

COMMITTEE	Finance Policy & Resources Committee
DATE	9 June 2015
DIRECTOR	Angela Scott, Chief Executive
TITLE OF REPORT	Events Programme 2015-16
REPORT NUMBER	OCE/15/020
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	Yes

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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek approval for the events programme detailed in appendix 1 and associated budget in 2015-16.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. That members note the content of this report.
2. That members approve the events programme detailed in appendix 1 for 2015 - 2016.
3. That members approve the budget of £510,000 to deliver the events programme for 2015 - 2016.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This report outlines the proposed financial implications from the Corporate Communications & Promotion revenue budget and Common Good Fund to deliver a programme of events for Aberdeen in 2015 – 2016.

It should be noted that there are significant budgetary pressures placed on all the individual event budgets due to the rising costs associated with traffic management, Temporary Traffic Restriction Orders (TTRO), licensing and the installation of essential events infrastructure.

Similarly the costs associated with the provision of stewarding, security, medical and welfare also continue to rise annually but are a necessary requirement to meet our obligations under Health and Safety legislation.

The Corporate Communications & Promotion revenue budget also has to accommodate the costs associated with the Performing Rights Society for Music (PRS) fees that a number of Aberdeen City Council's events are legally subject to. Previously these costs were met from the local authority's General Fund.

Discussions will be undertaken with the Finance Department regarding the future administration of the Community Festive Fund (revenue budget and Common Good Fund) and the grant funding for Galas (Common Good Fund).

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

**Staffing**

Officers in the City Events Team possess specialist knowledge and skills that are needed to meet the standards expected within current Health and Safety legislation and public sector guidance, as laid out in "The Event Safety Guide – A Guide to

Health, Safety and Welfare at Music and Similar Events” (commonly known as “The Purple Guide”).

The current team consists of 4 skilled Events Officers (1 x Senior City Events Officer, 2 x City Events Officers, 1x City Events Executive). All these officers have lead responsibilities to deliver specific events and activities within the programme.

Currently the team is mainly focused on event delivery but through service restructuring is looking towards the growth of the city events programme, the development of a strong, unique events strategy in conjunction with officers in Cultural Services and the Civic Office and the facilitation of knowledge transfer and skills development between officers.

Efforts are also being made through the new Communications & Promotion service restructure to support the exploration and development of sponsorship opportunities that would secure external income streams for services within Aberdeen City Council. These monies could support the future growth of the events programme without creating an additional financial burden on the public purse.

### **Twinning and International Partnerships**

Since 2012 there has been a significant strengthening of the relationship between City Events and Twinning, with twin city partners actively participating in a number of the events delivered by the team, adding an international and cultural dynamic that hasn't existed previously.

This has also resulted in reciprocal arrangements where organisations from within Aberdeen have been invited to participate in events, activities and projects overseas benefiting our local communities and citizens.

The twinning programme continues to grow and develop annually and actively encourages engagement from groups who have never accessed support either financial or in-kind from Aberdeen City Council previously.

A separate report to the FP&R committee on 18 February 2015 supported the 2015-16 twinning activities that will grow and develop twin city partnerships while seeking to complement Aberdeen's events programme.

### **Management of events in Aberdeen's parks and open spaces**

A separate report in conjunction with colleagues in Communities, Housing & Infrastructure was approved by the CHI committee on 18 March 2015. This report detailed the management of events in parks and open spaces in the city, ongoing support for Friends groups established in Aberdeen and the upgrading of infrastructure in our public spaces to ensure their continued suitability for events and activities.

In order to support the growth of community events, the Events team will review booking systems and processes that are currently available to support community event organisers and to use the website as a key resource. In particular the team will explore methods with legal services of handling public liability issues to make it easier for community groups to manage risk.

## **5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES**

This report outlines the proposed programme of events the City Events Team is tasked with delivering on behalf of Aberdeen City Council in 2015 – 2016. It also identifies the associated budgets that ensure events are delivered within our legal responsibilities under Health and Safety legislation.

