

COMMITTEE	Finance Policy & Resources Committee
DATE	15 September 2015
DIRECTOR	Angela Scott, Chief Executive
TITLE OF REPORT	Aberdeen Winter Festival 2015
REPORT NUMBER	OCE/15/034
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	Yes

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide Committee with information on the plans for the Aberdeen Winter Festival 2015 and the Christmas Village on Union Terrace, following the request for further details by members at the Finance, Policy and Resources Committee on 9 June 2015.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. That members note the content of this report.
2. That members agree the programme of events proposed for the Aberdeen Winter Festival 2015, as detailed in the 9 June 2015 FP&R City Events report.
3. That, subject to a Service Provision Agreement, members approve the payment of £132,350 from the £200,000 previously agreed at FP&R Committee on 9 June 2015 to Aberdeen Inspired to support the delivery of the Christmas Village.
4. That members agree to refer the recommendation to suspend the drinking in public places bye-law to the next available full council meeting on the 8th October 2015

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Council at its budget meeting on 5th February 2015 approved a £200k budget from the Common Good Fund for Hogmanay Celebrations. Finance, Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 9th June 2015, approved the use of these funds for a City Centre Winter Festival and Hogmanay Celebration.

Detailed below is the proposed financial model for the delivery of the Christmas Village that Aberdeen City Council (ACC) will support at a cost of £132,350.

FINANCIAL COSTS/PROJECTIONS –

Appendix 1a and 1b – costs and projections detailed as at 22nd July 2015.

ACC will enter into a Service Provision Agreement with Aberdeen Inspired to ensure that the monies provided by ACC are used for the sole purpose of delivering the activities detailed in the report. This agreement will also ensure that robust reporting mechanisms are in place to keep ACC informed on a regular basis regarding the organisation of the event, and that strong and transparent governance ensures that sound financial management practices are applied in the delivery of the Christmas Village.

ACC has agreed to fund some additional internal costs of works involved in the winter festival and this includes traffic management costs, the decoration of Marischal College, Winter maintenance on Union Terrace, lighting upgrades on Union Terrace Gardens and Union Terrace and upgraded power supplies. The total value of these works in staff time is approximately £50,000 and will be met from within existing service budgets.

Workings identify a projected share of income for each partner. This figure could be subject to variance given factors such as poor weather which may impact on projected footfall.

All other costs will be met by Aberdeen Inspired.

Discussions are ongoing with the relevant services and Aberdeen Inspired and Codonas regarding the operating model for the Village.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Service support

A number of services across ACC will be required to provide support to Aberdeen Inspired to ensure that the Christmas Village on Union Terrace is delivered.

The Corporate Management Team within ACC have agreed to support this ambitious project as it serves as a strong test case for the city as it moves towards the ambitions of the City Centre Masterplan.

This event could become a signature event in the city's calendar should it prove popular with residents, visitors and the wider business community in Aberdeen, so it is crucial that the appropriate resources are made available to support this exciting opportunity.

Infrastructure

In discussions related to the installation of the Christmas Village and the wider Winter Festival, a review of the existing lighting and power infrastructure in and around Union Terrace and the gardens has been undertaken. This will support the proper installation of the activities at the site and ensure that while the village is in operation daily except for Christmas Day and New Year's Day, that the lighting is adequate to provide a safe and enjoyable space for all the family.

Work to upgrade the lighting across the area has commenced and will benefit not only the period of the Winter Festival but also the SPECTRA 2016 light festival that also occurs at this site in February 2016.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

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 5 – 6 weeks and would include an ice rink, hospitality area, traditional market stalls and fun fair rides.

Given the current situation with the Oil and Gas industry, some retailers in the City have suggested that there is pressure on sales figures this year and that a Winter Festival would help attract additional footfall into Aberdeen City Centre.

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 having the least impact of all the locations on traffic flow across the city at this key trading time.

The Aberdeen Winter Festival continues to grow in popularity since it was launched by ACC in 2005.

