

To: Leadership Board

On: September 18, 2019

Report by: Chief Executive

Heading: Paisley Fireworks

1. Summary

- 1.1 At the request of the Administration, this report provides options for the re-introduction of a Paisley-based fireworks display to the events programme for 2019. Two site options – Renfrewshire House and Barshaw Park have been identified as feasible sites and associated costs are included within this report for consideration. This would supplement the council's annual event programme which was previously agreed by Leadership Board on June 19, 2019.
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2. Recommendation

- 2.1 Should Members wish to introduce a fireworks event within the 2019 event programme, the available site options are:

Option A: Renfrewshire House – total event cost £145,000, circa 25,000 audience.

Option B: Barshaw Park – total event cost £90,000, circa 30,000 audience.

- 2.2 Members should note that the current year events budget is fully committed and that costs for the event in the current financial year will be met from under spends across a range of other services in consultation with Service Directors. If there is a desire to continue the event in future years it would need to be accommodated within the budget process.

3. Background

- 3.1 The council's 2019 event programme was agreed in January 2019 and was developed in response to the learnings of the 2018 programme evaluation. Procurement of the programme took place in the first two quarters of the year. 160,000 people are projected to attend council events in 2019 generating an economic impact of £4.5 million. The 2019 calendar (see below) also formed part of a mid-year update to Leadership Board and was supported by Elected Members in June. To date 7 events have been delivered by the events team:

Dates	Event	Attendees/Economic Impact/Local Spend
26-27 April	Paisley Food Festival – UK profile	19,750, EI - £328,883, LS - £779,292, Combined - £1,108,175
18 May	British Pipe Band Championships – UK/International profile	10,000, EI - £379,000, LS - £37,000, Combined - £416,000
2 June	Renfrew Gala Day – local profile	2,000 attendees
22 June	Barshaw Gala Day – local profile	8,000 attendees
6 July	Sma' Shot Day – local profile	9,500, EI – negative £38k, LS - £189,000, Combined - £151,000
10 August	Fire Engine Rally – local profile	2,500 attendees
7-8 September	Doors Open Days – regional and national profile	TBC
11 – 19 October	The Spree – UK profile	
25 - 26 October	Halloween event – UK profile	
10 November	Remembrance Service – local profile	
16 November	Paisley Christmas Lights Switch On – City Region profile	
23 November	Renfrew Christmas Lights Switch On – local profile	
30 November	Johnstone Christmas Lights Switch On – local profile	
7 December	Glen Cinema Torchlight Procession & Abbey Service – local profile/national significance	

3.2 A Paisley fireworks event was not included in the original 2019 programme following a review of event performance/cancellation risk and is not budgeted for in this financial year (2019/20). Additional investment was made in visitor events - Food and Drink festival, British Pipe Bands, The Spree and Halloween Festival, where positive economic impact and national profile can be demonstrated. It also enabled additional investment in Christmas programming and a new £20,000 festive event fund for communities. The rationale for not including a fireworks event is outlined below:

- Event cost – fireworks events are not in scope for external funding with all costs borne by the council and totalling £120,000-£140,000 with a large proportion of costs being fixed safety and infrastructure costs (roof preparation works, road closures and exclusion zones), which cannot be reduced without compromising safety.
- Town centre impact - Our aim is to prioritise investment in events that maximise benefits for local traders and make our town centres busy for a prolonged period. Paisley Fireworks generates a short town centre dwell time and economic impact is low - £57,000 economic impact against an investment of £120,000.
- Available sites - Renfrewshire House is the only feasible firing site within the immediate Town Centre and this incurs significant infrastructure costs (as detailed above) - over £60,000 is required to protect the roof and erect the firing platform.
- Crowd management - due to works at Paisley Town Hall impacting on Abbey Close from 2019 to 2021, the available viewing area and crowd management zones for a Renfrewshire House show are impacted.
- Cancellation risk - due to proximity of private residential properties, listed buildings and major traffic routes, there is an elevated risk of event cancellation or show stop due to wind speed and/or direction. Paisley Fireworks was been cancelled in 2014 and 2018 due to weather conditions and within 24 hours of the event start time, requiring significant public messaging. It was also subject to a show-stop due to weather conditions in 2012.
- Strategy objectives – the event does not contribute to our objectives around community participation and codesign and volunteering, achieving ISO20121 accreditation (reducing the environmental impact of events), and delivering an event programme that meets

demand for sensory inclusive events and supports adults and children with ASN.

- Team wellbeing – events are delivered by a small core team, supported by key personnel across the council from Environment and Infrastructure, Health and Safety and Civil Contingencies. From October to December, the events team work across 9 consecutive weekends in addition to regular work patterns to deliver the winter programme and support more than 90,000 visitors to the town. The pressure of excess hours and growing visitor numbers poses a health and safety risk for council staff.

