

COMMITTEE	Communities, Housing and Infrastructure
DATE	29 August 2017
REPORT TITLE	European Green Capital Awards bid
REPORT NUMBER	CHI/17/211
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT:-

To seek approval of Committee to submit a bid to European Green Capital Awards 2020

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

2.1 It is recommended that committee:

- a) Approve the submission of a bid to European Green Capital Awards 2020
- b) Agree to receive a report back from officers when the outcome of the bid is known.

3. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES /

Europe's cities are recognised as the engines of the European economy, providing jobs and services, and serve as hubs that catalyse creativity and innovation. Cities are the living environment for more than 70% of all Europeans, with this percentage expected to rise to 80% by 2050. They have a strong potential for economic growth, innovation and employment opportunities. However, they are facing ever increasing challenges, with regards to the environment, transport and social cohesion. The European Green Capital is underpinned by European Policy on sustainable urban planning and design. The Awards support the goals set out most recently in the Urban Agenda for the EU-Pact of Amsterdam, signed in 2016, and prior to this the 7th Environmental Action Programme (EAP), as adopted in 2013.

The European Commission has launched the competition for the 2020 European Green Capital Awards. The main objectives of that initiative are to reward cities that have a consistent record of achieving high environmental standards and encourage them to commit to on-going and ambitious goals for

further environmental improvement and sustainable development. For the first time, to celebrate the 10th year of the European Green Capital competition, the Commission will award a financial incentive to the winners. The winning city will receive €350,000.

The title of European Green Capital and the financial incentive (2 instalments) is to be awarded in 2018. The financial incentive is deemed to be used to help kick start the programme of projects and events for the winning city's communication strategy and action plan presented at the jury meeting.

Aberdeen will be assessed on the basis of 12 environmental indicators:

- Climate change: mitigation
- Climate change: adaptation
- Sustainable urban mobility
- Sustainable Land use
- Nature and biodiversity
- Air quality
- Noise
- Waste
- Water
- Green growth and eco-innovation
- Energy performance
- Governance

For each indicator 4 sections have to be completed to describe:

- the present situation
- describe the measures implemented over the last 5-10 years
- describe the short and long term objectives for the future and proposed approach to achieve these
- list how the above information can be documented, adding links where possible

Finalists cities then present to an international Jury, when they must show their ongoing commitment to improving their urban environments and their capacity to act as a role model to others.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report. There is no cost involved in the submission of the bid. If successful, Aberdeen will receive €350,000. The €350,000 award does not require match funding but will be subject to a "letter of Intent" to deliver a communication strategy and action plan submitted as part of the city bid for European Green Capital. Details of the communication plan and action plan are not required for the first phase of submission but will be required if

Aberdeen is short-listed for the award and is asked to present to the Jury. At this point ACC will need to put together a communication strategy and action plan on how they intend to fulfil their European Green Capital year should they win. This will need to demonstrate how the funding will be spent and how this supports the wider investment in environmental projects and programmes across the city. 70% of this payment will be awarded on the date of award with the remaining 30% being awarded during the title year subject to the city being able to demonstrate it is meeting the commitments made in the communication and action plan. Payment of the award will be made on submission of the necessary financial information from the Council.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report. If successful, an offer of grant will be received and we will require legal review.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

6.1 Financial

There is no financial risk arising from the recommendations of this report.

6.2 Employee

There is no employee risk arising from the recommendations of this report

6.3 Customer / Citizen

There is no customer / citizen risk arising from the recommendation of this report

6.4 Environmental

There is no environmental risk arising from the recommendation of this report.

6.5 Technological

There is no technological risk arising from the recommendation of this report.

6.6 Legal

There is no legal risk arising from the recommendation of this report.

6.7 Reputational

There is no reputational risk arising from the recommendations of this report.

7. IMPACT SECTION

7.1 Economy

The European Green Capital Award would give Aberdeen an opportunity to make lasting changes that would improve quality of life for all. The Council would receive support from the European Green Capital Network and would benefit from opportunities to build alliances, attract inward investments as a result of media coverage from around the world, boost tourism, build recognition for environmental projects and develop the momentum required to continue improving environmental sustainability.

7.2 People

Winning the European Green Capital Award would give the citizens of Aberdeen a sense of pride in their city and the opportunity to inspire others and promote best practice in all other European cities. Success at the Awards would help stimulate sustainable growth and create a more diverse economy and resilient environment to set Aberdeen on a path to becoming a better and healthier place to live.

7.3 Place

Successful bid will allow the Council to use funds to focus on activities like protecting and enhancing natural capital, encouraging more resource efficiency and accelerating the transition to the low-carbon economy, which also seeks to tackle new and emerging environmental risks and to help safeguard health and welfare of EU citizens. We want to play a crucial role as place of connectivity, creativity and innovation, and as centres of services for their surrounding areas.

7.4 Technology

Most cities face a common core set of environmental problems and risks, including poor air quality, high levels of noise, greenhouse gas emissions, water scarcity, contaminated sites, brownfields and waste. At the same time, EU cities are standard setters in urban sustainability and often pioneer innovative solutions to environmental challenges. The financial incentive of winning the European Green Capital Award is deemed to be used to help kick start the programmes and events for energy savings and a move towards a carbon-neutral economy.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers.

9. APPENDICES (if applicable)

- a) EGCA 2020 Guidance Note
- b) EGCA 2020 Brochure

10. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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