The festival which runs from the 5th November to 3rd 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 calendar of events for 2015 consists of:

5 November	City of Aberdeen Fireworks Display	Aberdeen Beach
25 Nov – 3 Jan 2016	Winter Village operational from 10am – 10pm	Union Terrace
26 November	City of Aberdeen Christmas Tree Switch On	Castlegate
26 November	Lighting of Marischal College	Broad Street
29 November (AM)	The Trinity Centre Reindeer Parade	Union Street
29 November (PM)	City of Aberdeen Christmas Lights Switch On	Union Street
29-30 November	Potential St Andrews Day celebrations	Union Terrace
1 December	Nativity Scene	St Nicholas Kirkyard
Mid-December	Amanda Parer - Intrude art installation	Union Terr. Gardens
19 December	City of Aberdeen Carol Concert	Winter Gardens
31 December	City of Aberdeen Hogmanay Celebrations	Schoolhill

As well as the traditional programme of Christmas events delivered by ACC which include the Xmas Tree Switch On, Festive Lights Switch On and the Hogmanay Celebrations, this year a Christmas Village will be installed on Union Terrace for 6 weeks as a test exercise as we develop a stronger events offering in Aberdeen.

The Christmas Village will contain the following elements:

German Market

Up to twenty traditional wooden chalets will be located within the village and will sell a selection of seasonal produce, wooden crafts and festive decorations popular at this time of

year. It is crucial that the products on offer across the market complement the existing offer of the retailers in the city and provides high quality, unique products that cannot be purchased anywhere other than the market.

The individual wooden chalets will be hand built for installation in Aberdeen and will be dressed to enhance the experience for visitors to the winter village.

A professional market operator will oversee the installation, daily operation and six week management of the market to ensure that the offer is consistent, that the quality of the product is maintained and that all chalets remain fully operational for the duration of the village.

The market will add to the shopping experience within the city during the festive period and encourage people to dwell in the village for longer thus increasing the potential economic impact of Aberdeen's winter activities.

Funfair Rides

In previous years when the Aberdeen Winter Festival was held on Union Street, the inclusion of funfair rides always proved popular with local residents and visitors so to enhance the experience of visiting the Christmas Village, there will be a maximum of five funfair rides included across the site. These will include adult and children's rides to broaden the appeal of the village to a wider audience.

Detailed discussions have ensured that the loadings associated with the rides can be accommodated on Union Terrace without compromising the road surface and/supporting infrastructure and careful consideration has been given to where all the elements of the village can be sited ensuring minimum disruption to the businesses that operate on Union Terrace. Aberdeen Inspired will ensure all the businesses within the BID levy footprint are well informed of the proposals for the Christmas Village and will work to encourage businesses to support the village for the longer term economic benefit of Aberdeen.

Special attention will be placed on the positioning of the elements of the winter village to ensure they do not impact on the daily operations of the existing businesses in the vicinity and where appropriate, opportunities to behave as a good neighbour and to include organisations in the delivery of the village will be actively sought.

Ice rink

A key feature of the winter village is the real ice rink that will be built within the pocket park on Union Terrace, opposite His Majesty's Theatre. This innovative installation will see the ice rink installed on a raised platform within the pocket park, following work by park services to remodel the existing planting scheme at the site to accommodate the ice rink infrastructure.

The ice rink will be open air but will have a covered viewing area constructed on the Union Terrace slip road to allow people to watch the skaters from a safe environment.

The ice rink will have the usual supporting infrastructure including a boot changing facility, lockers and ticket desk to manage the rink users across the course of each day.

The ice rink site will be dressed in a festive theme and the trees in the pocket park will have lighting installed to enhance the experience during the skating sessions at dusk and through the evening.

Hospitality Marquee

Subject to approval from the emergency services following agreement on the sterile corridor that needs to be maintained throughout the site for emergency access, a 30m by 9m entertainment and hospitality marquee will be installed on Union Terrace to accommodate audiences of up to 200 people for live performances and local entertainment.

A stage and bar will be erected in the marquee and discussions are ongoing with a number of local performance organisations regarding the programming of entertainment in this facility across the six week operating period of the village.

It is also proposed that the St Andrews Day celebrations will make use of this facility to promote the occasion and encourage local residents and visitors to celebrate Scottish music, culture and traditions. Positive discussions regarding financial support from the National Events Fund managed by EventScotland are ongoing and will be concluded in the coming weeks, when a detailed programme of entertainment is provided for consideration. This event will aim to encourage residents and visitors to the city centre to visit the Christmas Village and enjoy the celebrations.

