
Cabinet Member for Policing & Equalities

30 January 2020

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Equalities and Policing – Councillor AS Khan

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Deputy Chief Executive (Place)

Wards affected:

All

Title:

Godiva Festival 2020

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:

The Godiva Festival is a hallmark annual event in the city calendar. In 2019 the Council reduced the core budget for Godiva as part of agreed measures to address financial challenges and its piloted initiatives to establish the potential for a more commercial approach, while underpinning the event with a one-off budget allocation. The Council tested the market for income to be generated to support the event in future by charging for car parking, improving merchandising and seeking increased sponsorship. Ticketing was also introduced, along with other measures, to address public safety concerns. Ticketing enabled accurate assessment of attendance, and profiling of customers, which has been used to inform projections for earned income in future.

After the 2019 results were known, the Council reassessed its core contribution to the festival, and included in its corporate budget consultation for 2020-21 proposals to increase the net contribution to the festival in order to provide a realistic and robust financial model.

This report seeks approval to the admission and parking charges for the Godiva Festival in 2020-22 necessary to balance the budget on an ongoing basis, assuming its scale and content remain the same.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member is requested to:

- 1) Approve the proposals for pricing of tickets and car parking for the Godiva Festival for the period 2020-22, as set out in Section 2 below, building on the additional core budget of £200,000 per annum to support the Festival which is pending approval through the corporate budget process.

List of Appendices included:

None.

Background papers:

None.

Other useful documents

Report to Cabinet Member Policing and Equalities – 10th October 2019 – Keep Godiva Festival Free for all

<https://edemocracy.coventry.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=653&MId=11969&Ver=4>

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

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Report title: Godiva Festival 2020

1. Context (Background)

1.1 The City Council is the organising body for the annual Godiva Festival. Financial pressures over time have required the Council to reduce the budget for the event and to consider how other sources of funding can be found to enable it to continue. During the period 2020 to 2022, Coventry will be the UK City of Culture and a host of the Commonwealth Games, and the Godiva Festival will play an important part in providing a high quality, accessible and enjoyable event for local people and visitors to the city. In 2019 income generating measures were tested and more robust data gathered concerning the volume and profile of attenders. This has been used to support a realistic assessment of potential future income from sources outside the Council and develop the proposal in this report.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

2.1 Three options were considered in order to manage a financially viable event in future.

2.2 Option 1 (not recommended) - continue to manage the festival within already agreed resources of £75,000 per annum. To balance the budget, it was calculated that ticket prices would need to be increased to a level necessary to achieve a yield of more than £10 per person per day on average. This would mean a top price of £15 in order to mitigate the associated drop in demand, and to accommodate concessionary pricing to meet equality requirements. The level was felt too high to be inclusive and to meet the Council's objective of increasing access to leisure, music and events.

2.3 Option 2 (recommended) – increase the agreed resources by £200,000 per annum for the Festival in 2020, 2021 & 2022, and increase the cost of entry to achieve an average net income of £4.70 per ticket. The programme would be reconfigured to improve the family offer on Sunday to make it better value. The mix of music would be broadened to increase appeal whilst continuing to support local talent. Market sensitive price-setting would be introduced for Friday and Saturday.

2.4 Option 3 (not recommended) - revisit previously discounted options. Outsourcing would remove the Council's control over content and be likely to raise ticket prices above even the levels of Option 1. Reducing content and scale to change the character of the event to a music-only weekend, would have an impact on the value of the festival as a family entertainment.

2.5 The recommended ticket pricing structure is set out at 2.8 and 2.9 below and takes into account:

- the increased value of commission (derived as a percentage of income)
- the likely impact on audience volume (10% lower than 2019)
- the expected profile of audiences based on 2019 audience survey
- the need for the pricing structure to be readily understood by customers and;

- the obligation to generate £327,000 net ticket income in order to balance the budget, taking into account the additional £200,000 core budget as set out in the corporate budget setting process which is pending approval.

2.6 The variety of proposed ticket prices includes good value family tickets and concessionary discounts for disabled people, people over 60 years old and 5-16 year olds. Under 5s and companions of disabled people will still require tickets, but they will not be charged. All child ticket-holders must be accompanied by a paying adult for security and safety reasons.

2.7 Early Bird prices, supported by an enhanced marketing budget, will encourage early sales which help to mitigate the Council's risk. Advance booking helps to inform the booking of infrastructure, which makes delivery more cost effective.

2.8 Admission Ticket Prices

Early Bird Prices - Up to 31st April				
	Full Price (17+)	Concession (5-16 & Over 60's)	Infants (4 & under) & Carers	Family (2 Full Price & 2 Concession Children)
Fri	£5.00	£3.50	£0	£15.00
Sat	£6.00	£4.50	£0	£18.00
Sun	£4.00	£2.00	£0	£10.00
3 Day Festival Ticket	£12.50	£8.50	£0	£37.00
Advance Prices - From 1st May - 2nd July				
	Full Price (17+)	Concession (5-16 & Over 60's)	Infants (4 & under) & Carers	Family (2 Full Price & 2 Concession Children)
Fri	£7.00	£5.50	£0	£22.50
Sat	£8.00	£6.50	£0	£27.00
Sun	£6.00	£3.00	£0	£15.00
3 Day Festival Ticket	£18.50	£14.50	£0	£59.00
On the Day Prices 3rd - 5th July				
	Full Price (17+)	Concession (5-16 & Over 60's)	Infants (4 & under) & Carers	Family (2 Full Price & 2 Concession Children)
Fri	£10.00	£7.00	£0	£30.00
Sat	£12.00	£9.00	£0	£36.00
Sun	£8.00	£4.00	£0	£20.00
3 Day Festival Ticket	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

