

BLUE SAIL▶

VISITORS PLACES DESTINATIONS

ABERDEEN 365 EVENTS STRATEGY OPERATIONAL REPORT

REPORT FOR ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

SEPTEMBER 2016

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This Operational Report is accompanied by two further reports - the Events Strategy itself and another summarising the five case studies of successful event cities.

1 THIS REPORT

This report follows the Aberdeen 365 Events Strategy report produced by Blue Sail for Aberdeen City Council. It provides more operational detail, advice and recommendations in a number of areas which will help in the implementation of the strategy, specifically:

- ▶ Animation and reactivation of city spaces and venues
- ▶ Developing and enhancing the current programme of events to deliver the strategy
- ▶ New opportunities and ideas for additional events which fit the strategic approach
- ▶ Sponsorship
- ▶ Monitoring, evaluation and intelligence
- ▶ Terms of reference for the Steering Group of the new dedicated Events Unit within ACC

A REMINDER OF THE STRATEGIC APPROACH

The Aberdeen 365 strategy is based on the concept of a **String of Pearls**. An approach based on **quality not quantity**, constructed around an annual calendar of **Headline** (major) and **Feature** (niche, specialist) events and festivals that punctuate the year with something significant happening each month.

The implementation of the strategy should be driven by Aberdeen City Council through a **combined Events Unit** acting mainly as an **enabler, commissioner, and facilitator** rather than a direct deliverer of events. Its work should be overseen by an **independent Steering Group** to ensure engagement with and input from the events sector and strategic partners.

The investment process should involve an **annual open call for bids** and all organisers seeking funding must demonstrate how an event will deliver against **clear criteria** including quality, ambition, visitor appeal, capacity building and sustainability. External events should be required to bid under the new arrangements and given the opportunity to 'step up' ie to grow, develop or enhance their event. Events created or maintained by the City Council will also need to demonstrate adherence to the new criteria. There should be a separate **bid fund for bought in events** which will enhance the programme and fit the strategic criteria.

2 MAKING ABERDEEN'S PUBLIC SPACES EVENT READY

Reactivating and animating Aberdeen's public spaces is one of the priorities of the City Centre Masterplan. Events are ideally placed to do this. Public spaces create the stage for informal public performance, street festivals, intelligent lighting, and large-scale public art works. These organic, inclusive gatherings contribute to the character and appeal of public spaces and provide emotional resonance for visitors and locals alike, influencing how people move and gather and how they experience the place.

DEVELOPING INFRASTRUCTURE

The Masterplan states that key open spaces will be made 'event ready', capable of hosting a range of events and entertainments. This means designing spaces with outdoor performance front of mind in the specification. This should include:

- ▶ Provision of flat, open space
- ▶ No street furniture or public art that cannot be easily moved
- ▶ Provision of electricity power supply, water and drainage at appropriate underground points
- ▶ Vehicle access for unloading
- ▶ Performer parking.

Specific event routes and public space sites need to be defined and agreed with external rights holders 6 – 12 months in advance of an event and therefore need to be built into infrastructure works programmes to ensure the events can be delivered. The implementation and phasing of the city centre masterplan must ensure that the right public spaces and venues are available.

With the pedestrianisation of Broad Street and the Marishcal Square development, along with Castlegate and Union Terrace Gardens, Aberdeen will have a varied range of small to medium scale open air spaces. For events that use these spaces and incorporate spatial and sequential programming (e.g. SPECTRA, LookAgain, and the Jazz Festival), it will be crucial to interconnect the spaces and create a safe public flow between them, and elsewhere in the city centre.

Unusual venues can be used to great effect to transform familiar spaces and cultural venues. A good example of this is in Horsens, Denmark where KUBEN a striking 6x6x6 metre contemporary glass space functions year round as a venue for cultural performances and exhibitions in the city centre. It is free to hire for residents and helps make the city centre a vibrant and entertaining place. Aberdeen would benefit from this type of facility.

OVERCOMING HURDLES

The principal potential event space in the city centre is Union Street, a wide boulevard, with excellent public access and transport links, large safe audience standing, striking viewing perspectives and architecture. It is a natural setting for major national and international events such as Tour of Britain, Great Aberdeen Run, CityGames and street theatre spectacles and site specific commissions, such as SPECTRA might commission. The Beach Esplanade is another location for major street theatre spectacles and potential route for cycling and running sporting events.

