

<b>Title of meeting:</b>	Cabinet Member for Culture Leisure & Sport
<b>Subject:</b>	Portsmouth Heavy Horse Show Review
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	8 February 2013
<b>Report by:</b>	Head of City Development and Cultural Services
<b>Wards affected:</b>	All
<b>Key decision:</b>	No
<b>Full Council decision:</b>	No

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## **1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1 This report seeks to inform the cabinet member on the feedback on the 2012 Heavy Horse Weekend and highlight the decreased number of horsemen and visitors. Furthermore to explain the background and development of an alternative invigorated event the 'Rural and Seaside show' to increase visitor numbers to the seafront and offer something unique to the city.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the cabinet member notes the reasons for the declining interest in this heavy horse event and that approval be given for the event to be modified and developed for the season 2013.
- 2.2 That the cabinet member agrees to the alternative event at May Bank Holiday, to create a 'Rural and Seaside show'.
- 2.3 That the new event, the Rural and seaside show will be managed within current cash limits

## **3. Background**

- 3.1.1 The Heavy Horse Show has been held in Portsmouth for 26 years, and was a very popular event and a major fixture on the seafront each Spring Bank Holiday attracting approximately 10,000 over the weekend at its peak.
- 3.1.2 The event's aim had been to raise money for cancer charities as well as keeping the tradition of the use of heavy horses alive.

3.1.3 The event includes an Obstacle Driving Championship, Scurry driving challenge and the Heavy Horse Parade which takes place on Bank Holiday Monday, and used to be considered by the horsemen as one of the largest Heavy Horse parades in the UK.

3.1.4 In previous years the number of entries in the parade exceeded 50 vehicles. In 2011, 33 horse drawn vehicles from across the country, from traditional working brewery drays and delivery wagons to classic carriages, took part in the parade.

The number of entries fell to 22 vehicles in 2012. This was partly due to the fact that PCC cannot make decisions on budgets until much later than the Horsemen would have liked which, meant that invitations to horsemen to participate were sent too late, but it also reflects the increasing lack of interest in horsemen able to take part, which could be for a number of reasons, including cost of attending.

3.1.5 The Events team took over the management of the event from DC Leisure in 2011 and attempted to add more interest to the event by including a Falconry display, dressage performance to music, sheepdog display and a vintage tea tent plus a mix of arts and craft stalls, children's rides, catering and trade stands.

On the Saturday the arena hosts a dog show which is run and managed by the Stubbington Ark and is always very popular.

3.1.6 The Events Team worked closely with members of the Heavy Horse community who advised on how the event had been managed in previous years, which horsemen/women to invite to the event, managed the setting up of the courses for the Obstacle driving and Scurry challenge and co-ordinated the parade.

### **3.2 Cost of the event**

3.2.1 The final cost of the event in 2012 was approximately £22,000.

In addition to the operational costs incurred to stage the event, other costs included supper for the participants, marquee hire, stabling for the horses and prizes. Sponsorship of £2,450 was received to support the programme.

### **3.3 Audience Profile**

3.3.1 The results from a small number of public surveys completed and from talking to people at the event, while not enough in number to give an accurate view of all those who attend the Heavy Horse Show, it does give an indication of the audience profile and their views on the event:

- Broad mix of public attending including families, older couples, groups of friends and younger groups
- Mainly from the local area
- Horsemen
- Interest in attending this type of event and similar shows
- Many brought their own food and stayed at the event for 2 hours or more

- Not a high spend which could indicate either low income attendees or a poor range of stalls
- The parade was well attended but there wasn't one day that was obviously busier over the weekend.
- Many people had attended the event in previous years
- Our questionnaires asked respondents to let us know what they most enjoyed about the event and the majority of the positive comments indicated that the most enjoyable elements were the heavy horses – the variety of them, being able to see them up close and stroke them - the dog show, falconry and the nice atmosphere of the event.

### **3.4 Event Development**

3.4.1 The aim is to take elements of the existing Heavy Horse weekend, if the horsemen are prepared to participate, but not have the Heavy horses as the main focus. The intention would be to create a 'Rural and Seaside show' that could incorporate the following:

- Heavy Horses
- A more diverse range of stalls on site that more suitably reflect the nature of the event
- To develop more arena demonstrations such as gun dog shows, gymkhana, polo, dressage, jousting, sheep dog displays amongst others
- More stalls doing demonstrations of traditional crafts, both rural and seafaring, such as spinning, weaving, knot making, hurdle making, sail making, cake decorating, quilting, chain saw carving, flower arranging etc
- Include a focus on environmental issues and links to traditional rural skills
- Donkey rides, an animal farm, ferret racing and Punch and Judy shows
- Vintage tea tent with live entertainment from local bands/musicians/performers throughout the weekend
- Bar on site selling real ales, ciders, wines and Pimms
- Increased engagement with local businesses/visitor attractions offering either activity as part of the weekend or have a 'great waterfront city' stall to promote Portsmouth and Southsea.
- Extending the weekend's theme to other venues in the city, such as Portsmouth Historic Dockyard to enhance the experience of the city to visitors and residents.
- More classic children's rides, such as Helter Skelter, carousels
- Display of historic, traditional and vintage vehicles.
- Sheep grazing on the grass adjacent to the skate park (if feasible with rules around moving of livestock and foot and mouth etc)
- Rare breeds on display

### **3.5 Marketing Plan**

3.5.1 Advertising in relevant country show magazines

- Use of visitportsmouth and portsmouthcc websites, facebook and twitter
- Banners on site in advance of the event

- Leaflets for display in local hotels, guests houses, visitor info centre, libraries and community centres
- Press release in advance of the event announcing the change of event
- Details of the event to be included in the Southsea Beach leaflet 2013

#### **4. Reasons for recommendations**

- 4.1 The original concept of the Heavy Horse weekend, while still attracting reasonable numbers to the seafront, no longer attracts the number of horsemen as in previous years nor a large numbers of visitors. The concept has become tired and in need of a fresh approach while still retaining the elements that visitors enjoy, such as the opportunity to see live animals and traditional skills.
- 4.2 A reinvigorated event would aim to increase visitor numbers to the seafront, offer something unique to the city that engages residents, visitors and local businesses and hopefully becomes part of the annual calendar.
- 4.3 An increased number of stalls and concessions would bring more income and reduce the overall cost of the event

#### **5. Equality impact assessment (EIA)**

- 5.1 An equality impact assessment is not required as the recommendations do not have a negative impact on any of the protected characteristics as described in the Equality Act 2010

#### **6. Head of Legal, Licensing & Registrars' comments**

- 6.1 This report raises no legal implications.

#### **7. Head of Finance's comments**

- 7.1 A financial appraisal for the event has not yet been carried out and consequently the costs and potential income associated with the proposed new Rural and Seaside Show are not known.
- 7.2 There is no additional PCC funding available for the event, therefore the final overall cost of the new event cannot exceed the budget for the existing Heavy Horse Show.

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Signed by  
**Stephen Baily**  
**Head of City Development and Cultural Services**

**Appendices:**           None

**Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972**

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

<b>Title of document</b>	<b>Location</b>
None	

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport on 8 February 2013.

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**Signed by:**  
**Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport**