

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE	<b>Council</b>
DATE	<b>23<sup>rd</sup> August 2017</b>
REPORT TITLE	<b>Big Noise Torry Evaluation Report by Glasgow Centre for Population Health</b>
REPORT NUMBER	<b>ECS/17/039</b>
DIRECTOR	<b>Gayle Gorman</b>
REPORT AUTHOR	<b>Fiona Clark</b>

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT:-**

This report provides a summary of the newly published evaluation report on the social and health impacts of Sistema Scotland's Big Noise programme in Torry by the Glasgow Centre for Population Health (GCPH).

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Council:

- a) Note the contents for information and assurance
- b) Endorse the conclusions determined by Glasgow Centre of Population Health on the analysis of the evaluation
- c) Agree that future Big Noise Torry progress be reported within a service update

### **3. BACKGROUND**

#### **3.1 Glasgow Centre for Population Health**

3.1.1 As detailed in the Big Noise Torry progress report to Council 25<sup>th</sup> June 2015 the Glasgow Centre for Population Health (GCPH) has been evaluating the social and health impacts of Sistema Scotland's Big Noise programme since 2013. An expansive evaluation of the Big Noise centres in Stirling and in Glasgow (including economic cost benefit was published in 2015 and is available from the GCPH website: [www.gcph.co.uk/publications](http://www.gcph.co.uk/publications))

3.1.2 GCPH secured funding from NHS Health Scotland and the People's Postcode Lottery in order to evaluate Big Noise Torry. GCPH researchers have conducted extensive fieldwork over a six month period (June to December 2016). Fieldwork has included:

- over 170 hours of structured observation of Big Noise delivery
- a creative drawing exercise (age-appropriate, validated qualitative method) with 130 children participating in Big Noise

- interviews with Big Noise musicians and volunteers
- surveys with school teachers, head teachers and deputy head teachers
- surveys with a range of Big Noise delivery partners
- development of five in-depth case studies with input from participants, parents/guardians, school teachers and Big Noise musicians.

3.1.3 Furthermore the GCPH has gathered a range of Big Noise delivery descriptive statistics including a detailed socio-demographic profile of Big Noise engagement based on administration data from Big Noise Torry linked to data from Education and Children's Services within Aberdeen City Council.

## 3.2 Key Findings

3.2.1 At this early stage of programme delivery the evaluation concludes that Big Noise Torry is a large scale, high quality social intervention which is already positively impacting on the social and emotional wellbeing of the participants taking part. These impacts on participants have also had positive cross over effects within schooling and home life.

3.2.2 Big Noise Torry has the potential to significantly enhance participants' lives, prospects, health and wellbeing through a variety of pathways in the long term. GCPH are particularly struck by how well embedded Big Noise is within the Torry community and the programme's commitment to promoting sustained and equitable engagement across a diverse pupil population.

3.2.3 GCPH acknowledge the success of Big Noise Torry is an endorsement of a range of local partners who contribute to the delivery of Big Noise. In particular the schools involved in Big Noise delivery, namely Walker Road and Tullos primary schools and Torry Academy secondary school receive specific recognition for their commitment, flexibility and innovation in working with Big Noise towards delivering a high quality programme.

3.2.4 The positive work undertaken by Big Noise, the schools involved and wider delivery partners, should be considered as fulfilling vital social elements as part of a wider regeneration investment in Torry which has already contributed towards improvements in the area; comparing 2012 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation data for Torry to that of 2016. That said, many challenges remain in Torry, Big Noise and delivery partners have an important role to play in addressing current low educational attainment and high levels of youth anti-social behaviour in the area.

## 3.3 Big Noise Torry Delivery

3.3.1 **Table 1** below summarises some key Big Noise Torry delivery information. 'In-school' provision refers to the weekly delivery of Big Noise provision within the school curriculum for primary one and two children at Walker Road and Tullos primary schools. 'After-school' provision refers to opt-in Big Noise orchestral provision after school hours.

3.3.2 In-school provision involves group based singing, instruments and musicianship. The after-school provision includes orchestra and musicianship sessions, and sessions with the children split into sectionals according to their instrument. The current orchestra uses string instruments only, giving children the option of violin, viola, cello and double bass.