2.9 Car parking charges are set out below.

Car Parking	Early Bird	Advance	On the Day
Fri	£10	£12.50	£15
Sat	£10	£12.50	£15
Sun	£10	£12.50	£15
3 Day Festival Car Parking	£25	£30	n/a

3. Results of consultation undertaken

3.1 For financial year 2020/21 a consultation has been carried out to inform budget setting, due to be agreed in February 2020. Only nine respondents to the corporate budget consultation referenced Godiva Festival. However, from the 2019 Festival audience survey, 85% of the 871 responses from audience members viewed the festival as Good or Very Good value for money. Some respondents to the survey expressed willingness to pay more in the future, with the expectation of an improved offer including getting bigger acts or having two stages.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 This decision will be implemented immediately, subject to Council processes. Tickets and car parking will go on sale as soon as the ticketing provider has been formally contracted.
- 4.2 The proposal includes an Early Bird ticket price, which assumes tickets will be on sale by the end of March 2020 at the latest. Advance ticket prices will apply from 1st May to 2nd July inclusive. Walk-up customers will be able to purchase tickets at the On the Day prices.

5. Comments from Director of Finance and Corporate Services

5.1 Financial implications

This proposal is dependent on an additional £200,000 per annum being provided from corporate resources to support the festival in 2020, 2021 & 2022 in order to keep prices at the proposed levels. The corporate budget for 2020-21 is scheduled for consideration in February 2020. Following the festival, a financial review will be undertaken to understand where financial success or failure has occurred and mitigating actions may be proposed for the following years.

5.2 Legal implications

Section 145 of the Local Government Act 1972 gives the Council the power to do, or arrange for the doing of, or contribute towards the expenses of the doing of, anything necessary or expedient for the provision of an entertainment. The Council's Contract Procedure Rules will be followed in relation to the appointment of the ticketing provider.

6. Other implications

None.

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

The Council Plan's objective "Increasing access to arts, sports & cultural opportunities including leisure, music and events" will be supported by improving the financial resilience of the Godiva Festival for the future, so that more people can access and enjoy the event. Pricing proposals have been developed to balance the need to generate a financial contribution, with ensuring the event remains affordable, especially for people on low incomes. The event will assist in Raising the Profile of Coventry by maintaining its scale and growing its quality. Planning on a three-year horizon enables the Council to enter preferential agreements for supply of services, helping to "Deliver our Priorities with Fewer Resources".

6.2 How is risk being managed?

The key risk is that insufficient income is generated from the proposed charges. While Godiva Festival is a respected event with a loyal following, people have many competing choices for their leisure time and disposable income. Many factors could affect the success of the proposed approach including affordability, the appeal of the programme and the perception of value for money, the success of the marketing and promotion effort, the weather, clashes with other events in the city, regionally and nationally and the ease of use of booking. The modelling of the pricing structure, as described above, mitigates many of these risks and the budget includes additional resource for marketing in a competitive environment. The impact of bad weather and other factors which may arise before the festival are mitigated by the promotion of advance sales.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

None.

6.4 Equality and Consultation Analysis (ECA)

Analysis of the Audience survey for the 2019 Festival show that the introduction of charges for the 2019 Festival had minimal impact on audience diversity, audience disability and profile. To address the potential for adverse differential impact, the proposals outlined in this report include the following measures;

- All tickets are competitively priced with staggered discounts for those who purchase tickets in advance
- Both 3-day Festival tickets and Family tickets are further reduced compared to individual tickets
- Tickets are very much below market rate for similar commercial events
- Sunday is programmed as a family day with a family ticket available at £10, which represents a like-for-like increase of £2
- The individual concession price is kept the same as 2019 at £2 for Sunday.
- Under 5s and personal assistants/carers/companions of customers with disabilities remain free
- Car parking charges are unchanged and Blue Badge holders have free car parking
- The event venue is a central location accessible by public transport
- We are aiming to improve the diversity of the food offer

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

In line with the City Council's Energy and Water Management Policy and the Carbon Management Plan, the festival aims to reduce its carbon footprint and use technology and recycling to minimise environmental impact. The introduction of paid car parking resulted in a drop of car parking on site (without an increase in anti-social parking) and increased the volume of audience walking to the site. Whilst being commercially viable, car parking will not be increased for festival and the introduction of a Green Transport Plan for the Festival is planned for 2020. The on-line ticketing does not require the audience to print out tickets as QR codes can be scanned on site thus reducing the amount of paper used in ticketing. The wristbands exchanged for tickets allows visitors to "pass out" and identifies the audience member as bona fide and assist with safety and security. Wristbands are recyclable and audience will be encouraged to deposit used wristbands at the exit points with stewards equipped with vessels to collect the used wristbands thus reducing anti-social littering and improving event recycling.

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

None.

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