

To: Leadership Board

On: February 23, 2022

Report by: Chief Executive

Heading: Event programme 2022

1. Summary

1.1 This report provides members with the schedule of council events programmed for 2022, and outlines measures in place to protect delivery should restrictions to live events once again be introduced, as part of Covid19 outbreak management. The report also provides members with an overview of a new two-year event strategy to 2024 and the performance of council events delivered within Scottish Government Covid19 guidelines in 2021.

2. Recommendation

2.1 Members are asked to please note the report.

3. Background

3.1 Renfrewshire Council's events strategy was approved in March 2018 to cover financial years 2018/19 – 2021/22 and was incorporated within Renfrewshire's Visitor Plan, with major events positioned as a driver of visitor numbers and spend, especially during seasonal closures and during the refurbishment of cultural assets and venues. The subsequent marketing of visitor events has been a key component of Paisley Is destination marketing and the Future Paisley programme, significantly contributing to changing the reputation of Paisley nationally and securing VisitScotland and EventScotland partnerships and funding.

- 3.2 Strategy objectives were developed in partnership with community and cultural partners ensuring buy-in for events and town readiness and strengthening local relationships to help drive the development of an independent and vibrant local event sector.
- 3.3 Prior to the pandemic significant progress was made with event audiences and spend per attendee rising year on year - some 350,000 event attendees over the period and £8.47 million of combined local spend and economic impact. EventScotland funding has been awarded to Renfrewshire Council in every round of signature (and recovery) funding since creation of the strategy. Visitor research and campaign analysis means we understand who attends events in Renfrewshire, what motivates attendance and where we draw event audiences. Satisfaction ratings were consistently above 95% for every event. Socially engaged practice remains an important USP for the team, with significant co-created work to remove barriers to participation and attendance events and young people continue to have a voice in shaping the events programme.
- 3.4 The Covid-19 pandemic has had a considerable impact on the events sector and on the Council's event programme, with widespread cancellation of live events due to public health restrictions. Very quickly the events team had to adapt partnerships, renegotiate timetables for national funding, pivot to digital programming and cancel mass gatherings, previously the hallmark of the programme. This enabled event programming to continue in part in 2020 and through 2021, flexing and adapting to meet restrictions. During spring 2020, members of the events team were deployed to support Renfrewshire's humanitarian response.
- 3.5 Ongoing restrictions in relation to number caps and vaccination passport checks continue to impact event delivery and this is expected to continue through 2022, with the possibility of the re-introduction of restrictions on mass gatherings in autumn/winter. As such the new Event Strategy to 2024 and the 2022 programme have been designed for pandemic tolerance.
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4. Covid-19 response

- 4.1 In response to legislation banning public gatherings a digital event programme was designed and delivered in 2020 ([a showreel of this work is available](#)). This enabled Renfrewshire to protect event brands and support community wellbeing by marking dates most important to local people. The event programme enabled groups and individuals to take part in cultural activity, celebrate and rediscover their local place and connect, albeit remotely, with other people. A digital programme was co-designed and produced for Sma' Shot Day, Doors Open Days, Radical War, Remembrance Day and Christmas and was received well. Key messages focused on spending local and building community and individual wellbeing.
- 4.3 Due to a second lockdown, delivery of digital events continued into 2021, with a digital Food Festival and a second digital Sma Shot Day celebration. The British Pipe Band Championships were cancelled for a second year and the partnership with the Scottish Pipe Band Association concluded.

4.4 To protect the programme through the lifting and re-instatement of Covid-19 restrictions, new objectives were developed, and programming work began to reintroduce Covid-safe live events for autumn/winter 2021:

- Develop new event models to withstand public health measures and in doing so build attendee confidence and encourage people back to events
- Support villages, towns, and local businesses by encouraging local spending
- Encourage and promote community participation
- Encourage and promote volunteering and skills development
- Enhance programming opportunities and reach through digital programming
- Maintain Renfrewshire's place on the event map in Scotland

4.5 Throughout the pandemic the team worked with EventScotland and Scottish Government through the Events Industry Advisory Group to ensure a safe and viable return to events. The council's events programme was awarded three lots of funding totalling £40,000 through the Scottish Events Recovery Fund to cover the additional costs of Covid secure measures required to reintroduce the Spree and Halloween Festivals.

