

Report on	Corporate Events 2022
Date of Meeting	10th February 2022
Reporting Officer	Kieran Gordon, Assistant Director Health, Leisure & Wellbeing
Contact Officer	Sharon Arbuthnot, Events Officer

Is this report restricted for confidential business?	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To provide information on the proposed Mid Ulster District Council Corporate Events Programme for April 2022 – March 2023 and to seek approval to proceed at risk in light of the changing circumstances with the covid-19 pandemic.
1.2	In light of the covid pandemic and due to the corporate events programme being “on hold” since March 2020, an opportunity exists to review the current portfolio of council corporate events within the wider tourism and economic context along with their capacity to deliver against key corporate objectives. Approval is sought to procure and engage specialist support to conduct a review and make recommendations for future consideration by Members.
2.0	Background
2.1	Corporate events help contribute to increased footfall and visitor numbers across our district which can help stimulate the growth of tourism and other businesses in our town centers and villages linking with our Regeneration Action Plan.
2.2	In addition to the direct impacts, events can also have indirect impacts on our local community. The social benefits are less visible, but they are just important. Events can raise community pride, teach people new experiences, strengthen relationships and bring communities together.
2.3	Each year, a programme of events is normally brought forward to the Development Committee, approved and then delivered however with the onset of the covid-19 pandemic in March 2020, the “normal” Mid Ulster District Council corporate events programme has been on hold.
2.4	As society takes some tentative steps again back to a position pre-covid, the evolving situation will continued to be monitored, to include intensive communication with Councils corporate Health and Safety team in addition to regular discussions with other Councils’ events team across NI. The continued outcome from these meetings is a collective approach in the delivery of safe corporate event throughout the eleven districts.

2.5	<p>In prior years, without the instrumental support of other departments within Mid Ulster District Council, it would be impossible to provide the high standard of events that have been previously delivered. This continued support will be crucial moving forward as this paper sets out the proposed approach to corporate events for 2022.</p>
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>Covid guidance regarding outdoor gathering and events are continuing to evolve but at the time of writing this report they include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong recommendations to take a Rapid Lateral Flow test before attending an indoor or outdoor event or gathering. • For the determination of the maximum number of people permitted to attend an outdoor gathering, in a non-domestic setting, the organiser or operator must carry out a risk assessment. • Outdoor gatherings of 30 people or fewer do not need a risk assessment. • The organiser must also take all reasonable measures to limit the risk of transmission of the coronavirus. • A person responsible for organising a gathering must, if requested to do so by a relevant person, provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ a copy of the risk assessment and ➢ an account of the reasonable measures taken • Where possible, attendees should maintain social distancing, as well as good hand and respiratory hygiene practices.
3.2	<p>The COVID Certification scheme was launched in Northern Ireland and since 29th November 2021, proof of COVID status has been required for access to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor events with 4,000 or more attendees with some or all of the audience not normally seated. • Events where more than 10,000 people will be present regardless of whether they are seated. • Exemptions to the scheme include an event held at an outdoor public place with no fixed entry points and for which neither tickets nor payment are required.
3.3	<p>A risk-based approach must remain when planning for physical events again. The main points to consider include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are still risks with proceedings with large events, which is not only a potential risk to the residents who may attend the event, but also to Council staff, contractors, artists, statutory authorities and agencies who collaborate with Council to deliver the corporate event plan. • Council is not in control of the external factors and in this fluid environment these could change with little or no notice; with this brings financial risks for Council. • Events may need to be delivered differently for safety reasons; the expectations of our residents/visitors and staff will need to be managed.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the current climate with staff shortages, large events could add additional pressures to town centre businesses. • Events budgets may be under pressure to comply with additional operational and health and safety costs which could increase expenditure. Event infrastructure and equipment may also have increased to shortages. • The Covid Certification scheme in Northern Ireland must also be taken into consideration and how this could impact the events on enclosed sites if implemented.
3.4	The proposal within this paper is to start to recommence the annual corporate events plan as agreed in prior years and that is to be considered with recognition that steps need to be taken to encourage target audiences to return along with aiming to rebuild the confidence within communities that covid mitigation controls are being implemented in a focused manner so far as reasonably practicable.
3.5	Events planning will also involve engagement with relevant stakeholders and also seek to incorporate any relevant actions within Council's Disability Action Plan 2021-2026.
3.6	The proposed schedule of corporate events is enclosed within the appendix. It should be noted to Members that this proposed schedule is similar in nature to those approved by Members in the years preceding the covid pandemic in March 2020.
3.7	Due to the nature of many of the events, planning needs to commence as soon as possible and in many cases, procurement exercises need to be conducted along with application for any statutory approvals, ie. road closures. It should be noted to Members that in order to proceed with the planning and execution of these events, elements of the event planning will need to currently proceed "at risk" and should any of the events need to be scaled back or cancelled with consideration of the covid restrictions (if any) at any given time, then Council may not have any recourse over any expenditure that has been incurred. Officers plan to take all reasonable steps to ensure financial risks are mitigated so far as reasonably practicable and will engage the support and advice of Council's procurement and insurance team.
3.8	Additionally, in light of the covid pandemic and due to the corporate events programme being "on hold" since March 2020, an opportunity exists to review the current portfolio of council corporate events within the wider tourism and economic context along with their capacity to deliver against key corporate objectives. Approval is sought to procure and engage specialist support to conduct a review and make recommendations for future consideration by Members.
3.9	<p>This review is intended to focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review the current portfolio of Council corporate events and their capacity to deliver against key corporate objectives • Identify issues, challenges and approach for Mid Ulster District Council in the delivery of its corporate events

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore how Council can grow existing events, identify new areas for growth with targets and explore partnership opportunities, including financial and funding opportunities. • Review requirements - both human and financial - required to support the delivery of the portfolio of Council corporate events • Clear identification of 'best fit' future trends and market requirements
	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	<p>Financial: Delivered within departmental budget allocation. However, increased expenditure may be incurred with implementing and managing any covid mitigation controls if required, ie. additional stewarding,etc. Elements of the event planning is proposed to currently proceed "at risk" with expenditure to be incurred and should any of the events need to be scaled back or cancelled with consideration of the covid restrictions (if any) at any given time, then Council may not have any recourse over any expenditure that has been incurred.</p>
	<p>Human: Can be derived within existing Council staffing resources, however mitigation factors need to be considered, ie. staff absences due to isolation,etc</p>
	<p>Risk Management: Risk Assessments to be continually reviewed with assistance from Council Corporate Health & Safety team. Covid legislation and guidance will be closely monitored and implemented where necessary. Assessing each event will need to be considered on its individual merits and potential controls will be dependent on the level of the covid transmission in the community at that time.</p>
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/A
	Rural Needs Implications: N/A
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	<p>To note the contents of this report and give approval for officers to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) proceed "at risk" with the enclosed schedule of corporate events for 2022. (b) procure and engage specialist support to conduct a review on the current portfolio of corporate events and make recommendations for future consideration by Members
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix A: Proposed Corporate Events Schedule for 2022