Whilst the closure of main transport arteries is logistically and politically challenging, cities across the UK are recognising the value of hosting major public events and spectacles in their city centres and directly addressing major road closures. Significant examples include Deansgate, Manchester for its CityGames, Princes Street Edinburgh for Hogmanay, Liverpool centre for La Machine's spider, and central London for a host of events including Ride London, London Marathon and Royal de Luxe's Sultan's Elephant. With advance notice, managed engagement and an inclusive approach to promotion other places have demonstrated that residents and locals can be brought on board, and in fact have resulted in a sense of civic pride. This is something that Aberdeen needs to address both to capitalise on its iconic public spaces and to secure local support for large events. Bids for designations such as Capital or City of Culture or UNESCO recognised cities can hugely help this process (cf Reykjavik, Derry and Hull) and very clear set out a city's ambition.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

A number of the bigger venues sit outside the city centre (Beach Esplanade, Hazlehead and Duthie Parks and the existing and new AECC). A major opportunity is lost if events taking place in these venues are centred solely there and connections not made into the city centre. If visitors can be brought into the city centre then the benefits of events are spread, the city becomes more vibrant and spend will increase. To make this happen will require a focused effort and collaboration with event organisers. It could include shuttle buses, information (maps and apps) on walking routes, taxi ranks etc. as well as promotion which gives strong reasons for visiting the centre. Bars, restaurants, shops and hotels should be involved in this promotion which might include special offers and deals for event-goers to entice people in. Associated fringe events in city centre spaces and venues should be encouraged.

FUNDING CRITERIA

Aberdeen 365 Strategy has a set of criteria on which funding for events should be based. **We recommend adding an additional criterion which requires organisers bidding for funding to demonstrate the contribution they will make to the reactivation and animation of public space.**

3 DEVELOPING THE PROGRAMME

String of Pearls is based on the premise that there will be at least one Headline or Feature event each month (see Strategy report for definitions of these two categories; there are also City and Community events which are local in their focus and draw).

The table below considers the existing programme, their potential as a major attractor (ie a Headline or Feature event) and therefore the priority they should have for funding. **It cannot be stated strongly enough that no event should be guaranteed funding under the new arrangements and all current events must step up from their current level of operation to secure future investment.** Equally however all events should be given the chance to meet the criteria of the strategy and make their case in an open bidding process. This means that the table below is simply our view at this point in time. The final column in the table provides some additional suggestions of where each event could usefully focus its efforts (some are already under discussion), but the challenge should be given to event organisers to come up with ambitious proposals which will meet the strategic criteria.

CURRENT EVENT PROGRAMME

Month	Festival/Event	Current Classification	Potential Classification	Funding Priority	Potential development	Venues
February	SPECTRA	Feature	Headline	High	Upscale site specific & international commissioning	Union Street Marischal frontage + quad, Castlegate, Broad Street Union Tce Gardens
March	Aberdeen Jazz Festival	City	Feature	Medium	Increase Jazz on the Green events in city centre outdoor spaces Programme top names and/or develop particular strands to stand out from other jazz festivals. Develop Nordic links	Music Hall, Lemon Tree, Blue Lamp, Castlegate, Broad Street, Union Tce Gardens, St Nicholas Roof Garden, City centre street stages, city centre bars