5. 2021 Event programme performance

5.1 The table below provides members with an update on the delivery of the 2021 programme:

Event	Attendees/participants	Highlights
Paisley Food Festival (digital) Programme of interactive cooking workshops, events and tasting sessions, growing and gardening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50+ businesses and community groups involved • 17,000 individual video views • Promoting community food initiatives – 17 blogs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.07 million OTSH • 43 pieces of media coverage across online and print • Social media campaign reach: 417,150 Engagement: 18,007 • Taste of Renfrewshire videos series created • 'Dough it yourself' pizza kits delivered locally
Sma Shot Day (digital) Story told over 3 short films and the Sma Shot musical.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2,136 individual video views • 20 local musicians and artists performing live at 'busker' stations across Paisley • 25 young people participated in film production • 22 people from Kairos and Spinners Gate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4.3 million OTSH • 22 pieces of media coverage across online and print • Social reach - 115,598 • Social engagements – 1,936

Event	Attendees/participants	Highlights
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> participated in digital textile workshops 8 primary classes participated in <i>We are Weavers</i> workshops 	
Doors Open Day (Hybrid)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 28 venues took part Celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Erskine Bridge by Transport Scotland Video tours of Brediland Allotments, RSPB Lochwinnoch, Castle Semple, Paisley Thread Museum, Lamont Farm and Bishopton Parish Church 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5.9 million OTSH 17 media articles 14,208 views across social media platforms of promo video and venue tours Blog on the Barscule Bridge created by a volunteer recruited specifically for this role Tree of Hope ceremony
<p>The Spree (Live – Covid safe format)</p> <p>Relocated Spiegeltent to Bridge Street. Enabled outside bar and seating area, social distancing and increased back of house production.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7,941 attendees £53k ticket income 96% satisfied or very satisfied Spree for All: 30 shows across Paisley, Lochwinnoch, Brookfield, Houston, Kilbarchan, Renfrew, Johnstone and Howwood. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18.1million OTSH 88 media articles Wee Spree (Live) - new home at Methodist Hall and Tannahill Centre
<p>Halloween Festival (Live -Covid safe format)</p> <p>5-day, town centre based, <i>Out of this World</i> Alien Trail developed by international artists.</p> <p>Neighbourhood- based performances choreographed by Cirque Bijou</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17,000 attendees Total economic impact £204,118 21% of attendees from most deprived decile 88% attendees satisfied or very satisfied 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 14.9 million OTSH 80 media articles Headline installation made from single use plastic from Team Up to Clean Up litter picks
Renfrewshire Christmas (Live)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4000 attended Paisley's Christmas weekend programme 2143 people attended Renfrew and Johnstone festive programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1million OTSH 24 media articles Total Economic Impact: £244,483 94% of people surveyed were either very satisfied or

Event	Attendees/participants	Highlights
		<p>satisfied with the festive activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average spend in 2021 was £45.14 compared to £39.00 in 2019 <p><i>'Great to have Christmas back'</i> <i>'The rides are excellent'</i> <i>'The wee one is loving it'</i> <i>"It feels like Christmas"</i></p>

6. 2022 programme and revised event strategy

- 6.1 The 2022 programme ensures the Council can meet safety requirements currently in place for events. It is likely restrictions will continue into 2022, such as vaccination passports checks at events with attendance numbers more than 10,000. There is also the possibility of restrictions on mass gatherings being reintroduced in autumn and winter 2022. There is currently no event insurance on the market to mitigate against Covid19 cancellations. In response, the 2022 programme for Renfrewshire does not include mass gathering/large crowd events. This limits the significant financial risk to the council, given the uncertainty of event capping or cancellations.
- 6.2 Event inflation and the increased cost of event infrastructure and supplies is also a significant challenge in 2022. Many suppliers to the events industry have significantly changed business models or have left the sector. Increased costs in the supply chain and additional costs of Covid mitigation means we are unable to deliver a like for like programme based on previous years.
- 6.3 Ongoing capital works and public realm improvements in Paisley town centre present a further challenge to the autumn/winter programme. Current project timescales indicate it is unlikely that Abbey Close will be available for programming at this time, restricting our event footprint. This means we will require a new location for the Halloween Festival.
- 6.4 The key adaptations made to safeguard delivery of the programme and manage costs, include:
- Avoiding events that require mass gathering in the town centre. This will ensure vaccination passport checks can be complied with and capacity limits can be managed if and when required.
 - Re-scheduling the date of The Spree to September. This reduces the risk of having to reduce capacity (and ticket income) and realigns the event with artist booking schedules and supply chain. The Wee Spree will remain in the October school's week to support children and families.

