

Title of Report: City of Derry Jazz & Big Band Festival 2019 Post Event Evaluation	Officer Presenting: Head of Culture Author: Festivals & Events Manager and Marketing Manager
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1 Purpose of Report/Recommendations

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on the outcome of the 18th City of Derry Jazz and Big Band Festival and also to seek approval from members to progress the programming and promotion of the 19th City of Derry Jazz and Big Band Festival in May 2020.

2 Background

2.1 The City of Derry Jazz and Big Band Festival is a core event in the council's annual calendar with many businesses, residents and visitors engaging with the event. It is estimated that over 60,000 visitors participated this year with occupancy levels peaking at 97.67% on Saturday 4th May overall bringing economic and social benefits into the region.

This year saw over 60 participating venues which included pubs, restaurants, shopping centres, public spaces and community groups a good number participating for the first time ensuring music was played to many different audiences right across the city.

The festival has grown in recent years and now has three Jazz Hubs, adding to the overall quality pure Jazz offering within the festival. The hugely popular Schools Education Programme returned this year and was extended to include a wider reach of schools hosting 30 sessions within 13 Primary Schools with over 2,115 school children attending sessions.

A new element of this year's Jazz festival saw Youth 19 hosting a fringe festival which married Jazz with a number of other music genres celebrating what young musicians produced locally while building on their knowledge of Jazz. This included master classes, workshops, outdoor concerts, on street performances and live gigs which culminated in a sellout performance by New York acclaimed act Hypnotic Jazz Ensemble.

The festival also developed further educational workshops including master classes, dance workshops, development projects and talent showcase platforms to ensure that the festival maintains its reputation as one of the most established and influential music events on the island of Ireland.

The overall event is a huge showcase for the city and region attracting international artists. It also hosted over 20 new acts including Marc Almond, Mr Wilsons Second Liners, Hypnotic Brass Ensemble, Sid Peacock & The Surge Orchestra, Ladies in the Blue and Kitty La Roar. It also provided a platform for talented local musicians such as master of jazz Gay McIntyre, John Leighton and many others.

It is the combination of local showcase and internationally acclaimed artists that allows the festival to meet and exceed its objectives including increasing out of state awareness, generating high occupancy rates and attracting international headline acts.

A multi-platform marketing campaign for the 2019 Festival launched on 19th March with a total spend of £37,000. There was an extensive outdoor campaign, with 48 sheet (billboards) placements across NI with 15 bus advertisements, impact wraps, Adshel lives (bus shelter advertising) here and in Belfast. This was supplemented with phone kiosks and bar socialites in both Edinburgh and Glasgow. Print and radio advertising ran throughout the campaign in local and national media outlets along with broadcast ads in cinema and Derry Girls.

There was a heavy focus on digital media, with an advertising campaign on Google and more focused social media which proved to be extremely effective and assisted in achieving successful results for the marketing campaign. The campaign saw Over 70,000 page views, a 19% increase on 2018. A new What's On DS Jazz Festival app was developed which achieved almost 25,000 page views and 934 downloads. There were 6,736 Facebook clicks, representing a 387% increase on 2018 and over 6 million Google Display impressions representing a 523% increase. Data collected from 81 participants (45% increase in 2018) with the overall results 95% rated the festival as Very Good or Good

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 The huge success of this festival can be attributed by the significant support provided by Council and officers recognise the need for transitional changes in the festival which will lead to Council ultimately playing a coordination and promotional role (subventing the profile acts and realising the marketing plan) with venues taking ownership for the acts within their premises. This is the longer term strategic objective as to how the festival will be sustained in the future. Council is also committed to the continued close working relationship with the many hotels and venues across the City and region to ensure that the event maintains its strong profile and occupancy and attendance levels. Officers would recommend that they continue to work with these venues and promoters in order to develop further the sustainability of the event and continue to grow audiences.
- 3.2 To continue to realise the strategic objective for sustainability of the festival it is proposed to continue the yearly 5% reduction for Tier 2 subvention to venues for contribution to acts fees which was set at 80%/20% for this year's festival to 85%/15% for 2020 – this will see venues contributing 85% towards artist fees and Council contributing 15%.
- 3.3 Council will continue to work with the Millennium Forum to lead on securing a headline act for Jazz 2020. Should we need to consider directly delivering a headline act this will done with a budget of £50,000 and via a Single Tender Action which members are asked to approve if required.
- 3.4 A feedback exercise was completed with the majority of venues positive in terms of visitor numbers and spend. Post event reviews in conjunction with a number of key venues have confirmed that the promotion of the festival earlier this year and launching the full programme listings five weeks prior to the start of the festival has reaped positive results.
- 3.5 To develop plans for next year an open meeting will be held with venues in August to discuss the procedure for booking acts for 2020 including application dates and process. Officer will work to ensure that there is fresh talent for the 2020 event.
- 3.6 Due to the move of the May Day bank holiday from the first Monday in May to Friday 8th May to mark the 75th Anniversary of VE day it is recommended that the festival continue to align with the bank holiday and run from Thursday 7th May – Sunday 10th May. Officers will work to align the Jazz event with the Battle of the Atlantic commemoration that the museum and visitor services team lead on generally on the second weekend in May. The theme of this alignment of the events in particular will reflect the VE day commemoration.

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

- 4.1 For the 2020 event it is proposed that officers work within the existing rates allocation for the City of Derry Jazz Festival which is £120,000. This will include a subvention budget of £20,000 to allow us to secure our headline acts in conjunction with our Tier 1 venues and a budget of £5,000 for an early promotional campaign including sending a delegation to travel to the Cork Jazz Festival and Sligo Jazz Festival.

5 Recommendations

- 5.1 Members are asked to note the contents of the report and approve the programming, financial and procurement arrangements for the Jazz Festival in 2020.

Background Papers

None.