

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Finance and Resources
DATE	1 February 2023
EXEMPT	The report is public but Appendix 2 is exempt in terms of paragraphs 6 and 8.
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Events 365 Plan 2023-2026
REPORT NUMBER	COM/23/044
DIRECTOR	Gale Beattie
CHIEF OFFICER	Richard Sweetnam
REPORT AUTHOR	Matthew Williams
TERMS OF REFERENCE	2.1.2 & 3.2

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update members on delivery of the 2016 365 Events Strategy, and some of the headline events; and to update the plan for the three years 2023-2026 as the framework for the work of the Events 365 Group.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Notes the update on delivery of the 365 Events Strategy;
- 2.2 Agrees the proposed 365 Events Plan for 2023-2026 (Appendix 1 to this report);
- 2.3 Instructs the Chief Officer - City Growth to re-convene the Event 365 Group as outlined in Section 3.19-3.21 in this report and to report annually to this Committee on the progress to implement the Event Plan; and
- 2.4 Instructs the Chief Officer - City Growth to work with government, national and local partners to explore new events opportunities at the local, regional, national and international level.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 The Council's Finance, Policy and Resources Committee approved the 2016 Events 365 Strategy in December 2016 (OCE/16/040). This has provided a framework for the delivery of events in the city.
- 3.2 The 2016 Strategy was based on the concept of an integrated programme of events, 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 happening each month.

- 3.3 It identified Spectra and Look Again as headline events with growth potential, with others such as True North, Highland Games and Sound Festival having regional impact. It also proposed larger events bringing higher cultural, economic and social impact to the city, for example, the Tour of Britain and the Tall Ships Race.
- 3.4 EventScotland has outlined that audience expectations have changed as a result of Covid-19 and reflecting these changes and new challenges in the sector during the Covid-19 pandemic, and more recently rising costs of living and delivery of events, a new three year Plan for 2023/2026 has been developed and is provided in Appendix 1 (with exempt information in the Plan provided in Appendix 2.).
- 3.5 For the events sector, organisations running venues and with large fixed costs are particularly exposed, and, at the same time as funders of events, such as Event Scotland, Creative Scotland and local government are under pressure to reduce budgets.
- 3.6 As well as the focus on events contributing to economic and social outcomes, there is likely to be a new focus on the sustainability of events, their environmental impact, including waste management, emissions, and energy transition. The new Plan will be delivered within the context of these new priorities and challenges.

The 2016 Strategy

- 3.7 An update on the delivery of the 2016 Strategy is provided within the proposed Events Plan in Appendix 1. The 2016 events programme was severely impacted as a result of the global pandemic, and the leisure and events sector continues to be affected by the impact on the sector and changing audience participation.
- 3.8 The 2016 Strategy was ambitious in terms of what it could potentially deliver within the capacity of the city and sector. However, it did set a statement of the city's ambition. There are five key successes from the Strategy:
 - a) Establishment of an Events 365 Group to support the CCMP objectives;
 - b) The 'year-round approach' and aiming to deliver events in off-peak times of the year;
 - c) Adoption of pyramid model – a framework to group events by 'headline', 'feature' or 'city' categories.
 - d) Winning major events such as the Tour Series (that in turn allowed Aberdeen to compete for the Tour of Britain) and securing funding for festivals like Spectra and major exhibitions in the newly refurbished Art Gallery.
 - e) Development of volunteering opportunities to support not only delivery of the event, but also wider participation and attendance – for example, at

Spectra, audiences creating a large scale performance and music piece; and the successful GetAbout Festival of Cycling organised around the Tour of Britain which engaged schools across the city and Aberdeenshire and amateur cycling groups.

- f) Skills and learning – a feature of the exhibition programme in Aberdeen Art Gallery is the participatory and interactive elements for adults and children and the programme involves a participatory learning programme to ensure that exhibitions can be enjoyed by all visitors regardless of their background and abilities.

