

**THE HUNTINGDONSHIRE BIG GIG  
(Report by Arts Services Manager)**

**1. SUMMARY**

This report outlines options for the future of the Huntingdonshire Big Gig, in the light of earlier Cabinet decisions concerning future funding of the event.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Huntingdonshire Big Gig 2004 came in on budget, with a net cost to the Council of £60k funded from the Medium Term Plan (MTP) over 2 financial years.
- 2.2 The original MTP bid was based on a three year cycle of events, with St Neots the proposed venue for 2007
- 2.3 In subsequent considerations of the Council's MTP, the funding available has been reduced to zero.
- 2.4 The Council's Medium Term Objectives current at the time of the bid were all met and the target audiences were reached. These audiences were local children and families, local young people, local people who do not normally engage in cultural activities, and members of the public who do not use or are unaware of local park facilities.

**3. FUTURE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 As there is no further funding from the MTP, at this stage there would appear to be 2 options for the event's future:
  - ◆ organise no future events; or
  - ◆ organise a ticketed event in St Neots in 2007, aiming at a cost-neutral budget, but underwritten by the authority in case of lower than anticipated sales due to inclement weather, conflicting events, and potential resistance to paying for what has been a free event in other towns in the District.
- 3.2 A draft budget for the second option is shown at Annex A. This is a best estimate, based on current costs but subject to inflation.
- 3.3 The draft budget assumes that workshops for children and young people, which were held in 2000 and 2004, are withdrawn from the event and the number of evenings which conclude with fireworks are reduced from three to one, making a total saving of £4,750.

- 3.4 As a ticketed event, there would be additional costs over and above those incurred in 2004. These are included in the draft budget and are: security fencing, additional marshals, increased administration staffing to deal with ticket bookings, ticket printing costs and abandonment insurance.
- 3.5 Credit card charges (2.5%) and VAT costs (17.5%) have to be taken into account when setting ticket prices.

#### 4. RISKS

- 4.1 The gross ticket sale figure of £95,500 required to balance the budget may be difficult to achieve. The weather is a serious threat to income, as may be resistance to paying for a ticket for an event which has been free of charge in other towns as well as other competing attractions. However, potentially it could be achieved like this:

Friday evening – 1,200 young people @ £5	£6,000
Saturday evening – 4,000 adults @ £10	£40,000
Sunday evening – 4,000 adults @ £12.50	£50,000

- 4.2 Annex B demonstrates the effect of variations from these target figures to indicate the potential need for the Council to underwrite the event.
- 4.3 It may be possible to charge for car parking. This would bring additional revenue which could be used to lower the ticket prices and may also encourage people to use public transport. However, it could also encourage concert attendees to park in local side streets and other inappropriate areas, as well as being a potential barrier to attending the event for our target audiences.
- 4.4 On the assumption that the event would primarily attract people from St Neots, there are unlikely to be a huge number of cars, so potential revenue would be small. There would also be additional Health and Safety issues to address with regard to the safe keeping of any cash collected and the safety of staff or volunteers collecting the cash.
- 4.5 Local sponsorship of the event has been considered; however, this could have a detrimental effect on other local initiatives, particularly those run by the voluntary sector. Other sources of sponsorship require the development of longer-term relationships and this is difficult to build for one-off events, particularly with limited staff resources.
- 4.6 Non-refundable deposits for hire of equipment would need to be paid from 2006/07 budgets to secure bookings. These total an estimated £11,000. The balance of costs would be incurred in 2007/08.
- 4.7 Abandonment insurance would be taken out to cover the whole event, should it be cancelled due to bad weather and other causes beyond our control. It would also be possible to claim against loss if any one, or two, of the concerts have to be cancelled as above, subject to us taking reasonable steps to mitigate the loss.

## **5. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

The Council's Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery & Resources) is to consider the options outlined in this report at its meeting on 6 September 2005. Its comments will be available to the Cabinet at its meeting.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 That Cabinet considers whether the Big Gig 2007 in St Neots should be organised by the Council as a ticketed event.
- 6.2 That, in the event of Cabinet authorising the Big Gig 2007 as a ticketed event, it should be underwritten by the Council to meet any under achievement of projected ticket income

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Report to Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery & Resources) 1 February 2005.

Report to Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery & Resources)  
6 September 2005.

Photographs of Big Gig 2004 at St Ives are available to view at [www.huntsleisure.org/arts](http://www.huntsleisure.org/arts), together with comments received from members of the public and performers.

**Contact Officers:** Peter Jones, Head of Community Services  
☎ 01480 388202  
Viv Peters, Arts Services Manager  
☎ 01480 388057

**DRAFT BUDGET FOR HUNTINGDONSHIRE BIG GIG 2007  
LOCATED IN ST NEOTS**

	£
Technical equipment hire	34,565
Acoustic safety engineers	2,625
General infrastructure (toilets, road signs etc)	5,644
Safety and security	5,000
Security fencing	3,550
Ticket printing	600
Additional admin staff	4,000
Artists & performers	20,000
Insurance (event & abandonment)	3,000
Licence (Performing Rights)	2,000
Promotion	5,000
Photography	400
Fireworks (1 night)	1,750
<b>ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>88,134</b>
Less: Earned income	1,000
Less: Eastern Orchestral Board contributions	8,000
<b>ESTIMATED COSTS</b>	<b>79,134</b>
<b><i>Gross ticket sales required to balance budget</i></b>	<b>95,500</b>
(inc VAT & estimated credit card costs)	
<b>NET COSTS TO HDC</b>	<b>0</b>

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE BIG GIG 2007

## TICKET SALES

## SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS

## Friday Tickets @ £5.00

	Numbers	Gross Income	Estimated Net Income	Budget Shortfall (Surplus)
<b>Target Audience</b>	1,200	£6,000	£5,000	-
<b>125% of target</b>	1,500	£7,500	£6,250	(£1,250)
<b>75% of target</b>	900	£4,500	£3,750	£1,250
<b>50% of target</b>	600	£3,000	£2,500	£2,500
<b>25% of target</b>	300	£1,500	£1,250	£3,750

## Saturday Tickets @ £10.00

	Numbers	Gross Income	Estimated Net Income	Budget Shortfall (Surplus)
<b>Target Audience</b>	4,000	£40,000	£33,250	-
<b>125% of target</b>	5,000	£50,000	£41,500	(£8,250)
<b>75% of target</b>	3,000	£30,000	£25,000	£8,250
<b>50% of target</b>	2,000	£20,000	£16,750	£16,500
<b>25% of target</b>	1,000	£10,000	£8,500	£24,750

## Sunday Tickets @ £12.50

	Numbers	Gross Income	Estimated Net Income	Budget Shortfall (Surplus)
<b>Target Audience</b>	4,000	£50,000	£41,500	-
<b>125% of target</b>	5,000	£62,500	£52,000	(£10,500)
<b>75% of target</b>	3,000	£37,500	£31,250	£10,250
<b>50% of target</b>	2,000	£25,000	£20,750	£20,750
<b>25% of target</b>	1,000	£12,500	£10,500	£31,000