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Swansea Event Strategy

Alpha 1 Event Management on behalf of Swansea City Council

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Introduction

Swansea is a city surrounded by extraordinary natural beauty, with cultural depth and a growing creative ambition. From its stunning sweeping bay and the iconic landscapes of the Gower to its vibrant neighbourhoods, parks and waterfront, Swansea offers a setting unlike any other in the UK. Building on this unique backdrop, Swansea is now ready to realise its ambition to establish itself as a leading events destination both for its visitors and its residents.

Swansea already hosts an annual portfolio of successful events that bring energy, colour and economic value to the city and county. Events and Festivals like the Wales Airshow, together with IRONMAN 70.3 Swansea, Swansea Arts Weekend, Swansea International Jazz Festival, Swansea, Christmas Parade and Waterfront Winterland, Singleton Park concerts, Croeso and a thriving programme of cultural and community events, including Gwyl Tawe, Swansea Pride, The Swansea Fringe and the Gower Show - all contribute to the area's identity and growing reputation and demonstrate what Swansea can achieve when ambition, creativity and community come together.

Increasingly, Swansea is recognised as a confident, capable and welcoming host city that embraces innovation, values its partnerships, and understands how to deliver memorable experiences for residents and visitors alike. The redevelopment of the city centre, waterfront and riverside areas, paired with iconic natural assets such as the Gower Peninsula, provide a strong stage on which to showcase culture, sport, music, heritage and community life.

This Events Strategy, which is part of a wider Culture Strategy, sets out a clear ambition for the next decade: to transform Swansea into a major national events destination, with a portfolio that drives economic growth, strengthens cultural identity, and ensures that the benefits of events are felt widely and equally across the city and county.



It is also essential that the planning and delivery of all events, both large and small, prioritises the protection of the coastline, the natural environment, and Gower as an Area of Outstanding National Beauty (AONB). Events must also be managed in a way that minimises impacts on local communities and residents, and aligns with Swansea's wider commitments on climate, health, and the Well-being of Future Generations.

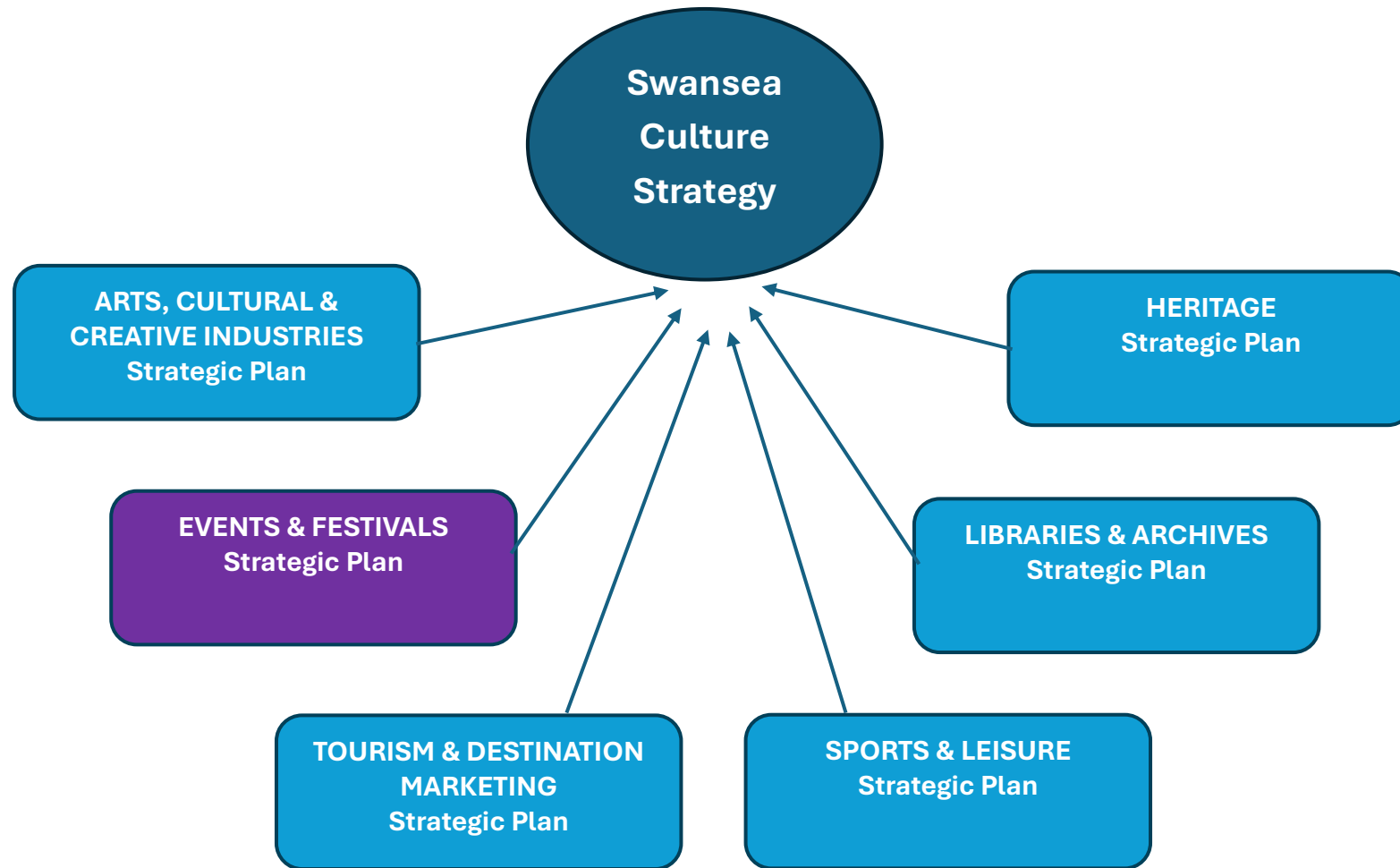
Over the next ten years, events will play a central role in telling Swansea's story: celebrating its creative talent, its Welsh language, music and culture, its maritime and industrial heritage and the everyday life of its diverse neighbourhoods and communities. But the right events must do so much more than just entertain. As well as helping to grow the visitor economy, extend the season and support local jobs and businesses, they must also strengthen community cohesion and wellbeing, offering inclusive opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to participate, perform, volunteer and lead. An event is an 'all round experience'.

Delivering this vision will require strong partnership working, stretching across Council services, cultural and community organisations, business and education, national partners and event promoters. This Events Strategy provides the framework for that collaboration. The vision, direction and strategic priorities in the Strategy are based on themes which emerged from extensive research and consultation. It prioritises destination events that can compete on a UK stage, supports grassroots festivals that express local identity and sets out how Swansea will use evidence and evaluation to guide its choices and invest where the impact will be greatest.

Getting this right for residents will also make Swansea more attractive to visitors, reinforcing a positive cycle where cultural vibrancy supports economic growth, community wellbeing and place-based identity.

This Events Strategy marks a significant moment for Swansea. It sets out a confident, connected and forward-looking approach that will guide decisions, investment and partnerships up to 2035. With the right ambition and collaboration, Swansea can deliver events that match the scale of its landscape, the richness of its culture and heritage and the aspirations of its people - creating a legacy that the whole city and county can be proud of.

Strategic Context



There are 6 strands feeding into the Culture Strategy, each with its own Strategic Plan.

The Events Strategy is a key driver to achieve the Events and Festivals strand.

Swansea's Path Forward – Building on our strengths

As an integral part of the Swansea Culture Strategy, events and festivals enhance and promote Wales' rich cultural heritage through the development of sustainable, inclusive and innovative tourism experiences. To shape the way forward for Swansea's events and festivals we reviewed the policies, plans, data and evidence that influence Swansea locally and nationally.

We explored the current and potential economic and social value of events, the city's cultural identity and assets, and the trends shaping participation and audience behaviour. Through resident and stakeholder surveys, workshops, one-to-one meetings and community engagement, alongside the desk research, we have identified Swansea's key strengths, opportunities and challenges. *(Detailed analysis of the outcomes can be found in - Appendix A)*

This work has helped us to create practical strategies and understand how events can better reflect Swansea's unique character, support tourism, improve access and inclusion and deliver wider benefits for communities and the local economy. It has also informed the priorities, actions and programmes set out in this Strategy - clarifying what needs to be done, by whom, and how progress will be monitored and evaluated.



From the practical strategies created the following four themes have been identified:

Harnessing Swansea's natural, cultural and community strengths to create a distinctive and ambitious Events Programme

Swansea will build a distinctive and ambitious events programme by creating destination-defining festivals that celebrate its coastline, maritime heritage and cultural identity. By making the most of its beautiful natural setting and active communities Swansea can grow its outdoor, endurance and water-based events. A varied programme can be developed to offer something for everyone, from families and students to wider local and visitor audiences.

By developing strong partnerships with universities, businesses and creative networks Swansea can drive innovation and new opportunities, using the support of a vibrant pool of local talent, producers and makers, which showcase Swansea's unique identity. Strong Council commitment will underpin this approach, enabling the city to secure external funding for culture-led regeneration, digital development and improved infrastructure.



Delivering growth through data-driven innovation, inclusion and place-making

Swansea will drive growth by using data, innovation and inclusive place-making to strengthen its events programme. The development of new shoulder-season and culturally distinctive events will help fill any programme gaps, while the inclusion of digital and hybrid events will help Swansea reach wider audiences. Improved data collection and evaluation is required to provide a deeper insight into audiences and impact and this will ensure better decision-making and more effective delivery.

A focus on inclusivity will ensure events reflect Welsh culture, neighbourhood identities and the needs of LGBTQ communities, older residents, disabled people and other minority and minority groups. This approach will help build unique “Swansea” event identities rooted in the city’s maritime heritage and creative legacy, setting Swansea apart from its competitors.

Strengthening Swansea’s competitive edge and resilience through strong identity, community and sustainability

Swansea will strengthen its competitive position by championing its distinctive coastal setting, rich heritage and established sports offer, ensuring events clearly reflect the city’s unique identity. Through guidance, support and well-developed infrastructure the Council will support organisers and producers manage increasing regulatory demands, maintaining high standards of safety and sustainability.

By actively involving local communities and talent, Swansea will build stronger public support for new events and minimise concerns around noise, congestion or commercial impact. A continued commitment to sustainability will reduce environmental impacts and pressures and help address climate and transport challenges.

Combined with a resilient, year-round tourism offer, these measures will support stable attendance and help safeguard Swansea’s events sector during economic downturns.

Ensuring long-term stability through better planning, evaluation, collaboration and community alignment

Swansea will secure long-term stability in its events programme by strengthening financial resilience through careful prioritisation, shared investment and multi-year funding approaches that can withstand economic pressures. A clearer and more consistent evaluation framework will help demonstrate the value of events, support informed decision-making and reduce community opposition. Improved transport and access planning will help alleviate congestion and protect sensitive environments, particularly in areas such as the Gower.

Programming will be managed thoughtfully to avoid overwhelming communities or creating seasonal strain, while enhanced community consultation will ensure local voices shape event development from the outset. The inclusion of indoor or hybrid formats, will help to reduce the impacts of climate-change and support reliable delivery throughout the year.

Vision

“We aim to create moments that matter and celebrate who we are and where we live.

Events that light up Swansea, bring people together, support our communities and grow our economy.”

Our vision is rooted in what matters most to our people. It celebrates the uniqueness of Gower, the Bay, our rolling countryside, and our vibrant city- all the places that make Swansea home.

Events in Swansea are more than things that simply happen - they create moments that matter, spark inspiration, bring people together, and become part of the story of who we are. They breathe life into our streets, where new connections are made and the spirit of Swansea shines through our communities, our economy, our culture, and our heritage.

We believe in listening, collaborating, and co-creating events that feel authentically “us,” not just bringing in generic ideas but weaving our identity and our people into everything we deliver.

We want Swansea to be a place where everyone feels welcome all year round — a place where unforgettable experiences are created, that visitors will always remember and locals will always feel proud of.

Because, when we get this right, Swansea becomes an even better place to live: people feel more connected and involved and Swansea becomes a more attractive place to visit: events generate buzz, draw in visitors, and boost our economy.

Our local businesses, culture, and communities all benefit: money stays local, talent develops, and new opportunities emerge. Swansea’s identity grows stronger: a richer, more inclusive, more vibrant story that everyone can be part of.

To achieve this vision, three strategic priorities have been identified which build on the current strengths of Swansea and meet future needs. They are:

1. Delivering the right events... for Swansea

2. A partner friendly destination ... easy to do events here

3. Sustainable now ... a legacy for tomorrow

Strategic priorities

Priority One - Delivering the Right Events... for Swansea

Swansea's events and festivals are central to its ambition to be a thriving, inclusive, creative and economically resilient place. Events support tourism, regenerate spaces, strengthen communities, promote well-being, and enhance the city's cultural identity.

This priority identifies a unified approach to delivering the right events for Swansea bringing together three interconnected drivers for change:

1. Maximising economic impact of events and festivals
2. Enhancing Swansea's cultural profile, identity and placemaking
3. Supporting communities, wellbeing and inclusion

1. Driver for Change: Maximising Economic Impact of events and festivals

What this means....

Maximising the economic impact of Swansea's events and festivals means developing and promoting an ambitious, year-round programme that attracts high-value visitors, increases dwell time and spend, and enhances Swansea's reputation as one of the UK's leading event destinations. Events have the potential to dramatically increase economic activity across hospitality, accommodation, transport, retail, leisure and the wider supply chain.

This priority recognises:

- The city's unique combination of urban, coastal and countryside settings, providing an unrivalled backdrop for cultural, music, sporting and endurance events.
- The need to compete with similar UK destinations (such as Cardiff & Bristol) for major cultural, music and endurance events while supporting locally rooted festivals that express Swansea's identity.

- The role events play in animating new public spaces and stimulating investment in communities.
- The importance of balancing economic aims with wider social, cultural and environmental strategic drivers, ensuring sustainable, responsible growth.

The next decade will focus on developing a portfolio of Destination / Signature Events - distinctive events that attract national and international audiences, generate significant tourism spend, and cannot easily be replicated elsewhere. These events enable accommodation providers to charge higher rack rates, extend the visitor season, and deliver year-round value across the tourism and hospitality sectors.

The Council - particularly through its Special Events Team - will continue as a key developer, commissioner and enabler of events that deliver strong economic outcomes, working alongside partners, promoters, cultural organisations and communities.

We will do this by...

1. Building Content In and Around the Swansea Airshow

Swansea Airshow remains the city's sole established Destination Event, attracting around 250,000 attendees, 59% of which are loyal repeat visitors and generating over £10m turnover to the local economy (2018). At a crowded time of year in the events calendar, the approach would be to widen the events appeal and give a greater sense of ownership to local residents. This would include:

- Expanding the programme with evening displays, pyrotechnic or drone shows, live entertainment and extended trading hours to increase length of stay and spend.
- Broadening audience appeal by developing linked events such as stargazing tours, kite festival and coastal trails, or family workshops.
- Increasing community ownership by working with local groups, charities and cultural organisations, local producers and craft through a dedicated cultural hub or community zone
- Strengthening the circular economy by prioritising local suppliers, food producers, STEM organisations and the creative industries.
- Refining marketing and messaging based on new audience insight to target regional, UK and niche visitor markets

- Developing the Airshow App to highlight new content and build interest and loyalty before, during and after the event and increase inter-activity.
- Developing behind-the-scenes content and a year-round engagement plan to build anticipation, loyalty and repeat visitors.
- Introducing regular independent evaluation to assess economic return and inform programming

2. Upscaling and Enhancing Existing Events Into Destination Events

Pre-Christmas Offer

- Develop a collective and unified offer across the Council and the City to position Swansea as a high-quality pre-Christmas short-break destination for domestic and travel trade markets.
- Create a coordinated Christmas festival/programme for Swansea with a themed light trail, ice rink, festive markets and waterfront/city centre animation.
- Unify businesses, operators and partners under one Christmas destination brand and integrate indoor and outdoor programming (e.g., museums, galleries, shopping centres) under a single marketing banner.

Spring and Autumn Event Opportunities

- Strengthen events such as Creosol and Swansea International Jazz Festival, by building cross-partner programming across culture, business, sport and community sectors and exploiting endurance events and the existing arts events that are focused in the shoulder season.

Endurance and Special-Interest Events

- Leverage Swansea's reputation for high-profile endurance events that attract longer-stay visitors and pre-/post-event tourism.
- Work with Event Wales and governing bodies to explore bids for major UK/European events (e.g. Full/half Ironman 70.3, Triathlon Championships, Multisport Worlds).
- Manage capacity carefully in sensitive areas such as the Gower, balancing economic benefit with environmental protection and resident wellbeing.
- Develop visitor packages with local hospitality providers and producers to maximise spend and encourage extended stays.

3. Creating and Reviving Destination Themes

Music Festivals and Concerts

- Adopt a medium term strategy to bring back major artists and music festivals by:
 - Building on partnerships like “Tunes on the Bay” to re-establish Swansea as a premium location for mid/large scale outdoor music events.
 - Attracting touring and/or branded themed festivals to broaden the market (e.g. Mighty Hoopla, Sausage & Cider Fest, Communion One)
 - Exploring the development of a Signature Outdoor Music Series, blending classical, folk, contemporary and crossover genres - e.g. cliff-top concerts, twilight orchestras by the sea, heritage-site music nights with premium hospitality packages and experiences.
- Develop shared-risk funding models with multiple promoters, hospitality operators and third-party guarantors to support major artists.

Home-Grown Cultural Events

- Draw inspiration from successful UK exemplars (Hay, Abergavenny, Machynlleth) that grew from grass roots into nationally significant festivals.
- Support grassroots, community-led festivals that reflect Swansea’s cultural identity, maritime heritage, Celtic history, literature, theatre, and local produce/makers.
- Position Swansea as a destination for authentic Welsh cultural experiences, responding to strong audience demand from older, higher-spending visitor segments.
- Have Festivals revolved around the City and County’s maritime heritage and Celtic history, literary and theatrical icons, and local produce/makers with a mix of indoor venues and outdoor countryside coastal and city locations and settings.
- Encourage community leadership, volunteer development, and resident ownership to ensure sustainability and local pride and to build events capable of attracting wider UK and international cultural tourists.

4. Using Robust Evaluation to Measure Economic Impact and Guide Investment

- As part of the performance measurement framework focus on economic value, visitor spend, bed nights, added value and ROI for Council-supported events.
- Conduct regular independent research for key events, including reintroducing bi-annual evaluation for destination-level events such as the Airshow.
- Use geolocation data and modern insight tools to analyse audience behaviour, catchments and economic impact.
- Ensure evaluation findings inform decisions on:
 - which events to scale
 - which require transformation
 - which no longer deliver sufficient return
- Publish annual reports to demonstrate the value of public investment and build confidence among partners and stakeholders.

2. Driver for Change: Enhancing Swansea's Cultural Profile, Identity and Placemaking

What this means....

This priority is about using festivals and events to strengthen Swansea's cultural identity, sense of place and community cohesion, while supporting the city's wider economic and physical transformation.

Events are recognised as a core mechanism for animating regenerated spaces now and in the future. The city's regeneration programme creates new platforms for events to animate public spaces, stimulate investment and reinforce the "City on the Beach" brand. They also help to unlock the potential of emerging food, drink and leisure offers as flexible cultural hubs.

Cultural events are a key tool for community cohesion, resilience and identity.

They can:

- connect people with Swansea's stories, languages, landscapes and heritage;

- build pride in place and shared ownership of the city's future;
- support health, wellbeing and inclusion;
- address social and economic inequalities where communities are under-served by the current offer;
- attract visitors and support culture-led regeneration and tourism;
- celebrate and develop local talent, including Welsh language and diverse cultural communities.

Enhancing cultural identity and placemaking through events therefore means joining up cultural ambition, regeneration, public realm design and social outcomes into a coherent, place-based events strategy.

We will do this by...

1. Strong cultural governance

- Ensuring the Events Governance Framework wraps around cultural event planning, co-ordination, curation and delivery across Council departments (Culture, Events, Tourism, Regeneration, Social and Community services) and external partners.
- Establishing clear roles and responsibilities across departments:
 - *Event delivery* (operations, logistics, safety, infrastructure & marketing)
 - *Event curation* (development, narrative, programming, authenticity, quality), recognising that curated content is critical to cultural impact and audience engagement
- Build partnerships that develop local talent, support authentic cultural programming, and expand grassroots community-led events - using micro-grants, open commissions and inclusive activities that reflect Swansea's diverse neighbourhoods and ensure cultural celebrations across the city, suburbs and rural areas, potentially under the Swansea umbrella brand.

a. Leveraging regeneration and enhancing public space

- Make sure new and improved public spaces are designed from the start to safely and easily host the intended programme of events, with the right power, access, digital connections and facilities in place.

- Maximise the use of key regeneration sites for events:
 - City Waterfront / Civic Centre site and promenade as a major waterfront event site
 - Castle Gardens as a green, social space with complementary performance opportunities around the Castle
 - Museum Green, Marina and Maritime Quarter for small-to-medium cultural and heritage events
 - Tawe Riverside Corridor and Hafod Copperworks for river-focused and industrial heritage-led events
- Amplify existing assets such as Swansea Market and surrounding streets (e.g. re-introduction of 'Orange Street' and new food and beverage uses) to host markets, cultural pop-ups and evening events that link retail, food and culture.
- Create a unified place experience by programming events along key connectors such as *Ffordd i'r môr*, linking city centre, market, riverside and beach into a coherent "City on the Beach" cultural journey.

b. Create a destination cultural festival

- Create a distinctive, authentic flagship festival that reflects Swansea's identity - through its maritime and industrial heritage, landscape, arts or literature. Celebrating Wales' deep connection with the sea and linking to the Maritime Quarter, National Waterfront Museum docks, museum gardens and seafront.
- Approaches to develop a festival include:
 - An Ocean Festival-style event, acting as the pinnacle of a year-round programme of local cultural activity. A similar approach has been adopted by Southport for 2026 based on a theme 'Elegance and Eccentricity' with new cultural events and installations at the shoulder and off-peak seasons. (SP'26)
 - Festival themes around famous national and global icons/celebrities (e.g. Dylan Thomas) who act as a cultural anchor but again providing the opportunity to present the wide range of existing offer with the emerging music and cultural scene.
 - Heritage and maritime themes with events and festivals bringing together artisan makers, digital creators, green and marine innovators, food producers and local artists to celebrate yesterday's traditions and today's local talent of making and creating.

2. Using events to reinforce place brand and change perceptions

- Create a collective plan to promote and develop events that embed and communicate the “City on the Beach” ethos, reinforcing Swansea as a liveable, creative, waterfront city.
- Align event branding, marketing and storytelling with the Placemaking Plan and city brand, ensuring consistent messages about Swansea’s identity reach residents, businesses and visitors.
- Connect events and arts and culture venues (museums, galleries, theatres, market, arena) through joint programmes, trails and cross-promotion so that events encourage exploration of the wider city.

3. Driver for Change: Supporting Communities, Well-Being and Inclusion

What this means....

Swansea has the ambition to lead the way in Wales and the UK by delivering events that strengthen social cohesion, build pride, and create a deep sense of belonging. Events will be designed to help communities flourish, offering meaningful opportunities for people to connect, celebrate shared values, and take part in inclusive, culturally relevant experiences.

