

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	City Growth and Resources
<b>DATE</b>	18 September 2018
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Governance of Events 365 Advisory Group and Aberdeen Festivals
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	PLA/18/ 147
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Richard Sweetnam
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Richard Sweetnam
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	2.3 - consider reports on key actions by the Council towards the delivery of the Regional Strategy and the Inward Investment Plan

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Committee on the proposed delivery and oversight model for Events 365 Advisory Group and Aberdeen Festivals.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Approves the proposed model to contribute to the delivery of Aberdeen 365 Events Plan;
- 2.2 Notes the formation of a new informal Aberdeen 365 Advisory Group;
- 2.3 Notes the composition of the new Group and agrees to appoint the Chief Officer – City Growth and Councillor Boulton as the City Council’s representatives on the group;
- 2.4 Notes the terms of reference for the new Group; and
- 2.5 Notes the secondment of a Council officer to VisitAberdeenshire to fulfil the new city-centric events development and supporting delivery role.

### 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 24 April 2018, the Council's City Growth & Resources Committee instructed the Chief Officer City Growth to report back to the Committee with a review on the governance of the Events 365 Advisory Group and Aberdeen Festivals. This report provides a recommended approach based on that review.
- 3.2 On 9 March 2017, the Council's Finance, Policy & Resources Committee approved an operational plan and the establishment of an Events Group to oversee the delivery of the Aberdeen 365 Events Strategy.
- 3.3 In summer 2017, an operational Aberdeen 365 Group was set up to ensure greater coordination and collaboration across public and private stakeholders in delivery of all events and festivals in the city. This was to support and drive the implementation of the Aberdeen 365 Events Plan within the CCMP and the wider economic and tourism objectives for the city. It is comprised of:
- Council officers – City Growth;
  - EventScotland;
  - VisitAberdeenshire;
  - SMG Europe;
  - Aberdeen Inspired;
  - Sport Aberdeen;
  - Aberdeen Festivals;
  - Culture Aberdeen;
  - Aberdeen Performing Arts; and
  - Officers from Aberdeenshire Council.
- 3.4 The group has been successful in providing a framework across a number of external stakeholders who have an interest in events locally, nationally and internationally, and has provided an open forum to:-
- Work with SMG Europe to ensure that their conferencing and event attraction aims are supported through the partners represented;
  - Collaborate with VisitAberdeenshire on activities including destination development and future marketing campaigns;
  - Partner with Aberdeen Inspired in engaging city centre businesses to maximise the commercial opportunities associated with events held in the levy footprint;
  - Collaborate with Culture Aberdeen and the Council's Culture team and its support for existing Aberdeen Festivals;
  - Ongoing development and delivery of the tourism/events activity aligned to the City Centre Masterplan, and the Aberdeen 365 theme of a vibrant and exciting city.
- 3.5 The Aberdeen 365 group has created a consolidated list of all the events across the region, so a clash diary is available for reference when considering the attraction and delivery of events in the future.
- 3.6 Aberdeen Festivals was established under an initial pilot in 2014 and a steering group was set up comprising leading cultural festivals in the area. It aims to lead the development and management of 'Aberdeen Festivals', a programme which brings 10 different cultural festivals together to work collaboratively on marketing and programming, including a distinct identity for 'Aberdeen

Festivals', including specific branding and promotional material. The festivals in the collective are: Sound Festival, Spectra, Techfest, Mayfest, Portsoy Traditional Boat Festival, True North, North East Open Studios, Look Again, Aberdeen Jazz Festival and Dancelive.

- 3.7 Following on from the April 2018 Committee decision, officers have undertaken an extensive consultation on the overall review of events activity with Aberdeen Festivals Advisory Group, Culture Aberdeen, Aberdeen Performing Arts, VisitAberdeenshire, EventScotland and SMG Europe.

#### **4. PROPOSED MODEL**

- 4.1 From the consultations, three areas emerge. Aberdeen 365 informal Advisory Group; VisitAberdeenshire Conventions & Events Bureau; and Events/ Festivals Development and Delivery Support. Each of these has been tested with the stakeholders as they have been developed.

