



Denbighshire Events Strategy 2014 -2020

“memorable experiences
a lasting impact”

Events are an important component of the cultural, social and economic life in Denbighshire and are valued as such by residents, businesses and visitors alike. In order to consolidate and develop this position, an Events Strategy is required to provide the context in which events are supported and encouraged in Denbighshire.

The Events Strategy has been put together to develop and support the existing programme, to create a framework within which new events can be encouraged and flourish, whilst ensuring they make a meaningful contribution to the local economy.

As such the Events Strategy helps us to decide how to best support existing organisers to ensure that their events are the best they can be, and to decide which events Denbighshire should encourage and develop itself. The strategy and supporting information will also play a key role in encouraging new event organisers to see Denbighshire as a natural partner for future development.

Any successful Events Strategy will rely on both the natural and physical assets that the County can offer, but will also be fundamentally influenced by the friendly attitude of the Council and its support infrastructure.

Denbighshire's Tourism offer is already enhanced by the existing events programme, and is a core strand of activity which will continue to improve the visitor experience and loyalty to the area. Events attracting large numbers of visitors or those that take place outside the traditional visitor season, help to increase spend locally, and increase the length of overnight stay.

The contribution of a robust and sustainable programme of events to the economy of the area is recognised through the expenditure that is made locally by those who attend, and through the services required. It is for this reason that the Council's Economic Ambition Strategy places key emphasis, and therefore priority, on the need to attract and support more events.

Denbighshire provides event organisers with **outstanding locations**, good transport links and is close to some of the largest built up areas in Britain, including Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Birmingham. The County has a wide range of natural resources,

including glorious beaches in the north and one of only five areas of outstanding natural beauty in Wales, the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB. Well known seaside resorts, attractive rural towns and villages, contribute to making Denbighshire an appealing location to both event organisers and attendees.

The natural strengths of the County make it a great location for a broad range of activities. This means that Denbighshire is in a strong position to add value to any event held in the County's beautiful surroundings.

The strategy aims to pull together these key factors into a robust and sustainable approach, ensuring that the County gets best value from investment in events which bring with them cultural, economic and social value.



Alternatively, arrangements can be made for events to be held in surprising locations. The summit of Moel Famau (Jubilee Tower) will feature in this year's Queen's Baton Relay.

An **experienced technical events team** based currently in Rhyl can be deployed to support events which are hosted in Denbighshire and have expertise in staging various indoor and outdoor events.

A **dedicated event and marketing team** has been set up, with experienced marketing professionals able to provide advice and practical help.

Denbighshire provides a wide range of other assistance to support events, such as traffic management, road closures and licencing. The Events Team are able to help guide organisers through each process to ensure that events run smoothly and that the Council's response is seamless.

In recent years the County has demonstrated that it has the potential to attract and hold successful events appealing to a wide range of visitors. This track record gives confidence that the aspirations of this Strategy are a natural fit and provide a solid base from which to expand.

Partnerships

Our existing partnerships with event organisers are testament to the fact that we work extremely hard to support and provide a crucial link for them in developing local relationships with town and community representatives and groups.

We have a vibrant and diverse voluntary sector, able to be deployed for large events in roles such as hosts or welfare support. Denbighshire continues to develop opportunities for volunteers to contribute, through a new volunteering policy and through our website.

Denbighshire as a County already plays host to a wide range of events, a good example is, Rhyl Air Show, which has been in existence since 2009 and annually attracts 120 thousand visitors, is a heart thumping display of aero acrobatics against a stunning beach backdrop. Smaller intimate and charming local produce markets and festivals feature throughout our picturesque market towns.

Range of events

The wide range of existing events demonstrates a long history of successful management delivered through many different models. Some are organised privately with the Council's support and others are organised by or funded by Denbighshire County Council.

Sporting events include the Etape Cymru Cycle race and the Tour of Britain, as well as the Wales Rally GB. The scenic backdrop and interesting routes makes the County a natural choice for on and off road events. Walking festivals are regularly and keenly attended by walkers from across the world, enjoying the vista of historic hill forts and tackling the famous Offa's Dyke path.

Music and Arts Events range from local town based events, which showcase local Welsh talent attracting a predominantly local audience, through to International televised events.

Business events help our local employers to network and celebrate their contribution to the national economy whilst giving them an opportunity to sell their products to the public. The Hamper Llangollen Food Festival is a good example, and is becoming renowned for showcasing the best of Welsh produce.