The City Events Team have for many years provided internal and external advice and support to event organisers to ensure that safe, secure and enjoyable events are delivered in the city for the local residents, surrounding population and those visiting the city for business or leisure purposes.

There is ongoing pressure on the team to identify and develop new events in terms of developing the city's offering as well as continuing to meet priorities within the existing events programme and as a result, partnerships with internal and external partners are crucial going forward.

Initial cross department discussions suggest that there is collective support for Aberdeen's long-term regional, national and international event profile ambitions, a strong will to represent the wider interests of citizens and visitors and to provide cultural distinction of the North East of Scotland.

Officers in Education and Children's Services are working with Cultural partners, under the Community Planning framework, to revise the current cultural strategy, 'Vibrant Aberdeen', which expires in 2015. The new culture plan for the city will, when complete and subject to approval, provide a framework of priorities for the culture sector in the city for the next ten years. Officers will work closely to ensure the City Council events strategy and the culture plan, as they develop, provide a cohesive, co-ordinated and comprehensive course of action for improvement for the sector.

In the interim, it is anticipated that in 2015-16 the City Events Team will deliver the events programme as detailed in appendix 1, to support the city's ongoing attractiveness as a destination to live and visit.

The City Events Team works closely with a number of city agencies including Visit Aberdeen, the Aberdeen City and Shire Hotels Association (ASCHA) and Aberdeen Inspired to ensure that events that are held in Aberdeen support local businesses and offer exciting activities to support the weekend leisure destination break market. These events also aim to attract local residents and national and overseas visitors which in turn provide economic and social benefits for local traders within the city.

The events detailed in the events programme contribute to the common good of the city, are inclusive, maintain and develop the city's continued civic pride and showcase Aberdeen's ability to attract and host major cultural and sporting events.

Where possible the team continues to maximise income opportunities through the recovery of fees for advice, consultancy and event delivery time that is provided to assist external event organisers who run commercial activities in the city. Income is also derived from the hire of Aberdeen's parks and open spaces.

Income from sponsorship has proved to be very difficult to secure, particularly since the team has limited staff resources to approach potential sponsors, are lacking in available capacity to develop skills that will support the generation of sponsorship and are unable to develop a long term event delivery plan due to the annual budgetary process. As previously detailed resource support will be provided in the new Communications & Promotion service to help event officers identify and develop sponsorship opportunities across Aberdeen City Council that could deliver income in the future, relating to the assets available across the local authority.

## 6. IMPACT

Corporate

*Aberdeen – the Smarter City*

- We will promote Aberdeen as a great place to live, bring up a family, do business and visit.
- We will ensure that Union Street regains its position as the heart of the city and move cultural activity centre-stage through re-invigorated cultural leadership.

*Smarter Living ( Quality of Life)*

- 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 diverse cultural events for the whole community and beyond.

*Smarter Economy (Competitiveness)*

- We will work with partners to promote the city as a place to invest, live, work and export from.

*Community Plan*

- Work with other organisations, agencies and groups, including Visit Scotland and Visit Aberdeen, to encourage tourism and the provision of facilities for tourists.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Aberdeen's city events programme is key to the destination promotion that Aberdeen City Council, Visit Aberdeen, Aberdeen Inspired and Visit Scotland Aberdeen City and Shire currently undertake.

Should this diverse and engaging programme not continue, then Aberdeen could potentially cease to be an attractive destination for visitors and local residents with economic spend being distributed elsewhere in Scotland and event organisers considering alternative delivery locations.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

Dawn Schultz  
City Promotions Manager  
Tel: x 2767  
[Dschultz@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:Dschultz@aberdeencity.gov.uk)

