

# The City of Edinburgh Council

10am, Tuesday 25 August 2020

## Support of Civic Life in the Capital City

<b>Item number</b>	
<b>Executive/routine</b>	
<b>Wards</b>	<b>All wards</b>
<b>Council Commitments</b>	2, 6, 7, 9, 15, 18, 31, 46, 47, 51, 52

### 1. Recommendations

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It is recommended that the Council:

- 1.1 notes the range of civic activity undertaken by the Office of Lord Provost during Phases 1 and 2 of Lockdown, and the wide use of alternative and virtual means of communication, as set out in paragraph 4.2;
- 1.2 recognises the restrictions placed on the civic diary in the next phase of operation arising from the decision not to re-open the City Chambers for events until at least the middle of October 2020;
- 1.3 notes that outdoor events and engagements at other venues will go ahead during Phase 3 subject to satisfactory risk assessments by event organisers;
- 1.4 endorses the early planning that is underway for future civic events including a Lord Provost Community Garden Party in 2021, as set out in paragraphs 4.9 to 4.12;
- 1.5 acknowledges the key role of the Depute Lord Provost and Bailies and supports the proposal for fuller participation at key civic events throughout the year, as described in paragraphs 4.18 to 4.20; and
- 1.6 Notes the more clearly defined role for the Depute Lord Provost and proposed adjustment to the Council's Civic Hospitality Policy, as set out in paragraphs 4.21 to 4.24.

**Andrew Kerr**

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## Support of Civic Life in the Capital City

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 This report supplements the Year 3 Office of Lord Provost Report to Council on 30 June 2020 in 2019/20, by addressing the Administration and Conservative Group addendums.
- 2.2 The range of activity undertaken during Phases 1 and 2 of the Lockdown is described to demonstrate the full use of virtual and alternative forms of communication during this period.
- 2.3 Ongoing restrictions on the civic diary are detailed in the context of the closure of the City Chambers for events until at least mid October 2020.
- 2.4 Significant work to plan future civic events in the city and lift spirits of the community is then detailed.
- 2.5 Going forward, a clearer set of duties for the Bailies and a better defined role for the Depute Lord Provost, particularly in relation to the Council's Civic Hospitality Policy, is proposed.

### 3 Background

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- 3.1 At its meeting on 30 June 2020, the Council welcomed the Year 3 Report from the Office of Lord Provost and called for a further report on:
  - 3.1.1 new methods and new technology enabling the continued support of civic life in the city while COVID -19 Regulations apply. To include how virtual ceremonies can be delivered and how the Depute Lord Provost and Bailies can assist with these new approaches. (Addendum by the Coalition)
  - 3.1.2 proposed methods of civic engagement by the Lord Provost, Depute Lord Provost and Bailies to ensure as complete a civic presence as possible. The report to include the potential and appropriateness of undertaking events by virtual methods; other new ways of engaging; reference to government and other guidelines; and any budget impacts for the Office of Lord Provost. (Addendum by the Conservative Group)

- 3.2 This report addresses these key points and maps out the way forward and constraints in reviving the civic health of the city.

## 4 Main report

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- 4.1 The previous report to Council on 30 June detailed the actions and output of the Civic Office in 2019/20. It was also made clear, however, that COVID-19 had impacted very negatively on the civic life of the city. Many key events had been postponed or cancelled and it was considered necessary to determine the best and most appropriate ways of reinstating the civic life of the city.

### **Phases 1 and 2 of Lockdown**

- 4.2 During phases 1 and 2 of the lockdown, the Office of Lord Provost has been:
- Using the Lord Provost's Twitter Account to convey key civic messages
  - Recording Video Messages for main events including Victory in Europe Day and thanking Kinship Carers and Faith Community Leaders
  - Delivering speeches to large audiences at Virtual Conferences, specifically the Adapt Northern Heritage Conference on climate change and the RSA (Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce) Scotland Conference
  - Joining Virtual Events such as the Carers Week 2020 Coffee Morning
  - Holding Virtual Meetings (Skype/MS Teams) with partners including the new Chief Executive of the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo, the University of Edinburgh and Volunteer Edinburgh
  - Laying a wreath to commemorate the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of St Valery at the Stone of Remembrance on 12 June
  - Raising the Flag for Armed Forces Week on 22 June
  - Signing the Edinburgh 2050 City Vision charter in the limited presence of media representatives on 2 July
  - Developing the new galaxy website [www.edinburghlordprovost.com](http://www.edinburghlordprovost.com)
  - Preparing Bids for future Royal Visits to the City, in the light of the pandemic
  - Considering and processing requests for civic recognition and hospitality.

