

The City of Edinburgh Council

10.00am, Thursday 24 June 2021

Office of Lord Provost: Year 4 Report 2020/21

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

1. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Council:

- 1.1 notes the impact of COVID restrictions and the closure of the City Chambers on the operation of the civic diary;
- 1.2 commends the Civic Leadership for the adoption of alternative means of engagement and range of undertaken activity, described in paragraphs 4.7 to 4.16;
- 1.3 welcomes the early planning that is underway for future civic events, including a Lord Provost Community Garden Party, as set out in paragraphs 4.17 to 4.23;
- 1.4 agrees that all Council initiated proposals to the Royal Household should be routed through the Lord Provost's Office, as specified in paragraph 4.20;
- 1.5 agrees to receive a final report on the findings and recommendations of the Lord Provost's Commission 'The Strategy for Our Ex Forces Personnel'; and,
- 1.6 agrees to receive a final report before the end of the current administration, setting out clear protocols for the future operation of the Civic Office as set out in paragraphs 4.3 to 4.6 of this report.

Andrew Kerr

Chief Executive

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Report

Office of Lord Provost: Year 4 Report 2020/21

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This annual report profiles the work and commitments of the Civic Leadership from June 2020 to May 2021, a period of significant restriction in the daily life of the city.
- 2.2 The range of activity undertaken is described in the context of new measures to support civic life in the city and a clearer definition of the role of the Depute Lord Provost and Bailies of the Council.
- 2.3 It is proposed that these changes are captured in a set of protocols to be presented to Council in the shape of a final report prior to the end of this Administration.

3. Background

- 3.1 Following the Council meeting on 30 June 2020, the Lord Provost's Office was tasked with adopting new working methods and technologies to enable the continued support of civic life in the city whilst COVID -19 Regulations applied.
- 3.2 Further detail was also called for on how best the Depute Lord Provost and Bailies could assist with these new approaches.
- 3.3 This work resulted in two further reports:
 - Support of Civic Life in the Capital City: Report to Council on 25 August 2020; and,
 - Civic Hospitality Policy and Budget Adjustments: Report to Finance and Resources Committee 21 January 2021.
- 3.4 This Year 4 Annual Report is set out in the context of these practical and policy developments, elements of which need to be adopted for the future function of the civic role.

4 Main report

- 4.1 Against a backdrop of COVID restrictions and the closure of the City Chambers, early measures were put in place to maintain the civic profile of the city.
- 4.2 These were presented to Council on 25 August 2021 and included:
- using the Lord Provost's Twitter account to convey key civic messages;
 - recording video messages for transmission at main events and for thanking key service providers during the pandemic;
 - delivering speeches at virtual conferences;
 - holding on-line meetings with key partners to progress major initiatives across the city; and,
 - developing the galaxy website www.edinburghlordprovost.com

Enhancement of Depute Lord Provost and Bailie Roles

- 4.3 A more defined role in the recovery process for the Depute Lord Provost and the five Bailies was also approved by Council. The focus was on greater support for the Lord Provost and participation at key civic events throughout the year.
- 4.4 With regard to the Depute Lord Provost, there was a further extension of this role to include co-consultee under the terms of the Council's Civic Hospitality Policy. This change was implemented following the Finance and Resources Committee on 21 January 2021 when the Civic Hospitality Policy Statement was amended accordingly.
- 4.5 Throughout this period the Lord Provost and Depute Lord Provost have met on a regular basis, following Full Council, to determine the action lines from Motions and other decisions impacting on the civic office. This has proved to be a highly effective way of co-ordinating diaries and distributing the workload between the Civic Leaders of the Council.
- 4.6 These important changes are being encapsulated in a revised set of protocols which will be presented to Council for approval before the end of the current administration. This will ensure that current good practice is retained and implemented by the future civic leadership of the Council.

Summary of Civic Activity in 2020/21

- 4.7 It is not appropriate to provide a direct comparison of the output of the Civic Office in 2020/21 with previous years. This is because whole swathes of normal business such as Citizenship Ceremonies, Church Services, and Royal Visits to the city could not be conducted during the lockdown.
- 4.8 The summary of civic activity at appendix one confirms that there has been a significant reduction in the volume of civic events undertaken in 2020/21. A total of 106 civic events were cancelled in the last twelve months, with the City Chambers remaining closed for use throughout this period.