## Appendix 1 – Events programme 2015-16

Date	Event	Revenue Budget	Common Good Fund
May-Aug	Galas		£10,000
21 June	Aberdeen Highland Games, Hazlehead Park	£80,000	
27 & 28 June	Armed Forces Day, Union Street/ Aberdeen Beach & Airborne Forces Day, Aberdeen Beach		£10,000
3 July	BP Big Screen, Duthie Park	£20,000	
22-23 August	Celebrate Aberdeen, Aberdeen City Centre		£20,000
Nov - Dec	Community Festive Fund	£25,000	£4,000 (Hogmanay events only)
5 November	Aberdeen Fireworks Display	£14,000	£25,000
22 November	Aberdeen's Winter Festival-Christmas Lights Switch On	£25,000	
26 November	Aberdeen's Winter Festival-Christmas Tree	£7,000	
28 Nov 2015 – 3 January 2016	City Centre Winter Festival (new for 2015) and Aberdeen's Hogmanay Celebrations on 31 December 2015		£200,000  Pending further discussion and analysis regarding event – monies detailed for Hogmanay will be used across the full winter programme.
1 December	Aberdeen's Winter Festival-Nativity Scene		£6,000
19 December	Aberdeen's Winter Festival-Carol Concerts	£4,000	
5 February 2016 (4-7 days)	Spectra Light Festival	-	
Ongoing	Summer & Winter marketing activity	£30,000	
Annual fee	Performing Rights Society for Music (PRS)	£30,000	
<b>Total</b>		<b>£235,000</b>	<b>£275,000</b>

### **Galas (May – Aug)**

City Events administer and manage the galas budget. This budget allows for groups and organisations that arrange and deliver a gala/fun day in their community to receive grant funding to support associated costs in the delivery of their event. The grant can be used to support infrastructure costs, entertainment and publicity.

It is proposed that beyond 2015 City Events investigate alternative ways to administer the grants for galas, to maximize existing resources in identifying, attracting and supporting the delivery of high quality events to Aberdeen.

One option is to offer an online solution with tutorials and learning modules on the council's website with the possibility of an open booking system. The team could also offer masterclasses in community event organisation. It is proposed that a further report be brought back with more detailed options.

### **Highland Games (21 June)**

For over 50 years, Aberdeen's Highland Games has been an ever popular and long standing event in the annual programme. It has developed over the years to become a favourite for all the family and is always held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in June. The Games are a multi-faceted event that combines traditional highland games, free family activities, trade and charity stalls, Scottish traditional music, a funfair, beer tent, armed forces displays and catering.

The Games provide a safe, family friendly environment with a range of affordable or free activities ensuring access to this cultural experience is inclusive to all those who attend the event.

The budget income is dependent on the weather conditions and attendance can fluctuate from 5,000 to over 15,000 people. Inclement weather can result in a low attendance and will have an impact on the income derived from the entrance fees on the day of the event.

Expenditure covers infrastructure, family activities, stewarding, medical and welfare, traffic management and publicity. Most of this expenditure is spent on the lead up to the event and therefore there is little scope to reduce costs if the income achieved on the day is low.

In 2015 City Events will again look to increase activities that reflect the ethos of a family friendly event whilst incorporating the Scottish Governments themed Year of Food and Drink.

### **Armed Forces Day & Airborne Forces Day (27 & 28 June)**

Held on the last Saturday in June, the event celebrates the contribution of our veteran and serving armed forces personnel and gives an opportunity for residents of, and visitors to the city to show their support and thanks.

The event takes the form of a parade down Aberdeen's premier street consisting of veteran associations and individuals, serving personnel, cadets from all three of our armed forces and vintage military vehicles. Led by over 8 pipe bands, the parade generates great pride and emotion and attracts over 2,000 people.

The budget covers traffic management, stewarding, first aid, pipe bands, transport and promotion. There is not sufficient funding from ACC to deliver this event, however, in previous years there has been an annual grant awarded from the MOD. The MOD has indicated that this funding will be reduced in future years and eventually withdrawn. The application process The MOD have confirmed grant funding of £9k to support this year's activities.

As per the event delivered in 2011 at the Queen's Links, a request has been received to again combine support to this returning group from the armed forces. The 2015 event will join up with the Airborne Forces Day in sharing costs of a weekend of Military activities. The Airborne Forces Day (Sunday 28 June) will combine private and public elements to the event. The private elements will be a church service and an Airborne Forces ceremony lunch. The public elements will be a marching band performance, free climbing wall, trading and information stalls and a parachute display.