- 3.3 At the request of Elected Members, Officers have undertaken a further feasibility study over the summer to establish the cost of adding a Fireworks event to the 2019 programme and provide alternative site options for a display in Paisley.

4. Options appraisal

- 4.1 21CC are the Council's main delivery partners for Fireworks events and have worked with the council team to identify alternative event sites to reduce event costs, retain the event within Paisley and minimise cancellation risk. Two locations have been identified as being suitable town centre sites – Renfrewshire House (detailed above) and a new site at Barshaw Park. Seedhill Playing Fields was immediately ruled out due to capacity restrictions and nearby housing developments, and Saucelhill Park is ruled out due to a petrol station being within the hot-fall out zone.
- 4.2 Site investigations have considered several factors to determine the suitability, challenges and risks. We have also considered how we reduce the likelihood of further event cancellations. Within the scope of the study we looked at general space requirements, public viewing and crowd management, restricted zones (i.e. Abbey gardens and graves), locality, condition and nature of adjacent buildings, access to the site (production crew, emergency services etc, public safety, impact on the town if sections of road or public access require to be closed off, safety distances, public access routes, roads and railways, wind direction, overhead obstructions and flight paths, other site-specific parameters.
- 4.3 Our site analysis is outlined below. The projected costs are confirmed as Renfrewshire House, £145,000 and Barshaw Park, £90,000.

Table 1:

Site: Renfrewshire House Audience capacity: 25,000 multi-site	Estimated cost: £145,000
Pros	Cons
Elevated site with several vantage points around the town centre and surrounding suburbs	Significant, fixed infrastructure costs in excess of £60,000 associated with firing from roof – this includes preparatory and protection required to minimise roof damage.
Elevation with no immediate adjacent buildings/obstructions supports angled set pieces/full production scope, and the use of larger shells – highly impressive display.	High cancellation risk due to prevailing wind direction and nearby residential properties and listed buildings.
Safe site that protects set up required & public can't access firing site	Reduced public viewing area due to Town Hall works. Audience needs to be split either side of Abbey with implications for crowd management/egress
Brings audience into the heart of the town centre	Mill Street closure for duration of the show – implications for Blue Light
Well-supported public transport and adequate parking capacity	Multi-day set up which increases costs

Table 2:

Site: Barshaw Park Audience capacity: 30,000 single site	Estimated cost: £90,000
Pros	Cons
Event infrastructure supports up to 30,000 people (increased audience size) with little disruption to the town centre.	Golf course will need to close for 1-day to support set up
Sufficient access for emergency vehicles	Additional security and stewarding will be required to ensure public safety around perimeter of firing site – access from Golf Course. Breach would require a show stop.
Existing perimeter fence forms a natural barrier between event crowd and the public and firing site is not easily accessible to the public	Significant car parking issues and traffic congestion in and around Barshaw Park
Very large fall out area in the prominent wind direction reducing the risk that debris will damage property or cause injury	Some ground damage may be left on the golf course fairway.

Single day set up, reducing costs associated with staffing.	Existing perimeter fence to golf course will need to be dismantled for production crew access to firing site
Ease of maintaining the prescribed safety distances and fall out zones	Unlikely to create footfall to town centre businesses
Lower risk of cancellation due to prevailing wind direction	

4.4 Should Members wish to introduce a fireworks event within the 2019 event programme, the available site options are:

- Option A: Renfrewshire House – total event cost £145,000
- Option B: Barshaw Park – total event cost £90,000.

4.5 Members should note that the current year events budget is fully committed and that costs for the event in the current financial year will be met from under spends across a range of other services in consultation with Service Directors. If there is a desire to continue the event in future years it would need to be accommodated within the budget process.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – an investment of £95,000 to £140,000 will be required to support delivery of a Fireworks event in Paisley.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – none
3. **Community/Council Planning** –
 - *Our Renfrewshire is thriving* – promoting a positive image and reputation of Paisley, and Renfrewshire as a whole, in Scotland, the UK and internationally
 - *Reshaping our place, our economy and our future* – implement our destination marketing plans | deliver a range of exciting and diverse events to increase visitor numbers and grow local event attendances
4. **Legal** – none
5. **Property/Assets** – none
6. **Information Technology** – none

7. **Equality & Human Rights** - The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report
8. **Health & Safety** – none
9. **Procurement** – none
10. **Risk** – none
11. **Privacy Impact** – none
12. **Cosla Policy Position** –not applicable

List of Background Papers

N/A

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