



Leicester  
City Council

Minutes of the Joint Meeting of the  
HERITAGE, LEISURE AND SPORT SCRUTINY COMMISSION AND THE  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, CULTURE AND TOURISM SCRUTINY  
COMMISSION

Held: TUESDAY, 3 JULY 2012 at 5.30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Dr Barton (Chair)  
Councillor Bhatti – (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Naylor (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Bhavsar	Councillor Cassidy
Councillor Chaplin	Councillor Chowdhury
Councillor Fonseca	Councillor Joshi
Councillor Newcombe	Councillor Shelton

I N A T T E N D A N C E

Sir Peter Soulsby – City Mayor

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**11. ELECTION OF CHAIR**

RESOLVED:

that Councillor Barton be elected as Chair for the meeting.

**12. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Waddington.

**13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were asked to declare any interests they had in the business on the

agenda. The following declarations were made:

Councillor Shelton declared that in respect of the presentation on the Festivals and Events Consultation, he had a personal interest as he was Chair of the Saffron Fete Committee.

Councillor Dr Chowdhury declared that in respect of the presentation on the Festivals and Events Consultation, he had been approached by the Leicester Hindu Festival.

Councillor Fonseca declared that in respect of the presentation on the Festivals and Events Consultation, he had been approached by the Leicester Hindu Festival.

Councillor Bhatti declared that in respect of the presentation on the Festivals and Events Consultation, he was a member of the Diwali Working Party.

Councillor Joshi declared that in respect of the presentation on the Festivals and Events Consultation, he was a member of the Diwali Working Party. He was also a member of the Leicester Council of Faiths and they had submitted representations.

Councillor Cassidy declared that in respect of the presentation on the Festivals and Events Consultation, he had been involved in the Leicester International Music Festival.

Councillor Bhavsar declared that in respect of the presentation on the Festivals and Events Consultation, he had been to a meeting of the Leicester Hindu Festival Council.

#### **14. PRESENTATION ON THE FESTIVALS AND EVENTS CONSULTATION**

Mike Candler, the Cultural Quarter Project Director delivered a presentation to the Joint Scrutiny Commission on the Festival and Events Consultation.

He explained that the review of the Festivals and Events programme came as a result of the need for the Council to demonstrate continued value for money in the activities and services it supported or provided to ensure that public funds were used for the greatest benefit and that the changing needs of the city's communities were met. There were three main categories of festivals and events, namely Arts, Community and Culture and Faith and any festival that received £5,000 or more had been scoped into the review.

The Cultural Quarter Project Director then elaborated on the different festivals and events that had been included in the review:

##### **Dave's Leicester Comedy Festival (Arts)**

It was reported that the Dave's Comedy Festival received Council funding of £18,500, and based on the Council funding and approximately 44,000 people

attending the events in 2011, this worked out a cost of £0.42 per user. Research from the De Montfort University demonstrated that the festival contributed £2 million to the local economy and sustained 21 FTE jobs.

The Commission heard that proposal was for funding at the current level of £18,500 to be maintained and for a three year funding contract and service level agreement to be negotiated. This would enable the organisers to access other funding streams.

### **Spark Children Arts Festival (Arts)**

This festival received Council funding of £9,000 and based on the Council funding and approximately 12,700 children attending the festival in 2011, this worked out at a cost of £0.71 per user. There were 163 events, some of which were targeted to children and families on low incomes.

The proposal was for funding at the current level of £9,000 to be maintained and for a three year funding contract and service level agreement to be negotiated with The Spark.

### **Leicester Belgrave Mela (Arts)**

The Cultural Quarter Project Director reported that the Leicester Belgrave Mela received Council funding of £30,000 which resulted in a cost per user of £1.50 based on Council funding and approximately 20,000 attending the festival in 2011. Research from the De Montfort University demonstrated that the Mela had a social and economic impact with businesses reporting an increase of 63% in the number of customers on the festival day.

The proposal was for funding at the current level of £30,000 to be maintained for the Belgrave Mela and for a three year funding contract and service level agreement to be negotiated.

### **Leicester International Music Festival (Arts)**

The Commission heard that this was an annual festival over a 4 day period which received Council funding of £5,000. There were nine events over the 4 days, one of which was a family concert aimed at attracting a younger audience.

Based on Council funding and attendance figures, the cost per user worked out at £4.29.

The proposal was for funding at the current level of £5,000 to be maintained for the Leicester International Music Festival and for a 1 year funding contract along with a description of the associated benefits and outputs to be negotiated.

### **St George's Day (Community)**

it was explained that this was an annual day event which received Council funding of £10,300. It was first staged in 2009 and was located in the Cultural Quarter to drive footfall into the area. Based on Council funding and an attendance of 4,500 in 2011, the cost per user was £2.28.