The budget will cover half of the costs; infrastructure (marquee, generators, chairs, tables, PA/ sound system, licensing) traffic management, overnight security, stewarding and staffing for the occasion. The remaining costs would be met by the Airborne Forces Day organising group members.

### **BP Big Screen (3 July)**

For over 20 years, the Royal Opera House has screened live relays from its building at Covent Garden to cities around the UK.

Aberdeen is a popular venue for this occasion and provides a unique opportunity to watch world class performances live and direct from The Royal Opera House in the beautiful surroundings of the Duthie Park. Up to 5,000 people attend the screening, depending on the weather conditions.

The Big Screen concept:

- Introduces opera and ballet in relaxed surroundings to new audiences
- Gives people an opportunity to see the world's best performances and performers
- Provides free world class entertainment to families who might otherwise not be able to access tickets

The partners in the Big Screen 2015 project are Aberdeen City Council, the Royal Opera House and BP.

Aberdeen City Council's financial contribution goes towards some of the infrastructure costs associated with the event including barriers, stewarding, first aid facilities and staff, toilets, waste management, lighting and seating.

It is proposed to maintain the budget in order to allow the event to maintain its high standard of delivery and safety.

### **Celebrate Aberdeen (22 & 23 August)**

In conjunction with the third sector, this event aims to build on the strong cultural base that exists in Aberdeen and offer a new platform to celebrate Aberdeen and talent that exists here.

Featuring a parade, musical and entertainment performances in Union Terrace Gardens, this is a popular event with the local population.

The budget covers traffic management, stewarding, infrastructure and publicity.

### **Community Festive Fund (Nov – Dec)**

City Events administer and manage the Community Festive Grant Fund. This budget allows for groups, communities and organisations to apply for up to £500 to help support any festive activity or event that they are organising. The grant can help with staff costs, venue hire, refreshments (no alcohol), publicity and promotion, presents and entertainment. The fund is very popular and in 2014 over 85 applications were received from various groups across the city. All were successful in being awarded grant funding though demand did exceed the total grant funding, so all applicants received some funding albeit not to the sums requested.

It is proposed that the City Events Team look at alternative delivery mechanisms for the Community Festive Fund after winter 2015.

### **Aberdeen's Winter Festival 2015**

Aberdeen's Winter Festival continues to grow in popularity since it was launched by Aberdeen City Council in 2005.

The festival which runs from the 5<sup>th</sup> November to 1st January each year aims to:

- stimulate visits to Aberdeen for events and enhance the Christmas shopping experience
- increase short break visits based on leisure, entertainment and retail
- raise awareness of Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire as a leisure destination

- encourage initial visit to region, translate to repeat visits

The proposed calendar of events for 2015 consists of:

5 November	City of Aberdeen Fireworks Display	Aberdeen Beach
22 November	City of Aberdeen Christmas Lights Switch On	Union Street
26 November	City of Aberdeen Christmas Tree Switch On	Castlegate
28 Nov – 3 Jan	City Centre activities (new for 2015)	Union Terrace
1 December	Nativity Scene	St Nicholas Kirkyard
19 December	City of Aberdeen Carol Concert	Winter Gardens
31 December	City of Aberdeen Hogmanay Celebrations	Union Terrace

**Positioning:** A lively and exciting programme of festive events which generate economic benefits for both tourism and retail sectors in the city region. Join us in Aberdeen SHOP, STAY & PLAY.

**Target market:** Local residents, hoteliers, business and tourism community, influencers/opinion formers, transportation providers, visitors-local, national and international.

**Rational and Emotional benefits:** A vibrant and engaging programme of festive events that showcase Aberdeen and the city region to residents and visitors alike. A sense of pride and excitement for Aberdeen’s Winter Festival and a desire to visit Aberdeen and the region during this season.

**Brand Signifiers:** Aberdeen’s Winter Festival logo that is modern and contemporary to reflect the ambitions of the programme and city, strong imagery reflecting events, lifestyle, retail and infrastructure.

