

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

DATE

**REPORT OF SENIOR
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET INFORMATION ITEM

Health, Leisure & Culture - Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Jim Beall

Annual report of the Independent Safety Advisory Group (ISAG)

SUMMARY

The Independent Safety Advisory Group brings together a range of professionals to scrutinise and advise upon event safety. ISAG looks at plans for a wide range of events in Stockton on Tees but it is focussed on events of a significant scale or complexity and events on Stockton Council land. The ISAG does not take decisions on whether or not an event should go ahead but its recommendations have a significant impact on the Council's decisions to allow an event or require changes to an event plan.

ISAG's independent Chair produces an annual report for information, to highlight significant findings and make recommendations for areas of further work.

REASONS FOR PRODUCING THIS REPORT

The ISAG Chairs report is presented to Cabinet to allow them to see the level and type of scrutiny and challenge being brought to bear in relation to events to ensure the public are properly protected. Cabinet are also able to see and comment upon the areas of further work recommended by the ISAG Chair.

DETAIL

1. ISAG was convened nine times during 2019 and reviewed more than 50 events. Attendance was good and the input from a range of agencies illustrates the commitment to ensuring the safety of the public at events in face of complex and dynamic threats.
2. In the majority of cases information is provided to ISAG in a timely fashion and recommendations are responded to positively. However, the Chair's report highlights a decline in the percentage of event plans presented on time. Late submissions add pressure to ISAG Members who need to schedule time to study plans before the Group meetings.

3. Where event plans are not considered to provide sufficient assurance or contain sufficient detail, event organisers are asked to consider certain risks further and provide additional mitigation. ISAG does not take a decision as to whether or not an event should proceed but it will highlight concerns to the Council or other agencies who may take a decision to prevent or modify an event in light of ISAG's concerns. This process occurs equally where Stockton Council is the event organiser and where the event organiser is another body.
4. The ISAG Chair's report highlights 3 areas of work to note; **Yarm Fair**, Billingham Folklore Festival (**BIFF**), and **Stockton Fireworks**.
5. In relation to **Yarm Fair**, at the request of Stockton Council, the ISAG Chair coordinated a review of the suitability of the space for an event of that type, triggered by problems with the 2018 Fair. The full debrief of the autumn 2019 Yarm Fair had not been completed at the time of writing this report but ISAG noted a largely positive response to the additional constraints on the footprint of the event and also the effectiveness of the earlier finishing time in reducing the levels of antisocial behaviour.
6. The main outstanding concern in relation to Yarm Fair relates to traffic management and Council officers will continue to work with the event organiser to strengthen plans for future years.
7. In relation to **BIFF**, the ISAG Chair notes that the public performance arena is not on Council land and therefore it would not necessarily be scrutinised by ISAG. The scale of the performance arena and stage is modest. However, given the Council's visible and widely publicised support for the event the visiting public might reasonably assume it to have been approved by the Council. ISAG did invite BIFF to provide their event plans for comment but they were unable to do so.
8. Officers of the Council will continue to work with members of the BIFF organisation to ensure they fully understand their duties and liabilities in relation to the safety of the public at their event.
9. **Stockton Fireworks** display and the associated fairground rides and concessions are also the subject of ISAG comment. The full event de-brief has not yet taken place but monitoring of the event shows that whilst the massive crowd on the Riverside was well managed, the relocation of the Fairground rides to the High Street generated several incidents of significant antisocial behaviour.
10. Officers will review plans for the event in 2020 and in particular the location and duration of the fairground element.
11. The full ISAG Annual Report, including an improvement plan and dates for the anticipated ISAG meetings in 2020, is attached as Appendix 1.

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