

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL**Environment and Infrastructure Committee****21 March 2018****PERTH WINTER FESTIVAL****Report by Executive Director (Environment)**

This report outlines the approach taken to the development and implementation of the 2017/18 Perth Winter Festival along with its estimated impacts.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 At its meeting of 8 March 2017, the Enterprise and Infrastructure Committee considered a report on the development and performance of the Perth Winter Festival (Report No 17/97 refers). The Committee was apprised of the approach taken to the development of the Festival with the report also including an extensive outline of the methodology taken to the evaluation of the events, together with details on the estimated economic impacts. The Committee approved the approach to the development of the Festival in the future (with particular reference to the Christmas Lights event), and requested a report on the performance of the 2017/18 Festival to a future meeting of the Committee.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to outline the approach to the 2017/18 Winter Festival along with its key outputs and impacts.

2. PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

- 2.1 Since its establishment in 2013, the Winter Festival has evolved from a one day Christmas Lights event to an extensive programme which now extends from Hallowe'en to the new Perth Riverside Light Nights event. The Festival is, therefore, an overarching programming and marketing device for milestone events in the period from the end of October to mid-February. Although they are part of an overall programme, each of these events requires its own operational and management plans to ensure safe and effective delivery. In addition, their content is designed to appeal to the local catchment and visitor markets alike. It is also intended that, wherever possible, the events provide a platform for performers and artists from Perth and Kinross, with the programme including performances by dance troupes, bands and musicians of different genres, and poets. This includes the two day Christmas Lights event with local acts featuring on both the main stage and secondary stages on the first day of the weekend (Saturday). In addition, the Sunday of the Christmas Lights events remains a community focussed day. There is also a strong focus on the promotion of local food and drink offers at the events. Therefore, while there is a strong economic imperative to deliver an innovative programme to support the visitor economy, there are also softer benefits

derived from the festival in terms of cultural participation, community engagement, and civic well-being.

- 2.2 As in previous years, officers met with elected members in October 2017 to consider and discuss issues relating to the development and delivery of the programme of events for winter. The meeting had a particular focus on agreeing the scale and scope of the major feature of the Festival – the Christmas Lights event. Given the significant growth in audience numbers, it was agreed that, for 2017, Tay Street would continue to be the location of the main stage, with a series of other entertainment zones operating within the city centre throughout the day. The traditional Chocolate Festival was further developed for 2017 to become the first Chocolate and Gin Festival in Scotland, with participation from artisan producers from Perth and Kinross and elsewhere in Scotland. In view of the growth in visitor numbers in recent years and the anticipated audience, new measures were put in place around the Tay Street, High Street and George Street areas to mitigate congestion and ensure the safe movement of pedestrians, for the Christmas Light Switch on day itself.
- 2.3 Local businesses were consulted and informed of developments by the Council's City Development Team through the Perth City Traders' Association.
- 2.4 For 2017, the Winter Festival programme and marketing communications included Hallowe'en and the city's Bonfire Night, the latter being organised and hosted by the Perth Strathearn 200 Round Table. The main events within the 2017/2018 Winter Festival were:
- Hallowe'en Parade and Fun Night – Saturday, 28 October 2017
 - Fireworks and Bonfire Night – Sunday, 5 November 2017
 - Christmas Lights event – Saturday, 18 November 2017 (Christmas Light Switch On)
 - Christmas Lights event – Sunday, 19 November 2017 (Festive Feast and Community Day)
 - St Andrew's Day celebrations – Sunday, 26 November 2017
 - Churches Lantern and Nativity Parade – Saturday, 2 December 2017
 - Santa Run – Saturday, 9 December 2017
 - Perth Riverside Light Nights – Saturday, 27 January to Wednesday, 14 February 2018
- 2.5 The Riverside Light Nights were first staged in 2017 at the Norie Miller Walk on Perth's riverside. Following its success in attracting large visitor numbers last year, this sound, lights and entertainment event was further developed for 2018 with the inclusion of additional themes, and enhanced entertainments and catering provision by local producers. The purpose of this event is to conclude the Winter Festival, encourage evening visits to the city and also demonstrate how feature lighting enhances the city scape. The event commenced with two themed evenings to mark Burns Night and the programme included Superheroes, Alice in Wonderland, LED LightNight, Wizard of Oz, Chinese New Year, and concluded with Valentine's Day.

