

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

LEISURE and ARTS ADVISORY BOARD

14 January 2008

**Report of the Chief Leisure Officer and the
Cabinet Member for Leisure, Youth and Arts**

Part 1- Public

**Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non-Key Decision (Decision may be taken
by the Cabinet Member)**

1 TONBRIDGE CASTLE FESTIVAL OF MUSIC AND FIREWORKS

Summary

This report provides Members with programme and ticket price proposals for the above event due to take place during the weekend of the 11, 12 and 13 July 2008.

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Members may recall at the last meeting of this Board (Decision D070178 MEM) that authority was granted to enter into negotiations with promoters, Musical Associations (MA) regarding the 2008 Festival, and ticket prices be reviewed taking into account market conditions.
- 1.1.2 Since that meeting proposals have been received from MA regarding the programme for the event, and discussions have taken place regarding changes to the ticket prices.

1.2 2008 Festival

- 1.2.1 Having considered feedback from the public attending the 2007 Festival, MA has suggested the following line up for 2008:-

| | | |
|------------------|---|---|
| Friday 11 July | - | Beatles tribute followed by Madness tribute |
| Saturday 12 July | - | Summer Nights (Musicals as per 2007 event) |
| Sunday 13 July | - | Ronnie Scott's In the Park (Jazz) |

- 1.2.2 At the time of writing this report further details regarding the proposed event for Sunday night is being sought from MA, which will be reported verbally at the meeting.

- 1.2.3 Due to the popularity of the Friday and Saturday night performances, it is felt there is scope to increase capacity levels for these two nights from 1,500 to 1,600 at each performance.
- 1.2.4 Discussions have taken place with the Fire Safety Officer as well as the Council's Health and Safety Officer. The capacity figure is determined using a formula taken from a guidance document entitled "Fire Safety Risk Assessment at open air events and venues". The Fire Safety Officer states that the calculations prove that 1,600 people can be safely evacuated from the site if required, aided by the number of exit points on site at the Castle. Since the inauguration of the Festival in 2000, the need to evacuate en mass at this event has not yet occurred. This is largely due to the health and safety measures MA put in place at Tonbridge Castle, which is standard practice at all the venues throughout the UK.
- 1.2.5 The pricing structure for tickets at this event has remained the same since the initial Festival took place during the Millennium celebrations. Based on past trends, both the Friday and Saturday night performances sell out well in advance of the event taking place. Traditionally Sunday night has proved harder to reach capacity sales as many people have to go to work the next day. Following consultation with MA the proposed changes are as follows:

| 1 – 30 April Early Bird Special Offers | 1 May – 10 July | 11,12,13 July <i>*subject to availability</i> |
|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £20.00 adults • £15.50 child • £12.50 Leisure Pass holders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £23.50 adults • £17.50 child • £14.50 Leisure Pass holders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £26.50 adults • £19.00 child • £16.50 Leisure Pass holders |

The proposals represent an increase of approximately 8% on ticket prices, but maintain the pricing policy of discounts to encourage early bookings. The arrangement with the promoters regarding Leisure Pass holders will remain as in previous years. The proposed prices remain competitive in relation to similar events run by MA and other promoters in the local area.

1.3 Legal Implications

- 1.3.1 The Council has powers to undertake this activity by virtue of Section 145 of the Local Government Act 1972. The contract with MA will be drawn up in agreement with the Council's Chief Solicitor.

1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.4.1 A subsidy of £18,000 is currently allocated in the 2008/09 arts revenue budget to support the event. If the proposed changes to capacity and prices outlined in the report are agreed, it is anticipated that the subsidy will reduce by £4,000. Discussions are currently ongoing with MA to agree the reduction and I will update Members verbally at the meeting. The Leisure Pass holder ticket price ensures

fair access for all. The promoters have public liability insurance cover of £5 million.

1.5 Risk Assessment

1.5.1 A risk assessment and detailed Event Safety Plan for the Festival is undertaken on an annual basis in liaison with the Council's Health and Safety Officer. The contractor providing the firework display also has public liability insurance of £5 million. MA produce their own Health and Safety documents for this event, and employ external security staff to be on site over the weekend.

1.6 Recommendations

1.6.1 It is, therefore, **RECOMMENDED** that subject to Member comment:

- 1) the proposed Festival programme brought forward by Musical Associates for 2008 be agreed;
- 2) the capacity for the performances on the Friday and Saturday evenings be increased to 1,600 and be reflected in the Event Safety Plan; and
- 3) the proposed ticket prices for the 2008 Festival as outlined in the report be agreed.

The Chief Leisure Officer confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

Background papers:

contact: Lyndsey Bennett

Nil

Robert Styles
Chief Leisure Officer

Sue Murray
Cabinet Member for Leisure, Youth & Arts