
NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

16 December 2020

Council

Title: Events Support for Community Organisations

Purpose: To provide an update to Council on support for community events.

Recommendation: That Council:

- a) Notes the progress made by the Community Events Support Working Group; and
- b) Authorises officers to continue to implement the Community Events Support Working Group's project plan.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This update has been provided in response to a motion to Council on 19 September 2018 in relation to support for community organised festivals and events across North Ayrshire. The motion was: "That Council instructs Officers to establish a short term Member/Officer working group to investigate the support provided to community groups, clubs and societies organising events across North Ayrshire and the challenges that they face."
- 1.2 The working group was requested to "report back to a future Council meeting outlining positive proposals surrounding the support, funding, licensing, permissions and other issues affecting local people and groups organising events and festivals across our communities."
- 1.3 As an amendment, Council instructed officers to make arrangements for a Member seminar to investigate the support and information provided to organisers of events and the challenges that they face.
- 1.4 This resulted in the establishment of a Community Events Support Working Group (CESWG) who worked with the Transformation Team, IT and key stakeholders.
- 1.5 A thorough review of process has resulted in a new online events notification tool being developed and a successful application to NAVT has provided funding for a time-bound part-time post to re-establish a North Ayrshire Community Events Forum to develop community capacity and to establish supports and processes for community organisations.

- 1.6 While the focus of this report is on supporting community events on an ongoing basis, the current position during the pandemic is that no events can take place in Level 3 and 4 areas, and with the exception of drive-in events, events can generally not take place in Level 2 areas. At the date of writing this report, North Ayrshire was in Level 3

2. Background

- 2.1 Successful public events are memories that are tangible in communities; from local to national events, they create memories to share and stories to tell. In addition to the emotional impact, public events can have a tangible impact on the local economy, education, mental and physical health, volunteering opportunities and community spirit. However, the behind the scenes organisation of these events can be under-estimated or under appreciated.
- 2.2 North Ayrshire Council currently has no *dedicated* community events team and supports local organisers through an online toolkit which takes them through the process of negotiating licensing, public health and safety and liaison with emergency and statutory services. Groups are supported in turn by Connected Community Locality teams and other colleagues e.g. Licensing, Environmental Health, Roads etc., where required.
- 2.3 In the main, local events are medium-sized community events including fireworks, gala days and seasonal events. These have been growing in number and in ambition, pre-Covid. Marymass and the Viking Festival are significantly different in scale. Exceptional events in recent years have had dedicated, multi-agency coordinating groups, for example the Queen's Baton Relay in 2014 and the national golf events at Dundonald.
- 2.4 A Community Events Support Working Group (CESWG) with representation from Connected Communities, Roads, Licensing, Environmental Health, IT, Tourism and Police Scotland supported by the Transformation Team held an initial workshop for Councillors and key stakeholders. This included discussion around current processes and procedures and current issues faced by organisers. It highlighted potential future support requirements.
- 2.5 The CESWG decided that the issue of 'funding' would be out of scope for Phase 1 of the project due the size and complexity of the community event process review objectives. The scope of the work was therefore as follows:
- a) Completing a SWOT analysis and competitors' analysis;
 - b) Benchmarking with other Local Authorities (UK wide) to understand and learn from their event notification processes;
 - c) Reviewing best practice;
 - d) Analysing the strengths, weaknesses and other factors which affect the current event notification process;
 - e) Confirming the scope of the project and agreeing the project roadmap;
 - f) Evaluating each stage of the current application process and identifying possible solutions for each problem area;