Food & Beverage

Aberdeen Inspired's preferred supplier are proposing to install a number of festive catering concessions that will sell food and drink to the visitors of the Christmas village. The products on offer will be in keeping with the festive theme and will differentiate from the festive fayre that can be purchased elsewhere in the city during this time. Again the product will be of a high standard and competitively priced to encourage people to come early, stay longer to enjoy all the village has to offer and to consume produce to enhance the festive experience.

Control of alcohol within the site to reduce disorderly conduct and public drunkenness will be a key element of the event plan produced by Codonas to support the delivery of the Christmas village. The village will attract people of all ages across the course of the day and it is the duty of the organisers to ensure that at all times the village remains welcoming and safe for everyone. A strong emphasis will be placed on the management of the village and the calibre of the staff who will provide marshalling services across the facility. They will require to be event aware, alert at all times and must ensure that any undesirable behaviour is minimised and removed from the site with the minimum of disruption.

Licensing

The appropriate Market Operator, Public Entertainment and alcohol licenses will be applied for through the Licensing Service to support the professional delivery of the Christmas village.

Discussions are ongoing with Legal Services and the Licensing Team within Police Scotland regarding the suspension of the drinking in public bye-law that would see people purchasing alcoholic beverages and be able to enjoy them in a controlled and safe environment across the Union Terrace site.

If approval to proceed with the suspension is received from ACC members, then the following process would need to be undertaken:

- (i) Report to be taken to ACC Full Council to seek formal approval.
- (ii) The Police and Procurator Fiscal (PF) are then required to confirm that they have no objection to the proposed suspension.
- (iii) Scottish Government will then approve the draft suspension (ACC send them the draft suspension with the letters of support from Police and PF).

- (iv) ACC then advertise the suspension to the public by way of a notice in the local print media.
- (v) A month's notice is required to allow the public to inspect the suspension at ACC offices and object following the advertisement. Any objections from the public would be taken into account by the Scottish Government in considering if the suspension should be confirmed.
- (vi) Following the expiry of the month notice period, ACC contact Scottish Government again to confirm that no objections have been received.
- (vii) Legal Services then arrange for the bye-law to be signed and sealed and sent to the Scottish Government for confirmation. The Scottish Government then send us signed confirmation.
- (viii) A second notice must appear in the local print media at least a day before the event.
- (ix) ACC then send the confirmed bye-law to the Scottish Government, Police Procurator Fiscal

Licensing requirements and the timescales involved will also need to be taken into consideration. Legal services have advised that the timescales are tight should full council approve the bye-law suspension request at its meeting on 8th October 2015 and will use its best endeavours to complete this timeously for implementation by 25th November 2015.

Union Terrace Gardens

To add to the Christmas Village around Union Terrace, it is proposed to build an installation by the artist Amanda Parer of approx 5, 7ft inflatable rabbits in Union Terrace Gardens from mid-December until mid-January 2016. The works have previously appeared in various locations around the world. This activity in the festive programme will see an additional space become accessible during a time of year that normally restricts our ability to enjoy our parks and open spaces and will provide an exciting experience during the winter months in the city.

Union Terrace Gardens will be lit appropriately to ensure safe ingress and egress to the site and the installations will be secure at all times to create a similar experience to that of the Wild Dolphins in the city in 2014.

It is proposed that this installation will remain in-situ until mid-January adding welcome light after the twelfth night and to provide a connection to the SPECTRA Light Festival that will occupy Union Terrace Gardens in early February 2016.

Marischal College

2014 saw Marischal College dressed with Christmas trees for the first time, and the public response was incredibly positive to this iconic feature complementing the festive activities across the city. As a result, there is a desire to expand the decoration of this site to increase its presence in the winter programme and to utilise the wider frontage of the building to include festive decorations, colour and lighting features to enhance the space.

In conjunction with Facilities Management, discussions are ongoing to detail the infrastructure, budget and actions that need to be undertaken to light the site on the 26th November along with the Christmas tree at the Castlegate, as there will be a ready audience in the footprint for this annual occasion that could be actively encouraged to visit pre/post the event at the Castlegate.

This occasion could offer an additional opportunity to ACC to engage the wider public in the switching on or photography of the site for use in future publicity material.