March	Granite Noir	City	Feature	Medium	Highlight Nordic noir themes	Belmont Fimhouse, His Majesty's Theatre, Lemon Tree
April/May	Look Again	City	Headline	High	Relocate dates to summer period Collaborate with NuArts Programme major international street theatre events for city centre	Citywide street venues , Broad Street, Beach Esplanade
June	Enjoy Music	City	Feature	Medium	Build collaborations to curate stages and venues in city centre	Hazlehead Park, Lemon Tree, city centre music venues & bars
June	Highland Games	City	Feature	Medium	Develop contemporary aspects Linkages and activity in city centre Programme associated cultural activity	Hazlehead Park, Castlegate Broad Street
July	Aberdeen International Youth Festival	City	City	Low	Transfer delivery to specialist music tour operator Staged withdrawal of ACC funding from event over 2 years	Music Hall, Lemon Tree, Castlegate, Broad Street, Union Tce Gardens, St Nicholas Roof Garden, City centre street stages
July	BP Big Screen	City	City	Low	Immediate halt to ACC funding for event	Duthie Park
August	Celebrate Aberdeen	City	Feature	Medium	Upscale to participatory city-wide cultural event Engage with city's wider professional cultural sector	His Majesty's Theatre, Music Hall, Aberdeen Art Gallery, Cowdray Hall, Union Street, Lemon Tree, Castlegate, Broad Street, Union Tce Gardens, City centre street stages
September	Truenorth	Feature	Feature	Medium	Greater emphasis on the regionally distinctive Integrate internationalism of Northern Arc	Music Hall, Lemon Tree, City centre bars
October	DanceLive	Feature	Feature	Medium	Greater emphasis on	His Majesty's Theatre, Lemon Tree,

					commissioning Scottish based artists & companies Appoint high-level artistic director	Castlegate, Broad Street, Union Tce Gardens , City centre street stages
November	Sound	Feature	Feature	Medium	Broaden programming to increase access & engagement Greater use of city centre spaces & venues	Music Hall, Lemon Tree, Cowdray Hall, City centre bars

POTENTIAL NEW EVENTS

Even with development and investment the current programme falls short in delivering sufficient Headline events. While Feature events can support the programme they are the smaller, specialist or niche ‘pearls’ which fit around the high impact Headline events. It will therefore be necessary for the city to commission new activity to extend existing events or stage entirely new ones. In general we take the approach that it is better to have home-grown than bought-in events and this should remain the long term strategy to build capacity and sustainability. However by careful commissioning of events which deliver the strategic criteria and fit the city’s cultural narrative, then the String of Pearls can be delivered in the short term and a boost given to the city’s events programme. Regular new commissions will also keep things fresh and introduce an element of ‘surprise’ into the regular programme.

The table below suggests opportunities for new activity and new events, where they might take place and with an indication of likely cost. Where similar events have taken place elsewhere we indicate that as examples and include contact details of the event company.

New/Extended Events	Venues	Activity	Indicative Cost	Illustrative City	Company Website
SPECTRA Indicative Commissions	Union Street Marischal frontage + quad Castlegate Broad Street Union Tce Gardens	Commissioning programme of site-specific light installations and 3D projection mapping	£1,000,000	Durham, Eindhoven	http://nva.org.uk www.porteparlevent.com echelman.com http://lesorpailleursdelumiere.com

	<i>Infrastructure: electricity power supply points</i>				
LookAgain NuArt Transe Express As The World Tipped Place des Anges Les Commandos Percu	Citywide Beach Esplanade Broad Street Broad Street Beach Esplanade	Commissioning programme Aerial spectacular Aerial spectacular Aerial spectacular Music percussion fireworks	£75,000 £50,000 £40,000 £50,000 £35,000	Stavanger Derby Birmingham Hull Derby	www.nuartfestival.no www.transe-express.com/en www.wiredaerialtheatre.com www.lesstudiosdecirque.com www.commandospercu.com
	<i>Infrastructure: Mobile stages; electricity power supply points; performer changing space. For audience: Road closure shuttle bus/park & ride, signed, safe walkways</i>				
Winter Light Festival Christmas Village Fireworks, Christmas Lights Hogmanay SPECTRA – grand finale	Union Street Marischal frontage + quad Castlegate Broad Street Union Tce Gardens	Unique, local offer (food, drink, crafts) which avoids 'faux', ubiquitous Christmas markets. Innovation in Fireworks Christmas Lighting Develop Hogmanay	£50,000		
	<i>Infrastructure: Mobile stages; electricity power & water supply at underground points; vehicle access & parking for trader unloading</i>				
Tall Ships Race	Harbour, Beach Esplanade	Tall Ships Office, Management, Marketing, Logistics, Festival Programme	£2,200,000	Belfast	www.sailtraininginternational.org
	<i>Infrastructure: Mobile stages; electricity power supply points; Secure audience access to harbourside</i>				

