

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE	Finance, Policy and Resources
DATE	9 March 2017
DIRECTOR	Bernadette Marjoram
TITLE OF REPORT	Christmas Village Feedback Report 2016
REPORT NUMBER	CHI/17/044
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	Yes

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to introduce feedback on the Christmas Village 2016 as set out in the Council's Service Level Agreement 2016 – 2019 with Aberdeen Inspired.

The Chief Executive of Aberdeen Inspired, Adrian Watson, will attend The Committee meeting to answer any questions arising from the information that is appended to this report from Committee Members.

James Bream, Research & Policy Director, Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce will also attend.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee:

- i) Notes the feedback report on the Christmas Village;
- ii) Seeks annual feedback reports in line with the Service Provision Agreement 2016 – 2019.

### 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Council is contributing a total of £150,000 per annum to Aberdeen Inspired towards the delivery of the Christmas Village.

The Service Level Agreement with Aberdeen Inspired sets out the City Council's three year contribution to the Christmas Village.

#### 4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

**Staffing:** Aberdeen Inspired is required to engage with officers from the Council's Economic Development Service and other departments, including the Communications and Promotion Service, although there are no staffing implications for the Council.

#### 5. BACKGROUND

The Christmas Village was first established by Aberdeen Inspired in November 2015.

The key objectives as detailed in Appendix 1 are:

- Create a festive offer in Aberdeen city centre on a par with other UK cities;
- Increase footfall in Aberdeen city centre during the festive period;
- Provide a positive economic benefit to Aberdeen city centre by encouraging the additional use of existing businesses.

Performance indicators for the Christmas Village include:

- Value of overnight stays and spend per head by visitor type;
- Day visitor numbers and spend
- Gross Value Added of tourism in the destination economy
- Customer satisfaction
- Reputation measured through traditional and social media sentiment analysis

Appendix 2 provides more detail on the research and analysis undertaken by Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce on behalf of Aberdeen Inspired in relation to the Christmas Village.

Forthcoming priorities/ next steps:

- Determining the location of the Christmas Village in 2017
- Building on the Christmas narrative, development of a strong marketing campaign for the city and region in conjunction with Visit Aberdeenshire
- Ongoing support the development of events in the City and wider region
- Ongoing engagement with city centre businesses to enhance the Christmas Village offer while showcasing local, quality product through supply chain development.

#### 6. IMPACT

**Improving Customer Experience** – Events support by the Council provides an opportunity to promote and enhance the long-term economic prosperity of Aberdeen and the wider region by attracting additional visitors to the city on account of the event. In turn this attracts additional commercial activity in the city and officers will work

with partners including Visit Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen Inspired to maximise both the benefit of events on city-centre businesses and provide information on the event itself.

Supporting and delivering a diverse programme of city events is expected to improve the customer experience by:

- Enhancing the reputation of the city for staging local, national and international festivals and events;
- Better positioning of Aberdeen as a leisure tourism destination for those looking for new and unique event experiences
- Providing city infrastructure that attracts and supports external event organisers

Participation at board level of Aberdeen Inspired and Visit Aberdeenshire helps the Council to promote and enhance the long-term economic prosperity of the North East of Scotland by attracting more business and leisure tourism to the area.

Aberdeen Inspired has a significant role to play in promoting the activities arising from the City Centre Masterplan and their importance to city centre businesses.

**Improving Staff Experience** – Staff within the Council’s Economic Development Service will work closely with colleagues from Communications and Promotions and Culture services to improve the city’s economic and tourism performance and make it an even more attractive city to live, work, invest and visit.

**Improving our use of Resources** – Collaborating with local, regional and national partners improves our use of resources and maximising financial leverage to secure events. By working in partnership the Council is able to share the workload and take lead or supporting roles where appropriate, without compromising the level of service delivered.

Participation in Aberdeen Inspired Board improves our use of resources by ensuring that at a strategic level we fully understand the needs of destination development and marketing to help support economic and tourism growth, and delivery of the objectives in the City Centre Masterplan and the Regional Economic Strategy.

**Corporate** – Representation on the Aberdeen Inspired Board ensures the Council is able to play a key role in the long term development of Aberdeen city centre.

Aligned to this, is its corporate role in providing confidence to the events market that the Council supports the attraction of the ‘right’ event for the city, and the contribution to wider economic, tourism and City Centre Masterplan objectives.

The report is also directly contributing to delivering the Smarter Aberdeen Objectives.

**Public** – This report is not of interest to the public as the financial implications of the report are minimal, and the paper does not present a new policy and strategy. There are no requirements for an EHRIA or a PIA.

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

The risk to the Council is minimised as each event is governed by a specific contract/Service Level Agreement between the organiser and the Council. This has been finalised in conjunction with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Head of Finance. Any such agreement mitigates against any financial risk to the Council.

There is a reputational risk to the Council if an event does not develop as planned. This is mitigated by the experience of Council officers in securing and supporting the delivery of events by the local authority and external event organisers.

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

## 9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 – Aberdeen Inspired Report

Appendix 2 – Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce Christmas Christmas Village Research

## 10. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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