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| Title of Report: Halloween 2019 | Officer Presenting: Head of Culture Author: Festival and Events Officer and Marketing Manager |
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1 Purpose of Report/Recommendations

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on proposals for the Halloween Festival 2019 and to advise on the procurement processes to date.

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 three years have visitor numbers to the event double from an audience in 2015 of 50,000 to in excess of 100,000 across the city and district for the 2018 event. This is 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 Tourism Northern Ireland commissioned Cogent Management Consulting LLP (Cogent) and its partner Cognisense to conduct a Research Study and Evaluation of the Derry Halloween Event 2018

2.5 According to the Cogent report (Surveyed over 4 of the 7 days of the festival) the total number of **attendees** at Derry Halloween 2018 was **99,573** with **197,723** spectator attendances indicating multiple visits on multiple days. **50%** of spectators were from the Derry City and Strabane **District Council Area** with **27%** from the **Rest of Northern Ireland** and **23%** from **Outside Northern Ireland**.

21,453 of the 22,794 spectators from outside NI travelled to Northern Ireland specifically to attend Derry Halloween 2018.

2.6 Attendance and participation at all events programmed were up on previous years, with between 4,000 - 5,000 attending activities and fireworks in Strabane.

2.7 The total number of unsubsidised commercial bed-nights generated by Derry Halloween 2018 attendees was 11,219 generating a total of £419,090 for the accommodation sector within Northern Ireland.

Spend on other items outside of accommodation allowing for the impact of leakages and neutral expenditure was £1,743,739.

The economic impact analysis (based on attendees from outside NI spend and organiser income from outside Northern Ireland minus all leakage caused by expenditure with businesses and traders from outside NI) shows that Derry Halloween 2018 generated a benefit of **£812,646** to the Northern Ireland economy. This represents a positive return of £8.55 for every £1 **of the £95,000** invested by Tourism NI

Taking account of the £1,192,385 spent by NI residents from outside the host council area, the tourism impact of Derry Halloween 2018 was **£2,005,031**. This represents a positive return of £21.11 for every £1 invested by Tourism NI.

Including the Event Organiser's expenditure, the total benefit to Northern Ireland based businesses (i.e. revenue received by NI-based businesses and traders as a direct result of Derry Halloween 2018) was **£3,200,723**.

2.8 Derry Halloween Marketing

The event attracted massive media coverage and in addition to winning 'Best NI Event or Festival Experience' at the Northern Ireland Tourism Awards in 2018 the 2018 event also picked up Best International Experience in 2019. The 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, Ireland AM, KTLA (Los Angeles), KTVU (San Francisco) 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.

The Web and social media campaign delivered 2.9 million digital impressions, 6.3 million impressions across Social Media and over 333,000 page views and a PR value of €6.4 million.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 The 31st 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.
- 3.2 The Halloween programme will begin with the Castlederg Apple Fair on Friday 25th October and run to Friday 1st November. The event 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.
- 3.3 In 2019 the Halloween Festivities will include a wide range of programming including Awakening the Walls illuminated & animated trail, little Horrors Family programme, Tours n Trails, Samhain Sessions, Street Animation, Carnival Parade and fireworks displays which are among the highlights.
- 3.4 The theme for Derry Halloween 2019 is 'The Other World Awakens' which acknowledges a festival rooted in thousands of years of Celtic traditions and the stories of the historic 400 year old City Walls.
- 3.5 Animation and activities secured to date include:

Saurus - back by popular demand and possibly one of the finest walkabout acts in Europe the Saurus are an incredible high impact act. The height of a double decker bus these amazing creatures steal the show wherever they go.

Museum of the Moon - a touring artwork by UK artist Luke Jerram. Measuring seven metres in diameter, the moon features 120dpi detailed NASA imagery of the lunar surface and will return with a full programme to the Guildhall.

Celestial Soundcloud by Pif Paf - when the audience move beneath eye sensors hidden in the cloud, they will activate one part of a vocal harmony and a special light moment.

Wicked Windows - unique and innovative installations bring to life often unused windows around the City Centre for some spooktacular surprises.

Awakening of the Walls – for three evenings before Halloween the Walled City and the Walls themselves are animated by an illuminated trail through the historic city. This event has now become as big as Halloween night with over 60,000 attending the event in 2018. Council is currently working with the relevant agencies to pedestrianize the City Centre in 2019 to accommodate the large crowds safely and have applied for a Road Closure Order for these key nights.

Samhain Sessions - a series of intimate music events under the Samhain Moon, celebrating the Celtic origins of Halloween. MRK Events have successfully tendered to develop this.

The Other World Awakens Halloween Street Carnival Parade – the finest Carnival Acts, circus and street performers descend for the Other Worlds illuminated spectacular. Over 800 district wide participants take place in this annual event from a cross section of the community.

3.6 Officers from the wider department are working with partners to ensure that there is a quality food offering at the Halloween event in keeping with the Tourism and Food strategies and aligns with the **Taste the Ireland initiative that is running at that time which** is an all Island showcase that focused on food and drink experience and is the perfect opportunity to promote the extensive catalogue of food and drinks that the district has to offer. DCSDC Festival and Events are working alongside Tourism and to develop a food offering in Waterloo Place with other vendors in Guildhall Square. The detail on this is the subject of a separate report to this committee.

3.7 **Fireworks Finale** – Pains Fireworks have secured the tender to deliver the Halloween Fireworks for the 2019 event.

The Marketing Campaign for the 2019 Derry Halloween Festival will deliver an extensive national and international campaign capturing target audiences and raising awareness of the Festival. The campaign has a budget of £98,000 and will use a mix of tools including Outdoor, TV/Radio, Print, PR and Digital to reach our potential customers across NI, ROI and GB. Officers are currently working on Co-Operative Marketing Campaigns with Tourism NI and Tourism Ireland to reach International audiences including The Open, Taste the Island. Derry Halloween was one of the featured events in their recent Events 365 Canadian Webinar.

The outdoor campaign launched in March 2019 with a Luas Campaign in Dublin during March reaching high footfall numbers in the City for the St Patrick's Day Celebrations. This tied in with the TV Ad running on Series 2 of Derry Girls broadcast on Channel 4 in March which had a destination focus and profiled Derry Halloween.

The Digital campaign including google ad words/paid search has been ongoing since the start of the year to coincide with marketing activities and updated content on the dedicated platform.

Further Outdoor campaigns are planned throughout the Summer in NI, ROI and Scotland during times of high footfall (The Open, Edinburgh Fringe Festival etc)

- 3.8 Officers had 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 to ensure an enhanced event that would generate business for the town centre. Following a consultation exercise however the majority of respondents 64% were not in favour of this move. Officers will work with businesses and the community to deliver the fireworks event on 31st October.

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

- 4.1 Officers will need to procure additional programming for the Halloween Festival for some large scale animation pieces in addition to those procured under annual tenders.
- 4.2 A single tender action will be required to appoint Sauras, this will be done adhering to existing policy and procedures.
- 4.3 Officers currently have calls open to Cultural Venues, Little Horrors Storytelling/Theatre and Individual Artists.
- 4.4 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. A tender exercise was undertaken to appoint the music provider and the Museum of the Moon.
- 4.5 Confirmation has been received from Tourism Northern Ireland International Fund that the Halloween event has achieved a grant award of £130,000, an increase from £95,000 in 2018.

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.