

Report

Cabinet

Part 1

Date: 17 July 2024

Subject Newport to host the 2027 Eisteddfod yr Urdd

Purpose To seek Cabinet decision on the invitation to host the Eisteddfod yr Urdd in Newport in 2027

Author Head of Regeneration and Economic Development

Ward All

Summary Newport has been invited to host the Eisteddfod yr Urdd, one of Europe's largest touring festivals, in 2027.

This report provides Cabinet with information about the Urdd festival and also outlines the wider economic benefits, opportunities and advantages and financial implications to hosting the event.

Proposal 1) To confirm Newport's commitment to hosting the Eisteddfod yr Urdd in 2027, and
2) Earmark £200k of the Events reserve as the Council's contribution to delivering the event.

Action by Heads of relevant services.

Timetable Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Chief Executive
- Strategic Director for Environment and Sustainability
- Strategic Director for Transformation and Corporate
- Head of Law and Standards
- Head of Finance
- Head of Infrastructure
- Head of People, Policy and Transformation
- Head of Environment and Public Protection
- Head of Education
- Head of Preventions and Inclusion
- Cabinet Member for Communications and Culture
- Newport Live

Signed

Background

The Eisteddfod yr Urdd is one of Europe's largest touring festivals attracting approximately 60,000 visitors over the course of the 7 day event. Over 15,000 children and young people under the age of 25 compete as finalists at the Eisteddfod yr Urdd. The 2024 event was held in May in Powys and the 2025 event is being hosted in Neath Port Talbot. In April 2023 the Council was invited to submit an Expression of Interest to host the Eisteddfod events between 2026 and 2031. Subsequently Newport has been invited to host the Eisteddfod yr Urdd in 2027.

The annual cost of staging the Eisteddfod yr Urdd is £2.4m. The Eisteddfod yr Urdd is broadcast on a variety of media outlets, including S4C, BBC Wales and ITV Wales, covering 80 television broadcast hours. There is also approximately 50 radio broadcast hours plus content and coverage in the local and national press. The Eisteddfod yr Urdd has a prominent presence on social media networks with the #Urdd2022 hashtag reaching an audience of 7 million people during the Eisteddfod week. The Urdd's social media accounts reached 1.2million people and gathered over 17,000 likes during the week of the event.

This opportunity would not be the first time that an event of this nature has been held in Newport. One of the earliest Eisteddfod events was held in Belle Vue Park in 1897. In 1988 and in 2004, Newport hosted the National Eisteddfod at Tredegar House.

What is Required?

Commitment and effective co-operation between all parties is vital for the success of the Eisteddfod if the children, young people and residents of Newport and the surrounding areas are to have the best possible experiences. As an annual event, there is significant experience and good practice available from the Eisteddfod yr Urdd team. The Council also has 'working together' and 'making a difference' as its core values and service areas work together to deliver services and events for the benefit of our residents and stakeholders.

The Eisteddfod yr Urdd event week is the pinnacle of at least two years of planning and is delivered through a dedicated working group. The working group would consist of Urdd Officers as well as representatives from the relevant service areas within the Council and external partners. The working group would meet monthly during the first year of the planning cycle with event planning transferring to a Safety Advisory Group for second year and until the event closes. There would be a lead contact within both organisations but the delivery of this event in Newport requires commitment from a number of service areas.

The Eisteddfod yr Urdd site itself is critical to the delivery of the event and the requirement is for a minimum of 25 acres for the Maes/field with alcohol and entertainment licence, 50 acres for parking and 15 acres for caravans and camping. A location for the event has not been formally agreed but the Council is exploring suitable sites with the Urdd, ahead of a formal public announcement in September.

There is also a requirement to facilitate access to school halls and rooms (within an agreed timetable) in order to support primary and secondary age rehearsals and central committees. Teachers and staff would also need to be released to support children and young people with rehearsals. The Urdd staff will be responsible for the organisational aspects of rehearsals for shows but schools and teachers will need to support.

Marketing and communications are a fundamental part of the development and delivery of the event and there will need to be close working between the Council's PR and communications team, the Urdd team and key partners to ensure that the event is fully promoted and publicised.

We are also asked to provide a suitable venue to host the youth theatrical production for rehearsals and performances (approximately 7 days). Newport Live are aware of this opportunity and we will explore use of Newport Live venues to support this event during the course of the week.

