

## Events and Festivals in Lichfield City – Economic Impact

Cllr Ian Pritchard

Date:	19 March 2019
Agenda Item:	Events and Festivals In Lichfield City
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Key Decision?	NO
Local Ward	N/A
Members	



Economic Growth,  
Environment and  
Development (overview and  
scrutiny) committee

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the committee with details of the work that has been undertaken to date, as part of a commission to assess the economic impact of key events and festivals that take place in Lichfield city.
- 1.2 Lichfield traditionally boasts an extensive and enviable programme of events and festivals which attract thousands of visitors to the area.
- 1.3 Whilst Lichfield District Council delivers and supports a small number of these events, the majority of events that take place are delivered and funded by partner organisations.
- 1.4 The aim of this work is to determine the impact the growing number of events and festivals are having on the city, local businesses and council services. In particular the council wish to identify the measurable economic benefits the events and festivals deliver.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that Members consider and note the contents of this report.

## 3. Background

### Context

- 3.1 A key theme of Lichfield District Council's Strategic Plan 2016 – 2020 is that we will help "create a vibrant and prosperous economy" by encouraging increased visitors, increased spend in our local economy and more overnight stays.
- 3.2 Events and festivals are recognised as a key part of this, as an engaging events programme helps us build on our heritage, tourism, and cultural offer and encourages more footfall, both to the events and afterwards as events help showcase the city for future visits.
- 3.3 Lichfield is rapidly becoming known as the "City of Festivals", it has an all year packed calendar of events that range from traditional well established events like the Greenhill Bower and Lichfield Proms in the Beacon Park to newer events such as the Monthly Grub Club and The Cathedral Illuminated. The popular Lichfield Food and Drink Festival that takes place in August over 3 days is now in its 8<sup>th</sup> year, Lichfield Festival in July is now in its 36<sup>th</sup> year and lasts for around 10 days. A lot of the newer events are food and drink related, and are taking place in the city centre and on land directly adjacent.

### Delivery and support

- 3.4 As the local authority, Lichfield District Council has various direct and indirect roles and functions when it comes to events and festivals, through its regulatory service it provides the necessary licences and consents to allow activities to take place ensuring they are safe for customers and can be suitably

accommodated. In addition the council via its tourism and communications teams help to promote and market what is on and through the provision of land and/or availability of facilities such as car parks help to support the events and festivals.

- 3.5 An internal officers group was set up in early 2018 to consider how best Lichfield District Council can promote and support the various events and festivals via the councils many different roles. Officers from regulatory services, tourism and leisure services are part of this group.
- 3.6 A joint events and festivals collaboration group, made up of key partners, event organisers and officers and members from Lichfield District Council also meets to ensure a joined up approach is taken. The group shares best practice ideas and keeps everyone informed of what's on and when.

### **Assessment Methodology**

- 3.7 Members have previously indicated a desire to have an understanding of the economic impact of events and festivals on the city. To this end officers have been asked to undertake this work and report back.
- 3.8 Following the circulation of a project brief, The Market Research Group an independent market research agency based in Bournemouth University, were the chosen company to deliver this work.
- 3.9 Bournemouth University The Market Research Group, an independent market research agency based within Bournemouth University (BU) have been appointed to carry out the work. They specialise in providing market and social research intelligence services tailored to suit the needs of individual organisations within the public, tourism, heritage, arts and academic sectors. MRG have over twenty years' experience of undertaking visitor research at local, regional and national level for a range of organisations, including local authorities.
- 3.10 The first part of the economic impact assessment is to provide a **Position Statement** of the key events and festivals which took place in the city in 2018, this can be found in appendix 1. The next stages of the economic impact assessment will be carried out over the coming month and include:
  - 3.11 **Event organiser survey**  
Event organisers will be asked to take part in this survey with the aim of learning more about their events, including what their target markets are, how they operate and function in terms of financial returns to the organisation, ticket sales, jobs created. The event organiser survey will be divided into different surveys depending on the type of event, and number of events that organiser runs.
  - 3.12 **Stall holder survey**  
Stallholders will be asked to take part in the survey to learn more about why they choose to trade at events in Lichfield city, visitor spend, economic benefits, where they come from, and to gain feedback from their customers.
  - 3.13 **Event organiser interviews**  
Key event organisers will be asked to take part in interviews to explore their perspectives, aims and objectives surrounding staging events and festivals within Lichfield. The research team will aim to undertake five interviews with separate event organisers to form case studies that will help provide a narrative on the event and festival industry within the city.
  - 3.14 **Business survey**  
The research team will design and distribute a postal survey to up to 500 local businesses to gather their views on the impact of the events and festival industry within the city. The survey will explore views and perspectives around the events within the city and the actual economic impact that they are having on their business.

### 3.15 Visitor survey

Visitors will be surveyed at some of the events, to help us learn more about where visitors are coming from, are they residents, how far have they come from, what is the purpose of their visit, how long have they stayed for – are they a day visitor or here for an overnight stay, how did they hear about the event. If they are a visitor what else have they done whilst here. This survey will capture both visitors to the area and residents.

### 3.16 Data analysis and reporting

The consultants will prepare a concise but comprehensive report, which includes a narrative, supporting data/evidence and conclusions about the economic impact of events and festivals in Lichfield, this will be presented to a future EGED committee in January.

Alternative Options	As this is a summary report focusing on the position statement of events and festivals, alternative options are not considered as part of this report.
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Consultation	As this is a summary report focusing on the position statement of events and festivals, alternative options are not considered as part of this report
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Financial Implications	Budgets for LDC activities to deliver and support events are contained in the relevant service departments.
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Contribution to the Delivery of the Strategic Plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A key theme of Lichfield District Council’s strategic plan 2016-2020 is that we will help “create a vibrant and prosperous economy” by encouraging increased visitors, increased spend in our local economy and more overnight stays.</li> <li>2. Events and festivals are recognised as a key part of this, as an engaging events programme helps us build on our heritage, tourism, and cultural offer and encourages more footfall, both to the events and afterwards as events help showcase the district for future visits</li> </ol>
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Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications	There are no identified equality, diversity and human rights implications
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Crime & Safety Issues	There are no identified crime and disorder issues.
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GDPR/Privacy Impact Assessment	There are no identified GDPR issues.
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Risk Description	How We Manage It	Severity of Risk (RYG)
There are no identified risks		

Background documents N/A

Relevant web links  
[www.visitlichfield.co.uk](http://www.visitlichfield.co.uk)