This priority recognises that:

- Events play a vital role in improving community well-being - social, cultural, physical, and mental.
- Swansea’s events will reflect local identity, support diverse communities, and remove barriers so that everyone can participate, benefit, and feel represented.
- Events of all scales - from neighbourhood celebrations to major city festivals - will contribute to a healthier, more connected, and more vibrant Swansea.

We will do this by...

1. Fostering Social Cohesion, Pride, and Belonging

- Creating shared moments - large and small - that build trust and civic pride, following examples like Swansea's EID Festival and Croeso Food & Drink Festival.
- Featuring local music, dance, language, and storytelling to celebrate community identity and strengthen neighbourhood connections.

2. Ensuring Accessibility and Inclusivity

- Developing short-term inclusive practices such as:
 - Local stages for community performers
 - Interactive workshops (craft, storytelling, theatre)
 - Community-led event zones
- Implementing accessibility audits and improvements (physical, sensory, cognitive).
- Introducing tiered or reduced ticketing for low-income residents.
- Partnering with community transport providers.

3. Supporting Mental and Physical Well-Being

- Recognising events as preventative health tools that reduce loneliness and encourage activity.
- Partnering with health and well-being organisations to deliver:
 - Wellness zones (yoga, mindfulness, health checks)
 - Mental health awareness campaigns
 - Activity-based sessions as core programming

4. Developing Local Talent, Skills, and Economic Opportunities

- Growing talent pipelines through youth programmes such as Abertawe Festival for Young Musicians and youth skills development at The Bunkhouse.
- Ensuring events nurture confidence, creativity, and employment pathways for young people.

5. Enhancing Community Participation and Ownership

- Creating inclusive volunteering and participation pathways with accredited training, recognition schemes, and an Event Ambassadors Programme.
- Hosting community consultation forums and establishing advisory panels for accessibility and inclusion.
- Providing micro-grants for community-led events.
- Introducing Participatory Planning Workshops supported by a regional Events Forum to co-design event themes and content.

6. Representation and Role Models

- Featuring diverse community stories in marketing and programming.
- Working with schools and community groups to highlight positive local role models.
- Launching a “See It to Be It” Spotlight Series to showcase community talent and identity.

7. Balancing Economic and Community Impact

- Including community benefit clauses in event contracts.
- Allocating a percentage of profits to community projects.
- Conducting social impact and well-being assessments.
- Developing a Community Dividend Policy to reinvest event revenue into health, arts, education, and local initiatives.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE ...

- A balanced annual events calendar that supports hotels, hospitality, local businesses and city centre regeneration in all seasons.
- A recognised and distinctive portfolio of destination events — including an enhanced Airshow, standout cultural festivals, major endurance events and a coordinated pre-Christmas offer — attracting regional, national and international audiences.⁷
- A stronger visitor economy, demonstrated by increased overnight stays, higher visitor spend, extended seasons and sustained year-round tourism.
- A clear cultural identity for Swansea, with a narrative visible through events and shaping positive perceptions of the city and county e.g. “City on the Beach”
- Vibrant, regenerated and animated public spaces across the city centre, waterfront, riverside, market district and wider areas, regularly hosting safe, welcoming cultural activity.
- Stronger community cohesion and pride in place, reflected in increased participation, trust, belonging and cultural confidence among residents.
- Wider and more equitable access to events for underserved communities across neighbourhoods, suburbs, former industrial areas, rural villages and the Gower, contributing to improved social and mental wellbeing.
- A thriving creative ecosystem with more opportunities for local artists, performers, cultural organisations and young people to develop skills, showcase talent and progress into creative careers.
- A strengthened circular economy, with growing local procurement, local supply chains, reinvestment of revenue and clearer economic and social value for communities.
- Environmental responsibility embedded in event planning and delivery, ensuring protection of the Gower, coastline, natural assets and community wellbeing.
- Swansea recognised nationally as an accessible, inclusive, resilient and high-quality event destination with a distinctive cultural character rooted in its stories, language, landscape and waterfront identity.
- Evidence-led decision making, with monitoring and evaluation guiding investment, partnerships and long-term planning.

Priority Two – A Partner Friendly Destination... easy to do events here!

The development of clear processes and decision-making is key to support and more integrated and cohesive events sector that are well communicated to all event organisers, public private and third Sector community stakeholders and residents in delivering and developing successful events.

To be a partner friendly destination the strategic driver focuses on changes that need to be made in strengthening Governance, Partnerships and Investment in creating a relationship driven processes and smart ways to create capacity, and leverage funding.

Driver for Change: Strengthening Governance, Partnerships & Investment

What this means....

Strong governance, coordinated partnerships, and strategic investment are essential to delivering a successful, year-round programme of events across Swansea.

The strategy highlights the need for:

- Meaningful engagement between event organisers, communities, businesses, educational institutions and third sector stakeholders.
- Clear alignment between events and wider Council, regional and national policy priorities, including economic growth, cultural development, community wellbeing and environmental sustainability which in can lever further funding and support.
- Governance structures that align with the wider Culture Strategy (currently being developed) ensuring that events remain a core strand within a coherent city-wide cultural offer.

- Swansea Council acting as the lead authority, responsible for policy, regulation, city presentation, place management and public spaces. The Council is therefore the primary custodian and driver of the Events Strategy and relies on willingness of stakeholders to drive successful implementation.
- The Councils role is not just delivery but strategic leadership, forming stronger and diverse partnerships, and aligning internal departments that builds capacity and links investment to the strategy's priorities

Ultimately, governance and partnership structures will ensure that Swansea develops a balanced portfolio of events across the year and across the city and county - maximising economic, cultural, social and environmental benefits while reducing reliance on short-term grants and building long-term multi-agency partnerships.

We will do this by...

1. Developing Strong Governance

Establishing two core groups to create and collective focus, build trusted relationships and guide strategy implementation:

a. Swansea Events Partnership Board (SEPB)

Reporting into the Culture Strategy governance framework the SEPB will:

- Set and uphold the strategic direction for the Swansea events portfolio
- Bring together key local, regional and national stakeholders
- Prioritise events, investment decisions and funding opportunities, and oversee delivery of the Events Strategy and Action Plan
- Shape policies and processes with input from stakeholders
- Ensure events support economic return and positive social, cultural and environmental outcomes
- Champion consistent communication across stakeholders, reinforcing the strategy's vision

b. Swansea Events Forum

The Forum will:

- Ensure cohesive delivery of public, industry and community events in line with strategic priorities

- Act as the platform for understanding, industry needs, idea sharing, innovation and best practice
- Facilitate collaboration, communication and knowledge exchange
- Provide a sector-wide perspective to feed into SEPB

Collectively these bodies will strengthen alignment on sustainability, transport, city presentation, seasonal planning, event diversity, location spread, and links between indoor/outdoor and business events.

2. Creating Capacity in the Council to Drive Change

Led by the Council's events team, establish a Central Events Coordination Group that will:

- Support the SEPB and the Events Forum
- Implement a clear governance mechanism to maximise cross-departmental coordination, sharing expertise and shared strategic direction.
- Conduct a full audit of existing resources, skills and event delivery functions
- Understand roles, build skills, capacity and resources across departments to create a unified “events engine.”
- Identify training and skills gaps and create a development programme (e.g., curation, stakeholder engagement, sustainability, evaluation)
- Maximise shared resources, reduce duplication, and streamline processes.
- Foster improved collaboration with event organisers through co-production approaches and clearer communication channels.
- Ensure collective approach internally and with external partners in strategic and event themes e.g. St David's Day, Christmas Offer, cultural destination events and city regeneration
- Strengthen performance management by:
 - Creating clear KPIs aligned with service plans
 - Introducing consistent pre- and post-event reviews
- Develop an Events Policy or Charter setting out the strategic and operational framework for event's organisers when applying for events and festivals explaining how events are developed, delivered and administered, aligning with Council policies and the Events Strategy.

3. Strengthening Funding and Investment

- Recognise Swansea Council as the primary investor in city and county events, through capital investment in public spaces and revenue support for delivery and development of outdoor events and primarily focused on economic benefit and profile
- Ensure that future funding decisions related to events development and delivery across the Council (inc. city centre management, cultural services, events team) align with the Events Strategy and maximise the opportunity to leverage further funding, commercial income
- Reduce reliance on short-term grants by developing multi-year partnerships with businesses, universities, and regional agencies.
- Introduce a Swansea Events Portfolio and Investment Framework to guide how the Council and all partners:
 - Assess value and prioritise funding
 - Balance economic, social and environmental impact
 - Align investments with regional, national and UK opportunities
 - Strengthen competitive bids for external funding
- Treat all events and festivals as one coordinated portfolio, allowing balanced development across: scale (destination to community), frequency (annual / recurring / one-off), type (culture, sport, music, etc.), seasonal and geographic spread and audience reach.
- Understanding the type and scale of event:
 - What gap does it fill in the portfolio?
 - How well does it deliver strategic outcomes?
 - What partnerships, funding or leverage does it bring?
 - Can it grow into a recurring or destination event?
 - Is it the best use of limited resources?

Appendix B provides a more detailed suggested Framework with assessment criteria

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE ...

- A strong, transparent governance structure aligned with the Culture Strategy, enabling strategic decision-making and shared ownership.
- A unified events ecosystem where the Council, partners, communities, and industry collaborate effectively.
- A skilled, well-resourced Council events function acting as a strategic leader and efficient coordinator across departments.
- A balanced, year-round events portfolio that reflects Swansea's identity and maximises economic, cultural, social and environmental value.
- Clear investment priorities and reduced duplication across departments and partner organisations.
- Multi-year partnerships with businesses, universities, regional bodies and national funding organisations.
- Improved confidence from funders, strengthened by transparent investment decisions linked to strategic outcomes.
- A thriving events sector with improved capacity, stronger partnerships, and co-produced events across the city and county.
- Enhanced community engagement, with events that reflect local needs, increase participation and widen access.
- Continuous improvement through consistent evaluation, shared learning and sector-wide feedback.

Priority Three – Sustainability now... a legacy for tomorrow

Swansea's events and festivals sector is at a pivotal moment. Shaped by changing audience expectations, rising costs, digital transformation and increasing environmental responsibilities, the city has a unique opportunity to set a new standard for sustainable, innovative and inclusive events.

The priority brings together two interconnected drivers for change:

- Sustainable and Responsible Events – embedding environmental, social and economic sustainability into every stage of event planning, delivery and legacy.

- Fostering Innovation and Skills Development – building the skills, confidence, creativity and capacity of organisers, partners and communities to deliver future-ready events.

Together, these drivers will position Swansea as a leading green events destination that nurtures local talent, protects its natural assets, and delivers long-term benefits for communities and visitors alike.

1 .Driver for Change: Sustainable and Responsible Events

What this means....

Swansea will lead the way in Wales and the UK in delivering environmentally conscious, socially responsible and economically balanced events, positioning Swansea as an environmentally responsible events destination, helping attract international visitors who prioritise sustainability.

This strategic priority recognises the need to:

- Be guided by the *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015*, whereby Swansea’s events sector will embed sustainability into every stage of event planning, delivery, and legacy.
- Prioritise waste prevention, carbon reduction, sustainable resource use, biodiversity protection, and community well-being across the city, valley communities, and rural areas including the Gower AONB.
- Benchmark its practices against European green-event standards, aligning with national policy such as the Green Events Code of Practice (GECOP), Net Zero Wales, and Beyond Recycling.
- View events not only as entertainment or economic drivers, but as vehicles for environmental stewardship, education, positive behavioural change and responsible tourism.
- Ensure long-term viability, by strengthening partnerships, championing “local first” supply chains, investing in shared and sustainable event infrastructure, mitigating environmental risks in sensitive rural areas and promoting sustainable transport choices.
- Realise the ambition to create a consistent, high-quality, green event ecosystem that supports Wales’ targets for zero waste and net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

- Encourage a cultural shift so that organisers, suppliers and attendees increasingly “think greener” in all aspects of event design.
- Access funding from national and regional programmes, including Arts Council Wales and “Pride in Place” initiatives, which will be critical to upgrading infrastructure and supporting this transition

We will do this by...

1. Creating a Swansea Green Events Charter for Event Management

- Establishing a clear, robust off the shelf framework for sustainable event standards aligned with national policy and the Green Events Code of Practice (GECOP)
- Requiring all new and existing event organisers to sign up to core sustainability principles covering waste, energy, biodiversity, materials in line with Welsh language requirements.
- Introducing a consistent assessment process and minimum standards for environmental responsibility across the industry.
- Promoting a “think greener” culture, using best practice exemplars such as the **Gilbert White Eco Light Festival*** to inform new event designs (e.g. low-impact lighting trails in Singleton Park).

2. Strengthening partnership working and investment in shared green infrastructure

- Developing collaborative models with local producers, suppliers, crafts people, Welsh contractors, and sustainability-focused caterers.
- Prioritising “local first” procurement across food, infrastructure, décor and logistics, promoting seasonal, organic locally sourced ingredients supporting sustainable farming and reducing food miles.
- Developing shared or reusable infrastructure - energy-efficient staging, recyclable signage, modular structures - to reduce waste and costs.
- Supporting investment bids (Arts Council Wales, Pride in Place, Year of Croeso Weatherproofing Fund) to upgrade green event infrastructure.
- Improving sustainability assessments and supplier practices for major events such as Wales Air Show, including a full environmental audit.

3. Protecting Swansea's rural, coastal and natural environments

- Better management of events in the Gower AONB and sensitive rural areas through stronger coordination, collaboration, improved scheduling, and limits on major event capacity.
- Enhancing trails and rural infrastructure to support low-impact endurance and wellbeing events.
- Prioritising smaller community-led events that balance culture and nature.
- Ensuring all new event proposals integrate climate resilience, biodiversity protection, and multifunctional green infrastructure (e.g. green roofs, living walls, flood-mitigating installations).
- Adopting best practice carbon-tracking models similar to **WWF's Great Wild Walks**** to measure and communicate sustainability performance.

4. Providing guidance and incentives to reduce event carbon footprints

- Encouraging and enabling organisers to adopt circular economy principles, renewable energy sources, low-carbon generators, digital ticketing, and waste reduction systems.
- Enabling and encouraging innovation such as solar or cycle-powered installations, on-site food composting, carbon usage transparency and the charging of contractors for actual power consumption to encourage reduced usage.
- Promoting onsite composting, recycling and waste prevention through clear guidance and event templates.
- Supporting events that promote education and behaviour change through sustainability-themed activities, workshops and community engagement - drawing inspiration from the **Green Gathering in Chepstow*****.

5. Improving sustainable travel options to and from events

- Working with regional partners to integrate events into future transport planning.
- Promoting walking, cycling, electric vehicles, bike hire, carpooling, and ride-share incentives.
- Introducing or expand electric/hybrid shuttle buses, park & ride systems, and railway link shuttles, especially for Singleton Park and Gower events.
- Partnering with operators (e.g. National Express, Big Green Coach) to offer dedicated festival transport packages.
- Introducing hybrid or virtual event components to reduce travel emissions and improve accessibility.
- Using examples from **Boomtown, Green Man and Latitude****** to inform a Swansea-wide sustainable travel strategy.

2. Driver for Change: Foster Innovation and skills development

What this means....

Swansea's events and festivals sector operates in a rapidly evolving landscape shaped by shifting audience expectations, increasing costs, and more complex regulatory, digital, and sustainability demands. For the sector to grow, event organisers - particularly small and community groups - must become more skilled, more confident and better supported to innovate how events are designed, delivered, and evaluated.

This strategic priority recognises the need to:

- Strengthen the capability and resilience of local event organisers through shared learning, skills development, and structured support.
- Build a long-term pipeline of creative and technical talent from local education providers and training hubs.
- Enable the development of “home-grown” festivals that reflect Swansea's culture, identity and creative communities.
- Enable the sector to respond to new technologies, hybrid formats, environmental expectations, and future regulatory change.
- Encourage a culture of co-creation with communities, ensuring events reflect local voices and under-represented groups.
- Improve access to digital skills, sustainability practices, and innovative approaches that allow Swansea's events to stand out regionally and nationally.

Delivering this priority requires the Council to take a leadership role in convening partners, strengthening governance and coordination, reviewing internal capacity, and enabling a more joined-up approach across organisers, educational institutions and industry networks.

We will do this by...

1. Establishing Strong Forums, Networks & Co-Creation Spaces

- Create a dynamic Events Forum (see Priority 2 - Governance) linking organisers, businesses, education partners and innovation hubs to share intelligence, build collaborations, and identify common challenges.
- Facilitate co-creation workshops using design-thinking techniques to bring together organisers, residents, community groups, and the Council to shape new event formats and inclusive ideas.
- Develop a digital events hub as a repository of case studies, toolkits, templates, contact directories and shared learning resources.
- Use forums to host guest speakers and masterclasses on regulation, sustainability, digital innovation, new legislation and cost pressures.

2. Developing Training & Skills Pathways – Logistics, Digital & Creative Content

- Establish a modular programme on ‘Up-skilling’, offering training in event logistics, operations, safety, evaluation, creative programming, fundraising, hybrid delivery and marketing.
- Work with institutions such as Gower College Swansea, Swansea University, UWTSD, and national bodies to build accredited and CPD-recognised learning routes.
- Combine online webinars, in-person workshops and peer mentoring to ensure accessibility for community and volunteer-led groups.
- Conduct a digital performance evaluation across events to identify gaps in digital audience engagement, marketing, content creation and hybrid delivery.
- Develop a programme that supports the development of innovative content experimentation with hybrid formats, new content ideas, pop-ups and circular economy models, with mentoring and post-project learning reviews.
- Map and integrate regional digital and creative industry support—e.g., UWTSD’s Innovation Matrix, local tech clusters, innovation hubs and digital training programmes.

3. Building Innovation and Resilience

- Support a shared service approach across community organisers, including shared volunteers, equipment, suppliers, marketing platforms and cost-saving procurement embedding circular economy principles working with programmes such as CEIC.

4. Growing and Retaining Local Talent & Volunteer Capacity

- Work with local education providers to map gaps and develop career pathways in event production, digital content, operations, and creative roles.
- Encourage the expansion of internships, apprenticeships, placements and live event projects with local festivals and event organisations.
- Develop a volunteer strategy that addresses motivation, wellbeing, flexible roles and clear skill-building pathways to strengthen retention and community engagement.
- Connect young event professionals with wider creative networks and peer support communities to strengthen and retain talent in the region.

5. Monitoring, Evaluation & Continuous Improvement

- Define core performance metrics: volunteer retention, cost per participant, sustainability indicators, digital reach, audience diversity and innovation adoption.
- Implement post-event reviews for organisers, feeding into the Events Forum and a shared regional benchmarking database.
- Aim to introduce at least one new innovation or improvement per year across the city's event portfolio.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE ...

- A recognised Swansea Green Events Standard, with all major event organisers signed up and demonstrably reducing their environmental impacts.
- Measurable progress toward Net Zero across the Swansea events ecosystem, including reductions in energy use, waste and carbon footprint.

- A thriving local green economy, with increased use of Welsh suppliers, local food producers and sustainability-focused contractors.
- Shared sustainable infrastructure that reduces duplication, lowers costs and strengthens environmental performance.
- Improved protection of the Gower and other sensitive landscapes, with fewer clashes, better planning and reduced damage, congestion and disruption.
- Expanded low-impact event opportunities, including endurance, wellbeing and nature-based cultural programmes that support year-round tourism without harming the environment.
- A skilled, confident and innovative events sector capable of delivering high-quality, inclusive and sustainable events all year round.
- Community and volunteer-led organisers showing greater resilience, improved compliance, better planning and stronger digital capability.
- Strong, consistent partnerships between event organisers, educational institutions, creative industries and business networks.
- A pipeline of local creative and technical talent retained in Swansea through enhanced training, internships and career pathways.
- Distinctive “home-grown” events and festivals that reflect Swansea’s cultural identity and attract external audiences.
- Increased digital engagement and hybrid models, improving reach, storytelling and year-round audience interaction.
- Shared learning, toolkits and hubs that reduce duplication, cut costs and stimulate collaborative innovation.
- Year-on-year improvements in event sustainability, including carbon reduction, waste diversion and strengthened local supply chains.
- A visible improvement in volunteer recruitment and retention, contributing to community cohesion and a stronger civic culture.
- High public confidence that Swansea’s events are environmentally responsible, community-oriented and aligned with the Well-being of Future Generations Act.
- Recognition of Swansea as a city that nurtures creativity, invests in its event organisers and leads on innovative, sustainable event practice in Wales, the UK and internationally.

Conceptual Events & Exemplars

Suggestions for events and festivals that could be developed over the next 10 years

The below table describes ideas for some conceptual events and festivals that could be developed over the course of the ten years of the Strategy and could fulfil the ambitions outlined in the above Priorities. They all focus on presenting Swansea's place, landscape, people and culture and build on the audience profiles and emerging trends, filling the events calendar across the year.

They are all working titles - not suggested names for events or festivals - and need fuller development.

For each event there is a classification for the suggested type of event – with some of the smaller ones having the potential to grow to Destination level.