- Continuing to deliver a revised Halloween Festival model that replaces mass gathering and main-stage performance times with a trail format, enabling crowd management.
- Delivering a rolling programme of festive activity in the weeks leading up to Christmas in Paisley, Renfrew and Johnstone, maximising the benefits for local businesses and avoiding one-day only main stage programming.
- Working in new locations and outdoor spaces and protecting fringe events across Renfrewshire.
- Continuing to develop digital programming within live events to increase accessibility and to reach people who may not be able to attend in person.
- Recognising the value and importance of localism and ensuring the programme generates local event supplier opportunities and encourages people to stay local and spend local.
- Investing in Covid safe event delivery.

.6.5 The 2022 programme is confirmed below:

Date	Event
18 Dec – 19 March	Future Paisley Exhibition
28 Feb – 6 March	Unboxed – About us
29/30 April	Paisley Food Festival
2 June	Platinum Jubilee beacon service
5 June	Renfrew Gala Day
18 June	Barshaw Park Gala Day
2 July	Sma Shot Day
23 July	Renfrew Pipe Bands
17/18 Sept	Doors Open Day
1/10 Sept	The Spree
16/23 Oct	Wee Spree
28/29 Oct	Halloween Festival
13 Nov	Remembrance
December	Renfrewshire Christmas (Paisley, Renfrew and Johnstone)

6.6 We have developed a short-term strategy to direct event programming over the next 24 months, during a period of ongoing uncertainty when we must adapt to ongoing capital works in Paisley town centre and respond to existing/new Covid public health measures. The strategy will support the council's social and economic recovery plans and will focus on delivering social impacts in Renfrewshire, building local audience in the lead up to the reopening of cultural venues and supporting the recovery of local businesses who rely on the opportunities generated by major events. The strategy can be found at **Appendix 1**.

6.7 Beyond 2022, the team will host the Royal National Mod in Paisley in October 2023 and a major event funded by Future Paisley and delivered in partnership with National Theatre of Scotland and OneRen (summer 2023). The team will begin work on a new

five-year event strategy that maximises the opportunities created through the reopening of new cultural venues and event spaces and builds on the legacy of Future Paisley.

7. Recommendation

Members are asked to please note the report.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – none
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – none
3. **Community/Council Planning** – Council Plan, Outcome 1: Reshaping our place, our economy and our future (*delivering significant programmes of economic and cultural regeneration which will transform Renfrewshire and its prospects/ promoting Renfrewshire as a place to live, work in and visit/achieving recognition for local cultural excellence*)
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

Author: **Louisa Mahon, Head of Marketing and Communications,**
T: 0141 618 7546 E: louisa.mahon@renfrewshire.gov.uk



Events Strategy

2022/23



Renfrewshire
Council



Halloween Festival 2021

Introduction

The 2022/23 Events Strategy has been produced in the context of the global COVID-19 pandemic and the major capital infrastructure and public realm works ongoing in Renfrewshire until 2024, which have an impact on the delivery of largescale public events.

As such, this is an interim strategy to take Renfrewshire Council through the completion of the capital programme culminating in redeveloped event space in the heart of Paisley town centre and four redeveloped cultural venues—Paisley Town Hall, Paisley Arts Centre, Paisley Cultural and Learning Hub and Paisley Museum.

The focus of the strategy is the delivery of outdoor events that attract and engage visitors, connecting our communities in Renfrewshire and those attending across Scotland.

