



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Events Unit Update
Date:	13 August 2008
Reporting Officer:	Marie-Thérèse McGivern, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives, ext 3459 Gerry Copeland, Events Manager, ext 3412

Relevant Background Information

In October 2007 the Committee agreed to the delivery of the Council's annual events programme. The purpose of this report is to update Members on these event activities and to request the Committee's approval and input on a number of key items connected to the following; World Irish Dancing event, London 2012 Public Screens Programme, 2011 British Transplant Games, Support for Sport Funding Programme and the Visit of QE2 to Belfast on 4 October 2008 and The Scottish, British and European Scottish Pipe Band Championships.

Key Issues

World Irish Dancing Championships

In March 2008 the City hosted the above event, which attracted approximately 18,000 people and generated an estimated £4 million (see **Appendix 1**). This was the fourth time since 2000 that the Council has hosted this event with 92% of all participants and supporters coming from out-of-state. The total cost of staging this event was £101,754 with 90% of finance being allocated to Waterfront Hall operational issues.

Members are requested to approve that the Council bids for the World Championships (one year only) during the period of 2011 to 2015, and to approve an increased budget for staging the event of £200,000. The rationale for this increase is two fold

1. The bidding process now attracts significant competition from across the UK, Ireland and North America meaning that the Irish Dancing Commission will require an inducement in addition to the use of venues.
2. The competition now requires a second venue, which will increase overall staging costs.

Halloween 2008

Over the last four years the Council has staged its annual event at the Odyssey public realm. In 2007 the event attracted 25,000 people and generated £284,000 for the Belfast

economy at a cost of £150,000 to the Council (a return on investment of £1.89 for every £1 of funding). The Odyssey Arena has however, informed the Council that for the 2008 event the public realm outside the Arena is not free due a concert at the venue. Members are requested to give approval that the event be staged at Clarendon Dock and Ballast Quay. Both these sites will accommodate the significant audience that this event attracts and still allow for a major fireworks display on the night.

London 2012 Cultural Olympiad

City Hand-over Event; 'Live Sites' Public Screen & Cultural Olympiad Funding

At May's Committee Members were informed of the programme connected to the London 2012 Olympics and 'live sites' public screens. The Lord Mayor has been invited to attend a special ceremony in Belfast on 24 August to mark the closing of the Beijing Olympics and the official status of London becoming the next 'Olympic City' in 2012. This will be part of a number of events in regional capitals across the country.

In addition the Council has received details on the 'Live Sites' public screens from LOCOG 2012. The proposal would see a permanent 25sq m screen, valued by the BBC and LOCOG 2012 at £750,000, positioned in Donegall Place (this is dependent upon planning approval and site allocation). The concept would mean that the BBC, LOCOG 2012 and BCC would share broadcasting time on the screen which would operate 18 hours a day, 365 days a year. The screen would also be utilised for major events including a number of London 2012 events. The key indicative costs of the proposal that BCC are asked to address are as follows with further information in **Appendix 2**.

- Planning permission and process as one off payment estimated at £6,000
- Project management for the installation of the screen £30,000
- Groundwork estimated at £35,000
- Control room space adjacent to screen estimated at £10,000
- Operating costs (annually) estimated at £17,000
- BCC Project co-ordinator (annually) estimated at £20,000
- Annual programming costs of for the next four years £60,000

In total BCC would have estimated costs of £81,000 as one-off payments and £388,000 of costs for the next four years. Should Council agree to support this initiative BCC officers would intend to offset some of these costs with DSD via their 'Streets Ahead' programme, which will see Donegall Place re-landscaped. The Committee is asked to note after the four year period that the screen would become the property of BCC with a guaranteed link to the BBC's national public screens programme. A considerable amount of clarification and negotiation with DSD and other bodies is still required before final costs are brought to Committee for consideration. In the meantime Members are asked to note this proposal.

Members will be aware that as part of London 2012's bid a parallel cultural programme has been scheduled from 2009 to 2012. This proposed programme would highlight non-sporting cultural events in the lead-up to the Olympic Games.

As part of the above processes it has become apparent that there are minimal additional resources being committed to the Cultural Olympiad 2012 by DCAL in Northern Ireland although BCC and other Councils are being actively encouraged to design and support new events as part of the Cultural Olympiad. There is clear evidence that the Arts Councils for England and Wales are receiving substantial support from DCMS.

Members are asked to agree that the Department writes to the Minister for DCAL to arrange a meeting to discuss this issue. The purpose of would enable the Council to express its views on the need to provide a regional NI fund to deliver a programme of events in lead up to and during the 2012 games.

World Transplant Games 2011 and British Transplant Games 2011

In June the Council, Sport NI and representatives from the Transplant Sport UK travelled to Australia for the final stage of bidding for the 2011 World Transplant Games. Unfortunately Belfast was not successful. However Belfast has received an initial approach from Transplant Sport UK regarding the opportunity to host the British Transplant Championships in 2011. This event would bring up to 1,000 competitors from across the UK for a period of four to five days creating significant economic activity for the City. The overall budget for the British Championships would be circa £500,000 compared to a projected budget of £2,250,000 for the World Games.