Event locations and infrastructure

Events can be held in traditional venues such as the fully serviced Llangollen Pavilion which has hosted the Llangollen International Music Eisteddfod for more than 60 years, through to the Events Arena in Rhyl which has accommodated celebrated acts at free open air concerts. There are also performance spaces such as the Rhyl Pavilion and privately owned facilities such as Bodelwyddan Castle and grounds.

There are many strategies, policies and existing initiatives that impact on tourism and events. Ensuring the Strategy acknowledges these, and maps out their contribution, is crucial to ensuring a meaningful impact.

Local context

One of the seven priorities identified in Denbighshire's Corporate Plan 2012-2017 is developing the local economy. The link between an increase in the number of successfully managed events and the positive impact on the local economy is identified as an outcome of the Plan, and is derived from an increase in revenue from tourism. The Plan makes the explicit link between the role events can play in raising the profile of Denbighshire as a destination, and the potential for increasing the number of over-night stays and therefore visitor spend.

The Corporate Plan also sets out how a programme of successful events can create opportunities to develop and grow the increased visitor numbers during an event.

Another important contribution to developing the local economy is the impact that a successful programme of events can have on the local development of infrastructure. Physical assets can be invested in, and expertise can be developed in the public and private sector.

As a consequence of the Council prioritising the development of the local economy Denbighshire has published its Economic and Community Ambition Strategy 2013-2017. This identifies key priorities for action under six themes.

- 1 Infrastructure for growth
2. Supported and connected businesses
3. Opportunities for growth
4. High quality skilled workforce
5. Vibrant towns and communities
6. Well promoted Denbighshire

The Events Strategy plays an important role in its delivery. Helping to stimulate new events and enhancing existing events will develop expertise and employment opportunities in the creative and event support sectors as well as in the more traditional retail, tourism and leisure businesses.

Tourism accounts for 10% of employment in Denbighshire, and although jobs tend to be seasonal and lower paid, the development of events will encourage diversification into higher value areas. Event staging or event management may help to increase the value of employment and stimulate the formation of new creative businesses.

Recognising that any events programme will have a significant impact on local residents and communities, it is important to consider the opportunities for the Strategy to have a positive impact on those who live and work in Denbighshire. Denbighshire's Big Plan 2011-2014 examines this from the perspective of eight outcomes. For example outcome 8: Denbighshire has a thriving and sustainable economy and a skilled workforce. It is important to take into account the fact that events offer possibilities for volunteering and work experience which may provide routes into longer-term employment. Events also encourage business entrepreneurship by creating opportunities for local businesses to provide skills and services to the event organisers.

Sporting events are a natural fit with the County's assets; often this type of event offers opportunities for participation as well as spectating. There is a clear link with Denbighshire's Leisure Strategy which will deliver on the vision that by 2020, Denbighshire will be renowned for high quality, accessible leisure opportunities attracting high levels of participation and improving the well-being of its residents and visitors.

The Corporate Communications Strategy 2012 -2015 identified a need for Denbighshire to improve its destination marketing activity. One of the key actions to deliver this is to produce an Events Strategy. The role that Corporate Communications and Marketing plays in conjunction with the marketing of the events will be developed further in the Strategy.

Regional and National Context

The Welsh Government Strategy for Tourism 2013 – 2020 recognises the role that events play in driving through higher earnings from tourism, focussing particularly on the major events in the high profile venues. However there is a clear emphasis on supporting events at community, regional and national level.

The Welsh Government recognises the impact of local action to create an attractive programme of events that can augment the visitor experience significantly.

The Welsh Government has also identified a key opportunity to develop the meeting and conference events market which is under-developed in Wales. International business conferences are to be encouraged in the cities of Wales; however there should be an opportunity for the regions to capitalise on any image enhancements.

With the support of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board and the Wales Major Events Unit in Cardiff, opportunities for Denbighshire to work with international event organisers to attract national and international events to the region will be provided.

The Tourism Strategy is delivered regionally by Tourism Partnership North Wales working with Denbighshire to promote North East Wales in particular. The Marketing Strategy produced by TPNW provides opportunities for Denbighshire to capitalise on the wider reach achieved through the Visit Wales campaigns.

The Major Events Unit Event Wales: A Major Events strategy for Wales 2010-2020 is the key industry strategy to impact on our strategy. It provides a purpose and context for attracting events to Wales and a clear direction on the Team Wales approach to attracting internationally recognised events to Wales. It highlights many of the same culturally significant aspirations as we do at the local level and provides selection criteria which recognise the same issues that need to be taken into account locally such as economic impact.