Suggested event & Type	Description	Timeframe/Season
Land and Sea Festival Destination	Building on the existing Food and Drink offer and smaller festivals the Land and Sea Festival would bring the countryside and city together - based on Swansea's unique coastal identity, celebrating the region's rich mix of land-grown produce, fresh seafood, and local culinary talent. The festival would bring together celebrity chef demonstrations, a large artisan market, themed dining experiences, hands-on cookery workshops, and family-friendly food adventures. Showcasing everything from Gower lamb and Welsh cheeses to Swansea Bay seafood, street food, craft drinks, and sustainable food innovation, the event would support local producers and hospitality businesses, positioning Swansea as a leading Welsh food destination. Linked to the food offer would be a cultural and entertainment offer on festival stage(s) celebrating local talent/artists/celebrities. It could become a signature annual celebration of the flavours, stories, and producers that define Swansea's land and sea.	Late Spring / Early summer

Swansea Festival of Making Our own Destination	A celebration of creativity, craft, innovation, and community reimagining the successful Blackburn model through Swansea's own coastal, cultural, and future-focused identity. Bringing together artisan makers, digital creators, green and marine innovators, food producers, and local artists, the festival would transform Swansea into a lively hands-on playground where residents and visitors can make, build, experiment, and learn. Spread across key city-centre locations and supported by strong partnerships with local universities, makers, and creative industries, the festival would boost footfall, support SMEs, and strengthen Swansea's reputation as a dynamic, imaginative, and forward-thinking city.	Shoulder seasons or early summer
Sky and Sand Festival Destination	A sky arena with the headline event being a Kite Festival. Large inflatable creatures, synchronised sport kites, bring your own kite and workshop areas. Balloon glow and skyline zone – including giant illuminated inflatables. A sand canvas park with mega sand murals. A wind garden – sculpture park with walk through inflatables and wind-powered kinetic art works (spinners, sails etc). An active beach arena – beach Zumba, yoga, giant team games. Night time zone with illuminated kite ballet and light installations marking the tidal line.	Late Spring / Early summer
Cultural Convergence Festival Community Destination	Celebrating and showcasing Swansea's rich cultural identity - from its Welsh heritage and coastal-city history to its contemporary diversity and creative talent. The festival would bring together heritage and modernity, local stories and global perspectives, and a blend of performance, participation and artistic exchange. Developed by growing and aligning existing festivals, community events and new commissions, it would evolve into a 7–10 day programme spread across indoor and outdoor venues. Core strands would include performance and stage arts, visual arts and installations, literature and storytelling, community participation, and international cultural collaboration. Designed to mature over 5–10 years, the festival could be delivered through a mixed funding model and become a major annual celebration of Swansea's cultural life.	Autumn
Classical Folk	Concerts, potentially building to festivals, at historic sites (Castles, Swansea Bay) combining classical orchestra or ensemble with folk/traditional/Welsh	Late Summer/ Early Autumn

Our own Destination	music/Celtic influences. Possibly world-music rhythm elements. Mixed hospitality and VIP packages	
Rhythm and Heritage Nights Our own Destination	Evening events at historic heritage sites, (e.g. Swansea Castle, Docks, SA2). Combining live music and light installations themed around heritage and the future. Other components could include open air concerts with fusion between Jazz, pop, classical and choral, as well as evening heritage walks. Tiered ticketing and VIP packages	Shoulder and peak season
Garden and Flower Festival Our Own	A festival celebrating plants, gardens, horticulture and green spaces. The event would centre on a main horticultural showcase in Singleton Park, complemented by satellite activities in Clyne Gardens and smaller parks and open spaces across Swansea. This would provide a mix of formal, relaxed and wild garden experiences while extending the festival's reach into local neighbourhoods. Community gardens, public parks and local groups could host smaller events, evening pop-up garden stalls and hands-on greening workshops, creating an inclusive, city/county wide celebration of nature and horticulture.	Spring
Swansea Christmas Glow Destination	An immersive seasonal lighting experience celebrating the city's heritage - its waterfront, docks and coastal identity - while drawing both residents and short-break visitors into the heart of the city. Launching with the award-winning Christmas Parade, the event would boost winter footfall, support local businesses and position Swansea as South Wales' leading festive destination. The programme could feature: • Illumination and Light Trails: artistic light installations across the city and waterfront, including illuminated walkways, light tunnels and interactive light artworks.	November/December

	Festive Waterfront and City Activation: a blend of waterfront character and traditional festive atmosphere, with markets, food and drink, winter-themed activities, local crafts and seasonal produce. Swansea Christmas Glow would offer a mix of free and paid experiences, such as public illumination trails, street-level installations, headline attractions like an ice rink or big wheel, premium light-sculpture walks and themed festive markets—all promoted as part of a unified citywide Christmas offer.	
Community Arts Week Community	Showcasing neighbourhood/local talent through open-mic events, performances and installations, while offering intergenerational, hands-on workshops in crafts, storytelling and theatre creating opportunities for local cultural groups to exhibit and engage with the community	Spring / Autumn
Swansea Diaspora Festival Community Our Own	A multicultural festival promoting cohesion, cultural vibrancy, and the Welsh language, inspired by Scotland's Homecoming events. It would celebrate Swansea's diverse communities while encouraging 'Swansea Jacks' with local roots to return and share in their heritage.	Spring / Autumn
Move & Mind Festival Our Own Destination	Blending arts, creativity, movement, and mental health support, designed to boost Swansea's economy and visitor sector while promoting well-being by making use of the area's landscapes and open spaces Could be 'Swansea's Step into Spring Wellness'	Spring / Autumn
Swansea Soundwave Our Own	A three day event for 5,000–10,000 people across multiple indoor and outdoor venues, featuring 30+ acts with a focus on young local talent and offering production, staging, and marketing workshops. Promoted through tourism partners it would encourage overnight stays, youth engagement, skills development, and cultural visibility.	Late Spring / Early Summer

Exemplars

Sustainable and Responsible Events	
<i>Gilbert White Eco Light Festival*</i>	Environmental awareness must guide the creation and management of all events. The Gilbert White Eco Light Festival in Winchester demonstrates how to minimise ecological impact by using renewable energy, solar-powered UV lighting, and mainly reusable or natural materials. It also reduces light pollution by restricting up-lighting and limiting operating hours to protect wildlife. Similar principles should inform future seasonal lighting displays - such as Christmas installations - with locations like Singleton Park offering potential for an environmentally responsible major lighting trail.
<i>WWF's Great Wild Walks**</i>	The WWF Great Wild Walks illustrate how to run events sustainably and responsibly. Aiming to offer immersive nature experiences with minimal environmental impact, WWF uses a detailed carbon-tracking system that monitors every stage - from planning and local sourcing to logistics, eco-friendly materials, waste management, staff travel, and supplier transport. By measuring and sharing this data with participants, WWF ensures continual improvement, making each event increasingly sustainable.
<i>Green Gathering in Chepstow***</i>	The Green Gathering in Chepstow demonstrates how dramatically events can reduce their environmental impact, achieving an 81% carbon footprint reduction in five years. Alongside music, the festival focuses on educating and inspiring visitors toward sustainable living. It relies on renewable energy, sources mostly organic local food, composts all food waste, and promotes circular-economy principles through workshops on foraging, waste reduction, repair, and up-cycling. Its commitment to resource recovery is reflected in a 73% recycling rate across 13 waste categories.
<i>Boomtown, Green Man and Latitude****</i>	Festivals are proving that strong support for sustainable travel can meaningfully cut transport impacts. At Boomtown Fair in Hampshire, over 35% of attendees arrive by coach or train through the festival's sustainable travel scheme, aided by dedicated shuttle buses and discounted or enhanced public-transport ticket options. Green Man in the Brecon Beacons similarly offers extensive National Express coach routes and free rail-station shuttles, while Latitude in Suffolk partners with Big Green Coach to provide nationwide low-impact travel choices.

Enhancing Swansea's Cultural Profile, Identity and Placemaking	
SP'26 (Southport 26)	A year-long programme of arts, music and performance events heralding Southport's Year of Culture. Backed by Sefton Council and Culture Liverpool, the programme incorporates a compendium of newly commissioned events such as an immersive Light Port event in February, through to international street theatre and a Big Top Festival featuring world-class modern circus. Running alongside this will be the Southport Originals programme of established events such as the Flower Show, Food and Drink Festival, Air Show and Musical Fireworks Championships. A Literature festival also takes place in October. The year-long festival is branded as 'Southport – Elegantly Eccentric' and is embedded within a £38m regeneration programme centred around Marine Lake.

Performance Management Framework

This Events Strategy is clear about the importance of evidencing the impacts and benefits of events as a key contributor to overall local and national priorities and playing a key role in contributing to the value of those economic social and environmental impacts. Everyone involved in delivering this Events Strategy must seek to improve measurement.

The Table in Appendix C provides an outline performance framework broken down by each Priority giving a menu of indicators and outcomes that can be consolidated. The framework must be developed taking into consideration the need to link to a Culture Strategy Performance Management Framework; other service areas (Regeneration); and other external organisations. As the Events Strategy becomes established then it will require full engagement through the Swansea Events Partnership Board and Events Forum to develop this framework.

Appendix A - Swansea Events Strategy

Research and Consultation

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Section 1: Introduction:

This research and consultation underpins the Events Strategy bringing together key conclusions summarised in the form of a SWOT analysis that is used to develop specific strategies to deliver the 3 Key priorities and the drivers for change highlighted in the strategy.

This included

Research

- Comprehensive review of relevant national, regional and local policies and strategies
- Demographics event industry, and wider tourism trends.
- Audience analysis of events and festival
- Review of current events programme
- Audit of events space
- Stakeholder Mapping
- Benchmarking successful UK and European Cities with similar geography, having a similar industrial and cultural heritage with tourism

Consultation

- Public survey to gain views on the current events programme
- Stakeholder Survey to gain views on challenges and opportunities in developing events
- Three workshops to develop a vision and priorities/drivers for the strategy
- Drop in sessions to seek views on the current programme
- Interviews with key stakeholders unable to attend workshops including commercial and public sector representatives
- One to one interviews with key officers and representatives of the Council

Section 2: National, Regional and Local Policy Review

The key policy documents reviewed, are detailed in the table below:

Type	Policy
National	- Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 (the Well-being Act) - Well-being of Wales 2025 update - National Events Strategy for Wales (NESW) 2022–2030 "Welcome to Wales 2020–2025" Priorities for the Visitor Economy. - Priorities for Culture GOV.WALES (Priority 2 celebrating Wales as a nation of culture)
Regional	- South West Wales Regional Economic Delivery Plan (REDP) 2021–2030 - Swansea Bay City Deal (SBCD)
Swansea: Corporate	Corporate Plan 2023/28 (2025/26 refresh)
Local Development	- Local Development Plan 2023-38 (LDP2) - City on the Beach (COTB) Concept (Urban Splash) - Placemaking principles: Swansea Council website, June 2023 - Vision for Swansea City Centre: Swansea Council website, Sept 2023
Local Economy	- Swansea Business Improvement District (BID) Business Plan 2021-26 - SC Culture & Tourism Anchor Initiative (SPF funded). Update June 2024 - Swansea Culture Strategy 2025-30

	• Swansea Destination Management Plan 2023-26 • Swansea City Centre Retail & Leisure Review & Repurposing Strategy (2021) • Swansea Tourism Business Update Oct 2025
Local Environment	• Swansea Climate Strategy & Future Events • Swansea Local Nature Recovery Action Plan (LNRAP) 2023-30
Local Wellbeing	• Swansea Public Services Board Local Well-Being Plan 2023-28

These policies were reviewed looking at six areas of impact that inform the development of Swansea's Events Strategy, covering:

1. Economic Impact and Regeneration
2. Year-round Outdoor Programming
3. Sustainability and Nature Integration
4. Local Identity and Authenticity
5. High Quality, Safe and Experience
6. Collaboration and Inclusivity

1. Economic Impact and Regeneration

Opportunities (Highlights):

- *Events Strategy as Economic Driver:* The UK Events Sector is valued at £61.6bn a year¹ and is recognised as a high-impact tool for achieving economic regeneration and is a key contributor to rebuilding city centre footfall.
- *Leveraging New Assets:* The strategy should capitalise on the massive £1 billion regeneration programme and new infrastructure, including Copr Bay (Arena, Coastal Park), Y Storfa, and the City Waterfront.

¹ <https://www.visitbritain.org/research-insights/business-events-research>

- **Targeted Growth:** Events are crucial for positioning Swansea as the thriving cultural and commercial hub and visitor destination for the region and can be utilised for high-yield activities like business events and conferences.
- **Job Creation:** The Events Strategy should maximise benefits by creating employment and training opportunities, especially through community benefit clauses in contracts, and support the shift toward green jobs.

Challenges (Weaknesses):

- **Viability Gap and Funding Reliance:** Regeneration often requires public gap funding due to low commercial and residential land values. The sector currently faces limited public funding and a gap in investment-ready creative businesses.
- **Productivity and Wages:** The region faces a large productivity gap (GVA is 80% of the UK average), and average weekly earnings in the visitor economy are below the Welsh average.
- **Squeezing event space to the margins:** Whilst there are new public spaces proposed and under development these are often designed to support multiple functions and on smaller footprints. This can impact on the scale and types of events that can be held within the city centre

2. Year-Round Outdoor Programming

Opportunities (Highlights):

- **Enhanced Outdoor Infrastructure:** Swansea has confirmed major outdoor assets, including Singleton Park, Swansea Bay Beach, and the new coastal park. The "City on the Beach" (COTB) ethos establishes the five-mile beach and coastline as a top asset.
- **Strategic Activation:** Events can strategically activate enhanced spaces like Castle Square Gardens, Wind Street, and The Kingsway, and in future the Ffordd i'r môr ('the way to the sea') route to link the city centre and the beach.
- **New Event Types:** There is an opportunity to exploit water-based events and grow niche adventure and outdoor activities (e.g., cycling, water sports).

Challenges (Weaknesses):

- **Seasonality:** The tourism economy is highly peaked in the summer months, with spare non-serviced accommodation capacity existing between October and March.
- **Dispersed Venues:** Events sites and facilities can be dispersed without a clear circuit linking them, requiring strategic connectivity efforts, particularly when considering destination scale / multi-venue events.
- **Transport Dominance:** Car use continues to dominate travel to Wales (70%), which negatively impacts on sustainability goals.

3. Sustainability and Nature Integration

Opportunities (Highlights):

- ***Mandatory Alignment:*** Events must align with the Council's legal commitment to address the Climate Emergency, the goal of being nature positive by 2030, and the Net Zero targets for the Council (2030) and the city (2050).
- ***Green Infrastructure (GI) Leverage:*** Utilising multifunctional GI installations (green roofs, living walls) to enhance biodiversity, manage flood relief, and provide summer cooling for event environments.
- ***Resilience Funding:*** Community and private-sector operated events could explore the Weather-proofing Fund (grants up to £20k) to build resilient outdoor infrastructure.
- ***Sustainable Travel:*** Leveraging massive investment in Active Travel, which means 60% of households are within 500m of a dedicated off-road cycle route.

Challenges (Weaknesses):

- ***Measurement and Monitoring:*** Swansea is challenged to develop and share a standardised methodology for events to measure their environmental footprint.
- ***Strict Regulations:*** Events must adhere to high mandatory standards established by new Workplace Recycling Regulations and the Deposit Return Scheme consultation in support of growing the circular economy.
- ***Recreational Disturbance:*** Events held in outdoor and marine environments must actively manage and minimise recreational disturbance to protect local wildlife.

4. Local Identity and Authenticity

Opportunities (Highlights):

- ***Unique Narrative:*** The events strategy should leverage Swansea's rich cultural assets linked to Dylan Thomas, music, visual/performing arts, and maritime heritage. The COTB ethos provides a unique selling point.
- ***Signature Events:*** An opportunity exists to create at least one unique, signature festival rooted in local heritage (e.g., Dylan Thomas Festival).

- **Cultural Showcase:** Events Strategy should actively celebrate local culture, promote the Welsh language, and showcase authentic local food and drink.
- **Heritage Assets:** Events can be linked to the promotion and activation of restored and repurposed developments like the Palace Theatre and Albert Hall.

Challenges (Weaknesses):

- **Lack of Uniqueness:** The current cultural events programme is perceived as having limited uniqueness and visitor appeal, requiring more high-profile and/or distinctive events.
- **Brand Perception:** Wales has weaker associations with festivals, events, arts, and cultural attractions compared to other destinations.

5. High Quality, Safety, and Experience

Opportunities (Highlights):

- **Quality Infrastructure:** Commitment to public realm improvements, including the transformation of Wind Street and the redesign of The Kingsway presenting opportunities to enhance events
- **Digital Excellence:** Leveraging enhanced digital infrastructure (smart city capabilities, 5G/IoT) for engaging and high-quality visitor experiences.
- **Safety Collaboration:** Multi-agency collaboration (Council, Police, BID) is in place to ensure safety and enhance the overall experience.

Challenges (Weaknesses):

- **Public Realm Perception:** The current general presentation of some negative perception in certain areas about the cleanliness of streets and public toilets.
- **Safety Concerns:** Need for continual commitment to reduce any perception of anti-social behaviour particularly in the evenings around night time economy.

6. Collaboration and Inclusivity

Opportunities (Highlights):

- **Collaboration:** Collaboration is vital for delivering impact and is supported by established governance structures like the DMP Steering Group and representatives from the Culture Strategy Group
- **Community Cohesion:** Events are expected to enhance diversity and inclusivity, provide opportunities for people to come together, and foster community cohesion.
- **Volunteer Base:** good local volunteer base for community action.

Challenges (Weaknesses):

- **Affordability Barrier:** The cost-of-living crisis means affordability is a significant barrier, highlighting a need for affordability and free options within any events schedule
- **Inclusivity Gaps:** Events must ensure accessibility for all, particularly those affected by poverty and inequality, and reduce barriers for residents who are digitally excluded.

Section 3: Swansea Audience Analysis: Across 6 Key Events & Festivals

There is very little analysis of events and festivals that are organised either by the Council or in partnership with the Council in regard to both audience analysis and the economic or social impact of those events.

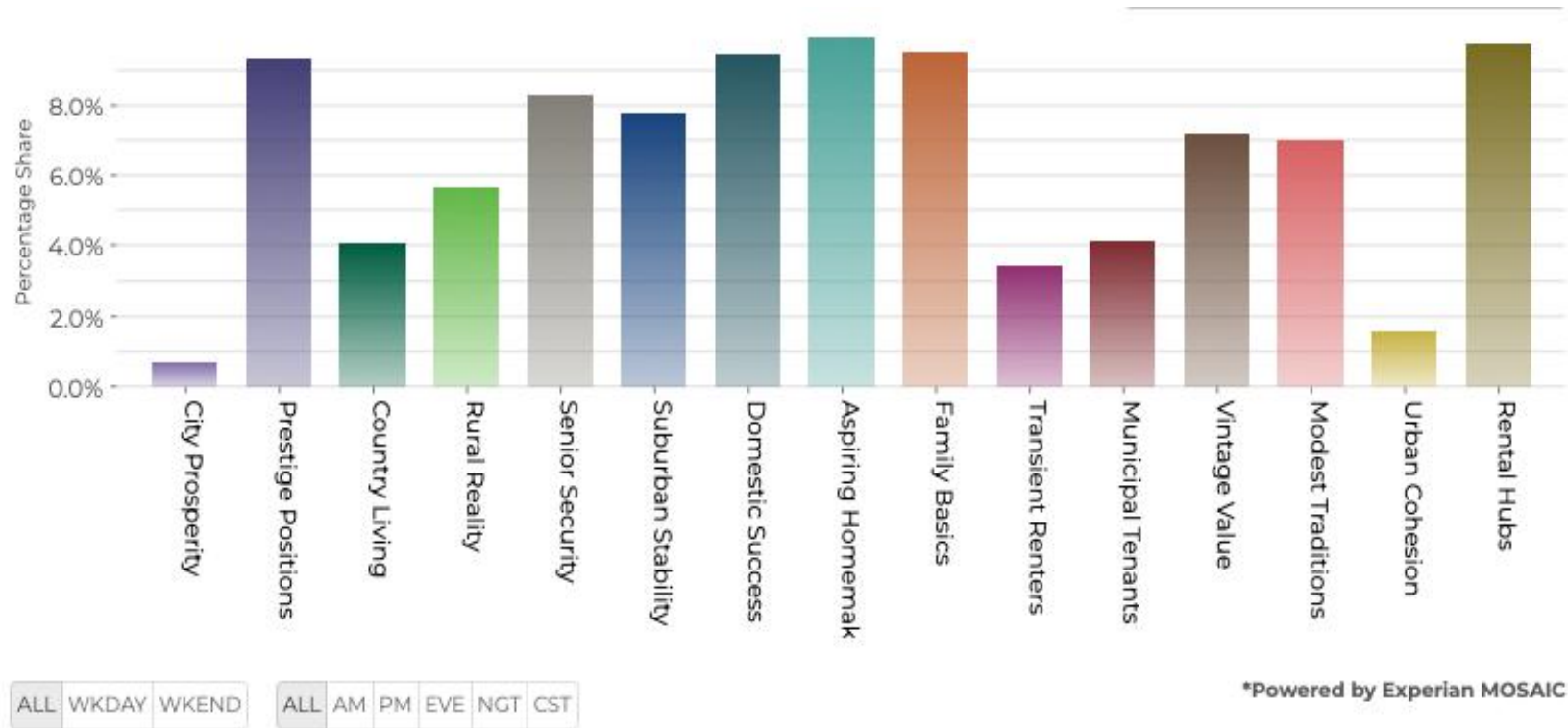
Where there is analysis, this has been undertaken by the event organiser (Ironman 70.3) or has been undertaken by the Council some 7 years ago (Wales Air Show). In both these cases estimates are given around demographics, gender and estimated economic impact as well as other indicators. In these instances, the economic return more than outweighed the Council's investment by a ratio of around 20:1.

However, for this study we undertook some audience segment analysis of existing footfall across Swansea City Centre and the Bay covering six major events held between September 2024 and August 2025 was undertaken. This analysis is based upon footfall data analytics supplied by Visitor Insights and is derived from mobile location data from mobile phone GPS signals where users have opted in to location tracking services. The data is combined with demographic information from Experian's MOSAIC classification.

The area covered by this analysis is shown in the map below:



A snapshot breakdown of annual footfall based on MOSAIC demographic profiles shows key audiences. Using MOSAIC's segmentation profiles, we can begin to identify the types of events and festivals that these audiences are potentially interested in.



MOSAIC Group	Key Types of Event Appeal
Prestige Positions, and Country Living	These groups are attracted to premium experiences such as premium arts (theatre/opera), fine dining pop-ups, charity galas, business conferences, and boutique wellness events.
Rural Reality	This group prefers events like county shows, outdoor concerts, motorsport, craft fairs, and seasonal markets.
Senior Security	These audiences are drawn to daytime and accessible events, including matinees, classical concerts, heritage attractions, coach trips, and local community events.
Suburban Stability, Domestic Success, and Aspiring Homemakers	These family-focused groups prefer food & drink festivals, family-friendly daytime events, comedy, cinema, theatre, and local sports.
Family Basics, Transient Renters, and Vintage Value	These groups are attracted to high-energy, contemporary, and often competitive events like live music, club nights, city festivals, indie cinema, fitness races (Hyrox/Spartan), and esports/gaming.
Municipal Tenants, Modest Traditions, and Rental Hubs	These groups prioritise accessible and budget-friendly activities, preferring free/low-cost community events, football, carnivals, street markets, and cinema deals.

Audience segmentation of the city and bay area across 6 key events periods in the Swansea Event Calendar

A representative sample of six major event periods that took place within Swansea Bay over the last 12 months was selected and examined the footfall and MOSAIC profile of the city centre and bay area during these dates. The data provides a good indicator of key audiences attracted to the city. The six events analysed were:

- Tunes on the Bay (2nd – 4th May 2025)
- Music Festivals Weekend - (20th – 22nd June 2025)
 - Campfire Country Music Festival
 - BeatMasters – 90 & 00s Festival
 - We Love it – Family Fun Music festival
- Wales Air Show (5th – 6th July 2025)
- Iron Man (13th July 2025)
- Swansea Bay 10k (15th Sept 2024)
- Waterfront Winterland (1st Dec 2024 – 2nd Jan 2025)

These six major events generally attract a broad cross-section of the population, but they were particularly successful in appealing to the established, aspirational and mid-range affluence segments of the local market.

The following Acorn & Mosaic groups form the dominant core audience, consistently accounting for the largest share of attendees across almost all events (10% or more):

Mosaic Segment	Description (Source Reference)	Consistent Attendance Range
Prestige Positions	Wealthy, established homeowners, business owners, and influential residents with high incomes and assets (Groups A & B, e.g., Exclusive Enclaves, Silver Serenity).	9% – 10%
Domestic Success	Families with comfortable resources, often in good quality suburban or garden-belt homes, focusing on successful careers and family life (Groups D & P).	8% – 10%
Aspiring Homemakers	Young households with good salaries, often buying recently built homes or young families with high expenses, demonstrating ambition (Groups H & N).	10% – 11%
Rental Hubs	Working singles and sharers, often professionals or students, typically renting private accommodation in city locations (Groups J, O, R).	8% – 12%
Family Basics	Families with multiple children, low affluence, and stretched budgets, often renting from social landlords (Group I, e.g., Small-scale Families, Squeezed Living).	8% – 10%
Senior Security	Financially set older homeowners, often retirees in desirable suburbs, with high discretionary incomes (Groups B & E).	8% – 10%

This consistency demonstrates that major events effectively capture the interest of the *aspirational middle class* (Aspiring Homemakers, Domestic Success), the *affluent retired* and *established wealth* (Prestige Positions, Senior Security), and a significant proportion of *low-affluence families* (Family Basics).