### **Phases 3 and 4 of Lockdown**

- 4.3 Now in phase 3, some greater flexibility is permitted by the Scottish Government. Recent civic events have included the signing of the Friendship Agreement with Contalmaison as agreed by Council on 30 June. The Agreement marks the sacrifice of the young men of the 16<sup>th</sup> Royal Scots and the bond between the two communities. Eight people including the Depute Lord Provost and the Consul

General for France attended the brief ceremony on 14 July, observing the necessary social distancing requirements.

- 4.4 There are continued restrictions on the use of the City Chambers, however, with no further civic events to be held until at least mid-October. This is due to health and safety requirements and the decision to suspend activity is in line with the Council's wider policy around building openings. This means that the City Chambers is not scheduled to open until phase 4 of the Scottish Government Roadmap. Limitations on the type of events that can take place in the City Chambers will still apply.
- 4.5 There is scope though for civic events to be held outside, safely and within current guidance. On 17 July, the Lord Provost also unveiled the floral clock in West Princes Street Gardens. This is dedicated to NHS, care and key workers who have worked tirelessly through the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 4.6 Planning is also underway for a small civic event in the Quadrangle on Sunday 13 September to mark the annual Edinburgh Riding of the Marches, given that the main events cannot take place this year. In addition, the Lieutenancy has been notified of re-scheduled visits to the city by The Princess Royal in September and October. The event organisers will be contacted regarding risk assessments and necessary safety procedures.
- 4.7 Inevitably though, there will be a further period of greater reliance on alternative means of communication and different ways of doing business. Key meetings will be held remotely and these will include the next session of the Lord Provost's Commission on 'The Strategy for our Ex Forces Personnel'. This is due to take place on 2 September when education, training and employment issues will be examined.
- 4.8 Overall, however, virtual methods of communication are not considered to be as effective in an environment where face to face and personal contact with people who work and live in the city is far more meaningful and valued.

### **Looking Ahead**

- 4.9 The current circumstances dictate though that the resumption of this type of activity is delayed until phase 4 and beyond. In the meantime, there is a welcome opportunity to plan future civic events that will mark the experience of the pandemic and lift civic spirit.
- 4.10 The possibility of holding a Lord Provost Community Garden Party in 2021, with invited guests from the NHS, Carer and voluntary sectors, at the refurbished Saughton Walled Garden is already under discussion. A bid for The Princess Royal (who opened the restored Garden in June 2019) to attend and meet guests from the community will be submitted to the Palace for the next round of engagements.
- 4.11 A key civic event to align the response to COVID-19 with the Installation of the Governor of Edinburgh Castle is also under early consideration. To take place in February to April 2021, the outline idea is to hold a procession, comprised of organisations who made contributions to fighting the pandemic, from Holyrood to the Castle where the Installation of the Governor would take place on the

Esplanade. The Council's Events Team is currently looking at this and more detailed plans will come forward in due course.

- 4.12 Any underspend on the Council's Civic Hospitality Budget in this financial year could be carried forward to meet the cost of these special events next year. This will require a report to the Finance and Resources Committee followed by a referral to Full Council for approval.

### **Civic Role of Depute Lord Provost and Bailies**

- 4.13 It is also helpful at this stage to set out a clearer and more defined role for the Depute Lord Provost and Bailies in this recovery process. In terms of background, the Depute Lord Provost is first and foremost the Depute Convener of the Council. Both the Lord Provost and Depute Convener hold office until the next Council elections.
- 4.14 In recognising the scale and demands of the civic role in the capital city, the Council has also agreed to the appointment of Bailies to support and represent the Lord Provost at civic functions and events. The position of Bailie is a historic role in Scotland, elected by a town council from among the councillors. In the current administration, there are five Bailies nominated by each of the political groupings.
- 4.15 Over the last year, the Depute Lord Provost has chaired Full Council in the absence of the Lord Provost and has represented the Office at key events such as the collection of the Gold Standard under the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme in London on 12 December 2019.
- 4.16 The Depute Lord Provost and Bailies have provided a strong civic presence and support for new citizens at the Citizenship Ceremonies held in the City Chambers. In 2019/20, Group Ceremonies were by more than 1,000 newly confirmed Citizens in Edinburgh. These ceremonies have been on hold and, once resumed, there will be a significant back log of citizenships to be conferred.
- 4.17 As with the Depute Lord Provost, the Bailies have also represented the Lord Provost at other key civic events. For clarity, it is custom and practice firstly to invite the Depute Lord Provost to undertake engagements. If not available, then the Bailies are approached for assistance. Individuals' proximity to event locations is sometimes taken into account along with other relevant factors.
- 4.18 Looking ahead, the Depute Lord Provost and Bailies have registered a strong commitment to supporting the Lord Provost and to taking on more civic responsibilities in this context. As well as representing the Lord Provost on request, there are key civic events throughout the year when it is proposed that all the Civic Leaders should attend where possible.