We have used the same event description labels as are used in this strategy for clarity and cohesion.



There are many challenges which need to be addressed as part of this Events Strategy, and that we are committed to resolving.

- Ensuring that economic value is maximised**
 During a period of intense challenge in public finance, it is crucial to ensure that the investment in individual events clearly delivers a return. The requirement for undertaking an economic impact assessment will need to be at the forefront of decision making as to which events can be supported. The importance of an improved economic outcome for our businesses and residents cannot be underestimated with some significant challenges faced in particular by communities in Rhyl and Denbigh.

Some existing events have been analysed to assess their economic impact using a comprehensive model for assessing the effect of an event on local, regional and national economies. This model can also be used to predict the likely impact of an event before it takes place.

It is a key challenge for the strategy to ensure that the use of such modelling is embedded in event management in Denbighshire, to assess and improve the economic impact of events that are either hosted or funded by Denbighshire.

- Ensuring that the visitor experience is of the highest standard**
 Visitors have become accustomed to a wide range of excellent event experiences. The visitor experience can never be taken for granted; opportunities to test the reality versus the perception should always be taken and encouraged. Measuring the experience against competitive alternatives will ensure that opportunities to improve will be identified. It is a key challenge to keep pace with the expectation of visitors in order to encourage repeat visits and recommendations. Helping event organisers to recognise and act on this will be important, as will ensuring that we put on events that are attractive to audiences.

- Marketing the events to increase attendance, stay and spend**
 Although many of the events organised by Denbighshire and our partners in the County are organised professionally, there is a challenge to improve the marketing of these events. To ensure that the organisers are able to identify and target their audiences is a key factor, as is their ability to capitalise on all media platforms and joint marketing opportunities with other organisations. Improving events to encourage additional overnight stays and spend will



- need a step change in product development and event marketing.
- Developing opportunities for communities to deliver events well**
 Communities, town councils and local event organisers currently arrange a wide range of small local events. In spite of having the expertise to deliver these events, there is an opportunity to improve quality and confidence. There are few opportunities to share information and expertise between organisers, and no technical guidance available to help them in the process. Local event organisers interact with various parts of the Council in planning their events, but do not have comprehensive guidance on their responsibilities or advice to make it easier for them to organise successful events.

- Creating opportunities for volunteers to participate.**
 Volunteering is widely used across some areas of the Council to great effect particularly in Leisure, Heritage and Countryside services. There is a challenge to raise participation levels for volunteers in events. We already have examples that events can act as a catalyst for volunteers to gain employment.

- Improving the professional standards in event organisation**
 Although there are pockets of significant expertise and experience in event organisation in Denbighshire County Council, a comprehensive toolkit has not as yet been developed for event organisers nor is there any mechanism to share best practice. The key challenge is provide help to improve the overall performance and to monitor professionalism. Attracting high profile events to the County will be fundamentally influenced by the reputation of and confidence in Denbighshire's events team. Building this reputation is a key

- area of focus.
- Securing additional funding to develop the events programme**
 In a period of intense competition for funding and in view of the need to market events more comprehensively, the key challenge is to secure sustainable sources of funding for the events programme.

Securing sponsorship and funding is fundamentally influenced by the challenge of developing professional standards which will influence the investment decision makers.

- Competing regionally to attract events to Denbighshire**
 Working with other local authorities on a regional basis to attract major events began with the Wales Rally GB and the Tour of Britain. The challenge of balancing the benefit to the region and the benefit to the County is particularly evident as our neighbouring counties have a more developed offer for hosting events. Denbighshire will need to invest in



Within Denbighshire there is the knowledge and experience to deliver co-ordinated, successful events. This Strategy has been developed to set out the aspirations and outcomes, and clearly identify the role Denbighshire County Council will play in funding, delivering, hosting and managing large or small events within the county.

For events to be delivered effectively it will be necessary to develop a partnership approach. In order to deliver this, Denbighshire will support the strategy with the following documents:

- An events programme.
- An events toolkit
- A pack designed to sell Denbighshire to event organisers.
- A strategic decision making process for selecting events to be supported directly by the Council.
- An action plan for delivery of the Strategy.

The vision guiding our delivery is that:

“By 2020 Denbighshire will have a vibrant programme of well managed events spread across the seasons and locations in Denbighshire, which contribute to the local economy, creating additional visitor spend and additional opportunities for employment in the supporting sectors.”

