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**6 September 2012**

**Name of Cabinet Member:**  
**Cabinet Member, Policy, Leadership and Governance – Councillor J Mutton**

**Director Approving Submission of the report:**  
Assistant Chief Executive

**Ward(s) affected:**  
all

**Title:**

Godiva Festival 2012

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**Is this a key decision?**  
No

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**Executive Summary:**

This report outlines the background to the cancellation of the 2012 Godiva Festival and actions taken since then.

**Recommendations:**

The Cabinet Member is asked to recommend that further discussions take place between the Events Team and Parks team to scope out options for future years that would better protect the Festival from the risk of cancellation due to adverse weather conditions.

**List of Appendices included:**  
None

**Other useful background papers:**  
None

**Has it or will it be considered by Scrutiny?**  
No

**Has it, or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?**

*No*

**Will this report go to Council?**

*No*

## Report title: Godiva Festival 2012

### 1 Context

- 1.1 As part of the review of CVOne responsibility for managing the annual Godiva Festival transferred to the City Council at the beginning of 2011. There has always been a close partnership arrangement between the two organisations as the core funding for the event was provided by the City Council. As part of the review most of the core team who were responsible for managing the event were transferred to the City Council under Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment)(TUPE) regulations. The 2011 Festival proved to be the most popular in its 14 year history, with more than 120,000 visits to the event over the three days.
- 1.2 Planning for the 2012 event started late in 2011. This was earlier than the previous year, when planning for the 2011 event only began once management responsibility for the event moved to the Council on 1 April 2011. Initial discussions took place with artist agents and existing contractors during the early part of 2012 as it was important that contracts were in place as early as possible due to the potential impact that the 2012 Olympics might have on the ability to hire equipment and book artists. By April most of the contracts were in place. Following the success of the previous year's event most of the trade stalls had also been booked as well as the fun fair, both of which provide an income stream towards the cost of the event.
- 1.3 The layout of the field for the event was also confirmed with the backstage area backing onto the brook which runs along one side of the event field. This layout had been in place for a number of years and is designed to minimise the impact of noise from the event on local residents.
- 1.4 The site build began on Monday 18 June and the earliest parts of the build included erecting the perimeter fence and laying the backstage trackway. The build progressed well and by the beginning of the following week most of the infrastructure was in place. By this stage, despite difficult ground conditions from the wettest summer on record, there was no real concern that the event would not be able to go ahead although there was some damage to the backstage area during the initial build. The situation was reviewed daily and included visits by the Council's Deputy Leader, Chief Executive and Assistant Chief Executive. They were advised by officers including the Council's Senior Events Officer, The Godiva Festival Producer (who has worked on the event since 2001), and the Festival Site Supervisor (who has worked on the event since it began in 1998).
- 1.5 A further visit took place on the afternoon of 28 June and despite a torrential downpour the Events team advised Senior Officers and the Deputy Leader that the final stages of the build were progressing as well as could be expected in the weather conditions. Overnight on 28/29 June it continued to rain and this coincided with the transfer of heavy plant including generators to the backstage areas. The overnight rain had also meant that the Rhythm tent area and main stage areas were also becoming heavily waterlogged. Efforts were being made to soak up standing

water in the tents by using bark, but the extent of the waterlogged areas meant that this was not proving to be completely effective.

1.6 By 8am on Friday traders had started to arrive on site and were finding it difficult to access the event field without causing damage and getting their vehicles stuck in the mud. This was having a knock on effect with the final stages of the build of the event as the backstage vehicles were being called upon to help move traders vehicles. At 8.30 am members of the Events team took the decision that they had no choice but to recommend to senior officers that the event should be cancelled. The decision was taken for the following reasons.

- Concerns about the ability to complete the build of the event due to worsening conditions in the backstage area.
- To prevent further damage to the park as a result of traders arriving on site. Unlike many other festivals the Godiva Festival takes place in a public park which is used throughout the year and which residents expect to be maintained in good condition.
- Concerns about the ability of the stage personnel to be able to manage the backstage area during the event as a considerable amount of heavy backstage traffic was expected as bands brought their equipment on-site.
- Worsening conditions in the front of stage areas, particularly in the Rhythm tent.

1.7 2012 has been one of the wettest summers on record a number of other major events have been cancelled due to the weather.

1.8 The Godiva Festival dates had been planned to coincide with the Olympic Torch Relay evening celebration on 1 July. This event was still able to go ahead as it was located on a separate field that had the advantage of recently being upgraded and has improved drainage as part of the Heritage Lottery funded work in the park. In addition, heavy equipment and vehicles did not use the site in the week leading up to the event (as was the case with the Godiva Festival area), so the ground was not damaged during the storms of the week preceding the event. Heavy plant was also restricted to the perimeter of the field during the build over the weekend. The event attracted around 20,000 visitors into the park, with thousands more lining the Relay route to the park.