- g) Identifying resource requirements and future software / system requirements for the e-form;
- h) Mapping out a new process which takes into consideration all issues and challenges highlighted throughout;
- i) Removing, where possible, customer issues and barriers currently faced;
- j) Developing an e-form which streamlines and simplifies the current process, introducing new and improved communication channels for customers, internal services and external agencies;
- k) Working with IT to steer the system build of the new e-form, which provides the ability to carry out detailed process analysis and information management (i.e. recording of numbers of successful forms submitted, e-form points of failure, auditing number of successful events held, event type, repeat events held etc, none of which was available before);
- l) Closer partnership working with key external agencies and emergency services and agreeing on improved communication channels and ways to support the effective flow of critical information in future for events;
- m) Redesigning and streamlining the events Toolkit ensuring that event organisers are fully supported through the whole event planning journey, providing key links to all information required and including attachments to essential documentation. This Toolkit has also been updated in line with current Covid-19 events planning guidance from the Scottish Government; and
- n) Assessing support requirements to build community capacity to develop and deliver local events, including through re-establishing a North Ayrshire Community Events Forum. A previous approach, supported by the Council, was successful in establishing a network of groups who provided peer support, expertise, advice and guidance to each other, work with schools and facilitated the purchase and sharing of equipment. Access to external funding would also be maximised through such a networking organisation.

2.6 Connected Communities will assume ownership of the new process and provide support for the application and approval process. There are already well-established lines of communication and support from the locality teams and the centralised management of the process will provide a sustainable approach.

2.7 The CESWG has now also secured North Ayrshire Ventures Trust (NAVT) funding for a dedicated officer whose role will be to build community capacity to develop and deliver local events. The post-holder will provide some additional capacity to liaise with Council and NAVT funding officers to increase access to funding for events. Recruitment to this part-time temporary (up to two years) post is currently in progress, so that capacity is increased as community groups start planning for 2021 events in a post-Covid context.

2.8 While primarily focused on supporting medium-sized community events, there will be an important interim role for the new Community Events Capacity-Building Officer within the managed support groups, led by the Tourism Team, for developing processes in relation to larger scale, major events.

2.9 The work of developing the process is still in progress and the next step for the Community Events Capacity-Building Officer will be to work with the Transformation

Team to move the new process onto a new IT platform which will streamline the events notification steps automatically between services.

3. Proposals

3.1 That Council:

- a) Notes the progress made by the Community Events Support Working Group; and
- b) Authorises officers to continue to implement the Community Events Support Working Group's project plan.

4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

- 4.1 £30,000 NAVT funding has been secured to support a part time, temporary officer to act as the single point of contact for events' organisers. The online events notification tool continues to be developed within existing resources. A key element of the Community Events Capacity-Building Officer's role will be to identify sources of financial support for community organisations and to work with the Connected Communities and NAVT Grants Officers to build capacity in local organisations to improve the sustainability of the events and the processes.

Human Resources

- 4.2 Connected Communities will have ownership of the new process and provide support from across existing Connected Communities teams. NAVT funding has been secured to support a part time, temporary officer for up to two years to act as the single point of contact for events' organisers as we work towards establishing a sustainable process and local support network. This will be managed through North Ayrshire Council's HR processes.

Legal

- 4.3 While the focus of this report is on supporting community events on an ongoing basis, the current position during the pandemic is that no events can take place in Level 3 and 4 areas, and with the exception of drive-in events, events can generally not take place in Level 2 areas. At the date of writing this report, North Ayrshire was in Level 3.

Equality/Socio-economic

- 4.4 The purpose of investing in events coordination is to reduce inequalities as a result of rurality and remoteness from large-scale events, increase community cohesion and advance education and community capacity in relation to culture and heritage.

Environmental and Sustainability

- 4.5 None.

Key Priorities

4.6 The proposal contained within the report supports the North Ayrshire Council Plan priorities:

- Active and strong communities;
- Inclusive, growing and enterprising local economy;
- People enjoy good life-long health and wellbeing; and
- Vibrant and welcoming places

Community Wealth Building

4.7 The application supports the following pillars of community wealth building:

- Creating volunteering and skills development opportunities;
- Advancing community enterprises; and
- Supporting local business activities and increasing the variety of ownership models.

5. Consultation

5.1 The proposal contained within this report has been developed by the through wider consultation with Elected Members and key stakeholders.

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For further information please contact **Rhona Arthur, Interim Head of Service, Connected Communities**, on **01294 324415**.

Background Papers

NAC Event Support New Process

TO-BE Process

Appendix 1

TO-BE