Aberdeen's Hogmanay Celebrations

Due to the presence of the Christmas Village on Union Terrace, Aberdeen's traditional Hogmanay celebrations will be moved to an alternative location on Schoolhill. This will enable the City Events Team to continue to use the approved fireworks launch site on the roof of HMT for the display at midnight marking the start of the New Year, as well as maintaining connectivity with the Christmas Village across the course of the evening.

A programme of entertainment will be scheduled on the stage on the 31st December 2015, which will be placed at the junction of Blackfriars Street outside the Cowdray Hall with the viewing crowds congregating on Schoolhill to view the performances.

This site will enable us to maintain the access between Union Terrace, Union Street and Schoolhill for the purposes of Hogmanay, offering access to a number of experiences to enhance Hogmanay night.

Traffic Management

The management of traffic in Aberdeen during the period of the Aberdeen Winter Festival will be critical to ensuring that the residents, businesses and visitors can continue to travel around the city with the minimum of disruption as this key economic time of the year.

The following proposals and attached plans are currently used successfully for each of the International Market closures which operate from Thursday to Sunday. Over the years a base traffic management plan has been developed with alternative routes set up for the bus infrastructure and to allow all other traffic to flow in a north to south direction.

Aberdeen Inspired and ACC will initiate a campaign to build awareness about the potential impact on traffic in the area including diversions, alternative means of transport and parking available in the city. This awareness raising will need to start as early as possible to enable residents and businesses to make alternative arrangements.

The first traffic order will operate 24 hours per day from the 16th November 2015 to the 8th January 2016 and will close Union Terrace Slip Road, from Union Terrace to Rosemount Viaduct, opposite HMT.

The second phase and full closure of Union Terrace will take effect from the 21st November 2015 and will operate 24 hours per day and will close Union Terrace between Union Street and Rosemount Viaduct. Diamond Place will be closed between Union Terrace and Diamond Street.

In addition to the proposed closure of Union Terrace, further restrictions from September 2015 will be in place on Broad Street in relation to the Marischal Square development where southbound traffic will not be affected but Northbound traffic will be restricted to "Bus Only".

Alternative traffic routes will be available via the following:

Northbound via Union Street, King Street, West North Street and Gallowgate

Northbound via Union Street, Rose Street, Skene Street and Rosemount Viaduct.

Southbound via Blackfriars Street, St Andrews Street, Charlotte Street, John Street and Denburn.

Southbound via Skene Street, Woolmanhill and Denburn

(See attached plan No.1 Appendix 3)

Also during the period of the closure, on Union Terrace, Aberdeen, there will be no waiting between its junctions with Union Street and Rosemount Viaduct.

Also by virtue of this order – during the period of the closure, - the prohibition of right turns from Skene Street, Aberdeen, onto Rosemount Viaduct will be suspended *for buses only* also there will be a suspension of waiting on the north side of Skene Street (opposite the junction with Summer Street) and the prohibition of right turns from Rosemount Viaduct, Aberdeen, onto Skene Terrace will be suspended.

Bus Infrastructure

The existing bus stops on Union Terrace (5 No.) will be removed and temporary stops put in place on Rosemount Viaduct, north of the Skene Street junction (Noose and Monkey / Denburn Health Centre) for bus number 3 (First) number 3G, number 4 and 59 (Stagecoach).

First Bus number 12 will utilise existing stops at Guild Street and Woolmanhill.

First Bus number 20 loop via Gallowgate / Broad Street/ Union Street/ Bridge Street / Wapping Street / Guild Street.

The 'country buses' (Oldmeldrum / Westhill / Inverurie) go via Guild Street / Wapping Street / Denburn and utilise the bus stop on Woolmanhill at the Raeburn Place junction.

For clarity, the current bus diversion routes for the closure of Union Terrace are detailed on plan.

The ACC transport team has initiated regular meetings with the bus companies to discuss issues and ameliorative actions.

(See attached plan No.2 Appendix 4)

Additional Car Parking

Recently one lane of the Denburn Dual Carriageway was removed while the contractor carried out work on the neighbouring Triple Kirks development. Officers are currently considering the provision of additional car parking on the east carriageway to accommodate approx. 50 vehicles along its length. If approved the "at any time" restriction will be removed through the Temporary Traffic Regulation Order.