North Sea Tall Ship Regatta	Harbour, Beach Esplanade	Tall Ships Office, Management, Marketing, Logistics, Festival Programme	£1,800,000	Blyth	www.sailtraininginternational.org
	Infrastructure: Mobile stages; electricity power supply points; Secure audience access to harbourside				
Tour of Britain	Union St/Beach Esplanade + Aberdeenshire	Hosting Fee and event management and infrastructure plus additional local event activity (Costs shared with Aberdeenshire Council)	£250,000	Glasgow	www.sweetspotgroup.co.uk
	Infrastructure: Mobile stages; electricity power supply points; Team bus parking, road closures shuttle bus/park & ride				
Summer Screen	Union Tce Gardens /St Nicholas Roof Garden / Duthie & Hazlehead Parks/ Art Gallery/ Queens Links/ Marischal College Quad	Programme of films for summer nights across Aberdeen	£11,000	Somerset House, London	www.somersethouse.org.uk/film
	Infrastructure: Mobile (inflatable) movie screen with projector and sound system; electricity supply points				
Royal De Luxe - Saga of the Giants	Union Street Broad Street	Company fee; event management and infrastructure	£1,500,000	Reykjavík / Limerick	www.royal-de-luxe.com/en
	infrastructure: Road closures, electricity power &				

	water supply points; shuttle bus/park & ride				
Great Aberdeen Run & Great CityGames	Union Street, Beach Esplanade	Event management and infrastructure	£140,000	Stirling	www.greatrun.org
	Broad Street, Castlegate and Union Tce Gardens	Cultural happenings in the new events spaces	£30,000		
	infrastructure: Road closures, mobile stages; electricity power & water supply points; athlete changing space, shuttle bus/park & ride				
Aberdeen & Shire Food & Drink Festival	Broad St Castlegate Union Tce Gardens	Management, Promotion, Events & Infrastructure	£180,000	Stavanger / York	
	Infrastructure: Mobile stages; electricity power & water supply at underground points; Road closures, Market Stalls/chalets, vehicle access & parking for traders unloading				
Midsummer Festival	City Centre & Shire	Cultural events Lighting events and installations	£250,000	Cork	

Investment time line

It takes time to develop home grown and commission new original events. It is certainly quicker to buy in events. The table below indicates the likely time lines

Booking existing events which take/have taken place elsewhere	6-12 months
Commissioning - new events/extensions to existing	12-24 months
Bids for national events	18-24 months
Bids for international events	36+ months

EVENTSCOTLAND

EventScotland is keen to work with Aberdeen to support the implementation of an ambitious event strategy which is focused on scale, profile and impact nationally and internationally. **We recommend early discussions are held with EventScotland** to explore the proposed events programme and establish where they can help with advice and funding. In principle Event Scotland can provide 3 year support if there is a clear direction for an event programme. They can also support bids for the right sort of event. Event Scotland's funding programmes are:

- ▶ **International Events Programme** - for events that generate substantial economic benefits for Scotland through increased visitation including tourists, spectators and participants. Events should highlight Scotland as an events and tourism destination through high profile, international media coverage. Funded events in 2017 will be encouraged to embrace the History Heritage and Archaeology themes.
- ▶ **National Events Programme** - designed to support Scotland's events industry in showcasing the country's assets. A focus on History Heritage and Archaeology activity will be encouraged strongly to 2017 funded events. The programme provides assistance to supported events to generate increased national profile, and attract increased. There are specific criteria that events must comply with.
- ▶ **Beacon Events Programme** - the Beacon Events Programme supports uniquely Scottish events that generate tourism benefits and contribute significantly to the Scotland the Perfect Stage strategy impact areas. Events that have completed three years of National Programme funding are eligible to apply, with other listed criteria. In 2017 the focus of funded events where appropriate will be on History Heritage and Archaeology.
- ▶ **Scotland's Winter Festivals Programme** - a funding programme for Winter Festivals, celebrating St Andrew's Day, Hogmanay and Burns Night. The fund encourages event organisers to deliver new or enhanced activity to increase the celebration or promotion of our National Days. (Reopens April 2017)
- ▶ **Scottish Clan Fund** - a fund to provide legally-constituted Clans and Clan Societies with financial support of up to £5,000 for individual events to support additional elements or new activity specifically designed to grow events, expand the visitor experience and spread the benefits of events across the country.
- ▶ **VisitScotland Growth Fund** - a fund for collaborative tourism marketing projects that support growth in the tourism sector and ensure that visitors experience the true Spirit of Scotland. In 2017 VisitScotland is particularly interested in projects that reflect our History Heritage and Archaeology.

