

<b>Title of Report:</b>  <b>Halloween 2019</b>	<b>Officer Presenting: Head of Culture</b>  <b>Author: Festival and Events Officer</b>
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## **1 Purpose of Report/Recommendations**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on planning and programme development for the Halloween Festival 2019 and to seek approval to move forward with procurement processes required.

## **2 Background**

- 2.1 Established over 30 years ago, by the people of the City as a small community event, the City's Halloween festival has developed to offer locals and visitors alike a unique and authentic experience. Still very much loved and owned by the people, the festival has grown to become one of the largest Halloween Festivals in Europe and the largest in Ireland and the UK.
- 2.2 The last number of years have seen a large increase in visitor numbers to the city, in 2015 the festival attracted an audience of 50,000, In 2018 overall the festival attracted audiences in excess of 120,000 across the city and district, evidence that the scale of the Halloween festival has grown to international and major event status.
- 2.3 In 2018, the Derry City and Strabane District Halloween programme enjoyed its biggest ever programme of events with over 2,000 participants taking part in over 100 events in over 40 venues.
- 2.4 Attendance and participation at all events programmed were up on previous years, with between 4,000 - 5,000 attending activities and Fireworks in Strabane and over 110,000 people attending events in the City. Over 50,000 people experienced Awakening the Walls during the 3 nights before Halloween and audience numbers were the highest ever recorded on Halloween Night with over 44,000 attending the Carnival parade and fireworks in the City.

- 2.5 The event attracted massive media coverage and in 2018 this culminated in achieving the accolade of 'Best NI Event or Festival Experience' at the Northern Ireland Tourism Awards, our PR and FAM trip (in partnership with Visit Derry, Tourism NI and Tourism Ireland) campaign delivered €6.4M of positive coverage including features in Forbes Magazine, The Guardian US, The Independent and Irish Central. There was also significant coverage from the Live 360° Broadcast (Samhain Live) on TG4 and BBC2 which featured behind-the-scenes features and renowned music acts. Officers are currently in talks with the production company for Samhain Live 2019 and hope to develop this with extended coverage throughout the festival and live streaming. The festival also had pre-recorded footage broadcast on TV3's Ireland AM throughout the week of the festival.
- 2.6 The 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019 falls on a Thursday and the aim is to sustain the high audience numbers and the media coverage by extending the event to a weeklong celebration delivering a high level of programming across a full week to target the weekend visitor markets on both sides of Halloween.
- 2.7 The Halloween programme will run from Friday 25<sup>th</sup> October with the Castlederg Apple Fair to Friday 1<sup>st</sup> November and will engage public, private, voluntary and community sectors in programming a wide range of activities for all ages in over 45 venues locations throughout the Derry City & Strabane District Council area.
- 2.8 In 2018 Derry International Halloween Festival had been successfully awarded a grant of £95,000 from Tourism NI (TNI) towards the City's Halloween events programme and marketing. An application has been made to TNI for £150,000 for this year to allow for the enhancement and increase the duration of the event.

### **3 Key Issues**

- 3.1 Full programme details will not be available until June committee however officers are keen to seek approval to move forward with procurement processes required before that date.

- 3.2 Officers have also been approached by members of the business community in Strabane through the Strabane Towns Forum, Business Improvement District (BID) and Strabane Chamber of Commerce to consider the movement of the main date of the Halloween celebrations in Strabane from mid-week to a weekend date prior to Halloween. It is proposed that, subject to the favourable outcome, of a wider public consultation process in Strabane that pre-approval is given by members to change the date in Strabane for the main celebrations this year to be on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2019.
- 3.3 This will allow for enhanced programming within budget and will generate economic benefits for Strabane town with more people able to spend more time at celebrations in the town and has the potential to attract more visitors to overall event.

#### **4 Financial, Equality, Legal, HR, Improvement, Rural Needs and other Implications**

##### 4.1 Procurement

Officers will need to procure additional programming for the Halloween Festival for some large scale animation pieces. These and other procurement exercises have already been issued and in order to allow successful contractors to be engaged and commence work to meet the deadlines required for the event members are asked to pre-approve the appointment of selected organisations or companies, subject to all the existing procurement processes of Council. Officers may have to appoint through Single Tender action some specialist international acts to enhance this year's programme. Officers will report back with an update and record in the register of decisions. Other smaller items will be procured by way of quotation request subject to our existing policy and procedures. All other items required are covered on current annual tenders.

Please see below details of up to date budget figures and projected income:

DCSDC Rates	£300,000
TNI Grant if received	£150,000
Other Income/ Sponsorship	<u>£124,000</u>
Total	<u>£574,000</u>

A summary breakdown of costs is as follows:

Participation	£320,000
Production & Venue Costs	£100,000
Marketing Costs	£98,000
H&S, Licensing & Insurance	<u>£56,000</u>

£574,000

Members should note that the projected costs reflect the extension of the duration of the events in particular in relation to production, safety and programming.

## **5 Recommendations**

- 5.1 It is recommended that members approve, financial and procurement arrangements as set out above and note the contents of the report.
- 5.2 It is recommended that, subject to the favourable outcome of a wider public consultation process in Strabane that pre approval be given by members to change the date in Strabane for the main celebrations to Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2019.