

TITLE OF REPORT - RHYTHMS OF THE WORLD 2010 AND FUTURE PLANS FOR 2011

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY, PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 To highlight the successes and challenges of the Rhythms of the World (ROTW) Festival 2010.
- 1.2 To inform this Committee of preparatory work for the 2011 event.

2. FORWARD PLAN

- 2.1 This Report does not contain a recommendation on a key decision and has not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Rhythms of the World occurred on July 24th and 25th 2010, and for the third year took place in Hitchin Priory grounds.
- 3.2 The Hitchin Committee gave the Festival £5,000 in funding, subject to a bond of £1,000 being held to cover any costs arising from the Festival.
- 3.3 As in previous years significant Officer support was given to ROTW in the lead up to this year's event.
- 3.4 ROTW used Butts Close for the 2010 event for a car park and in consultation with the Council and agreement from the local organisations that have an interest in this land.
- 3.5 The advanced ticket charges for entry to the 2010 Festival were Adults £7, Youth £3 with under 5's free and pay at the gate was £1 more, with no re-admittance once you left the event site.
- 3.6 The 2010 Festival was once again very successful with approximately 19,500 attending on the Saturday and 11,500 on the Sunday.
- 3.7 Although there were minor operational issues within the formal site, there were no reasons for the grant bond to be retained, so the remaining £1,000 was released to the organisers.
- 3.8 A number of licensing issues have been identified with regard to the 2010 Festival and the organisers have been served a final written warning from Licensing and Enforcement regarding these matters.
- 3.9 Amongst the issues identified was the need for more multi agency planning

meetings prior to the Festival and also community liaison meetings.

A number of other concerns were raised by Hertfordshire Constabulary and the Council's Noise Enforcement Section and the Rhythms organisers have been asked to put forward an improvement plan detailing the issues and the proposed solutions.

An event specific Safety Advisory meeting will then be arranged in order for all the responsible authorities and other statutory bodies to assist with developing the plan by contributing ideas to address their particular areas of concern.

4. RHYTHMS OF THE WORLD 2010

- 4.1 The 2011 Festival will be on the 9th and 10th July, 2011. The Festival will take place once again in Hitchin Priory grounds although there may be slight changes to the layout of the event site.
- 4.2 Plans are already being prepared to ensure an effective implementation of the event.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 empowers local authorities to do anything which they consider will improve or promote the social, economic or environmental well-being of their area.
- 5.2 The Terms of Reference for Area Committees contained in the Council Constitution state that Area Committees are empowered to allocate discretionary and devolved budgets. Area Committees are also empowered to establish and maintain relationships with outside bodies/voluntary organisations operating specifically within the area including, where appropriate, the provision of discretionary grant aid/financial support.
- 5.3 On 17 June 2010 ROTW were granted a permanent premises licence under the Licensing Act 2003 for the grounds of Hitchin Priory. The operation of the licence is limited to two days each calendar year in June, July or August. This means the organisers do not need to apply for a premises licence every year as they have needed to previously. It also means that at any stage a responsible authority (such as the Police) or an interested party (such as a resident living in the vicinity of the premises) may ask the licensing authority to review the licence because of a matter arising at the premises in connection with any of the four licensing objectives. The review is a request for the Council to look at the existing licence and decide whether its conditions are adequate to meet the four licensing objectives defined under the Licensing Act 2003, namely the prevention of public nuisance, the prevention of crime and disorder, the protection of children from harm and public safety.
- 5.4 Section 136 of the Licensing Act 2003 states that the effect of a failure to comply with the Premises Licence and any of the conditions attached to the license is a criminal offence. Upon conviction this would result in a fine of up to £20,000 or up to six months in prison or both.
- 5.5 If any land owned by NHDC is used to host any part of the event (such as car Parking on Butts Close) an occupational licence will need to be entered into between NHDC and Rhythms of the World to regulate the use of the land and to protect NHDC in the event of any costs or claims arising from such use.

6. FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Council supports the Festival both 'in kind' and in a grant to ROTW from Hitchin Area Committee. It is difficult to assess the 'in kind' support but it is substantial.
- 6.2 The Committee has supported ROTW for a number of years at an annual cost of £10,000, but reduced to £5,000 in 2010.
- 6.3 This Committee has a track record of providing financial assistance to ROTW, which has proved invaluable to the event. ROTW continues to source new avenues of fundraising to keep pace with increasing costs, but has highlighted the importance of Council funding in both direct financial input and the fact that these monies assist in levering in other sources of funding.
- 6.4 However, in light of the of financial pressures facing the Authority resulting from announcements in the Government's recent Comprehensive Spending Review and pending decisions to set the Council's own budget for next financial year, it is perhaps only prudent to defer any future level of Area Committee funding for next year's ROTW, until the 2011/12 budgets have been formally agreed.

7. HUMAN RESOURCE AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The ROTW Festival is recognised as an important multi cultural event for the local population, as well as further afield.
- 7.2 ROTW has continued to benefit from direct officer involvement in the festival. A Community Development representative has ensured that all liaisons between ROTW and NHDC (as well as other external organisations) has progressed smoothly, and the SAT team has organised a range of dedicated meetings with the ROTW team.
- 7.3 ROTW is an excellent example of a multi faceted arts and music project that serves to promote good community cohesion and cultural diversity.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to consider:

- 8.1 Thanking Rhythms of the World for running a successful event during 2010.
- 8.2 Agreeing to the use of Butts Close by ROTW for the 2011 event, subject to consultation with other local organisations that have an interest in this land.
- 8.3 Deferring the decision on the level of Area Committee Grant Award funding for next year's ROTW, until the budgets for 2011/12 have been formally agreed by Council.

9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 9.1 No alternative options have been considered. However, the process of identifying sources of funding for the festival is an ongoing project.

10. CONTACT OFFICERS

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