The nursery classes receive 30 minutes of in-school tuition a week, with primary one and two children taking part in two 45-minute sessions per week. During after-school

provision the children are invited to participate in three sessions per week, each session lasting an hour and a half.

**Table 1: Overview of Big Noise Torry**

<b>Big Noise Torry Overview Summary</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Big Noise Torry was established in 2015.</li><li>- Presently there are 522 children engaged with Big Noise Torry on a weekly basis.</li><li>- Participants start from three years old, up to nine years old.</li><li>- Approximately 157 children participate in nursery Big Noise activities.</li><li>- Approximately 235 children participate in 'in-school' provision.</li><li>- Approximately 130 children participate in 'after-school' provision.</li><li>- Of these, around 90 children attend summer, Easter and October 'school holiday' provision in 2016.</li><li>- Big Noise Torry programme costs were £325k in the 2015/16 financial year.</li><li>- Aberdeen City Council provides £243k (75%) of the total programme funding.</li><li>- The remaining £82k coming from Creative Scotland, private trusts, foundations and donors.</li></ul>

3.3.3 The implementation of Big Noise Torry is underpinned by Sistema Scotland's seven delivery principles as reported by the GCPH in 2015. These include, among others, the longevity and intensity of the programme, promoting strong relationships between Big Noise staff and pupils and a commitment to ensuring the programme is accessible and inclusive.

3.3.4 The delivery of Big Noise Torry is also based upon a strong connection with the community and local residents having good awareness and understanding of the programme. Ultimately this community connection is undertaken in order to promote participant engagement in the programme. Community engagement and awareness raising is undertaken on an ongoing daily basis through Big Noise representation on a range of local community groups as well as musical performances outside the schools at the end of the school day. Furthermore the staging of regular mini-concerts and high profile larger concerts in Torry raises wider community awareness of Big Noise.

3.3.5 Delivery partners and schools describe having a good working relationship with Big Noise. A strength identified across the feedback was the commitment and willingness between Big Noise and the partners to work together to achieve progress. The partners feel that there is a strong mutual dedication to the outcomes Big Noise strives for, both in the schools with the children, and in the greater community, and this commitment strengthens the working relationship.

### 3.4 Sociodemographic profile

3.4.1 Table 2 below summarises the sociodemographic profile of pupils eligible for Big Noise Torry after-school programme; those that currently engage and; pupils that have not engaged (columns three to five). The same sociodemographic information is provided for all Scottish school pupils and all school pupils in Aberdeen City

(columns one and two) to contextualise the Torry information. Column five summarises the key observations emerging from analysis of each data row.

- 3.4.2 Assessing the equality, inclusion and fairness of access to the after-school element of Big Noise delivery is important because; first, other Big Noise provision is embedded within the school day and after-school provision is offered on an opt-in basis. In addition after-school provision is the most intensive part of Big Noise where the strongest outcomes are likely to be achieved, it is important that access is promoted equally and especially amongst pupil groups with greatest need.
- 3.4.3 At the time of the report some 128 pupils were actively engaged in the after-school programme from an eligible population of 213. This represents a 60% after-school engagement rate which is markedly higher than that in Raploch (49%) and Govanhill (31%) as reported by GCPH in 2015.
- 3.4.4 **Table 2** (below) also makes clear that socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils; pupils of non-white backgrounds; pupils where English is the second language within their households; and, pupils currently 'looked after' by local authority are all well represented within Big Noise after-school provision.

**Table 2: Profiling Big Noise Torry engagement: Equality, Inclusion and Fairness**

		1. All Scottish pupils	2. Aberdeen City Pupils	3. Pupils eligible for Big Noise After-school	4. Pupils attending Big Noise After-school	5. Non attenders	6. Observations
<b>Pupil numbers</b>		679,840	13,723	213	128	85	Currently 128 of 213 (60%) eligible pupils are accessing the after-school programme
<b>Gender</b> <sup>i</sup>	<b>Male</b>	346,203	7,021	104	47	57	The after-school take up rate among eligible male pupils (45%) is markedly lower than that of female pupils (74%)
	<b>Female</b>	333,637	6,702	109	81	28	
<b>Pupils living in most deprived SIMD deciles</b> <sup>ii</sup>		11.0%	12.5%	47.4%	55.5%	35.3%	Pupils from SIMD deciles 1 and 2 are well represented in after-school provision
<b>Pupils of non 'White: Scottish' or 'White: British'</b> <sup>i</sup>		13%	32.7%	39.4%	41.4%	36.5%	Pupils of non-white backgrounds are well represented within BN after-school provision.
<b>Pupils where English is second language spoken in household</b> <sup>i</sup>		5%	22.2%	33.3%	33.6%	32.9%	Pupils where English is not their first language are well represented within after-school provision.