The Council is expected to contribute financially to the hosting of the event, with a requirement for a £200,000 financial contribution, which equates to 8% of the total cost of the event. This contribution can be accommodated from the current events reserve. There are also 'in-kind' contributions which will involve providing staff to support with the delivery of the event and also funding fees and charges for items such as hire charges (relating to venues as well as NCC land and assets) and licences/orders administered by the Council. At this stage there is no confirmation of the quantum of any of these fees and charges and a further update to Cabinet will be provided with further details.

Benefits

The Urdd provides opportunities for young people from all parts of Wales to take part in activities relating to sport, culture, arts, community, and international activities. In 2023, it was estimated that 90,000 children and young people competed in the Urdd District, Regional and National Eisteddfods with around 270,000 children, young people and families experiencing the value of the Eisteddfod yr Urdd annually by engaging with it in some way.

Data from a survey of young people who participated in the Urdd event in 2023 found that the vast majority felt they had progressed in terms of their attitude towards Welsh, their social skills and well-being and emotional skills.

- 89% felt more confident in social situations,
- 93% felt more confident to take part in activities,
- 88% were more likely to use Welsh,
- 73% felt they understood more about Wales,
- 80% said they were more willing to share an opinion,
- 70% agreed they were more likely to ask for help when needed, and
- 89% felt 'prouder' of themselves.

With the implementation of the Curriculum for Wales by 2027, there are direct links and contributions resulting from the Eisteddfod yr Urdd activities to the four purposes, and across the six Areas of Learning and Experience. The Eisteddfod syllabus will provide opportunities for learners to discover, learn, perform and be creative, offering Newport schools a unique opportunity to innovate through the Expressive Arts. The event will also provide opportunities for many children, families and their communities to experience their 'Cynefin' linking their sense of identity to the social, environmental and historical traditions of the Eisteddfod yr Urdd.

An important byproduct of this significant event is the unique opportunity for Welsh first and second language learners to hear, practice and support their language skills. There is an evidence base to demonstrate that the acquisition of the Welsh language was disrupted for learners during and post pandemic. This local event will support learners of all ages to immerse themselves in the Welsh language. This also provides an affordable trip and visit for all schools across the city to access.

The event supports Outcome 3 (More children continue to improve their Welsh language skills when transferring from one stage of their statutory education to another) and Outcome 5 (More opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school) of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan as well as the golden thread of 'promoting Welsh language' which underpins the whole strategy. The Eisteddfod yr Urdd will undoubtedly support learner and parental pride and confidence in Welsh language.

The Eisteddfod yr Urdd supports the vision of the Youth Work Strategy for Wales, where all young people in Wales 'are thriving, with access to opportunities and experiences in Welsh which provide enjoyment and enrich their personal development through youth work. The Eisteddfod yr Urdd embodies the youth work in Wales principles and purposes and would mean young people in Newport and the surrounding region would have the opportunity to take part in an event that supports the five pillars of youth work - educative, expressive, participative, inclusive and empowering. Youth work in both the medium of English and Welsh in Newport fully embrace these 5 pillars.

The event would enhance the good practice that takes place in Newport and encourage a legacy. Newport Youth & Play Service currently commission the Urdd to support Welsh Youth Work which links into the

Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. The Eisteddfod yr Urdd would also support young people in Newport to extend their knowledge, understanding and skills with the Welsh Language.

The event aligns Welsh Medium youth work with young people in Newport with local priorities, national plans and wider strategies including Youth Engagement and Progression Framework, Youth Work in Wales: Principles and Purposes, Children and Young People's National Participation Standards and Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers.

In addition to supporting the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) this initiative would also be a key milestone in promoting Welsh language in the City, as part of our 5 Year Promotional Strategy that informs policy, plans and work programmes across the council to help achieve Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 Strategy. Newport is a Welsh city with rich multicultural, multilingual communities. We want to celebrate the Welsh language as part of our shared identity, and increase opportunities for everyone to see, hear, learn, use and love our national language.

Our 5-Year Promotional Strategy has 3 strategic themes to deliver our vision, considering the city's linguistic profile, our existing Welsh language priorities, and our aspirations for Welsh language growth. The Eisteddfod yr Urdd will support the council in achieving our objectives under all three themes. More specifically, this initiative will support:

- **Theme 1: Communities and Culture**

This theme focuses on increasing awareness of the Welsh language across our communities, normalising Welsh so that it is heard and seen outside formal environments like school, college or the workplace. This theme also aims to engage non-traditional Welsh users, including our ethnic minority communities, and broaden our community partnerships. This initiative will facilitate increased use and visibility across all of the communities within the city and engage Welsh Language users and learners at every level by:

- Enabling us to work with local stakeholders and community groups to promote Welsh as a living language in Newport.
- Creating and support social opportunities for people to use and develop their Welsh language skills.
- Promoting Welsh as a language for all
- Developing a Newport that is aware of its Welsh language culture and history.
- Developing a sense of place steeped in Welsh language and Culture
- Ensure that communities have increased awareness council services that are available in Welsh.
- Promoting bilingualism as something that is completely natural.
- Protecting and nurturing the Welsh language for future generations to use and enjoy.

