

Agenda item:

Title of meeting: Culture, Leisure and Sport Decision Meeting

Date of meeting: 17 October 2016

Subject: Victorious Festival

Report by: Director of Culture and City Development

Wards affected: All

Key decision: No

Full Council decision: No

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Cabinet Member with an evaluation on the successful delivery of the Victorious Festival since 2014 and to request that an approach be made to secure future Victorious Festivals in Portsmouth.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **That this update report on the successful operation and delivery of the three Victorious Festivals on the seafront be noted and that the organisers of the Festival be congratulated on their very professional approach, delivery and responsiveness around all aspects of the event.**
- 2.2 **The officers be authorised to negotiate with Victorious Festival to enter into a contract for the delivery of an annual festival over the August Bank Holiday weekend from the end of the current contract period (2020) for a further five year term (2021 - 2025) with an optional 2 year extension (2026 - 2027) on terms satisfactory to the Director of Culture and City Development, the Director of Finance and Information Services, and the City Solicitor (in consultation with the Cabinet member for Culture, Leisure and Sport).**

3. Background

- 3.1 In October 2014 a report was brought to Culture, Leisure & Sport seeking agreement for the Council to enter into an extended contract with Victorious Festival to provide land and staffing support to enable them to deliver a large-scale music festival.

3.2 After the initial successful delivery of the relocated festival onto Southsea Common in 2014 Members authorised officers to enter into an extended contract with Victorious Festival to help them deliver their event based on their previous successful track record of delivery and their detailed market intelligence for a period up to 2020.

4. Successful delivery of Victorious Festival

4.1 Following the delivery of Victorious Festival in 2014, 2015 and 2016 it has become apparent that the Festival organisers can deliver a successful large scale event as we had originally anticipated in the initial report to Culture, Leisure and Sport committee in 2014.

4.2 The total number of tickets sold for the event over the last three years has continued to grow from a base level of 63,000 in 2014 to the current estimated level for 2016 of 110,000. This demonstrates a 75% increase in attendance at the Festival over the last three years and so making it one of the most successful events annually held in the city.

4.3 As anticipated the Festival organisers invested considerable time and resource into ensuring that their event runs smoothly and considerably whilst supporting the event on the seafront. This has entailed developing a broad number of communication methods to ensure that the event was as effective as possible through both a series of newsletters to residents and business in the near vicinity to the festival area and also by attending meetings and talking about the event between festivals.

4.4 The social media activity in relation to the festival remains very high level with high levels of praise for both the quality and range of activity on offer and the perception of many attending of the very good value for money their ticket price represented. The added profile this gives to Portsmouth is very hard to calculate but is extremely significant with Victorious Festival trending on Twitter and at one point being in the top 10 international searches on Google during the 2016 event.

4.5 The site continues to be well planned and carefully organised so as to put the audience at the heart of the offer with consideration for the surrounding residential accommodation and in consultation with Environmental Health. The on-going provision of a responsive sound monitoring process is core to the event and will continue to be a Council requirement of the event organisers going forward.

4.6 The event organisers have always welcomed feedback on their event and officers can demonstrate the evaluation feedback process and how learning year on year is implemented into the planning for future events. This has resulted in changes to areas such as taxi pick up points, stewarding points, and trial post-event buses. The evaluation usually takes place several months after the event to inform the plans for the following year.

