



BASINGSTOKE LIVE 2018

Cllr Terri Reid, Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration, Arts and Heritage

Report to	CEP Committee
Ward(s):	Eastrop (All)
Key Decision:	Yes
Appendix 1:	Basingstoke Live 2018 budget
Appendix 2:	
Appendix 3:	
Papers relied on:	Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council Cultural Strategy – <i>Enriching lives, Art and Culture at the heart of our community</i>

Foreword - Cllr Terri Reid, Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration, Arts and Heritage

Following the adoption by Cabinet of the cultural strategy '*Enriching Lives - arts and culture at the heart of our community*' which sets out a 5-year action plan and a 10-year strategic approach for culture and the arts in the borough, the council and its partners are moving forward with its delivery.

Basingstoke Live is one of the borough's key events that helps showcase the area's diverse cultural offer to all, including those further afield, and contributes to promoting Basingstoke as an attractive place to live and visit. By introducing an entry charge for Basingstoke Live we aim to grow the reputation of the event and showcase local talent to a wider audience while improving the overall quality of the event and the festival-goer experience. With over 30,000 tickets available at accessible prices, we will retain the event's community spirit whilst improving engagement in the arts and securing a sustainable future for the event.

Views of the committee are sought on the introduction of an entry fee for Basingstoke Live 2018

Background, corporate objectives and priorities

Basingstoke Live has run annually in the War Memorial Park since 2007. This event is currently free and attracts between 15,000 and 20,000 people over the weekend. Now in its 12th year, the music festival attracts a mainly local audience reaching families, teenagers and adults, with some visitors coming from further afield depending on the reputation of the acts. One of the event's aims is to provide a platform for local musicians and artists to showcase their talents, with 150 acts performing annually. Basingstoke Live is the final event in the Basingstoke Festival calendar, usually falling on the second weekend in July. It is managed by the council's Arts and Events team in liaison with a forum of volunteer promoters and commissioned artistic co-ordinators Drum Runners Trading, who collectively make up the Basingstoke Live forum.

For health and safety reasons and because of the possible detrimental impact of the event on the town centre, a number of changes were introduced for the 2017 event:

- 1) A free ticketed entry system – to allow safety partners to know in advance of the event how many people may be attending. This also provided an additional method of communication in advance of the event to send important updates and key messages to those people signing up for tickets.
- 2) No entry to the event after 8pm on Saturday evening – to stop pre-drinking in town before entry to the event and to allow the security and CSPO teams to prepare for egress of the event.
- 3) No alcohol was allowed to be brought onto the event site but could be purchased at bars at the event if over 18. This approach controlled under-age drinking and excessive alcohol consumption and reduced antisocial behaviour successfully.
- 4) Increased security to reflect the terrorism threat level and co-ordinated police and CSPO presence in line with national guidance on events and counter-terrorism policy.

A number of other changes were introduced including a review of previous suppliers, greater town centre business involvement as well as a more family-friendly offer which created a more welcoming atmosphere and safer environment at the event. The marketing and communications of the event reflected these changes, which had both positive and negative responses from festival goers.

Making Basingstoke Live resilient and sustainable is one of the core aims of the council's [Cultural Strategy, 'Enriching lives: Arts and culture at the heart of our community'](#) annual action plan.

Basingstoke Live meets key priorities in the council plan by improving residents' quality of life through providing opportunities to take part and showcase emerging talent. The event attracts visitors from outside the borough helping us market Basingstoke as a place to live, work and learn, supporting controlled and sustainable growth. It also supports those who need it, by helping to ensure that there are benefits to communities, through the promotion of wellbeing and community initiatives at the event.

Glossary of terms

Term	Definition
CSPO	Community Safety Patrol Officer

Main considerations

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update CEP on plans to introduce an entrance fee for Basingstoke Live in 2018 to enhance the quality and appeal of the event as part of a longer term strategy to further develop the event and its audience to ensure its sustainability and resilience. This is one of the core aims of the council's Cultural Strategy 'Enriching lives, art and culture at the heart of our community'.
- 1.2 The proposed ticket-pricing structure ensures the event remains accessible. The event continues to be free for children under 12 and only £2 a day ticket or £3 for weekend for 13 – 17 year olds. The most expensive ticket is £15 for the whole weekend.
- 1.3 The council will continue to engage local community groups and offer a platform for local artists to showcase their talent during the event whilst attracting higher quality acts to improve the offer at Basingstoke Live 2018. The event infrastructure will also continue to be used for other community and commercial cultural opportunities building upon trials in 2017.