THEMATIC YEARS

The Scottish Government designates themed years which drive funding through EventScotland and promotion through VisitScotland. 2017 will be Year of History, Heritage and Archaeology and 2018 Year of Young People.

None of the current or suggested events are a particularly good fit with 2017 themes, so it will require some innovative thinking around new commissions, which could also extend into the shire. This would be an ideal early 'project' for the new Steering Group and, by extension, engagement with the events sector demonstrating the new strategic approach. Ideas potentially worth exploring include:

- ▶ Heritage coast
- ▶ SPECTRA lighting commission for archaeological sites
- ▶ Historic trading and cultural links with Scandinavia
- ▶ A flotilla of old Aberdeen built boats -if enough survive
- ▶ Traditional music (extending Truenorth)

The steering group should be addressing similarly be addressing 2018 early next year. Given the theme a better route might be to think about how to engage young people, rather than to stage events for them. Ideas could include:

- ▶ Commission young artists/creatives (working with universities) to produce special work for events
- ▶ Collaborations between young people in the North East and Scandinavia
- ▶ Appointing 'young curators' for events to work alongside organisers
- ▶ Youth strands in events e.g. young musicians programme for the Jazz Festival/Sound/Truenorth
- ▶ New activity around Enjoy Music festival
- ▶ Great Aberdeen Run or CityGames or other sporting events for under 25s only
- ▶ Tall Ships Regatta (which is aimed at young people).

There is also the opportunity for collaboration with other places in Scotland which will improve the likelihood of national funding as well as generating events of greater scale. EventScotland suggests a tie up with Glasgow on European Championships and/or youth participation is one such opportunity. Another might be collaboration with Dundee which is also seeking to develop its events programme.

BRANDING AND POSITIONING

String of Pearls is not meant to be a consumer facing name, however we think it makes sense to 'package' Aberdeen's events offer (building on the success of Festivals Aberdeen) to support the positioning of the city as a vibrant, cultural place where lots goes on all year round. We recommend packaging the events programme and giving it a 'name' to use in promotion which is a good fit with the city cultural narrative. Here are some illustrative suggestions, but the name and approach should be another early initiative taken forward by the Steering Group in consultation with Visit**Aberdeenshire**:

- ▶ Twelve NorthEast
- ▶ A Dozen Silver Darlings
- ▶ Northern Lights 12
- ▶ Aberdeen12/The Aberdeen Twelve/The Aberdeen Dozen

A strong and effective relationship between the Events Unit and Visit**Aberdeenshire** will be essential to achieving the objectives of the Strategy in attracting visitors and profile (c.f. Rotterdam, Belfast, Liverpool).

4 MONITORING, EVALUATION AND AUDIENCE INTELLIGENCE

At the very least an event should be able to measure how many people attend. Actual audience numbers can however be difficult to measure, particularly for free events but even for paid events. While it is straightforward to measure the number of tickets sold it, is less easy to find out if these are individual visitors or multiple visits by the same person. A computerised Box Office system combining marketing facilities and ticketing functions (and ticketing free events) are the only completely reliable way to measure this.

As well as numbers it is useful to know where people come from, the type of people they are and how much they spend, what else they did as well their views of the event. Such information can readily be gathered via surveys of a sample of people attending the event. There are examples of audience surveys being undertaken by a number of Aberdeen's events. The survey of visitors to the Christmas Village (by Aberdeen Chamber of Commerce commissioned by Aberdeen Inspired) provides on place of origin, spend and satisfaction which will provide a useful baseline. Meanwhile VisitAberdeenshire commissioned Culture Republic to undertake a postcode catchment and profiling analysis of visitors to members of Aberdeen Festivals to allow them to see where attendees were coming from and the kind of people they are.

Ideally all events should be undertaking at least some monitoring and evaluation, and ideally using a consistent approach to allow comparison across events. **We recommend eventIMPACTS Toolkit** as a simple, tried and tested approach and supported by Event Scotland. See www.eventimpacts.com which provides online guidance and good practice for evaluating the economic, social, environmental and media related impacts associated with an event. Approaches are provided for basic (in-house at minimal cost), medium (in-house or contracted out) and advanced (contracted-out) methodologies. Evaluating the media related impacts provide useful insights into place marketing elements.

