
Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities

10th October 2019

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities – Councillor AS Khan

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Deputy Chief Executive (Place)

Ward(s) affected:

All Wards

Title: Petition Response – Keep the Godiva Festival Free for All

Is this a key decision?

No - although the proposals affect more than two electoral wards, the impact is not expected to be significant.

Executive Summary:

This report responds to a petition from February 2019 from Councillor Gary Ridley;

“As we approach our year as City of Culture the Godiva Festival should play a big part in attracting visitors to the city, however that’s now at risk. The Council’s plan to charge people just because they’re not from Coventry is divisive and unfair.

We’ve always welcomed visitors to the city of peace and reconciliation and they’ve made a huge contribution to our economy. However, this plan punishes them at a time when we should be opening our doors to the world.

So, we the undersigned believe the festival should remain free for everyone wherever they are from. All are welcome in our city and we call on the Council to scrap this divisive visitor’s tax.”

To help meet the financial pressure of introducing ticketing at the Godiva Festival a £2 administration fee per person was introduced and applied to all visitors from within the City and those who came from outside the city thus ensuring there was no disincentive for inbound visitors.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities is requested to:

1. Consider the content of the petition and note the concerns of the petitioners.
2. Authorise Officers continue to seek out the best value options for financing the Godiva Festival, reflecting the need to balance attracting visitors from outside of the city with the opportunity for residents to attend and the imperative to produce a balanced Godiva budget.

List of Appendices included:

None

Background papers:

None

Other useful documents

None

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been 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: Petition Response - Keep the Godiva Festival free for all

1. Context (or background)

1.1 The Godiva Festival is a major undertaking and in the climate of reducing resources and the need to introduce ticketing, a small charge of an administration fee was introduced to enable the festival to go ahead. Charges were made at a very low level, to ensure they did not create a barrier to attendance and they were applied to festival-goers regardless of whether they were Coventry residents or visitors from out of town. Coventry continues to warmly welcome visitors to the city and visitor feedback strongly supported the view that the Godiva Festival offered value for money. The Godiva Festival continues to be one of the Country's largest and best value festivals of its type.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

2.1 For the 2019 festival, the Council wanted to see how introducing charging could contribute to ensuring the festival has a sustainable future and piloted:

- 1 Introduction of an "Administration fee" of £2 per person for all Festival visitors
- 2 Introduction of a charge for on-site car parking
- 3 Introduction of merchandise retail line.

2.2 The attendance figures and sales are summarised below

Day	Advance Sales	Free Carer Ticket	On the Day Sales	Total
Friday 5th July	12116	88	856	13060
Saturday 6th July	32178	129	3299	35606
Sunday 7th July	26041	179	3856	30076
Totals	70335 (89.5%)	396 (0.5%)	8011 (10%)	78742

2.3 Comparison with previous years

2.3.1 The 2018 total of 115,000 visitors was derived from manual clicking-in of the audience, including each time a single visitor left and returned to the festival site. The 2019 total of 78,742 is an accurate record of sales of individual tickets. In addition, around 2000 persons were on site each day including staff and performers– comprising all the performers on all the stages, school's music, local bands and singer/songwriters, main stages talent, security, bar staff, medics, crew, and ticket staff. The total number of people on-site over the weekend was 84,742. Entry to the Festival was notionally free, albeit an administration charge of £2 per person was levied. This applied to all Festival visitors regardless of their home location and free entry was available to the carers of disabled visitors).

2.4 Festival Visitor Home Locations

2.4.1 The Festival attracts a mainly local and regional audience and the 2019 Festival attracted a similar audience profile as in previous years. Thus the introduction of charging did not reduce the appeal of the Festival for visitors from outside Coventry;

	2018	2019
CV 1-6 postcodes	54%	54%
Other CV postcodes	18%	20%
Other UK Postcodes	26%	26%
International	0.9%	-

(The discrepancy in 2018 is due to some surveys submitted without a postcode)

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1 Godiva Festival visitors were surveyed on site at the event and remotely after the event. Some of the results of the survey have been included in this report. Further analysis is being prepared and will inform decisions for future years.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

The charges above were introduced for the 2019 Godiva Festival in May 2019. There is no fixed timetable for Godiva Festival 2020 proposals at the current time.

5. Comments from Director of Finance and Corporate Services

5.1 Financial implications

The City Council agreed a one-off resource of £379k for the 2019 Godiva festival. In 2020 no such resource has been identified whilst the Council considers options for future editions of the festival. To maintain a festival of a similar size and quality of the 2019 event would require a combination of increased income through charging, contributions and/or subsidy.

Further work is ongoing to understand the financial implications of all options for Godiva Festival 2020.

5.2 Legal implications

There are no legal implications arising from this report. The petition is being dealt with in accordance with the Petition Procedure Rules which is set out in the Council's Constitution.

6. Other implications

Any other specific implications

6.1 How will this contribute to the Council Plan (www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan/)?

Godiva Festival is incorporated in the Cultural Strategy and its sustainability contributes to reducing Council budget pressure. Increasing access to arts, sports and cultural opportunities and promoting Coventry as a visitor destination and centre for arts and culture sports and leisure; music and events are priorities of the Council plan.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

The risk of missing income target through sales is managed by regular milestone checks and by aligning sales with marketing so that marketing can respond to the rate of sales. Finance colleague's involvement and risk register maintained.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

Introducing the income streams is also accompanied by the costs to implement the income streams – from ticketing company personnel and facilities to the hardware and equipment needed to maintain site security and safety. The costs of these are offset by the income. In 2019, the Council partnered with an external provider to operate the ticketed approach. The result of ticketing the event was that public safety is improved for all festival goers, contractors and CCC staff.

6.4 Equality and Consultation Analysis (ECA)

Equality Impact Assessment will be completed in line with proposals for Godiva 2020 in due course. No timetable yet has been set.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment

None

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

We are working closely with City of Culture Trust to align Godiva with the range of high-profile events and offers for 2021

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