

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET – 9th JANUARY 2008

HOMECOMING 2009

Joint Report by the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services and the Depute Chief Executive / Executive Director of Corporate Support

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Cabinet of the current position regarding the Homecoming 2009 project and propose East Ayrshire Council events to support the Homecoming 2009 initiative and bring visitors to East Ayrshire.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Scotland's Year of Homecoming 2009 is a Scottish Government led initiative aimed at attracting thousands of visitors to Scotland by showcasing Scotland as a 'must visit, must return' destination to a worldwide audience. The events will take place between February and November 2009, the 250th anniversary of Robert Burns' birth.
- 2.2 A national Advisory Board has been appointed to oversee the project. This board is chaired by Allan Burns, formerly of Diageo, and vice chaired by John Brown of the Scottish Executive. The Board also has representation from, amongst others, Visitscotland, COSLA, National Trust Scotland, Big Lottery Fund, Edinburgh International Film Festival, National Archives, Scottish Whisky Association, Robert Burns World Federation, Scottish Enterprise and South Ayrshire Council. The project is based in Ayr where the project director has an office.
- 2.3 Homecoming Scotland is targeted at 'Affinity Scots', people who have an affinity in some way with Scotland, for example through family links, previous visits, work or study or who are members of associations of some kind with a Scottish connection. The Homecoming programme aims to motivate Affinity Scots from around the world to travel to Scotland in 2009 and celebrate the country's achievements. There are five pillars which will provide a focus for events and activities.
- "Come to the home of *Robert Burns*"
 - "Come to the home of *Enlightenment and Innovation*"
 - "Come to the home of *Golf*"
 - "Come to the home of *Whisky*"
 - "Come to the home of *Your Ancestors*"

3. FUNDING GUIDELINES

- 3.1 Homecoming Scotland has recently announced that there will be a £1,000,000 funding allocation available to support events that are successful

with bids to the Themed Events Programme. One off funding of between £5,000 and £50,000 will be available to create new or enhance existing events in line with the themes and objectives of Homecoming Scotland.

- 3.2 Events will require to submit a clear business case with robust outcome measurement and it is not expected that Homecoming Scotland will be the majority funder. The deadline for the submission of bids is 26th February 2008 and grant awards will be announced on 11th April 2008. Timescales are therefore very tight and it is important that consideration is given to possible new or enhanced events to allow high quality bids to be submitted.

4. POTENTIAL EVENT PROGRAMME

- 4.1 The Homecoming project has created interest amongst local businesses and organisations and while it is too early to provide confirmation of the bids that will be made from Ayrshire it is likely that events such as the Burns an' a' that Festival will bid for additional funding and the organisers of the Cumnock Highland Games are keen to expand the games in 2009. The Ayrshire Chamber of Trade are considering a major event at Prestwick Airport. This event will have a 1940's and 1950's theme and will feature Big Bands. The organisers hope that the event will be one of the Homecomings main 'signature events'.

- 4.2 Consideration has been given to the Councils option for events and the initial ideas have been examined against the newly announced funding criteria to establish which events would have the best chance of securing external funding and attracting significant visitor interest. Two events are proposed:

- East Ayrshire's link with Robert Burns and Scottish creativity would be showcased in a new exhibition which will feature new commissions and collections. The exhibition would run from February to June. This would tell the story of Burns and use this as a way of exploring creative Ayrshire in its widest form. New commissions around Burns themes would be created and an event programme designed to support the theme. Key lenders would be approached to support the exhibition and the aim would be to produce the definitive Burns exhibition during the year of Homecoming.
- A second exhibition featuring Innovation and Enlightenment would follow from June to September. This would tell the story of Ayrshire's great innovators from Murdoch to present day and feature key collections relating to the theme sourced from our own collections and beyond. The programme would be supported by a range of events.

- 4.3 Both exhibitions will be held at the Dick Institute and would be supported by a programme of events and educational activities that would draw on the highly successful www.futuremuseum.co.uk partnership.

- 4.4 The estimated cost of the new exhibitions would be £90,000 and it is likely that the maximum grant available would be £50,000. The remaining £40,000

would need to be met from Council budgets, with additional funding spread over 2008/09 and 2009/10.

- 4.5 Activities with Town Twinning partners are also being considered with representatives from Twin Towns possibly invited for short visits to sample the Homecoming events. A budget of £5,000 would be required to fund accommodation and civic events.
- 4.6 There will be a requirement to support and encourage local tourism industry groups and businesses to organise events and apply for funding, appropriate officers in the Corporate Support Department will carry out this function. Officers from Neighbourhood services will manage any new exhibitions. An officer working group will ensure that all Homecoming activities are effectively co-ordinated.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Additional funding must be identified if new events are to be promoted and delivered and, as with all external funding application, there is no certainty of success.
- 5.2 The maximum additional cost of the proposed events would be £95,000 and it is estimated that the maximum grant available would be £50,000. £45,000 would therefore need to be identified and confirmed to allow a bid to be submitted.

6. POLICY / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Support for the Homecoming 2009 initiative, which aims to bring visitors to Scotland would assist in the delivery of the objectives set in the Improving Opportunities section of the East Ayrshire Community Plan.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 Homecoming 2009 offers the national programme of events for Homecoming 2009 opportunity to plan for East Ayrshire to offer a local Homecoming event programme to ensure that the area is in a position to accrue any benefits that may arise from this major initiative. The events proposed seek to build on the Council's strengths and are aimed at creating international, national and local interest in the area, its history, and its heritage. This programme cannot be delivered without substantial additional funding and its detailed planning must start as soon as possible.

8. RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 The Cabinet is recommended to:
 - (i) note the local events being planned for Homecoming 2009 and the funding guidance;

- (ii) approve the proposal to organise two major exhibitions around the twin pillars of Burns and Innovation at the Dick Institute and Town Twinning activities, subject to funding being available;
- (iii) approve expenditure of £45,000 from the General Services balances for the financial year 2008/09 to cover the cost of these events;
- (iv) request that the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services provide further progress reports to Cabinet on the Homecoming 2009; and
- (v) otherwise note the content of this report.

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Depute Chief Executive / Executive Director of Corporate Support

WS&EM/JAG

3 January 2008

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL

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