

Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 17 May 2016

Update on the Red Flag system for events

Item number	7.5
Report number	
Executive	
Wards	All

Executive summary

In response to a motion entitled Festival Events by Councillor Mowat, the Council meeting of 4 February 2016 requested an update report to the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee in April 2016 on the red flag mechanism, in light of the issues flagged in Councillor Mowat's motion, covering the two years since its implementation.

A report describing the Red Flag process was considered at the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee meeting on 12 April 2016, which continued consideration of the matter to this meeting of the Committee, to allow officers to have discussions with Councillor Mowat.

This amended report reflects the outcome of discussions with Councillor Mowat, and notes that a communication protocol has been adopted as an improvement to the Red Flag system.

Links

Coalition pledges	P24
Council outcomes	CO20
Single Outcome Agreement	SO1

Update on the Red Flag system for major events

Recommendations

- 1.1 Note that the Red Flag system has been in active use since 2014.
- 1.2 Note that a communication protocol has been adopted to ensure that local councillors and the public are alerted as swiftly as possible to any late changes to access to public areas.

Background

- 2.1 Council considered a motion by Councillor Mowat entitled Festival Events at its meeting on 4 February 2016, and in response, requested an update on the Red Flag mechanism covering the two years since its implementation.
- 2.2 The Corporate Policy and Strategy meeting on 12 April 2016 continued this matter until this meeting, to allow officers to have discussions with Councillor Mowat to inform the report. This report reflects the outcome of discussion with Councillor Mowat.
- 2.3 The findings of an Events Governance Review were presented to Committee on 5 November 2013. On 25 February 2014, the Committee approved recommendations for implementing this review, including a revised application and approval process and the establishment of relevant roles and responsibilities, with a continuing central role for the Council's Events Management Group, chaired by the Culture Service. One of the key recommendations was the implementation of a stakeholder engagement, communication and consultation protocol. A Red Flag system was introduced by the Council with criteria that help all concerned to identify when an event or emerging related circumstances or issues have the potential to give rise to wider implications for the city and other services, and to issue a Red Flag communication to the appropriate elected members and officers.

Main report

- 3.1 It is the responsibility of every member of the Events Management Group to raise any items that meet the Red Flag criteria (these are listed in appendix 1). The Red Flag alerts are coordinated and circulated by the Culture Service on behalf of the Events Management Group, which has Council-wide service

representation along with representation from Marketing Edinburgh. When a Red Flag is required, the Lead Officer responsible for the event completes a Red Flag template, which is then circulated to elected members and relevant officers. The template is provided in appendix 2.

- 3.2 The Red Flag template highlights any permissions required from the Council for the event, including but not limited to, licensing and Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders. The Events Management Group revised the original template after some months of its use to incorporate an indication of any remaining decision-making or approval timelines – to encourage officers to issue alerts at the earliest opportunity, even if the event has not yet been fully approved or its details finalised. Each Red Flag notes the name and contact details for the Lead Officer. Updates to the Red Flags are circulated as discussions with Council officers and other relevant stakeholders continue and plans progress.
- 3.3 The Red Flag system is for information only and provides an update on potential proposals being discussed with officers. It is intended to highlight any implications for the city related to events and to ensure that everyone in the Council who needs to be aware of the issue is alerted at the earliest opportunity.
- 3.4 The Red Flag does not constitute recommendations from officers, nor seek approval from elected members for action. The Red Flag system ensures consistent messaging should any relevant members or officers deal with external enquiries etc and further enables facilitation of inter-service discussion and resolution.
- 3.5 Since the Red Flag system was implemented in 2014, a total of 28 individual Red Flags (plus 17 updates) have been circulated to elected members and relevant officers. These have covered topics potentially affecting the delivery of or arising from:
 - 3.5.1 Christmas celebrations and related activities (7 Red Flags);
 - 3.5.2 music events (6 Red Flags);
 - 3.5.3 sport events and cultural events (4 Red Flags each);
 - 3.5.4 rallies, demonstrations, parades and gatherings (5 Red Flags);
 - 3.5.5 civic events and national issues (3 Red Flags)
- 3.6 Almost all of the Red Flags have related to events taking place in the city centre, with a minority relating to locations such as the Royal Highland Centre, or to issues affecting events across the entire city. The Red Flags in 2014 and 2015 were issued at a frequency of circa two per calendar month; in 2016, three have been issued to date, one in each calendar month.

