



PRCC.50 16/17

**Committee Prosperous
Communities**

Date 31st January 2017

F

Subject: Wolds Arts Festival Evaluation

Report by:

Chief Operating Officer

Contact Officer:

Karen Whitfield
Leisure & Cultural Services Team Manager
01427 675140
Karen.whitfield@west-lindsey.gov.uk

Purpose / Summary:

To update Members regarding the Wolds Arts Festival and future tourism work

RECOMMENDATION(S):

- 1) Members note the evaluation results of the Wolds Arts Festival and agree that no further funding is set aside to support the provision of stand alone events.
- 2) Officers continue to work and support other emerging Tourism opportunities within the District and that this work continues to be monitored by the Leisure Cullture Tourism and Events working group.

IMPLICATIONS

Legal: None

Financial : There is no further budget set aside to support the direct provision of events within West Lindsey
FIN/119/17

Staffing : None

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :

Risk Assessment :

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities :

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes

No

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes

No

1 Introduction

- 1.1 A two year salary and expenditure budget was previously agreed for 2015/16 and 2016/17. The purpose of this was to assess whether large scale events could generate significant numbers of visitors to the District thus raising the profile of the District, encouraging repeat visits and increasing tourism spend.
- 1.2 Originally an Events Co-ordinator was employed directly by the Council. However, after the post holder left the Council it was agreed that a better use of the budget would be to work in partnership with a high profile organisation to deliver a major event and to undertake some robust evaluation around the financial and social benefits of doing so. This would enable the Council at the end of the agreed two years' funding to evaluate the social and economic benefits of events and enable a robust decision on future funding commitment.
- 1.3 The Council approached Magna Vitae who were responsible for the development of the SO Festival and have a track record of delivering high profile festivals and cultural events. They were duly appointed to work in partnership with Officers to develop the Wolds Arts Festival.

2. Wolds Arts Festival

- 2.1 Linking in with Lincolnshire Day the event took place over the market towns of Market Rasen and Caistor on the 1st and 2nd October 2016 respectively. The programme was varied and included a range of street performances including music, theatre and pyrotechnic shows for the finale. A full communications plan was developed to ensure a high level of marketing was undertaken for the events.
- 2.2 The Festival was well received and approximately 500 people visited on each day, totalling around 1000 audience members over the weekend.
- 2.3 Highlights for the Festival included:
 - 95% satisfaction rate with audiences surveyed.
 - 79% were regular cultural attendees, and 21% were new to Arts events
 - 96% would like to see another Festival in 2017
 - Approximately £10,000 direct spend brought to the local area by contracting local companies and organisations
 - Approximately £10,000 spend generated into local shops and businesses by attendees
 - High profile re-tweets by the DCMS and Arts Council
- 2.4 Whilst the event was a great success and enjoyed by those attending the cost of producing the Festival was not matched by economic impact over the two areas. In addition as 82% of the audiences were from the local catchment group the Festival did not produce a large number of visits from outside the District.

3. Future of Events

- 3.1 There is no further funding set aside to support events within West Lindsey going forward and whilst the Wolds Arts Festival was clearly enjoyed by the audiences that attended the events, the economic impact was lower than the cost of providing the event. In addition the events did not attract a large number of visitors from outside the District.
- 3.3 There are emerging priorities and work streams for the Council that will deliver tourism opportunities for the District. These include the Mayflower 400 initiative and the emerging partnerships with Visit Lincoln and the Wolds Area Partnership. Time and resources will be needed to maximise the opportunities presented and these will be requested through the Council's governance routes at the appropriate time.
- 3.3 It is therefore proposed that, given current financial constraints and the other emerging priorities, further provision of stand alone events is not supported and no further resources are allocated in this regard.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 It is therefore **RECOMMENDED** that Members note the evaluation results of the Wolds Arts Festival and agree that no further funding is set aside to support the provision of stand alone events.
- 4.2 Officers continue to work and support other emerging Tourism opportunities within the District and that this work continues to be monitored by the Leisure Culture Tourism and Events working group.