

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education, Culture and Sport
DATE	28 th March 2013
DIRECTOR	Gayle Gorman
TITLE OF REPORT	Sistema Scotland and Aberdeen
REPORT NUMBER:	ECS/13/012

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report provides an update on work to investigate the delivery of a first phase project working with Sistema Scotland.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. Instruct officers to develop the operational model and wider Business Plan with Sistema and potential funding partners.
2. Instruct officers to progress the development of *Big Noise* Torry with the local community.
3. Instruct officers to report back to Committee in due course.
4. Refer the report to Finance and Resources Committee to consider the funding requested to progress the financial and funding model.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The previous report used information to reflect that investing early in an individual's life was a very cost effective way to positively influence their life choices. This initiative, in common with the other *Big Noise* projects, looks to positively invest as early as possible, rather than respond to problems when they present themselves.

To support the development, funding of around £50,000 would enable the necessary preparation work to be undertaken in collaboration with Sistema Scotland. Sistema would work with officers of the City Council to develop more detailed proposals for the delivery and a proposed financial and funding model. This model would then fully inform the timing of development of a *Big Noise* Torry programme.

The costs of implementing *Big Noise* are estimated to be as follows, on full financial year costs, based on the initial project in Stirling and the more recent estimated costs for the programme in Glasgow:

Set-up costs

Year nil - £150,000 (set-up only)

Year one - £350,000

Year two - £450,000

Year three - £575,000

Year four - £615,000

Year five - £620,000

These figures will be subject to revision and may be amended dependent on the level of uptake and future developments. The Council will also provide access to facilities and in-kind support, and will need to assess the implications of loss of letting income. Accommodation for the project will also be required. These will be included in the next report to Committee, prior to the project progressing.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

4.1 These include commitment from the Council to ensure that the children, young people and wider community can be fully involved. Also, that there is senior officer time and commitment to support, facilitate and be advocates for the initiative; there will be legal implications to be resolved, suitable designated property as above, including storage, group and individual teaching spaces, performance spaces to suit, and a appropriately-resourced space to base Sistema staff.

4.2 There is currently existing instrumental music tuition provided in the Torry Associated School Group and there will need to be consideration of what changes might result. These will relate to the current range of musical opportunities, implications for musical tuition in other schools in the city and related matters, which may benefit from a separate report to Council.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

5.1 Previous reports have endorsed the concept and recognised the benefits of Sistema; they have also recognised the potential of a *Big Noise* phase one project being developed in the City. Below is a resumé of the main points from the previous report to the Committee:

5.2 Sistema Scotland is the official Scottish partner of 'El Sistema', founded thirty years ago in Venezuela and has adapted the model to meet the needs and conditions of the Scottish environment. This model

is based on evidence which shows that skills learned through orchestral education have the potential to bring the following benefits: - developing self-esteem; discipline; and achievement; and so improving the outcomes for children who face inequality and disadvantage.

5.3 Big Noise is an early intervention programme that uses music and engagement in an orchestra from an early age with the aim of fostering confidence, teamwork, pride and aspiration in the children taking part. It aims to engage the whole family and wider community and so extend achievement of these outcomes across the wider community.

5.4 An evaluation was undertaken of *Big Noise* Stirling for the Scottish Government which reported in March 2011. The Evaluation had a number of main findings:

- There are 344 children who attend nursery and school at the Raploch Campus. *Big Noise* has successfully engaged with 80% of the children. Primary 2 to Primary 7 children are eligible to attend after school and during school holidays. There are 219 children who can attend; 65% took up this voluntary opportunity.
- Children involved were found to gain benefits in personal and social development, including improving confidence, self esteem, social skills and the ability to concentrate.
- The families of children involved reflected on improved relationships at home, wider social networks and more shared activities between parents and children. Parents could also recognise a “more positive, aspirational future for their children”, and that *Big Noise* has given them pride and widened their future potential achievements.
- Parent and professionals interviewed identified changing perceptions of the wider community in the Raploch area. There was evidence of more positive relationships between parents and officials and organisations and skills being shared between partner organisations.
- *Big Noise* is contributing to eight National Outcomes.