- 4.7 In line with the majority of major events in the city the Victorious Festival organisers have undertaken a number of elements of research around attenders at the event. Through this research the extremely positive economic impact of this event on the city can be seen and some of the core findings from the 2015 report are beneficial in demonstrating the wider value of the event to the city
- 4.8 The last set of key economic impact findings of the Victorious Festival on Portsmouth were as follows:-
- 48% of attenders from were Portsmouth
 - 52% of attenders were from outside of Portsmouth
 - 92% of attenders felt the Festival was good value for money
 - £3.48 million - total estimated visitor spend in the local economy
 - £1 million - total estimated spend by Victorious Festival in local economy (contracts/crew nights etc.)
 - **£5.82 million** - total estimated visitor spend factoring in wider subsequent economic benefits
- 4.9 Victorious Festival have also continued to investment into infrastructure elements associated with large scale events and many of these sections of infrastructure, such as fencing and barriers, have been made available to community and other event organisers at a reduced hire or free usage rate. These have included Pedal Portsmouth, Portsmouth Triathlon and the commemorations for the centenary of the Battle of Jutland.
- 4.10 Victorious Festival has also continued to make available a percentage of their ticket income to support charitable causes. Within Portsmouth this has included the D Day Museum Transformation Project, Portsmouth LGBT Pride Event and Southsea Skate Park whilst funding has also contributed towards improved floral winter bedding. Internationally the Festival has worked with the Portsmouth based African Women's Forum donating funds to a specific Liberian school project. Funding has also been allocated to projects which are still evolving but which will again demonstrate their on-going interest in improving areas of the seafront including the Southsea Castle Water Fountain and the renovation of drinking fountains along the seafront.
- 5. Victorious Festival beyond 2020**
- 5.1 A report by the Association of Independent Festival indicates the considerable and on-going growth in Festivals. Whilst this was at a peak between 2000 - 2011 the market is still viewed as very robust which the year-on-year growth of Victorious Festival in Portsmouth can clearly demonstrate. As would be expected diverse market factors such as weather and the quality of headline acts can have a negative impact on consumer confidence on individual festivals whilst elements such as the positive impact of the 'Glastonbury effect' can also have a clear influence on audience perception resulting in increased sales.

- 5.2 Officers are very aware that the 'Victorious Festival' brand is becoming increasingly noticed both nationally and internationally. This change in status of the event can be clearly demonstrated as they have recently been nominated in the UK Festival Awards in the categories of 'Best Family Festival and 'Best Major Festival' - a reflection of the increasing market position the Festival holds.
- 5.3 We are aware that the current contractual arrangements are due to end after the 2020 event however officers are concerned that the success of the event both in regards to the economic impact the event has on the city and the significant profile the event provides will also be attractive options to other cities who may seek to entice the event to their area.
- 5.4 Whilst we appreciate there are still a number of years remaining in the current contract officers are seeking authorisation to initiate discussions and commence negotiations for a further contract period with the event organisers in order to secure Victorious Festival in Portsmouth for the medium term. The proposed term of this further contract would again be for a period of 5 years with the option for a 2 year extension so covering the Festival from 2021 - 2027.
- 5.5 Providing the event organisers with this longer term contract will also enable them to lever in further investment into the event infrastructure which, in turn, will also have a wider community event benefit if the use of any infrastructure can also be secured for them. Additionally it would also be anticipated that any further contract arrangements would again contain elements for financial contributions to community projects in Portsmouth and further afield.

6. Reasons for recommendations

- 6.1 It is important to acknowledge the successful delivery of this now significant national event as it has grown and developed over the last three years. In order to secure the Victorious Festival event in Portsmouth beyond 2020 in the context of the highly competitive Festival officers need to be authorised to initiate negotiations in the near future for a new contract period.
- 6.2 There is also an increasing risk that if officers do not start negotiations in the near future that Victorious Festival relocates to another city and that Portsmouth will lose the estimated £5.82 million visitor spends as well as the significant loss of national profile as the home of such a creative event.

7. Equality impact assessment (EIA)

- 7.1 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.

8 Legal Comments

- 8.1 This authorisation extends to the commercial agreement for the proposed events, but does not cover any authorisations which may be necessary under

the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Highways Act 1980, or Licensing Act 2003.

9. Finance Comments

- 9.1 The recommendations contained within this report will be implemented from within approved budgets.
- 9.2 This event generates a significant direct income for Portsmouth City Council through the contractual agreement with the festival organisers. In addition to this, there is a large secondary spend which benefits other businesses in the city and provides an opportunity for economic development and growth.
- 9.3 The securing of the event for a further five year period after 2020, with the option to extend for an additional two years, will enable the Council to work with the organisers develop the event further and explore the future financial opportunities.

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 Signed by:
Stephen Baily
Director of Culture & City Development

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:

Title of document	Location
Victorious Music & Cultural Festival	http://democracy.portsmouth.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Clid=131&Mid=2435&Ver=4
Victorious Festival Report	http://democracy.portsmouth.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Clid=131&Mid=2840&Ver=4
Seafront Masterplan	https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/ext/development-and-planning/planning/seafront-masterplan.aspx
Associated Independent Festivals Report	http://aiforg.com/wp-content/uploads/AIF-Six-Year-Report-2014.pdf

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/
rejected by Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport on 17th October 2016

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Signed by:
Cabinet Member for Culture Leisure and Sport