<b>Pupils currently 'looked after' by local authority<sup>i</sup></b>	2%	0.9%	1.4%	1.6%	1.1%	'looked after' children are well represented within after-school provision
<b>Pupils with additional support needs<sup>i</sup></b>	22%	19.7%	29.6%	14.6%	51.7%	The rate of pupils with ASN engaged in after-school provision is 14.6%; approximately half the rate in the eligible population (29.6%)
<b>Average school attendance<sup>iii</sup></b>	93.7%	94.8%	92.7%	94.3%	90.7%	Pupils engaged in after-school have a higher attendance rate (94.3%) than both the eligible population and non-attenders.
<b>School absences which are unauthorised<sup>iii</sup></b>	2%	1.6%	1.7%	1.4%	1.9%	Pupils engaged in after-school have lower unauthorised absences (1.4%) compared to the eligible population (1.7%) and the non-attenders (1.9%)

<sup>i</sup> Pupil Census 2016 data used for pupil numbers.

<sup>ii</sup> Percentage of pupils in Decile 1 and 2 based on SIMD2016 linked to Pupil Census Data.

<sup>iii</sup> Based on Attendance, Absence and Exclusions 2015/16 data set. Primary 3 and 4 pupil information is based on their attendance/absence when they were in primary 2 and 3 respectively.

3.4.5 The school attendance rate for Big Noise Torry after-school participants is 1.6% higher than the total eligible population and a 3.6% higher attendance rate compared to those who do not attend. Furthermore the rate of un-authorised school absence is lower among Big Noise Torry after-school participants.

3.4.6 The rate of after-school participants with Additional Support Needs (ASN) is approximately half (49.3%) the rate seen in the eligible population. While this is markedly lower than that seen in Big Noise Raploch (90%) and Big Noise Govanhill (97.5%) Big Noise Torry is acutely aware of this issue and is delivering specialist sessions with ASN pupils to promote and enhance access to after-school provision.

3.4.7 There is a 29% higher after-school engagement rate for female pupils (81 from 109; 74%) compared to males (47 from 104; 45%). This increased after-school engagement among eligible female pupils compared to males was also evident in Big Noise Raploch in 2015.

### 3.5 Early assessment of impact

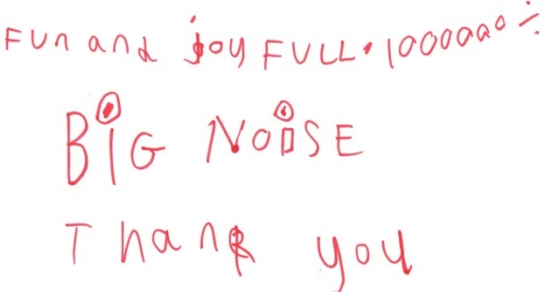

3.5.1 Big Noise Torry has been operational for one full school academic year; and the programme works with young children, from the age range of three to nine years of age. Whilst this limits the range of impacts that are observable at this stage compared to Big Noise Raploch for example, which has been running for a decade, GCPH are confident in the reliability of their findings.