To deliver this vision we aspire to

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Increase the quantity and quality of events held in the County. | Raise the profile of the County as a destination that welcomes and supports events with professionalism | Increase the economic impact of events that are supported by Denbighshire |
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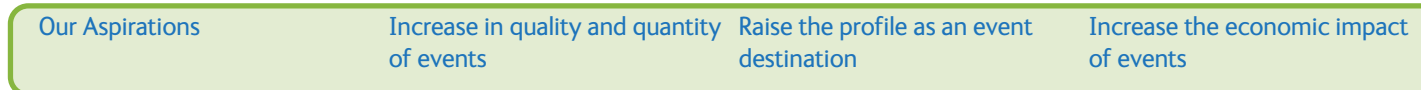
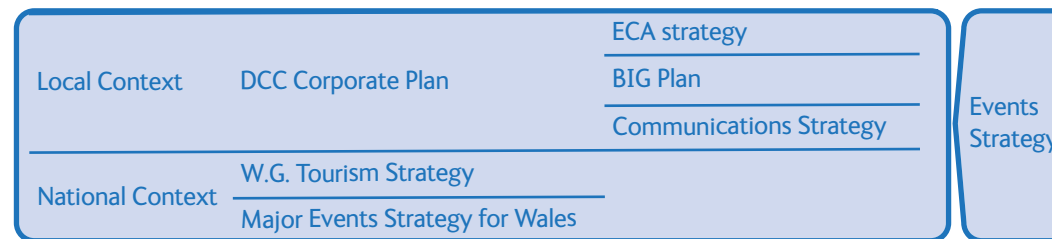
Supporting this is the aspiration to seek funding, sponsorship and investment to help to improve the offer.

Our Desired Outcomes

To achieve our vision and aspirations, we have developed four key outcomes:

1. Organisations involved in the delivery of events in partnership with Denbighshire County Council, will be confident to deliver effective well managed and well-marketed events.
2. Visitors and residents in Denbighshire will be able to enjoy a more varied range of year round events.
3. All supported events will demonstrate a clear proven economic benefit to the County.
4. Denbighshire’s reputation for hosting events is recognised and new events are attracted to the County as a result.

The Strategy has been developed on the basis of research done with Councillors and event organisers in Denbighshire. This strategy is derived from the findings of the consultation completed for the Economic and Community Ambition Strategy with Councillors officer and businesses.



| Our Desired Outcomes | Well managed and marketed events | More varied range of events | Economic benefit to the county | Improved reputation attracts more events | Principles Equality Investment Economic benefit Appropriate Language Safety |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--|--|
| Actions | Event audit | Gap analysis | Economic impact model | Event pack | |
| | Event toolkit | Market research | Market Research | Streamline support | |
| | Best practice shared | Event criteria | Event Business networking | Promote success | |
| | Co-ordinated advice | Regional partnerships | | | |
| Promotional platforms | | | | | |

Underpinning Principles

Our strategy is guided by a number of principles which underpin the action plan.

1. Equality and access for all – the strategy will ensure that any event supported by the Council will consider and implement the best options to ensure access is maximised for all. This will be key criteria in the selection of events which will be supported.
2. Maximising investment opportunities – external funding will be sought to increase the number and quality of events that can be hosted.
3. Maximising economic benefits – Decision making will be primarily influenced by the proposed economic benefit of the event to the local community.
4. Appropriate language and cultural considerations – participants and those accessing information about events will be able to access this in the Welsh language.
5. Community engagement and consultation – the strategy will focus on ensuring that events have the support of local communities and partners.
6. Health and safety – events will only be supported if they are operating safely and legally.

Event Type and Definition

The Denbighshire Strategy will match the classifications used in the Welsh Government Events strategy. These event descriptions help us to categorise events consistently across Wales. Using the same language as the Welsh Government will help us to explain our strategy more effectively when applying for funding and support from the Welsh Government.

| Description | Definition | Example |
|------------------|--|---|
| Mega Events | These are peripatetic events with a global reach normally preceded by large scale capital projects: | The Commonwealth Games |
| Major Events | These are events defined by their scale and appeal to attract large scale international audiences and extensive media coverage, and to deliver economic impact and significant visitor numbers for the host destination: | The Ashes Test Match |
| Signature Events | These can have a strong international dimension but unlike Major Events they are recurring. They are also unique to Wales or distinctly Welsh in Flavour and reflect our culture, traditions and values: | The Llangollen International Music Eisteddfod |
| Growth Events | These are smaller events, often new with a footprint and focus that is regional, local or sector led and which demonstrate the ambition and potential to evolve and grow to become Major or Signature events: | The Llangollen Food Festival |