Differentiators: Audiences Attracted to Specific Events

While the overall audience is broad (Tunes on the Bay, Music Festivals Weekend) slight shifts in attendance highlight which segments are specifically drawn to particular event types:

1. Endurance and Sporting Events (Ironman 70.3 & Swansea Bay 10K)

These events attract proportionally fewer of the absolute highest-wealth and established homeowners, but they strongly appeal to younger, active, and suburban segments:

- *Swansea Bay 10K* (Sport): This event draws the highest percentage of Rental Hubs (12%) compared to all other events listed (which average 8–10%). This suggests a strong appeal to the transient, often younger professional and student population who typically rent city accommodation (Groups J, O, R).
- *Ironman 70.3* (Endurance): This event registers the lowest attendance within the city from the wealthiest segment, City Prosperity (0%), and registers slightly lower attendance from Domestic Success (8%) compared to the 10% average. It shows elevated participation from Suburban Stability (10%) and Aspiring Homemakers (11%), suggesting it successfully targets established homeowners and career-focused families (Groups F, H). The event itself could be perceived to attract wealthier participants and this may not be fully reflected in the data.

2. Large Scale Family and Seasonal Events (Wales Air Show & Waterfront Winterland)

These events, which are typically free or have mass appeal, show the least differentiation, indicating they are most effective at general market saturation:

- *Wales Air Show* (Mass Appeal): Along with the Music Festival, the Air Show attracts the highest percentage of Aspiring Homemakers (11%). This aligns with the profile of young families with young children or pre-children couples who are tech-savvy and focused on progress (Groups H, N).
- *Waterfront Winterland* (Seasonal/Family): This event is slightly more successful than average at attracting the lowest-affluence groups, registering 10% for Family Basics (Group I: families with low affluence, often social tenants). It also registers the highest attendance for Transient Renters (4%).

Under-Served Audiences

The event data reveals several key Acorn/Mosaic groups that are poorly served, consistently registering only 1% to 4% attendance across all six major events.

1. The Lowest Affluence (Urban Cohesion and Municipal Tenants)

Despite the high attendance figures for *Family Basics* (8–10%), the most severely cash-constrained urban segments are largely missed:

- *Urban Cohesion*: This segment, representing tenants with minimal cash living in small social flats within urban locations (Group K: Urban Basics), consistently registers only 1% to 2% attendance. This indicates a failure to reach the core demographic experiencing the most severe financial constraint and possible social exclusion (e.g., those with very low discretionary incomes and high unemployment). This may be due to cost of travel.
- *Municipal Tenants*: This group, which includes low-affluence families often renting from social landlords (Group I: Family Endeavours), registers only 3% to 4% attendance. While related to the higher-attending Family Basics segment, this low figure suggests that specific subsets of social renters remain largely disengaged from the major event schedule.

2. Singles and Transient Urbanites

The general population of singles and transient urban dwellers is underrepresented, despite the high numbers in the Rental Hubs segment:

- **Transient Renters:** Individuals living alone in one or two-bed apartments with low discretionary incomes (Group J: Single Spaces), consistently register only 3% to 4% attendance. This points to a gap in programming specifically targeting the social and cultural needs of working singles and mature singles who are not part of a traditional family unit.

Key Markets and Event Expectations

Based on the segments dominating current footfall, event programming could be fine-tuned to prioritise experiences that meet the needs and disposable income levels of these core groups:

1. Aspiring Homemakers & Domestic Success (High Demand for Quality Family and Aspirational Lifestyle Events)

Audience	Description	Event Expectations
Aspiring Homemakers (9%–10%) & Domestic Success (9%–10%)	Career-focused, high-earning families, often with young children, high mortgages, and good discretionary income. They are tech-savvy and enjoy active family lifestyles.	Ticketed, High-Quality Family Experiences: Events like the Wales Air Show (which they attend highly), high-quality children-oriented activities, and structured family fun. They seek events that justify high spending on non-essentials. They also look for events tied to pension planning and financial savvy.

2. Rental Hubs (High Demand for Social, Digital, and Urban Niche Events)

Audience	Description	Event Expectations
Rental Hubs (8%–12%)	Young singles, sharers, and professionals renting city apartments. They have social	Low-Cost/Free Urban Socialising: Events catering to social lifestyles, such as music showcases, specialised comedy nights, or digital/gaming events. They prefer city break holidays and

	lifestyles, use public transport, and are tech/mobile savvy.	events that are easily accessible via public transport in central locations.
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3. Prestige Positions & Senior Security (High Demand for Refined Culture and Premium Experiences)

Audience	Description	Event Expectations
Prestige Positions (9%–10%) & Senior Security (8%–9%)	Wealthy established residents, often retired, with high value assets, high discretionary income, and traditional media consumption habits. They are financially savvy and enjoy charitable donations.	Exclusive/High-Value Cultural & Traditional Events: Events focusing on arts and crafts, high-end food and drink experiences (Marks & Spencer shoppers), traditional media events, and charitable functions. They may enjoy classical performances or niche heritage talks.

4. Family Basics (High Demand for Free, Accessible, and Budget-Friendly Fun)

Audience	Description	Event Expectations
Family Basics (9%–10%)	Families with low budgets, limited qualifications, often social renters, who are highly social media present and price conscious.	Free Community & Fun Day Events: They seek events that minimise financial expenditure, such as free fun days, budget holidays (camping), and local family activities. Programming must be sensitive to their high financial constraints and need for accessible entertainment.

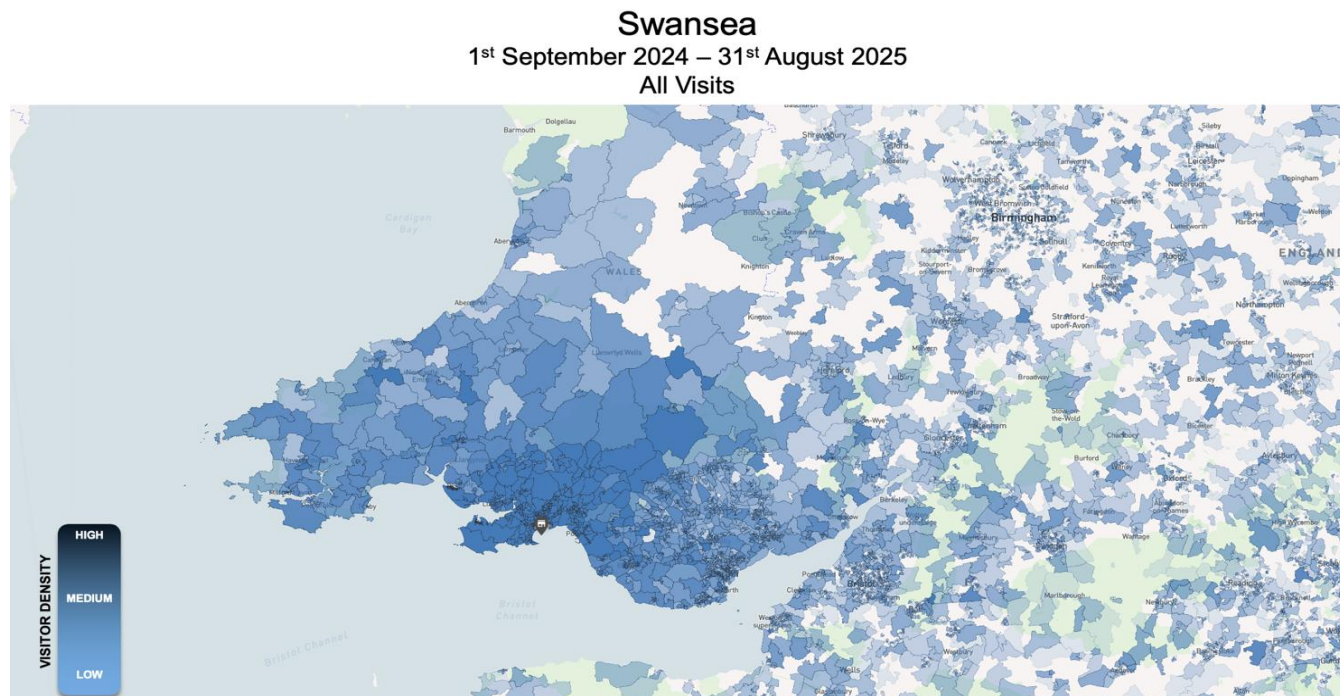
Catchment Analysis: Where do Swansea's visitors come from?

This comparison examines the geographical catchment areas (LSOAs) for the overall annual footfall in the Swansea City Centre and Bay Area (Wider Catchment) against the catchment generated specifically on the days of the six major events, highlighting key differences and demonstrating where the events draw a wider audience.

1. Baseline Catchment: Highly Localised Annual Footfall

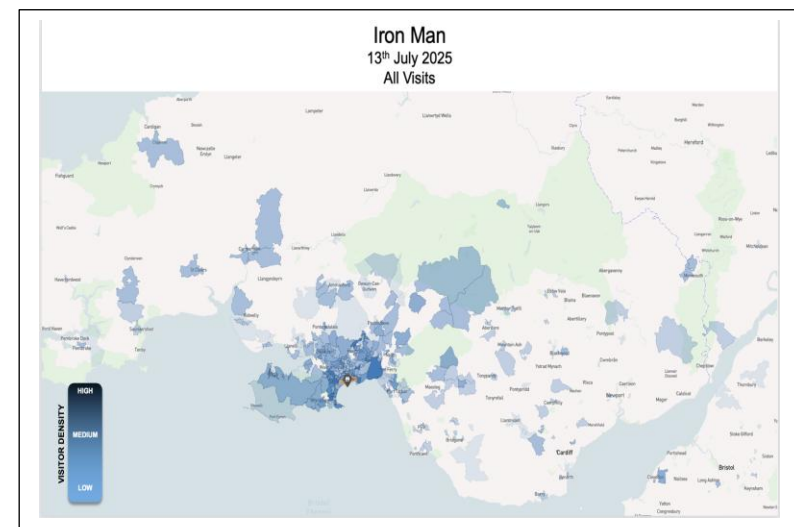
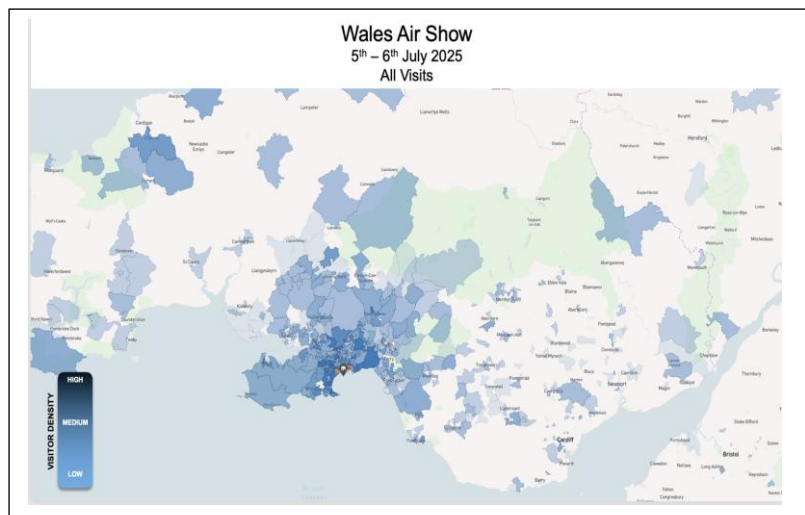
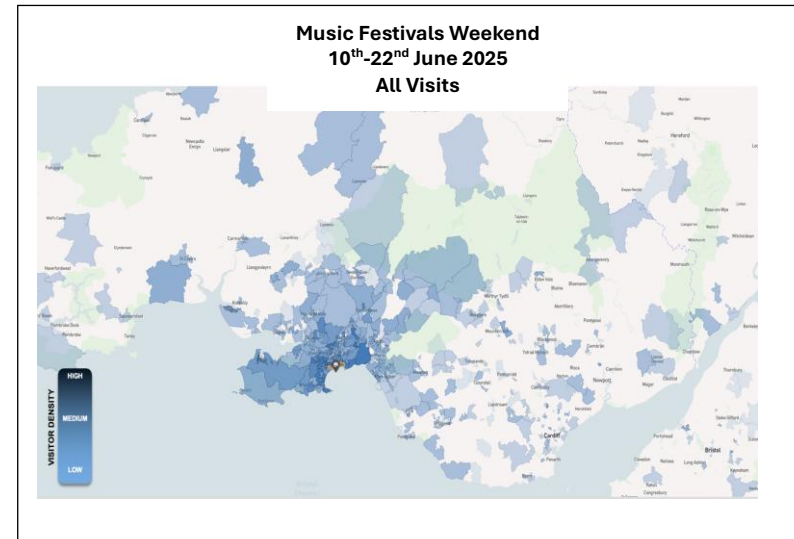
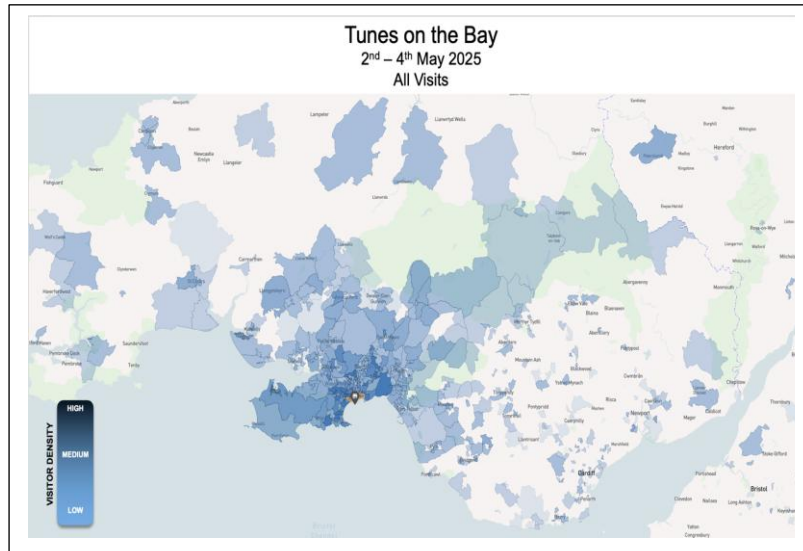
The general annual visitor footfall is dominated by highly localised areas, primarily within Swansea and the adjacent Neath Port Talbot area.

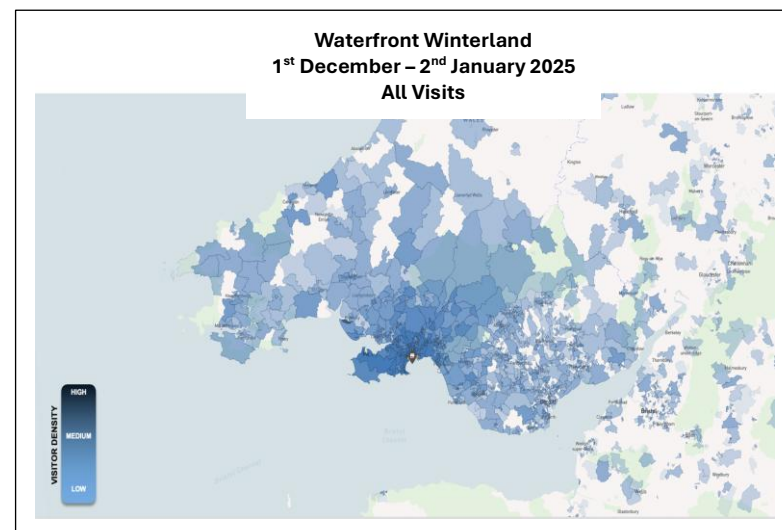
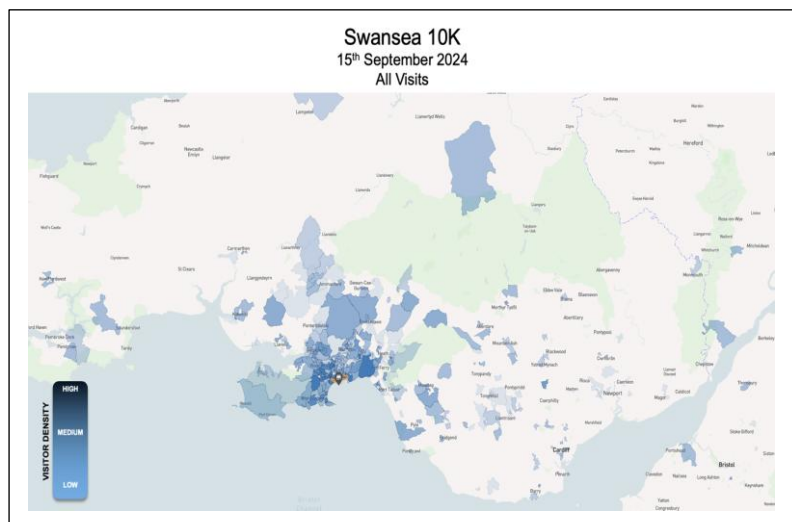
- **Geographical Concentration:** The top 7 catchments for the overall year are situated very close to the City Centre/Bay Area, ranging from 0.36 KM (Swansea 026A, Rank 2) up to 8.25 KM (Swansea 028A, Rank 7).
- **Top LSOA Sources:** The highest ranked catchment is Neath Port Talbot 010F (6.67 KM), followed by multiple immediate Swansea LSOAs. This confirms Swansea city centres role as a regional and local commercial/leisure hub.



2. Key Differences and Catchment Widening During Major Events

While the majority of visitors during event days still originate from the local top-ranked LSOAs, the six major events, particularly the endurance and spectacle events, demonstrate a distinct ability to draw a significantly wider geographical catchment compared to the annual norm.





A. Events drawing distant UK-wide catchments

Event	Distant Catchment Example (LSOA Code)	Distance (KM)	Rank (Event Day)
Ironman 70.3	Merton 010D (London area)	257.68 KM	39
Ironman 70.3	Peterborough 007F (East England)	275.42 KM	40
Ironman 70.3	Winchester 010D (Hampshire)	193.92 KM	41
Waterfront Winterland	Merton 010D (London area)	257.68 KM	39
Waterfront Winterland	Peterborough 007F (East England)	275.42 KM	40
Tunes on the Bay	Marchmont East & Sciennes (Scotland)	483.17 KM	96

The presence of visitors from areas in London (Merton), East England (Peterborough), Hampshire (Winchester), and even Scotland (Marchmont), demonstrates that these specific events succeed in drawing a true "destination" audience that travels significantly greater distances than the regular annual visitor base.

B. Increased Regional Depth

The events also exhibit a stronger pull from adjacent Welsh and English regions that are outside the immediate Swansea/Neath Port Talbot LSOAs, appearing higher in the event-day rankings than the annual catchment's highly localised profile would suggest:

- *Ironman 70.3 (Endurance)*: This event is particularly successful in widening the catchment within South Wales, attracting visitors from:
 - Caerphilly 019B (49.4 KM) at Rank 43.
 - Herefordshire 005F (117.95 KM) at Rank 42.
- *Tunes on the Bay (Music)*: This event demonstrates a wider Welsh pull, bringing in:
 - Cardiff 034D (54.43 KM) at Rank 97.
 - Neath Port Talbot 004C (14.17 KM) at Rank 30.
- *Wales Air Show*: This spectacle event draws from neighbouring counties, including Pembrokeshire 001A (66.23 KM) at Rank 61.

C. Contrast in Local Catchment Priority

While the same local LSOAs dominate both lists, their specific ranks and distances shift slightly during events, confirming event impact:

- For example, the Waterfront Winterland event draws higher proportional traffic from nearby Swansea LSOAs (e.g., Swansea 026A at 0.36 KM, Rank 1 in event data). The most heavily trafficked annual LSOA, Neath Port Talbot 010F (6.67 KM), is ranked slightly lower at Rank 2 for the Waterfront Wonderland event. This small shift suggests that proximity becomes even more critical for frequent/seasonal family events.
- Conversely, the Ironman 70.3 event brings Neath Port Talbot 010F (6.67 KM) to Rank 1 and pushes the closest Swansea LSOA (026A, 0.36 KM) to Rank 3, indicating that the specific nature of the event attracts a focused regional audience slightly more distant than the immediate core of the City Centre.

Section 4: Exemplar Destinations: Benchmarking Best Practice

Having established who Swansea's current audiences are and where they are from, together with socio-economic expectations, similar cities which offer a unique mix of coastal beauty, rich cultural heritage, and an industrial past and celebrate their success through their development were looked at. These are destinations that combine:

1. Coastal features – Seaside charm with natural beauty.
2. Countryside access – Proximity to nature and rural landscapes.
3. Strong culture – Vibrant arts, music, and historical culture.
4. Industrial heritage – A history tied to manufacturing, mining, or shipbuilding.

UK Exemplars- Cardiff, Plymouth, Bristol



1. Cardiff, Wales

- Coastal & Countryside: Cardiff sits on the coast, with stunning views of Cardiff Bay, and is close to beautiful natural spaces like the Vale of Glamorgan.
- Culture: Known for its vibrant arts scene, theatres, and music festivals. It's a cultural hub, especially with the National Museum and the Wales Millennium Centre.
- Industrial Heritage: The city has a rich industrial history, particularly in coal mining and shipbuilding, with key landmarks like the Cardiff Docks and the Butetown area.

2. Plymouth, England

- Coastal & Countryside: A port city with scenic coastal walks, beaches, and easy access to Dartmoor National Park.
- Culture: Known for its maritime history and arts culture, with museums like the National Marine Aquarium and The Box.
- Industrial Heritage: Strong industrial roots, particularly in shipbuilding and naval industries.

3. Bristol, England

- Coastal & Countryside: Located on the River Avon, Bristol offers both coastal views and nearby countryside in the Cotswolds and Mendip Hills.
- Culture: A vibrant cultural scene with museums, theatres, street art (Banksy), and a bustling music scene.
- Industrial Heritage: Historically a key port city, Bristol was famous for shipbuilding, the aerospace industry, and tobacco trading.

Summary analysis:

The key areas considered were regeneration plans, policy documents, notable events.

1. All four destinations have undertaken extensive regeneration policies and plans.
2. All of their regeneration policies revolve around waterfronts.
3. All engage in cultural programmes; with many programmes emerging alongside/integrated into regeneration plans.
4. Not clear how place-making is emerging through events, more through regeneration policies
5. Regeneration incorporates housing and transport infrastructure
6. Community engagement is high
7. Skills based development emerging through events
8. Grass roots music emerging
9. Festivals in public spaces is popular
10. Food and drink festivals popular
11. Policy documentation includes; Devolution directives; Levelling Up/Shared prosperity monies; Urban Development Corporations; Spatial Growth Strategies; Skills Hub and Civic redevelopment; Sustainable urban development; Strategic place-partnerships; Enterprise Zone status; Cultural strategies and citizen engagement.

