

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE - 29 JUNE 2004**

#### **BURNS AN' A' THAT FESTIVAL**

##### **Report by Executive Director of Development and Property Services**

#### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To advise the Committee of the outcome of an impact assessment study carried out on the Burns Festival 2003.

#### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Burns An' A' That Festival was established by the Ayrshire and Arran Tourist Board in 2002. Funding for the festival was provided by a range of partnership organisations including East Ayrshire Council which provided a grant of £40,000.
- 2.2 Following the 2003 Festival, an independent evaluation was commissioned and was undertaken by the Moffat Centre for Travel and Tourism Business Development, at the Glasgow Caledonian University.

#### **3. OUTCOME OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 3.1 The impact assessment demonstrated that the Burns An' A' That Festival had a significant impact on the local economy with:-
- Approximately 48,000 people attending events, both paid and free, across the 9-day duration of the festival
  - Over £2m of advertising equivalence press coverage, and
  - Local direct expenditure of £950,000
- 3.2 The festival used Burns and his work as the basis of a wider celebration of Scottish creativity and the arts. The 2003 Festival was considerably more ambitious in length and content than the first festival in the previous year and the range of venues was increased.
- 3.3 The principal event held in East Ayrshire was the Holy Fair at Mauchline, which was the primary launching event for the festival.

#### **4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 4.1 The success of the festival in its first 2 years indicates its potential to grow further and attract significant numbers of overseas and international visitors. It is proposed that the festival be developed on a year-by-year basis, leading up to the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Burns, in 2009, which coincides with the Scottish Executive's "homecoming".
- 4.2 In order to achieve this continued growth, it is recommended that the festival must continue to stage high profile major events with the involvement of world-class performers and innovative programming.

## **5. BURNS AN' A' THAT FESTIVAL 2004**

- 5.1 The 2004 Festival took place over the period 29 May – 5 June. This festival was more extensive and ambitious than the earlier festivals. One of the innovations was musical evenings in country houses, which included an event at Dumfries House, together with a number of key events in Kilmarnock.
- 5.2 The 2004 Festival also included an expanded fringe event which had in excess of 30 events, in various locations across Ayrshire.
- 5.3 Early indications are that this year's festival has been even more successful, than last year's, exceeding visitor number targets particularly at the Holy Fair in Mauchline and the Kilmarnock events at the Laigh West High Kirk, amongst others.
- 5.4 Informal calculations of the economic benefits to East Ayrshire of the Mauchline and Kilmarnock events (i.e. benefit to retailers, hoteliers, restaurateurs etc) stand at approximately £90,000.

## **6. FUNDING SUPPORT FOR 2004 FESTIVAL**

- 6.1 The funding proposed for the 2004 Festival, from East Ayrshire Council, amounts to £40,000, provision for which has been made in the Grants to External Bodies budget 2004/05.

## **7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The Burns An' A' That Festival contributes significantly towards the policy objectives of the Strategy of the Ayrshire Economic Forum (Ayrshire: Scotland's Western Gateway) and also the East Ayrshire Community Plan.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The proposed grant funding in the current financial year will be drawn from the Grants to External Bodies budget, within which there is an approved allocation.

## **9. LEGAL AND PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 There are no legal and personnel implications.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes:-
  - i) the outcome of the independent evaluation study; and
  - ii) the positive initial feedback on this year's events, with a detailed report on economic impact to be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee

**James Lavery**  
**Executive Director of Development & Property Services**  
7 June 2004  
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## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 1. Burns an' a' That Festival: May 2003: Impact Assessment**  
**Prepared by Moffat Centre for Travel and Tourism Business Development**

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