

REPORT TO:	Special Scrutiny Committee	
DATE:	16 July 2025	
PORTFOLIO:	Councillor Kimberley Whitehead - Culture, Heritage and Arts	
REPORT AUTHOR:	Victoria Tindall	
TITLE OF REPORT:	Events Review	
EXEMPT REPORT (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A)	Options	Not applicable
KEY DECISION:	Options	If yes, date of publication:

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 *To provide an update on plans for events in Accrington Town Centre for 2025-26 including costs and value of money*

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the process remains until such time where new objectives are introduced

3. Reasons for Recommendations and Background

3.1 This year's events budget of £150,000 allows for grants to be provided for events taking place in the boroughs high streets, parks and open spaces.

Objectives for these events are;

- Increase visitors to the high street
- Engage with people who live in and around Hyndburn
- Create an event which can engage with the widest possible audience
- Demonstrate value for money
- Explore additional funding sources, other than that of the Council

3.2 The event programme for 2025-26 includes

Category	Event	Date	Location	Organiser	Funding agreed
Culture & Heritage	Easter Trail	7-11th & 14-17th April	Gatty Park	Community Solutions	£150
Objectives met	Increased visitors to the park at Easter. Over 250 children participated in the trail Majority of visitors were Hyndburn residents. Cost per head to the Council £0.60. Additional investment to the event was £150				
Food Festival	Food Festival	Sat 7th June	Accrington town centre	Scott Dawson	£24,000
Objectives Met	An estimated 8,000 visitors attracted to the town centre. Approx. 50% from Hyndburn and the remaining from the wider East Lancashire area. Over 200 new visitors to the town centre. Varied attractions to bring a wider audience to the town centre. Showcased local businesses. Cost per head to the council was £3. Additional investment to the event was £24,000				
Net Zero	Eco Fest	Sat 14th June	Accrington town centre	Prospects	£7,000
Objectives Met	An estimated 9,000 more visitors to the town centre than the previous Eco Fest. Hyndburns own environmental charity raised awareness. Cost to the council was £0.77. Additional investment to the event was £7,000.				
Culture & Heritage	Summer Fair	Sat 14th June	Gatty Park	Community Solutions	£750
Objectives Met	Increased visitors to the park. Over 1200 attendees. Majority of visitors were Hyndburn residents. Cost per head to the council £0.125. Additional investment to the event was £150.				
Culture & Heritage	Hyndburn Sound	Fri 20th- Sun 22nd June	Accrington venues	ACE Team	£4,000
This event will involve 21 venues across three days. The aim of the event is to animate these venues with live music and attract visitors to the town centre and enhance the nighttime economy offering. Each venue will receive an average of £200 investment into attracting visitors. Visitors will receive free entertainment and experience a lively experience in Accrington Town Centre.					
Culture & Heritage	Summer Trail	21-25 July & 28-1 Aug	Gatty Park	Community Solutions	£150
This event hopes to increase visitors to the park over the summer holidays. The aim is to engage with residents and have them explore the park. If the expected 100 visitors participate in the trail the cost per head to the Council will be £1.50. Additional investment to the event is £150					
Soapbox	Soapbox Challenge	Sat 23rd Aug	Accrington town centre	Scott Dawson	£25,000
This is one of Hyndburn's flagship events which brings around 12,000 visitors from all around the northwest to the town centre. This is one of Accrington's tourism attractions, and was a finalist in last year's Lancashire Tourism Awards.					
Culture & Heritage	Town Crier competitions	Tbc	tbc	G.H. Civic Society	£1,000
This event has been a successful event in the past. The aim is for this to become a regular on the Town Crier calendar for years to come. The town plays host to hundreds of visitors from all over the UK. This is a popular event which boosts Great Harwood tourism.					

