

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
EDUCATION CULTURE AND SPORT COMMITTEE
15 JANUARY 2009

Agenda Item	
Report No	

HIGHLAND 2007 EVALUATION

Report by Director of Education, Culture and Sport

Summary

The purpose of this report is to present the findings of the independent evaluation of Highland 2007 undertaken by the Centre for Cultural Policy Research within Glasgow University. The report highlights some of the key successes and lessons learned from managing and delivering Scotland's first themed year.

1. Background Information

- 1.1 In November 2008 the Centre for Cultural Policy Research within Glasgow University published the formal evaluation of Highland 2007. Copies of the Executive Summary of the report were circulated to Members on 19 November and the purpose of today's report is to highlight some of the key findings presented by the research team.
- 1.2 The report produced by Glasgow University evaluates the impact of Highland 2007, a tri-partite partnership project funded principally by the Scottish Government, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) and The Highland Council. The evaluation was carried out over a three year period, from May 2005 until June 2008, and examined what happened before, during and immediately after Highland 2007.
- 1.3 In addition to the three main funding agencies, Highland 2007 developed and worked with a network of 33 concordat partners, five Local Authorities and 17 commercial sponsors to deliver a year long set of events and projects aimed at promoting and celebrating the Highlands and its culture.
- 1.4 The researchers describe Highland 2007 as 'one of the most ambitious and complex cultural projects ever staged in the UK' and highlighted the partnership between the three member organisations as 'exemplary public sector partnership working'. The remainder of this report presents a sample of some of the key successes to emerge from the project managed and delivered by this ground breaking partnership and looks forward to how the lessons learned can be used to best effect in maximising the positive legacy of Highland 2007.

2. Key Successes

- 2.1 A sum of £13.1 million cash and in kind support was invested in the revenue programme of Highland 2007. Of this total, £5.8 million was provided by The Highland Council and HIE, with £6.7million being attracted from funding agencies outwith The Highland Council area. The remaining £0.6 million was attracted in commercial sponsorship.
- 2.2 A sum of £31.6 million was invested in capital projects associated with Highland 2007. Of this total, HIE and The Highland Council contributed £20 million, with the remaining £11.1 million being secured from the Scottish Government.
- 2.3 The scale of the programme was far greater than originally anticipated and included 500 events or projects, 136 capital projects and a series of events and activities within schools. Figures suggest that overall attendances were high with a significant level of visitors to the Highlands and Islands participating in events.
- 2.4 £2 million in-kind support for marketing was committed by VisitScotland to Highland 2007. While some difficulties were encountered between Highland 2007 and VisitScotland around the issue of how this funding was allocated, this relationship did deliver an increase in visitors to the Highlands in 2007. Marketing activity carried out by VisitScotland on behalf of Highland 2007 had a reach of over 19 million people around the world and was valued at £4.7 million. UK and international PR activity on behalf of Highland 2007 was valued at £1.4 million and included regular contact with over 1400 media contacts.
- 2.5 The impact of this activity saw an increase of 1.3% in visitor numbers (in 2007 from 2006) to visitor attractions in the Highlands of Scotland. Accommodation across all sectors saw growth: hotels by 3.4%; guest houses / B&Bs by 5%; self catering by 1.7%; and caravan / camping by 34.8%.
- 2.6 The Highland 2007 website recorded 327,000 unique visits across the year in 2007. In November 2008, for that month alone, the Highland 2007 website received 158,000 unique visits, reflecting the trend throughout 2008 that visits to the website continue to increase despite most of its functions being archived.
- 2.7 Several large events including the UCI Mountain Bike World Championships and Trials and the Adventure Racing World Championships achieved international TV coverage and the BBC reported 27 million hours of audience viewing and listening to Highland – related material during 2007.
- 2.8 Adjusting for so-called 'leakage' of expenditure outside the region, and allowing for some projects and event activity that would have happened in any case, net employment impact was 326 Full Time Equivalent posts (FTEs) and an income of £6.6 million.
- 2.9 A further 213 FTEs (net) were supported on a voluntary basis.
- 2.10 An estimated 520,000 additional day visits and 43,000 additional overnight stays in the Highlands and Islands were made by non residents of the Highlands and Islands as a result of Highland 2007. Among the additional overnight visitors, 58%

were from the rest of Scotland and the remainder were from the rest of the UK or overseas.