## Background

In previous years, Aberdeen City Council has delivered Christmas activities relating to its events programme as currently determined by the ambitions detailed within the administrations manifesto and how to allocate the relevant monies provided to ensure that we deliver events that are right for Aberdeen city.

We have worked in close partnership with Aberdeen Inspired, Visit Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire Council, Scottish Enterprise and other key organisations including VisitScotland Aberdeen City and Shire.

Additionally, Aberdeen City Council encourages everyone involved across the city, region and nationally to work together and to raise our existing high standards even higher.

Aberdeen City Councils regular engagement with Aberdeen Inspired has helped inform Aberdeen’s Winter Festival programme over recent years and this group’s contribution continues to be vital in engaging with the local business community, particularly in the relation to the city centre where a number of our key winter festival activities are held and have the greatest impact.

Aberdeen City Council is a major supporter of Aberdeen Inspired and in response to this will seek to identify opportunities to include information that supports its priorities and to actively use platforms that will reach a wider audience than ever before with a very modern, contemporary and relevant offering for the winter season and making the city lively all year round.

Aberdeen Inspired and Aberdeen City Council continue to benefit from this interaction through sharing creative thinking and transferring knowledge about the city, its economy and future trends to maximise opportunities for local suppliers.

## **Winter Festival proposal for 2015**

Aberdeen Inspired approached Aberdeen City Council in February 2015, seeking support for the development of a stronger festive offering focussed in the city centre. This presence would feature a static “village” installation in-situ for 4 – 5 weeks and would include an ice rink, hospitality area, traditional market stalls and fun fair rides.

Initial discussions have included representatives from Aberdeen Inspired, Visit Aberdeen, City Events Team, Environmental Services, Transport and Road Services, Emergency Services, City Wardens, Codonas Amusement Park and First Group.

A number of potential sites were considered including Union Street, Castlegate and Broad Street but Union Terrace is the preferred option due to the reduction in impact on traffic across the city at this key trading time. Concerns around the ability to accommodate all the elements of the winter festival infrastructure on Union Terrace are currently being investigated.

Following a recent site visit, plans are being developed to determine where the associated infrastructure for market stalls, fair rides and an ice rink can be located on Union Terrace, taking into consideration that the annual Hogmanay celebrations are also held at this location.

It is proposed to explore the option of a St. Andrews Day event that might attract sponsorship via Event Scotland and which would ‘kick-off’ the Winter Festival.

Procurement arrangements, supplier contracts and the share of cost/profits have yet to be discussed, as well as the responsibility for the overall ownership, organisation, delivery and management of the winter activities from November 2015 to January 2016.

### **City of Aberdeen Fireworks Display (5 Nov)**

This annual event at Aberdeen Beach is always held on 5 November and attracts well over 20,000 spectators. A 20 minute display, accompanied by music, set up is delivered by a professional, licensed and competent fireworks company and regularly receives positive feedback from its attendees and is highly praised by the local emergency services.

The budget for this event covers provision and firing of fireworks, traffic management, medical and welfare, emergency planning, stewarding, park and ride services, an independent safety advisor, pre-entertainment and publicity.

### **Aberdeen’s Winter Festival-Christmas Lights Switch On (22 Nov)**

This event is a very popular family favourite in the events programme attracting over 20,000 people to Union Street. A carnival themed parade led by a pipe band, the Lord Provost and community groups travel down Union Street switching on the lights as they pass underneath.

The budget for this event covers traffic management, stewarding, entertainers, hire of costumes, infrastructure, confetti canons, community groups and associated publicity.

### **Aberdeen’s Winter Festival-Christmas Tree Switch On (26 Nov)**

The people of the City of Stavanger, one of Aberdeen’s twin cities, very generously gift the city a Christmas tree from Norway, sited on the Castlegate facing up Union Street. A switch on ceremony takes place to bless the tree featuring members of the Regional Ecumenical Team, the Salvation Army, Lord Provost of the City of Aberdeen and Mayor of the City of Stavanger. Each year also sees a reciprocal performance from Aberdeen or Stavanger to cement the special relationship the tree represents.