- **Theme 2: Education**

This theme ensures that Welsh language activities across the city align with and support the achievements of targets set out in our WESP. We want all families to be aware of Welsh medium education options across Newport and understand the benefits of bilingual education. This initiative will support the targets of our WESP by:

- Helping us to inspire pupils to use and develop their Welsh outside the classroom
- Promoting the benefits of learning and using Welsh in both Welsh and English medium schools
- Supporting non-Welsh speaking parents of children in Welsh medium education
- Raising the profile of Welsh medium education and consequently increasing the number of children in Welsh medium education

- Developing our partnerships further with colleagues in Further and Higher Education across Newport to look at potential opportunities to promote the benefits of learning Welsh and learning opportunities.
- Developing our partnerships further with stakeholders, colleagues, and the Welsh in Education Forum (WEF) members

- **Theme 3: Employers and Skills**

This theme focuses on the example that the council sets as an organisation which values and supports the use of the Welsh language. We aim to create an environment where Welsh and English are treated and viewed equally, and staff feel empowered to use and develop their Welsh language skills. This initiative will assist in achieving the objectives of this theme by:

- Increasing partnerships with key stakeholders to promote Welsh language as a skill across a range of sectors and
- Helping to develop and create opportunities for people to use and develop their Welsh use outside of formal environments like school, college, or the workplace.
- Work with stakeholders to promote the benefits of learning Welsh to students and pupils across Newport.
- Further embedding our Welsh Language Skills Policy into relevant Council processes, which will aid the Council with its workforce planning and use of Welsh internally.
- Creating supportive and safe spaces for staff with all levels of Welsh to develop their skills.
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Newport City Council's first Welsh Language Promotion Strategy was published in 2017 and our current plan runs until March 2027. If approved by Cabinet, the Urdd Eisteddfod Newport 2027 could also present a unique opportunity to launch the council's third Welsh Language Promotion Strategy publicly, promote our new Welsh language priorities, and communicate our aspirations for Welsh language growth in Newport.

Wider Economic Benefits

An assessment of the economic value of Urdd Gobaith Cymru was published in November 2023 by Arad Research and states that the economic value to Wales has increased from £25.5m in 2017-18 to £44.9m in 2022-23, an increase of 76%. Whilst the activities of Urdd Gobaith Cymru are not limited to the delivery of the Eisteddfod yr Urdd event, the report considers the economic impact of the event as follows:

- The 2023 Eisteddfod yr Urdd is estimated to have generated an economic value of £16.0m in **Wales**, comprising:
 - £1.5m direct impact from spend by the Urdd organisation on goods, services and salaries,
 - £7.4 indirect impact from visitor spend within the event and in the wider area (of which £3.8m was spent on local accommodation), and
 - £7.1m induced impact through supply chains.
- The 2023 Urdd event in Carmarthenshire generated an economic value of £8.5m in the **local area**, comprising:
 - £0.5m direct impact from spend by the Urdd organisation on goods, services and salaries,
 - £5.8 indirect impact from visitor spend within the event and in the wider area, of which,
 - £3.8m was spent on overnight accommodation),
 - £0.6m was spent by visitors on Carmarthenshire businesses on the Eisteddfod site, and
 - £1.5m by visitors on off site services, including food, drink and other local goods.
 - £2.2m induced impact through supply chains.
- Eisteddfod visitors spent £5.8m on goods and services from organisations based in the Carmarthenshire area.

- Visitor spend in the Carmarthenshire area in 2023 was estimated to be £7.4m, on the following:
 - £3.8m on private accommodation (e.g.hotels),
 - £1.7, with businesses from Wales on the Eisteddfod site (e.g. stalls and catering),
 - £1.5m of goods and services from other local businesses (e.g. restaurants, shops and transport),
 - Approximately £0.5m in local areas as part of attendance at local and regional Eisteddfods.

In terms of the return on investment, the Eisteddfod yr Urdd had an income of £2.3m in 2023. By dividing the total economic impact (£16.0m) by this income figure, it can be shown that the Eisteddfod yr Urdd generated an economic value of £6.96 in Wales for every £1 of income received.

