

Report to	-	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date	-	11 June 2018
Report of the	-	Executive Director
Subject	-	Tourism Events Funding

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**Recommendation:** It be **RESOLVED:** That the report be noted and Cabinet be requested to confirm that the Council's current policy for the allocation of events support funding be maintained.

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## **Introduction**

1. This report outlines the Council's current events policy in relation to visitor events funded throughout the district and a summary of the funding allocated over the last three years. This report does not consider the other support to Tourism that Rother District Council (RDC) provides and that of 1066 Country Marketing.

## **Background**

2. In 2013 Cabinet approved the recommendations from the Tourism Working Group to reallocate the local marketing budgets for Bexhill and Rye towards supporting events (Minutes CB13/9 and CB13/42 refer). The budget available totals £9,000 for each town with any underspend being rolled forward into subsequent years.
3. The allocated budget was specifically to be used for pump priming new visitor events to help with start-up costs and to help existing visitor events with financial support towards new activity which will attract a new visitor audience.
4. The pump priming support was provided on a sliding scale over a three year period, with the aim of enabling each event to become self-sustaining by the fourth year through commercial activity, securing sponsorship/income or other external funding. This would ensure that the Council's funding would continue to be available to support the development of new events in future years.
5. Further concessionary support has also been provided to events by the Council, which includes the use of Council owned land at no additional cost, usage of car parks, additional refuse collection and street clean-up services.
6. The events budget is managed by officers in consultation with the appropriate Ward or Lead Member. For Bexhill this is the Lead Member for Bexhill Affairs and for Rye this involves the two Rye Ward Members.

## **Bexhill**

7. The Bexhill events funding initially supported the establishment of three large events in the town; these being the Roaring 20s, Motofest and the Festival of

the Sea, all of which were in receipt of a three year package of pump priming funding.

8. On expiry of their pump priming funding the organisers of all three of these events indicated that without the continued assistance of Council funding the events might not be able to continue. Cabinet considered this matter in December 2016 and approved the ring-fencing of £3,000 within the Bexhill Events budget for those organisations who had received pump-priming funding. Monies would only be allocated on receipt of a completed application form evidencing what each organisation was actively undertaking to reduce reliance on Council funding (Minute CB16/57 refers).

## **Rye**

9. From April 2014 to March 2017 the Rye events budget was managed by Rye Town Council by way of a Service Level Agreement (SLA). The management of the events budget was brought back to the Council during 2017/18 with agreement from the Rye Ward Members, as the terms of the SLA were not being met.

## **Battle**

10. Funding allocated to Battle continues to be spent on tourism marketing through an established marketing group comprising key stakeholders in Battle including Battle Chamber of Commerce, Battle Town Council, English Heritage, local businesses, event organisers and Battle Museum. Activity includes the production of an annual visitor guide, PR campaign, social media campaigns and events postcards. The 2013 Tourism Working Group considered the local marketing budget for Battle but did not make any recommendations to reallocate these funds at the time.

## **Other support**

11. In addition to the funding allocations, officers provide further support to events across the district through the Cultural Development and Tourism team and have supported the development and growth of new cultural events, including the Battle Festival, Blackshed Gallery exhibitions, Music City, Rother Festivals network, Christmas Capers in Robertsbridge and Streets of Battle.

## **Events Guidance/Criteria**

12. Officers, in consultation with Ward and Lead Members have produced funding guidelines for the allocation of event funding for Bexhill and Rye. These are detailed within the application form that is sent to every event organiser when enquiring about event funding. These guidelines are set out in Appendix 1.
13. The funding available is specifically for pump priming new visitor events in either town, or to support the growth of an existing event either in terms of new activity or developing a new audience. The overall aim is to grow visitor numbers to the district, encourage repeat day and overnight visits and increase visitor spend.

14. Research shows (1066 Country Marketing Strategy November 2016) that events are a key driver for visitors to come to a destination and have an increasingly important role to play in the perception of a town/destination.
15. Officers are aware that some event organisers in Bexhill have requested that the Council's policy change to allow the events budget to provide continued 'core' funding for the already established events. They cite difficulties with securing sponsorship or other funding; or in some cases a reluctance to raise commercial revenue, for example through admission charging, in order to maintain free access to the community.
16. Should the Council's present policy be changed to provide 'core' annual funding to events; at the present budget level, this could provide, at most, a small amount of funding for a small number of events. It would cause a reliance on Council funding, provide no incentive for those events to look for opportunities to secure sponsorship or additional income and would restrict the Council's ability to encourage further growth in the events calendar through supporting new events, or to encourage the development and growth of established events.
17. As detailed above, Cabinet has approved the ring fencing of £3,000 within the Bexhill events budget to be used for organisations who had previously been in receipt of pump priming funding. Event organisers can apply to this pot of funding to help develop or sustain their event, providing evidence is supplied of how they are working towards reducing their reliance on the Council's funding.
18. Details of events supported through the Bexhill and Rye event funds for the last three years are included in Appendix 2. Details of allocated funds for 2018/2019 are also included for Members' information.

