

Policy and Sustainability Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 28 May 2020

Winter Festivals Consultation

Executive/routine	
Wards	All especially City Centre
Council Commitments	43 , 46 , and 47

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that Committee agree:
 - 1.1.1 the proposed approach for appointing a service provider to deliver the consultation on the future of the Winter Festivals in Edinburgh from 2022; and
 - 1.1.2 that the All Party Oversight Group (APOG) on Festivals and Events has met, been consulted and had input in to the Specification for the Winter Festivals Consultation and will continue to provide oversight throughout the appointment of a service provider and the consultation process itself.

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Report

Winter Festivals Consultation

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 At the meeting of the Culture and Communities Committee on [18 June 2019](#), an emergency motion was tabled by the Coalition Administration to undertake a public consultation on the future of the Winter Festivals from 2022. This report provides an update on the timescales to appoint a consultant to deliver this work and the specification for this consultation.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Council is commissioning a wide-reaching and independent consultation with residents and other stakeholders from across the city on the future of Winter Festival activity in Edinburgh. The city's Winter Festivals offer is currently comprised of two main events: Edinburgh's Christmas; and Edinburgh's Hogmanay.
- 3.2 The Edinburgh's Christmas event currently takes place over a six-week period from around the third weekend in November to around 6 January, at locations in and around the city centre of Edinburgh. The activities that form Edinburgh's Christmas include a market offer, fairground, family attractions and, until 2018, an ice rink.
- 3.3 Edinburgh's Hogmanay is an internationally renowned New Year festival in its 28th year. Currently, it is a three-day festival centred around celebrations on 31 December. The festival provides international promotion for the city and images of the midnight fireworks display are broadcast around the world, attracting significant international audiences as well as providing managed city centre celebrations. Activities include a street party, concerts in Princes Street Gardens, a torchlight procession and an open-air ceilidh.
- 3.4 The footprint of both events has changed over recent years: while the levels of entertainment on offer at Edinburgh's Christmas and Hogmanay have increased, so has the level of infrastructure required to deliver them. In particular, Edinburgh's Christmas had a new layout for 2019/20 that required a large structure to be built in Princes Street Gardens. While this new layout improved the visitor experience and resulted in increased visitor numbers, it provoked strong opinions both for and against and did not have the necessary consents in place.

- 3.5 The Council wishes to engage in an open public conversation about the future of these events, to listen to feedback from residents and to ensure that the future of the winter Festival achieves the right balance for those living and working in Edinburgh.
- 3.6 The timescale for delivering the consultation was originally Spring 2020. However, due to the impact of Covid-19 and the current suspension of all public consultations, this has been delayed. In the meantime, officers will procure a service provider to allow the consultation to be delivered as soon as the suspension is lifted.

4. Main report

- 4.1 Underbelly Ltd are contracted to deliver two further editions of Edinburgh's Christmas and Edinburgh's Hogmanay until 2022. While there is little scope to vary the current contract, it is an appropriate opportunity to review these events and to ask residents and businesses, those who have attended the festivals and those who haven't, how they wish to celebrate Christmas and Hogmanay from 2022 onwards.
- 4.2 An Emergency Motion from the Coalition Administration to Culture and Communities Committee on 18 June 2019 instructed officers to undertake a wide consultation on the future of these events.
- 4.3 The central principles of the consultation are that its reach should be as wide as possible and use a combination of methods (i.e. not just an online survey) to gather, as accurately as possible, a representative and consensus view on the future of Christmas and Hogmanay celebrations in the city. It should fully reflect the demographic of the city and reach residents both within the city centre and those outwith, businesses, city stakeholders and community groups. A representative list of those to be consulted can be found below.
- 4.4 In consultation with, and led by, the APOG on Festivals and Event, officers have prepared a brief and set of guiding principles for a service provider on what the consultation should deliver and who it should reach. It will ask service providers to propose a methodology and set(s) of questions that will achieve the desired breadth of engagement and to establish:
- 4.4.1 support and scale of Winter Festivals activity;
 - 4.4.2 the type of Winter Festivals activities they would like to see and where; and
 - 4.4.3 the guiding principles on how Winter Festival activity should be delivered.
- 4.5 Those to be consulted include:
- 4.5.1 City Centre residents, especially those who have been affected in the past by Winter Festival activity;
 - 4.5.2 Edinburgh residents in general, ensuring a level of engagement and opportunity to respond that is as wide as possible;

