

Midfest

Report by Mary Smith, Director, Education, Communities and Economy

1 Purpose of Report

On 28 May 2013 Cabinet supported the proposal to support, coordinate and promote Midfest, a county-wide festival of arts, culture and music to be held during 21-28 September 2013.

This report provides an update to Cabinet.

2 Background

The Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Communities has been working with Midlothian Arts and Creativity Team, Midlothian Tourism Forum, Corporate Resources personnel and other key stakeholders to progress proposals regarding this event,

3 Progress update**3.1 Programme**

Since confirming agreement for this event the following progress has been made:

- 45 individual events have been agreed to take place across the week commencing 21st September. These span an array of art and music including comedy, storytelling, literature, song, craft, film, drama and dance.
- International performers have been secured for events at Dalkeith and Pathhead respectively.
- Venues across the county will act as hosts for the programmed events, including those in Dalkeith, Pathhead, Penicuik, Lasswade, Roslin, Middleton and Temple.
- Collaboration with key groups for elements of the programme is positive, including Dalkeith Country Estate, Penicuik Arts Association, Rosslyn Chapel and the Pathhead Music Collective.
- All events have been developed in conjunction with communities and a strong level of engagement and participation has been secured.

In addition to ticketed events, the working group has ensured that there are events hosted for specific groups across Midlothian including:

- Arts workshops with care home residents
- Drama events for groups supported through Kinship Care
- Crafting opportunities for pupils of Saltersgate School
- Storytelling opportunities for four primary schools – Strathesk, Mauricewood, Woodburn and St Mary's RC

There has been local support for businesses offered by way of catering opportunities.

3.2 Launch day

Opening the festival will be a day of activities and events at Dalkeith Country Park, afforded to Midfest without cost by Buccleuch Estates. The Council will facilitate stalls for crafters and has applied for the necessary licensing. Interest has been received from 25 stallholders covering a range of crafts including photography, jewellery making, ceramics, painting and glassware. In addition, 10 community music groups including the Rough and Ready Choir, the Community Concert Band and Loanhead Brass Roots have agreed to play in a rolling programme of music.

Additional activities secured include percussion workshops, art workshops for young people from Leith School of Art, face painting and a barbecue.

The necessary arrangements have been agreed with the Park in relation to parking provisions and first aid arrangements.

Volunteer stewards have also been secured to inform and advise members of the public.

3.3 Stakeholder Engagement

This has been strong and The Midlothian Tourism Forum has agreed to underwrite the finale event to be held at Melville Castle.

Melville Castle has offered significant support by way of gifting Midfest their venue at no cost.

Rosslyn Chapel worked with the Council to provide a separate programme of events at the Chapel and on the opening day, working to raise the profile of their venue and of Midfest.

Queen Margaret University have worked with The Council to offer involvement of costume design students, photography students and event management students. The Council are also in dialogue with the University to set up a placement for a postgraduate event management student to work with the Council towards hosting a Midfest in 2014.

Lasswade High students have nominated to be stewards on the opening day.

Community venues such as Temple Village Hall and St Nicholas Buccleuch Church have agreed to take part without venue fees and many are hosting events at no cost to the Council.

3.4 Publicity

The Council's Communications and Marketing section has prepared a project plan for marketing of events. This incorporates the following:

- Midlothian News has allocated 4 pages of content regarding Midfest
- The Programme is distributed across all Council venues and venues hosting events
- Posters to display at all Council venues and other venues hosting events
- Venues will also self-manage their own promotional material e.g. village hall websites
- Artists will also self-manage promotional material e.g. websites for singers announced forthcoming concert
- Branding will be created for the entrance to Dalkeith Country Park
- The launch of the programme received positive press coverage
- Facebook and Twitter coverage.

4 Report Implications

4.1 Resource

As outlined in the previous paper, the cost to the Council is in the region of £50,000.

An application for £10,000 to Homecoming Scotland to cover the cash elements of this (publicity, artist costs, equipment hire) has not been successful and in line with the Cabinet decision this will be funded from Councillor's Ward Environment Revenue funds.

