

Finance and Resources Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 26 January 2023

Response to Motion by Councillor Mumford – Operation Unicorn

Executive/routine	
Wards	City Wide
Council Commitments	

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 The Committee is asked to note the information provided in response to part 5 of the adjusted motion by Councillor Mumford on Operation Unicorn (set out at paragraph 3.1.1 in this report) as approved by the Council on 27 October 2022.

Andrew Kerr

Chief Executive

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2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Members of the Royal Family are frequent visitors to Edinburgh. When on official business in the capital city, their work is supported by the Lord Provost (ex officio the Lord Lieutenant of Edinburgh) and members of the staff in the Office of Lord Provost.
- 2.2 Much of the cost to the Council is therefore met from the Lord Provost's Office budget. This applies to the up and coming confirmed engagements involving HRH The Princess Royal.
- 2.3 The cost of any larger scale events involving HM The King and other members of the Royal Family can only be assessed on an event by event basis and primarily through the Council's EPOG (Events Planning and Operations Group) process. No such information is available at the present time.
- 2.4 Given the basis on which the Capital City Supplement (CCS) is included within the Local Government Finance Settlement, it is not possible to assess the adequacy of related funding received specifically in respect of royal events, other than noting that the overall additional funding received through the CCS is significantly less than relevant expenditure highlighted in the Council's original submission.

3. Background

- 3.1 On 27 October 2022, the Council approved the following element of the adjusted motion by Councillor Mumford on Operation Unicorn:
 - 3.1.1 Additionally calls for a report to Finance and Resources Committee within 3 cycles outlining the costs associated with future planned visits from Charles III or other members of the monarchy that will be incurred by the council over the next year and whether this is covered in full by the Capital City Supplement.
- 3.2 This report provides the information requested whilst acknowledging that certain requirements for confidentiality apply.

4. Main report

- 4.1 Official Royal engagements and visits to the city take place in the context of a constitutional monarchy and Edinburgh's role as the capital city of Scotland.
- 4.2 Palace notification of such events is primarily through the Lieutenancy which means the Office of Lord Provost in the City of Edinburgh's case. This relationship is set out in the Lieutenancies Act 1997 which specifies that the Lord Provosts of Aberdeen, Dundee, Glasgow and Edinburgh are ex officio the Lord Lieutenants of their respective cities. Elsewhere in Scotland, Lord Lieutenants are appointed directly by the Monarch.
- 4.3 The role of Lord Lieutenants is further described in the legislation which clarifies that key duties are to represent the Monarch and to support members of the Royal Family when on official business in their areas. The Act also contains provision for the appointment of a Clerk to the Lieutenancy whose role is to assist the Lord Lieutenant in fulfilling these duties. In Edinburgh this function is delegated by the Chief Executive to the lead officer in the Lord Provost's Office (who is both Executive Assistant to the Lord Provost and Clerk to the Lieutenancy).
- 4.4 This means that much of the cost to the Council of planned visits by members of the Royal Family work is contained within the budget for the Office of Lord Provost. The remuneration of the Lord Provost/Lord Lieutenant is included in this budget as are the salary costs of those staff who are engaged routinely in the planning and delivery of Royal events in the city.
- 4.5 A further in-kind contribution concerns the occasional loan of one of the Council's civic vehicles to Police Scotland as a key partner in this area of work. This provides a suitable car if necessary to the Police who are tasked with driver duties and with providing essential security to members of the royal family.
- 4.6 Looking ahead, the cost to the Council of known Royal visits will be met by the Lord Provost's Office budget as described above. At the time of writing, the only confirmed official engagements comprise 14 engagements by HRH The Princess Royal over the period January to June 2023. The visits in question reflect HRH's various patronages and key roles such as Chancellor of the University of Edinburgh.
- 4.7 In line with advice received from Police Scotland, no prior detail of these visits can be released to ensure the integrity of the security operation and to mitigate threat and risk. Any request for information relating to future Royal visits needs to be routed through the Royal Communications Office.
- 4.8 Future activity involving HM The King in Edinburgh is yet to be announced. This includes any plans to mark the Coronation of King Charles 111 and for 'Royal Week' (held traditionally late June/early July and based at the Palace of Holyrood House).
- 4.9 As and when information is released by the Royal Household, the Council's EPOG (Events Planning and Operations Group) process will be activated if necessary to deal with matters of public safety, road closures, policing and other issues.

Additional costs to the Council may then apply but these cannot be specified or quantified at this time and would be considered on a case by case basis.

- 4.10 Similarly, the requirement for any Impact Assessments to be carried out will be assessed and then implemented through the EPOG.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 As in previous years, a summary of Lieutenancy activity in Edinburgh will be included in the annual report on the Office of Lord Provost to Full Council in June 2023. In the meantime, staff in the Lord Provost's Office will continue to liaise with the Palace on forthcoming events and support scheduled visits.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 As stated above, much of the cost of Royal visits to the city is met from the Lord Provost's Office budget which amounts to £506,518 in the current financial year (with nearly 70% of spend on staffing costs). Where larger scale events (such as Operation Unicorn) take place, costs will be incurred across a wider range of service delivery areas. Any future events of this nature can only be costed as the necessary arrangements are put in place through the EPOG process.
- 6.2 At this stage in the Scottish Government budget process, Edinburgh's funding for 2023/24 includes a £3.9m Capital City Supplement payment. This funding has been provided in recognition of a number of factors outlined within the Council's submission in 2009, including the associated costs of royal visits, although is significantly less than the overall sum originally highlighted. Given this, it is not possible to assess the adequacy of funding received specifically in respect of royal events as requested by Councillor Mumford's motion.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 The Office of Lord Provost routinely undertakes engagement and co-production with a broad range of stakeholders, leading community representatives and business organisations.
- 7.2 Speeches and other inputs for events are developed in consultation with the organisers.
- 7.3 The Office of 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.
- 7.4 The Office of Lord Provost endeavours to mitigate carbon impacts by utilising public transport where and when appropriate, where any long-distance travelling is required.

- 7.5 The Office of 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.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 None.

9. Appendices

- 9.1 None.