Members are requested to approve further discussions with Transplant Sport UK on the possibility of hosting the British Games in Belfast.

Support for Sport Programme

A number of event applications requesting funding have now been received. These applications have been assessed by officers, based on the assessment criteria agreed at the Development Committee in March 2008. A list of these requests together with summary information and officer recommendations for funding is attached as **Appendix 3**.

Visit of the QE2 to Belfast on the 4 October 2008

Belfast Harbour Commissioners have requested that Council assist the Port with the visit of Cunard's QE2. This will be the final United Kingdom port of call prior to the ship departing to Southampton and on to its last cruise before the vessel becomes a static attraction in Dubai. Previous visits to Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Liverpool attracted audiences in excess of 200,000. It would be the intention of the Harbour to coordinate this event so the public can both see and visit the vessel. At the time of writing this report the Council are not being asked to provide funding for the project, but BCC are being asked to commit staff from the Events Unit to assist with the visit. Whilst more details will be brought to Committee in due course, Committee are asked to note the event and to agree in principle for Council to be supportive of the Port's request.

Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association (European Championship)

On 4 August 2008 BCC's Events Unit received an 'offer to bid' letter from the Royal Scottish Pipe band Association (RSPBA) with regard to the Scottish, British and European Championships during the three year period 2010-2012. (**Appendix 4**). Members are requested to approve the submission of bids for the European event, as RSPBA have recommended this as the preferred option, during the three year period. Members are asked to note that all bids must be received by the RSPBA by 12 noon on 9 October 2008. The following factors surrounding the bids would need consideration:

- Cost to stage the event: The bid for the event would have two cost elements. The first is the RSPBA fee; this must be paid directly to the organisation. The second element of the cost would be for logistical and site requirements that the event would require. The level of the RSPBA fee would be estimated at £55,000 and the logistical costs would be an estimated at £100,000 each year during the three year period.

- Belfast City Council Contribution. It is suggest that Belfast City Council meet the RSPBA fee. BCC would also be asked to contribute £100,000 to the logistical costs. Members are asked to note that other sources of public funds would be sought for the logistical costs. These organisations would include the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure, NITB and the Ulster Scots Agency.
- Use of Council Land. The event would require a space capable of catering for an audience of 25,000 people and number of Council and non-Council sites would be examined.
- Location. Currently both Council and non Council sites would be investigated.
- Estimated economic impact. These figures are difficult to give specific details on but it is estimated that between £500,000 and one million pounds would be generated over the three year period for the host city. This figure is based estimates generated by Lisburn City Council.
- Bed nights. These are difficult to quantify but it would be estimated that the event would fill all current bid spaces in the city

Resource Implications

Financial

- The WIDC bid would see the Council's commitment to this event increase from £100,000 to £200,000 and approval would be required in order that BCC can bid for the event during the 2011-15 period.
- Approval for the Halloween event finances at £150,000 and the Support for Sport Programme at £85,000 has been included in the Department's operational budget and approved by Committee in October 2007.
- Members are asked to note that further reports on the public screens item will be brought to Committee.
- The possible cost of staging the 2011 British Transplant Games will be identified in further discussions with Transplant Sport UK.
- There would be no cost implications at this time for the QE2 visit on the 4 October 2008
- The RSPBA bid : Members are asked to approve part one of the overall event costs. This would be £55,000 which would be paid directly to RSPBA. With regard to the second element of the additional finance of £100,000 per annum BCC's officers would be hopeful to offset some elements of these costs via Department of Culture Arts and Leisure, NITB and the Ulster Scots Agency.

Recommendations

Members are requested to approve the following:

- World Irish Dancing Bid: Members are requested to approve that BCC bids for one event during the years of 2011 to 2015 and that budget for staging this event, if the Council were successful with its bid for one of these years, be increased to £200,000.
- Halloween: Members are requested to approve the staging of the City's annual Halloween event at Clarendon Dock and Ballast Quay on 31 October 2008.
- 'Live sites' public screens: Members are requested to note the live screens site report.
- Cultural Olympiad: The Department arranges a meeting with the Minister for DCAL regarding lack of funding for the 2012 Cultural Olympiad programme.

- 2011 British Transplant Games: Members are requested to approve further discussions with Transplant Sport UK on the possibility of hosting the British Games in the city.
- Support for Sport Programme: Members are asked to approve the recommendations on requests for Events funding (totalling £19,965) attached at **Appendix 3**.
- QE2 Visit: That the Council agrees to providing help in kind support for the QE2 visit on the 4 October 2008.
- Members are requested to agree that Belfast City Council bid to stage the 2010-2012 European Scottish Pipe Band Championships.

Key to Abbreviations

BCC – Belfast City Council
BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation
DSD – Department of Social Development
DCAL – Department for Culture Arts and Leisure
DCMS – Department for Culture, Media and Sports
LOCOG 2012 – London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games 2012
WIDC – World Irish Dancing Commission
RSPBA – Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 – World Irish Dancing 2008 Economic Survey
Appendix 2 – LOCOG 2012 and BBC Public Screen Proposal
Appendix 3 – Support for Sport recommendations
Appendix 4 – RSPBA letter

BLANK PAGE