The Eisteddfod yr Urdd Newport 2027, if approved by Cabinet, would be the largest Welsh language event in the City since 2004 and will contribute to the vision of the Corporate Plan which seeks to increase the number of Welsh speakers in Newport by improving access to Welsh education, promoting the Welsh Language and supporting businesses. If accepted by the Cabinet, as plans progress, we will work with hospitality, leisure and retail businesses across the city to ensure that the whole city feels part of and benefits from this huge event.

Financial Summary (Capital and Revenue)

- The cost of hosting a successful Eisteddfod yr Urdd is £2.4 million. There is funding from the Welsh Government and commercial sponsorship partnerships developed by the Urdd. The rest is via the Urdd’s internal fundraising efforts. The Council is asked to contribute £200,000 (8% of the total cost) as well as in kind contributions and through funding hire charges, including relevant Council buildings and assets, Council issued licences/permits/orders, and also staff time to effectively plan and support delivery of the event.
- Whilst this event would be delivered collaboratively by a number of services across the Council and with external partners. The Regeneration and Economic Development service hold an events budget which currently has a financial reserve of £372k. This reserve is held for the delivery of strategic events and it would be appropriate to fund the £200k contribution from this budget.

	Year 1 (Current) £	Year 2 £	Year 3 £	Ongoing £	Notes including budgets heads affected
Costs					
Net Costs	200,000	0	0	0	*Excludes ‘in-kind’ contribution costs and funding of other hire/fees/charges
	200,000*	0*	0*	0	
Net Impact on Budget	0	0	0	0	

Risks

Risk Title / Description	Risk Impact score of Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L)	Risk Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L)	Risk Mitigation Action(s) What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect?	Risk Owner Officer(s) responsible for dealing with the risk?
Failure to deliver	H	L	Relevant service areas have been consulted on the proposed event and the known implications for supporting the delivery of the event. Newport Live have also	Heads of Service

			been made aware of the event and the opportunity to use venues for performance space. The Urdd Gobaith Cymru are responsible for actual delivery of the event with the Council playing a supporting role.	
Lack of suitable location to host the event.	H	L	Discussions with the Urdd are already underway with a number of sites under discussion. Newport has a track record for hosting national and international events and it has been noted that Tredegar House previously accommodated the National Eisteddfod event in 1988 and 2004.	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Lack of Traffic Management during the event	M	L	Traffic Management Plans will be developed and put in place to safely and effectively manage the event. Newport has experience in managing major events and the proposed traffic management plan will be agreed by the Safety Advisory Group	Head of Infrastructure

* Taking account of proposed mitigation measures

Links to Council Policies and Priorities

The delivery of this funding programme supports the primary objective of the Corporate Plan 2022 -2027, which is to deliver an 'Ambitious, Fairer, Greener Newport for everyone.'

To achieve this goal, Newport City Council has four well-being objectives that are the focus over the next five years and create the foundations for our longer-term vision for Newport over the next 20 years. Well-being objective 1 is particularly relevant:

1. Economy, education and skills Newport is a thriving and growing city that offers excellent education and aspires to provide opportunities for all.
 - Become a destination that celebrates cultural diversity, heritage and delivers elite sporting events.
 - Increasing the number of Welsh speakers in Newport by improving access to Welsh education, supporting businesses and promoting the Welsh Language

One of the overarching principles of the Gwent Well-being Plan 2023 acknowledges that the Welsh language is a key part of Wales' cultural heritage and all Public Service Board members have pledged to promote, encourage and increase the use of the Welsh language.

The important links to the WESP and Welsh Language Promotional Strategy are outlined within the report. The initiative also supports the Welsh Government '[Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers](#)' strategy.

Options Available and considered

1. To confirm Newport's commitment to hosting the Urdd Eisteddfod in 2027 and to agree to the financial contribution of £200,000.
2. To decline the invitation to host the Urdd Eisteddfod in Newport in 2027.

Preferred Option and Why

- (1) The opportunity for Newport to host the Urdd Eisteddfod provides the City with a unique opportunity to both showcase Newport as a place to visit, but also supports the Council's aims and objectives of the Corporate Plan, Welsh Education Statagic Plan and the Welsh Language Strategies. This event would attract visitors both locally and nationally to the City, boosting the local economy and resulting in an increase on local spend for our hospitality, leisure and retail businesses across the City. Discussions will continue with the Urdd Gobaith Cymru to confirm a suitable location, which will be announced at a public event in September.