##### **1. The Aberdeen 365 informal Advisory Group**

- 4.2 Reviewing the activity of the first 12 months of the existing Aberdeen 365 Group, it is proposed that a new informal Advisory Group is formed that is comprised of the existing membership. The purpose of the Advisory Group is to:

- Interface with national events plans with Government agencies;
- Discuss pipeline events in the city in the context of existing (actual), planned and potential bids and future priorities;
- Oversee coordination across all events and festivals – local, national or international events; and business events;
- Oversee links to wider activity – culture, Events Complex Aberdeen, city centre eg Union Terrace Gardens and Broad Street; and organisations supported by the Council in the cultural sector;
- Consider financial implications of delivery of 'headline' event/ festival. Per the original Blue Sail strategy, these are established, new start-ups or bought-in events that:
  - secure a national and international profile for Aberdeen;
  - attract large numbers of visitors and new audiences;
  - will be of level of impact to achieve significant media coverage; and
  - will generate more overnight stays in the city;
- Oversee implementation of the Aberdeen365 Plan.

- 4.3 It is proposed that an Elected Member Councillor Boulton and the Chief Officer - City Growth participate in the informal Advisory Group

- 4.4 The existing evaluation criteria (from the March 2017 report) around which the Group will assess the deliverability events/ festivals will remain:

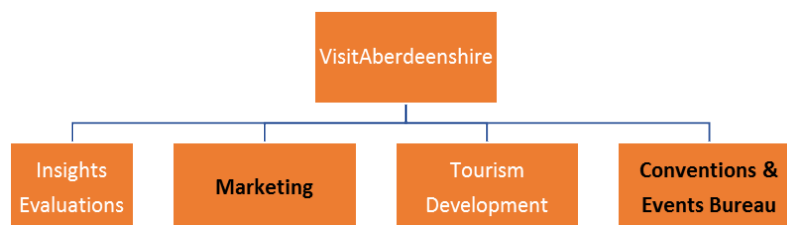
- The extent to which an event/ festival aligns/ contributes to the strengths of the city product in the Regional Economic Strategy, the Tourism Strategy and/ or Culture Aberdeen (including UNESCO Creative Cities bid in 2019);

- The extent to which an event/ festival supports the cultural distinctiveness of the city – its contribution to place making;
- ‘Legacy’ impacts of staging that event, and growing the city’s national and international reputation;
- The extent to which the event/ festival will attract visitors to the city centre, and from outwith the AB postcode – overnight/ return visits;
- The economic impact from the event/ festival – using the universally accepted impact model managed by EventScotland;
- Media profile – does the event/ festival have the potential to attract media attention, advancing Aberdeen and the region’s reputation nationally and internationally;
- Funding – if the Council contributes, what added-value is there from that investment in terms of leveraging external funding (e.g. EventScotland, sponsorship) and in-kind support.

4.5 Any reprioritisation of events may involve stopping funding of some current events, improving on some existing events that demonstrate the best impact against the criteria, bidding for existing high profile national and international events and stimulating the development of new proposals that may be funded via partners or other sources.

## 2. VisitAberdeenshire Conventions & Events Bureau

4.6 The new advisory group will be supported directly from within a new delivery resource being proposed that will operate from within VisitAberdeenshire - Visit Aberdeenshire Convention & Events Bureau. The Council supports delivery of VisitAberdeenshire as a tourism destination and marketing organisation. The illustration below shows how the organisation is structured.



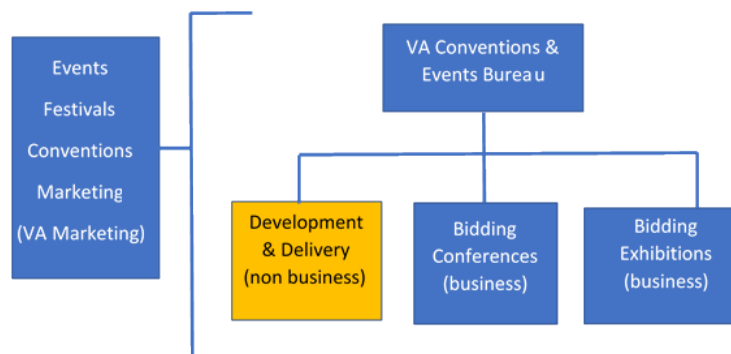
4.7 Under the proposed model, both the promotion and marketing activity of Aberdeen Festivals collective activity (the 10 Festivals) and the other events that meet the criteria above will be integrated to and delivered through the wider VisitAberdeenshire marketing resource, with a ring-fenced budget to promote festivals and events. This will provide both links to the wider tourism and destination marketing plan; and in doing so, provide greater efficiency and economies of scale by coordinating and integrating the events/ festivals marketing to the wider promotion of the city to visitors.

4.8 The Conventions & Events Bureau function is currently comprised of three posts employed by VisitAberdeenshire. A lead, and two posts that support the bidding for *business* conferences and exhibitions to the city. These posts work closely with the Aberdeen City & Shire Hotels Association (in securing a bed

bank) and SMG Europe in relation to the Events Complex Aberdeen. This resource is not focused on wider tourist/ leisure events and festivals.

