

# Culture and Communities Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 3 October 2024

## Firework Displays

Executive/routine  
Wards

Routine  
All

### 1. Recommendations

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- 1.1 It is recommended that committee notes the report, which has been prepared in response to a request from Committee in February 2024.

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## Firework Displays

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 The report sets out various options in respect of the feasibility and cost of hosting and/or supporting fireworks displays for Bonfire Night within Edinburgh.

### 3. Background

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- 3.1 The report has been prepared in response to an action agreed by Culture and Communities Committee in February 2024 to explore the feasibility of supporting smaller community organised fireworks displays and to identify what scope there is for the Council to fund and support public firework display.
- 3.2 Over the last two years, significant anti-social and criminal behaviour has been taking place within some of Edinburgh's communities on Bonfire Night. Debriefs and meetings with community representatives organised via Edinburgh's Bonfire Community Improvement Partnership (CIP) have identified that it is worth exploring whether organised displays might have a part to play in adding a controlled family-friendly environment where fireworks can be enjoyed by Edinburgh's residents and visitors and count as another diversionary activity within the city.
- 3.3 Last year there were multiple community organised licensed firework displays in the following areas;
- 3.3.1 St Peter's Primary School (Ward 10 – Morningside);
  - 3.3.2 The Grange Cricket Club (Ward 15 – Southside/Newington);
  - 3.3.3 Myreside Rugby Ground (Ward 10 – Morningside); and
  - 3.3.4 King George V Park, Currie (Ward 2 – Pentland Hills).
- 3.4 This year, whilst no applications had been received at the time of writing the report, it is anticipated that the same areas will organise their own displays again. In addition, a new display, "Fawkes Festival", is being advertised at the Royal Highland Centre (Ward 1 – Almond). Council officers and other members of the Bonfire CIP have also been working alongside community representatives from the

Niddrie area to look at the possibility for a community event in the area. Discussions on this are still ongoing.

- 3.5 On 23 August 2024, Committee [approved](#) four firework control zones was given for within Edinburgh. This decision would still allow for licensed organised displays within these zones and in other parts of the city. The zones agreed were Balerno, Seafield, Calton Hill and Niddrie.
- 3.6 It was noted by Committee that while there are negative impacts on communities resulting from any firework display, particularly in relation to the welfare of animals and vulnerable persons, the effects are lessened if the displays are well publicised in advance, so that individuals can put in place their own safeguarding measures.
- 3.7 A [Scottish Government consultation](#) identified generally positive support for organised public displays. Further, the Scottish Government acknowledged that fireworks can bring communities together when they are used responsibly, at the right time and in the right place.

## 4. Main report

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- 4.1 Council officers have looked into the feasibility and cost of hosting and/or supporting fireworks displays in Edinburgh. The following options are available:
  - 4.1.1 Organised community firework displays:
    - 4.1.1.1 With a small grant per event offered to help with the safety management costs of running a community fireworks display;
    - 4.1.1.2 A community representative would need to be identified for the area. The Community representative would take on the responsibilities of an event organiser, with the funding going towards a professional fireworks company, licences, stewarding/security, medical and event infrastructure; and
    - 4.1.1.3 The events would be planned via the Event Planning and Operations Group process and be subject to licences being granted.
  - 4.1.2 Organised community events:
    - 4.1.2.1 As above, except with no fireworks display. The events could reflect the communities desired programming requirements, based on their knowledge and experience of what would serve the community best in terms of an event to promote community safety and social cohesion.
  - 4.1.3 Organised city display – one city centre location:
    - 4.1.3.1 The is likely to mirror the end of year festival fireworks (as previously seen in the city);

- 4.1.3.2 An event organiser would need to be appointed and a significant budget allocated to meet the event planning and safety requirements for an event of this nature;
  - 4.1.3.3 The event would need to be free to attend to meet the aims of being an accessible event for the residents and communities of Edinburgh, although a ticketed element and/or commercial opportunities could be introduced, as per the festival fireworks, to help meet the financial pressure of putting on such a large-scale public event;
  - 4.1.3.4 The events would be planned via the Event Planning and Operations Group process and be subject to licences being granted; and
  - 4.1.3.5 For an event in 2025, if the Council were to fund a display, a tender opportunity would need to be advertised by February 2025 in order to ensure sufficient time to produce the event.
- 4.1.4 Organised city display – multiple locations:
- 4.1.4.1 This could mirror the seven hills fireworks that has previously been seen in the city;
  - 4.1.4.2 An event organiser would need to be appointed and a large budget allocated to meet the event planning and safety requirements for an event of this nature, although with no dedicated viewing zones (i.e. “view from your street”) this would help to minimise costs;
  - 4.1.4.3 The events would be planned via the Event Planning and Operations Group process and be subject to licences being granted; and
  - 4.1.4.4 For an event in 2025, if the Council were to fund this, a tender opportunity would need to be advertised by February 2025 in order to ensure sufficient time to produce the event.
- 4.1.5 Organised city event – one location (large area within city centre):
- 4.1.5.1 The proposal would mirror other events with significant themed activations (e.g. Paisley Halloween) without a large fireworks display, but could include smaller pyrotechnic effects;
  - 4.1.5.2 An event organiser would need to be appointed and a significant budget allocated to meet the event planning and safety requirements for an event of this nature;
  - 4.1.5.3 The event would need to be free to attend to meet the aims of being an accessible event for the residents and communities of Edinburgh, although a ticketed element and/or commercial opportunities could be introduced to help meet the financial pressure of putting on such a large scale public event;

4.1.5.4 The events would be planned via the Event Planning and Operations Group process and be subject to licences being granted; and

4.1.5.5 For an event in 2025, if the Council were to fund this, a tender opportunity would need to be advertised by February 2025 in order to ensure sufficient time to produce the event.