We have also included the following categories to differentiate the Denbighshire strategy from the National strategy.

| Description | Definition | Example |
|------------------|--|----------------------------|
| Local Events | These events are significant to the local community and attract local interest and local visitors: | Christmas Celebrations |
| Corporate Events | Events that promote the work of the Council to residents, businesses and investors and encourage more interaction with residents, businesses, Council staff and Council Members: | Business Networking Events |



Outcome 1 - Well managed and marketed events

Organisations involved in the delivery of events in partnership with Denbighshire County Council will be confident to deliver effective well managed and well-marketed events.

This will be achieved by improving our communications with existing event organisers and developing direct links. We will need to share best practice and develop our own reputation for consistent practical and professional advice

Key Actions will include:

Identify existing events and event organisers.

Produce an events toolkit for local community event organisers

Provide mechanisms to share best practice from the experienced event organisers who are part of the strategic events group.

Co-ordinate advice for event organisers from different parts of the Council

Introduce the economic modelling tool for events.

Implement the first sift criteria for selection of events

Develop a more detailed scoring process for accepting events to support to ensure that they are well managed and well promoted.

Develop social media platforms for promoting events

Enhance the **What's On** brochure to promote events more effectively to visitors.

Producing a events calender

Outcome 2 - More varied range of events

Visitors and residents in Denbighshire will be able to enjoy a year round, wider and more varied range of events across the county

Key Actions will include:

Undertake an analysis of the existing range of events and identify the gaps

Develop relationships with key partners to attract new events and funding.

Work closely with regional event organisers to maximise the related activities for regional events.

Work with Denbighshire's Economic and Business Development team to decide which type of events to encourage to the area.

Identify key regional events to avoid duplication.

Outcome 3 - Economic benefit to the County

All supported events will demonstrate a clear proven economic benefit to the County.

Key Actions will include:

Introduce and promote the use of the economic modelling tools for events.

Introduce a clear link with the outcomes of the ECA strategy as part of the selection criteria for supporting events. Undertake market research into the opportunities for sponsorship and funding

Work with Denbighshire's Economic and Business Development team to decide which type of events to encourage to the area.

Identify and attract events which extend the tourism season

Identify and attract events that increase the length of visitor stay and spend.

Provide additional opportunities for businesses to engage with events and offer them opportunities for additional business.

Outcome 4 - Improved reputation attracts more events

Denbighshire's reputation for hosting events is recognised and new events are attracted to the County as a result.