5.5 The project is generational; it is about the whole community being involved or engaged, improving the community, social justice and wellbeing. By investing in children, it seeks to make a difference to the next generation and into the future. The initial project is five years long, with Stirling Council committing to mainstream the work thereafter.

5.6 Observation by the elected members who visited *Big Noise* Stirling included clear recognition that it is a project which needs time to be able to make and demonstrate a lasting difference. It could already show it was:

- encouraging ambition and giving life chances
- building on the resilience of the young
- giving new life skills

- offering a taste of success
- broadening horizons
- bringing the discipline of playing together as a team

5.7 Overall, the impression was of an initiative which had enthusiasm, strong commitment and belief from those involved in its delivery, Sistema Scotland's Board, officers and musicians; and, equally strong belief and commitment from the local authority, both senior and local elected members and officials. The enthusiasm appeared to be matched by participants, from pre-school to the seven month-old adult "Noise" group; while there was seriousness and concentration in performance, there was also enjoyment, confidence and a sense of achievement.

5.8 Since then, the *Big Noise* orchestra has been involved in opening the UK's Cultural Olympiad, with Gustavo Dudamel and the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra on Midsummer's Day 2012. A second *Big Noise* project has been agreed since then, to be in Govanhill, Glasgow.

5.9 The three issues identified as requiring resolution from the last report to Committee are:

1. A business model to deliver a project with Sistema Scotland;
2. The criteria for identifying an appropriate community; and
3. Possible funding sources.

5.10 The Business Model

There are two aspects to the Business model – the first relates to the operation of a phase one *Big Noise* in Aberdeen; our discussions with Sistema Scotland indicate that they have given considerable thought as to how they would operate another project distant from their main office. Many of the issues they have considered will be tested through their operation in Glasgow.

5.11 The intention is that a *Big Noise* Team Leader and *Big Noise* Operations manager would be recruited, based within the community in which the initiative is to operate.

5.12 A draft scoping document from Sistema Scotland is attached as an appendix which explains the proposed operating model in more detail.

5.13 It will also be the intention that *Big Noise* musicians coming to the city be invited to participate in other musical instruction and performance, which will both contribute to the wider learning and cultural life of Aberdeen. It is hoped that this invitation will both sustain Sistema and encourage musicians of the highest quality here. The Council also operates the City Music School, based at Dyce Academy, as well as the Instrumental Music Service; consideration will be given

with Sistema as to how the tutors involved in both the School and Music Service might be able to be involved.

5. 14 Criteria for identifying an appropriate community

The rationale for delivering the *Big Noise* in both Stirling and Glasgow has been to focus the work in a community of most need. The proven belief of Sistema is that children and communities can be transformed and empowered by music.

5.15 In Aberdeen, there are 22 data zones in the most deprived 15% of Scottish data zones. The majority of the 22 data zones are in areas of priority. The most deprived data zones in Aberdeen are concentrated in the Council's priority neighbourhoods – Tillydrone (4), Middlefield (3), Torry (4), Woodside (3), Seaton (3), Cummings Park (2), Northfield (1), Mastrick (2) and Stockethill (1).¹

5.16 Evidence shows that giving young children the best start in life ensuring their best health, care, learning and play experiences improves the outcomes for them as adults, and makes a significant contribution to society. The economic return on investment in early years is significantly higher than at other stages by improving their personal and societal outcomes². The quality of a child's relationships with its parent or carer and the experiences they have in their home is also critical to physical and mental health, and educational attainment.³

5.17 The Early Years Framework and the related national social policies *Equally Well*, the health inequalities framework, and *Achieving our Potential*, the anti-poverty framework, are seen as the key tools for promoting transformational change necessary to reduce inequalities, improve outcomes for children and ultimately contribute to improving the economic prosperity of families, communities and Scotland. Ministers have made it clear that the early years agenda has to be taken forward in a cross-sectoral, multi-agency way, using the *Getting it Right for Every Child* methodology. Local government and community planning partners have signed up to deliver these key outcomes for children and their families' through the Single Outcome Agreement.

5.18 The Council has agreed to implement the above policy locally, including through The Aberdeen Integrated Children's Service Plan 2008 incorporates the principles of the framework and sets out the joint vision for children and young people in the city.