2 The Proposal

- 2.1 To continue to improve the quality of the acts performing at Basingstoke Live, enhance the offer and raise the profile of the event, the portfolio for Housing, Regeneration, Arts and Heritage proposes to charge an entrance fee in 2018 to ensure the longer term sustainability and resilience of the event.
- 2.2 With paid entry, the council could considerably increase the artistic budget for the event, as shown in Appendix 1, which can be used to secure significant headline acts and improve the quality and perception of the festival overall. This will not only be attractive to local Basingstoke festival goers but also to those further afield thus creating additional audience and, additional revenue, and bringing people into the town centre and borough.
- 2.3 The Arts and Events team will continue to run a series of paid-for entry outdoor events, including outdoor cinema evenings, in the run up to the event that will support the Basingstoke Festival programme, make use of the infrastructure for Basingstoke Live and generate additional income.
- 2.4 Finally, subject to further discussions with the police, security contractor and the council's Community Safety Team, the Arts and Events team is exploring offering a free Friday evening 'Battle of the Bands' event run in partnership with local Basingstoke schools and colleges and targeted at the under 18s.

This event would offer a platform to showcase emerging musical talent and be free of charge.

- 2.5 It is hoped that there will be significant local musician interest in the Basingstoke Live town centre buskers trail, which started running last year with the aim of animating the town centre.
- 2.6 The evaluation of Basingstoke Live 2018 will further inform the future strategy for the event, which focuses on increasing audience numbers and diversity in attendees from both local residents and visitors to the borough.

Finance and budget

- 2.1 The total cost of Basingstoke Live 2017 was £145k. £27k was achieved in income, with the council subsidising the remaining £118k.
- 2.2 There are no planned reduction in budget for the event in 2018/19 in order to continue to deliver the event in its current format. The majority of expenditure for Basingstoke Live is linked to the provision of compulsory infrastructure such as fencing, stages, marquees and generator hire. With increasing infrastructure and event operating costs, the current resources do not allow for any improvements in terms of quality of the headline acts or the diversity of activities on offer during the event.
- 2.3 To identify possible infrastructure and operating costs savings, a further review of all suppliers has been carried out. To reflect this, it has been decided that the artistic co-ordination of the event will be delivered directly by the council's Arts and Events team rather than an external supplier. This will save £11k of expenditure as well as enabling the council's Arts and Events team to work more closely with the Basingstoke Live volunteer promoter's forum as well as ensuring overall quality control. Possible other savings may be realised through the procurement process for equipment and services such as marquees, security staffing or generator hire. However, these will be marginal and will not provide the required level of income to enhance the quality and appeal of the event.
- 2.4 Coventry Godiva Festival is the only other free local authority-run festival nationally. The event attracts over 175k people over the weekend and therefore is significantly larger.
- 2.5 Keeping the event free does not provide for an artistic budget to enhance the quality and grow the event. Over time, this has reduced the appeal of the event and will result in Basingstoke Live becoming stale with no other option than to do what was done before.
- 2.6 Basingstoke Live is not currently an attractive offer to business sponsorship or in a position to attract other funding. This is due to the event being associated with underage drinking, being perceived as having a negative impact on the town centre and for not being seen as family-friendly. The offer has not been of high quality enough to make it an attractive proposition to sponsors and therefore income generation has been focused on trade and catering.

- 2.7 Based on previous attendance numbers at Basingstoke Live, a conservative estimate of the number of tickets that could be sold for a charged for event stands at 12k tickets over the weekend. This factors in a worst case scenario of a 25% drop in attendance as a consequence of the introduction of an entrance charge. Based on guidance from the Safety Advisory Group to comply with health and safety consideration and numbers generated by the Crowd ID software matrix, the maximum capacity for the event has been set at 15k people at any given time and the number of tickets available for the event will be capped at this number per day. Estimated income for a sell-out event stands at £80k excluding VAT.
- 2.8 The following table sets out the proposed pricing structure for 2018/19. The ticket prices listed below have been set to address costs increases, to allow for an increase in the artistic budget and also to keep the event accessible to local residents with a focus on young people and families. No other paid for music festival in the region offers tickets at such a reduced cost meaning that Basingstoke Live will retain its unique status as one of its kind.
- 2.9 The table below shows income based on expected and maximum number of tickets sold.