These parking bays would be "Free of Charge" to stop all day commuter parking throughout the closure period and would only be operational between 10.00am and 18.00 hours.

(See attached plan No.3 Appendix 5)

Road Signage

The road signage will be based on the International Market model **(See attached plan No. 4 Appendix 6)** but extended to ensure that all major routes, both north and south of Union Street are captured due to the upcoming changes to traffic movements on Broad Street. Southbound to Union Street there will be no change, however northbound traffic will be restricted to "Buses Only"

The existing International Market signage is as follows:

Union Terrace – (both ends) - Road Closed

Diamond Place – Road Closed

South College Street and Guild Street – ‘Union Terrace Closed, please use Denburn Dual Carriageway’

Rosemount Viaduct – ‘Road to Right Closed’ (at Library), ‘Road to Left Closed’ (at HMT) and ‘Union Terrace Closed, please use Denburn Dual Carriageway’ at Denburn Health Centre

Union Street at Diamond Street – ‘Road to Left Closed’

Union Street at Trinity Centre – ‘Road to Right Closed’

Skene Street (opposite YMCA) – ‘Union Terrace Closed, please use Denburn Dual Carriageway’

Additional Road Signage

(See attached plan No.5 Appendix 7)

Due to the length of the closure period additional advance signage will be provided on the following key routes into the City.

Skene Square, north of Woolmanhill Roundabout (to capture Berryden corridor)

Market Street, between Hadden Street and Guild Street at Shiprow

Skene Street, at back of Central Library (for vehicles from Spa Street and Woolmanhill Area (including John Street and Denburn

Great Southern Road south of King George VI Bridge

West Tullos Road, east of Great Southern Road roundabout

Wellington Road at QE Bridge

Holburn Street between Union Grove and Albyn Place

Albyn Place east of Rubislaw Place

Crown Street south of Windmill Brae

College Street south of Guild Street

King Street between Merkland Road East and Errol Street

Bon Accord Street at Langstane Place

Schoolhill at the Academy Shopping Centre (to divert traffic via Blackfriars Street / Denburn dual carriageway)

Beach Boulevard, west of Links Road

Queens Road, between Forest Road and Fountainhall Road

In addition to the above fixed signage our existing Variable Message Signs (VMS) on all major routes into the City will inform drivers of the closures to maximise driver notification.

Currently ACC staff within the ITS team work on the six weekends before Christmas to monitor the traffic movements and make alterations to the traffic light signal times in order to keep the traffic moving as smoothly as is reasonably possible

Discussions have also been initiated with the Public Transport Unit regarding opportunities to change behaviour of residents in Aberdeen and their interaction with public transport, thus reducing the number of vehicles on the road network during the busy festive period.

Increasing the number of parking spaces around the city (i.e. school playgrounds, large businesses etc.)

Given that the Winter Festival closure will be running 7 days a week for 6 weeks, there is little opportunity during this period to utilise school playgrounds and car parks belonging to businesses. These will be in operation during the majority of the closure and would only be available on weekends.

One option is to consider additional Park & Ride sites and run a shuttle bus to terminal points within the City. Two locations have been considered.

Location 1 – Parking on both sides of the Beach Esplanade from Accommodation Road to the toilet block at Footdee. This area can accommodate approx. 325 vehicles and a number of temporary bus stops would be provided along its length.

The area would require a shuttle bus to operate between the Esplanade with a terminal point created on the eastern end of the Castlegate. The proposed times of operation would be 10.00am with the last bus leaving the City Centre at 18.00 hours.

Location 2 – Parking on both sides of St Fitticks Road from Balnagask Road to Greyhope Road. This area can accommodate approx. 160 vehicles and a number of temporary bus stops would be provided along its length.

The area would require a shuttle bus to operate between the existing car park area on Greyhope Road to Poynerook Road which can serve Union Square and give easy access to the City Centre. The proposed times of operation would be 10.00am with the last bus leaving the City Centre at 18.00 hours.

Location 3 – During previous festive periods, Woodhill House has been used as a P & R site to encourage residents to the west of the City (around Anderson Drive) to gain easy access and free parking.

This option would require further discussion with Aberdeenshire Council due to recent changes to the existing site, barriers have been installed along with Automatic Number Plate Recognition. (ANPR).