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

The financial element of this proposal is twofold, an explicit financial contribution of up to £200,000, which is recommended is afforded from the Events earmarked reserve, and also an in-kind contribution in the use of Council services and facilities at no/subsidised cost to the event. No extra cost or detail has been identified in relation to the latter e.g. venue hire, cleansing, site remediation, parking/transport arrangements, statutory highways arrangements etc and therefore clarity on these and similar issues will be required when available. At this point therefore, the presumption in considering this report needs to be that any service costs are affordable from within existing budgets and resourcing.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

This report seeks an in-principle decision to host the Urdd Eisteddfod and a commitment of £200k of Council funds towards that project. There are no legal implications at this stage. The decision to host the event and to commit the funding requested are matters for the Cabinet to decide upon.

Should the Cabinet resolve to agree to the recommendations in this report, legal advice will be provided as needed in order to support the project.

Comments of Head of People, Policy and Transformation

The Welsh Language Act and the Welsh Government's *Cymraeg 2050 – A million Welsh Speakers* set challenging duties on public sector organisations to increase the number of people who speak Welsh. The Urdd Eisteddfod presents a major opportunity to not only promote the Welsh Language and culture in Newport but also across South Wales, nationally and overseas, through the hosting of one of Europe's largest youth festivals. The Council's Welsh Language Strategy promotes Newport as a Welsh city with rich multicultural, multilingual communities. It sets out the intention to celebrate the Welsh language as part of a shared identity, and increase opportunities for everyone to see, hear, learn, and use the national language.

Whilst the report outlines the direct costs to the Council in hosting the event, it explains that the estimated financial benefit to the local economy is potentially far greater, for example in boosting the visitor economy and local supply chains. In addition to this the report notes that the Urdd Eisteddfod 2027, if approved, would be the largest Welsh language event in the City since 2004. This would contribute to the ambitions of the Corporate Plan which not only seek to increase the number of Welsh speakers in Newport, but to support businesses, grow the economy and become a destination that celebrates cultural diversity, heritage and delivers major events.

There are no direct human resources implications in this report.

Scrutiny Committees

None.

Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment:

A full Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment (FEIA) was undertaken on this proposal and published on the Council's website (available in Welsh [here](#) and English [here](#)).

This FEIA considers our legislative responsibilities under the Equality Act (2010), including the Socio-economic Duty, the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015) and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure (2011).

- **Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act**
- **Equality Act 2010**
- **Socio-economic Duty**
- **Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011**

The council has a number of legislative responsibilities to assess the impact of any strategic decision, proposal or policy on people that may experience disadvantage or inequality.

The Eisteddfod yr Urdd contributes to the achievement of the 7 aims of the Wellbeing and Future Generations Act and is an example of the 5 ways of working. The preparation period by staff and volunteers as well as the activities during the eisteddfod week, contribute towards a prosperous and resilient Wales, where culture and the Welsh language thrive, bringing communities together.

- Thinking Long term – Newport City Council wants to promote Welsh language as part of a shared identity, and increase opportunities for everyone to see, hear, learn, and use the national language. The Urdd Eisteddfod is a major youth event which promote Wales's vibrant culture and thriving language to future generations.
- Preventing problems arising or getting worse – if the Welsh language is to thrive studies indicate that use of the language will need to increase away from traditional heart-land areas, such as urban South-East Wales and amongst new communities of Welsh Speakers such as minority ethnic communities, and English speaking families.
- Integration – activity should deliver on a range of Well-being goals. The scale of the event has delivered significant economic boosts in addition to the cultural benefits to previous hosts.
- Collaboration & Involvement – delivering a successful Eisteddfod would require a joined up multi agency and multi sector approach. Furthermore effective community engagement and public relations activities will be needed to maximise participation particularly for non-Welsh speakers.

Consultation

As part of the development of our Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2022 -2027, Newport City Council undertook a series of engagement and consultation exercises to capture the views of the people in Newport, including Welsh Language stakeholders and partners, on our Welsh language priorities and aspirations for Welsh language growth. Around 600 responses were received, which highlighted key areas that this strategy and our work should address, including:

- A reluctance to learn Welsh or see the value of learning Welsh
- Low perceived visibility of the Welsh language across the city
- A concern that people were being 'forced' to engage with the Welsh language
- Lack of awareness of Welsh language opportunities, activities and groups across the city
- A lack of confidence in using Welsh language skills

This consultation has informed our three strategic themes, which were developed to address these gaps and our existing Welsh language priorities, and wider Welsh language work. The Council will undertake further engagement and consultation as part of the development of our third five-year Welsh Language Promotion Strategy, which will run from March 2027 until March 2032.

- Welsh Language Champion has been informed of this opportunity.

Background Papers

WESP – Welsh in Education Strategic Plan

Dated: 8th July 2024