### 3. Events/ Festivals Development and Delivery Support

- 4.9 The consultations indicate that there is a need for development and delivery of wider events/ festivals to be coordinated with the business conference activity and across city stakeholders. A single resource that is located within VisitAberdeenshire would provide this interface, coordinate the work on promotion and marketing delivered through VisitAberdeenshire, and work with existing and new events/ festivals, including the Aberdeen Festivals collective brand. The role would work with the Council's City Events unit in terms of any events it is working on (as a developer itself); and ensuring the relevant logistical and technical expertise and direction is disseminated to all events/ festivals in the city.
- 4.10 The proposed approach will ensure that there is a dedicated city-centric resource within VisitAberdeenshire coinciding with a very important opportunity for the city, and region, in 2019 and 2020, as a number of infrastructure investments come onstream. The chart below indicates how the 'non-business' (ie sport, leisure, culture activity) development/ delivery role could operate as a wider collaborative model within VisitAberdeenshire.



- 4.11 The purpose of the role is to strengthen the entire Aberdeen 365 Plan and its delivery. Specific tasks anticipated include:
- Oversee research, fact finding and due diligence activity (dates, costs, criteria met) on all events proposed by Aberdeen Events 365 stakeholders;
  - With Aberdeen Events 365 stakeholders, coordinate a grid of target/ proposed events over a ten-year target of major events;
  - Co-ordination of welcome and civic activity around for bought in events;
  - Source and co-ordinate external funding applications;
  - Develop an event-specific destination infrastructure sales pitch (facilities, support, access);
  - Coordinate and conduct site inspections to effectively showcase hotels, event facilities, attractions and relevant local influencers to the prospective clients;

- Conduct sales trips, attend conferences, tradeshows and networking meetings to promote the city as an events destination;
- Working with strategic partner organisations, coordinate with any relevant Scottish / UK governing bodies to position Aberdeen and the region (particularly in relation to sport events);
- Co-ordinate quarterly Aberdeen Events 365 meetings (the informal Advisory Group);
- Source Ambassadors to support bids and proposals;
- Manage and communicator of B2B events calendar.

## **5. MEASURING PROGRESS**

- 5.1 VisitAberdeenshire is developing an evaluation framework for all its campaign activity. By integrating Event and Festivals marketing into the same marketing structure, the work on the evaluation of events/ festivals will be consistent to that work. In addition, the impact model managed by EventScotland will be used.
- 5.2 The Council's contribution towards delivery is regularly reported through its Committees.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The Council provides £50,000 annually to the Aberdeen Festivals Collective; and £520,000 towards the core costs of VisitAberdeenshire. This is governed by a three-year SLA which ends on 31 March 2019. The annual funding of £50,000 contributes towards an overall Festivals budget of £135,000. An 'Aberdeen Festivals' brand identity will be maintained for some activity and in response to the aspirations of existing funding. In due course, within the proposed model, a separate legal form of Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) may be used to enable some events/ festivals to access wider funding.
- 6.2 The Aberdeen Festivals funding has continued at this level and is provided as part of the Council's approved Culture Programme. Under the proposed approach, it is assumed that the Council enters into a new SLA for 2019/20-2021/22, and that this will be for £570,000. This is subject to the Council's budget setting process.
- 6.3 However, in order to support development and delivery of existing, planned and/ or new events support in 4.9 above (the Development & Delivery post), at no additional cost to the Council, it is proposed that an officer is seconded into VisitAberdeenshire to fulfil the new city-centric development and delivery role. The officer will be seconded on their current grade and job profile and Aberdeen City Council will remain their employer. It is anticipated that the secondment will be for 1 year initially, reviewed, and subject to that, may then be extended if required. The officer's substantive post would not be backfilled for the duration of the secondment.

## 7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Legal Officers from both the Commercial and Procurement and Governance Legal Teams will assist with the legal aspects around delivery of the new oversight model, including all necessary documents pertaining to the SLA, any secondment agreement(s) and SCIO arrangements.
- 7.2 It is anticipated that the creation of a SCIO will provide a more clearly defined structure and purpose to the Aberdeen Festivals tranche of the Aberdeen 365 strategy. It will also give the Council greater legal and financial comfort in relation to funding this strand of the strategy regarding the Council's Local Code of Practice on Following the Public Pound and its revised governance structure, as well as giving a legal personality to the organisation, which is essential in order to access external funding sources and to ensure appropriate management of finances/budgets and funding awards.