Renfrewshire Council's previous strategy committed to bidding for new events and national funding. This provided successful with national funding secured every year and several high-profile events delivered

in Renfrewshire, building Renfrewshire's reputation as a successful event host and strengthening national partnerships. Events bid for and delivered over the duration of the strategy include The British Pipe Band Championships and the Scottish Album of the Year Awards, with the Royal National Mod to be hosted in 2023. Renfrewshire Council events generated significant profile for the area with over 165 million opportunities to see or hear something positive about Renfrewshire.

The strategy for 2022 and 2023 seeks to build on this success and consolidate and refine the events programme. This means innovation in programming, extending the reach of events across Renfrewshire, building our visitor event brands and ensuring our programme is deliverable in a pandemic/epidemic context. We will also develop a new approach to hosting events from 2024 onwards.

The legacy of the COVID-19 global pandemic is expected to impact the events sector for the duration of this strategy, and as such we have designed our approach to flex to meet any ongoing or future changes in government legislation and public health advice.



The Bluebells at The Spree 2021

Current position

Events bring a range of positive impacts and play a key part in placemaking and regeneration. They generate community and supply-chain benefits at a local level and have been an important tool for Renfrewshire to address seasonality—driving visitors at off-peak periods and during the closure of attractions.

They are an important element of regeneration, fostering regional and local economic growth and delivering public policy. They bring legacy values that positively influence society and industry, and benefits extend beyond direct economic measures. Outdoor events bring communities together, create social cohesion and provide volunteering opportunities.

Events are an important contributor to Renfrewshire's visitor economy and over the course of the previous strategy (2018–2021), events delivered by Renfrewshire Council generated a combined local spend and economic impact of £8.47 million and brought 350,000 people to our town centres and venues, despite the cancellation of live events in 2020 and much of 2021.

The strategy has also delivered significant social impacts with over 6,000 participation opportunities, ranging from performance to production and volunteering. Our aim has been to focus our practice with some of Renfrewshire's hardest to reach groups, ensuring everyone has a fair and equal chance to enjoy cultural activities and to shape the programme delivered in Renfrewshire. This approach was crystallised through the development of Paisley Halloween Festival during the Year of Children and Young People.

The Renfrewshire Events programme includes two distinct programme strands. Visitor events: Paisley Food and Drink Festival, The Spree Festival and Paisley Halloween Festival—nationally recognised event brands that attract attendees across central Scotland, and local events; gala days, Sma' Shot Day, Doors Open Day, Christmas light celebrations - free-to-attend events designed primarily to engage local people and enhance civic pride. The team also provide event management support for elections and referenda and for corporate events delivered by Renfrewshire Council.



Halloween Festival 2019

Vision

Renfrewshire is host to much-loved events that capture imagination, examine issues important to society and attract visitors across Scotland. The backdrop is stunning natural and built heritage, providing a unique stage and showcasing Renfrewshire's destination potential well beyond a local audience.

Combined with a compelling local narrative, we share stories of Renfrewshire's bold and radical history and set out future aspirations.

Our vision is to deliver high-quality events through socially-engaged practice, deliver positive and memorable experiences for residents and visitors, contribute positively to the local economy, and position Renfrewshire as a great place to visit, work and learn.

Objectives

We will deliver economic, social, and cultural impacts for Renfrewshire by:

- encouraging more people to spend time in Renfrewshire by offering a year-round programme of high-quality event experiences
- maximising co-design, participation and volunteering opportunities by embedding socially-engaged practice through event design and delivery
- understanding and removing barriers to participation so that everyone in our communities can access events
- developing partnerships locally and nationally that strengthen the capacity of our cultural and creative sectors and create opportunities for local talent
- strengthening emotional connection between local people and their place by illuminating stories and issues that are important and showcasing the best of Renfrewshire
- supporting local businesses to fully maximise the benefits of supply opportunities and publicity and footfall generated by events
- incorporating new event trends and technologies ensuring the programme continues to diversify and remain relevant
- delivering a programme that can withstand the impact of current and future Covid19 restrictions
- investigating how events can help work towards net zero Renfrewshire and raise awareness of climate change among attendees and participants.

