

PERTH COMMON GOOD FUND COMMITTEE**5 October 2016****PERTH CHRISTMAS LIGHTS FESTIVAL AND CITY CENTRE CHRISTMAS DRESSING****Report by Director (Environment)****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The report notes the activities for the Christmas Lights event on Saturday, 19 November 2016, which is part of the overall Perth Winter Festival programme. It seeks funding approval for development of the event as a weekend festival. The report also seeks additional funding to replacement of existing Christmas lighting and enhancing the dressing of the city centre over the festive season.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Perth Common Good Fund has traditionally supported the costs associated with the Perth Christmas Lights including erection, maintenance, storage, rent, feu duties and electricity charges. In addition, the Common Good Fund has supported the Christmas Lights switch on event which has grown significantly since 2012 in terms of scale, scope and attendance. In 2015, it was estimated that attendance peaked at 30,000 members of the public in Perth City Centre for the Christmas Lights event with an estimated £1.6 million generated for the local economy.
- 1.2 At its meeting of May 2016 (Report No. 16/205 refers), the Perth Common Good Fund Committee approved the budget for Financial Year 2016/17 which includes a provision of £76,300 for Christmas events with £39,000 from this allocated for the Switch On event. This is scheduled for Saturday 19 November 2016 and this report outlines the proposed breakdown of expenditure associated with the event. The remaining £37,300 budget is allocated for the storage, erection, removal and purchase of dressing and Christmas Lights - £14,000 for rates and rent of a Unit at Acorn, £300 for electricity for events at Horsecross plaza, and £23,000 for erection, removal, repair and purchase of lights and dressing. Expenditure in 2015/16 on erection/removal and lighting repairs amounted to £15,973, of which £7,153 related to repairs to lights. Depending upon the repairs required for 2016/17, potentially there may be approximately £7,000 budget available to meet additional expenditure on new dressing material and lighting equipment.
- 1.3 In line with the Council's Events and Festival's Strategy, the Perth Winter Festival was developed in 2013/14 as an overarching programme of events and celebrations lasting from Bonfire Night on 5 November until the Chinese New Year in February. The objective of the programme is to generate additional economic benefits for the city through increased visitation and

expenditure by visitors and residents while also contributing to the vibrancy and cultural life of the city and raising the profile of Perth as a leading events destination. The winter programme comprises the Christmas Lights event as a stand out feature which has established a reputation as a major event in the area's annual calendar, while reinforcing the message "Christmas starts in Perth".

- 1.4 The Committee will also be aware of the Council's bid for UK City of Culture status for Perth in 2021. The development of a strong year round events and festivals portfolio will be an important feature of Perth's bid and will reinforce the city's credentials as a cultural and events tourism destination. Accordingly, with continued investment there is scope to develop further the Winter Festival and specifically the Christmas Lights event as a weekend festival and to market it as such to as wide an audience as possible.
- 1.5 Events and marketing expenditure for the Winter Festival is met from the Environment Service's revenue budget with private sector sponsorship also forthcoming for specific elements. In 2015/16 overall expenditure for the Winter Festival, including marketing and events support, was £166K. The Common Good funding is intended to support specific elements on Saturday, 19 November 2016 when the focus is on the Christmas Lights celebrations.
- 1.6 A report on the development and performance of the Perth Winter Festival was approved by the Council's Enterprise and Infrastructure Committee in March 2016 (Report No. 16/129 refers). The committee was informed of the revised approach to the Winter Festival which had taken account of the major building works at 2 High Street. In turn, this necessitated the relocation of the main stage to Tay Street. In addition, this relocation was also informed by the audience numbers and was undertaken following an extensive consultation and communication exercise involving elected members and with the emergency services. In 2015, the Santa Parade was also rerouted due to the construction programme at 2 High Street but also to avoid congestion in the High Street given the very large volume of people now attending the event.
- 1.7 The Enterprise and Infrastructure Committee was also informed of the results of an extensive evaluation study of the Winter Festival. This encompassed a series of visitor surveys which in turn provided the basis for impact assessments including estimates of the expenditure generated by the events – specifically the Christmas Lights event, Coca Cola Truck visit and Santa Run. The total number of visitors to Perth on the day of the Christmas Lights event was estimated to be 66,000. This is derived from the estimated footfall count for the day of 98,448, and adjusted to 66,000 to take account of multiple counts and in recognition that not everyone in Perth that day would have been participating in the event or staying on to see the lights switched on. It is estimated that the attendance on Tay Street at the lights switch on was 30,000. The economic impact assessment estimated that the Christmas Lights event generated an over £1.6 million net additional expenditure.