- 4.9 Nonetheless, what can still be demonstrated is a high level of activity throughout the year. This has been achieved using alternative forms of engagement and communication in line with COVID-19 restrictions. With the co-operation of the various bodies concerned, suitable adjustments have been made to hold on-line or outside socially distanced events.
- 4.10 In total 156 civic events went ahead during the year with 107 of those taking place virtually. A lesser number of 56 speeches were also made in a variety of settings but mostly on-line.
- 4.11 Beyond the statistics, it is important to recall the death of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh and the Lord Provost's Motion of Condolence to the specially convened meeting of Council on 16 April 2021. This recalled HRH's immense contribution to the civic life and international reputation of Edinburgh throughout his life of public service. The Depute Lord Provost and Bailies also paid tribute to the legacy of The Duke, in particular his support for young people and the environment.
- 4.12 Other civic events that took place in 2020/21 include:
- the unveiling of the Floral Clock tribute to NHS and other key workers, including Council staff, on 17 July 2020;
 - Bailie support for the Commemoration of the 150th Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi at Saughton Park and the Consulate General of India on 2 October;
 - the Lord Provost's visit to Full Hearts Empty Kitchens on 6 November 2020 to meet and thank volunteers;
 - the Depute Lord Provost's unveiling of the 'Inspiring Volunteers of the Year Award' plaque, recognising all volunteers during the pandemic, at the City Chambers on 17 December 2020; and,
 - the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge visit to Starbank Park on 27 May 2021 and launch of the Council's Green Space Index.
- 4.13 It was also possible to progress key pieces of work in 2020/21 through a mix of on-line meetings or seminars and the sharing of necessary documentation. These initiatives included detailed succession planning for the Monarchy, in close working with main partners such as Police Scotland.
- 4.14 Through the OneCity Trust, the Lord Provost promoted the findings of the Poverty Commission report 'A Just Capital: Actions to End Poverty in Edinburgh'. The Trust's own investment in community projects amounted to £113,397 in 2020/21, with funds allocated to 23 projects tackling poverty and inequality locally.
- 4.15 In supporting improved services for people experiencing poor mental health and wellbeing, the Lord Provost chaired the second Edinburgh Thrive Conference. This involved some 200 delegates on-line to use data and evidence in driving forward necessary change.
- 4.16 With four key priorities emerging from the consultation exercise, the Lord Provost launched digitally the Edinburgh 2050 City Vision Charter on behalf of the Council in July 2020. Engagement with key stakeholders continues and to date some twenty organisations have signed up to the Charter.

Looking Ahead

- 4.17 With the gradual easing of lockdown restrictions, the scope for civic activity and undertakings increases. Now that the City Chambers is reopening to the public, it is planned that events such as the presentation of the annual Edinburgh Science Medal will take place from the end of June onwards. This allows agreed Motions to Council and other commitments to be fulfilled, albeit in compliance with the relevant COVID regulations as they apply at the time.
- 4.18 There is potential for some additional spend on civic occasions and hospitality due to the carry forward of fifty per cent of underspend in the 2020/21 Civic Hospitality Budget. This was approved by the Finance and Resources Committee on 21 January 2021 and, as a result, a £30,000 budget was put to a reserve that can be drawn down from in future years.
- 4.19 A specific plan is to hold a Lord Provost Community Garden Party later in 2021, with invited guests from the NHS, Carer and voluntary sectors, at the refurbished Saughton Walled Garden. A bid for The Princess Royal (who opened the restored Garden in June 2019) to attend and meet guests from the community has been submitted to the Palace for the next round of engagements.
- 4.20 Requests for Members of the Royal Household to participate in key city events can stem from any part of the Council. It is important though that the Lord Provost's Office is sighted on all such proposals from the outset. This is to avoid confusion and overlap, and to ensure that the Lord Provost's role as Lord Lieutenant is not compromised. Council is asked to agree that Officers should adhere to this protocol in future, as a matter of good governance.
- 4.21 Moving into the final year of this administration, it will also be important to bring the Lord Provost's Commission 'The Strategy for Our Ex Forces Personnel' to a meaningful conclusion. Commissioners have been meeting over a series of themed workshops to examine the issues and barriers faced by personnel and their families in making the transition from military to civilian life. Council is asked to receive a full report on this Commission later in the year.
- 4.22 Finally, it is pertinent to raise the likelihood of COP26 going ahead in early November 2021. Although the main event is taking place in Glasgow, there are major implications for Edinburgh. Clearly the policy focus on climate change is of major import to the city and to the Council and aligns wholly with the Council's own strategic priorities, as set out in the Council Business Plan and supporting strategies and plans. There is also a major role for the city in accommodating delegates for the conference and hosting those from the Ambassadorial and Consular Corps.
- 4.23 This is likely to create a high level of civic activity and interaction in the Capital City, involving potentially Members of the Royal Family as well. These matters are under scrutiny by the Edinburgh Working Group and Council will be kept informed as the COP 26 plans develop.