- 4.5.3 Edinburgh residents with sensory and mobility impairment, disability groups and organisations representing the interests of those with visibility and mobility impairment including the Edinburgh Access Panel;
 - 4.5.4 Edinburgh residents on low incomes and organisations representing their interests;
 - 4.5.5 Community Groups, especially those for children and young people, and single-parent families;
 - 4.5.6 Heritage and community organisations with a particular interest in the City Centre;
 - 4.5.7 Faith-based organisations;
 - 4.5.8 Edinburgh Community Councils;
 - 4.5.9 Businesses operating in Edinburgh and particularly the City Centre, including, but not limited to Federation of Small Business/Chamber of Commerce businesses, tourism industry, hotels. There are also a large number of businesses who are not members of an official representative body and these businesses should also be included; and
 - 4.5.10 Stakeholder organisations involved in or impacted by the delivery of current Winter Festival activity including, but not limited to, Police Scotland, transport providers, NHS Lothian, Festivals Edinburgh, EventScotland and VisitScotland, Essential Edinburgh.
- 4.6 The outcomes of the consultation will be presented to the APOG on Festivals and Events and to the Culture and Communities Committee (or other relevant Committee).
 - 4.7 The consultation will provide a framework for delivering future Winter Festivals from 2022 onwards and its outcomes will determine the models to be employed in the delivery of these events as determined by the people of Edinburgh.
 - 4.8 Officers are making the necessary preparations to issue an invitation to respond to this brief and to appoint a service provider to deliver the consultation as early as possible.
 - 4.9 Once appointed, members of the APOG on Festivals and Events will approve the final methodology and list of questions proposed by the service provider.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 As the value of the project is under £50,000, the Council will invite responses through the Quick Quote system on Public Contracts Scotland. The documentation will be made available in the week beginning 1 June 2020. Given the current circumstances with Covid-19, a slightly longer response time of four weeks will be applied to allow service providers to submit their responses.

- 5.2 Responses will then be evaluated and a report recommending appointment of a service provider will be prepared for the next available meeting of the Policy and Sustainability Committee. It is anticipated that this exercise will take around 4 weeks with a target Committee date of 6 August 2020.
- 5.3 The APOG on Major Festivals and Events will approve the exact methodology to be employed as well as the questions being asked by the appointed service provider.
- 5.4 The service provider will then provide a public and independent report to the Council's APOG on Major Festivals and Events via the Executive Director of Place, before then being reported to the Culture and Communities Committee (or other relevant Committee), where the service provider will be required to attend and answer any questions from elected members.
- 5.5 All public consultations are currently on hold. A commencement date is currently unavailable but this consultation will be opened as soon as instructed. Consultation is expected to last for a minimum of 12 weeks.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 A budget of £40,000 has been identified to deliver this consultation. The budget is held within the Events budget in the Culture Service.
- 6.2 Delivering this consultation is an essential exercise in determining the future of the Winter Festivals in Edinburgh and ensuring that they meet the needs of Edinburgh residents and businesses.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 The consultation is expected to have a positive impact on stakeholders and the community. The central principle of this consultation is that everyone within the city – residents, communities, businesses and stakeholders – will be invited to participate and to ensure that views from across the entire city are heard. The service provider is tasked with creating a methodology to ensure that this central principle is delivered.
- 7.2 An Integrated Impact Assessment will be completed as part of the consultation process and will be reported to this Committee as part of the results of the consultation.
- 7.3 Execution of this consultation is not anticipated to have any negative environmental impacts.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 Motion to Culture and Communities Committee on [18 June 2019](#)
- 8.2 Report to Culture and Communities Committee on [28 January 2020](#)

8.3 Report to Policy and Sustainability Committee on [25 February 2020](#)

9. Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1 – Specification for Winter Festivals consultation.

Service Provider Brief – Edinburgh Winter Festival Consultation

The Council is proposing to commission a wide-reaching and independent consultation with residents from across the city and other stakeholders on the future of Winter Festival activity in the city.

Christmas

The Edinburgh's Christmas event currently takes place over a six-week period from around the third weekend in November to around the 6th of January, at locations in and around the city centre of Edinburgh. The activities that form Edinburgh's Christmas include a market offer, fairground, family attractions and, until 2018, an ice rink.