- 2.11 The expenditure on accommodation, tickets, food and drink etc associated with these additional visitors to the Highlands and Islands was an estimated £4.5 million.
- 2.12 Adding multiplier impacts brings a total visitor expenditure impact of £6.1 million to the economy of the Highlands and Islands, which would sustain around 133 FTE jobs and generate an income of around £2.1 million.
- 2.13 Over time there is likely to be a continuing positive impact from repeat visits by people who otherwise might not have considered coming to the Highlands and Islands had it not been for Highland 2007.
- 2.14 Promoters reported business and tourism benefits, including the formation of new business ideas and opportunities created for repeat visits. New specialist posts were created and skills enhanced, particularly in the creative industries.
- 2.15 Festivals were one of the biggest successes of the Highland 2007 programme and a particular source of enthusiasm amongst young people living in the area.
- 2.16 Benefits for young people of being involved in Highland 2007 projects included increased self-confidence, increased access to and awareness of local culture, heritage and environment, and new skills.
- 2.17 The Highland Promise – An Gealladh Mòr, a raft of activities co-ordinated by schools around the six strands, was a positive experience for many schools and shows what is possible when resources are provided to invest in culture. The opportunity to work together in Associated School Groups appears to have been beneficial for the schools involved and the majority of Head Teachers felt that the pupils had benefited by learning something new about Highland culture.
- 2.18 The programme of community – based events was regarded as a major success of Highland 2007. Promoters reported many benefits related to the social capital of the Highlands and Islands, including, for example, the increased involvement of young people in community life, and a stronger sense of collective achievement and potential.
- 2.19 Investment in capital projects, large and small, was important for strengthening the cultural infrastructure, providing resources and equipment and improving access.
- 2.20 In terms of the perceived impact of Highland 2007 itself, when asked what effect the year's events had for the identity and prosperity of the Highlands and Islands, a total of 80% of The Highland Council residents perceived an impact, more than a quarter believing it to be a major impact.
- 2.21 Residents of the Highlands and Islands claimed to have a greater level of familiarity with the Highlands and Islands and also with its culture post Highland 2007. Both residents and non residents of the Highlands and Islands agreed strongly that Highland culture is something of which to be proud. Strong agreement was also expressed for the statement that Highland culture is important for the Highland economy.

3. Legacy

- 3.1 In addition to highlighting the aforementioned positive outcomes, the findings of the research presented some key lessons that had been learned from the process of planning and managing Scotland's first themed year and the Member organisations on the Board of Highland 2007 have used both to good effect in shaping the plans to maximise on the positive legacy of the project.
- 3.2 One of the first decisions to be taken by Members of the Board of Highland 2007 was to retain and to build upon the 'strong and effective' partnership highlighted within the evaluation report. The formal Board of Highland 2007 held its last meeting on 18 November 2008 with the agreement that a new partnership would emerge to continue the work initiated by the company that managed and delivered Highland 2007 and to develop long terms plans for its legacy. The remit and membership of this partnership are outlined in **Appendix 1**.
- 3.3 At the ECS Committee of 22 May 2008, Members agreed that a Highland 2007 Legacy Programme be established to build upon the success and momentum of Highland 2007 in enhancing and promoting the events, festivals and cultural calendar of the Highlands. The criteria and guidelines developed for this funding programme were devised to reflect the findings of the evaluation report and to incorporate the constructive feedback from promoters and event organisers across the region. The response to the first funding round produced a high volume of high quality applications, most of which built on events and projects initiated in response to Highland 2007. Work is ongoing to continue to refine the funding criteria in response to feedback received from applicants and from the Members reviewing their submissions and it is anticipated that the response to round 2 will be equally impressive.
- 3.4 At the same Committee in May, Members also agreed that a sum of £125K be ring fenced within the Legacy Programme to support projects and events initiated by schools and youth groups. This decision reflected the findings of the evaluation report that the experience of being involved in The Highland Promise – An Gealladh Mòr had rendered many positive outcomes for the young people and for the schools involved. From the applications supported during round 1 of the Legacy Programme, just over £107K was allocated in support of submissions by schools and youth groups and it is anticipated that the same high quality of applications to provide cultural opportunities for young people will be forthcoming in round 2.
- 3.5 One of the core tasks undertaken by Highland 2007 was to lever in funding from outwith the region to support investment in the cultural infrastructure of Highlands. This function has continued as part of the immediate legacy of the project. Following the allocation of £600K by The Highland Council to initiate the Highland 2007 Legacy Programme work is now ongoing to add to the investment committed by the Council and thus far £60K has been secured from Homecoming Scotland and £60K has been awarded from the Scottish Government in support of the Highlands plans to host a flagship event for Homecoming Scotland in October 2009. Applications are in train to seek financial support from Creative Scotland, LEADER and Bòrd na Gàidhlig in the immediate future to the same effect.