European benchmarking: Genoa, Italy; Bilbao, Spain; Brest, France.



1. Genoa, Italy

- Coastal & Countryside: A historic port city on the Ligurian Sea, offering both urban waterfront views and access to the hills surrounding the city, with scenic walks and nature.
- Culture: Rich cultural and historical significance, with a UNESCO World Heritage old town, museums, and theatres.
- Industrial Heritage: Genoa has a long industrial legacy tied to its shipbuilding, port activities, and steel industries.

2. Brest, France

- Coastal & Countryside: Located on the northwest coast of France, near the Brittany Peninsula, it offers access to both the sea and the surrounding rural landscapes.
- Culture: A strong cultural identity, with maritime museums, festivals, and an active art scene.
- Industrial Heritage: Historically a naval port city with shipbuilding, naval activities, and a heavy industrial presence.

3. Bilbao, Spain

- Coastal & Countryside: A coastal city located in northern Spain with beautiful landscapes, including the Basque countryside and the Cantabrian Sea.
- Culture: Known for the Guggenheim Museum, vibrant Basque culture, and rich culinary traditions.
- Industrial Heritage: Bilbao was once a steel and industrial powerhouse, and although much of this has declined, the city's transition from industrial to cultural hub is a key part of its modern identity.

Summary analysis:

The key areas to consider are regeneration plans: policy documents: notable events: and lessons learnt for Swansea.

All four destinations use events to drive impact in their cities, including a lot of heritage around historic buildings.

1. All have industrial areas that have had extensive regeneration plans in order to redevelop including event space, community areas and legacy themes.
2. All the developments have been around reclaiming space and waterfront usage whether coastline or rivers.
3. They all use events as tools but also through their regeneration policies have considerable development plans including transport, mobility, greening, community spaces, public private partnerships and urban planning to align with heritage preservation but also needed for viable events.
4. Notable events include in Genoa an annual science and arts festival, in Gothenburg the Way Out West Music and Arts Festival and also the Gothenburg Culture Festival particularly aligning with their 400th anniversary. In Bilbao, the Port of Bilbao open days, European Heritage Days, World Maritime Week. In Brest, the Maritime Festival, the Jeudis du Port Music Festival and heritage museums focusing on Maritime innovation and research.

5. It is clear that place-based identities and place-based marketing happen through the events portfolios.
6. Policy documentation includes urban master plans, blue economy and regional Maritime strategies, public-private partnerships around heritage preservation, national recovery and resilience plans, accessibility and inclusion plans, historic centre engagement plans, environmental and climate adoption policies, community engagement and government plans, maritime innovation and eco-development of blue space plans

Overarching key lessons for Swansea from UK & European examples:

- Events drive impact and activate public spaces.
- Community involvement is key to supporting the available events portfolio.
- Events can also be used to showcase new infrastructure particularly around regeneration plans.
- Events play a huge part in place branding and tourism policies and also in particular smart tourism.
- Events must follow sustainability standards and also must consider transport, venue and waste management guidelines.
- Events also play a huge part in heritage and spatial planning.
- Events can drive institutional culture partnerships.
- Events must align with strategic plans.
- A drive across these four destinations seems to be around blue growth i.e. focusing on Maritime industry and technologies, Heritage reclamation of waterfronts impacts branding and tourism.
- Events from Grass roots should be encouraged
- Food and Drink Festivals are popular.

Section 5: Emerging Trends within the Events Industry

Having examined the current market and opportunities for place-making led event development both within Swansea and through benchmarked examples further afield, emerging trends within the events and visitor markets were examined.

There are several emerging trends and audience behavioural shifts that will significantly impact the events industry and guide future programming for Swansea and South West Wales.

The trends identified reflect major shifts in global priorities (net zero, sustainability, and digitalisation), economic uncertainty, and changes in regional development strategy:

1. Sustainability and Decarbonisation Imperative

The overarching trend is the legal and strategic commitment to achieving Net Zero by 2050 in Wales, and Swansea Council's ambition to be Net Zero by 2030.

- *Circular Economy:* Events must shift from a "linear economy" (make, use, dispose) toward a circular economy, emphasizing resource reduction, re-use, and avoiding waste. Event organisers are increasingly encouraged to adopt practices that reduce carbon emissions and resource over-exploitation.
- *Green Investment:* The economic future of South West Wales is strongly tied to renewable energy and the net zero economy. This priority creates opportunities for event infrastructure innovation, such as the use of renewable energy, integrated transport, and green technologies like biomass and electric charging points.
- *Environmental Footprint Measurement:* There is a recognised need to measure the environmental footprint of events using standardized methodologies and demonstrate how this impact is reducing over time.

2. Digital Transformation and Technology Adaptation

The pace of technological change and digitalisation is a "transformational factor" impacting all aspects of economic life, including the events sector.

- *Digital Infrastructure Demands:* Visitors, particularly international ones, expect easy-to-use Wi-Fi, 4G, and/or 5G, and accessible websites. However, poor and inconsistent mobile and internet coverage, especially in rural areas, remains a significant barrier that hampers efforts to attract visitors and must be addressed for technological competitiveness.
- *New Event Formats:* New trends, technological advances, and innovations developed for event delivery include digitalisation, hybrid event delivery, gaming, and e-sport.
- *Digital Marketing:* The cultural sector is leveraging digital tools for enhanced engagement and promotion. Destination Marketing relies heavily on social media (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube) and digital media campaigns in high footfall sites.

3. Economic Instability and Financial Constraints

Economic challenges are influencing both business operation and consumer behaviour:

- *Cost of Living/Rising Costs:* The events sector faces continued challenges including increasing costs and the cost-of-living crisis. This crisis forces individuals to make tough choices, such as deciding between attending the theatre/cinema and regularly participating in a sports club.
- *Funding Uncertainty:* The end of European funding requires developing sustainable alternatives. Additionally, the inherent uncertainty of rolling twelve-month funding contracts makes long-term planning challenging for sports activities.
- *New Revenue Streams:* The upcoming Visitor Accommodation (Register and Levy) Act will allow councils the choice to introduce a visitor levy from April 2027, potentially raising funds to invest in tourism services and infrastructure.

4. Shift to High-Quality, Authentic, and Sustainable Experiences

- *Demand for Quality:* Quality is a key theme for all visitors. There is a desire for consistently high quality in attractions, activities, accommodation, food, and customer service.
- *Authenticity and Culture:* Visitors, particularly international ones, seek authentic Welsh experiences, focusing on the unique Welsh language, distinct culture, heritage, and landscape. Promoting these differences is seen as central to distinguishing Wales from the rest of the UK.
- *Sustainability Focus:* Travellers are increasingly determined to make sustainable travel choices and express demand for eco-friendly accommodation. However, there is a recognised gap between good intentions and actual behaviour, meaning event programming needs to make sustainable choices easy and well-promoted.
- *Experiential Travel:* There is strong interest in experiential travel, where visitors participate in activities like food and drink tasting, guided nature experiences, and behind-the-scenes experiences, as opposed to passive sightseeing.

5. Desire for Year-Round and Geographical Spread

- *Addressing Seasonality:* Events are needed to build a stronger tourism offer outside the peak summer months. The visitor economy must "break free of seasonality" by developing creative marketing and identifying events suitable for the traditional tourism 'off season'.
- *Dispersal from City Centre:* There is a perceived need to spread larger events across the broader county to alleviate pressure (e.g., road closures, traffic) on the city centre, while still ensuring accessibility. Event programming needs to maximise the geographical spread across Wales, attracting visitors to every corner.
- *Niche and Alternative Programming:* There is an appetite to move beyond repetitive programming and embrace niche subcultures, delivering smaller, alternative events and festivals (music, food, poetry, art, gaming) by reducing financial and logistical barriers for smaller event organisers and community groups.

6. Changes in Travel and Connectivity Behaviour

- *Reliance on Cars (Despite Ambition for Active Travel):* The car continues to dominate travel by domestic visitors to Wales. However, there is a push to invest in sustainable transport systems like the Swansea Bay and Southwest Wales Metro, and to increase the use of active travel measures (walking and cycling).
- *Need for Cohesive Transport:* Visitors and locals widely report that transport links into and around Swansea by train and bus are inadequate and unreliable, limiting access to events, venues, and the night-time economy.
- *Short-Term Bookings:* There is a trend toward more short-term bookings for domestic overnight trips, with over half booked less than a month in advance.

7. Demand for Community and Inclusivity

- *Community Ownership:* There is a focus on identifying and celebrating events that have local appeal and community ownership, including volunteer support. New events must reflect the needs of local communities and involve young people in event programming.

- **Targeting Diverse Groups:** Programming needs to cater to a variety of genres and demographics to ensure the events on offer are widely inclusive and accessible. This includes promoting accessibility for all, including people with impairments, and ensuring cultural events are relevant to Swansea's increasing ethnic and cultural diversity.
- **LGB+ and Youth Focus:** There is a recognised need for more LGBTQ+ inclusive programmes and spaces. For youth, events and pathways are needed to retain young people in the region, including attracting school leavers and graduates back to the industry.

Section 6: Review of Swansea's Current Events Calendar

Having explored emerging trends within the events and visitor markets, a detailed analysis of Swansea's current range of events and festivals was undertaken with a view to identifying any gaps or opportunities to develop the calendar going forward.

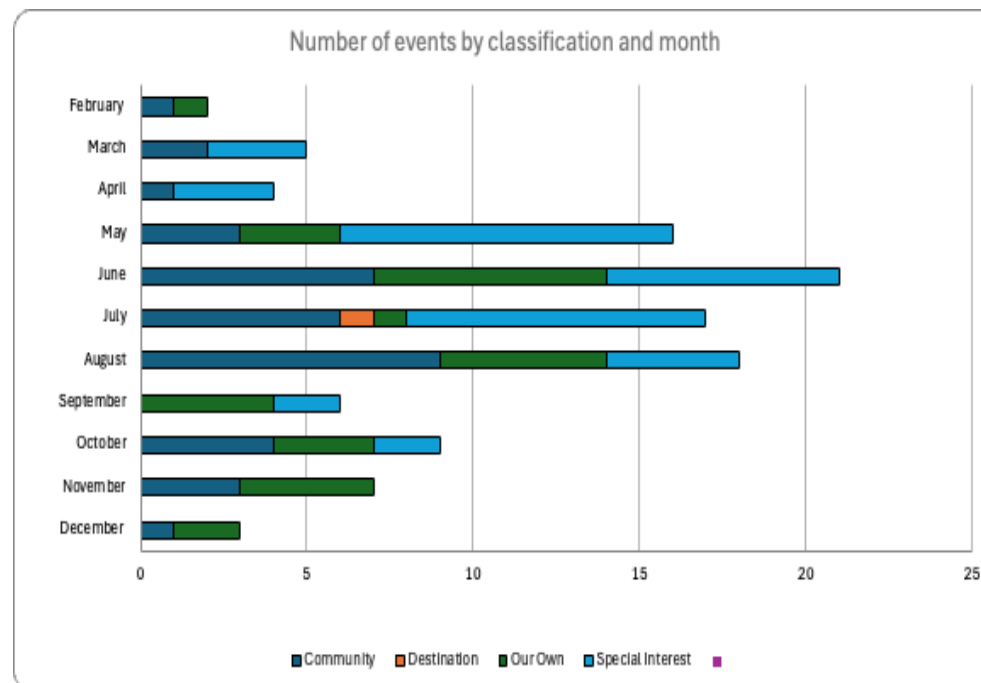
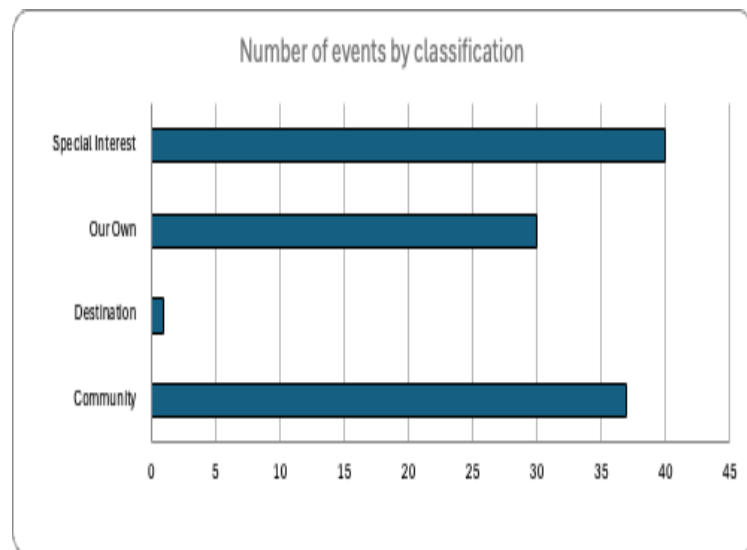
In order to undertake a meaningful analysis of the range of Events and Festivals that take place across Swansea, a classification was established.

Community Events (CE)	Special Interest Events (SIE)
These events (usually up to 1000 attendees) are primarily held in local parks, gardens, seafront and civic space and are organised by the community close to the site. Examples include fetes, sponsored walks, fund runs, family fun days, etc	These are events and festivals that attract residents and visitors with particular specialist/niche interests. Examples include vintage car rallies, 10k run, half marathon, mountain bike championships, rugby tournaments, etc
'Our Own Events' (OOE)	Destination Event (DE)
These are events predominantly for the benefit of the local town/borough residents. They can be small or large in scale (1000+) and they can be added value experience events for visitors. Examples – parades, food and drink festivals, Christmas switch-on, Pride, family fun days, etc	These are high profile events and the festivals drawing large numbers (5000+) with people coming specifically to take part or spectate in the particular events. They have an economic impact and raise the profile of the area. They would include multiple day music festivals, Eisteddfods, air shows, Tour of Britian

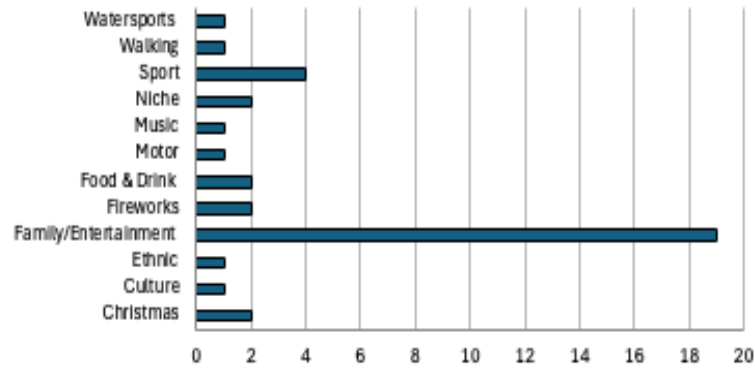
Time of Year	
New Year	January/February
Spring (inc. Easter holidays)	March/April/May
Summer (inc. half term and holidays)	June/July/August
Autumn (inc. half term)	September/October
Christmas (inc. school holidays)	November/December

Audit of Current Events and Festivals

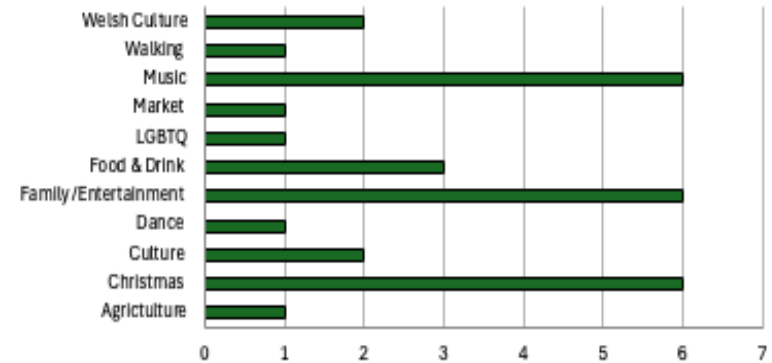
In this section an audit of current Events programmed in Swansea and the Gower for the period 1st September 2024 to 31st August 2025 was undertaken.



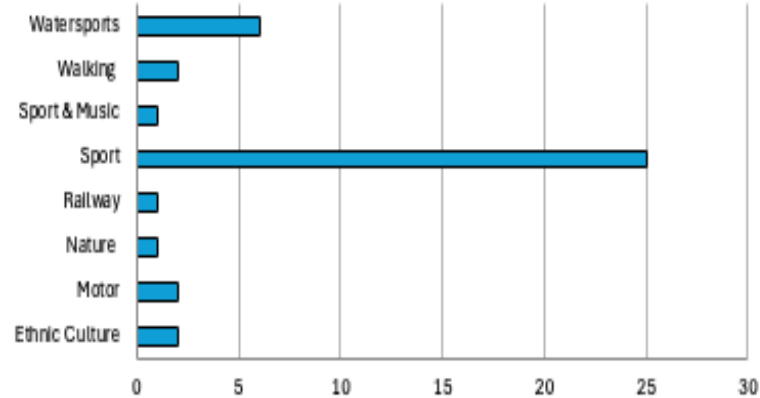
Community events by type



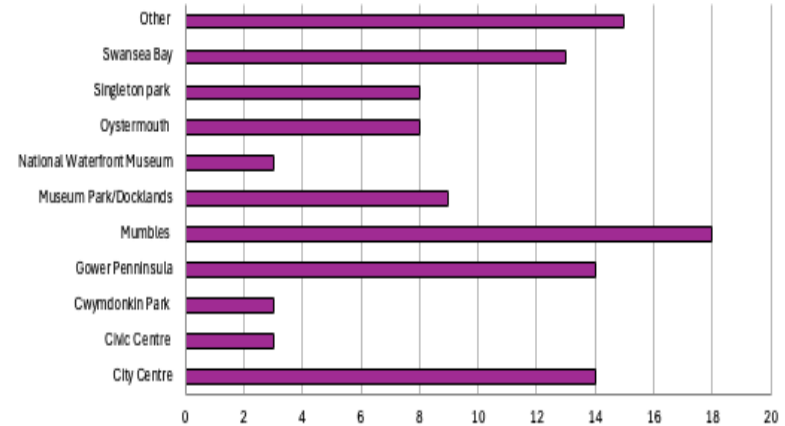
Our Own events by type



Special Interest event by type



Number of events by location



Analysis of Regional and Local Destination Events

Event	From	To	Type	Location	Estimated attendance	Detail
Abergavenny Food Festival	21/09	22/09	Food & Drink	Abergavenny	25,000	Featuring food demos, markets, kids' cooking classes
Green Man Festival	14/8	17/08	Music & arts	Brecon Beacons	25,000 per day	A celebrated independent music and arts festival
Royal Welsh Show	22/07	24/07	Agriculture	Builth Wells Powys	200,000	A four-day agricultural extravaganza
Blackweir Live (Music Festival)	27/06	09/07	Music & arts	Cardiff (Blackweir fields)	35,000	A brand new outdoor greenfield concert series
Cardiff Music City Festival (inc. Swn)	03/10	18/10	Music & arts	Cardiff	61,700	A three-week sprawling, multi-venue music and arts festival
Cardiff International Food & Drink Festival	27/06	29/06	Food & Drink	Cardiff	50000	Wales's largest free food event
Cardiff Half Marathon	05/10	05/10	Sport	Cardiff	29,000	Major road race, one of largest in UK

Pride Cymru	21/06	22/06	LGBTQ	Cardiff	50,000+	A vibrant three-day LGBTQ+ festival
Tafwyl	14/06	15/06	Welsh culture	Cardiff	38,000	A free, two day festival of Welsh language culture
Cardiff Mela	15/06	15/06	Ethnic culture	Cardiff	30,000+	A multicultural arts and music festival celebrating Asian culture
Balloons & Tunes	27/06	29/06	Family /entertainment	Carmarthen	10,000	A three-day family festival
Cruise Culture Car Show	24/08	24/08	Motor	Carmarthen	7,500	Wales' biggest modified and performance car show
Hay Festival	22/05	01/06	Cultural	Hay on Wye	200,000+	A world-renowned literary and ideas festival
In It Together (Family Festival)	23/05	25/05	Music	Port Talbot	35,000	Featuring headline acts like Kaiser Chiefs, Becky Hill, and Ronan Keating
Festival of Light (Margam Park)	17/11	31/12	Family /entertainment	Port Talbot		Lighting installation
Ironman 70.3 - Tenby	21/09	21/09	Sport	Tenby	2000	An iconic triathlon set against Tenby's scenic coastal backdrop
Cowbridge Music Festival	12/09	25/09	Music	Vale of Glamorgan	3000 + Outreach	Showcases worldwide artists in a charming setting
Wales Airshow	5/7	6/7	Airshow	Swansea Bay	250,000	Annual airshow

Section 7: Identified Gaps in the Current Event Calendar

The analysis of the current local and regional calendar of events for Swansea was broken down into two key sections covering:

- Destination Events attracting national, regional and local audiences
- Community, Special Interest and 'Our Own' Events, primarily targeting local and regional audiences

Destination Events:

Consideration was given to whether there is market opportunity to introduce a new destination-scale event for Swansea and, if so, what form it might take and whether there scope within the busy local and regional calendar to stage a new destination event? Key gaps in the calendar to avoid competing directly for audience attention include:

1. High Summer Break (Late July / Early August)

The period immediately following the Royal Welsh Show (ends July 24) and leading up to the Green Man Festival (starts August 14) offers the greatest opportunity to draw large audiences to a new Destination Event.

2. Late Summer / Early Autumn Transition (Late August / Early September)

The period after the Cruise Culture Car Show in Carmarthen (August 24) and before the start of the Cowbridge Music Festival (September 12) is relatively clear of major weekend destination activity.

3. Pre-Season (January – April)

The four-month period at the start of the year is free of any listed Destination events, although growth opportunity is also low due to weather. There may be opportunities to develop a new destination event around Easter.

4. Late Autumn (Late October / Early November)

This gap occurs after the end of the sprawling Cardiff Music City Festival (October 18) and before the start of the major winter light installations at Margam Park (November 17).

Potential new Destination Event themes to consider:

To make the most of distinctiveness, a new Destination Event should take advantage of Swansea Bay's unique identity (coastline, industrial heritage, and academic focus). Below are some initial suggestions:

Suggested Event Type	Targeted Gap Period	Rationale for Avoiding Competition
Coastal Technology & Innovation Expo	Early September (August 25 – September 11)	This event could leverage Swansea's proximity to universities and its coastal environment, focusing on cutting-edge fields like marine technology, green energy, and digital futures. It avoids direct competition with established regional Music, Food, and traditional Culture festivals (e.g., Cowbridge Music Festival, Abergavenny Food Festival).
Swansea Step Into Spring Wellness & Adventure Festival	March – April	Capitalising on the quietest time of year, this event could focus on endurance training, cold water immersion, and mindfulness sessions based around the Gower Peninsula and the Bay. This targets the wellness and niche adventure market when no other major destination events are scheduled.
Festival of Maritime Heritage and Craft	Late July / Early August (July 25 – August 13)	Focused on the history of the Docks, maritime culture, and related traditional crafts (sailing, boat building, fishing history). This event would follow the successful Wales Airshow but provides a distinct cultural offering. It avoids competition with the Royal Welsh Show's focus on Agriculture and the Green Man Festival's focus on independent music/arts.
International Short Film & Documentary Showcase	Late October / Early November (October 19 – November 16)	A dedicated event focusing on non-narrative or niche filmmaking (e.g., environmental documentaries, animated shorts). This would draw a specific cultural audience after the conclusion of the broad Cardiff Music City Festival. It is distinct from the large-scale literary focus of the Hay Festival in May and the immediate family focus of the Festival of Light starting in mid-November.