- 1.8 The report to the Enterprise and Infrastructure Committee also contained an assessment of the visitor experience, from a qualitative perspective, was derived from the visitor survey. Very high levels of satisfaction were recorded. Businesses were also surveyed in a bid to establish whether the Christmas Lights event had any benefit to the business. Replies were received from 35 businesses.
- 1.9 In 2015, additional funding of £10,000 was provided from the Common Good Fund to extend the programme into Sunday, 22 November to make a more extensive weekend event package. Officers were also able to secure the visit of the Coca Cola truck on that Sunday which proved to be a major draw to the city centre, attracting an estimated 9,000 visitors. Estimated footfall for the Sunday in the core city centre area was 18,031 (11,100 for the equivalent Sunday in 2014). Again a visitor survey and economic impact assessment was undertaken of the Coca Cola truck visit which estimated that the net direct additional expenditure generated was £210,000.
- 1.10 Expenditure in respect of the Coca Cola truck visit amounted to £1,971. This related to event stewarding and health and safety related costs in respect of public safety – there is no fee charged by the Coca Cola truck promoter. The balance of the additional funding was used for the wider entertainment programme in the city centre on the Sunday.
- 1.11 Local businesses through the Perth City Centre Connect Group and the Perth Traders Association have asked the council to enhance the dressing of the city centre over the winter period. Officers were asked to consider what enhancements could be made, to supplement the core Christmas lights network, in order to create a more festive ambience in the public areas of the core retail centre.
- 1.12 Last year, the Perth Common Good Fund approved support of £2,750 for the provision of Christmas trees and large wreaths to dress the city centre. A number of smaller trees were supplied through this, which businesses adopted and decorated at their own expense. Businesses have fed back that they would like this scheme to continue and be expanded this year. The large wreaths that were purchased in 2015 have been stored for reuse during 2016.
- 1.13 It has been identified that all of the existing Christmas Lights in St John Street are at the end of their life and are required to be replaced, if the existing coverage of lighting is to be maintained within the city centre.

2. PROPOSAL

Christmas Lights Festival

- 2.1 For 2016, a full programme of events and entertainments is being planned to create a festival weekend in the city which will appeal to a broad range of age groups. As with the past few years, it is intended that there will be opportunities for local community groups to participate in street and stage performances including a community stage in King Edward Street for choirs,

dance and musical groups. An outline programme for Saturday, 19 November 2016 is as follows:-

11:00 – 18:00

Funfair Pleasure Rides

Street Food

Ice Sculpting

Street Art

Themed Streets

Street Entertainers

Community Stage programme (from 12:00)

Main Stage programme (from 14:00)

1700 - Santa's Parade: from Thimblerow, High Street, Scott Street, South Street to Tay Street

1810 - Christmas Lights Switch On, special effects lighting and pyrotechnics display

Main stage entertainment continues

1830 onwards - Funfair Pleasure Rides

Main Stage entertainment continues until 1930

- 2.2 Artists for the Main Stage and Community Stage programmes are being sought and the programme schedule is therefore still to be confirmed. The addition of the Community Stage in recent years has provided a platform for local talent, in particular youth groups from across Perth and Kinross, to perform. In line with the Council's bid for City of Culture status, it will be important to maintain support for this element of the weekend festival.
- 2.3 In line with last year, it is proposed that the Perth Common Good Fund contribution, which has already been approved, supports the following elements of the programme on Saturday, 19 November 2016:

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|---|---------|
| Main stage (lighting, sound, pyrotechnic effects, and related infrastructure) | £20,000 |
| Community Stage at King Edward Street | £1,000 |
| Santa's Parade and street entertainments | £10,000 |
| Children's stage / family area at Horsecross Plaza | £3,000 |
| Health, safety and welfare (medical cover, stewarding, toilets, waste services and cleansing) | £5,000 |

- 2.4 As per previous years the programme will be extended to Sunday 20 November 2016. The Committee is asked to consider whether additional funding of £10,000 could be provided to enhance this event with the additional funding going towards:

| | |
|--|--------|
| Community Stage | £1,000 |
| Street entertainments | £6,000 |
| Children's stage/family area at Horsecross Plaza | £1,000 |
| Health, safety, welfare | £2,000 |

2.5 For 2016/17, the impact of the programme of events will be assessed by business surveys along with analysis of visits to the city.

2.6 It is proposed that the following funding is considered:

- £3,000 to assist with dressing the city centre for the festive season - £500 for the decoration and refurbishment of large Christmas wreaths to be hung from 26 banner lampposts in the High Street and King Edward Street and dressing for the Provost's lampposts and £2,500 for 30 Christmas trees (various sizes) for display on the High Street
- £8,500 for 100% of the purchase of replacement lights for St John's Street on the basis that the Street Lighting Partnership have advised that the current lights will not be useable for this year. The lights have been repaired extensively since they were initially purchased but the Street Lighting Partnership have advised that repairs are no longer economical and the lights have reached the end of their life.

