

# Portsmouth City Council Events Strategy 2017 - 2021



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## **1. Introduction**

The City of Portsmouth is a lively and active city. With a rich and varied past, it has been the home of the nation's Royal Navy for centuries, is the birthplace of Charles Dickens and Sherlock Holmes and has played a full part in the history of the country. Events, over many years, have played a key role in Portsmouth's past and we perceive that the city is poised to become a global events destination with events becoming an extremely important asset for the City's future.

Over the years, events have formed part of a wide programme of involvement between communities, groups and individuals and include examples such as local school's carols concerts, area wide events such as the Great South Run, civic events such as the Remembrance Service as well as many others.

Hosting significant national and international events such as the America's Cup World Series races and the Victorious Festival provides the authority, with the help of other partners, the opportunity to form a new Events Strategy to help achieve our ambition to be a global events destination and make Portsmouth a Great Waterfront City.

There are many extremely valuable events organised directly or indirectly by Portsmouth City Council, although it could be argued that the full potential of this type of activity has not been achieved. This strategy and vision, if adopted and implemented, would bring a rational to events in Portsmouth and help us realised the potential benefits to both the city and the wider South East Hampshire region.

This strategy aims to capitalise and build on previous successes to deliver economic, social, sporting and cultural legacies for the city going forward. It recognises that across the sector, it is the major events that generate the most significant outcomes for the city's economy.

We believe that major events can help provide a means to realise Portsmouth as a Great Waterfront City and drive the right outcomes within the context of the city. This includes the networking opportunities for local businesses that major events consistently delivery back to both local and regional economies.

## **2. Why events are important?**

Whilst Portsmouth has a strong tradition of hosting successful, prestigious, large scale cultural and sporting events which have been shown to materially boost the local economy there are also many events which are delivered directly by community groups as well as a parallel strand of commemorative events which take place across the city. This web of different types of events are an integral part of the fabric of the city and as such need to be understood for the different roles they play.

Community groups often allow people with a common interest to come together to celebrate their specialism in an appropriate way. This can range from dog walking groups, to vintage car owners or faith groups who wish to mark something of significance to them. To this end this strategy will be a pivotal document to provide direction to support and advice and to maximise the resources the city has available e.g. public land and space.

The strand of commemorative events have a special significance in Portsmouth which appropriately reflect the city's military connections. It is right that key dates such as Remembrance Sunday and the anniversary of the D Day invasion are marked. In March 2012 Portsmouth signed an Armed Forces Community Covenant which encourages the city to support the service community in the area and the staging of such commemorative events is a key component of this support.

Major events are crucial to the fabric of the city in delivering and developing a range of economic and socio-economic benefits. They attract visitors to the region and positively influence perception of place through the quality experiences they deliver. They add significant value to local communities through participation in events from enhancing skills and knowledge in the planning stages to delivering community cohesion in the event delivery.

The Great South Run is an annual event, billed as the world's leading ten mile race, and attracting world-class elite athletes. The programme includes a weekend of sporting events. In 2015, just under 25,000 runners participated, attracting in tern tens of thousands of spectators. The economic benefit of the race as previously been calculated a £2.575m, rising to a total impact of over £3.3m when wider economic benefits are factored in. The impact is driven by the scale of visitors, and the rates of expenditure whilst they are in the city. Key to the generation of income is the fact that more than 80% of runners are from outside the area and around a third of this proportion stay overnight.

Looking at a larger scale visitor event, the Victorious Festival in 2015 generated 99,658 attendances over the two days it was held. The event generated an estimate £4.48m direct economic benefit to the city, rising to £5.82m when wider benefits are factored in. Critically also is the spending by the event organisation itself - including local labour - which was estimated at nearly £1m.

These benefits have been recognised by many successful cities around the world and more recently in the Government Cultural White Paper which was published in March 2016. A strong approach to events in Portsmouth is important because it will::

- Have a direct and immediate benefit to the local economy
- Make Portsmouth a more attractive place to live in and visit with a year-round offer
- Reinforce the position of Portsmouth as a Great Waterfront City
- To accelerate longer-term development benefits for the city

### **2.1 Direct and Immediate benefit to the local economy**

The extent to which the event will generate economic impact within Portsmouth will depend on a variety of contributing factors, including duration of event, potential to attract visitors from outside of the City, the nature of the event and audience profile.

