

Event Evaluation	14th March 2017
To: The Leisure and Development Committee For Decision	

Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)	
Strategic Theme	Promote our tourist offer locally and internationally
Outcome	Improve Prosperity
Lead Officer	Head of Tourism & Recreation
Cost: (If applicable)	Within Budget - £15k

The purpose of this report is to propose the continuation of the process to evaluate Council's own events and those events financially supported by Council.

BACKGROUND

Tourism and Event Management - November 2015 - In order to outline the approach for the future of event management in the newly formed Council, in November 2015, Council approved the performance measurement of events managed directly by Council and those supported by Council.

Airwaves 2016 – In order to apply the approved approach above, Airwaves 2016 was assessed on the following basis:

A programme of primary research in order to estimate the additional expenditure generated in the local economy (determined as the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area) as a result of Portrush hosting Air Waves 2016; and second, to assess spectator satisfaction with and their perceptions of various aspects of hosting the event in Causeway Coast and Glens.

Tourism and Recreation Business Plan 17 / 18 – In accordance with the approved business plan for the Tourism and Recreation Service area, officers will enact a standardised evaluation process, to measure events on the contribution to the visitor economy, media impact and engagement, visitor perceptions and satisfaction.

THE AIM OF THE EVALUATION

The aims of this work is to first, estimate the additional expenditure generated in the local economy (determined as the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area) as a result of the event, and second, to assess visitor satisfaction with and their perceptions of various aspects of hosting the event in Causeway Coast and Glens.

In doing so, the evaluation of Council's own events and those events financially supported by Council, provides an independent objective assessment, which allows for ongoing development, in accordance with the specific aims of the event.

THE STANDARDISED EVALUATION PROCESS – METHODOLOGY

Economic Impact - In order to apply the necessary level of consistency, the research model will be based upon the following:

To calculate the additional expenditure in the Causeway Coast and Glen's economy attributable to the event, the key interest group of spectators will be surveyed:

1. Quantify the proportion of respondents who live in the host area and those who are from elsewhere;
2. Establish basic characteristics of visitors e.g. where they live and composition of the party;
3. Establish the proportion of people whose main reason for being in the host area is the event;
4. Determine the catchment area according to **locals** (Causeway Coast and Glens residents), and visitors, either **national** (elsewhere in Northern Ireland) or **international** respondents;
5. Quantify the number of visitors staying overnight in the host area and the proportion of these making use of commercial accommodation;
6. Quantify how many nights those using commercial accommodation will stay in the host area and what this accommodation is costing per night;
7. Quantify for those staying overnight (commercially or otherwise) and day visitors, the daily spend in the local economy on six standard expenditure categories; and
8. Quantify what people have budgeted to spend in the host area and for how many people such expenditure is for.

For the purpose of this research the impact will be calculated on the Causeway Coast & Glens area, hence, anyone living outside this area but visiting as a direct result of the event being staged will be eligible for inclusion in the economic impact calculations.

Visits to the event by local people will be recorded in order to calculate the "dead-weight" percentage. Although their expenditure will not be included in the impact calculations, they are calculated to indicate the size of the local expenditure as part of a wider economic importance analysis.

Perception Surveys - The research will also examine visitor perceptions and awareness, using face to face surveys throughout the event using a self-completion questionnaire.

An overall usable visitor sample of 1,000 is necessary to establish a representative sample for major events.

EVALUATION PROVIDER

The selection of the external organisation to conduct the prescribed methodology, will be in accordance with Council's procurement policy and is a budgeted cost within the 17/18 financial period.

EVENT SELECTION

In February 2017, Council considered and approved the following:

- Council's own event programme for 2017, these being events managed and delivered by Council's Event Team, including the Salmon and Whiskey Festival, Airwaves, the Auld Lamas Fair.
- Council's 2017 Tourism Event Grant Funding Programme and the allocation of funding to the successful applicants. The recipients include the NW200, Supercup NI and the Heart of the Glens Festival.

In accordance with the approach approved by Council, it is proposed that two events are evaluated in 2017, an event managed directly by Council and one supported (grant funded) by Council.

If considered appropriate, based upon a view of visitor numbers and contribution to the economy, the following two events are deemed to be an evaluation priority:

The Auld Lammas Fair - The Auld Lammas Fair is the oldest traditional fair in Northern Ireland and the entire Island of Ireland, occurring in Ballycastle since the seventeenth century. Celebrated on the last Monday and Tuesday in August, the traditional fair marks the end of the summer and the beginning of the harvest.

As a traditional fair, the event has predominately featured an agricultural / market / equine theme.

Rather than being a structured event, the fair is predominately a social gathering and attracts traders selling '*craft, bric-a-brac and farm produce*'.

A further dimension is the street entertainment, music, food stalls and a carnival, which in conjunction with all the various elements creates animation and vibrancy throughout the town, attracting thousands of visitors to Ballycastle.

The NW200 – Northern Ireland's biggest attended sporting event in 2016, attracting up to 85,000 fans over race week and in excess of 50,000 on race day.

Research conducted shows a significant annual boost to the North Coast tourism economy with an estimated total visitor spend of £4.5m in the area in 2015.

The wider media and PR value to the area, in terms of local, national and international exposure, as independently measured by Nimms Media Evaluation, increased to £10.3m in 2015.

Council provides monetary support to the NW200, through the grant funding programme, but additional 'in-kind' support including the provision of physical resources (barriers, fencing, waste receptacles, toilets) and the provision of a staff resource for cleansing operations, marshalling, resource deployment (such as installing barriers).

CONCLUSION

The evaluation of Council's own events and those events financially supported by Council, provides an independent objective assessment, which allows for the informed development.

RECOMMENDATION

In accordance with the Council's approved approach using the methodology detailed in the report, members are asked to consider and approve the performance management of events, specifically the external evaluation of two events; an event managed directly by Council one supported by Council: The Auld Lammas Fair and the NW 200.