However this site has proved problematic in the past as the service is run in conjunction with the Kingswells P & R service. Buses used to arrive at Woodhill House with limited capacity available for those wishing to board.

Winter maintenance

Concerns have been raised regarding the winter maintenance programme and the ability to ensure that the road and footways on Union Terrace remain safe at all times for the suppliers and pedestrians who enter the winter village site.

In the event of snowfall and/or compacted ice it is unlikely that the gritting vehicles in operation at this time of year will be able to access the site as the grit is normally sprayed at a height that would compromise the village infrastructure on the street.

Aberdeen Inspired will need to determine how winter maintenance and safe site management will be undertaken during the festive period in the event of adverse weather and sub-zero temperatures.

This will also need to take into consideration if/when the village should cease operation due to inclement weather and the risk to public safety.

Special Events Working Group

Since March 2015, discussions have been ongoing with a wide range of partners and agencies including Police Scotland, Scotland Fire and Rescue Service, the Scottish Ambulance Service, First Group, Visit Aberdeen and APA regarding the city's plans for the Aberdeen Winter Festival.

This groups support is vital in the delivery of the all the planned activities and can provide the much needed guidance and support to ensure that all risks are identified and minimised for the benefit of all those who organise, manage and attend any/all of the events in the Aberdeen Winter Festival.

The group have been largely supportive of the ambitious plans to deliver this programme and continue to provide welcome advice and direction as we move towards the detailed planning of the programme of events this winter. A positive meeting was held with all parties on 2nd September 2015.

Marketing & Communications

The Aberdeen Winter Festival and Christmas Village marketing and communications will focus on:

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 to SHOP, STAY & PLAY.

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

Benefits: A vibrant and engaging programme of festive events that showcase Aberdeen to residents and visitors alike. A sense of pride and excitement for the Aberdeen Winter Festival and a desire to visit Aberdeen and the region during this season.

Brand: The Aberdeen Winter Festival brand (Appendix 8) is modern and contemporary to reflect the ambitions of the programme and city, using strong imagery reflecting the events, lifestyle, retail and infrastructure of the city.

The Aberdeen Winter Festival Strategy will ensure that activity any activity undertaken by Aberdeen City Council and supporting partners is carefully focussed to secure maximum exposure and best value. Every opportunity will be taken to maximise our investment by ensuring local (Aberdeen centric) campaigns dovetail with regional (Aberdeen City and Shire) and national (VisitScotland) promotional activity.

Every effort will be made to encourage local residents and visitors to visit Aberdeen over the festive period through a strong event and retail offering that is differentiated from those of other Scottish cities such as Dundee and Inverness.

Essential to the success of this campaign is the core content held on the Aberdeen City Council website and also partner websites including Aberdeen Inspired, Visit Aberdeen and Visit Scotland. All marketing activity will drive traffic to this website where visitors will be able to find out detailed information on the festive programme and the wider offering within Aberdeen City and Shire including retail, transportation and accommodation providers. This website will be updated regularly with news and features to ensure repeat visits and can also accommodate partner offerings and reciprocal links to those organisations within the region.

This activity will be complemented by the marketing and promotion undertaken by Aberdeen Inspired in respect of the Christmas Village and Visit Aberdeen as a destination of choice during the festive period.

The aim of the Aberdeen Winter Festival marketing campaign is to ensure widespread awareness of and attendance at events happening across Aberdeen during the festive period by raising the profile and promoting the city as a festive destination of choice.

Aberdeen City and Shire has a large and well established network of weekly, daily and broadcast media. A number of news agencies and district offices of national publications also operate within the area. Community newsletters and talking newspapers also operate.

The variety of titles provides good opportunities to focus on the Aberdeen Winter Festival and the Christmas Village key messages locally and nationally, as appropriate.

Summary

Gaining suitable exposure for the Aberdeen Winter Festival, and particularly events happening in Aberdeen, will rely on working with a wide range of media in the lead up to, and during winter 2015.

All material prepared for the media will also be copied to Visit Aberdeen and Visit Scotland to add to their portfolio of news and information about events.

Focussed advertising campaign: the advertising activity will need to be carefully considered to ensure that the investment provides a good return within a limited budget. A range of adverts will be created which complement a suite of marketing collateral and the website address. Where adverts are being placed, negotiations will take place to request editorial space to accompany the advert.