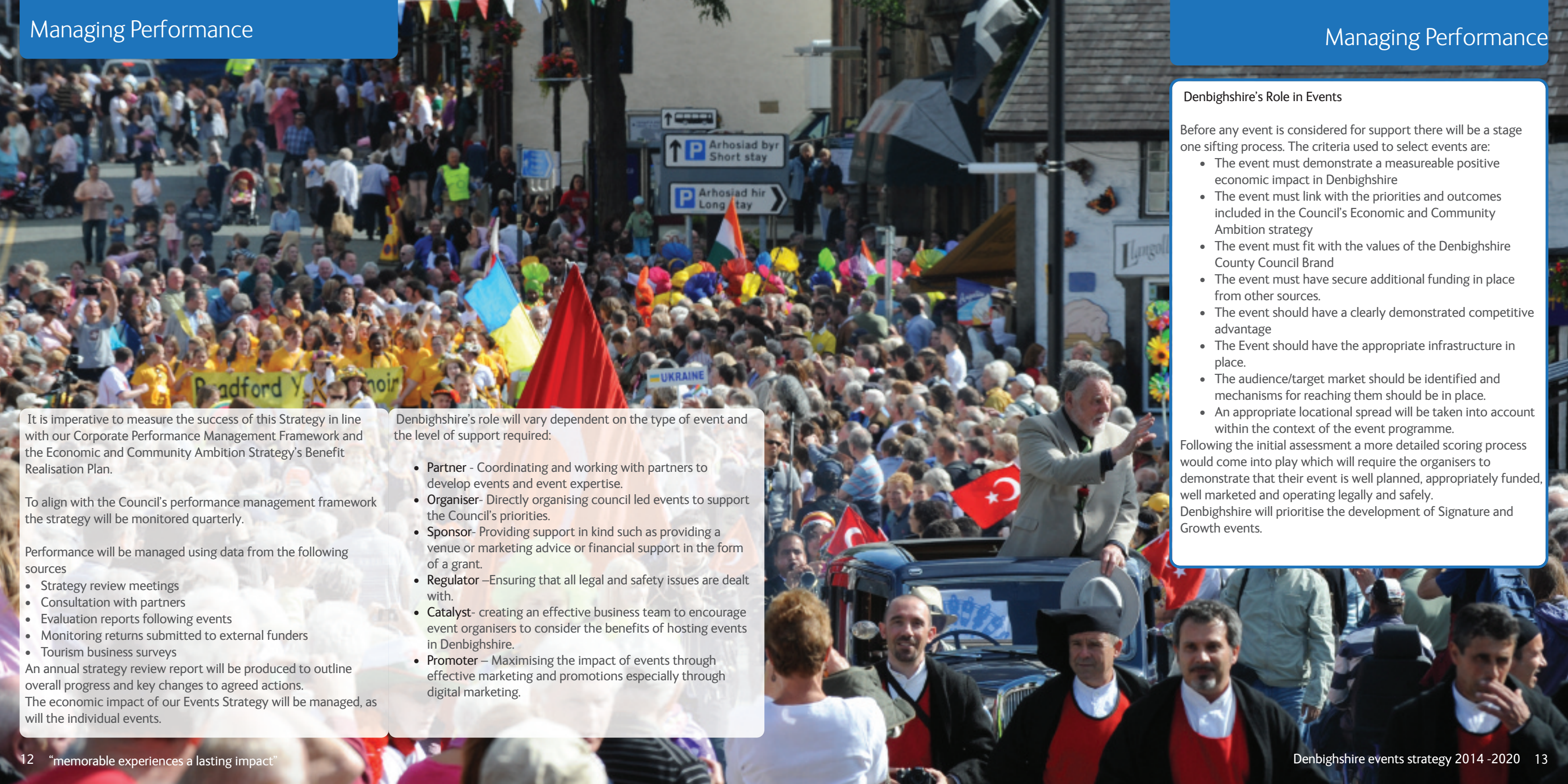
Key Actions will include:

Produce a comprehensive event pack which can be tailored to provide information for potential event organisers.

Streamline all of the event support activities and ensure easy access to the different Council departments involved

Undertake targeted market research to attract investment in events.

Promote the success when new events are attracted to Denbighshire



It is imperative to measure the success of this Strategy in line with our Corporate Performance Management Framework and the Economic and Community Ambition Strategy's Benefit Realisation Plan.

To align with the Council's performance management framework the strategy will be monitored quarterly.

Performance will be managed using data from the following sources

- Strategy review meetings
- Consultation with partners
- Evaluation reports following events
- Monitoring returns submitted to external funders
- Tourism business surveys

An annual strategy review report will be produced to outline overall progress and key changes to agreed actions. The economic impact of our Events Strategy will be managed, as will the individual events.

Denbighshire's role will vary dependent on the type of event and the level of support required:

- **Partner** - Coordinating and working with partners to develop events and event expertise.
- **Organiser**- Directly organising council led events to support the Council's priorities.
- **Sponsor**- Providing support in kind such as providing a venue or marketing advice or financial support in the form of a grant.
- **Regulator** –Ensuring that all legal and safety issues are dealt with.
- **Catalyst**- creating an effective business team to encourage event organisers to consider the benefits of hosting events in Denbighshire.
- **Promoter** – Maximising the impact of events through effective marketing and promotions especially through digital marketing.

Denbighshire's Role in Events

Before any event is considered for support there will be a stage one sifting process. The criteria used to select events are:

- The event must demonstrate a measureable positive economic impact in Denbighshire
- The event must link with the priorities and outcomes included in the Council's Economic and Community Ambition strategy
- The event must fit with the values of the Denbighshire County Council Brand
- The event must have secure additional funding in place from other sources.
- The event should have a clearly demonstrated competitive advantage
- The Event should have the appropriate infrastructure in place.
- The audience/target market should be identified and mechanisms for reaching them should be in place.
- An appropriate locational spread will be taken into account within the context of the event programme.

Following the initial assessment a more detailed scoring process would come into play which will require the organisers to demonstrate that their event is well planned, appropriately funded, well marketed and operating legally and safely. Denbighshire will prioritise the development of Signature and Growth events.