A major events sources some of its income from outside of the region but it also spends it in the region to deliver the actual event e.g. additional direct business-to-business expenditure Secondly the event attracts visitors who directly spend money in the local economy in areas such as accommodation, restaurants etc.

### **2.2 Make Portsmouth a more attractive place to live in and visit with a year-round offer**

With careful consideration of how the event will affect the normal operation of the City and a focus on having a longer spread of activities throughout the year. Events make cities more vibrant and interesting to both live and work in with the potential to bring people together, sharing a sense of identity.

### **2.3 Reinforce the vision of Portsmouth as a Great Waterfront City**

Hosting major events can often result in a significant impact on a city and its image. The impact of the images from the 2015 America's Cup World Series race have achieved a brand identity and media profile which has been unprecedented for the city and has supported a positive image of Portsmouth on a national and international level.

### **2.4 To accelerate longer-term development benefits for Portsmouth**

Increasing the profile of Portsmouth has the potential to accelerate economic and infrastructure developments which provide a significant catalyst for change. Portsmouth would have the potential to use major events to give focus to their priorities and use the opportunity to develop longer-term business and trade connections.

### 3. Vision

**Our core vision is:**

***To build on Portsmouth's reputation for attracting and delivering major high quality events which continue to grow our position as a vibrant Great Waterfront City.***

The vision outlined in this document is of a Portsmouth that is ambitious, highly skilled, creative and able to make and take advantage of opportunities the events provide. The resurgence of major event activity and our securing of one-off major events has increased our knowledge and capacity to deliver a broader programme and to actively encourage further event development across Portsmouth.

At present the Council does not overly pursue opportunities to host major events and so does not reap the benefits of attracting new business from this market. Opportunities exist to capitalise on the natural resources that Portsmouth quite clearly enjoys; most noticeably excellent venues, its prime location within the affluent South-east, close links to a critical mass of population and a geography which lends itself to an active water programme.

Whilst the focus of this strategy has been on major events there needs to be a parallel programme promoting a strong sense of identity and civic pride through the delivery and support of a range of high quality community led events. This will not only improve skills within communities but also provide a platform for community cohesion and cross-sector working e.g. Portsmouth Pride Festival.

This Strategy will support a transparent approach which will help us deliver change through:

- A spread of risk across many events so the critical mass of activity is of greater value than the individual parts
- Ensuring we deliver those events which are right for Portsmouth with an appropriate geographical spread across the city
- To further improve our national and international reputation for delivery
- To maximise our return on investment - being able to clearly demonstrate the value through effective research
- To engage in events which bring added value to the city e.g. to provide the maximum opportunities for local suppliers

#### **4. How can the City Council support this vision?**

Portsmouth City Council's financial position continues to be very challenging and its investment needs to be strategically targeted against key outcomes to ensure resources are used efficiently and effectively. However funding is only one part and Portsmouth must be 'event friendly' and easy to do business with in order to attract the calibre of events which will enhance and develop our reputation.

Additionally we need to ensure that we have the knowledge, capacity and infrastructure to provide an 'event friendly' approach. This needs to consider areas such as the provision of venues, added value through tourism and transport as well as the oversight role which the Portsmouth Events Safety Advisory Group holds.

##### **4.1 Partnership working**

Working in partnership with external agencies and private sector event management companies e.g. Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, Victorious Festival, will be crucial. With the public sector facing increasing financial pressures it is essential to target resources into core priorities which can attract significant benefit to Portsmouth.

Attracting major events cannot be just a priority of the local authority but should be supported by a wider spectrum of aspiration across many organisations and businesses in order to achieve the major benefits which we believe events can bring.

##### **4.2 Global Positioning**

If Portsmouth is to use this opportunity to fundamentally change its position on events to strive to put it on a truly international platform then a comparison with some cities where events are at the heart of their delivery is appropriate.