Hogmanay Festival

Edinburgh's Hogmanay is an internationally renowned New Year festival in its 28th year. Currently, it is a 3-day festival centred around celebrations on the 31st December. The festival provides international promotion for the city and images of the midnight fireworks display are broadcast around the world, attracting significant international audiences as well as providing managed city centre celebrations. Activities include a street party, concerts in Princes Street Gardens, a torchlight procession and an open-air ceilidh.

Audiences

Based on the [key performance indicators](#) of the current contract, both events are successful, attracting large audience numbers and delivering a high-quality offer to both residents and visitors. In 2019, over 2.6m visitors attended the Christmas festivities in Princes Street Gardens, an increase of nearly 5% on the previous year. Hogmanay continues to attract an annual audience of 75,000 for the evening of 31 December with the Torchlight Procession on 30 December and Loony Dook on 1 January both selling out, attracting an audience of 184,000 people across the three days. However, large audiences in key city centre sites have a significant impact on greenspaces and transport. In future, audience volume may not necessarily be the most important metric and a focus on quality, community benefit and engagement and balanced use of public spaces will be of greater importance. As such, new Key Performance Indicators will be developed for future events to reflect this.

Economy

Both events are important to the economy: the [most recent economic data](#) for Edinburgh's Christmas shows an impact of £113.2m for the city; Edinburgh's Hogmanay generates £39.2m for Edinburgh. Both events also employ large numbers of Edinburgh residents and provide income for Edinburgh based businesses and suppliers. The way this local impact circulates throughout the Edinburgh economy will be of increasing importance.

Sites

The footprint of both events has changed over recent years: while the levels of entertainment on offer at Edinburgh's Christmas and Hogmanay have increased, so has the level of infrastructure required to deliver them. In particular, Edinburgh's Christmas had a new layout for 2019/20 that required a large structure to be built in Princes Street Gardens. While this new layout improved the visitor experience and resulted in increased visitor numbers, it provoked strong opinions both for and against.

Next Phase

The current contract for delivering both events expires in 2022. It is an appropriate opportunity to review both events and to ask residents and businesses, those who have attended the festivals and those who haven't, how they wish to celebrate Christmas and Hogmanay from 2022 onwards.

The Council wishes to engage in an open public conversation about the future of these events, to listen to feedback from residents and to ensure that the future of the winter Festival achieves the right balance for those living and working in Edinburgh.

Scope to influence

The consultation will seek to engage with residents from across the city – reflecting the widest possible demographic and geographic input. Participants will be able to influence the future direction of the Winter Festival.

1. Support for and scale of Winter Festival activity

Rationale

The Winter Festivals provide an opportunity for residents and visitors to celebrate both Christmas and Hogmanay in the city. While the non-financial benefits and impacts are paramount, the Council also recognises that there are economic benefits from the current Winter Festival activity that provide a significant financial boost to the economy of the city. In setting future direction, the Council wishes to consider all the financial and non-financial considerations with a strong emphasis on the non-financial benefits.

Limitations

The Council has already received estimates of financial benefit of Winter Festival activity to the city and Scotland and is not seeking to repeat this. The Council's current contract with Underbelly covers Winter Festival activity to the winter of 2021/22; therefore, the Council is limited in what changes to Winter Festival activity are possible before the end of this contract (notwithstanding the impact of Covid-19) and the focus of this consultation will be solely be for the future years of the festival starting in 22/23.

Key issues to be addressed by consultation

- How are residents impacted by Winter Festival activity, both in terms of having a positive attendance experience or otherwise (especially city centre residents as a distinct group)? Does resident location have a bearing on views of any impact? What is resident experience of those both living in event areas and those visiting them?
- What other non-financial impacts of Winter Festivals are there for the city?
- How do all Edinburgh residents, including City Centre residents, benefit from Winter Festival activity?
- How does the scale of the Winter Festival impact wider business activity (broken down by sector) including displacement of existing businesses by concessions?
- What are the potential benefits and/or consequences of a scaled back or alternative model?

2. The type of Winter Festival activity

Rationale

The Council understands that support and opposition vary for different elements of Winter Festival activity. The events attract large resident and visitor numbers who enjoy their experience but there are opposing views on the scale and impact of the current

arrangements. The design of activities determines the number of visitors, the demographics of visitors, and the location of these activities. Therefore, the Council wants to understand these preferences in more detail in order to shape the opportunity for review going forwards and proactively manage any consequences of the decisions taken.

