

City of Edinburgh Council

10.00am, Tuesday, 19 November 2020

Edinburgh International Group Update

Executive/routine
Wards
Council Commitments

1. Recommendations

It is recommended that the City of Edinburgh Council:

- 1.1 Notes that the Edinburgh International Group reconvened in October 2020.
- 1.2 Notes that partners agreed to development of a forward schedule of regular meetings to support ongoing collaboration, and the refresh of the Edinburgh International framework by June 2021.

Andrew Kerr

Chief Executive

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Report

Edinburgh International Group Update

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The report responds to the motion made to the City of Edinburgh Council in October 2020 by the Lord Provost on the progress in re-establishing the Edinburgh International Group.
- 2.2 The Edinburgh International Group, chaired by the City of Edinburgh Council's Chief Executive, reconvened in October 2020.

3. Background

- 3.1 In August 2019 the Policy and Sustainability Committee approved a new framework of principles to guide future international engagement and activity by City of Edinburgh Council. The framework notes that international activity should clearly:
 - 3.1.1 Support the strategic aims of the Council;
 - 3.1.2 Support identified challenges and opportunities for the city;
 - 3.1.3 Be delivered in partnership to ensure high impact and value for money; and
 - 3.1.4 Be carried out in alignment with the international priority work of key partners.
- 3.2 In support of this approach, the framework incorporated the establishment of a new Edinburgh International Group of partners and stakeholders. This group aimed to facilitate sharing of information on international activities and approaches across partners who face many of the same issues and opportunities.
- 3.3 The motion by the Lord Provost at the City of Edinburgh Council meeting on 20 October 2020 noted:

“That the Edinburgh International Activity Report was passed by Policy and Sustainability on the 6 August 2019.

That Recommendation 1.3 in the above report was “to work with partners to establish a new International Edinburgh Group as a collaborative way of working. Instructs the Chief Executive to report, in one cycle, on progress to establish this group and on the detail of any meetings which have taken place.”

4. Main report

- 4.1 The re-established Edinburgh International Group is a key element in the approach to partnership and collaboration on international relations set out in the International Framework.
- 4.2 Following the delay, due to Covid-19, of planned engagement in early 2020, a session of the Edinburgh International Group was held in October 2020 to re-engage with partners on international activity, and to begin work towards understanding partner’s engagement plans and priorities for the coming year.
- 4.3 Key partners invited to take part in the session on 12 October 2020 included representatives from:
 - 4.3.1 Scottish Government
 - 4.3.2 Scottish Development International
 - 4.3.3 Scottish Enterprise
 - 4.3.4 Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce
 - 4.3.5 Federation of Small Businesses
 - 4.3.6 Edinburgh Airport
 - 4.3.7 Edinburgh Universities, Higher Education Institutes
 - 4.3.8 Edinburgh World Heritage
 - 4.3.9 Edinburgh Festivals Groups
 - 4.3.10 Fintech Scotland
- 4.4 At this meeting City of Edinburgh Council officers provided an overview of its recent international activity, including participation in recent Eurocities events. The session also provided an opportunity for all partners to outline their current and future international priorities. During the discussion, partners agreed that in order to maintain Edinburgh’s position as an outward looking international city, the city’s actions to adapt to changes occurring as a result of Covid-19 and relating economic recession should include a refresh of the Edinburgh International Framework agreed by Council in 2019.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 In follow up from this meeting, proposed next steps include:
 - 5.1.1 Agreement with partners of a forward schedule of meetings for the Edinburgh International Group to re-establish individual partner connections and take forward opportunities for joint collaborations, and
 - 5.1.2 To develop and agree a process for the refresh of the Edinburgh International Framework for consideration by Council in June 2021.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 Actions in this report can be taken forward within existing agreed budgets. Any additional impacts arising will be considered as part of future reports to Council.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 The Edinburgh International Group represents key stakeholders and partners in international activity across the city. Initial engagement with this group has begun and will be continued throughout delivery of the actions outlined in this report.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 [International Framework Report](#)
- 8.2 [Motion by Lord Provost - Edinburgh International Activity](#)
- 8.3 [International Activity Report - August 2019](#)

9. Appendices

None