4.19 These include:

- The 10 Church Services (held at St Giles Cathedral and other Churches across the City) including the Kirking of the Council, the Edinburgh International Festival and the Academic Service
- Civic Receptions for Multi Faith groups
- The Opening of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland
- Flag Raising Ceremony for Armed Forces Day
- The Ceremony of the Keys for the General Assembly and Royal Week
- The Edinburgh Riding of the Marches Civic Reception and Procession
- Diwali Festival of Light
- Remembrance Sunday
- The Torchlight Procession at New Year.

4.20 In so doing, there will be a greater civic presence and interface with the community of Edinburgh in a non-political environment. This is at a time when efforts to boost confidence and morale across the city are badly needed. To make this achievable, it is understood that commitments in the civic diary will need to be shared with the Depute Lord Provost and Bailies well in advance so that key dates are kept free as far as possible.

4.21 For the Depute Lord Provost, it is proposed that further consideration be given to a more defined role and specific set of responsibilities. These could include the Council's Civic Hospitality Policy which is covered by a Scheme of Delegation to Officers, approved by the Finance and Resources Committee on 29 October 2015 and then updated (in terms of Lead Officer designations) in 2019.

4.22 Under the terms of the Scheme, requests for civic hospitality are considered against established criteria in consultation with the Lord Provost. This approach could be widened out to include the Depute Lord Provost as a consultee and, to speed up the decision making process, as a substitute in the absence of the Lord Provost. An appendix to the Civic Hospitality Policy, outlining roles and responsibilities, would be needed to clarify this change.

4.23 The same arrangement would still apply whereby any individual civic hospitality events costing £10,000 and above would need to be reported to the Finance and Resources Committee for approval.

4.24 Beyond the specific remit of Depute Convener and the proposed shared responsibility for the Council's Civic Hospitality Policy and Budget, it would also be feasible to establish a portfolio of specific projects for the Depute Lord Provost. This would be based on agreed civic objectives with a particular emphasis on engagement with local people and communities as the City emerges from the COVID-19 Pandemic.

## 5 Financial impact

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- 5.1 The Office of the Lord Provost operates within the budget allocated in the Council's previous Financial Plan 2017-21. This amounts to a total budget of £507,891 in 2020/21, including £67,000 for Civic Hospitality.

## 6 Stakeholder/Community Impact

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- 6.1 The Office of the Lord Provost routinely undertakes engagement and co-production with a broad range of stakeholders, leading community representatives and business organisations.
- 6.2 Speeches and other inputs for events are developed in consultation with the organisers.
- 6.3 The Office of the Lord Provost assists both the Council and city partners to deliver key equality and rights outcomes, and to meet the Equality Act 2010 public sector equality duties to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation, (ii) advance equality of opportunity, and (iii) foster good relations.
- 6.4 The Lord Provost's stewardship of the One City Trust is also an important lever in helping to mitigate the negative impacts of poverty and inequality across the Capital.
- 6.5 The Office of the Lord Provost endeavours to mitigate carbon impacts by utilising public transport where and when appropriate, where any long-distance travelling is required.
- 6.6 The Office of the Lord Provost contributes to the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 public sector duties and contributes to the delivery of Sustainable Edinburgh 2020 objectives, the advancement of vibrant flourishing communities, social and economic wellbeing and an efficient and effectively managed city.

## 7 Background reading/external references

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- 7.1.1 See [www.edinburghlordprovost.com](http://www.edinburghlordprovost.com)

## 8 Appendices

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None