

ABERDEEN 365 EVENTS STRATEGY

REYKJAVÍK, ICELAND <http://visitreykjavik.is/annual-events>



Overview:

- ▶ European City of Culture created attitudinal change
- ▶ Culture, festivals & event and city promotion consolidated in one department
- ▶ Arms-length funding process by Council
- ▶ Close cooperation between City Council and independent festivals
- ▶ Year round festivals calendar punctuated by major high profile events
- ▶ Focus on growing Signature Festivals but events first and foremost for the citizens
- ▶ Sport events delivered independently
- ▶ Winter festival exploits authenticity and distinctiveness.

Area	Findings	Learning for Aberdeen
Introduction – Background	<p>Population of circa 120,000 (over 200,000 in the region). European City of Culture in 2000 - identified potential for festivals and events to change residents' negative perceptions, build self-confidence and pride. Also to change international profile, gain international recognition and develop visitor tourism.</p> <p>The Department of Culture and Tourism portfolio includes cultural assets (libraries, museums, galleries), Visit Reykjavík (VR) responsible for the City's policy in culture, promoting Reykjavík as a tourist destination and promoting and strengthening a vibrant and flourishing cultural city. Reykjavík funds the Reykjavík City Theatre and joint owns Harpa concert hall and conference centre. It is a UNESCO City of Literature.</p>	<p>Used European City of Culture bid as a catalyst to change attitudes and increase pride and self-confidence of the residents about their city.</p> <p>Culture, festivals & event and city promotion consolidated in one department.</p>
How City engages with festivals and events	<p>Last 5-7 years seen massive development in festivals and events. Visit Reykjavík runs several important city festivals: Reykjavík Culture Night (same night as city's marathon), Winter Lights Festival (incorporates Museums Night and Swimming Pool nights) and Children's Festival.</p> <p>VR is responsible for grant aid to a wide-range of city festivals: Reykjavík Arts Festival, Iceland Airwaves, Reykjavík Film Festival, Gay Pride, Colour Run, Design March and Yoko Ono's Imagine Peace Tower.</p> <p>Also supports over 50 smaller local festivals and events plus artists/cultural producers.</p>	<p>Promotes an annual festivals and events calendar, punctuated by major high profile events.</p> <p>Festivals are first and foremost for the citizens – tourism builds on this authenticity.</p> <p>Portfolio of city and independently delivered events.</p>
Governance & management	<p>VR's budget as part of Dept. is set annually by City.</p> <p>Uses arms-length principal for external grants using panel of assessors from cultural sector. Panel decisions ratified by members of Council's Culture & Tourism committee.</p>	<p>Arms-length independent funding process.</p>

Services provided by Events Office -Team and Responsibilities	Visit Reykjavík is in charge of tourism, marketing and events. In-house team manage operate and promote VR portfolio of events	Co-ordinated promotion of festivals and events by the city
Funding Policy of City to culture	Currently major external events awarded 3 year contract then apply again. Undertaking review of funding policy: Aim to build a framework of 5 – 6 key external major events to support them with increased funding; longer funding cycle. Also aim to reduce number of smaller annual grants (circa. 500 applications pa); and introduce quality and sustainability criteria.	Recognise need to put greater investment into signature events over a number of years. Rationalise support for repeat funding of small events with clear criteria.
Funding Themes / Criteria	Signature festivals criteria: Of importance to local community; Identified as a major city cultural event; Good vehicle for promoting Reykjavík; Authentic to Reykjavík	Signature festivals criteria based on local connection and promotional opportunity.
Promotion & Marketing	Visit Reykjavík leads extensive promotion of Reykjavík as a destination both for leisure and conference tourism. Events key strand of promotion.	Use of events in marketing.
Non-cultural events – sport	‘Advent Festival’ VR supports Business Chamber led events with artistic and promotional input. Grown as a tourist draw features: Ice Rink, music everywhere – lots of outdoor music events - streets, bars... small Icelandic traditional market. Sporting events (e.g. marathon) delivered by Reykjavík’s Association of Sports. Bidding more for mid-scale international events (runner-up World OutGames).	Business & City collaborates to make a winter experience authentic and distinctive. Sport events delivered independently.