- 3.5.2 All the evidence gathered concludes that Big Noise Torry is a high quality social intervention which is already positively impacting on the lives of participants. To gain an overview of the programme of works please view the short Big Noise Torry video by clicking on the hyperlink: [BIG NOISE CUT 09 - YouTube](#):
- 3.5.6 In the drawing exercise with 130 Big Noise participants 100% of the pictures drawn by in-school participants, and 100% of the pictures drawn by after-school participants contained positive images and narrative. Similarly when responding to 'How does Big Noise make you feel?' 100% of both in-school and after-school participant drawings contained a positive image and narrative again in reference to happiness, enjoyment, fulfilment and pride.
- 3.5.7 Analysing the pictures and narrative in more detail, GCPH interprets that teamwork, sense-of-belonging, pride, confidence and aspiration are also strong themes emerging from the pupils participating in Big Noise. Impacts of Big Noise on participants identified by teachers, close delivery partners and parents and guardians include increasing confidence, enhanced team working, improved listening and oral skills, greater understanding of boundaries and rules, improved concentration and communication.

*"It's nice seeing something give her confidence. Confidence with other people but for herself as well. She knows she has a talent and that's really good for her. She's not just in front of the telly all the time now"*

(Parent of Big Noise participant)

**Figure 1: Samples from Big Noise participants' creative drawing exercise**

	
<p>'How do you feel at Big Noise?' – The '1000000%' is in response to additional discussion concerning how important Big Noise is to the participant.</p>	<p>'How do you feel at Big Noise?' – '[it] makes me feel happy!!!'</p>

	
<p>'How do you feel at Big Noise?' – 'Big noise makes me happy!'</p>	<p>'What do you like best about Big Noise?' – 'I like playing my cello'</p>

3.5.8 Teachers in particular described how pupils attending Big Noise demonstrated increased responsibility, motivation, self-awareness, leadership and initiative compared to those who do not.

3.5.9 Some teachers described how they felt Big Noise had enhanced English language, reading and writing skills among pupils where English was the second language in their household.

*"I have thoroughly enjoyed watching concerts and lessons and the enjoyment, sense of pride and achievement which is seen through this is something which fills me with great joy."*

(Depute Head Teacher)

### 3.6 Conclusion

3.6.1 At this early stage of programme delivery the report concludes that Big Noise Torry is a large scale, high quality social intervention which is already positively impacting on the social and emotional wellbeing of the participants taking part.

3.6.2 Big Noise Torry is being implemented in line with Sistema Scotland's delivery principles including longevity, intensity, inclusivity and a focus on strong relationships between Big Noise staff and participants.

3.6.3 The programme has very close ties to the community and has strong evidence concerning its accessibility and inclusivity within what is a diverse community; that said, we recommend that the approaches to engagement of male pupils should be reviewed. The characteristics of Big Noise Torry delivery which enable the programme to engage with demographic groups which have been traditionally underserved by some mainstream provision may represent important learning for other services in Aberdeen City.

3.6.4 The impacts Big Noise Torry is having are convincing from the perspectives of participants, parents, guardians, teachers and delivery partners. For this young pupil group in Torry the themes of happiness, enjoyment, pride, aspiration and increasing confidence are consistent with those observed in Big Noise Raploch and Govanhill for this age range.

- 3.6.5 These early impacts observed in Torry underpin a range of outcomes within the ‘theories of change’ or ‘impact pathways’ developed by the GCPH in 2015. For example if engagement with Big Noise is sustained, medium-term outcomes observed in teenage participants in Raploch include, among others, aspiration for higher education, positive peer groups and diversion from drug and alcohol use.
- 3.6.6 Drawing on wider research evidence the GCPH has theorised how such medium-term outcomes can potentially translate into better employment prospects, reduced criminality and enhanced health and wellbeing in later life.

*“From the evidence gathered to date we are confident that the delivery characteristics of Big Noise Torry and the impacts observed fit well within the theories of change identified by the GCPH in 2015. Therefore we also conclude that Big Noise Torry has the potential to significantly enhance participants’ lives, prospects, health and wellbeing through a variety of pathways in the long term. The scale and types of impact will depend on an individual’s own experiences and needs. Consistent and long-term engagement with the programme is likely to encourage better outcomes.”*

**Report Details:**

Evaluating Sistema Scotland – Big Noise Torry: initial findings report. Chris Harkins, Katie Moore, Glasgow Centre for Population Health (GCPH) June 2017

**4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Council’s contribution to Big Noise Torry Funding in 2016/17 was £333,859.

Funding has also been secured specifically towards the work of Big Noise Torry from:

Aberdeen Harbour Board	£15,000 per year for 5 years
Creative Scotland	£20,000*
Scottish Government	£42,000**

\*From a three year award    \*\* From a four year award

In addition, other funding contributions amounting to £6,000 tbc have been received.