5 Financial impact

- 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

- 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

- 7.1.1 See www.edinburghlordprovost.com

8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix One: Summary of Civic Activity June 2020 to May 2021

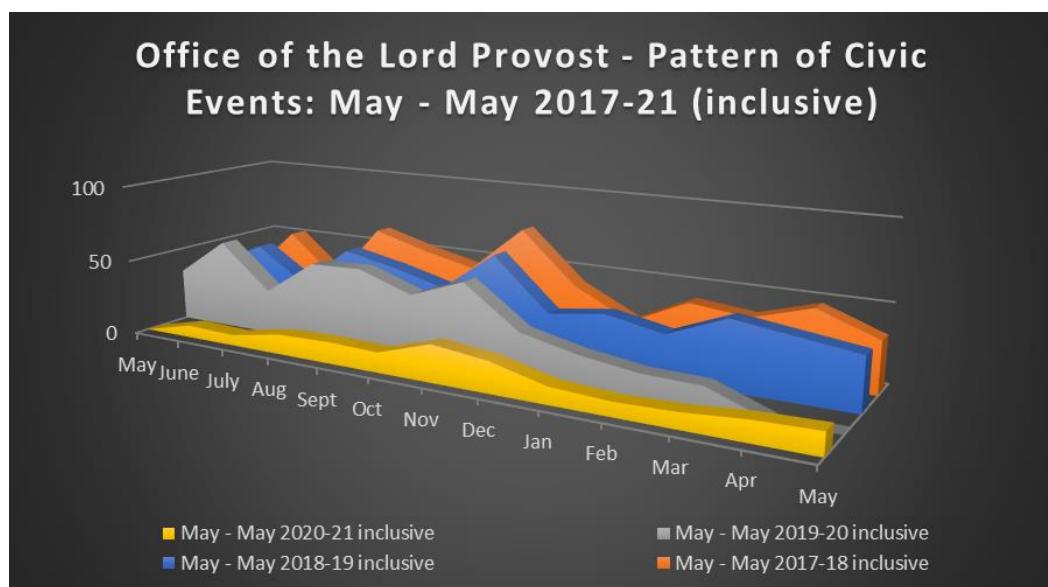
Summary of Civic Activity June 2020 to May 2021

1 Civic Activity

From March 2020, civic events were impacted negatively by the COVID lockdown and other restrictions, and this continued throughout 2020/21.

Across the year, a total of 455 civic commitments were fulfilled, comprising 156 civic events and 299 routine business meetings.

The graph below illustrates the volume of civic events across the four years of the current Lord Provost, from May 2017.