- 3.9 One of the lessons from the Strategy was that despite an overall framework for events, festivals and conferences in the city, there were occasions where the Council was approached to potentially host an event that could not have been anticipated and therefore were not included in the Strategy. Examples of this include BBC Sports Personality of the Year or Eurovision 2023. The need for flexibility has been reflected in the new Plan,

2026 Events Plan – Methodology and Approach

- 3.10 Preparation of the Plan involved a mix of desk top analysis of relevant events strategies and recent city event evaluations which included feedback from children and young people.
- 3.11 External consultation was undertaken with EventScotland, Visit Scotland, ASM Global (P&J Live operators), and Visit Aberdeenshire (including Aberdeen Convention and Events Bureau.
- 3.12 With this information, two ‘workshop’ discussions were held with participating organisations in the Events 365 Group to discuss and agree the emerging outcome areas that the Plan should respond to and the overall remit for the Events 365 Group going forward.
- 3.13 Officers also participated in the EventScotland National Events Strategy Review & Update – Economic Benefit & Financial Sustainability Roundtable, the Host City 2022 conference which included a number of international major event rights holders, and an overview of the latest thinking in the events sector, particularly for sport and conferencing; and a feedback session with BBC on Eurovision 2023.
- 3.14 The outputs of the consultations were also used to draft the new Events Plan.

The New Plan

- 3.15 The new Events Plan is provided in Appendix 1 to this report (with exempt information in Appendix 2). Key points include:
- Adaptation of the pre-existing pyramid model of events, ranging from a high number of local events, to aspirational targets for major international and ‘mega’ events;

- Retention of the ‘year round’ events model to ensure that Aberdeen has a diversity of event highlights in every season;
 - An emphasis on activating new city centre venues – Union Terrace Gardens;
 - An aspiration to grow the number and scale of events taking place in the city, either originated locally, produced at national and international level, or won from major events rights holders;
 - A strategic focus on business tourism and conferences in P&J Live;
 - An updated remit for the work of the Event 365 Group.
- 3.16 Feedback in developing the new Plan emphasised the need for even greater collaboration and coordination in both delivery of events, maximising the benefits of events, where relevant, working on the submission of bids for events or funding to support events, and joint marketing.
- 3.17 At its meeting of 28 February 2022, the Council instructed the Chief Officer - City Growth to discuss with the UK Government Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and the Natural History Museum the feasibility for a Natural History Museum Aberdeen, including the University of Aberdeen and the Aberdeen Medico-Chirurgical Society.
- 3.18 Discussions between the Chief Officer – City Growth, the UK Government Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, and the Director of the Natural History Museum established that the Natural History Museum’s forward plan does not include the development of regional outposts. Nevertheless positive outcomes of discussions include additions to Aberdeen Archives, Gallery and Museums public programmes, loans from the Natural History Museum and opportunities for city-wide partnerships involving heritage and science partners such as the University of Aberdeen Museums and Special Collections, and the Aberdeen Medico-Chirurgical Society. The potential for such initiatives for any links to the new Plan will be explored.
- 3.19 A new remit for the Event 365 Group is proposed reflecting the ‘lessons learned’ from the 2017 Strategy. For the Council, it is proposed that a progress report is brought to a relevant Committee annually to report on implementation.
- 3.20 The remit of the Event 365 Group moving forward is to:
- Oversee and co-ordinate strategic planning/ bidding and funding of the city’s events and receive updates on progress;
 - Agree/ adopt mechanisms for assessing and approving proposed events, including impact on the city, financial implications and include recommendations to appropriate governance of participating organisations for their consideration of supporting and event;
 - Ensure that demand for Council resources is planned so that events are well planned and delivered – operations, safety, transport etc;
 - Provide accurate information on relevant websites – Culture Aberdeen, Visit Aberdeenshire and other organisations recognising that this is also an Events Plan for the wider region;

- Share information with communications team across partner organisations for the promotion of events; and
- Forward Plan - scheduling complementary events to create more impact, or rescheduling to spread impact or prevent audience clash.

3.21 It is proposed that Council Officers drawn from City Growth, including Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums, Events and any other services needed on an ad hoc basis (eg traffic management) operate on the Group. Other participants will be drawn from EventScotland, VisitScotland, VisitAberdeenshire, the Universities, ASM Global (operators of P&J Live), APA, Culture Aberdeen, Sport Aberdeen, Sports Village and Aberdeen Inspired.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The Council has invested £1.6m supporting the delivery of events in the city in 2022/23. This includes both funding of bids for events, financial support to existing events, support to secure business events at the Convention Bureau itself. In the year ahead, the Convention Bureau, P&J Live Sales Teams and officers will continue to work closely together with VisitScotland's Business Events leads to capitalise on the emergence of demand for business conferences as the sector recovers from Covid-19 impacts.