Dr Anthony Leonard  
Executive Director

### **Risk Assessment Statement**

There are no risks attached to this report if the current policy for the allocation of events support funding be maintained. However, should there be a change, the risks are those as outlined at paragraph 16 above.

### Funding guidelines:

Applications are welcomed from community groups and promoters looking to stage events in Bexhill/Rye. This funding is to increase visitors/tourists to Bexhill/Rye and how this aim will be met must be apparent in all applications to be eligible for funding.

- Grants will only be awarded to events that are open to the general public.
- Grants are awarded to events encouraging a new visitor audience from outside Bexhill/Rye and Rother into the area. Where this is the first year of an event, comparisons can be made with data from similar events. Actual visitor figures will need to be recorded in the evaluation to inform further funding applications.
- New Event Funding is awarded to pump prime the development of new events and support them into becoming self-sustaining. To this end the Council will award up to three years funding on a sliding-scale, Council budgets allowing. Applications need to be submitted on a yearly basis.
- Additional visitor activity can fund established events which are developing a significantly new strand of work that will bring an increased or new visitor numbers to the event. It will need to be made clear how this visitor group is new to the event, how they will be engaged and potential additional visitor numbers.
- Grant awards will be made direct to the applicant in 2 stages, 75% of grant up front, when all necessary paperwork has been received by Rother District Council, and the final 25% on receipt of the completed evaluation forms.
- Funding is project based and fixed term. Funding in one financial year is not a guarantee of future support. Money from one event cannot be rolled forward to support another project.
- If profits from one year's event are given away rather than re-invested in the following year's event, the event will not be eligible for further funding.
- Any projects receiving funding will be expected to complete detailed evaluation. No further grant funding will be considered until outstanding evaluation forms are returned.

Events funding allocated since 2015/2016.

### **BEXHILL**

<b>Event</b>	<b>Funding allocated</b>	<b>Pump priming/New Activity</b>	<b>Ring fenced £000 for event previously in receipt of pump priming funding</b>
<b>2015/2016</b>			
Bexhill Roaring 20s	£3,500	Pump priming year 2	
Motofest	£4,000	Pump priming year 2	
Festival of the Sea	£1,000	Pump priming year 3	
Journeys Dance Festival	£3,000	Pump priming year 1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>£11,500*</b>	*£2,500 carry over from 2014/2015 budget	
<b>2016/2017</b>			
Bexhill Roaring 20s	£3,000	Pump priming Year 3	
Motofest	£3,000	Pump priming Year 3	
Festival of the Sea	£500	Additional new activity	
Journeys Dance Festival	£2,000	Pump priming Year 2	
<b>Total</b>	<b>£8,500</b>		
<b>2017/2018</b>			
Bexhill Roaring 20s			£1,000
Motofest			£1,000
Festival of the Sea			£1,000
Journeys Dance Festival	£1,500	Pump priming Year 3	
Bexhill Roaring 20s	£1,600	Additional new activity	
Cycle Festival	£2,000	Pump priming Year 1	
Midsummer Festival	£1,000	Pump priming Year 1	
Wheels of Wonder	£500	Pump priming Year 1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>£6,600</b>		<b>£3,000</b>
<b>2018/2019</b>			
Journeys Dance Festival			£1,000
Motofest			£1,000
Festival of the Sea			£1,000
The Great Gatsby	£4,000	Pump priming Year 1	
Cycle Festival	£500	Pump priming Year 2	
Streets of Bexhill	£2,000	Pump priming Year 1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>£6,500</b>		<b>£3,000</b>

**RYE**

<b>Event</b>	<b>Funding allocated</b>	<b>Pump priming / New Activity</b>
<b>2015/2016</b>		
Ukulele Festival	£500	Pump priming funding
Rye Arts Festival	£2,304	New activity to attract a new audience
Christmas Festival	£3340	Pump priming Year 1
Rye Kino event	£2500	Pump priming Year 1
<b>Total</b>	<b>£8644</b>	
<b>2016/2017</b>		
Christmas Festival	£5,236	Pump priming Year 2
<b>Total</b>	<b>£5,236</b>	
<b>2017/2018</b>		
Festival of The Sea	£4,000	Pump priming Year 1
New Road Artist event	£345	New activity
<b>Total</b>	<b>£4,345</b>	
<b>2018/2019</b>		
Rye Jazz & Blues Festival	£3,000	New activity to attract a new audience (Year 1)
<b>Total</b>	<b>£TBC*</b>	*19 expressions of interest already received