

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Finance Policy & Resources
DATE	16 February 2016
DIRECTOR	Angela Scott, Chief Executive
TITLE OF REPORT	City Events 2016-17
REPORT NUMBER	OCE/16/006
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	Yes

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the city events programme 2016-17 detailed in Appendix One, and includes for members consideration issues relevant to the city's ambition to grow its existing events portfolio.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. That members note the content of this report.
2. That members approve the proposed events programme for 2016 – 2017, and a budget of £510,000 subject to the normal budgetary process.
3. That members confirm their continued support for the international street market to be held in the city centre and instruct officers to procure a market operator to deliver this activity.
4. That members instruct officers to undertake an events review to support the development of a 3-5 year events strategy.
5. That members instruct officers to explore the creation of an events bid fund to support the attraction of larger/signature events as outlined in Aberdeen 365 City Centre Masterplan theme.
6. That members instruct officers to develop a report on sponsorship to be presented to a future committee for consideration.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Budget : The delivery of the city events programme 2016-17 is dependent upon an allocation within the Communications & Promotion budget, covering staffing costs (4 FTE) and specific events. This will be determined in February 2016 as part of the Council's corporate budget setting process.

If there is a significant change from 2015/2016 to 2016/2017 in the operational or staffing budgets for city events, a revised report will be brought forward to the next appropriate Committee for consideration. In 2015/2016, the allocated operational budget was £510,000, and Appendix One sets out how a similar level of budget would be allocated to key activities in 2016/2017.

It should be noted that there are significant budgetary pressures placed on all individual event budgets due to the costs associated with traffic management, 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 local authority obligations under Health and Safety legislation.

The Corporate Communications & Promotion revenue budget also accommodates 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.

Sponsorship: 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.

Efforts are being made to explore opportunities to secure external income streams that would support the work of Aberdeen City Council and the future growth of the events programme without creating an additional financial burden on the public purse.

Work is ongoing in the Communications & Promotion Service to identify and develop sponsorship opportunities across Aberdeen City Council that could deliver income in the future, relating to the assets available to the local authority.

Support is also being sought for the establishment of an events bid fund that would provide a financial resource to maximise the opportunities for attracting new events to Aberdeen in the future.

The budget, criteria and framework for the fund have yet to be determined but it is proposed that a further report be brought to Finance, Policy & Resources Committee in summer 2016, which provides members with the detail required to determine whether such a fund will provide the city with the opportunity to develop its core event programme to match the city's future ambitions as a dynamic, cultural hub.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Staffing: The City Events team is currently staffed by one full-time Senior City Events Officer, two full-time City Events Officers and one full-time City Events Executive. The successful delivery of the city events programme is dependent on a fully-staffed team.

To ensure the most appropriate use of staff time and resources in delivering events in Aberdeen, officers from the team work with colleagues in other Council services including Cultural Services, Licensing and Traffic Management to ensure the safe delivery of events.

The City Events Team also 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 business 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 benefit local traders within the city.

Twinning & 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.

Following an annual review of the programme in 2015-16, activities in 2016-17 will aim to grow and develop the existing twin city relationships while seeking to complement Aberdeen's existing events programme.

Management of events in Aberdeen's parks and open spaces: Working in partnership with colleagues in Communities, Housing & Infrastructure, the City Events team support the delivery of a large programme of events in our parks and open spaces, provide support and advice for Friends groups established in Aberdeen and seek to advise and finance through rental fees, the upgrading of infrastructure in our public spaces to ensure their continued suitability for events and activities

City Centre Masterplan: Following the recent appointment of the City Centre Director, it is crucial that there is early engagement with all relevant services within Aberdeen City Council and external stakeholders. This will ensure that

the city's infrastructure supports a year round offer of high quality innovative events that reflect the culture and heritage of the Aberdeen while generating economic, physical and social benefits for the city, its residents and visitors. All of these aims have outlined in the Aberdeen 365 theme in the City Centre Masterplan.