'We believe that all children and young people in Aberdeen should enjoy being young. Aberdeen will be a city where children and young people are safe, nurtured,

¹ Deprivation in Aberdeen: Analysis of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 2012.

² OECD Starting Well or Losing the Way? 2006

³ Health in Scotland: Annual Report by the Chief Medical Officer, 2006

healthy and active; are included, respected and responsible; achieve their full potential; and are supported to participate in decisions that affect them.

5.19 There is a range of information which provides evidence to support why any of the above communities would be seen to be an appropriate location to set up and develop a phase one *Big Noise* project in Aberdeen. It is not intended to provide comparative information, as each in its own way has already been assessed as being an area of priority. There are “Total Place” initiatives in both Northfield and Torry, the former being led through educational attainment and the latter through community safety. These initiatives have brought Council Services and partners together to achieve improvements by working closer together.

5.20 The focus has been to consider Torry, as the present Torry Academy associated schools group (ASG) is the smallest in the city, having only two primary schools, Tullos and Walker Road. Torry has a strong sense of community spirit and wellbeing; there have been significant changes in the community in recent years, though, with considerable change in the community’s demographic and ethnic profile.

5.21 The provision of a new secondary school in the south of the city has the potential to have an affect on the community simply due to it being in a different location. The introduction of *Big Noise* could be beneficial in assisting to support the community during and following this particular change. The phase one project could be extended to include the revised wider ASG when the new secondary school is built.

5.22 Through “Total Place” and related work, led by Grampian Police locally, there is to be a “Torry Lighthouse Festival” on 29th June this year, celebrating creative arts in the community. This initiative, to encourage music and related activity will encourage and complement the investment in youngsters through *Big Noise*”, as well as the potential for community participation.

5.23 It is for these reasons that a phase one *Big Noise* initiative in Torry has been proposed. The scale of the phase one project would be able to be sustained and it would enable the concept to be proved locally, with a view to future development.

5.24 While officers can suggest that Torry might benefit from a Big Noise project, it is recommended that the decision is one which needs the community to fully embrace for it to build from good foundations. This is in line with the National Early Years Framework, which suggests there is a need for transformational change to ensure successful early intervention in children’s lives and that the ten elements of the change are:

- developing a coherent approach to planning and service delivery;
- **helping children, families and communities to secure outcomes for themselves;**
- **focusing on engagement and empowerment of children, families and communities;**
- addressing and breaking cycles of poverty, inequality and poor outcomes in and through early years;
- using the strength of universal services to deliver prevention and early intervention;
- putting quality at the heart of service delivery;
- ensuring services meet the needs of children and families;
- improving the outcomes and children's quality of life through play; simplifying and streamlining service delivery.

5.25 An exploratory meeting was held on 16th January, which attracted a wide range of community and school representatives, as well as local elected members. The Communications Manager from Sistema Scotland, George Anderson explained the background, theory and practice developed in Stirling and their aspirations nationally. There was strong support for the proposal to be explored further and dates are currently being identified for visits to the *Big Noise* in Stirling, to meet representatives of the respective communities and to see the benefits, as well as identify any other matters they might need to consider, that *Big Noise* brings. The visits will be arranged at as early a time as possible and include the local elected members.

5.26 It is then proposed that an open meeting be held in Torry, with presentations by Sistema Scotland and reports back from those who have visited. Thereafter, a report will be made to a subsequent meeting of the Committee with an assessment of the willingness and appropriateness of the community to become the phase one *Big Noise* Aberdeen.

5.27 An initial response from the Community Council has welcomed the potential to introduce a music-focused regeneration initiative for young people in Torry. Investing in people it sees as a key aspect of regeneration. It would be prepared to offer support to help reach all the community organisations in Torry. It has welcomed the approach as it would be locally-based and locally-managed, inviting a range of community representatives to assist and offer community oversight and advice.

5.28 It may also be helpful to the Committee to note that the Council has received approaches from individuals in the city who are interested in supporting a Sistema project here, once more details are available.