Key performance indicators

KPI	Outcome	Impact	Target by end of 2023
Number of attendees (total number of people attending events)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More people visit our town centres and attractions• Communities come together to celebrate events and spend time together	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased spend in the local area supporting local businesses• Community cohesion and strong social connections• Local ambassadors take pride in promoting place	170,000
Number of visitors (the number of attendees who live outside Renfrewshire)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased day visitors who can ‘sample’ Renfrewshire’s visitor offer• Cross promotion of Renfrewshire’s visitor attractions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased spend in the local area supporting local businesses• Positive area image• Increased tourism numbers outside of event times	30,000
Economic impact (including local spend)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased income on event days for local retailers and businesses• Supply opportunities are created for the local events sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sector stability and growth – cultural, creative, tourism and hospitality	£3 million
Number of participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More people are able to participate and shape cultural activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• People feel confident and experience wellness• New skills lead to further education and employment	3,000

KPI	Outcome	Impact	Target by end of 2023
Number of local performers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased opportunities to showcase and develop local talent• Increased opportunities to showcase local cultural organisations and groups• Partnerships are established with national cultural organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• People feel more confident• More people regularly participate in arts and creativity• Cultural sector is strengthened• Increased employment opportunities for those entering cultural and creative sectors.	500
Number of volunteering hours delivered	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local people have regular access to cultural volunteering opportunities• More people gain recognised awards/qualifications through volunteering.• Local people can develop new skills, gain experience and build confidence through events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• People feel more confident and connected and can access employment and further education opportunities.	700
Attendee satisfaction rates	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We understand how to continually improve the event offer and encourage repeat visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• People have a great experience in Renfrewshire and tell others to visit.• More people visit Renfrewshire on a regular basis• Increased footfall and local spend	96% satisfied or very satisfied



Paisley Town Hall, Halloween Festival 2021

Strategic context

Renfrewshire Council's event programme is aligned to EventScotland National Events Strategy—Scotland the Perfect Stage and directly contributes to the strategic aims of the Council set out in the Council Plan:

- **Outcome 1:** reshaping our place, our economy and our future—promoting Renfrewshire as a place to live work and visit, through destination marketing and delivery of diverse and exciting events to increase visitor numbers and grow local event attendances.
- **Outcome 3:** Tackling inequality, ensuring opportunities for all—celebrating diversity within our communities, and ensuring that the voice and needs of different groups within society are heard.

It also contributes to Renfrewshire's Economic Strategy (2020–2030), responding to Challenge 4—raise Renfrewshire's profile as a place to visit, by delivering an events programme to position Paisley on a national and international stage as a unique must-see events destination.

The events programme is an important contributor to the Future Paisley Programme, delivering outcomes under each of the programme's 5 step changes:

- Radically change Paisley's image and reputation in Scotland, the UK and internationally
- Raise prosperity and increase wellbeing in our communities
- Paisley will be recognised for its cultural innovation
- Transform Paisley into a vibrant town centre
- Develop a sustainable and resilient creative economy in Renfrewshire

Through the Culture and Creativity theme of Renfrewshire's social renewal plan, the events programme creates high quality participation and volunteering opportunities for young people and adults, contributing to wellness and social connection and opening a pipeline to skills development, work experience and paid work.

Capital investment

The strategy is produced at a time of significant investment in cultural regeneration. Investment of over £100 million is being made to transform cultural assets and public realm. Attractions and venues such as Paisley Museum, Paisley Town Hall and Paisley Arts Centre are currently undergoing transformation and major refurbishment that will bring visitors and performance and create first-class event space.

Abbey Close Paisley will be transformed to increase capacity and provide an improved, flexible and accessible events space allowing more people to access outdoor events in an iconic location.

Redevelopment of the sites will be ongoing for the duration of the 2022–2023 event strategy and dynamic adaptations to the programme may be required to accommodate works and enable events to continue to take place within the town centre.



'Connecting Threads: Dance, Create, Connect and Celebrate'
for Digital Sma' Shot Day 2020

Impact of COVID-19

The Event Industry has been hit hard by COVID-19, being the first industry to close and the last to be permitted to open with restrictive measures still in place.

