take part in the consideration and voting upon the relevant item of business. However, a member with such an interest may make representations, answer questions or give evidence relating to that business before the business is considered or voted on, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under a statutory right or otherwise (**paragraph 19** of the code).

Members may participate in any discussion and vote on a matter in which they have an interest, as described in **paragraph 18** of the code, where that interest relates to functions of the Council detailed in **paragraph 20** of the code.

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

It is a criminal offence for a member to participate in any discussion or vote on a matter in which he/she has a disclosable pecuniary interest (and where an appropriate dispensation has not been granted) **paragraph 21** of the code.

Members are required to comply with any procedural rule adopted by the Council which requires a member to leave the meeting room whilst the meeting is discussing a matter in which that member has a disclosable pecuniary interest (**paragraph 22** of the code).

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SUMMARY

The attached report presents the outcomes of the Place Select Committee's review of Billingham Event Infrastructure.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommend that:

- 1) For any potential future accommodation site solutions, BIFF need to fully consider the wellbeing of the performers, as well as their responsibilities around health and safety that have been outlined as part of this review.
- 2) In order to create safe temporary accommodation for its performers, BIFF should consider all elements within the summary of estimated infrastructure costs for various accommodation options devised as part of this review (including the sums of money emerging as part of this analysis). As a key contributor to the festival, SBC should satisfy itself that these requirements are being met.
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could consider the frequency of the event in order to reduce the annual burden of the infrastructure costs.

DETAIL

1. Billingham International Folklore Festival (BIFF) has been staged every year for over 50 years. Celebrating diversity, bringing communities together and attracting visitors, it has a significant international reputation and considerable value as an example of how global cultural forms were revealed and celebrated in an era without global digital communications.
2. BIFF is one of the founder members of the global network of folkloric festivals known as Conseil International des Organisations de Festivals de Folklore et d'Arts Traditionnels (CIOFF). The framework within which BIFF presents performers from around the world is set out by CIOFF, and has remained largely unchanged for many years. These rules require the host festival to accommodate and feed a large number of performers (up to 300) for a period of two weeks or more. The visiting groups include children and adults.
3. In recent years, BIFF has used a variety of school buildings and temporary structures to house their artists, most recently utilising the former Campus School sports block on Marsh House Avenue, Billingham. However, as part of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's (SBC) 'Let's Share' strategy, approval has been given to the transfer of the Campus sports block to Onsite, on behalf of a range of tenant/users.
4. For 2017, the BIFF organisers estimated the additional costs for temporary infrastructure to be approximately £25,000 - Cabinet subsequently approved the use of up to £25,000 (in addition to its annual £60,000 grant) of SBC resources to enable the short-term measures to facilitate BIFF this year, and endorsed a proposal for further work to be undertaken to explore and define costs for longer-term solutions to the infrastructure challenges faced by BIFF and similar events in Billingham.
5. The key aims of this review were to examine the following:
 - Analysis of how BIFF organisers are using the current Marsh House Avenue site, and what infrastructure requirements are needed for the current format of the event in both the performance and accommodation sites.
 - Understanding of the costs of accommodating groups during the festival period, including catering and transportation, as well as infrastructure associated with the performances.
 - Exploration of potential alternative accommodation sites and different approaches, including the provision of temporary 'event village' systems provided by commercial suppliers.
 - Consider the potential for existing partners in BIFF, such as the Billingham Town Council and St Modwens, to play a different or greater role to enable its future sustainability.
6. The Committee received evidence from a number of key stakeholders, including the Local Authority (Culture, Leisure and Events Department, Finance & Business Services Department (including the Health and Safety Unit), and Local Billingham Councillors), BIFF Directors, Sound2Av (BIFF 2017 Infrastructure Contractor), Billingham Town Council, Onsite Building Trust and Arts Council England.

During the festival in August 2017, Committee Members undertook visits to the accommodation site based at the former Campus School sports block on Marsh House Avenue, Billingham, as well as the performance site in Billingham Town Centre.

COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS

7. This report is not subject to an Impact Assessment.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8. There are no current financial implications.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9. None.

RISK ASSESSMENT

10. This review is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

COUNCIL PLAN POLICY PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES

11. The review supports the following Council policy principles:

- Creating economic prosperity
- Developing strong and healthy communities

The review will also contribute to the following Council Plan 2017-2020 key objectives:

Arts, Culture and Leisure

- Deliver sustainable events and attractions that contribute to the delivery of vibrant and economically successful town centres and economic prosperity.

CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

12. There are no direct implications in the report.

CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

13. The Committee have received evidence as set out in the final report of the Place Select Committee.

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Education related?: No

Background Papers: None

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors: Billingham Wards

Property: Public Open Spaces