5.29 Possible Funding Sources

The second part of the Business model, above, is securing funding; at this point, initial investigations have been made, however these would be dependent on the final location of the phase one project. Equally, Sistema has benefited from a range of funding streams for its developments, which we may be able to jointly investigate, including a number of national agencies. Sistema itself will commit to securing ongoing funding of 25% for *Big Noise* Aberdeen.

5.29 The City Council's funding contribution will increase year on year for the first five years at agreed levels. It is proposed that before the end of year five the City Council will review the programme and consider the level of its future financial commitment. In Stirling, the council is considering how to broaden the Sistema opportunity to all its school children and it is intended that we learn from this experience and build in to future planning.

5.30 If the Committee agree to the proposal progressing as outlined above, officers will begin to assess the likelihood of local financial support around Torry.

5.31 Interest in Sistema

Sistema Scotland is in discussions regarding a number of communities around Scotland about establishing a *Big Noise* programme and plans to take a view in the next few months on which areas to prioritise to the next stage. Sistema Scotland is keen to reach all the communities in discussion, but plans to grow one centre at a time, rather than see an immediate roll-out of the programme across the country. Sistema Scotland is committed to delivering high quality programmes that are long-term and sustainable

5.32 Discussions between Sistema Scotland and Aberdeen are regarded as amongst the most advanced with proposals amongst the most fully developed, however the Committee is asked to note that other areas are currently also being considered for *Big Noise* Centre 3. Sistema Scotland has asked that it be clear that it is in discussions with a number of communities around Scotland about establishing a *Big Noise* programme and plans to take a view in the next few months on which areas to prioritise to the next stage. If Aberdeen is not selected for the launch of Centre 3, Sistema Scotland will continue its commitment to work with Aberdeen City Council in order to launch in Aberdeen at a later date.

6. IMPACT

Corporate - This report relates to 'Aberdeen – the Smarter City'

- We will work with our partners to seek to reduce the levels of inequality in the city. We will challenge inequalities wherever they exist and bring our communities closer together.
- We will enhance the physical and emotional wellbeing of all our citizens by offering support and activities which promote independence, resilience, confidence and self-esteem.
- We will provide a high quality education service within our schools and communities which will improve attainment and life chances of our children and young people to achieve their full potential in education, employment or training.
- We will improve access to and increase participation in arts and culture by providing opportunities for citizens and visitors to experience a broad range of high quality arts and cultural activities.
- Working with our third, public and private sector partners, we will provide opportunities for lifelong learning which will develop knowledge, skills and attributes of our citizens to enable them to meet the changing demands of the 21st century.
- We will aim to have a workforce across the city which has the skills and knowledge to sustain, grow and diversify the city economy.
- We aspire to be recognised as a City of Culture, a place of excellence for culture and arts by promoting Aberdeen as a cultural centre hosting high quality and diverse cultural events for the whole community and beyond.
- We will embrace the distinctive pride the people of Aberdeen take in their city and work with them to enhance the sense of well-being here, building strong communities which look out for, and look after one another.
- We aim to leave a legacy which will make compelling reading in a new chapter in the history of Aberdeen and we aim to do this with one voice.

It also relates to the Single Outcome Agreement and in particular, Outcome 3, "We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation" and Outcome 13, 'We will take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity'.

There are also clear links with the delivery of the city's Cultural Strategy, "Vibrant Aberdeen" and the bid development to become UK City of Culture. It also has direct links to the city's Learning Strategy, supporting the experiences and outcomes of the Curriculum for Excellence and contributing to the outcomes of the city's Anti-poverty strategy.

There is likely to be public interest in this report, as previous reports and reports elsewhere on Sistema has engendered support and wish to know how the Council's investigations are progressing.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Report to the Education, Culture and Sport Committee, 2nd June 2011, "Big Noise": Sistema Scotland in Stirling, ECS/11/034.

Report to the Education, Culture and Sport Committee, 8th October, 2009, Strategic Music Partnership and potential links with Sistema Scotland, ECS/09/31.

Aberdeen City Council, Early Years Framework Implementation Plan, June 2010.

The Scottish Government, The Financial Impact of Early Years Interventions in Scotland, 2010.

The Scottish Government, The evaluation of the process and outcomes achieved to date by Big Noise Children's Orchestra in the Raploch Estate in Stirling, 2011.

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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