Another useful tool for ticketed events where the organiser has contact details is Audience Spectrum, developed by the Audience Agency for events to map and identify the cultural profile of their audiences. See www.theaudienceagency.org/audience-spectrum.

We recommend that as part of the sector engagement activity undertaken by the new Events Unit a commitment should be secured to using the eventIMPACTS Toolkit and Audience Spectrum (where contact details are available) and that that this should be a condition of any funding given by ACC.

In addition to research activity undertaken by individual event organisers it would be useful to find out more about the awareness, perceptions and motivations of tourist visitors to the city and the role that events plays and could play in attracting visits. The national surveys (Great Britain Tourism

Survey and International Passenger Survey) provide some data but are limited because of sample size and the lack of fine grain in questions. VisitAberdeenshire working with Scottish Enterprise has recently contracted with the Chamber of Commerce to develop and deliver a more robust approach to local data and intelligence. **We recommend discussions take place with VA to establish the opportunity to gather information which might inform festivals and events.**

5 SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AND PACKAGES

The bulk of financial support for Aberdeen's events is inevitably going to come from the City Council and other local or national public bodies such as Aberdeenshire Council, Aberdeen Inspired, Events Scotland and Creative Scotland. Additionally the universities have an important role in supporting events financially, in-kind and in capacity building.

The Events Strategy's operational basis is that festivals and events are independently produced, with ACC acting as facilitator rather than manager or deliverer. Therefore, independent events' organisers should be expected to generate income for their own activities – this will include fundraising and sponsorship. It will also be the case that bought in Headline Events may already have high profile sponsors attached (eg. Aviva Tour of Britain).

The ACC Events Unit should recognise the potential for competition and duplication in seeking sponsorship and we recommend setting up clear communications and coordination with the sector. An early priority for the new Events Unit should be to coordinate the development of sponsorship packages with Headline and Feature Events organisers and lead the approach to major corporates.

The businesses operating in should in theory – because of their scale and international focus – be good potential sponsors. However sponsorship for the city's events over the past 18 months has seen a dramatic reduction due to the downturn in the oil and gas sector. We have also heard that available corporate funding seems to be going to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activity rather than cultural sponsorship. As Aberdeen's energy sector recovers, major Headline Events – which are by definition high quality and high impact - could deliver attractive brand sponsorship propositions.

The situation in Aberdeen is replicated throughout the UK with massive reductions in cultural sponsorship. Corporate philanthropy is now rare, and even with CSR there is limited loyalty to local communities, as decisions are increasingly taken at Head Office rather than locally. Major corporate businesses are focusing on engaging with target markets through events which provide international broadcast rights; developing technology and social media; and building reputation and credibility (e.g. banks); or exploiting sponsorship for political influence (eg. energy, food & drink).

In Aberdeen some potential sponsors may feel that events should be wholly funded from the public purse, however others will see it as an opportunity to foster good relationships with ACC, raise their profile locally and internationally and give 'something back' to their community.

Aberdeen businesses stand to benefit from an association with an event in a variety of ways. It is important to communicate with them in the language they identify with - some perceive themselves to be commercial sponsors, others donors and collaborations may be for cash or in-kind. We recommend

using terminology in its narrow but accurate sense that commercial sponsorship is an arrangement whereby the sponsor pays cash or provides in-kind support for the project or organisation, in exchange for real business benefits, e.g. the benefit of association, benefit of priority access to an event, advertising, signage etc. These benefits will assist the sponsor to achieve its business objectives, which may include marketing and public relations.

It is proposed that a ‘funding symposium’ be held for all major stakeholders to identify how Aberdeen might maximise existing funding sources and develop a bid fund.

SPONSORSHIP PACKAGE OPTIONS

There are four levels of sponsorship that would be appropriate:

- ▶ Exclusive Naming Rights - title sponsorship (E.g. Aviva Tour of Britain)
- ▶ Main Event Sponsorship - acknowledgement in the tag-line of the event title (E.g. SPECTRA in association with xyz)
- ▶ Event Exclusivity – activity sponsorship (E.g. Stage or venue branding rights, or specific activity or event within the whole event)
- ▶ Official Supplier (alcohol; travel/transport; accommodation, lighting etc.)