New Destination Event themes to programme avoiding clashes

Consideration for a new Destination Event should avoid clashing with similar themed, established, high-capacity Destination events already dominating the calendar, for example:

Large-scale Music Festivals	In It Together	May
	Blackweir Live	June
	Pride Cymru, Tafwyl	June
	Green Man	August
	Cardiff Music City Festival	October
Large Food & Drink Festivals	Cardiff International Food & Drink Festival	July
	Abergavenny Food Festival	September
Major Endurance Sports	Ironman 70.3 Tenby	September
	Cardiff Half Marathon	October
Large Generic Family Entertainment Festivals	Balloons & Tunes	June
	Festival of Light	November/December

Community, Special Interest and ‘Our Own’ Events:

Reviewing the existing range of events scheduled across Swansea in 2025 against 2021 census demographic data, several key local communities appear to be underserved by the current events schedule which is heavily focused on general Family entertainment (e.g., fun days, children's discos, seasonal themes), Sport (running, cycling, football), and specific Major Cultural/Ethnic Holidays (e.g., Eid, Diwali, Chinese New Year).

Ten key communities, split across 3 categories who are underserved by the current Events Schedule, were identified:

Category 1. Audiences Requiring High Accessibility and Respite

This category encompasses residents whose participation is limited by health, age, mobility, or care responsibilities, often overlapping with the Institutional and Supported Residents demographic.

Underserved Audience	Demographic Context	Event Gap & Potential New Events
1. Older Adults (65+)	Represents 20.5% (48,900) of residents. This group also overlaps with the Affluent, Older, and Rural Empty Nesters in areas like SA3.	Gap: Lack of specific programming tailored for mobility constraints and specific interests, such as highly accessible daytime social gatherings, educational workshops, or arts activities. Potential Events: Refined cultural or intellectual events (e.g., lecture series, classical music showcases) appealing to those with high leisure time and disposable income, particularly in areas like Mumbles and Gower (SA3).
2.Disabled Residents	Proportion (22.4%, or 53,500 people) is higher than the average for Wales.	Gap: Lack of recurring, non-sports-focused community events that specifically address social and cultural inclusion needs beyond the annual Para Sports Festival.
3.Unpaid Carers	Approximately 10.9% (24,700 people) provide unpaid care and are often socially isolated.	Gap: No events explicitly dedicated to providing respite, support, or social interaction for this cohort. Potential Events: Integration of specific, dedicated respite services within existing Hyper-Local Empowerment Weeks or structured workshops to provide dedicated break time and support networks for carers.
4.Institutional Residents	Around 5,200 people (2.2%) live in communal establishments.	Gap: Underserved because most community events rely on self-transport to public parks. Potential Events: Explicit outreach and event programming hosted directly <i>within</i> residential environments, such as care homes or institutions.

Category 2. Audiences Defined by Economic Disparity

This group, identified through ACORN data, represents the largest underserved segment based on economic constraints, requiring free, high-value, and location-specific interventions.

Underserved Audience	Demographic Context	Event Gap & Potential New Events
5.Low-Income / Socially Rented Families	Dominate areas like CF42, SA15, SA12, and SA5. Characterised by single-parent families, routine occupations, and limited mobility for centralised, ticketed events.	Gap: Lack of high-value, skills-based, or targeted <i>free</i> events. Current offerings are often generic fun days, lacking focus on parental/adult enrichment. Potential Events: Hyper-Local Empowerment Weeks—free, multi-day programs in community centres focused on adult education, CV workshops, family budgeting, and job support, paired with free professional childcare and food provisions. Affordable Maker Festivals—free or subsidised structured arts, crafts, and DIY workshops in community hubs/school grounds.
6. Sharers and Students	High concentrations in SA2 and SA1, typically possessing lower disposable income.	Gap: Lack of consistent, low-cost, or niche events tailored to non-traditional social hours, academic interests, or distinct from the central bar culture. Potential Events: Late-Night Digital Arts & Gaming Hubs—low-cost, late-evening events in the SA1/City Centre utilising digital art or specialised gaming tournaments. Alternative Culture Showcases—regular, small-scale pop-ups for emerging cultural pursuits (e.g., niche comedy, student filmmaking, specialised electronic music).

Category 3. Audiences Defined by Cultural and Identity Niche

This category includes specific language communities and specialised social groups whose needs extend beyond major annual celebrations.

Underserved Audience	Demographic Context	Event Gap & Potential New Events
7. Non-UK European Communities	Polish (1,863 speakers) and Romanian (773 speakers) are the largest non-English/Welsh languages spoken outside the UK.	Gap: Lack of explicitly listed events or festivals celebrating the culture or supporting the social integration of these specific communities. Potential Events: Targeted cultural integration festivals or specific community food/craft markets celebrating Polish or Romanian culture in localised areas.
8. Welsh Language Community	18.3% (42,500 people) reported some Welsh language skills.	Gap: Absence of targeted, neighbourhood-level community events designed to actively promote the Welsh language or provide social opportunities through Welsh outside of major festivals (Croeso, Gwyl Tawe).
9. LGB+ Community	Represents 3.4% (6,700 people), slightly above the Welsh average.	Gap: Lack of smaller, continuous, or local social/support events dedicated to the LGB+ community outside of the main annual Swansea Pride festival.
10. Armed Forces Households	A significant number of households (7.3% or 7,600) contain a veteran.	Gap: Absence of listed, year-round community gatherings or social programmes aimed at providing ongoing support and connection for veterans and their families, outside of Armed Forces Day.

Section 8: Swansea Event Venues & Outdoor Spaces Audit

The public open space audit from the work done for the Culture Strategy was taken as a starting point.

This was edited down to key sites for events together with major sites both in the city centre and along Swansea Bay.

The assessment showed that a considerable amount of investment has already been undertaken by the Council in key sites with potential to support major events in respect of utility provision and access (e.g. Singleton Park, Museum Park). No other sites which would benefit from additional investment have been specifically identified at this time.

The table below provides an insight into the nature of the space, the type of current events and some additional comments:

Site/Venue	Detail	Existing use/events	Additional Comments
Amphitheatre	Outdoor Performance Space currently undergoing major makeover to allow for year-round use.	Free music festivals, local artist performances, film viewing. Amplitude music Festival. Jazz Festival	Will be suitable for year-round use. Opportunity to develop content linked to a broader programme of festivals in Museum Park and the development of the maritime quarter linked to the National Waterfront Museum
Amy Dillwyn Park	Small coastal park in Swansea city centre with planting, seats and children's play area	Amy Dillwyn 'Dark' Park event	Only one event takes place - no further development at this time
Blackpill	Part of route from the Bay down to Oystermouth and back	Start of Tri Hard 5K	No further development at this time
Blackpill Lido	Outdoor water park	Mumbles Railway Festival	Potential for future events.
Bonymaen Park	Set in the urban area of north east Swansea, Bonymaen Park is a focal point to the local community. It has a number of facilities that will appeal to all age groups	Used for public and community events. Has an Events Section listed but nothing on it currently due to time of year	Very active community group - Friends of Bonymaen Park. Further discussion to look at any aspirations

Brangwyn Hall	A concert venue - council owned. - named after the artist Frank Brangwyn,	Gin & Rum Festival, Swansea Pride	Exploring potential to link cultural festivals with indoor and outdoor programme. Links to community programmes that perform there. E.g. Music Service
Brynmill Park	A family-friendly park featuring a lake and diverse wildlife habitats. £1.3m lottery fund restored the park described as a community focal point	Local family friendly events, seasonal events - e.g. Yule Log Day Retreat. Strong Friends group	Active community group. Further discussion to look at any aspirations
Castle Square	Has had a variety of installations over the years - currently being redesigned with potential of reducing the amount of event space	None at present - future possibilities	Events space limited to pop-ups now. Review with regeneration team once complete
Caswell Bay Beach	Swimming and surfing location with cafes and a surf school. The beach holds both a Blue Flag and Seaside award and is accessible by wheelchair.	Surfing, and kayaking. Surf schools operate there and hold summer holiday surf club sessions as well as 'Health & Wellness days' organised by Blue Ocean Activities.	No further development at this time. Potential discussion around water based events and festivals
City Centre - inc. Oxford Street/ Union Street/ Portland Street / Princess Way	Pedestrianised shopping streets used for a variety of events and markets	Croeso, Swansea Arts Weekend, Fringe Festival, Swansea Food & Drink, Swansea Classic Vehicle Show	Major events space for city centre regeneration. No current power supply
Clyne Castle Gardens	A botanical garden known for its rhododendrons, azaleas, and rare plant species	Fungi Festival	Could have potential for a flower/garden/botanical show - linked to other sites
Clyne Valley Country Park	Clyne Valley Country Park is the city's only country park. Within its 700 acres you will find a varied landscape ranging from open and wooded hillsides, steep gorges and quarries to	Holds a number of sporting and other events including cycling, orienteering, 'night' orienteering SBOC Summer League 6, 'Park Lives Mountain Biking. Local community	No further development at this time

	meadowland and wet valley floor.	groups lists running, cycling, mountain biking and horse riding	
Cwmdonkin Park	A Victorian park famously linked to poet Dylan Thomas, offering scenic views. Bowling Green	Children's magic and disco. Mad Hatters Tea Party, Easter Egg hunt, Halloween event, Summer Fun Day. Small, free, low-cost events organised in partnership with the Council and local community groups	Opportunity to build events around a strong community - even in own right or linked to other cultural events through its association with Dylan Thomas. Has stage//power
Dunvant RFC	Rugby Football Club	Dunvant Fireworks Display. Swansea Diwali Ball, Seasonal children's events – e.g. Halloween	No further consideration at this time
Dylan Thomas Square & Theatre	Has had a variety of installations over the years	Regular Marina Market. Christmas Parade. Listed as permissible for music events, fetes, food festivals, fun runs, community events by the Council. Used as a meeting point for walking trails and themed tours. The Dylan Thomas theatre is located in the square and used by Swansea Little Theatre to host a variety of productions, local dance groups, music festivals, touring companies, comedy etc.	Future programming considerations revolved around the quayside/maritime quarter event development
Hafod Park	Large open green space with games area and bowling green	Community Bowls Open Day, Park Lives Multi-Sports days for children. Community Gardening/Workshops	Good community site - no further consideration

Highmead Park, Newton	Community Park - part of recent local initiative to improve green spaces and facilities	Summer Fun Days	Some community use - no further consideration at this time
Jersey Park	Local community park with a range of facilities including a play area and bowling green	Family Fun Days and sports events	Some community use - no further consideration at this time
Killay Precinct	A small retail/community hub	Killay Market	Popular regular market. Could be linked to a wider food and drink event
Kings Way	Transformed using Eur Reg Dev Funding with new public areas, landscaped parkland and pocket park	Retail/pop-up spaces, creative sessions, nightlife events. Future opportunities for pop-up arts/culture events??	Retail/pop-up spaces, creative sessions, nightlife events. Future opps for pop up arts/culture events??
Knab Rock, Mumbles	Rocky promontory/slip way area near Mumbles	Mumbles Duathlon, Welsh Sea Rowing, B14 National, Dart 18 TT Regattas	Focus for waters ports/sailing. No further consideration at moment
Langland Bay	Popular seafront park & surfing spot with holiday beach huts, casual dining & a promenade.	Surfing competition	No further development at this time. Potential discussion around water based events and festivals
LC Swansea	Formerly known as the Leisure Centre.	Comic Con, Brick Festival	Potential to have links to outdoor events
Llangennith Bay Beach	Llangennith beach is situated on the western edge of the Gower Peninsula, it is a favourite with surfers	Difficult access	Limited capacity to develop any major event. Difficult access
Llansamlet Park	Small playground, park in Llansamlet	Fun Day, TallyFest25	Some community use - no further consideration at this time
Morrison Park	Park with lake, wildlife area, walking trails, play area and skate park	Family Fun Day	Some community use - no further consideration at this time
Mumbles Promenade	Newly developed promenade with small event spaces	Mumbles RNLI Raft Race. Pop up / local artists/ markets? The Great Christmas Fun Run 2025 due to take place 7 Dec on the prom	Only opened July 2025 so no listed events/ pop ups so far but the renovation is cited as supporting more/prominent events and popups in the future. Development

			opportunity, although limited power supply. Would need to be a linear type of event
Museum Park / Green	Site constantly used for events throughout the year with good facilities	World Combat Championships, Waterfront Winterland, Christmas Parade, Dance Days, Jazz Festival, Gwyl Tawe, The Big Rumble Samba Drumming, BBC Antiques Road Show	Good infrastructure. Further understanding required of how the future programming fits in with the aspirations as part of the National Waterfront Museum development
Mynydd Newydd Playing Fields	A public sports and recreation area located next to Mynydd Cadle Common in the Penderry area of Swansea	Drive In Cinema	Some community use - no further consideration at this time
National Waterfront Museum	A museum that tells the story of industry and innovation in Wales over the last 300 years located on the Swansea Marina quayside. Features 15 interactive galleries, real objects, and contemporary exhibitions	Chinese New Year, Vintage & Makers Market, UNESCO City Learning Festival. Links to Maritime Quarter/ Museum Park	Understanding how the review of the use and development of the museum and the immediate area, fits together with the events programme.
Newton Road, Mumbles	Residential/business road used for community events	Here Comes Summer, Mumbles Classic Car Show	One off road closures. No further considerations
Oxwich Bay Beach	Oxwich Bay is a large sandy stretch with lots on offer – sea, surf, dunes, salt marsh, fine food, shops – and it's easy to get to.	Start of Gower Trail Race	Private land and unknown about ambitions of the landowner No further considerations
Oystermouth Castle & cemetery	Encompasses Peel Wood, the cemetery (including woodland burial site), and the castle grounds.	Teddy Bear Picnic, Mumbles Fest, We Love Fairies, Outdoor theatre, Prince & Princess Day, Oystermouth Food Festival, The Spooky Castle, The Dark Side	Busy events space with sufficient power/toilet provision for events

Parc Williams & Loughor Castle	The Castle remains are set within a small park, less than a hectare in size, and within walking distance of Parc Williams offering facilities for outdoor activities.	Parc Williams Picnic & Fun Day	Good outdoor space for events but limited use at the moment, and limited infrastructure
Parc y Werin	Features two bowling greens and a football pitch. The park also has large open spaces which ideal for taking a walk with your dog or running.	Family Fun Day Parc Y Werin	Some community use - no further consideration at this time
Penrice Castle & Gardens	A 13th-century castle with an 18th-century landscaped garden designed by William Emes.	Gower Show	Good event space but unknown about ambitions of the landowner
Port Eynon Bay Beach	Offers water sports activities and has good accessibility for disabled visitors	Swansea Trisharks	Opportunities to link to wider water sports offer but otherwise no further consideration
Prince of Wales Dock and sheds	Undergoing transition under new ownership - Welsh Government taking control to oversee development of possible new marina and pedestrian bridge	Para Sports Festival, swimming element of Ironman 70.3 and other endurance events	Has opportunity to have other water sports based events. Limited capacity for any form of large watercraft due to restricted accessibility
Ravenhill Park	Features a basketball court and concrete amphitheatre.	Circus Dayze Fun Skillz	Some community use - no further consideration at this time
Recreation Ground, Swansea Bay	Used for funfairs and starting point for major running events	Circus Zyair, 10K start, funfairs	Good commercial site. No current electric supply

Rhossili Bay	Including Worms Head, Rhossili Down and Cliffs, owned by National Trust. Large car park	Macmillan Mighty Hike, Beat the Trails, Area used for public and community events but mostly seasonal, nature-based and relatively informal rather than large events. E.g. Summer of Play at Rhossili, 'Walk with us' - Rhossili Well-being walks	1200 capacity car park at Southern End (Worms Head). Opportunity for some form of sensitively presented event linked to the sunset over Worms Head. Some catering but limited infrastructure. Further discussion with National Trust.
SA1 Hospitality area	A modern waterfront development with a range of hospitality options, including hotels, restaurants, and bars	Swansea Triathlon, Jazz Festival	Opportunity to develop events linked to Dock area around pop-up events
Singleton Park- 3 sites	The largest urban park in Swansea with a botanical garden, boating lake and historic features. It incorporates the ground of Sketty Hall and Singleton Abbey. 3 separate sites for events	Outdoor Cinema, Eid in the Park, Vintage Car Show, Race for Life, Campfire County Music Festival, BeatMasters Festivals, We Love It Festival	Significant investment in infrastructure to support major events.
St David's Square/Place	Swansea city centre, open space but is planned for development	Halloween, Spooks in the City, City Chilli Festival	Limited opportunities as event space due for development
St Helen's Ground, Swansea Bay (Cricket / Rugby)	Site under major redevelopment with new stadium, corporate hospitality & 5G networks. Owned by the Ospreys. Currently used for fireworks	Swansea Fireworks	Uncertainty of the site to be used for major events following redevelopment, except for sporting events and those linked to digital based themes.
Stouthall Country Mansion Gardens	18th-century neo-classical mansion, set within 16 acres of woodlands and grounds. Described as a 'newly renovated Adventure Centre and Events venue'.	List 'outdoor event space' in its details but appears to be used more for weddings, corporate events etc. Has 2 giant event tipis which suggests capability for festivals, open days, larger gatherings.	Need to understand ambitions of landowner - but is advertising as an events space.

Swansea Arena	A multi-purpose venue located in a coastal park in Swansea, Wales, near the city's marina	Swansea Arena House party	Concert venue. Possibility of linking to outdoor events
Swansea Bay inc. Cenotaph	Five-mile stretch of sandy shoreline in Wales that runs along Swansea Bay. It's a popular destination for water sports, relaxing, and walking. Also used for Wales Air Show and Tunes on the Bay	Tunes on the Bay, Wales Air Show, Swansea Swim, Beach Rugby, Ironman 70.3, Aquathlon, Big Food Festival	Opportunities for more beach based events which reflect the sensitivity of the area e.g. Kite Festival
Swansea Civic Centre Grounds & Foreshore	Currently part of regeneration. Various installations over the years	Fun runs, charity walks, sport and recreation sessions - grass area is bookable for activities. Community fairs, festivals, pop-ups - as per Council's guidance it can be used to host music events, food festivals and community events.	Currently under regeneration plan. Working with external consultant to look at event options for the future.
Swansea Guildhall Rotunda	Various installations over the years	Armed Forces Day, Swansea Pride, Christmas Parade finish	Opportunities for start and finish of events or civic occasions/anniversaries
Swansea Marina	Various installations over the years	The marina is home to the Swansea Community Boat Trust "Copper Jack" which offers public sailings, floating classroom sessions for schools / community groups, and music events on the river/lock system. The 'What's On' booking system invites submissions for events - publicised as available event space in Swansea. Very active Swansea Marina & SA1 Waterfront Community Group	Any events programme linked to the Maritime Quarter concept and development of the National Waterfront Museum. Limited opportunity for major maritime event due to busy marina and limited access for large watercraft

Swansea.com Stadium	Previously Liberty Stadium	Home of Swansea City AFC and the Ospreys Rugby team	Has potential to hold large events but limited interest. No major concerts been there for nearly 20 years.
Underhill Park	Park situated in the heart of Mumbles with play area, picnic benches, woodland, football and rugby pitches	Newton Athletic Football Festival, Summer Fun Day	Run by Mumbles Community Association (MCA). Active community hub and sports clubs. Need to understand ambition for other events
Vetch Field	Records show only used for one large annual event	Sandfields Eid	Potential for other similar events. Limited infrastructure
Victoria Park inc. Patti Pavilion	A compact (10 acres or so) beautiful urban park situated between the city centre and Mumbles. Contains the Patti Pavilion venue within the park used for theatrical performances, concerts, pantomimes and fairs.	Regular Swansea Bay Market. Sports and health sessions. Community gatherings, fairs, cultural events.	Small community park with popular market. Good site to develop community indoor/outdoor events
Waverley Park	An urban park with woodland and a cricket pitch	Clydach Summer Fete	Some community use - no further consideration at this time
Weobley Castle	Fortified Manor House managed by Cadw and open to the public.	Gower Folk Festival, Love Trails Festival, JOPO Fest	Busy site for Gower events. Great views privately owned. No further action
Wind Street	Vibrant hub for nightlife and dining, offering a wide array of bars, restaurants, and entertainment options.	Swansea Pride,	Linear space, works well with pop up events and parades etc.

Section 9: Swansea Events Sector Stakeholder Mapping

The tables below identify the range of stakeholders who were identified as having an interest and possible input into the development of the Strategy and ultimately its delivery. Those who responded have already had input into the development of the final Event Strategy. Those who did not respond during the engagement phase will need to be updated and consulted over the delivery of the final Strategy.

Council Departments, Services, Teams			
Adult Services	Destination Steering Group	Leisure, Partnerships, Health & Wellbeing	Public Health
Arts & Creative Economy	Economic Development	Licensing	Regeneration Team
Children & Young People	Education Service	Music Service	Seafront
City Centre Management	Equalities Policy Development	Nature & Environment	Sport & Health
Community Engagement	Events	Parks	Tourism
Community Partnerships	Highways	Placemaking and strategic planning	Traffic
Council Run Venues			
Dylan Thomas Museum	Grand Theatre	Oysternouth Castle	Swansea Marina
Glynn Vivian Art Gallery	LC Swansea (Leisure Centre)	Swansea Arena	Swansea Museum
Swansea.com Stadium			

Event Organisers / Promoters			
BeatMasters	Dance Days	Jazz Festival	Swansea Walk of Light
Big Food Festival	Dunvant Fireworks	Love Trails	The Army
Campfire Music	Eisteddfod	Sandfields Eid Party	Tunes on the Bay
Chinese New Year	Gower Folk Festival	Summer Fun Days	Urdd
Circus Zyair	Gower Show	Swansea Fringe	We Love it Tribute Fest
Clydach Summer Fete	Gwyl Tawe	Swansea Pride	Weobly Folk Festival
Sports Events Organisers/Promoters			
Admiral 10k	Gorseinon 10k	Ironman 70.3 70.3	Swansea Bay 10k
Bay Aquathlon Series	Gower 10K	Mumbles Duathlon	Swansea Half Marathon
Dart 18 TT Regattas	Gower Bike Ride	Mumbles Triathlon	Swansea Swim
Dragon Coastal Races	Gower Half Marathon	Newton Athletic Festival	Swansea Tri Sharks
B14 Nationals	Gower Ultra Challenge	Ospreys in the Community	Talfest25
Beach Rugby	Gower Trail Race	Race For Life	The Darts XIV Charity Run
Beat The Trails	Gower Walking Festival	Swansea 5k	World Para Tri Series
Other contacts			
4theRegion	Gower College/Heritage Centre	SC Productions	Urban Foundry
Bunkhouse	Gower Heritage Centre	St Helen's Rugby Ground	UWTSD
CADW	Mumbles Community Council	Swansea BID	Visit Wales
Council for Voluntary Services	National Trust	Swansea Music Hub	Welsh Athletics
Disability Sport Wales	National Waterfront Museum	Swansea Muslim Consortium	Welsh Triathlon
Enjoy Wales	Penllergare Valley Woods	Swansea University - SU	WICAS
Event Wales Advisory Group	Penrice Estate	Taliesin Arts Centre	YMCA
Event Wales	RNLI	Tourism Swansea Bay	
Friends of....			
Brynmelyn Park	Cwmdonkin Park	Morrison Park	Park Werin
Brynmill Park	Golden Grove Park	Oystermouth	Pontlliw Park
Coed Bach Park	Jersey Park	Parc Llewelyn	Primrose Park
Coed Gwilym Park	Melyn Mynach	Parc Williams	Ravenhill Park

Community & Town Councils			
Bishopston	Llanmadoc	Llanrhidian Lower	Penrice
Gorseinon	Cheriton	Llwchwr	Pontardulais
Gowerton	Llangyfelach	Mawr	Pontlliw and Tircoed
Ilston	Llanrhidian Higher	Pennard	Port Eynon
Llangennith			

Section 10: Public and Stakeholder survey results

A public and stakeholder online survey in English and Welsh ran from 24th Sept to 17th October with 215 members of the public and 50 key stakeholders completing the survey. Hard copies of the survey were also made available

Below is a summary of the survey responses:

Key Strengths

- **Positive Event Perception:** Both the general public and stakeholder respondents agreed that Swansea is a good place to attend events and festivals.
- **Strong Family Focus:** Events and festivals in Swansea are perceived to cater well for families.
- **High Attendance Interest:** Popular event types that people enjoy attending include the Air Show, Sports events as a participant, Family based/child friendly events, Seasonal events (e.g. Christmas) and Live music events.