The proposal was for the current management arrangement and funding of £10,300 be maintained for the delivery of the 2012 St George's Day festival. It was also aimed to extend partnership working to maximise the potential and raise the profile of the festival.

### **Riverside Festival (Community)**

It was explained that the Riverside Festival was an annual 2 day event which received Council funding of £18,000. Based on Council funding and an attendance of approximately 16,000 in 2011, the cost per user worked out at £1.12.

It was proposed that the current management and delivery arrangement and funding of £18,000 should be maintained. It was also recommended that in order to increase the capacity of the event the organiser should explore the opportunity to develop a 'satellite' site in Castle Gardens.

### **Leicester Caribbean Carnival (Community)**

The Cultural Quarter Project Director explained that this was an annual one-day event which received Council funding of £100,000. Based on Council funding and an attendance of approximately 20,000 in 2011, the cost per user worked out at £5.00. De Montfort University research demonstrated that the carnival contributed up to £69,000 to the local economy.

In 2011 the event was held on Victoria Park and it was proposed for the carnival to be supported on the model developed in 2011/12 and that the city centre procession / parade should not be re-instated. It was also proposed that a 3 year funding contract and service level agreement be negotiated with the Leicester Caribbean Carnival with funding being reduced from £100,000 to £60,000 per annum by 2014/15.

### **Castle Park Festival (Community)**

The Joint Scrutiny Commission heard that the Castle Park Festival was an annual week- long event held in August, which received Council funding of £11,000. Based on Council funding and an estimated attendance of 11,000 in 2011, the cost per user worked out at £1.00.

It was proposed that from 2013, the Council should cease to fund this in order to develop a new heritage and arts festival with a focus on the old town area. It was suggested that as an option to this it might be preferable to rebrand the Castle Park festival and the City Mayor responded that it was hoped that elements of the Castle Park festival would remain.

### **Black History Season (Community)**

This was an annual 2 month event and in 2011, a programme of 22 events attracted 2,100 attendees. The festival received Council funding of £5,000 and based on this, the cost per user worked out at £2.38.

It was proposed that the Council maintained the funding and delivery arrangement for this festival in 2012. It was also aimed to broaden the programme and engagement with education, youth and community providers and black groups such as the African Caribbean Citizens Forum and the African Caribbean Centre.

### **Humberstone Bonfire (Community)**

The Project Director explained that this was an annual free event which received Council funding of £16,000. In 2011 approximately 8,000 people attended the event and based on this and the Council funding, the cost per user worked out at £2.00. The majority of attenders were from the Coleman and neighbouring wards.

It was noted that the event was in direct competition with the Abbey Park bonfire which the Council charged for, and it was proposed that the Council ceased to fund and organise the Humberstone Bonfire. In addition it was proposed that the Council provided support and advice to the Community to help them develop and raise funding for a community managed Bonfire and Firework display on Humberstone Park if they wished.

Comments were made that the Humberstone Bonfire was a popular event which was supported by members of the public from 5 different wards. Concerns had been received from constituents that they could not afford the Abbey Park event and also it was difficult to get there as some buses did not run at night. It was suggested that the Council should charge a minimum fee for attendees at the Humberstone Park Bonfire, but in response it was stated that to charge an admission fee it would be necessary to secure the site which would be very difficult to do. Abbey Park had controllable exits which made it possible to charge admission fees.

The City Mayor acknowledged that this was a difficult decision and suggested that there were other funding streams available, such as Ward Community Meeting budgets and it might be possible to obtain funding from them.

### **Navratri (Culture and Faith).**

The Joint Commission heard that this festival was held in De Montfort Hall and the Ramgarhia Community Centre and was staged over 9 nights. The festival received Council funding of £20,000 and attendance over the 9 nights in 2010 was 8426, (The average was approximately 50% of capacity at the Ramgarhia Community Centre). Based on the attendance and the Council Grant (excluding the discounted hire of De Montfort Hall) the cost per user was £2.37. The Project Director explained that the decline in attendance at the Ramgarhia

was largely due to local Temples organising events for their own communities.

The proposal was that the Council ceased to fund a grant to the Leicester Hindu Festival Council for the hire of the Ramgarhia Community Centre, and that the Council continued to hire the De Montfort Hall at its published community rate to the Leicester Hindu Festival Council for the purpose of staging the Navratri festival.

A member queried the numbers of attendees at the Navaratri celebrations commenting that he believed that the attendance figures may have been higher than the 8426 quoted. The City Mayor asked the Project Director to confirm the statistics and their source to the member in question.

In response to a query from a Member of the Joint Commission, the City Mayor explained that in respect of funding for the Ramgarhia, it was difficult to support the event there when similar events were held throughout the City, some of which operated on a commercial basis.