The budget covers installation, tree dressing and dismantle, switch on event, transport costs and publicity.

### **Aberdeen’s Winter Festival-Nativity Scene (1 Dec)**

A traditional nativity scene with appropriate music is displayed in the heart of the city centre within the grounds of the St Nicholas Kirk and provides an opportunity for visitors to enjoy the true message of Christmas.

The budget covers the delivery, set up, dismantle and uplift of the shed and nativity figures. Although it is difficult to deduce the numbers visiting the scene over the period it is open, the team receive many positive and glowing comments from the public and specifically on the traditional message that this event symbolises.

The current budget covers all costs associated with the installation, blessing event, removal and storage of the scene on an annual basis.

#### **Aberdeen's Winter Festival-Carol Concerts (19 Dec)**

A very popular and free event that has grown from one concert to two to meet demand.

Over 1000 attend the David Welch Winter Gardens to enjoy and sing along to all their favorite carols in the run up to Christmas.

The City Events team will work with the staff of Duthie Park and Friends of Duthie Park to enable them to deliver these concerts in 2015, removing the need for future City Events support.

This budget covers the provision of PA equipment, seating which incurs staffing costs for set up/removal, stewarding and hospitality.

#### **Aberdeen's Winter Festival-Hogmanay (31 Dec)**

Featuring a large fireworks display launched from the roof of HMT and a small outdoor stage on Union Terrace to entertain the crowds prior to the arrival of the new year, this event continues to attract between 5,000-10,000 people onto the streets in Aberdeen city centre.

It is the teams' intention to continue to deliver this activity in support of Aberdeen's strong winter festival offering and to discuss with our partners the inclusion of this in any enhanced winter programme.

#### **SPECTRA Light Festival (5 February 2016)**

Working in conjunction with Cultural Services, City Events supported the organisation, delivery and management of this unique event in Union Terrace Gardens.

In 2016, it is proposed that this relationship continues and that City Events continue to provide the relevant site and event advice to the successful supplier, aimed at the future growth and development of this festival. In addition the Communications and Promotion Service is in discussions to provide this event with marketing and media support.

There is a real opportunity to extend the aims of the light festival across other parks and open spaces in Aberdeen and to install additional lighting infrastructure that can be used to enhance the walking, events and evening experience while accessing the city centre. 2016 is also the Scottish Government's Year of Architecture & Innovation so we should address Aberdeen's infrastructure and lighting needs at the earliest opportunity.

Discussions regarding existing lighting infrastructure and future prioritised lighting strategy are ongoing with representatives of CHI.

#### **Summer/Winter Promotions**

A budget is set aside for the promotion of our Summer and Winter Festivals. This includes advertising in various local publications such as relevant What's on, Raring2Go, Scottish Field, Explore Scotland and Aberdeen Journals. The team also uses radio for specific events such as the Fireworks Display and publicises elements of the annual events programme on relevant promotional mediums. City Events also produce and distribute posters, leaflets and fliers for various events and in particular publish and distribute 10,000 Winter Festival brochures locally, nationally and internationally in conjunction with our partners at Aberdeen Inspired, Visit Aberdeen and the Aberdeen City and Shire Hotels Association. During 2015/16 it is proposed to continue to develop the services online presence through website development and social media.

**Future events**

Early discussions are ongoing about utilising the Marischal Square Quadrangle as a public space which could also be used for events. There may be opportunities to dovetail a trial of the space with existing events and festivals such as those organised by APA. The costs of investing in a weatherproof stage are being investigated.

Aberdeen City Council is currently in confidential discussions with a number of event organisers interested in bringing large events to the city in 2016. We will provide details outlining these discussions and information on the potential events to Elected Members, to determine if the events are in keeping with the council's priorities.

Following the success of the Wild Dolphin Trail in 2014, initial discussions have commenced regarding the installation of a further trail in future years. A small working group of key organisations will be formed to further plans and determine when would be the best time to install a new trail and the type of installation that will be best suited to Aberdeen.