

Place Select Committee
Review of Billingham Event Infrastructure / Billingham International Folk Festival (BIFF)
Outline Scope

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Which of our strategic corporate objectives does this topic address?	
<p>The review supports the following Council policy principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating economic prosperity • Developing strong and healthy communities <p>The review will also contribute to the following Council Plan 2017-2020 key objectives:</p> <p><i>Arts, Culture and Leisure</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver sustainable events and attractions that contribute to the delivery of vibrant and economically successful town centres and economic prosperity. 	
What are the main issues and overall aim of this review?	
<p>Billingham International Folk 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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. Required alterations to the building (which will result in more people using the building more of the time) reduces the space in which BIFF can house artists for</p>	

this and future year's festivals, though even with full use of the sports block in question, BIFF has required additional space for feeding the artists, and for the significant rehearsals essential to the production of the Festival.

The Council provides BIFF with an annual grant of £60,000, in addition to which BIFF have successfully secured Arts Council England (ACE) grants at varying levels. For 2017, the BIFF organisers have estimated the additional costs for temporary infrastructure to be approximately £25,000 – Cabinet have recently approved the use of up to £25,000 of Council 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.

The key aims of this review are therefore 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.

The Committee will undertake the following key lines of enquiry:

What are the key elements in the organisation of BIFF (pre-event construction of sites, accommodation/rehearsal/performance sites, transportation, health and safety/safeguarding considerations, contractor use, volunteer availability)?

What skills and capacity does BIFF have to co-ordinate and effectively discharge their responsibilities in relation to the creation and safe use of temporary accommodation, feeding and rehearsal space for staff, artists and volunteers?

What is the Conseil International des Organisations de Festivals de Folklore et d'Arts Traditionnels (COIFF) guidance for their member festivals, and what demands does this place on BIFF in terms of accommodation and staging of the event?

What is the contingency planning for public performances in the event of strong winds, storms or heavy rain (options and costs)?

What site options exist for the accommodation and rehearsal spaces in the event that the Marsh House Avenue site is no longer available?

What types of temporary event infrastructure are available to meet the accommodation and rehearsal needs on another site, at what cost, and with what operational or logistical implications?

To complement these lines of enquiry about the infrastructure needs of the event, and to inform a judgement by SBC about the investment required to achieve future infrastructure solutions, it will be necessary to establish a view about:

- How requests for funding are made, and on what basis? What are the views of current contributors such as Arts Council England, SBC and others, with particular reference to the continued reliability of future funds?

- What are the current audience numbers/demographics and trends?
- What does BIFF audience feedback reveal about the likely future interest in the event?
- What organisational development and legacy plans do BIFF have in place to ensure they would have sufficient future staff and volunteer capacity to undertake the roles required in the event that SBC and/or other funders made possible for the continuation of the Festival in its current format?
- Is there any learning from other such festivals/events?

Who will the Committee be trying to influence as part of its work?

Cabinet, BIFF management and its partners, including Billingham Town Council.

Expected duration of review and key milestones:

4 months

What information do we need?

Existing information (background information, existing reports, legislation, central government documents, etc.):

- Report to Cabinet – Billingham Event Infrastructure and Billingham International Folk Festival (July 2016).
- SBC Adults, Leisure and Culture Select Committee – Review of Festivals (March 2007).

New information:

- CIOFF guidance for their member festivals.
- BIFF costs and funding streams.
- Stakeholder feedback following BIFF 2017.
- Potential alternative sites for accommodation/rehearsals.

Who can provide us with further relevant evidence? (Cabinet Member, officer, service user, general public, expert witness, etc.)

What specific areas do we want them to cover when they give evidence?

Local Authority

Council involvement in BIFF
 Financial input into BIFF
 Alternative accommodation sites in Billingham
 Health and safety observations
 Local Councillor views on BIFF

BIFF Infrastructure Contractors

Support provided during festival
 Key infrastructure issues/observations

BIFF Committee

Organisation of BIFF (inc. pre-event)
 Financial position – funding streams
 Future challenges

Billingham Town Council	Current and future role in BIFF
Arts Council England (ACE)	Views on BIFF and future funding intentions
How will this information be gathered? (eg. financial baselining and analysis, benchmarking, site visits, face-to-face questioning, telephone survey, survey)	
Committee meetings, reports, desktop research, site-visits.	
How will key partners and the public be involved in the review?	
Committee meetings – partner organisations and stakeholders, audience/volunteer feedback.	
How will the review help the Council meet the Public Sector Equality Duty?	
The Public Sector Equality Duty requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities. This review will be mindful of these factors.	
How will the review contribute towards the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, or the implementation of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy?	
The assessment of options for future accommodation/rehearsal sites and event infrastructure in Billingham does not in itself contribute towards the JSNA or implementation of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.	
Provide an initial view as to how this review could lead to efficiencies, improvements and/or transformation:	
Exploration of the current organisation of BIFF, the requirements of such festivals in relation to CIOFF guidance, and the identification of potential alternative accommodation sites, should better enable BIFF, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council and other partners to ascertain the way forward for this festival. Infrastructure requirements, and the funding around this, are critical to the successful delivery of BIFF, and this review aims to identify and define costs for longer-term solutions to the current challenges faced by BIFF and the Council.	

Project Plan

Key Task	Details/Activities	Date	Responsibility
Scoping of Review	Information gathering	August 2017	Scrutiny Officer Link Officer
Tri-Partite Meeting	Meeting to discuss aims and objectives of review	29.08.17	Select Committee Chair and Vice Chair, Cabinet Member(s), Corporate Director(s), Scrutiny Officer, Link Officer
Agree Project Plan	Scope and Project Plan agreed by Committee	11.09.17	Select Committee
Publicity of Review	Press Briefing at start of review	n/a	Chair, Link Officer, Press Officer Scrutiny Officer
Obtaining Evidence	Infrastructure Contractors Site Visit Feedback Arts Council England CIOFF Guidance Local Authority Local Billingham Councillors BIFF Committee Billingham Town Council	30.10.17 13.11.17	Select Committee
Members decide recommendations and findings	Review summary of findings and formulate draft recommendations	11.12.17	Select Committee
Circulate Draft Report to Stakeholders	Circulation of Report	December 2017	Scrutiny Officer
Tri-Partite Meeting	Meeting to discuss findings of review and draft recommendations	TBC	Select Committee Chair and Vice Chair, Cabinet Member(s), Corporate Director(s), Scrutiny Officer, Link Officer
Final Agreement of Report	Approval of final report by Committee	15.01.18	Select Committee, Cabinet Member, Corporate Director
Consideration of Report by Executive Scrutiny Committee	Consideration of report	30.01.18	Executive Scrutiny Committee
Report to Cabinet/Approving Body	Presentation of final report with recommendations for approval to Cabinet	15.02.18	Cabinet/ Approving Body