

City of Edinburgh Council

10.00am, Thursday, 22 August 2019

Royal Burgh - 900th Anniversary Working Group - Proposal

Executive/routine
Wards
Council Commitments

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 To approve the formation of a short-life working group, to be chaired by the Lord Provost, with the protocol, membership and remit which are described in the report.

Andrew Kerr

Chief Executive

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Report

Royal Burgh - 900th Anniversary Working Group - Proposal

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The report recommends that committee approve the creation of a short-life working group to explore the possibilities of celebrations to mark the city's 900th anniversary as one of the first burghs of Scotland and what form/duration these may take.

3. Background

- 3.1 Although there is no surviving royal charter specifically granting Edinburgh its original burgh status, we can be reasonably certain that it became a royal burgh sometime between 1124 and 1127.
- 3.2 Burghs were introduced into Scotland by King David I as part of his feudalisation of the kingdom at his accession in 1124. He created a network of these during his reign, including Edinburgh. They became the original basis of municipal government in Scotland, lasting, with changes and reforms, until 1973.
- 3.3 An early charter by King David to Dunfermline Priory specifically references Edinburgh as one of 'his burghs', alongside Dunfermline, Stirling and Perth. While this charter is undated, the date range has been ascertained by academic historians to fit within the first three years of David I's reign (1124-1127).
- 3.4 The royal burgh status was confirmed in 1329 in a charter by King Robert I specifically to the burgesses of Edinburgh, confirming their rights and privileges. This charter survives and is also in the possession of the city council, being its oldest surviving burgh record. The 600th anniversary of this 'Bruce charter' was celebrated in 1929.
- 3.5 Other UK cities have undertaken similar celebrations in the past, including:
- Glasgow's 800th anniversary of its burgh status in 1975
 - York's 800th anniversary of its 1212 King John charter in 2012
 - Aberdeen's 800th anniversary of its 1215 King Alexander II charter in 2015
 - The City of London's 950th anniversary of its 1067 King William I charter in 2017

4. Main report

900th Anniversary Short-Life Working Group

4.1 Membership

Councillors:

- Lord Provost
- Convener of the Education, Children and Families Committee
- Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee
- Convener of the Culture and Communities Committee

Council Officers:

- Kevin Wilbraham – Information Governance Manager and Council Data Protection Officer
- Frank Little - Service Manager, Cultural Venues (Museums & Galleries)

Non-Council Members:

- Master of the Royal Company of Merchants – Secretary

A representative from each of the following:

- Festivals Edinburgh
- Edinburgh Tattoo
- Marketing Edinburgh
- The University sector
- Edinburgh World Heritage

Additional business stakeholder and external members or officers as required as proposals develop (to be determined by the Chair)

Removal of any members must be approved by the City of Edinburgh Council.

4.2 Chair

The Lord Provost will chair this Working Group. In their absence, the group will be chaired by another elected member.

4.3 Substitutes

Substitutes are permitted for elected members.

Substitutes are permitted for officers, from the same service area.

Substitutes are permitted for external members.

4.4 Remit

To discuss whether there is appetite for a celebration to mark the 900th anniversary of Edinburgh becoming a burgh.

To consider how represented stakeholders can work together to mark the occasion.

To investigate opportunities for commercial and heritage funding

To develop proposals to be presented to City of Edinburgh Council for approval

4.5 Meeting Arrangements

The Working Group will have flexible meeting arrangements and the Chair has authority to call a meeting.

4.6 Code of Conduct

The Councillors' Code of Conduct (paragraphs 3.14 – 3.15) specifies members' responsibilities regarding private information.

The Member Officer Protocol (paragraphs 4.7 – 4.12) specifies officers' responsibilities regarding private information.

Non-Council members should be aware that the discussion and papers at this meeting are confidential, and not for public disclosure.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 An initial meeting will be organised to discuss if there is an appetite for such a celebration and if so what form/duration this/these may take.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 The cost of resourcing a working group can be met from existing revenue budgets.
- 6.2 Any proposals will be brought back to Committee for approval and will require full costings.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 Committees should confirm that working groups have clear objectives and give consideration to whether a working group is the correct vehicle to take these forward.
- 7.2 An annual re-appointment report will be considered by City of Edinburgh Council confirming the lifespan and necessity for all working groups.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 None.

9. Appendices

9.1 None.