**5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

**6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK**

Governance arrangements are in place for Big Noise Torry as outlined within the report to Council on the 24<sup>th</sup> of June 2017. The Big Noise Torry Strategic Group monitor and review progress, and manage risk on an ongoing basis.

**Financial**

The Council’s contribution to Big Noise Torry Funding in 2016/17 was within budget at £333,859 Aberdeen Harbour Board has provided funding for the first five years of



the project and in addition Sistema have secured funding from Creative Scotland and the Scottish Government.

### **Employee**

Lack of resource within the council to support the Big Noise Torry strategic group and team. This is currently included within the Culture team role and responsibilities.

### **Customer/citizen**

The potential risk of lack of engagement in the project from the local community and partners however this has actually been identified as one of the strengths by GCPH. However an improvement in communication has been highlighted as a one area for development and Sistema and the team at Big Noise Torry are working on this.

### **Environmental**

There is a potential risk of being unable to find accommodation for Big Noise once the current Torry Academy building is demolished before the new school and community hub is built.

### **Technological**

None identified

### **Legal**

None identified

### **Reputational**

The report is likely to have a positive impact on the reputation of the Council. Governance arrangements are in place for Big Noise Torry as outlined within the BNT progress report to Council on the 24<sup>th</sup> of June 2015. The Big Noise Torry Strategic Group monitor and review progress, and manage risk on an ongoing basis.

## **7. IMPACT SECTION**

This section demonstrates how the proposals within this report impact on the strategic themes of Aberdeen City Council and Community Planning Aberdeen, as set out in the [Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26](#) and the [Aberdeen City Council Strategic Business Plan](#).

### **Economy**

The Council aims to support improvement in the local economy to ensure a high quality of life for all people in Aberdeen. You should advise how your proposal will impact on the local economy. For example, the proposals may improve the Council's use of resources through modernising, innovating and transforming our services. Or it may have a more direct impact in terms of business, tourism, and/or infrastructure.

### **People**

Evaluation of the Big Noise Torry programme by GCPH at this early stage after one full year of the programme has identified significant impacts on the young participants.

“At this stage, all the evidence gathered can only conclude that Big Noise Torry is a high quality social intervention which is already positively impacting on the lives of participants”.

Analysing the pictures and narrative in more detail, our interpretation is that teamwork, sense-of-belonging, pride, confidence and aspiration are also strong themes emerging from the pupils participating in Big Noise. Impacts of Big Noise on participants identified by teachers, close delivery partners and parents and guardians include increasing confidence, enhanced team working, improved listening and oral skills, greater understanding of boundaries and rules, improved concentration and communication.

## **Place**

The programme has very close ties to the community and has strong evidence concerning its accessibility and inclusivity within what is a diverse community;

From the evidence gathered to date GCPH are confident that the delivery characteristics of Big Noise Torry and the impacts observed fit well within the theories of change identified by them in 2015. They also conclude that Big Noise Torry has the potential to significantly enhance participants' lives, prospects, health and wellbeing through a variety of pathways in the long term. The scale and types of impact will depend on an individual's own experiences and needs. Consistent and long-term engagement with the programme is likely to encourage better outcomes.

## **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Report published by Glasgow Centre of Public Health on the evaluation of the impact of Big Noise Torry (*title and publication date tbc*)

Report to Council, 24th June 2015, Big Noise Torry progress report, ECS/15/034

Report to Council, 14th May 2014, Big Noise Torry Business Plan and Partnership Agreement, OCE/14/027

Report to Council, 18th December 2013, Sistema Scotland and Aberdeen, OCE/12/043

Report to the Education, Culture and Sport Committee, 8th March 2013, Sistema Scotland and Aberdeen, ECS/13/012

Report to the Education, Culture and Sport Committee, 2nd June 2011, “Big Noise”: Sistema Scotland ECS/11/034

Report to the Education, Culture and Sport Committee, 8th October 2009, Strategic Music Partnership potential links with Sistema Scotland, ECS/09/31

## **9. APPENDICES (if applicable)**

None

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