



Wigan
Council

Confident Council Scrutiny Committee Events Review and Future Plan

Report of Peter Hughes – Service Lead Culture & Events
and Georgina Roby Service Manager Culture & Events

11th November 2024



www.wigan.gov.uk



WiganCouncilOnline



WiganCouncil



Event Team Delivery

The Events Team is responsible for the delivery of:

- **Corporate Events** - Events that may have commercial elements but are primarily delivered for other reasons such as wider economy, reputational, health and wellbeing, statutory requirements.
- **Commercial Events** - the primary return for the council is commercial and these events do generate the largest amount of income, they also often bring the same added benefits as the corporate programme.

The Events Team also supports aspirations to develop the visitor economy and tie into key objectives with site developments at: Leigh Sports Village, Haigh Woodland Park, Pennington Flash, Wigan Pier and Town Centre redevelopments.





Progress with Unity

Events Team supports the new era Progress with Unity missions:

Mission 1: Create fair opportunities for children, families, residents and businesses by:

- Supporting the delivery of an inclusive year-round events programme
- Improving the health and wellbeing of our residents
- Converting day visitors to staying visitors, improving the local economy.

Mission 2: Make all our towns and neighbourhoods flourish by:

- Increasing the vibrancy of our Town Centres
- Increasing the number of new day visitors
- Increasing the number of repeat day visitors
- Supporting the delivery of large-scale transformational projects.



Strategic Priorities

- **Infrastructure** - To grow the event sector in the borough, we will need to ensure that existing organisations are resilient, especially in difficult circumstances such as those currently being faced. At the same time, we will need to plan for and create new infrastructure to support areas of identified future growth.
- **Capacity** - The continued success and growth of the events sector in the borough is reliant on increased opportunity and more equitable capacity being created, underpinned by co-collaboration, shared purpose and investment.
- **Delivery** - Since the formation of the team, strong progress has been made to provide a robust and professional service, with the ability to deliver high quality in-house productions and to cohesively work with wider partners from the sector. There is still work to do and at the heart of this will be provision of high-quality programmes that are relevant and responsive to our residents' interests and needs.





Return on Investment

To demonstrate return on investment, an annual estimated contribution to the wider economy is calculated, based on event attendees. These are:

- 2021/22 = £1.5M based on 69,000 event attendees.
- 2022/23 = £1.7M based on 73,000 event attendees (with additional visitors for the UEFA Women's EUROs events valued at £6M+ and Rugby League World Cup events £1M+).
- 2023/24 = £2M based on 89,000 event attendees.
- 2024/25 = On track to achieve £3.4M based on 149,000 event visits (including 50k Robin Park Concert attendees).

Other benefits of delivering the events programme include enhanced reputation, education, health and business/sector support.





2024/2025 Delivery

Events Team is on track to meet targets set out for 2024/25. Programme delivery:

- **Corporate Events:** Flashes Festival of Nature, Higham Bequest, 80th Anniversary of D-Day, Armed Forces Day, Frost Fest Wigan & Leigh, Light Night
- **Commercial Events:** Leisure Centre programme, EUROs 2024 Fan Zones, Women's Tour of Britain Cycling, SJM Concert Series, Leigh Feast, Wigan & Leigh Proms
- **Community Events:** Run Wigan Festival, St Georges Day parade, Leigh Leopards Fan Zones, Community Day, Wigan Pride, Leigh Pride, Wigan 10k, Diggers Festival
- **Equipment provision** to support community-led events including: Ashton Big Family Festival; Shevington Fete; Atherton Carnival; Atherton Proms; Firs Park Fun Day.





Proposed 2025/26 Programme

Commercial:

- Leisure Centre Commercial Programme
- Wigan & Leigh Proms
- Robin Park Concerts / After Show Events
- Tournament Fan Zones
- Leigh Music Festival
- Mesnes Park Music Festival
- Leigh Feast/Ashton Foodie Fri

Corporate:

- Armed Forces Day (Wigan)
- Light Night 2025
- Flashes Festival of Nature
- Frost Fest Wigan & Leigh

Community:

- Wigan & Leigh Pride
- Wigan Run Festival
- Wigan 10k



New Opportunities / Commercial

- **Manchester International Festival - Modern Legends** – Artists El Conde de Torrefiel will develop a programme of contemporary theatre to be performed during a two-week period in July at various locations, celebrating the people and places of Wigan Borough.
- **Animation of Wigan Pier** - In line with the Creative Industries Asset Strategy there is an opportunity to animate Wigan Pier with a series of pop-up events including music, theatre and visual arts.
- **Haigh Hall** - As the redevelopment of Haigh Hall progresses opportunities arise to animate the site. The events team are keen to develop those opportunities and promote community engagement.

One of the key aims for Events Team in 2025/26 is to **capitalise on commercial activity** that brings significant revenue in to offset event costs for core delivery. Keen to continue discussions with promoters SJM and host annual large scale music events.



Recommendations/decisions

For members of Scrutiny to:

- Endorse the content of the report and feedback on progress to date.
- To feedback on the proposed events programme activity for 2025/26.
- For Scrutiny to support work to progress going forward to 2030 linking to other key corporate strategies and plans of work.