- 3.6 The findings of the evaluation report have shaped the aims and proposed content of future Events and Festivals Strategy for the Highlands of Scotland for the period 2009 to 2012. The draft strategy is being developed and will be presented to the March 2009 ECS Committee. The rationale for developing such a strategy reflects the comment in the evaluation report that 'strong agreement was also expressed for the statement that Highland culture is important for the Highland economy', with the strategy aiming to maximise on the economic and social potential of developing and promoting the cultural calendar of the Highlands.
- 3.7 At the same time, the experience of working in partnership with VisitScotland in the lead up to and during Highland 2007 is now being used to good effect in reviewing and developing the Council's Partnership Agreement with VisitScotland. Many of the lessons learned along with the processes and relationships developed during Highland 2007 are now being adopted to ensure that increasing benefits emerge for the tourism sector of the Highlands as a consequence of the Council's ongoing relationship with VisitScotland and through focused investment of its Tourism Development Budget.
- 3.8 The remit of the Highland 2007 Review Group is to formally consider the findings of the evaluation report and to systematically plan the long term legacy of Highland 2007 and this work can now begin in earnest. However work has been ongoing during 2008 to capitalise on the immediate opportunities to create a positive legacy from the project and in particular to maximise on the potential benefits to the Highlands of being involved in the national Homecoming Scotland celebrations. More than 60 % of the proposals supported during round 1 of the Legacy Programme relate to events or projects that will form part of the Homecoming Scotland programme in the Highlands in 2009. In addition, the Highlands will host one of the Homecoming Scotland flagship events in October 2009 when the 'Highland Homecoming' will offer international visitors and locals alike the opportunity to experience the unique culture of the Highlands. Many of the partnerships and experiences derived from delivering Highland 2007 – Scotland's first themed year - can now be built upon to ensure that the Highlands is well prepared to capitalise on the economic and social potential of being part of Scotland's second themed year – Homecoming Scotland 2009.

4. Recommendations

It is recommended that Members note the contents of this report.

Signature:

Designation: Director of Education, Culture & Sport

Date: 5th January 2009.

Author Fiona Hampton, Director Highland 2007

Appendix 1 - Highland 2007 Review Group (short term – operational)

Terms of Reference

1. Group Members

Representatives from:

The Highland Council
Highlands and Islands Enterprise
The Scottish Government
Creative Scotland
EventScotland
Cultural Sector

2. Remit

The short term remit of the Highland 2007 Review Group is to assess the outcomes of the Highland 2007 Evaluation Report, to map the existing cultural services provided by each partner organisation and to propose an action plan to the Highland 2007 Legacy Group that will maximise on the opportunities to enhance the cultural sector of The Highland Council area through effective ongoing collaboration between The Highland Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, the Scottish Government, Creative Scotland, EventScotland and the cultural sector of the Highlands.

3. Functions

To achieve this remit, the Highland 2007 Review Group will be tasked with undertaking the following functions between January and April 2009:

- i) Review the key findings of the Highland 2007 Evaluation Report.
- ii) Map the current functions undertaken and services delivered by each partner organisation within The Highland Council area at present that impact on the cultural sector.
- iii) Identify examples of current joint working and opportunities for additional collaboration between the partner organisations within the cultural sector.
- iv) Identify the current individual outputs and collective achievements of the partner organisations for the cultural sector at present.
- v) Prepare a SWOT Analysis of the existing cultural provision by the partner agencies in the Highlands at present.
- vi) Highlight specific opportunities to enhance existing provision, delivery and achievements for the cultural sector through additional and ongoing collaboration between the partner agencies.
- vii) Present an action plan to the Highland 2007 Legacy Group for approval and implementation in April 2009.

4. Highland 2007 Legacy Group (long term – strategic)

This group would emerge from and continue the work of the Highland 2007 Board of Directors and will include representatives from the following agencies:

The Highland Council
Highlands and Islands Enterprise
The Scottish Government
Creative Scotland
EventScotland
VisitScotland
Bòrd na Gàidhlig
UHI
Cultural Sector