

The City of Edinburgh Council

10.00am, Thursday, 15 December 2022

Response to motion by Councillor Mumford – Operation Unicorn

Executive/routine	
Wards	All
Council Commitments	

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 The City of Edinburgh Council is asked to note the information provided in response to part 4 (paragraph 3.1.4 in this report) of the adjusted motion by Councillor Mumford, which was approved by the Council on 27 October 2022, on Operation Unicorn.

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Report

Response to motion by Councillor Mumford – Operation Unicorn

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report has been prepared in response to the adjusted motion by Councillor Mumford, approved by the Council on 27 October 2022, on Operation Unicorn.

3. Background

- 3.1 On [27 October 2022](#), the Council approved the following adjusted motion by Councillor Mumford on Operation Unicorn:
- 3.1.1 To congratulate officers and the Executive Team for successfully running Operation Unicorn.
 - 3.1.2 To note that as the capital city, Edinburgh was the main focus for mourners wishing to pay tribute to Queen Elizabeth in Scotland, incurring significant logistical challenges and costs.
 - 3.1.3 To note that despite careful planning, last-minute changes to Operation Unicorn beyond the control of the council led to considerable extra work and costs.
 - 3.1.4 Therefore, to call for a report to December's Full Council outlining the full costs of Operation Unicorn to the council, including but not limited to:
 - 3.1.4.1 Officer time, including detail of overtime worked by officers to deliver Operation Unicorn, whether appropriate time has been taken back for this and details of the impact this has had on wider council workplans.
 - 3.1.4.2 Costs associated with queuing and crowd management including sanitisation, policing and security.
 - 3.1.4.3 Details of overspend for Operation Unicorn, including costs incurred due to unplanned elements of Operation Unicorn, for example the change from train to plane and associated road closures.

3.1.4.4 Where possible, separation of costs incurred for the facilitation of mourning Queen Elizabeth and for the proclamation of King Charles III.

3.2 There were three other actions agreed as part of the motion approved by the Council on 27 October 2022 which are being progressed separately.

4. Main report

4.1 Operation Unicorn was the codename given to planning for death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II (HM The Queen) in Scotland.

4.2 The Council has been heavily involved in multi-agency preparations for the death of HM The Queen in Scotland and as such, on 8 September 2022, implementation of the operational plans commenced, as per the statutory obligations associated with this.

4.3 The Council's involvement ran from 8 September 2022 to 15 September 2022. A large screen was deployed in Holyrood Park on 19 September 2022 to broadcast the funeral of HM The Queen.

Operational Delivery

4.4 Operationally, the Council established an Incident Control Centre (CICC) and deployed officers to the Multi Agency Control Centre (MACC) at Fettes (which included Scottish Government, Police Scotland and other partner agencies). Officers also attended virtual Gold level Scottish Government meetings to co-ordinate the Scottish response.

4.5 The Council's operational plan for Operation Unicorn set out the roles and responsibilities of Council services throughout the period of activation in Edinburgh, with key officers identified for co-ordination and deployment of resources. Dynamic implementation of the plans was progressed, and co-ordinated through the CICC.

4.6 Services such as Road Operations and Street Cleansing, deployed operatives across the city to ensure that the city was clean and safe for residents and visitors wishing to attend the view the hearse as it passed through the city's streets, attend the vigil and/or to attend the proclamation of the new King.

4.7 In addition to the Council's roles and responsibilities, the Council also sought volunteers to augment volunteer support from Volunteer Edinburgh. These volunteers supported the delivery of the operational plan, most specifically in respect of supporting the vigil in St Giles Cathedral. Volunteering was undertaken, where possible, within normal working hours. However, where this was not possible, overtime claims were co-ordinated by service managers.

4.8 Many Council services continued to operate as normal throughout the period of Operation Unicorn, with little or no impact on service delivery. For those services, directly involved in the delivery, there were five days where normal work programmes were paused.

- 4.9 Some services were affected by the call for volunteers but, as these were for a limited time period, service managers were asked to support those who wanted to participate within normal working arrangements.
- 4.10 Members of staff who worked significantly over and above their normal hours during the period of activation in Edinburgh were encouraged to take additional time off once the response was 'stood down'.
- 4.11 For Council staff, it was agreed that additional hours should be paid as overtime. All overtime claims received have been processed for payment.

Operational Plan Changes

- 4.12 The motion specifically makes reference to a change in the plan for HM The Queen's coffin to be transported from Edinburgh to London. For several years it was intended that this would be by train, departing from Edinburgh Waverley. However, two years ago, the plan was updated to travel by aeroplane, departing from Edinburgh Airport.
- 4.13 In operational terms, if the coffin was transported by train, this would have meant that Princes Street required to be closed for up to three days with associated impacts for residents and on public transport. As the change of plan was made some time ago and the estimated costs were not calculated at the time, it is anticipated that this change actually had a beneficial impact on the city's transport network, on residents and is likely to have meant that the overall cost was reduced.
- 4.14 In the months prior to activation, one operational change was considered in response to advice from Police Scotland that there would need to be a full closure for HM The Queen's coffin to leave from Edinburgh Airport. In preparation, partners were aware that additional marshals and volunteers would be required, together with associated welfare facilities.