Opportunities

- **New Event Demand:** There is strong interest in seeing more events focused on specific areas such as Arts & Crafts, Food & Drink, Heritage and Performance/Culture based activities.
- **Specific Gaps Identified:** Opportunities exist to introduce niche events, including Water Sports, Comedy and Film Festivals, City based Walking tours, Horticulture, Fireworks (not November) and performances for those hard of hearing.

- **Community and Economic Priorities:** The top priorities for new event development are bringing the local community together; celebrating local culture/heritage; economic benefits.
- **Facility Enhancements:** Improving visitor experience by providing more welfare facilities; better event security; quiet (refuge) spaces; better disability facilities; and access are the most frequently requested improvements.
- **Logistics and Promotion:** Opportunities exist to encourage greater attendance through better traffic management; more frequent public transport; increased promotion; and better online information.

Challenges

- **Major Operational Hurdles:** Event organisers face severe challenges concerning red tape, rising costs, and securing funding.
- **Staffing Difficulties:** There is a reported lack of experienced staff and a lack of volunteers to support event delivery.
- **Planning Complexity:** Difficulties are encountered in organisation, planning, statutory and regulatory matters.
- **Stakeholder Concerns:** Event organisers also cited challenges related to the economic climate, difficulty securing Council permissions, the weather, and lack of collaborative interest.
- **Catering for Young People:** A specific challenge concerning the perception of whether events and festivals in Swansea cater well for young people was identified.

Section 11: Workshops, Drop In Sessions and 121 interviews

A series of workshops and drop in sessions were held at the end of October. The purpose of the sessions was to get a consensus around the future vision, priorities and drivers to develop the strategy along with feedback on the SWOT analysis that was undertaken as part of the desk research.

A summary of the SWOT analysis was presented along with suggested vision statements and key, themed drivers for change to deliver the strategy. Following the workshops all those who had expressed an interest but were unable to attend were sent a summary of the slides giving them the opportunity to feedback or to request a 121 meeting. Those slides can be found in Appendix D.

Feedback

Below is a summary of the feedback with some conclusions that were used to refine the SWOT and develop the drivers/priorities used for the Strategy.

Aspirations

“What city or cities would you like Swansea to look towards for inspiration?”

The responses to this question indicate that Swansea should aspire to be a vibrant, culturally rich coastal city, blending heritage and innovation, with the cultural richness of Barcelona and Lisbon, the vibrancy and inclusivity of Brighton alongside the authentic local pride of Cardiff and Liverpool. However, there was a strong feeling that Swansea must remain authentically Swansea and not simply imitate others, but embrace its own strengths: its coast, culture, creativity and communities.

Rather than aspiring to be like another city the consensus of opinion was that Swansea needs to:

- Celebrate its Welsh identity and seaside character of Swansea and County
- Strengthen the connection between the Bay, Gower, and the city
- Grow as a centre of culture, music, and arts
- Improve collaboration between all interested parties
- Offer an inclusive, family-friendly, and sustainable lifestyle
- Be proud to be Swansea — unique, grounded, and inspiring

Challenges

Feedback was that Swansea's events and festivals programme faces infrastructure, funding and co-ordination challenges which are compounded by environmental sensitivities and public perception issues.

Despite many skilled individuals and a strong enthusiasm, it needs a more joined-up, inclusive and proactive approach focusing on a more diverse programme of events, sustainable event management, better communication and collaboration, improved marketing and investment in transport, infrastructure and promotion.

The main challenges identified were around:

Infrastructure and Transport

- Poor connectivity and access particularly regarding Gower and late evening transport in the city. The need for improved public transport, potential community transport schemes, and even the reintroduction of trams to improve accessibility were highlighted by many.
- Shortage of parking, high costs, and frequent road closures which can deter both residents and visitors.
- Limited accommodation, inadequate signage, and facilities all of which impact on Swansea's ability to host larger or multi-day events.

Environmental and community sensitivities

- The Gower as an AONB creates considerable tension between event organisers and the potential growth of events and environmental protection issues.
- The cumulative impact of the frequency and overlapping of events, particularly in Gower, causes not only disruption in rural areas and strains on infrastructure but also tests community goodwill to the limits, resulting in multiple resident complaints.
- There is growing pressure to evaluate and reduce environmental impacts through improved event management practices across all organisers

Funding and economic pressures

- Rising operational costs, alongside the inconsistency and short term nature of funding streams threatens the viability of many events.
- Smaller and charitable organisers struggle with limited financial support and complex compliance processes.
- Arts Council Wales funding criteria was criticised as being overly bureaucratic and focused on linguistic rather than cultural or artistic diversity.
- Market dominance by major promoters across South Wales is impacting on opportunities for major concerts/events and on local organisers to innovate and compete.

Marketing and communication

- Inconsistent or late promotion currently results in residents being unaware of events impacting attendance figures.
- There was a concerted call for some form of centralised promotional hub, with d better use of digital and social media marketing.
- There is a perception of negative local media coverage with Swansea often being seen as less vibrant and inviting than neighbouring destinations such as Cardiff, Pembrokeshire, limiting its appeal to visitors and investors.
- A lack of recognition and appreciation of the benefits of events contributes to community resistance.

Diversity and inclusion

- There is a need to broaden the cultural and demographic appeal of events, engaging families, older audiences, and more diverse communities.
- Revitalising Swansea city centre through creative and inclusive events was identified as key to regeneration.
- The current event landscape is seen as physically oriented and narrow particularly focused on the Gower area.

Safety, regulations & compliance

- Smaller community organisers can find it difficult to navigate complex regulatory requirements (e.g., waste, health & safety, policing).
- Security and safety planning, including anti-terrorism, may require stronger coordination and resourcing. Although there was not overall agreement on this.
- Concerns were raised over insufficient policing and waste management, especially in rural areas during large-scale events

Organisational challenges

- A lack of collaboration between Council departments and limited external partnership working can sometimes create duplication and inefficiency.
- Lack of a centralised event calendar or information platform leads to scheduling conflicts as well as missed opportunities for joint promotion.
- Risk aversion and bureaucratic culture within government were repeatedly cited as barriers to creative, solution-based event development

Strengths, Opportunities and growth potential

Overall feedback from Swansea's event organisers and key stakeholders revealed a broadly optimistic, forward looking outlook for future events and festivals with attendees emphasising Swansea's strong community ethos, diverse cultural and natural assets, and the increasing alignment between event development, tourism and regeneration. However, while many highlighted the city and county's achievements to date, there was a clear desire for more structured collaboration, greater investment in infrastructure, and a shared ambition to create year-round, distinctive, legacy-driven events.

Strengths

- Swansea's history, heritage, and landscape are viewed as key assets. The city and surrounding county offer a variety of venues including the Bay, Mumbles promenade, the city centre and the Gower, suitable for both community and major outdoor events.
- Stakeholders identified Swansea's short communication lines between government, the local authority, and event organisers as a defining strength enabling responsive decision-making and effective partnership working.
- There is a visible enthusiasm for events within the Council, underpinned by supportive leadership.
- In addition, the warmth and pride of local communities, particularly the strong Welsh identity of Swansea and the Gower, provide a welcoming atmosphere and an authentic foundation for cultural celebration.
- The attendees felt that Swansea benefits from a strong network of experienced arts and events organisations, whose expertise and creativity represent an invaluable resource and that existing events already showcase a broad range of themes offering a strong platform for innovation and future growth.

Opportunities

- Many respondents saw events as a powerful tool for placemaking, animating underused or overlooked areas and driving regeneration. There is enthusiasm for re-establishing the Swansea Fringe Festival and creating new seafront experiences and water sport activities in the Bay.
- There is interest in developing hybrid and lifestyle-led events e.g. trail-based cross triathlons and wellness festivals. Similarly, opportunities exist to celebrate Welsh culture more confidently – particularly through traditional music, dance, and storytelling and to develop new heritage or industrial trails connecting the city’s past with the present.
- A recurring theme was the need for better collaboration across sectors with stakeholders emphasising that the event itself is only one part of the visitor experience, alongside where people stay, eat, and shop.
- Better alignment between local organisations, the university, cultural institutions, and regional councils could help improve Swansea’s position as a regional destination.
- There are opportunities to engage young people more actively through skills development, volunteering, and youth-led programming.
- There is also a need for a more diverse calendar including midweek and shoulder season events to balance the current seasonal focus. Stakeholders also encouraged multilingual, accessible programming, ensuring that events celebrating Welsh culture are open and inclusive for all audiences.
- Stakeholders stressed the need for investment in tourism infrastructure, particularly in rural areas that host major outdoor events. Improved trails and facilities on Gower would allow Swansea to maintain its reputation as a year-round endurance destination. However, this needs to be balanced against the concerns around sustainability and retaining the AONB.
- There are opportunities to formalise standards and support through Co-ordinated Community Support (CCS) which would ensure consistency and quality in event management and align event development with broader policy initiatives such as “Pride in the Place” reinforcing a sense of shared identity and ambition.

Growth Potential

- Stakeholders recognised the importance of better tracking of lifestyle trends to anticipate future demand. Understanding shifts in wellness, sustainability, and digital engagement will help shape a more responsive and innovative events programme.
- There is strong enthusiasm for a “local first” approach championing local producers, traders, farmers, and craft suppliers.
- There appears to be an aspiration to move towards experiences that create lasting legacies rather than just one-off events, reinforcing Swansea’s cultural identity alongside supporting skills development and strengthening civic pride.

- Better exploitation of links to film production, heritage tourism, and university partnerships could help position Swansea as a creative and cultural hub.

Vision Statements

Five conceptual vision statements were presented for initial consideration, (see Appendix D). These had been developed out of the initial research and initial responses to the survey

- These statements received mixed reactions with an emphasis on celebrating the natural environment, culture and heritage
- The first event organiser workshop were overall of the opinion that the statements were not really of any value and were unable to identify in any way what they felt Swansea's USP or identity was. They wanted plain, understandable language with no buzz words or jargon.
- The Council officers were a lot more vocal about the statements but felt it was important to balance ambition with realism as well as protecting Swansea's natural and historic environment and recognising the limits of existing capacity and infrastructure, particularly on Gower
- Overall, it was felt that a successful vision statement needs to reflect Swansea's identity whilst balancing ambition with realism.

Priorities & Drivers for Change

A series of initial drivers were presented for consideration (These can be found in Appendix D) together with a series of suggested actions on how they could be delivered.

Overall stakeholders strongly support the ambition to strengthen Swansea's event and festival offer but felt that priorities should be simplified, better defined, and more connected. Many felt the seven proposed drivers could be consolidated into a smaller number of overarching themes that link economic, cultural, and community outcomes.

- Tourism is important, but events must also serve residents and attract investment.
- Major and local events should work together – showcasing “helicopter” events alongside local talent and venues.

- Suggested focus on maximising local benefit – using local suppliers, spreading events across the county, and ensuring smaller communities also feel economic impact.
- Calls for a sustainable funding model and clearer understanding of how economic benefits are measured.
- Events can be used to attract talent, residents, and investors to Swansea.
- Broad agreement that identity and profile are central to Swansea’s event strategy.
- Some confusion around what constitutes Swansea’s “cultural identity”. Need to define and articulate it more clearly.
- Suggestions to use cultural icons, local heritage, and “Insta” moments to build a distinctive image.
- Events should reflect both Swansea’s urban and coastal character, strengthening the relationship with the wider Gower area and reinforcing civic pride.
- There was some uncertainty about the term “place making” – requires clearer explanation.
- Events are key to creating an “atmosphere” of a lively, ‘happening’ city with natural beauty and cultural vibrancy.
- Calls to improve city centre offer (e.g. retail, public realm) to complement event experiences.
- Support for shoulder-season and multi-day events to boost visitor stays (e.g. Jazz Festival, Arts Weekend).
- Suggestions for an Environmental Code of Conduct to be more visible and effectively implemented and / or for a “Responsible Event Management Code” – voluntary but tied to funding/support.
- Need to foster innovation and skills development
- Local identity and pride emerged as powerful motivators for both organisers and participants.
- Infrastructure and capacity (venues, transport, skills) remain challenges that require joined-up investment.

Additional comments

- There are some good flagship events but there is a need to refresh with more umbrella themes and more people engaged with those events.
- Events need managing better on the Gower. Need to consider whether it is possible for the Council to license events as they manage the rights of way?

- There is an untapped emerging music and cultural scene with no lack of ideas but hindered by a lack of resources to both develop and deliver them.
- There is a dominance of top bands by Live Nation so there needs to be a major offer/event in order to draw audiences in from the east. The costs of delivering major live concerts have more than doubled post Covid and there is a lack of promoters prepared to take risks.
- There is a lack of awareness of many music and choral performances and events involving working with children and young people - particularly through the Music Service. (e.g. Brass Bands, Samba Bands, Choral groups, Drumming workshops).
- Opportunity to build on the Dylan Thomas brand, linking to events and festivals that reflect his character and who he was rather than just his work
- Potential to attract high value tourism through themes around 'great product - great places' - innovating the Welsh Cymru brand.
- Emerging markets around the 'Dark Sky Experience' in Gower Penllergare County Park
- Develop events in Rhossili Bay/Worms Head (large car park) - Sea Shanty & Seafood festival, classical, silent discos, music event in the field on the cliff with amazing sunset views.
- Opportunity to build on events that promote Swansea as a City of Sanctuary.
- Opportunity to develop a Music and Sounds Festivals – involving children of all ages engaging with music in a variety of coastal and Industrial settings around making music and feeling good. There is funding support from national government to support children giving them an opportunity to experience music
- The Waterfront Museum is reviewing its events programme as part of re- development plans for the museum focusing on events routed in heritage and with a cohesive identity, developing the maritime quarter, including Museum Park
- Develop music concerts focused on Festival Brands rather than on individual artists and acts, enabling wider sharing of risks by promoters.
- Look at opportunities to work with Welsh National Theatre to link their work to existing or new events.
- Opportunity to link events and festivals to the planned regeneration of the city's riverside (e.g. Haford Copperworks and St Thomas station site) as well as the Civic Centre site offering future opportunities for mixed use and event activities within public space facing onto the seafront.

Section 12: SWOT Analysis

This analysis brings together key learnings from the desk research, surveys and workshops.

Strengths

Strong economic impact and year around tourism

- Some gaps evident in calendar where events could be positioned 4.7 million visitors, supporting 5,400 jobs. Tourism income 2024 £658 million.
- Events recognised as a high impact tool for delivering on economic regeneration and positioning Swansea as a thriving destination

Scenic Natural Environment

- Swansea is known for its stunning coastline, beaches (e.g., Rhossili Bay), parks, and the nearby Gower Peninsula — ideal for outdoor festivals, concerts, sports, and wellness events. Where ‘the city meets the sea’ Offering good natural and built venues

Cultural and Historic Identity

- Strong local heritage and cultural assets (e.g., Dylan Thomas legacy, Swansea Castle) can be integrated into themed outdoor events.
- There is visible enthusiasm within the Council and supportive leadership. The warmth and pride of local communities, particularly the strong Welsh identity, provide an authentic foundation for cultural celebration

Existing Infrastructure

- Locations like Singleton Park, Museum Park, and the city centre offer existing infrastructure suitable for outdoor staging and logistics.
- Organisational Expertise and Communication: Swansea benefits from a strong network of experienced arts and events organisations. Stakeholders cited short communication lines between government, the local authority, and event organisers as a defining strength.

Active Community Groups and Local Talent

- Rich pool of artists, musicians, performers, and sports clubs ready to engage with outdoor event opportunities. Diverse audiences. Vibrant music scene. Collaborative forums

Good Events Calendar

- Swansea perceived as a good place to attend events and festivals with families well catered for.
- Current events align to the 7 Well-being goals.
- Strong profile of sports themed events including, Ironman 70.3; Admiral Swansea Bay 10K; Triathlons
- Vibrant calendar includes Wales Airshow; Swansea International Jazz Festival; Food and Drink Festivals; Tunes on The Bay
- Family and Attendance Focus: Events are perceived to cater well for families. There is high attendance interest in the Air Show, Sports events (as participants), Family-based/child-friendly events, Seasonal events, and Live music

Council commitment

- Strong Council support for events portfolio to raise city profile and support businesses and community.

Weaknesses

Seasonal & programming gaps

- More events could take place in shoulder seasons.
- Under-utilisation of the Bay for water sports
- Few outdoor community events in City itself, specific to Welsh Culture/Heritage and ones that distinctly shout 'Swansea'.
- Lack of Destination events
- There is a specific challenge regarding the perception of whether events cater well for young people.

Limited Connectivity

- Compared to major UK cities, Swansea has limited air and rail connections, possibly affecting visitor numbers from outside the region.
- Poor local connectivity particularly regarding the Gower and late evening transport. There is a shortage of parking, high costs, and frequent road closures. Limited accommodation, inadequate signage, and facilities restrict the ability to host larger or multi-day events.

Financial pressures

- The Council and event organisers face financial pressures to deliver ambitious events
- Reduced external funding and sponsorship.

Event Evaluation

- Limited understanding of current audience profile and economic and social impact of events organised or supported by the Council.
- Lack of understanding of the future ambitions for developing events

Operational and Regulatory Hurdles

- Need to build capacity through increased collaboration between departments in areas of cultural development and partnership working.
- Smaller and charitable organisers struggle with complex compliance of event related regulations

Promotion and Marketing

- Marketing and Perception: There is a perceived imbalance of Council promoted event versus wider external and community events which may impact on attendance figures. There is a perception of negative local media coverage, often seeing Swansea as less vibrant than neighbouring destinations like Cardiff.

Opportunities

Programme Development

- Development of destination events e.g. maritime heritage, Spring wellness, Diaspora events
- Opportunities exist to celebrate Welsh culture more confidently through traditional music, dance, and storytelling. There is potential to exploit more links to Dylan Thomas. Events can be developed that build on Swansea as a City of Sanctuary.
- Fine tune Events Schedule to meet expectations of key local and regional audiences e.g.: ticketed, high-quality family experiences; low-cost/free urban socialising events; Exclusive/high-value cultural & traditional events; Free Community and Fun Day Events
- Strong interest to see events involving water sports, comedy and film festivals, city-based walking tours, horticulture, fireworks (outside of Nov)

- Development of events that increases accessibility to under-served audiences, e.g. affluent, older empty nesters and disabled residents, LGBTQ
- Diversification and Calendar Shift: There is a need for a more diverse calendar, including midweek and shoulder season events. Opportunities exist to engage young people more actively through skills development, volunteering, and youth-led programming.

Partnerships with Universities and Private Sector

- Co-hosting or co-funding events through academia or local business partnerships (e.g., tech expos, start-up showcases, career fairs).
- Opportunities for greater collaboration through DMP Steering Group, Swansea Bid and cultural and community representatives who formed part of the Culture Strategy Group.
- Better collaboration across sectors with an aspiration to move towards experiences that create lasting legacies

Digital & Hybrid Events

- Use of digital platforms for streaming or enhancing outdoor events with AR/VR, improving reach and accessibility and cutting-edge innovation including hybrid event delivery, gaming and e-sports
- Link outdoor events with an indoor element.

Funding from Arts and Heritage Bodies

- Potential to access UK Government, Welsh Government, and arts council funding for culture-led regeneration.
- Funding to improve infrastructure – recent Government Funding through “Pride in Place’ funding

University and student Population

- A Young and vibrant audience base from Swansea University and other institutions with opportunities to counter-programme appealing events during term time, outside of peak summer months

Variety of locally produced goods, to promote local identity

- Maximising the opportunity to link local producers and crafts to existing and new events and festivals and linking the city to the rural areas

Supporting Inclusive Community Engagement

- Support event development, especially around skills development and resilience (job quality)

- Support more grassroots organisations
- Develop events linked to neighbourhoods with synergistic cultural identity e.g. Literary Festival
- Leverage Swansea's rich cultural assets such as Dylan Thomas, music, visual arts and maritime history to stage events celebrating the city's unique narrative

Sustainability and the environment

- Benchmark against European exemplars of events that encourage eco-friendly event practices around areas such as energy efficiency, support for the circular economy and active travel initiatives, climate resilience
- Growing interest in sustainable travel and wellness can be tapped into helping the Council's commitment to become nature positive by 2030

Logistical and Promotional Improvements

- Attendance can be encouraged through better traffic management, more frequent public transport, increased promotion, and better online information. There is a concerted call for some form of a centralised promotional hub
- Opportunities exist to improve visitor experience by providing more welfare facilities, better event security, quiet (refuge) spaces, and better disability facilities & access

Placemaking and Regeneration

- Events are seen as a powerful tool for placemaking, animating underused areas, and driving regeneration. Opportunities exist to create new seafront experiences and tie events around the city's riverside (e.g., Haford Copperworks).

