

Policy and Sustainability Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 28 May 2020

Deferral of Edinburgh Summer Sessions 2020 to 2021

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1. Recommendations

- 1.1 This report seeks approval to reschedule the Edinburgh Summer Sessions event from August 2020 to August 2021 due to the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on public gatherings going forward.

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Report

Deferral of Edinburgh Summer Sessions 2020 to 2021

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The report seeks approval to defer the Edinburgh Summer Session concerts from 2020 to 2021 due to the ongoing impact on large scale gatherings caused by the Coronavirus pandemic.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Edinburgh Summer Sessions event is a concert series that has been presented in the Ross Bandstand and Princes Street Gardens since 2018. Approval for the Edinburgh Summer Sessions 2020 was given by the Culture and Communities Committee on [28 January 2020](#) within the Festivals and Events Core Programme 2020/21 report.
- 3.2 In August 2019 the Edinburgh Summer Sessions promoted by DF Concerts Ltd featured nine high profile concerts by artists such as Florence and the Machine, Madness, Lewis Capaldi and Primal Scream. This built on the success of the 2018 event with Tom Jones and Paloma Faith amongst others.
- 3.3 Due to the ongoing impact on events and large scale gatherings due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the Edinburgh Festivals this summer have been cancelled and a number of booking are being re-scheduled the across the cultural venues estate.
- 3.4 Policy and Sustainability Committee is asked to consider rescheduling the Edinburgh Summer Sessions event from August 2020 to August 2021 as set out below.

4. Main report

- 4.1 The Culture and Communities Committee approved the 2020 Edinburgh Summer Sessions programme on 28 January 2020, as part of the wider Festivals and Events Core Programme 2020/21 report. Nine concerts were planned with artists including Sir Tom Jones, Lionel Richie, Michael Kiwanuka and Simple Minds scheduled to perform.

- 4.2 Council officers and the event organiser, DF Concerts, had started to progress planning and delivery of this year's event through the Event Planning Officer Group (EPOG) however since lockdown restrictions began on the 23 March it has been impossible to continue this process.
- 4.3 The current guidance from the the UK and Scottish Governments indicates that it will be some time before larger social gatherings will be permitted.
- 4.4 As previously reported the live music industry is a significant contributor to the economy. The UK Live Music report [Music By Numbers 2019](#) conducted extensive research on the value of the United Kingdom's music industry and provides data on the economic impact of live events. The average spend by overseas music tourists was £851 per head in 2018 - up by 13% on £750 in 2017. The figure for spend by domestic music tourists in 2018 was £196 per head – up by 5% on £186 in 2017, thus estimating that the value to Edinburgh's economy from the nine Summer Sessions concerts would be more than £5.5m.
- 4.5 The current Coronavirus pandemic is having a devastating effect across many sectors with live music and performing arts hit particularly hard, impacting artists as well as the agents, promoters, production, freelance staff and all employees involved in the supply chain that supports the delivery of cultural events.
- 4.6 With little sign of this situation improving in the near future, the Council and event organisers are trying to mitigate these impacts through planning and rescheduling for future periods. This maintains confidence in the sector that business and culture will work to emerge in good shape when it is safe to do so.
- 4.7 For the Edinburgh Summer Sessions, both DF Concerts and Council officers have mutually agreed that the 2020 event looks unrealistic to be able to go ahead. It is recommended that Committee approve rescheduling the nine concerts planned in 2020 to August 2021.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 The decision of Committee will be communicated to all existing ticket holders and more widely to reach anyone who was potentially considering purchasing tickets.
- 5.2 If the recommendation to defer is approved, operational planning for these events will recommence when it is safe and appropriate to do so and applications for the relevant licenses and approvals will be submitted by the event operator at the appropriate time.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 The income from Edinburgh Summer Sessions 2020 formed part of the Place Directorate's income target and will not be achieved in 2020. If Committee approves deferring this event to 2021, this income will be received in 2021.

- 6.2 A review of the financial impact of COVID 19 on the Council budget is underway and this non-achievement of income is factored into those calculations.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 Confirmation of the event was shared to stakeholders through the Parks Approval Application. Officers were in the process of addressing operational impact on access to Princes Street Gardens at the time of lockdown measures being introduced and would be followed up subsequent to rescheduling the event to August 2021.
- 7.2 The event organiser would have to meet the required licensing and public safety requirements pertaining the event, achieved through relevant applications and EPOG recommendations.

8. Background reading/external references.

- 8.1 None.

9. Appendices

- 9.1 None.