Limitations

Expectation management is important as financial resources are unlikely to increase.

Key issues to be addressed by consultation

- What Winter Festival activity have residents taken part in and what have they enjoyed / not enjoyed?
- What type of events would residents like to host in their area? And what do they not want?
- What should any Winter Festival activities be going forward, including the location of any activities and the expected benefits of any changes? E.g. central locations versus distribution across the city's neighbourhoods; types of activities (using the current model as a comparator); duration; the importance or otherwise of having Christmas celebrations and a Hogmanay Festival for the city?
- What issues are important to residents, e.g. in relation to cost, sustainability, use of green spaces, accessibility and equalities?
- What negative impacts might result from changing activities – does the current model require to be changed or does the public support it in its present format?

3. The guiding principles of how Winter Festival activity should be procured from suppliers in future

Rationale

The Council has for a number of years commissioned an events management company to provide Winter Festival activity. Whether this will be repeated will depend on the results of this consultation but it may result in other models being required (e.g. community-led across multiple sites, a single events management company for the city centre or a combination of the two – these options are examples and not definitive). It is appropriate that residents and other stakeholders can determine the expectations set for those organising any events.

Limitations

Organisations will have to work creatively to ensure that what is offered absolutely meets the requirements of those consulted.

Key issues to be addressed by consultation

- What measures of success should be used for Winter Festival activity?
- What operational arrangements should be in place to ensure quick resolution of unexpected issues, especially those involving residents of the City Centre?
- What discounts should be applied, when, and to what groups?
- What considerations should be made for sustainability, accessibility and equalities issues in the design of activities?
- When should the Winter Festival activity be reviewed again?

Participants

Following the completion of an integrated impact assessment for Winter Festival activity and through discussions with stakeholders, the Council has identified the following groups it is important to hear from as part of this consultation. Service Providers should ensure the design of consultation activity is appropriate to reach and involve these groups (not listed in order of priority):

- City Centre residents, especially those who have been affected in the past by Winter Festival activity
- Edinburgh residents in general, ensuring a level of engagement and opportunity to respond that is as wide as possible
- Edinburgh residents with sensory and mobility impairment, disability groups and organisations representing the interests of those with visibility and mobility impairment including the Edinburgh Access Panel.
- Edinburgh residents on low incomes and organisations representing their interests
- Community Groups, especially those for children and young people, and single-parent families
- Heritage and community organisations with a particular interest in the City Centre
- Faith-based organisations
- Edinburgh Community Councils
- Businesses operating in Edinburgh and particularly the City Centre, including, but not limited to Federation of Small Business/Chamber of Commerce businesses, tourism industry, hotels. There are also a large number of businesses who are not members of an official representative body and these businesses should also be included.
- Stakeholder organisations involved in or impacted by the delivery of current Winter Festival activity including, but not limited to, Police Scotland, transport providers, NHS Lothian, Festivals Edinburgh, EventScotland and VisitScotland, Essential Edinburgh.

Current employees or elected members of the City of Edinburgh Council are free to participate in this consultation as citizens, or as representatives of other organisations. Employee and elected member views are not to be sought specifically as part of this consultation.

Methods

The appointed Service Provider should propose any consultation methods which they believe will encourage, enable and maximise participation and provide the Council with appropriate information on which to base its decisions. Within this, the Council emphasises the following:

- Consultation opportunities must be available online and offline
- Consultation must be a mix of qualitative and quantitative evaluation
- Consultation must be as wide as possible, ensuring those from across the entire city and all demographics are given an opportunity to participate
- Some consultation opportunities must be open to anyone, even those not previously identified as participants
- The Council will make its Consultation and Engagement Hub available for this activity and will support communications to networks and on social media
- The final design of methods must be agreed with the Council
- Aside from those specific elements above, consultation activity cannot be performed by any current employees or elected members of the City of Edinburgh Council operating in any capacity

Timescales

Final timescales will be agreed with the appointed Service Provider, however the consultation must be open for a period of at least 12 weeks.

Reporting

The final list of questions and methodology must be approved by the Council's All Party Oversight Group (APOG) on Major Festivals and Events via the Executive Director of Place prior to the consultation going live. The Service Provider should provide a public and independent report to be submitted to the APOG on Major Festivals and Events via the Executive Director of Place, before

then being reported to the Culture and Communities Committee (or other relevant Committee), where the Service Provider will be required to attend and answer any questions from elected members.