This shows that:

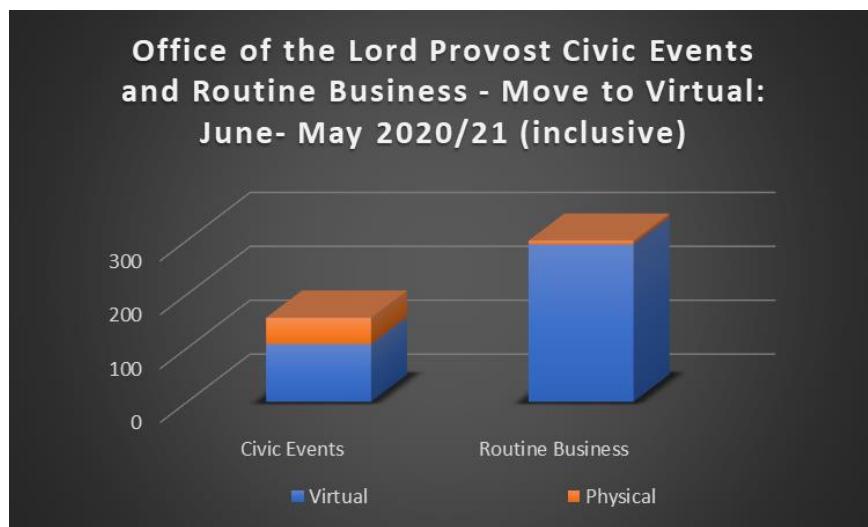
- compared with the most recent year of “normal business” i.e. 2018/19, there has been a reduction of 370 (70%) in the number of civic events undertaken in 2020/21; and
- compared with the previous year 2019/20, when COVID took hold and the city went into lockdown, there has been a reduction of 208 (57%) in the number civic events undertaken over the last year.

2 Move to Virtual Events

In managing the impact of COVID lockdown and safety mitigation measures, many civic events and meetings have taken place on-line, rather than in person.

The graphic below indicates that for the year 2020/21 there were:

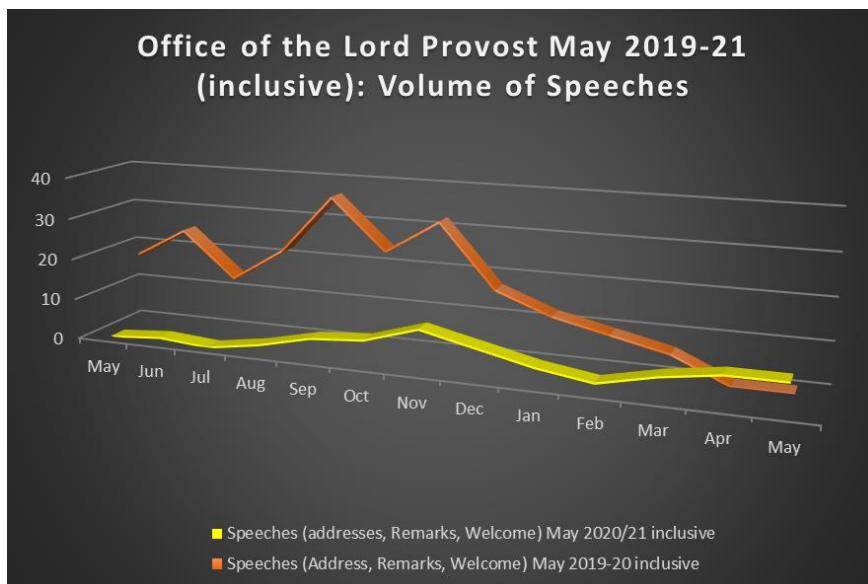
- 107 virtual civic events, comprising 68.5% of this activity; and
- 292 (97.6%) virtual routine business meetings.



3 Speeches

On average, the city's Civic Leaders make some 200 speeches annually, at a highly diverse range of gatherings and events.

The graph below shows that for 2020/21 only 56 speeches were given, due to the lower volume of civic events and nature of on-line occasions.



This represents a reduction of 141 (72%) compared with the previous year 2019/20 when 197 speeches were made.

Lieutenancy Activity

The Lord Provost is Ex Officio the Lord Lieutenant of Edinburgh with an established role to represent The Queen and support other Members of the Royal Family when visiting Edinburgh.

Owing to COVID lockdown and mitigation measures, working Royal Visits were severely curtailed across the UK.

In 2020/21, there have been 15 Lieutenancy events in Edinburgh, including occasions when the Lord Lieutenant or a Deputy Lieutenant has met and assisted Royal visitors.

This type of activity was reduced by 66% when compared to 2019/20 levels.