At the height of the pandemic live events were cancelled and our delivery model switched to digital. The digital programme enabled important local and national events to be celebrated and provided much needed opportunities for connection and participation across our communities. We delivered mass dance projects, poetry, live music, theatre and animation projects.

Through the pandemic a hybrid approach was adopted, and digital programming was combined with in-person events. This created a safeguard and allowed events to continue despite changing restrictions. It also enabled residents and participants who were isolating or unsure of visiting crowded environments to take part and join in celebrations.

It is expected that a level of restriction will remain in place for the duration of this strategy. Restrictions are expected to flex seasonally, with autumn and winter likely to have restrictions imposed. This will require a move away from one-day mass gatherings to promenade performance and the use of new spaces and trails. This will protect delivery and manage financial risk.

Value of local

Community empowerment and localism have influenced the strategy, recognising the impact of events on the 'liveability' of place and the important role events play in connecting communities, celebrating local culture, promoting wellness and providing world-class cultural experiences close to home.

Socially engaged practice and co-design remain core to our planning and development work, with community groups, local organisations and the business sector key stakeholders in the event programme. Our programme will support Scotland Loves Local and Renfrewshire's Spend Local campaign and will reinforce the ethos of 20-minute neighbourhoods.



Aerial performance workshops with Disability Resource Centre and Dirty Feet Dance Company, Halloween Festival 2019

The team

The Renfrewshire Council events team are responsible for all aspects of the planning, design and implementation of large-scale events. This includes objective setting, feasibility studies, programming, engagement, risk management, contingency planning, event operations, funding and ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all.

All event and project activities act as a direct catalyst for accomplishing the corporate and strategic aims of the council and each event in the council programme contributes directly achieving strategy objectives and KPIs.

Visitor events attract attendees from across Renfrewshire and visitors from outside the area, they showcase our attractions and cultural assets, reinforce reasons for future visits and create positive economic impact to benefit local business and retail. Local cultural organisations and artists are actively involved in event delivery and local groups benefit from participation and performance opportunities alongside professional artists.

Success is evidenced through event evaluation:

- Direct economic impact and visitor spend
- Propensity to return to the area for future events or other leisure purposes
- Local spend by residents
- Positive perception of the area and quality of the events programme
- Participation numbers

Local events boost civic pride and build emotional connection and are delivered through socially-engaged practice, enabling local people to take ownership of events and shape event design.

Success is evidenced by:

- Number of local people attending
- Number of local people participating
- Number of local volunteers
- Percentage of local people who say events makes them feel proud of their place.



Delivering great event experiences: our four priorities

1. Partnerships and audience development

Developing our network of partners is key to the sustainability of the programme. Strengthening and building partnerships creates opportunities for funding through national programmes and private commercial sponsorship.

Working with national cultural partners provides local talent with high profile performance platforms and development opportunities and helps to reach new audiences. Growing our audience and encouraging more

people within a 30-minute drive time to regularly attend our events is essential to delivering economic impact and creating demand for the reopening of cultural venues.

Partnerships

Maintaining strong partnerships across education, health and social care and cultural and business sectors is key to achieving our objectives. We have a strong track record of partnership in event delivery working regularly with Renfrewshire HSCP, OneRen, Paisley First, local cultural organisations and local groups such as Disability Resource Centre. A priority for 2022 and 2023 will be to further strengthen those partnerships and identify new ones that extend our creative vision and ethos of socially engaged practice. Through our relationship with EventScotland, council events have featured in every round of major funding available during 2018–2021. This national support has enabled ongoing programme development, partnerships with artists and organisations of national standing and has provided exceptional event marketing opportunities. Maintaining our close working with EventScotland will continue to ensure Renfrewshire Council's profile as event producer and host continues. We will:

- Develop and explore partnerships with national organisations in the specific areas of climate change and accessibility making these a consistent and constant theme in all planning.
- Continue to work alongside EventScotland supporting themed years activities through our programming approach.
- Maintain and strengthen partnerships with local groups, providing opportunities through programming and engagement.
- Develop a stakeholder engagement plan for each event, identifying local and national partners.