TICKET ALLOCATION	Expected no. of tickets sold	TICKET TYPE	PRICE	Total Expected income	Total maximum income
1000	500	Under 12 (Saturday)	free	£0	£0
1000	500	Under 12 (Sunday)	free	£0	£0
4000	2000	Under 12 (Weekend)	free	£0	£0
1000	750	13-17 years (Saturday)	£2	£1,500	£2,000
1000	750	13-17 years (Sunday)	£2	£1,500	£2,000
4000	3000	13-17 years (Weekend)	£3	£9,000	£12,000
1000	750	Over 18s (Saturday)	£10	£7,500	£10,000
1000	750	Over 18s (Sunday)	£10	£7,500	£10,000
4000	3000	Over 18s (Weekend)	£15	£45,000	£60,000
			Total Inc. VAT	£ 72,000	£ 96,000
			Total excl. VAT	£ 60,000	£ 80,000

- 2.10 Concessionary ticket prices have been considered as part of the council's research. The event will continue to offer free entry to under 12s, with a paying adult, and a further subsidised ticket entry to young people aged between 13 and 17 years old. Adult entry is a standard ticket price as the event continues to be subsidised by the council. Entrance for those who are caring for an individual with specific needs, such as Personal Assistants/Carers, will not have to pay to get into the event with a paying festival-goer who requires assistance.

- 2.11 Should a surplus be generated, it is suggested a strategic reserve is created to be used the following year to fund the delivery and further enhancement of the event to increase its long term sustainability. Alternatively, surplus income could be used to set up a Basingstoke Live Music Foundation to support the development of the next generation of local musicians.

3 Key issues for consideration

- 3.1 Basingstoke Live has been free since its inception in 2007 therefore loyal audiences may be put off by a paid for entry. The proposed pricing structure with heavily subsidised tickets will keep the event accessible and affordable while allowing for a better range of activities and higher quality of acts.
- 3.2 Residents may not be aware of this change in advance of the event. A comprehensive communications plan will be in place to counteract this.
- 3.3 The council expenditure budget and income target for the event have increased significantly to reflect expected income from ticket sales. There may be a risk that not enough tickets are sold to cover the expenditure. This will be mitigated by the pre-sale of tickets in the current financial year before expenditure is realised in 2018/19 as well as by ensuring the headline act is of suitable standing in the music industry to attract both a local and wider audience. A thorough marketing and communications plan will also be in place to promote the event and generate ticket sales.
- 3.4 If this change does not take place, the event runs the risk of becoming stagnant and be less attractive to residents and visitors to the borough.
- 3.5 Secondary sales of tickets may occur and the event may attract illegal ticket sellers. Tickets will be limited to 4 per purchaser and be sent to the purchaser digitally via email. Ticketing providers are currently being researched.
- 3.6 Festival-goers may not see the charge as inclusive or accessible. The event is heavily subsidised at ticket price points and compared to other days out or leisure activities, the price is very competitive. Tickets for the event may sell fast at subsidised prices and lead to disappointment or negativity around the popularity of the event if its sells out quickly.
- 3.7 Extra team resource and external staffing would be required to deliver a paid entry festival. This has been factored in the budget forecast for Basingstoke Live 2018.

4 Options Analysis

4.1 The table below shows the potential positive and negative impacts of charging for entry to Basingstoke Live verses the event remaining free.

Charging for entry	Free event
<i>Positive impacts</i>	<i>Positive impacts</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased artistic and quality festival offer • Greater understanding on who is attending • Very affordable for festival goers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully accessible for all
<i>Negative implications</i>	<i>Negative implications</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tickets may sell out quickly meaning that some may not get a ticket. • The subsidised ticket price may still be unaffordable to some festival goers • Basingstoke Live forum promoters may disengage with this change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artistic offer suffers • No understanding of how many people may turn up in advance which causes significant safety risks • The event does not move towards a sustainable financial model • The event becomes stale and stagnant; less attractive to festival goers

Corporate implications

5 Legal Implications

5.1 A procurement process will need to be undertaken in accordance with the council's Contract Standing Orders to appoint a contractor who can supply a suitable third party ticketing software system.

6 Financial implications

6.1 Over the past two years the event has cost an average of £145k and generated income of around £32k, resulting in a total cost to the council of around £113k per year.