Stewarding, Volunteering and Queue Management

- 4.15 The Scottish Government contract with Arcadis was utilised for procurement of stewards to support delivery, with the costs being met by the Scottish Government.
- 4.16 In recognition of the significant number of mourners expected to visit the city, additional stewards were commissioned to support the Arcadis contract, with the costs being met by the Scottish Government. These stewards were deployed at main event venues in the city, along with covering all road closure routes, media areas and the floral tributes.
- 4.17 In addition, volunteers from the Council, other local authorities, partner agencies and Volunteer Edinburgh also provided volunteer marshals.
- 4.18 The costs incurred by the Council are set out in Section 6.
- 4.19 In 2020, the Scottish Government provided £500,000 of grant funding to the Council to procure additional barriers and other public safety equipment in preparation for Operation Unicorn. The actual cost was circa £470,000.
- 4.20 The Scottish Government prepared and implemented the plan for the vigil queue, with support from the Council and other partners, with dynamic adjustments being

made once the queue was operational. Event Scotland and their staff volunteers led the management of the entrance to the vigil queue.

- 4.21 The plan included special arrangements for disabled people, to allow them to process through the queue more swiftly, with additional lighting installed to ensure that the route of the queue was well lit and deployment of marshals, stewards, volunteers (including Scottish Government staff volunteers) and Police officers along the route.
- 4.22 The welfare plan for the vigil queue was principally organised by the Council, with welfare facilities provided for staff in the Meadows and opening of the churches along George IV Bridge for refreshments, support, welfare and pastoral care.

Proclamation of King Charles III

- 4.23 The proclamation of King Charles III on 11 September 2022 took place at the Mercat Cross at 12noon.
- 4.24 As part of Operation Unicorn, the proclamation involved a multi-agency approach, involving Police Scotland, Ministry of Defence, the Council and other agencies. Each organisation bore their own costs for the event.
- 4.25 However, the responsibilities of the Council were similar to those in place for mourning and therefore no additional costs have been captured separately.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Council officers await a formal response from HM Treasury via the Scottish Government in respect of the claim made by the Council for costs incurred in response to Operation Unicorn.
- 5.2 The remaining elements of the motion will be progressed, as agreed by the Council on 27 October 2022.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 Following discussions with HM Treasury regarding the possibility for reimbursement, on 26 October 2022 the Scottish Government invited relevant councils to submit actual cost-based claims for the 11-day activation period of Operation Unicorn. Guidance received emphasises that costs considered for reimbursement should be necessary, unavoidable and additional. While this does not mean that all such costs will be reimbursed, the submissions were to be evidence-based and demonstrate how each element of cost addresses these criteria.
- 6.2 The Council submitted its claim by the requested deadline of 4 November 2022. Confirmation has been received that the loss of parking income is not eligible for possible cost recovery from HM Treasury. The costs to the Council are set out in

the table below. These costs include all of the staff costs associated with cleaning up after 15 September 2022.

Cost Category	Description of Activity	Total Cost
Employee costs, including overtime and personal travel and subsistence	Co-ordination, delivery and step-down of Operation Unicorn, including costs of marshalling/stewarding, traffic management, public safety and crowd management, cleansing, communications and other administrative support	£212,157
Other contracted services (e.g. Catering, Building Hire, AV Equipment)	Installation and removal of first aid/queue welfare marquee on Meadows, hire and operation of large screen in Holyrood Park for funeral broadcast, traffic management materials and parking enforcement in affected streets during road closures	£201,196
Contracted staff costs (Stewards etc)	Primarily security and stewarding required to maintain public safety along relevant routes, alongside small element of project management and agency staffing support	£108,060
Transport (including vehicle hire)	Coach hire for staff briefings and location along cortege route, taxi costs, vehicles for road closure operations	£31,975
Other	Including street and other signage, production of security-compliant badges, fuel usage for generator	£13,610
Total Claim for Reimbursement		£566,998
Parking income	Loss of income over period Friday, 9 to Tuesday, 13 September inclusive	£42,000
Total		£608,998

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 As part of the planning for Operation Unicorn, a Travel Demand Management Assessment was commissioned by Transport Scotland and a Crowd Dynamics Assessment was commissioned by the Scottish Government. The impacts for Edinburgh identified from both studies were incorporated into local planning. These were reviewed by the Edinburgh Working Group and incorporated into the project risk register.
- 7.2 In order to respond to Operation Unicorn, the Council worked closely with the Scottish Government and other partners on preparation and delivery of Operation Unicorn and the proclamation of King Charles III.

8. Background reading/external references

8.1 None.

9. Appendices

9.1 None.