### **Dashera (Culture and Faith)**

This was an annual Hindu festival held immediately after Navratri (10<sup>th</sup> night) and was almost 100% funded by the Council to the value of £7,200. In 2011 approximately 6,000 attended the event and the cost per user was £1.20.

It was proposed that the Council reduced its funding to £3,000 and negotiated with the Leicester Hindu Festival Council to take over the management and delivery of a Dashera event with a focus on the core activity of the burning of the effigy.

### **Diwali Switch On and Diwali Day (Culture and Faith)**

The two events received funding from the Council of £88,000 and attracted visitors to the City and Belgrave area. 74,000 attended the events in 2011; 36,000 for the switch on and 38,000 for Diwali day. Based on the attendance and Council funding, the cost per user was £1.19.

It was proposed for funding to the sum of £88,000 be maintained and confirmed for the Diwali Switch On and Diwali Day events, with the intention of focusing the Switch On event at the Belgrave Golden Mile and Diwali Day celebrations to include more cultural events and to located on Cossington Street Park.

The City Mayor added that these two parts of the Diwali celebrations were similar and that it had been suggested that more differentiation between the two events would be preferable.

Concern was expressed that if the Diwali day celebrations were staged on Cossington Street Park there could be health and safety issues because of the high number of likely attendees, and that the event would be difficult to manage if everything was concentrated into that area.

## **Christmas Lights Switch On (Culture and Faith)**

This event was funded entirely by the Council to the value of £16,000. Attendance in 2011 was approximately 8,000 and the cost per user was £2.00. Traders recognised that the Christmas Lights Switch On was a key event which 'kick started' Christmas trading in the City Centre.

It was proposed to maintain the budget for this event and also to review the site / location of the Switch On ceremony with a view, for health and safety reasons, to locate to the Gallowtree Gate / Humberstone Gate area with a link to the Town Hall Square.

The Project Director explained that as part of the review the following were proposed:

- for a Festival and Events Forum, led by officers of the Council, to be established with the aim of bringing together organisers to share good practice.
- to review marketing and develop a stronger campaign to brand the City's festival programme
- that the savings identified through the review be re-allocated to other projects including investment in marketing and branding, a new weekend heritage and arts festival and a new festivals fund.

The Joint Commission heard that the 12 week consultation would end in July, and consultations were taking place in wards where a festival or event was staged. The final report would be considered by the City Mayor and Executive in due course. The City Mayor re-iterated that the consultation was on-going and the views expressed as part of that process would be listened to and considered.

Members of the Joint Commission generally welcomed the review as a strategic cultural and community based review rather than a budget based exercise. Comments were made that it was important to provide funding for new festivals and it was suggested that the Council could do more to help organisations become more entrepreneurial. It was noted that Dave's Comedy Festival was particularly entrepreneurial and had been able to secure funding from different sources.

Comments were made that many of the events were city centre focussed and it was suggested that it would be beneficial to provide funding for events outside of the centre as this would encourage young adults to participate and engage more in their own communities. It was felt however that such events should not be funded from the relevant ward community meeting budget but rather there should be a budget to fund such events.

The following comments and suggestions were also raised by members of the

Commission:

- that it would be useful to have financial details of festivals including costs, income and sponsorship.
- that the Council information booklets and leaflets should include information on festival and events that were staged outside of the city centre.
- That it would be useful to invite Sarah Harrison, the City Centre Manager to join the new Festivals and Events forum, as the events brought very considerable economic and cultural benefit to the city.
- That it was important to provide opportunities for local people and young people to showcase their talent.
- That it would be useful for officers to talk to the staff in the Communications Unit about increased PR for festivals and events. Events such as Diwali raised the profile of Leicester; in addition Dasher was not celebrated in many cities and therefore gave Leicester a unique profile. It was also noted that when events such as the Diwali Switch On were held on a Sunday, they received less publicity because media representation was limited on Sundays.

The Chair then summarised the discussion and the following conclusions and recommendations were agreed:

RESOLVED:

that the Joint Commission:

- a) welcomes the report as a strategic cultural and community-based review rather than a budget-driven exercise;
- b) welcomes the creation of a festivals forum;
- c) believes the forum should consider the development of business, retail and other related links with individual festivals;
- d) believes the forum should measure cultural, economic and social impacts of individual festivals. The creation of the LE1 City Centre Management Group and its economic assessment work is welcomed and could usefully contribute to the festivals forum;
- e) welcomes the Cultural Ambition statement and shares the vision embedded in the launch document;
- f) recommends that festivals should support and develop the use of local talent;

- g) recommends that festivals should be inclusive within and across communities within the city;
- h) recommends that further discussions should take place to optimise the image and PR opportunities of existing events to gain best advantage from the events. This should include timings of the events to gain most publicity;
- i) recommends that further information should be obtained on the total costs of individual festivals and the income obtained from festival users.

## **15. CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 7.22 pm.