4.2 Hosting or supporting any of the above activities would provide an activity for the young people in the city to enjoy, however through discussions this year surrounding the organisation of a community-led event within one of the city's wards, it is also clear that any activity would also constitute a crowded place and therefore a potential target for anti-social and criminal behaviour.

4.3 However, all events do carry risk no matter the activity proposed and, through the event planning process, mitigations could be discussed and agreed by the multi-agency team to ensure as far as reasonably practicable that the city could hold safe events on bonfire night where possible.

## **5. Next Steps**

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5.1 Committee is asked to note the options identified for future firework displays. The financial impact of each option is outlined below.

## **6. Financial impact**

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6.1 In order to deliver the options set out in paragraph 4.1, the following indicative costs have been identified:

6.1.1 Organised community displays and events (Item 4.1.1 and 4.1.2), based on the budget available to Niddrie this year and other community events, a budget of £12,000 per area would be required. Where a community display or event was to take place within an agreed FCZ, it may be possible to use some of the £25,000 per zone available from the Scottish Government to contribute towards the costs for this purpose. It is understood that the contribution from this scheme would be approximately £7,500 per zone;

6.1.2 An organised city display (Items 4.1.3 and 4.1.4), based on previous budgets for similar events, the cost an estimated budget of £500,000 would be required; and

6.1.3 An organised city event (Item 4.1.5), based on budgets for similar events within Scotland, an estimated budget of £300,000 would be required.

6.2 The Council currently has no funding allocated for firework displays or community events. Therefore, to proceed with any of the options detailed in this report, the

Council would need to consider this as part of the budget setting process for 2025/26.

## 7. Equality and Poverty Impact

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- 7.1 An interim Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has been completed for the proposals outlined in the report. This will be updated with more detail, including from partner agencies if the Council decides to proceed with any of the options outlined.
- 7.2 The interim assessment notes that any proposed event(s) would need to be free to enter, albeit they may need to be ticketed to ensure safety. This would enable as many people as possible to attend the organised displays. It also notes that the most positive impact could be seen if all areas of Edinburgh had their own display, but this depends on the risk assessment, including intelligence gathering of each area and whether a crowded place event would be an unmanageable risk from anti-social or criminal behaviour.

## 8. Climate and Nature Emergency Implications

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- 8.1 As a public body, the Council has statutory duties relating to climate emissions and biodiversity. The Council

*“must, in exercising its functions, act in the way best calculated to contribute to the delivery of emissions reduction targets”*

(Climate Change (Emissions Reductions Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019), and

*“in exercising any functions, to further the conservation of biodiversity so far as it is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions”*

(Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004)

- 8.2 The City of Edinburgh Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and committed to work towards a target of net zero emissions by 2030 for both city and corporate emissions, and embedded this as a core priority of the Council Business Plan 2023-27. The Council also declared a Nature Emergency in 2023.

### **Environmental Impacts**

- 8.3 An [International Evidence Review](#), published by the Scottish Government in October 2019, highlighted that fireworks can pollute the air with gases and particles, which can contain metals and other elements that are potentially harmful to human health. Local air pollution, the frequency of cultural traditions involving fireworks and meteorological factors can all influence the impacts of fireworks on the environment; and the extent of these impacts in Scotland is unknown.

## **9. Risk, policy, compliance, governance and community impact**

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- 9.1 There has been no consultation and engagement on the proposals outlined in this report, however as with other events and as part of the events in public spaces process, the community in which the event(s) were taking place would receive notification of the intention to hold an event and be given the opportunity to provide feedback to officers. In the case of community events in particular, they would depend on a willing event organiser stepping forward to take on the responsibility of that role (See guidance in 10.1 and 10.2) and therefore events taking place in every community are in no way guaranteed even if that is seen as the way forward by elected members.
- 9.2 There are obvious risks attached with the council supporting or being the organiser of fireworks displays in relation to event safety, however these are usually mitigated satisfactorily through the licensing and Event Planning and Operation Group (EPOG) processes.
- 9.3 A further assessment of risks will be undertaken in relation to any proposals agreed and noted on the appropriate risk register in the next committee report.

## **10. Background reading/external references**

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- 10.1 [WTOFD-Blue-Guide-1.pdf \(eig2.org.uk\)](#)
- 10.2 [GYOFD-Red-Guide.pdf \(eig2.org.uk\)](#)
- 10.3 [Firework Control Zones - Committee Report - August 2024](#)
- 10.4 [Fireworks in Scotland: consultation - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)
- 10.5 [Scottish Government-international-evidence-review-2019](#)

## **11. Appendices**

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None.