4.2 The future Events programme will not be immune to the increasing financial pressures created by rising inflation. As such, there may have to be choices made about the scale or number of events the Council can afford to support in any given financial year. Where there are financial implications to the Council as a result of any event in the Plan, a report will require to be submitted to committee seeking permission to proceed with a bid, and outlining the potential costs. Planning to longer lead times will allow due consideration of these bids by aligning with the Council's annual budget setting process.

4.3 Wherever possible, funding and investment support from external sources will be sought for events, and officers in the Council's External Funding Team will continue to work with stakeholders in securing new sources of funding that could be available through national programmes such as the UK Shared Prosperity Funding or any other existing or emerging 'place based' funds. Officers will also seek to generate revenue or sponsorship from events, working with event organisers and stakeholders.

4.4 Existing in-house staffing resources could be aligned to any proposals that would require officer support, prioritising those that have greater linkage with the LOIP or the Council's Policy Statement. Where there is a need for more staff resource, 'project teams' will be assembled from within the wider range of organisations participating in the Events 365 Group, or from other partners.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report. Subsidy Control assessments will be made for individual events at the scoping and approval stage where appropriate

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the recommendations of this report. Assessment will be made for individual events at the scoping and approval stage.

7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	Failure to refresh the Event 365 plan risks not delivering on Regional Economic Strategy, or CCMP tourism plans	By implementing the recommendations herein, Aberdeen City Council will ensure that the City's event programme is coordinated and managed in line with the Event 365 strategic objectives. This will help to ensure that the City's cultural and events ambitions and objectives are met.	L	Yes
Compliance	Council, and event delivery partners,	The 365 and Safety Advisory Working	L	Yes

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
	fail to comply with statutory obligations	Groups will help to ensure that relevant legislation and industry best practice principles are embedded within events across the City.		
Operational	Failure to develop the City's event programme would fail to meet customer expectations	The 2016 strategy saw the development of Aberdeen's event programme, with a host of major events taking place since 2016. This has increased expectation of customers. The continuation and further development of the City's Event 365 programme will ensure that these increased customer expectations and not just met but are exceeded.	L	Yes
Financial	Whilst the Event 365 strategy has no direct cost	Events which are deemed to be of strategic fit will be	L	Yes

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
	associated, the major events which it will aim to attract will require significant funding in order to attract and deliver them safely.	put forward to the relevant Council committee for funding to be allocated. This will ensure that each individual event budget and business case can be considered independently.		
Reputational	Failure to attract major events will impact Aberdeen's reputation within the Event Industry, with constituents and with residents.	The continued development of Aberdeen's Event strategy will help to maintain Aberdeen's reputation for delivering events of scale safely and successfully.	L	Yes
Environment / Climate	Whilst there is no direct Environmental impact from this report, the event programme that follows may impact on the Council's net zero ambitions.	By ensuring that Council events follow internal guidance on developing and delivering sustainable events, and by sharing best practice through the 365 working group,	L	Yes

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
		environmental impacts will be minimised.		

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2022-2023</u>	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement <u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u>	<p>The proposals in this report support the delivery of the Partnership's Policy Statement for a Vibrant City:</p> <p>Aim to make Aberdeen a premier destination for festivals, productions, conferences, bands and events.</p> <p>Work with partners to bring national and international sporting championships to Aberdeen.</p>
<u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26</u>	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	The proposals could impact on the stretch outcomes in relation to supporting 400 Aberdeen residents onto Fair Work by 2026; and providing opportunities for residents to be reskilled to enable them to move into new opportunities.
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	The proposal will indirectly contribute to the Child Friendly City Improvement Project aim to achieve a UNICEF badge in Culture.

Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	Some of the events in the plan will require an assessment of the environmental sustainability of individual events – the carbon emissions of events, and participant/ audience travel is normally considered in event plans and funding bids.
Regional and City Strategies	The proposals support the new and emerging Regional Economic Strategy for Aberdeen to be a key tourism destination; the regional Tourism Destination Strategy (to grow visitor spend in the region) including from maximising opportunities from festivals and events; the City Centre Masterplan; and the Beach Masterplan.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	Required
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required
Other	None

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Finance, Policy & Resources Committee, Events Strategy Plan OCE/16/040 7 December 2016.

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix 1 - Events 365 Plan 2023/26

11.2 Exempt Appendix 2 of the Events 365 Plan

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