A comparison of the events strategies of cities such as Sydney, Barcelona, Cape Town and Glasgow revealed some common themes:

- They all recognise the strategic importance of major events and plan accordingly attracting investment if required
- They recognise the need to balance the social outcomes of the events with the economic outcomes
- They perceive events as a platform for transformation of their cities
- They use events to actively promote and enhance their city brand

Portsmouth would need a major step change in its thinking around events to achieve this and it is clear that we would need to think differently in order to realise the Vision. Through the adoption of this strategy Portsmouth can embrace a different approach to events and aim to be part of a bigger picture as an exciting globally connected city, internationally relevant and with a competitive advantage in attracting and retaining inward investment.

## **5. How can we deliver an attractive events programme?**

Our events programme will be a mixture of established successful events, new events which can be developed and national/international events which we will be trying to attract to Portsmouth.

In most instances the council will work in partnership with one or more organisations to deliver the events but the approach needs to be considered and relevant. All events should be contributing to at least one of the event benefits so through a full year the full programme should support all benefits as outlined through:

- Direct and immediate benefit to the local economy
- Make Portsmouth a more attractive place to live in and visit with a year-round offer
- Reinforce the position of Portsmouth as a Great Waterfront City
- To accelerate longer-term development benefits for the city

When considering events we will need to assess the proposal- against our basic requirements to ensure it can be safely delivered, consideration of which will be given through PESAG for all events for over 5,000 people. Additionally the event will be considered to see if it will:

- Ensure the event is right for Portsmouth
- Promote Portsmouth as an attractive and vibrant city
- Deliver to an appropriate demographic at an appropriate time of the year
- Deliver economic benefits to Portsmouth and for major events to have a mechanism in place to measure this
- Strengthen the city's reputation for successful quality event delivery
- Engage with local businesses and maximise opportunities for local suppliers
- Complement existing programmed events and effectively use resources

It should however be acknowledged that occasionally an event opportunity will arise which will be exceptional and which should be grasped even if it does not fully meet the core benefits. In such an instance flexibility and capacity to respond quickly will often be essential whilst not compromising the local authorities processes.

## **6. Route to Success: How will we deliver this?**

### **Objective 1 - Consolidation & Planning**

**Action 1.1** Develop a Portsmouth Portfolio to packaging the city's assets, strengths and potential capabilities to capture the attention of national and international organisations and event organisers

**Action 1.2** Foster relationships with key decision makers and those with the rights to larger events

**Action 1.3** Attend specific trade fairs e.g. The Event Production Show to market Portsmouth as an attractive, events friendly city

**Action 1.4** Have a consistent approach to the use of PCC land and the hire of Council resources and equipment in line with current policies on insurance and booking systems for spaces

### **Objective 2 - Building our Events Infrastructure**

**Action 2.1** Investigate future funding mechanisms to support events including European funding models

**Action 2.2** Explore options for a capital investment programme for event sites and infrastructure

**Action 2.3:** Develop a consistent and systematic approach to event measurement and evaluation including economic impact methodology

### **Objective 3 - Objective 5 - Marketing for Events**

**Action 3.1** Undertake proactive marketing to identified and specific event management companies who operate in the areas of event management most attractive to Portsmouth e.g. outdoor, music and water based events

**Action 3.2** Enhance marketing collateral for Portsmouth with marketing for major events

**Action 3.3** Articulate the benefits of major events to Portsmouth residents and businesses

## **Objective 4 - Organised for Events**

**Action 4.1** Streamline and promote the best practice for supporting events from small to large scale throughout Portsmouth from process to charges

**Action 4.2** Maintain and co-ordinate a city wide event's calendar to act as a planning tool for the benefit of all existing and prospective event organisers in Portsmouth

**Action 4.3** Provide support through the Event Application process to enable voluntary organisations and community event organisers to deliver safe, well run and enjoyable events

**Action 4.4** Ensure that the Event Application Guidelines are current and up to date reflecting current legislation and good practice to enable community organisations to plan, organise and deliver events for themselves