

OPTION: EVENTS BUDGET

BUDGET SAVING: £95,000

DESCRIPTION OF OPTION:

The value of tourism to Wirral currently stands at £289 million, employs 4,200 full time equivalent jobs and has increased by 13% over the past five years ie 2007 to 2011.

Events currently form an element of the Council's Destination Marketing delivery plan, and the Council provides events funding for a number of Core Events of international significance.

The Council also provides funding from the Supported Events Budget for a number of community-led events of national and regional significance. Wirral community event organisers apply for funds through an application process and funding is awarded based on the number of visitors attracted and the media coverage gained. The funding criteria also link to the Council's Destination Marketing themes eg Wirral Year of Coast and Countryside in 2012.

The option would be to take the entire Core and Supported Events Budget as a budget saving.

RATIONALE FOR SAVINGS

The budget saving will result in a new process to support event organisers – both local and national. This will include providing more detailed information for event delivery; working with event organisers to engage with the private sector to secure sponsorship, and helping them to source other funding streams.

IMPACT

Currently, the return on the Council's investment into both Core and Supported Events equates to approximately £84 received by Wirral's businesses for every £1 of Council events funding. The budget savings may have a negative effect on Wirral's businesses, visitor offer and community groups who depend on the annual Wirral programme of high profile events for their income, visitor breaks and fund raising activities respectively. In addition, the positive media profile of Wirral as a day and short break destination, highlighted through Wirral's comprehensive event programme, will also be lost as a result of the budget saving.

In 2011, over 170,000 visitors were attracted to Wirral's Supported Events and they collectively had an economic impact of over £5 million. The supported events for 2012 are currently being evaluated, at the time of this paper being written, however initial evaluation shows an increase of both visitors and economic impact to the Borough. The budget savings would have a detrimental impact to Wirral's businesses, potential visitor perceptions of Wirral and the media profile of Wirral, if the Supported Events Budget is also lost.

MITIGATION

Support to local and national event organisers would continue through the Wirral Events Advisory Group and on an individual basis as mentioned in the Rationale for Savings. Unfortunately, it is anticipated that a number of the events may not continue if the Council's Events Budget is withdrawn.