Audience development

Growing regular audiences to our events is critical to our continued success and there are significant opportunities to engage new audiences. We know more about our audience than ever before. Our data provides attendee age and demographics, where people travel from, who they bring, purchase patterns, and how likely they are to return. This is complemented by insights gathered through Paisley Is destination marketing which identifies topics and experiences, popular with visitor audiences and likely to inspire attendance at events. We will:

- Use Mosaic profiling to learn more about our target audiences and to identify how best to inspire their attendance at events.
- Develop audience personas and use these to shape programming and marketing messages.
- Create programme to increase the number of event attendees aged 16–24 and those aged 45+, living within 30-minutes of Renfrewshire.
- Continually improve accessibility at events for people with physical disabilities and neurodivergence, ensuring the best possible experience.
- Work with local groups who represent our ethnic minority communities and people with a disability to develop programming and better understand their barriers to participation.



Our visitors

- Most event goers live within a 30-minute drive of Paisley town centre... coming to our event is the main reason for their visit.
- Halloween attracts people from across Scotland and people are willing to travel further to experience the spectacle.
- Renfrewshire events attract lots of families and most people visit in a family group...the exception is The Spree which attracts couples and adult groups.
- One in five event goers come from the three most deprived data zones in Renfrewshire, influenced by ease of access and free programme.
- The Food and Drink Festival has a broad appeal with foodies split equally between families and adult groups.
- All events have high satisfaction levels, averaging 95%, demonstrating the quality of programming—most people say they are likely to come back again.
- Social media is the most popular way people hear about our events and word of mouth—the best form of promotion, ranks highly too.

2. Event and programme development

In 2019 event attendances at Halloween Festival, Spree and Paisley Food and Drink Festival reached record numbers, with Halloween attracting over 40,000 visitors. Renfrewshire Council events regularly listed as ‘must see’ in national and UK media.

To remain relevant and to continue to attract national funding, media coverage and engaged audiences, it is essential events respond to national themes and policies. This includes the introduction of new and emerging technology, accessibility and green credentials, and the use of new spaces.

Event development

We will expand digital content, use new locations and venues and reduce the requirement for mass gathering. The completion of cultural infrastructure works in 2023/24 will enable the programme to evolve once again. The Council’s ongoing commitment to providing free to access cultural events is a major factor when designing our programme of events. A programming framework will be developed over the duration of the strategy to support future event delivery from 2024.

We will:

- Continue to work with EventScotland on themed years programming and explore external funding and partner programme opportunities
- Continue to support the work of EventScotland national advisory group, ensuring compliance with all public health guidance in relation to live events
- Develop flexible events and programmes reducing risk of cancellation ensuring residents and visitors have access to high quality experiences
- Explore new and underused spaces within the town ensuring events can take place in a safe and controlled manner

“What Hogmanay is to Edinburgh, Hallowe’en is to Paisley”

The National

Featured in ‘Must visit food festivals’

Olive Magazine and Delicious Online

The Spree featured in ‘The best sounds of Scotland’

Metro

Paisley Halloween Festival featured in ‘The Best of What’s on in Scotland’

The Sunday Times

Paisley Halloween Festival featured in—‘7 nights going out or staying in? Top tips to fill your diary’

Sunday Mail

Programme development

Our programme development for 2022 and 2023 can be summarised under three themes:

Innovative content	Accessible	Sustainable and Greener
Align programme with Scotland the Perfect Stage, EventScotland themed years and local and national cultural strategy.	Be known for inclusive, accessible events.	Identify new event sites in Paisley and across Renfrewshire.
Create programmes that respond to new and changing event trends, adopting digital and hybrid events as our standard programming approaches.	Where possible, commit to free or nominal ticket prices reducing financial barriers to attendance.	Deliver safe events, able to comply with public health guidance.
Continue to deliver events that capture the imagination, tell unique and relevant stories; and that explore unique and surprising aspects of Renfrewshire’s heritage.	Work closely with the ‘Great Place Scheme’, Future Paisley, local schools and nurseries and youth services to engage children and young people and link programme to building cultural capital, wellbeing and attainment.	Continue to work with Zero Waste Scotland to minimise the environmental impact of council events.
Elevate our connections to Gaelic culture through programming ahead of hosting the Royal National Mod in 2023.	Build cultural capacity through co-design with local communities, groups and cultural organisations.	Where possible, support environmental initiatives through our event programmes, that raise awareness of climate change and the positive changes people can make.
Explore opportunities for significant and impactful indoor and outdoor programming, ahead of cultural venues re-opening in 2023.	Create opportunities for local organisations and artists to work with national partners across dance, drama, film, digital, literature, music, craft, and visual art.	Ensure our events are environmentally sustainable working towards Renfrewshire’s aim of net zero.
Work with Scotland’s national houses.	Work with health and social care colleagues to connect programme with Future Paisley funded projects delivered through CAHSC such as social prescribing.	
Take a multi art form approach to major events, from visual art and spectacle to circus, dance, music, and film.	Work with trusted partners to reach previously excluded groups and encourage their participation.	

3. Community engagement and volunteering

Community contribution is integral to our programming and is fully integrated with professional work. Through event programming, positive relationships have been established with volunteers, local groups and communities, made even stronger during the pandemic. This has transformed our approach to event design and is helping to build new partnerships, reveal important local stories and identify local talent.

In 2022 and 2023 we will expand our youth group connections and strengthen links with multi-cultural and intergenerational groups. We will continue to expand programming to be inclusive of people with physical and learning disabilities, ensuring performance and participation opportunities are maximised and to deliver the best possible event experience. We will

develop our approach to socially engaged practice and actively reach out to groups who are harder to reach, exploring barriers to participation and learning from them. We will review what it means to be a volunteer and provide meaningful opportunities for individuals to build and develop their skills and experience, beyond the events programme. We will:

Develop team expertise and knowledge	Build capacity within local groups and communities	Take a targeted approach – no one size fits all	Create meaningful volunteering opportunities
Learn from national strategies and policies that inform community engagement and develop best practice.	Establish conversations with groups to establish how they would prefer to engage with the events programme.	Taking a flexible approach to engaging with local groups, designed around the needs and capacity of each group.	Create a range of access points for volunteers across event operations and ensure opportunities are widely publicised.
Participate in continued professional development to build expertise in accessible programming and event accessibility.	Regularly attend meetings of DEAR, Ethnic Minorities Steering Group, Art Connections and others, to share information and opportunities within the events programme.	Actively recruit groups that would benefit from specific opportunities generated by each event. Listen to their needs and ensure learning is taken forward into events.	Recognise volunteer contributions to events through awards and programme credits (Saltire, Duke of Edinburgh).
Take a broad view of accommodating differing needs and fully explore training gaps across the wider event delivery teams.	Support community led events by offering support and guidance and act as a sounding board for groups developing new events.	Establish meaningful links with multi-cultural groups, intergenerational groups and groups supporting people with a disability.	Extend the volunteering training package and work with partners to develop a pipeline to further education or employment for regular volunteers.
	Work with schools and cultural champions in advance of events to promote participation opportunities that take place out of the school term.	Explore barriers to participation with groups we are engaging and address this through design and programming.	Develop a volunteer action plan.

4. Local business engagement

Supporting businesses to capitalise on the footfall from events working closely with Paisley First, local development trusts, business consortiums and the Renfrewshire Chamber of Commerce.

We will continue to work with local business networks and groups to ensure event readiness and to support business to fully benefit from opportunities events deliver. We will:

- Identify opportunities and impact for local businesses during the concept stage of events so that programming and marketing opportunities are considered.
- Regularly share information with local businesses on the development and delivery of the annual programme and the potential opportunities.
- Build fringe activity into visitor events enabling businesses to programme and host complementary activities and design customer offers and experiences.
- Work council services to ensure town readiness in advance of events.

Measuring performance and impact

Achieving our objectives and will be measured through external evaluation of visitor events and through reporting on our Key Performance Indicators. Event performance will be reported as part of the council’s performance reporting cycle.

Contact us

Pauline Allan
Events Manager
Renfrewshire Council

events@renfrewshire.gov.uk