Aberdeen Inspired TV and Radio Advertising Campaign:

Aberdeen Inspired has undertaken festive advertising in recent years to reflect the desire to modernise the City's approach to its television presence.

With support and additional footage supplied by BID partners, a Aberdeen Winter Festival TV campaign could complement and demonstrate continuity in message across the City offering.

Similarly, the tone of voice and information provided in the sound bites for radio will raise awareness of the key events and reinforce the SHOP, STAY & PLAY message.

VisitScotland Seasonal Mailer/Winter White Campaign:

Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeen Inspired may wish to consider committing monies to an seasonal mailer and the Winter White campaign that will highlight destination information and feature specific partner offers for accommodation, dining out etc.

Again an opportunity for BID partners to support these promotions may available.

Aberdeen City Council website:

As the city's primary source of news on Aberdeen events, it is critical that the portal is developed as a key source of information. Work is on-going to ensure that the site contains all the information required and will be updated as activities develop. The website is a good way of reaching those visitors from outwith the region in other parts of Scotland, nationally and internationally.

www.aberdeencitycouncil.co.uk/WinterFestival will be used on all promotional materials, with reciprocal links arranged with relevant sites – particularly retail, accommodation and travel providers etc. There will also be a link to the VisitScotland www.aberdeenandgrampian.com website.

Website E-postcard:

An electronic postcard could be started initially as an internal promotion, made available to all partner organisations websites for staff to send onto family and friends, as well as being placed on the Visit Scotland website. It should reflect the overall imagery of the Aberdeen Winter Festival branding and give people the opportunity to add their own personal message. Once the person has received it, there should be part of the email which gives them an opportunity to send it onto a friend.

Aberdeen Winter Festival Guide:

With a minimum distribution of 20,000 locally, nationally and internationally this high quality free listings guide proved so popular last year that it will be developed further for this year's campaign.

Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeen Inspired Winter Supplement:

Through existing media relationships, a joint collaboration between Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeen Inspired would be the most obvious demonstration of the partnership that exists in the city with the single objective of promoting the Aberdeen Winter Festival and the Christmas Village, additional events, retail, accommodation and transportation and the region as a whole.

Aberdeen Winter Festival Leaflets:

Containing a full list of key events taking place in Aberdeen and made available in public buildings, tourist attractions, hotels and conference facilities. It will also point people to the website and include basic details about the general city offering.

Aberdeen Winter Festival Postcards:

To be made available widely in public buildings across Aberdeen City and Shire, as well as handouts in shops, tourist attractions, hotels etc. These will have a strong image on one side, along with the Aberdeen Winter Festival brand and promotional of the website. On the back there will be space for people to write a message and the address.

Aberdeen Winter Festival Posters:

To be displayed in buildings to promote the message and encourage people to find out more information about the Aberdeen Winter Festival and Christmas Village.

Outdoor Advertising:

Where possible street signage will be used to promote the Aberdeen Winter Festival..

Subject to budget, bus and train advertising opportunities will also be explored.

Regional Gateways

Gateways to Aberdeen City and Shire will be very important to help raise awareness of the Aberdeen Winter Festival and discussions will begin shortly with relevant partners.

Face to face: work has already begun to speak to local groups about the Aberdeen Winter Festival and this work will continue. Accommodation providers, retailers, event organisers, travel co-ordinators etc will benefit from hearing first-hand about the programme of events on offer.

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.

The City Events Team works closely with a number of city agencies 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 annual 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.

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

[Item 16 – FP&R Committee June 9th 2015](#)

[Item 5 – Full Council February 5th 2015](#)

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

Dawn Schultz

City Promotions Manager

Tel: x 2767

Dschultz@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Appendix 1a and 1b – Christmas Village financial model

Appendix 2 – Union Terrace Christmas Village site plan

Appendix 3 - Aberdeen Winter Festival 2015 – Plan 1

Appendix 4 – Aberdeen Winter Festival 2015 – Plan 2

Appendix 5 – Aberdeen Winter Festival 2015 – Plan 3

Appendix 6 – Aberdeen Winter Festival 2015 – Plan 4

Appendix 7 – Aberdeen Winter Festival 2015 – Plan 5

Appendix 8 – Aberdeen’s Winter Festival 2015 – Aberdeen Winter Festival branding