Also included in the City Centre Masterplan is the connectivity of public places in the city and their use as event spaces in the future. The City Events team continue to encourage the use of spaces including the Castlegate and Marischal College Quad but this needs to be considered in the wider context of the plan and how people interact with the city centre environment.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

Events programme 2016-17: This report outlines the proposed programme of events the City Events team is tasked with delivering on behalf of Aberdeen City Council in 2016 – 2017. It also identifies the associated budgets that ensure events are delivered within our legal responsibilities under Health and Safety legislation.

The City Events team provides 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 external partners are crucial going forward.

The events detailed in the City 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.

It should be noted that the cost to deliver Hogmanay in 2015 exceeded the current budget with monies being redirected from existing service budgets and that this will not be sustainable in future years, so additional monies would be required to continue to deliver an event of this scale going forward.

A separate report provides members with feedback on the Christmas Village in 2015 and offers members options in relation to the Winter Festival in 2016, which is a key element of the City Events programme.

International street market: The existing international street market operator has approached Aberdeen City Council with a view to altering the existing terms of its contract, previously procured by the City Centre Manager in Economic Development.

Members are asked to consider their ongoing support for the international street market in the city centre. Also to achieve best value for Aberdeen City

Council in the delivery of this activity, that a procurement exercise is undertaken to test the market for operators of international street markets.

Going forward and subject to a successful procurement exercise that secures a market operator, the City Events team will undertake the organisation and delivery of the international street market.

Events review: Discussions are ongoing with colleagues in Cultural Services to develop an events strategy for the next five years that will cover the existing cultural programme, built and natural heritage and civic events. The development of an events strategy will allow the current offer to be reviewed, and where appropriate, incorporated into a year long rolling programme of cultural events which will seek to establish the city as a host for a range of high quality innovative events, provide bespoke activity throughout the seasons, establish and maintain signature events originating in Aberdeen and generate economic, physical and social benefits for the city, its residents and its visitors.

In order to achieve this, research will need to be undertaken to review the existing cultural and city events funded and/or delivered by a number of departments within Aberdeen City Council and consideration being given in line with the City Centre Master Plan of the infrastructure needs to deliver Aberdeen's future events ambitions.

See the draft brief in Appendix Two detailing the research be undertaken, with a view to having an events strategy in place in 2016.

6. IMPACT

Improving Customer Experience – Supporting and delivering a diverse programme of city events is expected to improve the experience of customers (Aberdeen's citizens, businesses and visitors) by:

- Raising awareness locally, nationally and internationally of the festivals and events held in Aberdeen
- Better positioning of Aberdeen as a city destination for those looking for new and unique event experiences
- Providing city infrastructure that attracts and supports external event organisers
- Maintaining and building on the profile of Aberdeen as a great place, to live, study, work, invest and visit. This will also help promote and enhance the long-term economic prosperity of the North East of Scotland by attracting more business and leisure tourism to the area.

Improving Staff Experience – Delivering the Christmas Village and wider Winter Festival provides the staff involved with valuable experience of dealing with a wide range of internal (Elected Members, senior officers) and external (businesses, contractors, suppliers etc) customers from diverse sectors including creative, cultural and event industries.

Staff within Aberdeen City Council from the Council's Promotions and Communication Service will work closely with colleagues Culture services, Transportation and Environmental services to improve the city's tourism performance and make it an even more attractive city to visit.

Improving our use of Resources – By working in partnership with internal and external event partners, of which Aberdeen City Council will take a lead role, the Council is able to share the workload and take lead or supporting roles where appropriate, without compromising the level of service delivered to the customer – the Aberdeen's residents and visitors to the city.

This will also help Aberdeen City Council understand the needs of destination development and marketing to help support tourism growth, and delivery of the tourism objectives in the City Centre Masterplan and the Regional Economic Strategy.

Corporate: The contents of the report relate directly to delivering the quality of life aspects of the Administration's **Smarter Aberdeen** vision as follows –

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.

Public – Neither an Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment nor a Privacy Impact Assessment is required for this report. There may be some public/media interest in the parts of the city events programme that involve participation by Elected members and/or officers.

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

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