In developing a sponsorship package the key elements to incorporate include:

- ▶ **Overview** - what the festival is about and how it matches sponsor’s needs; its Unique Selling Proposition ; how beneficial it is to the local community/economy
- ▶ **Festival details** – dates, times, venue, attendance. What scale of impact is it making? Any specific reasons why the forthcoming year will be bigger/better?
- ▶ **The case for funding** - why should a sponsor/supporter commit money towards this event? This section should be split into the general and the specific to ensure that all possible angles are covered (Corporate Social Responsibility, social conscience/public engagement, marketing to a target audience, brand development, PR...). What’s in it for them? Who will be attending? How do they match sponsor’s target market?

- ▶ **Tangible benefits/privileges which will come to the sponsor as a result of collaboration.** How many logos and where and when will they be displayed? Signage? Are there any complimentary tickets, or priority arrangement for securing tickets included? Invitations to meet key community members/councillors. Access to money can't buy experiences.
- ▶ **Financial commitment/sponsorship required** – the financial consideration will be balanced with the value of business benefits offered. Asking for 'support' doesn't always feel as good as asking for 'partnership', 'collaboration'. Clearly state the amount sought (+VAT if appropriate). Consider incentives for soliciting multi-year commitments. The cost of sponsorship must be less expensive than if the sponsor were to run the event on their own.

Equivalent media valuation as a measurement tool now lacks credibility in the sponsorship industry. A more useful methodology is *Full cost of event + cost of benefits + cost of servicing – budgeted ticket sales) = baseline fee*.

Then apply market influencers:

- ▶ Judgement on what the market will bear
- ▶ Lead time before the event (Under 6 months will very likely impact price, Under 3 months will severely impact both price and credibility)
- ▶ Other activities competing in the marketplace
- ▶ Uniqueness of the offer and its position in the marketplace
- ▶ Economic situation and trends

CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP SCHEME

Corporate membership clubs or schemes have been a popular form of generating corporate support. Such schemes are used to engage with the local business community in lower levels of support. But the main problems are:

- ▶ Not tailoring an approach is that lowest level gets fewer supporting benefits
- ▶ Not beneficial to creating strong high level sponsorships – makes for bargain hunters paradise
- ▶ Benefits with a monetary value may not be under the Events Unit control

- ▶ Servicing the scheme is likely to be resource and time heavy for small level of investment achieved
- ▶ The driver for many of these schemes is corporate entertaining at prestige events with the tangible benefit of free tickets. Many of 365 events will be free to view negating that principal benefit.

We therefore recommend that the initial focus on corporate support should be engaging with the Aberdeen business sector to establish successful commercial partnerships rather than a specific sponsorship scheme or club.

6 STEERING GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE

We have recommended an independent Steering Group to oversee the work of ACC's Events Unit, make event funding decisions, remove direct political intervention and engage with the wider sector. This section provides more detail on terms of reference for the operation of the Group.

Purpose

Provide advice, support and challenge to assist the Events Unit team in the strategic development of events in the city. Steering Group members will bring experience as senior leaders and influencers and demonstrate a strong commitment and understanding of cultural and/or sporting events.

Responsibilities

- ▶ Contribute to the development and monitoring of the strategy – including taking a lead role in themed years and bidding for bought-in events
- ▶ Make decisions on funding applications to events according to clear and transparent criteria based on the recommendations made by Events Unit staff
- ▶ Advise on the overall balance, content and quality of the annual event programme
- ▶ Contribute to the evaluation of each festival and review evaluation material from artists, delivery partners, participants and audiences
- ▶ Advocate widely on behalf of Aberdeen's events programme
- ▶ Advise and contribute to the development of fundraising, income generation and business development strategies to increase resilience.

Operation

The Steering Group should meet at least quarterly to a set annual schedule which fits with the funding cycle. If any member misses two consecutive meetings then their membership should cease unless there are exceptional circumstances. Operation of the Steering Group must be open and transparent and any conflicts of interest must be declared and affected members not involved in funding decisions.

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