Other	Summer trail & Circus event	tbc	tbc	St. Peter Church, Rishton	£2,000
A Treasure hunt on a Saturday during the summer holidays. The treasure hunt will require families to solve riddles and find special interest points in Rishton. There will be a central location where families will enjoy circus performers, and free food and drink.					
Culture & Heritage	Horticultural Show	Sat 6th Sept	Bank Mill House, Great Harwood	G.H. Civic Society	£500
This annual event now takes place at the Bank Mill Centre, recognised as part of Great Harwood's High Street, and gives locals, including the neighbouring townships of Rishton and Clayton-Le Moors, of every age and background, the opportunity to display their exhibits. Last year saw over 300 exhibits.					
Other	Health H3 event	Sun 14th Sept	Land next to Leisure Centre	Church Rotary	£2,000
The event will host approximately 8000 attendees of all ages and backgrounds, leveraging multiple local facilities, including a school field and playground, some borough council land, and a leisure centre. The event will feature health and fitness activities, cooking demonstrations, musical entertainment, and various stalls to promote healthier lifestyles in the community.					
Culture & Heritage	Pumpkin Trail	20-24th Oct	Gatty Park	Community Solutions	£150
This event hopes to increase visitors to the park over the autumn holidays. The aim is to engage with residents and have them explore the park. If the expected 100 visitors participate in the trail the cost per head to the Council will be £1.50. Additional investment to the event is £150					
Culture & Heritage	Twilight Night	6 th Dec	Rhyddings Park	KSE Events	£3,000
This free event will bring visitors to Rhyddings Park at night. It will be a mixture of light trails, themed activities and music to suit and attract families and individuals of all ages.					
Culture & Heritage	Lancashire Day celebrations	Thurs 27th Nov	Churchfield House, Great Harwood	G.H. Civic Society	£200
Every year at Churchfield House the Town Crier toasts the monarch, the Duke of Lancaster, and the opportunity is taken to sample some traditional Lancashire fare. Local residents take part along with representatives from the town's five primary schools – schools which cater for our multi-cultural, multi-faith youngsters.					
Accy Xmas	Accrington Switch On	Thurs 27th Nov	Accrington town centre	Scott Dawson	£24,000
Annual event which attracts residents from around the borough to enjoy Accrington town centre.					
Township Xmases	Rishton Xmas	tbc	tbc	St.Peter Church, Rishton	£1,900
Annual event for the residents of Rishton.					
Township Xmases	Great Harwood Xmas	Fri 5th Dec	Towngate Square, Rishton	G.H. Civic Society	£2,000
The annual Christmas light switch on event. Successfully entertaining over 2,000 people in 2022, 2023 and 2024.					
Township Xmases	Fern Gore Xmas	tbc	tbc	tbc	£2,000
2 nd annual Christmas light switch on event.					

Culture & Heritage	Christmas Markets	Thurs 11th Dec	Elmfield Hall, Gatty Park	Community Solutions	£250
Annual Christmas markets event takes place inside Elmfield Hall, including carols from a local school, stalls selling Christmas goods and a Santa's grotto. This event aims to bring 250 visitors to the Hall with an anticipated cost per head of £1					
G.H. Winter	Great Harwood Winter	Sat 13th Dec	Queen Street, Great Harwood	Scott Dawson	£20,000
Crowd pleasing, high impact event for the whole community building on the success of 2024					
Other	Christmas Tree display	tbc	Arndale Centre, Accrington	ACE Team	£3,000
This event will see a new location in this, it's third year. Local community groups and businesses decorate trees to bring a festive spectacle to the town.					
Traffic Management					£20,500
Contingency					£6,450

4. Alternative Options considered and Reasons for Rejection

4.1 Since 2018 we have explored the idea of commissioning a single event organiser to manage the budget and calendar of events. This idea has never been appealing as we find that different types of event attract specific demographics. The mix of events in the town centre currently works, appealing to all.

5. Consultations

5.1 Since the first consultation event in 2018 we have strived to put on events that were suggested and wanted by the local community and stakeholders. Each event is reported on. We assess how the event has performed in the town centre against our objectives and this assessment helps us make the decision on ¹⁾ whether we repeat it ²⁾ if there needs to be additional activity at the next one and ³⁾ whether there is the appetite for a repeat event.

6. Implications

Financial implications (including any future financial commitments for the Council)	£150,000 Budget for future years to continue events programme across the borough
Legal and human rights implications	N/A

Assessment of risk	All events are monitored and assessed by the Event Safety Advisory Group. The grant process is robust and risk is protected.
Equality and diversity implications <i>A Customer First Analysis should be completed in relation to policy decisions and should be attached as an appendix to the report.</i>	The grant application and event awarding process is fair and open.

**7. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985:
List of Background Papers**

7.1 *Copies of documents included in this list must be open to inspection and, in the case of reports to Cabinet, must be published on the website.*

If the report is public, insert the following paragraph. If the report is exempt, contact Member Services for advice.

8. Freedom of Information

8.1 The report does not contain exempt information under the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A and all information can be disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.