2.7 The related extended and enhanced dressing scheme would be additional to core lighting and additional Christmas lights installations and would be installed prior to the Christmas Lights Switch On, which this year takes place on 19 November, remaining until the beginning of Jan 2016 when it would be removed. The Street Lighting Partnership has been consulted on the proposed enhancements to the city dressing scheme and would continue to advise on the technical requirements for installation to ensure compliance with issues such as height clearance, power supplies, etc.

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the current budget provision from 2016/17 in respect of the Christmas Lights Switch On programme for Saturday, 19 November 2016 and for Christmas Lights.
- Consider the additional events and activities outlined in the report and whether additional funding can be provided to support once again an extension of the events to Sunday, 20 November 2016.
- Consider funding the enhanced city dressing and lighting proposals as outlined in this report.

Author

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Approved

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|----------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Barbara Renton | Director (Environment) | 19 September 2016 |



1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

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|---|-------------|
| Strategic Implications | |
| Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement | Yes |
| Corporate Plan | Yes |
| Resource Implications | |
| Financial | Yes |
| Workforce | None |
| Asset Management (land, property, IST) | None |
| Assessments | |
| Equality Impact Assessment | Yes |
| Strategic Environmental Assessment | None |
| Sustainability (community, economic, environmental) | None |
| Legal and Governance | None |
| Risk | None |
| Consultation | |
| Internal | Yes |
| External | None |
| Communication | |
| Communications Plan | None |

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement

- 1.1 The Perth and Kinross Community Planning Partnership (CPP) brings together organisations to plan and deliver services for the people of Perth and Kinross. Together the CPP has developed the Perth and Kinross Community Plan which outlines the key things we think are important for Perth and Kinross.

- i) Giving every child the best start in life
- ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens
- iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy
- iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives
- v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations

- 1.2 It is considered that the strategy and related actions will contribute to the following objective: Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy.

Corporate Plan

- 1.3 The Council's Corporate Plan 2013-2018 outlines the same five Objectives as those detailed above in the Community Plan. These objectives provide a clear strategic direction, inform decisions at a corporate and service level and

shape resource allocation. It is considered that the actions contained in the report contribute to objective (iii) outlined in paragraph 1.1 above.

2. Resource Implications

Financial

- 2.1 As part of the 2016/17 budget process, the Committee approved a budget allocation of £39,000 towards the Christmas Lights Switch On event. A breakdown of anticipated expenditure is provided in the report. In addition, a request is made for further funding of £10,000 to support additional elements for Sunday, 20 November 2016 in order to extend the programme and support the development of a festival weekend.
- 2.2 As part of the 2016/17 budget process, the Committee approved a budget allocation of £76,300 for Christmas events with, as noted, £37,300 from this allocated for the storage, erection, removal and purchase of dressing and Christmas Lights - £14,000 for rates and rent of Unit at Acorn , £300 for electricity for events at Horsecross plaza, and £23,000 for erection, removal, repair and purchase of lights and dressing. Previous expenditure on erection/removal and lighting repairs has been around £16,000 potentially leaving around £7,000 for further expenditure on new dressing material and lighting equipment. The request is for additional Common Good funding of £11,500 for enhanced dressing and lighting.

Workforce

- 2.3 There are no staff resource issues for Perth and Kinross Council.

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

- 2.4 There are no asset management issues.

3. Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1 An Equality Impact Assessment needs to be carried out for functions, policies, procedures or strategies in relation to race, gender and disability and other relevant protected characteristics. This supports the Council's legal requirement to comply with the duty to assess and consult on relevant new and existing policies.
- 3.2 The function, policy, procedure or strategy presented in this report was considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome:
- (i) Assessed as **relevant** and the following positive outcomes expected following implementation:

- The needs of equality groups to be addressed in the operational delivery of events in the city centre such as the provision for viewing by disabled visitors, the provision of additional toilet facilities for disabled visitors etc.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.3 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals. However, no further action is required as the proposals do not qualify as a PPS as defined by the act and are therefore exempt.

Sustainability

- 3.4 Under the provisions of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 the Council has to discharge its duties in a way which contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. In terms of the Climate Change Act, the Council has a general duty to demonstrate its commitment to sustainability and the community, environmental and economic impacts of its actions.

Legal and Governance

- 3.5 The consideration of the report is in line with the Council's Scheme of Administration.

Risk

- 3.6 Risks and the controls required to mitigate any risks will be reported through the Council's risk management process where the Council is the lead on individual projects.

4. Consultation

Internal

- 4.1 The Head of Finance has been consulted in the development of the report.

2. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 2.1 None

3. APPENDICES

- 3.1 None