6.2 In 2018, council funding will remain at the same level. However, to reflect the introduction of an entry fee and the subsequent increase in income estimated at £123k, the projected expenditure for Basingstoke Live 2018 stands at £231k the additional income generated through tickets sales will cover costs linked to artistic programming, headline acts and general enhancement of the offer at the event. The projected income figure of £123k is made up of £60k from festival entry ticket sales and the remainder from supporting activities

such as trade and catering, film screenings and fun fairs. Appendix 1 shows the full breakdown of income and expenditure. The financial risk lies predominantly around the uncertainty over the number of attendees given the change in format from a free to a charged event.

7 Risk management

- 7.1 A risk assessment has been completed in accordance with the council's risk management process and has identified no significant (Red or Amber) residual risks that cannot be fully minimised by existing or planned controls or additional procedures.

8 Equalities implications

- 8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken to consider the impact of the implementation of charging at Basingstoke Live and its impact on protected characteristics groups and the implications for the Public Sector Equality Duty. This assessment concluded that Basingstoke Live would continue to have a positive impact on community groups and residents as it supports the Creative Case for Diversity Arts Council England Goal, which aims to provide great quality art for all.
- 8.2 The event in previous years has had a particularly positive impact on young people as it aims to improve the advancement of music skills. In addition, the event on the Friday, which is aimed at young people, is free to attend. There is no charge for a child ticket (12 years old and under) with a paying adult, and the charge for 13 – 17 year olds is limited to £2 for a day or £3 for the weekend.
- 8.3 The introduction of an entrance charge could mean that some people on a low income may have some difficulties in paying, however, the price has been limited to cover costs and all tickets are subsidised, making the event one of the cheapest festival of this kind in the country.
- 8.4 It is noted that the free entrance for those who are caring for an individual with particular access needs, who attends the event (such as PAs/Carers), is positive for individuals with certain physical and sensory disabilities.
- 8.5 Equalities monitoring will form part of the evaluation of the festival and any unforeseen issues will be considered as part of future plans.

9 Consultation and communication

- 9.1 A full marketing and communications plan will be required to support the change in approach, with communications starting from the earliest opportunity possible.
- 9.2 This communication should use all channels available with a focus on event loyalty, giving the message to previous attendees and Basingstoke Live supporters first through the large Basingstoke Live and Basingstoke Festival social media following and the email addresses gained through this year's free ticketing sign up. Wider borough and regional promotion to follow.

9.3 Communications will include a full set of FAQs providing clear answers and messaging to explain the rationale behind the decision and an open and honest approach.

9.4 Key messages to include:

- The council will continue to subsidise and support Basingstoke Live.
- Basingstoke Live is important to people in the borough but it can only survive if it grows. The event is at risk of becoming stale, by introducing a small charge we can bring quality acts to the borough and the event can continue to thrive and grow.
- This is an opportunity to bring top international artists to Basingstoke and Deane, providing entertainment for residents and attracting more visitors to the borough.
- Basingstoke Live will continue to be a family friendly event with under 12s free and teenagers paying just £2 a day or £3 for the weekend – the price of a music ‘download’ to actually see a top quality act live.
- The event will remain accessible for all. Adult ticket prices to attend a full day the music festival are around the price of a trip to the cinema or a train ticket to watch a concert elsewhere. Prices are considerably lower than other paid for events, just a quarter of the cost for similar neighbouring paid for music events.
- By charging, the event can extend over a third day, staging a free battle of the bands event the night before the ticketed event, ensuring free access to local music for all under 18s.
- This supports the council’s vision that Basingstoke and Deane is positively known for arts and culture; a place where arts, culture and heritage are an integral part of the borough’s identity and reputation.

10 HR implications

10.1 These changes will have implications on the Arts and Events team. In the short term resources could be brought in to mitigate this.

10.2 Extra staffing to manage a box office will be required at the event. This role could be filled by an external box office event specialist.

Conclusion

11 Summary and reason for the decision

11.1 The council has committed to making Basingstoke Live as resilient as possible as per the core aims of the Cultural Strategy annual action plan. This decision is being made to enhance the quality of the event and improve its profile.

- 11.2 The event continues to celebrate local music talent and provides a platform for the next generation of musicians to shine. We want to encourage quality events in the borough to continue to improve resident's quality of life. By charging for Basingstoke Live, a sense of value is placed on the event.
- 11.3 This supports our vision of a borough positively known for arts and culture; a place where arts are an integral part of Basingstoke and Deane's identity and reputation, positioning the borough as an attractive place full of cultural vibrancy.

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Confidentiality	It is considered that information contained within this report (and appendices) do not contain exempt information under the meaning of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and therefore can be made public.