Threats

Climate Change & Environmental Impact

- Risk of severe weather events increasing
- Limited sustainable transport options & heavy reliance on cars may curb ambition for destination scale events in the future
- Events in the Gower need to be balanced by impacts on a sensitive environment and limited transport networks

Competing Cities and Regions

- Cardiff, Bristol and other regional centres may attract bigger acts/festivals from dominant large promoters unless Swansea offers a unique value proposition

Opposition to development of new events

- Noise, litter, traffic congestion, and over-commercialisation can generate local opposition and need to be carefully managed.
- Events need to demonstrate sustainability to avoid backlash or community resistance

Economic Downturn

- Economic downturn threatening the development of new events, and attendance at current events, through reduced consumer spending, ongoing cost of living crisis, rising event staging costs and reductions in sponsorship

Rising regulatory demands

- Pressures on event organisers caused by rising regulatory demands particularly in relation to environmental practices

Structural funding volatility

- Systemic Funding Risk: The inconsistency and short-term nature of funding streams threatens the viability of many existing events

Market Dominance

- Market dominance by major promoters across South Wales is impacting opportunities for major concerts/events and limiting local organisers' ability to innovate and compete. Costs of putting on concerts have more than doubled

External Perception

- The perception of negative local media coverage limits the city's appeal to visitors and investors compared to neighbouring destinations.

Key strategic priorities

- *Differentiate*: Leverage the natural beauty of Swansea and Gower to offer unique, eco-conscious experiences. Where 'the city meets the sea' through promoting Tourism and Place-Making
- *Diversify*: Develop a year-round calendar of outdoor events targeting different demographics (e.g., families, students, tourists, diaspora).
- *De-Risk seasonality*: consider events in April and September

- *Promote Smartly*: Use digital marketing and regional PR to build Swansea's brand as a leading outdoor event destination in Wales.
- *Champion Sustainable Accessible Design*: Make USP of Swansea for new portfolio development
- *Amplify what works*: clear experience at event management so has the expertise
- *Support inclusive Community Led Activities*: get community more involved in event from grassroots, through supporting communities and well-being
- *Maximise the Economic Impact of Events*: prioritise 'anchor events'
- *Enhance Swansea's Cultural Profile & Identity*: invest in homegrown festivals and distinctive programming, including cross-genre programming (art + food + sport)
- *Deliver Sustainable and Responsible Events*: introduce a 'Green Events Charter' for all Council supported events (waste, energy, transport)
- *Foster Innovation and Skills Development*: encourage hybrid events and develop partnerships in education
- *Strengthen Governance, Partnerships & Investment*: establish citywide events partnership (public, private, third sector). Increase collaboration between the Council, community groups, universities, and local businesses to maximise resources and increase reach

From the above SWOT analysis practical strategies have been developed with associated strategic priorities and drivers for change which are developed in the Strategy.

Appendix B

Swansea Event Portfolio & Investment Framework

1. Purpose

The Swansea Event Portfolio is the combined programme of festivals, events and mass-participation activities taking place across Swansea and the wider county (including Gower), managed as a single portfolio to:

- Maximise the economic impact of events and grow visitor economy and support local businesses.
- Enhance Swansea's cultural profile and identity
- support communities and well-being an improved quality of life
- Deliver sustainable and responsible events
- Make best use of limited funding and investment through clear priorities.

This framework sets out how events are classified and investment decisions are made.

2. Portfolio Tiers

Events are grouped into four tiers based on scale, reach and strategic importance. Examples in brackets are illustrative only.

Tier 1 – Destination Events

- Large audiences, regional/national reach, strong economic and profile impact.
- Typically free or mixed-income, with significant infrastructure needs.
- Examples: Wales Airshow

Tier 2 – Strategic Growth Events

- Strong identity and regional pull; clear growth potential.
- Support priority sectors (creative industries, tourism, rural economy, sport).

- Examples: Admiral Swansea Bay 10k, IRONMAN 70.3 Swansea, Christmas in Swansea, Swansea Arts Weekend Swansea Frine Festival, Tunes in the Bay, Croeso, International Jazz Festival, Love Trails, The Gower Show

Tier 3 – Local Anchor & Community Events

- Primarily local audiences; strong community and neighbourhood focus.
- Reinforce local pride, inclusion and participation.
- Examples: Amplitude Festival Gower Sho, Gower walking Festival, Croeso, community festivals, local cultural and heritage events.

Tier 4 – Micro / Experimental & Pop-Ups

- Small-scale pilots and creative activations, often in non-traditional spaces.
- Used to test new ideas, locations and formats before scaling.

3. Event Roles

Each supported event should have at least one clear primary role within the portfolio:

- *Visitor Economy Driver* – attracts day and overnight visitors; supports accommodation, hospitality and retail.
- *City Centre Waterfront Activator* – drives city and town centre footfall and dwell time.
- *Brand & Storytelling* – showcases Swansea / Gower's distinct identity, landscape, culture and heritage and Welshness
- *Participation & Wellbeing* – promotes active lifestyles, volunteering, social and cultural connection and family activity.
- *Sector Development* – supports local creative industries, food & drink producers, event professionals and other key sectors.

4. Investment Funding Criteria

All investment funding assessment consider tier, primary role(s) and performance against the following criteria:

Strategic Fit - Alignment with council priorities and strategies (economic, cultural, tourism, health and wellbeing, climate), and with the Swansea brand.

Economic Impact - Realistic potential to generate visitor spend, business opportunities and jobs; contribution to town/city centre vitality and/or rural economies.

Social Impact & Inclusion - Opportunities for participation, volunteering, skills; reach into diverse and disadvantaged communities; visibility of Welsh language and culture.

Brand & Profile Impact - Ability to project Swansea / Gower positively to residents and visitors; media and social media potential; “signature” content.

Environmental Sustainability & Place Quality - Sensible environmental measures (waste, travel, energy); respect for local communities and sensitive environments, especially in Gower.

Deliverability & Risk - Organiser capacity, governance and track record; robust budget; health and safety planning; match funding and income generation.

Portfolio Fit - Contribution to **calendar balance** (seasonality), **geographic spread** (city, coast, rural, valleys), and **audience/genre mix** (e.g. families, young people, older people, different artforms).

Weights may vary by tier (e.g. higher emphasis on Economic/Brand for Tier 1; Social/Participation for Tiers 3–4).

5. Funding Bands & Expectations

Indicative public funding parameters (to be refined):

Tier 1 – Flagship

Larger, often multi-year agreements.

Public funding up to a defined % of total budget (e.g. up to 40–50%).

Detailed business plans, economic and social impact evaluation required.

Tier 2 – Strategic Growth

Time-limited support (e.g. 2–3 years) with tapering public contribution (e.g. up to 30–40%).

Clear growth and audience development plans; requirement to increase earned and sponsorship income.

Tier 3 – Local Anchor

Smaller grants (e.g. up to a fixed ceiling) plus in-kind support (advice, venues, promotion, traffic management where appropriate). Simple application and reporting, focused on community benefit and inclusion.

Tier 4 – Micro / Experimental

Micro-grants with light-touch process.

Focus on innovation, learning and filling gaps in the calendar or geography, rather than hard KPIs

6. Governance & Review

- Investment priorities are reviewed and agreed by the SEPB are taken aligned with existing governance structures of or organisations represented by on the Board
- An annual “portfolio review” will:
 - Map events across tiers, roles, seasons and locations.
 - Identify gaps (e.g. early-year activity, rural/valleys coverage, specific audiences or artforms).
 - Inform future funding priorities, partnership development and bidding for regional/national events.

7 Criteria Scoring Outline Template

<i>Criterion</i>	<i>Things to consider</i>
1. Strategic Fit	Alignment with council national UK strategies
2. Economic Impact	Visitor numbers, spend, business growth
3. Social Impact & Inclusion	Participation, volunteering, equality, Welsh language
4. Brand & Profile Impact	Media, storytelling, signature potential
5. Environmental Sustainability	Waste, travel, Gower sensitivity
6. Deliverability & Risk	Track record, budget, safety
7. Portfolio Fit	Season, location, audience gap

Tier Weighting reviewed on an annual basis

<i>Tier</i>	<i>Weighting Guidance</i>
1 – Flagship	Prioritise Economic, Brand, Deliverability
2 – Growth	Prioritise Economic, Portfolio Fit, Sector
3 – Local Anchor	Prioritise Social Impact & Inclusion
4 – Experimental	Prioritise Innovation & Portfolio Fit

Appendix C - Performance and Management Outline Framework



Strategic Priority 1 – Delivering the Right Events - for Swansea City and County		
Dimension	Outputs	Outcomes - What Success looks
Visitor Economy /Economic Impact	• Annual number of overnight stays attributable to events (bed-nights) • Average and total visitor spend per event and annually (accommodation, food & drink, retail, transport, local services) • Extension of the tourism season: number / % of events held outside traditional peak season; visitor numbers / spend during off-peak • Occupancy rates of local hotels / accommodation during event periods vs non-event periods • Link to “Swansea Events Destination Plan / and annual performance indicators	• A stronger visitor economy, demonstrated by increased overnight stays, higher visitor spend, extended seasons and sustained year-round tourism.

Event Portfolio and Destination Branding	• Number and type of “destination events” in the annual event portfolio — broken down by category (e.g. airshow, cultural festivals, endurance, pre-Christmas, heritage, community) • Attendance / reach of key destination events (total attendees, audience origin — local, regional, national, international) • Media coverage, press mentions, social media reach/engagement tied to destination events; growth in external audience awareness • Distribution of events across seasons — share of events in off-peak months vs peak months; balance across festival types to avoid over-reliance on a few big events	• A recognised and distinctive portfolio of destination events — including an enhanced Airshow, standout cultural festivals, major endurance events and a coordinated pre-Christmas offer — attracting regional, national and international audiences • A balanced annual events calendar that supports hotels, hospitality, local businesses and city centre regeneration in all seasons
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Place Making and Spaces Activation	• Perception / brand-identity measurement: % of surveyed visitors or residents of Swansea's brand values • Number of public-space activations (events) per year across city centre, waterfront • Footfall / pedestrian counts in public spaces during event vs non-event periods • Diversity of event types by area (waterfront, city centre, suburbs, rural, Gower, villages) — share of events outside central area	• Vibrant, regenerated and animated public spaces across the city centre, waterfront, riverside, market district and wider areas, regularly hosting safe, welcoming cultural activity
Social Inclusion Community	• % of events with programming / outreach aimed at underserved communities (suburbs, rural villages, former industrial areas, Gower) • Participation — demographics of attendees (geography, socio-economic group, age, etc.) relative to local population distribution • Resident satisfaction / sense of belonging / pride / community cohesion — via surveys: pre- and post-events • Accessibility metrics: proportion of events with accessible facilities (physical accessibility, affordable pricing, transport access)	• Swansea recognised nationally as an accessible, inclusive, resilient and high-quality event destination with a distinctive cultural character rooted in its stories, language, landscape and waterfront identity • Wider and more equitable access to events for underserved communities across neighbourhoods, suburbs, former industrial areas, rural villages and the Gower, contributing to improved social and mental wellbeing

Cultural and Development for Events	• Number of local artists / performers / creative organisations participating in events annually • Number of opportunities created: workshops, showcases, youth-oriented programmes, internships, training tied to events • Repeat engagement / career progression: track individuals (artists, volunteers, crew) participating across multiple events or moving into professional roles	• Stronger community cohesion and pride in place, reflected in increased participation, trust, belonging and cultural confidence among residents • A clear cultural identity for Swansea narrative visible through events and shaping positive perceptions of the city and county • A thriving creative ecosystem with more opportunities for local artists, performers, cultural organisations and young people to develop skills, showcase talent and progress into creative careers
Local Economy and Local Procurement	• % of event procurement (goods & services) contracted to local suppliers / SMEs / social enterprises / Welsh producers • Value (£) or % of procurement going to local suppliers vs external suppliers • Number of events using shared local infrastructure / services (shared venues, local catering, local supply-chain)	• A strengthened circular economy, with growing local procurement, local supply chains, reinvestment of revenue and clearer economic and social value for communities

Evidence	• Evidence of environmental consideration across all events (e.g. waste management, low-impact transport & travel planning, protection of natural assets especially Gower / coastline) • Regular monitoring & evaluation reports: number of events evaluated (% of total), audit compliance rate, timely publication of summary reports • Stakeholder & partner engagement: number of partners (business, hospitality, community, arts) engaged, new formal partnerships / collaborations per year • Data system / dashboard in place to aggregate event portfolio data (attendance, economic, spatial, community, environmental) for analysis and planning • Load on infrastructure & environment vs carrying capacity: number of high-impact events vs small/low-impact events; monitor potential overcrowding, environmental stress, community disruption	• Evidence-led decision making, with monitoring and evaluation guiding investment, partnerships and long-term planning
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Strategic Priority 2 A Partner Friendly Destination ... Easy to do Events Here!

Dimension	Outputs	Outcomes What Success looks
Governance and Strategic Alignment	- Existence of a SEPB and SEV aligned with the overall Cultural / Events Strategy - Degree of strategic alignment: % of events / decisions approved through the shared governance body vs ad-hoc unilateral decisions - Transparency & accountability measures: public reporting of decisions, open-access minutes, clear investment criteria & priorities for both SEPB and SEV	A strong, transparent governance structure aligned with the Culture Strategy, enabling strategic decision-making and shared ownership.
Collaboration & and Integration	- Number of active partners engaged in events ecosystem (businesses, community orgs, cultural organisations, universities, funders, contractors) - Number (and %) of multi-partner / co-produced events, e.g. Council + community group, or business + arts org) per year	A unified events ecosystem where the Council, partners, communities, and industry collaborate effectively.

Capacity and Co-ordination	• Stakeholder satisfaction / confidence in governance & collaboration (survey among partners, funders, community, industry) • Consolidated events-function resources: staffing budget, infrastructure, capacity for coordination, resource procurement, • % of events / projects where Council acts as lead coordinator or strategic enabler vs partner or deliverer	• A skilled, well-resourced Council events function acting as a strategic leader and efficient coordinator across departments and external event organisers and partners • Clear investment priorities and reduced duplication across departments and partner organisations
Event Portfolio Balance and Strategic Output	• Annual events portfolio metrics: number of events, diversity by type (scale, purpose, audience, season), geographic spread • Share of events that meet strategic criteria (e.g. cultural identity, community engagement, economic value, sustainability) — i.e. “strategic events” vs ad-hoc / one-off	• A balanced, year-round events portfolio that reflects Swansea’s identity and maximises economic, cultural, social and environmental value.
Efficient and Effective Investment	• number / % of funding or resource allocations aligned with strategy & approved through governance rather than ad-hoc	• Improved confidence from funders, strengthened by transparent investment decisions linked to strategic outcomes.



Strategic Priority – Sustainability Now.... Legacy Tomorrow

Dimension	Outputs	Outcomes What Success looks
Ecological	• Total carbon footprint (absolute and per visitor/visit-day) • % reduction in greenhouse gas emissions (year-on-year) • Waste diverted from landfill • % of suppliers/contractors using sustainability-certified practices / locally (Welsh/local) sourced suppliers • % of participants reporting increased sustainable behaviours (e.g. using public transport, recycling, lower waste) • Number of events using shared sustainable infrastructure (e.g. shared green transport, shared waste / power-up / water facilities)	• A recognised Swansea Green Events Standard, with all major event organisers signed up and demonstrably reducing their environmental impacts. • Environmental responsibility embedded in event planning and delivery, ensuring protection of the Gower, coastline, natural assets and community wellbeing. • Improved protection of the Gower AONB and other sensitive landscapes, with fewer clashes, better planning and reduced damage, congestion and disruption. • . Year-on-year improvements in event sustainability, including carbon reduction, waste diversion and strengthened local supply chains. • High public confidence that Swansea's events are environmentally responsible, community-oriented and aligned with the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

Social /Community	• % of attendees from underrepresented or underserved communities (by area, demographic, socio-economic) • % of target community groups reporting increased participation in culture/sport/business events • Number of volunteers engaged; volunteer retention rate • Number of community-led / volunteer-led events supported / scaled	• Distinctive “home-grown” events and festivals that reflect Swansea’s cultural identity and attract external audiences. • . Community and volunteer-led organisers showing greater resilience, improved compliance, better planning and stronger digital capability • A visible improvement in volunteer recruitment and retention, contributing to community cohesion and a stronger civic culture.
Local Economy Capacity	• Number (and % value) of contracts awarded to local suppliers / SMEs / social enterprises / Welsh producers • Number of jobs supported or created (temporary & permanent) linked to events	• A thriving local green economy, with increased use of Welsh suppliers, local food producers and sustainability-focused contractors. Shared sustainable infrastructure that reduces duplication, lowers costs and strengthens environmental performance
Capacity Building and Education	• Number of people trained — new skills, internships, career pathways, volunteer training — through events / festival ecosystem • Utilisation rate of shared infrastructure / resources (e.g. green venues, shared transport, shared equipment) across events	• Recognition of Swansea as a city that nurtures creativity, invests in its event organisers and leads on innovative, sustainable event practice in Wales, the UK and internationally

	• Cost savings achieved through shared infrastructure, reduced duplication, local sourcing • % of events audited for sustainability (environmental, social, economic) post-event • Number of toolkits, guidelines, shared resources, training sessions, workshops delivered for organisers/volunteers • Digital engagement metrics: e.g. online audience reach, hybrid participation rates, year-round engagement via digital platforms	• Strong, consistent partnerships between event organisers, educational institutions, creative industries and business networks. • A pipeline of local creative and technical talent retained in Swansea through enhanced training, internships and career pathways. • Shared learning, toolkits and hubs that reduce duplication, cut costs and stimulate collaborative innovation • A skilled, confident and innovative events sector capable of delivering high-quality, inclusive and sustainable events all year round.
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Appendix D

Swansea Events Strategy Workshop Feedback slides

- Below are some of the key slides from the workshops held this week.
- The conclusions coming from the Challenges, Strengths and Opportunities, Vision and Priorities are as a result of the desk research and surveys carried out by Alpha-1.
- If you would like to provide feedback on those conclusions or make any further comments, we would be happy to receive them and will include them along with the comments and discussions from the workshops.

Survey and Desk Research so far.....

Policies and Strategies

- National Government
 - Wellbeing and Future Generations Act 7 Goals
 - National Event Strategy
 - Visit Wales
- Council
 - Corporate Plan
 - Cultural Strategy
 - Regeneration Plans
 - Tourism Plan
- Partnerships
 - Destination Management Plan

Surveys and Audience Intelligence

- Events Strategy Stakeholder and Public Survey
- Drop in Sessions
- Audience – Visitor Insights, Census, specific events data, Hotel study
- Events Programme Audit
- Stakeholders
- One to one discussions
- Current event and festivals programme – Swansea and surrounding area

Challenges



- What are the Challenges being faced now and in the future?
- What have been your ways to overcome them / “work arounds”
- What motivates you to thrive and survive?

Things to consider.....

Event Organisers

- What has helped you recently to develop events?
- Who are the current key partners you work/ collaborate with to overcome challenges?
- Who are the main types of people who attend your events, and what challenges do you face in getting them to come back?
- What makes it difficult to organise and develop event?

Businesses, Organisations, Groups, Communities

- How do the outdoor events in Swansea impact on your business, the destination or community goals?
- What types of events drive most footfall/spend or community cohesion – and what don't?
- How well do outdoor events and festivals organised in Swansea align with your own programming and what you do?

Challenges

- **Rising costs** increasing financial pressures with higher event organisation costs.
- **Council budget constraints** with limited funding to sustain or expand event support.
- **Economic downturn** impacting consumer spending and sponsorship opportunities.
- **Environmental compliance** with growing legislative requirements affecting event delivery.
- **Lack of strategic event evaluation** and risk assessment, undervaluing social and economic impact of events.
- **Events programme gaps** with lack of high-profile destination events celebrating local culture and heritage.
- **Increasingly strong competition** from nearby cities such as Cardiff and Bristol.
- **Rural endurance and outdoor event management** needs improved co-ordination.
- **Increased community sensitivity** with increasing resident and business concerns about event impacts (traffic, noise, litter).
- **Rising regulatory demands** with more complex requirements for small and community event organisers.
- **Unpredictable weather challenges** affecting outdoor planning and attendance.
- **Limited large scale transport connectivity** and infrastructure constraints impacting visitor access.

Strengths, Opportunities and Growth Potential

- Identify existing and potential future events rooted in the City and County's culture and heritage and natural and built landscape.
- Look at events that meet the changing tastes and needs of the potential audience, community and businesses

Things to consider.....

Event Organisers

- What are the opportunities to develop your existing audience and attract new audiences & develop or diversify your programme?
- Who could be key partners and collaborators to work with?

Businesses, Organisations, Groups, Communities

- What new events would you like to see and align with your goal? – audience time of year
- Who could be key partners and collaborators to work with/how can events integrate better with local business and communities?
- How could events be more inclusive for your members?

Strengths, Opportunities and Growth Potential

- **Year-Round Events calendar** with diverse, high-quality experiences that support a £600m+ tourism economy.
- **Strong Council backing** providing active support to grow the events portfolio, boost the city's profile and aid local businesses.
- **Exceptional setting** with beaches, parks, the Gower and a vibrant city centre providing ideal venues for events of all sizes.
- **Opportunity to animate new spaces** and bring new life to developed areas like Mumbles Promenade.
- **Strong cultural and historic identity** with strong foundations for distinctive outdoor events and festivals.
- **Rich creative talent pool** of local artists, musicians, and performers ready to engage diverse audiences.
- **Vibrant student community** enhancing audience base, participation and energy.
- **Growing interest in outdoor & wellness activities** aligning events with active lifestyle trends.
- **Strong reputation for outdoor endurance events** to build on including hybrid experiences.
- **Seasonal event development** boosting off-peak tourism with cultural events in autumn, pre-Christmas, and spring (e.g. Croeso, Diaspora).
- **Hybrid and fringe opportunities** extending indoor events to the outdoors or adding complementary experiences (e.g. Air Show fringe).
- **Increased policy alignment** to tap into regeneration and cultural funding (e.g. 'Pride of Place', Arts Council).
- **Promote local producers** to showcase regional food, drink and crafts to create themed destination events.
- **Grassroots growth** supporting authentic, community-led festivals celebrating arts, literature, and local culture.

Aspirations and Vision for the Future

Vivid Picture!



What Swansea will look, feel and sound like as a vibrant, inclusive, safe and economically impactful destination for events and festivals

The role events and festivals will play in enhancing Swansea City and County's attractiveness to live, work and visit

Vision Statements

- a. *"Create an inclusive, year-round outdoor events programme in Swansea that celebrates local culture, enhances natural environment and delivers lasting economic and social benefits for communities."*
- b. *"Position Swansea as a leading destination for distinctive, sustainable and accessible outdoor events, leveraging our unique spaces and working in collaboration with local communities and stakeholders."*
- c. *"Deliver high quality, memorable outdoor experiences across Swansea that strengthen Place, energise regeneration, promote wellbeing, and respect nature."*
- d. *"Become a benchmark for sustainable outdoor events that unite communities, amplify our natural and cultural heritage, and foster inclusive access, contributing positively to nature recovery and carbon reduction."*
- e. *"Foster a resilient, stakeholder-led outdoor events community, rooted in local identity and powered by strong partnerships that adapts to challenges, uses local assets sustainably and ensures that benefits are broadly shared among residents, artists, businesses and the natural environment."*

Priorities and Drivers for Change

What are the drivers to deliver economic and social impact and community identity?

What actions will deliver the change?

- a. Maximise Economic Impact
- b. Enhance Swansea Cultural Profile and Identity
- c. Promote Tourism and Place Making
- d. Support Communities and Wellbeing
- e. Deliver Sustainable and Responsible Events
- f. Foster Innovation and Skills Development
- g. Strengthen Governance and Partnerships and Investment