- 3.7 At the Council meeting on 4 February 2016 four event-related examples from which lessons could be learned were identified. These were the Street of Light programme which took place in the High Street throughout the Christmas events cycle in 2015; the Calton Hill 2015/16 Hogmanay Fireworks site; the Grassmarket city centre area when used for events; and events taking place in George Street during the summer festivals period.
- 3.8 A common thread emerged as a result of analysing these instances. Any change to access to public areas, or limitation of such access, must be more diligently communicated both to local Councillors and to the public, as comprehensively as possible. This is already a consideration and is tackled whenever these closures or changes are planned well in advance, but when short term requirements or unforeseen circumstances emerge, these must be more comprehensively addressed in future.
- 3.9 As a result, a communication protocol has been adopted by officers to ensure that such late changes are required (for example, to address public safety concerns) these will be immediately highlighted to local Councillors and red flags will be issued as necessary.

Measures of success

- 4.1 The success of the Red Flag system is measured by its efficacy in – as far as possible - getting essential information to all those who need it, at the right time.

Financial impact

- 5.1 The cost of the Red Flag system is contained within existing revenue budgets.

Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 A comprehensive review of Events Governance, which included the Action Plan, was previously approved by this Committee. There has been no change to the risk profile or any impact on compliance or governance since then. The Red Flag system supports the delivery of successful events in Edinburgh, as part of the Council's Events Strategy; a new Events Strategy for Edinburgh is in preparation and will be presented to the Culture and Sport Committee on 31 May for approval.

Equalities impact

- 7.1 None.

Sustainability impact

- 8.1 None.

Consultation and engagement

9.1 The Red Flag system is a communication tool.

Background reading / external references

[Review of Events Governance](#) – Corporate Policy & Strategy Committee 25 February 2014

[Review of Events Governance](#) – Corporate Policy & Strategy Committee 5 November 2013

[Review of Events Governance](#) – Corporate Policy & Strategy Committee 6 August 2013

Inspiring Events Strategy – www.eventsedinburgh.org.uk

Inspiring Events Guide – www.eventsedinburgh.org.uk

Paul Lawrence

Executive Director of Place

Contact:

Lindsay A Robertson, Culture Service Manager (Arts, Festivals & Events)

E-mail: lindsay.robertson@edinburgh.gov.uk | Tel: 0131 529 6719

Links

Coalition pledges	P24 - Maintain and embrace support for our world-famous festivals and events
Council outcomes	CO20 - Culture, sport and major events – Edinburgh continues to be a leading cultural city where culture and sport play a central part in the lives and futures of citizens
Single Outcome Agreement	SO1 – Edinburgh’s economy delivers increased investment, jobs and opportunities for all.
Appendices	1:Red Flag criteria 2:Red Flag form

Red Flag Criteria

Reputational

- Reputation or integrity of the Council is at risk

Political

- May be political implications related to the event

Citywide/Location

- Takes place in more than one ward or crosses city boundaries

Scale

- The scale attracts media or other attention

Impact

- Size, duration, and location etc has an effect on the normal running of the city eg transport

Timescale

- Considerations and permissions require long lead in times

Date/event conflicts

- Events occur simultaneously resulting in one or more of the aforementioned headings

Policy

- Conflicts with established Council policy

Legislation

- Legislation requires specific considerations

Red Flag template

EVENT MANAGEMENT GROUP

RED FLAG

Ref No		
For Information		
RED FLAG		
Affected Wards:		
Lead CEC Officer Contact:		
Decision-making Process & Timeline:		
Deadline:		
Venue:		
Circulation List:		