Midfest 2014

Given the strong level of engagement and contribution from across the County the working group has been asked to consider re-hosting Midfest in 2014. To plan this from an earlier point, the Council have engaged with Queen Margaret University regarding event planning and have applied to Homecoming Scotland 2014 for a sum of £5,000. With Cabinet agreement it is proposed to apply for a further £10,000 to Creative Scotland in October 2014 to assist with the funding of Midfest 2014.

It should also be noted that the Director is required to prepare a report to Cabinet on the event outcomes and options for future years.

4.2 Risk

INSURANCE

The Council have been assured the events planned are covered under the Council's current insurance and have advised our brokers accordingly. Self-managed venues have been advised they retain liability for events under their own insurance.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The Council has requested all participating artists and venues carry out their own risk assessment and to confirm prior to events this has been carried out.

AGREEMENT WITH VENUES

The Council's legal team have agreed the wording for our proposed agreement with venues which were issued in July 2013.

Contract with artists have been drawn up for the council sponsored events setting out appropriate terms and conditions of payment.

4.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation

The Council are already engaging with partners of the Community Planning Partnership to enlist support for Midfest 2013. There will be further opportunities for work placements in 2014.

Links with businesses have been established and branding of partners is recognised in the profile to help support economic development and raise awareness.

4.4 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

It is anticipated that events will be experienced by a significant number of Midlothian residents and visitors from further afield. This provides platform for the council and the communities it serves to work collectively to promote and celebrate our rich heritage, local culture and talents.

The outcomes anticipated from this year include:

- Improved health and physical, social and mental wellbeing.
- Celebrating diversity and increased community engagement
- Raising the profile of Midlothian as an arts destination
- Investment in local organisations
- Positive publicity and media activity
- Benefits to students and educational activity
- Strong linkages across the Midlothian artistic network and the inclusion of groups from elsewhere
- The ability to leverage the success of this year's events to draw in future funding

4.5 Ensuring Equalities

- The pricing of events is widespread – many are free – to ensure the barriers to experiencing art and culture is not prohibitive
- The inclusion of many of our groups has incorporated those from disadvantaged communities and rural location
- The venues have been supported to increase their capacity to host events and be recognised for doing so
- There has been strong engagement from across the county to represent all our communities
- The schools from Midlothian are being asked to participate, contribute and enjoy many of the elements of the programme

4.6 Supporting Sustainable Development

This report does not impact on sustainable development.

4.7 IT Issues

There are no IT issues arising from this report.

5 Summary

Cabinet is asked to note the progress made for Midfest 2013 and endorse the activities to date.

6 Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:-

- a) Note the progress made for Midfest 2013
- b) Note that the funding application submitted to Creative Scotland was unsuccessful
- c) Acknowledge the option to consider Midfest 2014 and support the submission of an application to Creative Scotland in October 2013
- d) Note the intention of the Director to report at a future meeting on the outcomes from Midfest 2013

19 August 2013

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Declaration Box

Instructions: *This box must be completed by the author of the report. The box will be copied and saved by the Council Secretariat who will delete it from the report prior to photocopying the agenda.*

Title of Report: *Inspection of Hawthorn Children and Families Centre*

Meeting Presented to: *Cabinet 16 April 2013*

Author of Report: *Don Ledingham*

I confirm that I have undertaken the following actions before submitting this report to the Council Secretariat (Check boxes to confirm):-

- ☒ *All resource implications have been addressed. Any financial and HR implications have been approved by the Head of Finance and Human Resources.*
- ☒ *All risk implications have been addressed.*
- ☒ *All other report implications have been addressed.*
- ☒ *My Director has endorsed the report for submission to the Council Secretariat.*

For Cabinet reports, please advise the Council Secretariat if the report has an education interest. This will allow the report to be located on the Cabinet agenda among the items in which the Religious Representatives are entitled to participate.

Likewise, please advise the Council Secretariat if any report for Midlothian Council has an education interest. The Religious Representatives are currently entitled to attend meetings of the Council in a non-voting observer capacity, but with the right to speak (but not vote) on any education matter under consideration, subject always to observing the authority of the Chair.