## 8. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

- 8.1 As business cases are developed in delivery of the action plan, officers will consider financial risk.

Category	Risk	Low (L), Medium (M), High (H)	Mitigation
<b>Financial</b>	The proposals assume that the Council will enter into a further three-year SLA with Visit Aberdeenshire at the same financial level as the current arrangement. There is a risk that this might not be confirmed in the Council's budget-setting process.	L	Ensure that the Visit Aberdeenshire strategy and business plan deliver against the Council's tourism and events objectives and offer appropriate value for money.
<b>Legal</b>	None	NA	None
<b>Employee</b>	The proposals in this report include secondment of a Council officer to Visit Aberdeenshire to support the development and delivery of the Aberdeen 365 model. There could be limited appetite for this secondment.	M	Work with Visit Aberdeenshire to clearly articulate the secondment and promote it as a significant career development opportunity and a collaborative response to a shared need to maximise the opportunity from the Council's investment in tourism and events infrastructure.
<b>Customer</b>	Failure to deliver the Aberdeen 365 proposals could lead to fragmentation of the events and festivals	L	The proposals have been tested across and have the buy-in from core partners and within the Council. There is

Category	Risk	Low (L), Medium (M), High (H)	Mitigation
	offer which could cause confusion for local residents and make it difficult for visitors to engage.		low likelihood of them not being approved by all relevant parties.
<b>Environment</b>	None	NA	None
<b>Technology</b>	None	NA	None
<b>Reputational</b>	Council's reputation could be damaged where actions are not supported or delivered.  Aberdeen's reputation as a city that can host major national and international events could be damaged amongst Government agencies – VisitBritain; VisitScotland; EventsScotland.	M	Commitment of all parties to the new model should mitigate this risk. Longer-term, it will be important to ensure that partner commitment is sustained.

## 9. OUTCOMES

Local Outcome Improvement Plan Themes	
	Impact of Report
<b>Prosperous Economy</b>	The report and the proposed governance and delivery models for Aberdeen 365 contribute to the internationalisation and inclusive economic growth strands of the Prosperous Economy chapter of the LOIP. Effective delivery of Aberdeen 365 will further enhance the city's international profile and standing and make the city a more attractive investment destination.
<b>Prosperous People</b>	In addition, a vibrant events strategy will drive jobs growth in creative and hospitality sectors in particular, which are key targets for employability programmes that the Council and its partners deliver.
<b>Prosperous Place</b>	Aberdeen's competitiveness as a destination – both for visitors and investors – is reliant on a strong cultural and events-based offer. Aberdeen 365 will deliver this and provide a platform for the city to secure significant national and global events in the



	future, enhancing both local civic pride and the city's international profile. Aberdeen365 delivery is also a key programme area of the CCMP.
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<b>Design Principles of Target Operating Model</b>	
	<b>Impact of Report</b>
<b>Customer Service Design</b>	The refreshed plan will align to the Council's support to its business customers and key employers in the city and the Council's 'business friendliness'.
<b>Organisational Design</b>	The Council's TOM, and the clustering in City Growth of Culture, Events, Galleries and Museums and Archives is improving collaboration and delivery across these key contributors to the city's cultural and tourism offer. The proposal will strengthen the links between these services and the wider promotion and marketing.
<b>Governance</b>	The new governance proposals set out that an Elected Member and the Chief Officer - City Growth participate in the informal Advisory Group. This is important for maintaining strategic relationships with Scottish and UK bodies and for building on existing local partnerships and networks.
<b>Workforce</b>	If a secondment is secured the proposal of an officer working at the heart of the destination marketing agency will result in organisational benefits to the Council and a funded agency and will also help wider planning and delivery of visiting programmes of wider investment in the Art Gallery, Music Hall.
<b>Process Design</b>	None
<b>Technology</b>	The proposal will deliver a digital platform to host events/ festivals information and may provide open access to the impact of flagship events on the city
<b>Partnerships and Alliances</b>	The proposals in this report are based on significant consultation across the sector. They will also ensure that partnership activity to date forms the foundation of all future activity.

## 10. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<b>Equality &amp; Human Rights Impact Assessment</b>	Not required
<b>Privacy Impact Assessment</b>	Not required

<a href="#"><u>Children's Rights Impact Assessment/Duty of Due Regard</u></a>	Not applicable
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**11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

City Growth & Resources Committee 27 April 2018 Cultural Strategy for Aberdeen (PLA/18/015)

Finance, Policy & Resources Committee 9 March 2017 Aberdeen 365 – Operational Plan (CHI/ 17/ 042).

**12. APPENDICES (if applicable)**

**13. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS**

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