## **2 Options considered and recommended proposals**

2.1 Following the Festival, reinstatement of the park began as soon as equipment could be moved safely from the site. The initial reinstatement works were focused on making the park safe for users by filling all tracks/trenches made by festival set-up vehicles. This has largely been completed with only grass seeding to be undertaken. No works have been undertaken to address the underlying ground issues that caused the cancellation of this years' event.

Officers have met to look at what measures could be put in place for next year's Festival, which has included physical works and revising the process by which the event set-up is managed and staged. These include:

- Provision of additional trackway and managing vehicle movements differently in the backstage area
- Moving the equipment drop-off point (the "Bone Yard") to the main car park area. This would impact on the Park and Ride service and also the fun fair, which currently provides an income of £10,000 toward the cost of the Festival.
- Provision of a reinforced grass footpath along the outside of the footpath from the car park to Coat of Arms Bridge Road, this would allow segregation of festival set up plant and vehicles from park users.
- Provision of a land drainage system across the back stage and stage area of the park together with grass reinforcement at key points within the spectator and back stage areas

2.2 The Cabinet Member is asked to recommend that further discussions take place between the Events Team and Parks team to scope out options for future years that would better protect the Festival from the risk of cancellation due to adverse weather conditions.

### **3 Results of consultation undertaken**

3.1 Regular consultation takes place with local residents on specific issues around the staging of events in the War Memorial Park. This includes the WMP consultative forum, which meets twice a year with Council officers to discuss relevant issues, and meetings for a larger number of local residents held before and after the Godiva Festival. A total of 2,275 local households are invited by individual letter to these meetings, which are also attended by West Midlands Police, where they get a full update on plans for the festival and asked for comments, feedback and views following the event.

### **4 Timetable for implementing this decision**

4.1 Planning for 2013 Godiva Festival will begin early next year but ahead of that detailed discussions will take place on how the event set-up is managed.

### **5 Comments from Director of Finance and Legal Services**

5.1 Financial implications

The total expenditure budget for the festival is £446k. Usually this is offset by an income budget of £131k giving a net budget of £315k. Due to the lateness of the cancellation all fees for equipment, staff and artists had already been committed. Some savings were made for example on security and noise monitoring although

some of these were offset by the additional costs during the week in providing additional ground protection.

Officers have worked hard to retrieve as much expenditure as possible and the total cost of the cancelled event is now expected to be £398k - less than early predictions by officers and media reports.

## 5.2 Legal implications

There are no specific legal implications arising from the contents of this report.

## 6 Other implications

### 6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / LAA (or Coventry SCS)?

The Godiva Festival contributes to the Council's objective of encouraging a creative, active and vibrant city and developing a more equal city with cohesive communities and neighbourhoods.

### 6.2 How is risk being managed?

6.2.1 Risks are being managed through a number of working and project groups set up to ensure both events are run safely and successfully. This includes the Event Safety Group and the event specific Godiva Safety Advisory Group (SAG).

6.2.2 Following the cancellation of this year's event officers were asked to investigate whether it would be possible to insure the event against adverse weather conditions in future years. Two insurance companies were approached one of which would not provide a quote as they said that it was "too large an adverse weather risk". The other company said that an event of this size would have to be referred to underwriters, but to get £75,000 of cover the fee would be £16,000. This would mean that to cover the cost of the event for just one year the insurance premium would be £96,000. The company that provided this quote would also require the Council to take public liability insurance with them, even though the Council currently holds public liability insurance, so this would add an additional cost.

### 6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

The cancellation of this year's Godiva Festival was a massive disappointment for thousands of Coventry people who enjoy the event every year, and to the Events Team working on delivering a successful event. In general, though, the local media and members of the public have been supportive of the cancellation of this year's event and have recognised that weather conditions were exceptional for this time of year. A hugely successful torch relay event held on Sunday 1 July gave Coventry people the opportunity to celebrate in the park, and set the scene for a successful Olympics in the city later in the month.

## 7 Equalities / EIA

There are no specific equalities implications arising from the report

## 8 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

8.1 The Godiva Festival aims to offset the impact on the environment as far as possible through encouraging recycling, efficient collections of litter throughout the weekend and encouraging people where possible to walk to the event. Plans for the 2012 event included a more efficient process for encouraging people to recycle plastic glasses for beer, encouraging more people to collect litter on the park during the event and promoting greener travel initiatives.

## 9 Implications for partner organisations

9.1 The Godiva Festival 2013 will again require significant input and resources from blue light partner organisations.

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## **Appendices**