The Burns Night events were supported by EventScotland as part of the Scotland's Winter Festivals initiative.

2.6 The Council led programme for the Winter Festival is also complemented by a series of other events including Farmers' Markets, Craft Markets as well as the Perth Concert Hall and Theatre programme. Promotional material for the Winter Festival also highlights the seasonal events that are taking place throughout Perth and Kinross.

2.7 The expenditure summary for the events which took place is as follows:

Event	Gross Expenditure	Income	Net Expenditure
Hallowe'en Parade and Fun Night	£33,290	£150	£33,140
Christmas Lights event	£217,203	£41,000	£176,203
Festive Feast	£17,206	0	£17,206
St Andrew's Day celebrations	£30,040	0	£30,040
Churches Lantern and Nativity Event	£850	0	£850
Santa Run	£1,675	0	£1,675
Riverside Light Nights	£93,236	£13,300	£79,936
Total	£393,500	£54,450	£339,050

2.8 The key features of the Christmas Lights Switch On event included:

- Main stage acts including local bands as well as Mud, the Hunna, Boyzlife, Alesha Dixon, East 17
- Horsecross Plaza children's stage featuring tribute acts, clown shows
- Outdoor Ice Rink at Horsecross Plaza
- King Edward Street stage featuring a varied programme of acts
- Themed entertainment zones and street performers throughout the city (including funfair and outdoor ice rink at Horsecross Plaza)
- Scotland's Chocolate and Gin Festival in the High Street
- Ice sculptures & live ice carvings
- The switch on of the Christmas Lights by the Provost which featured a pyrotechnic display

2.9 The cost breakdown for the Christmas Lights event is as follows:

Staging and infrastructure	£68,866
Marketing	£8,508
Health & Safety/stewarding	£18,625
Entertainment (all stages and street entertainers etc)	£112,204
Miscellaneous (signs, power charges, etc)	£9,000
Total	£217,203

3. EVALUATION

- 3.1 As outlined in the March 2017 report to the Enterprise and Infrastructure Committee (Report No 17/97 refers), an independent extensive programme of research and evaluation was undertaken of the Christmas Lights and St Andrew's Day events in the 2016/17 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. This estimated a net economic expenditure of £1.62 million and £144K respectively. In view of the extensive studies undertaken for the events in 2016 (and 2015 prior to that), an independent desk based appraisal of the economic impacts of key elements of the Winter Festival was undertaken for the 2017/18 events (Christmas Lights event; Christmas Feast; St Andrew's Day celebrations, Santa Run). This appraisal took account of estimated attendances and information from the previous evaluations in order to provide an estimated economic impact (Appendix 1).
- 3.2 The total number of visitors to Perth on the day of the Christmas Light event was estimated to be 80,000. This is derived from the estimated footfall count for the day of 120,000 and rounded down to 80,000 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 in the city centre at the time of the lights switch on was 45,000 (40,000 in 2016). In addition, it was estimated that attendances at the other events as part of the Winter Festival in the pre-Christmas period, totalled 37,000 giving a combined total of 117,000.
- 3.3 Based on the previous survey findings, it is estimated that 96% of visitors were day visitors and 4% overnight visitors. In calculating the estimated economic impact, the same methodology was used for 2017 as was used for the 2016 and 2015 reports. Taking account of daily expenditure assumptions and average length of stay for overnight visitors, the estimated economic impact of these events was calculated as follows:

Visitor Numbers	117,000
Gross expenditure	£6,893,078
Displaced expenditure	£5,564,293
Net direct expenditure	£1,328,785
Multipliers	1.32
Net additional expenditure	£1,753,996

The total net additional economic impact generated is therefore estimated to be approximately £1.8 million.

- 3.4 An online survey was issued to 453 city businesses to gauge impacts and reactions to the Christmas Lights event. Replies were received from 39 businesses and of these responses:
- 56% indicated that the event had had a positive benefit on the business
 - 15% suggested that the event had had no impact on their business

- 18% felt that the event had had a negative impact on their business
- 10% provided written comments which included references to how busy the city was and the quality of the atmosphere

3.5 In 2017, businesses were also asked if they would like to see the Christmas Lights event return in 2018. Of these responses:

- 74% responded yes
- 5% were neutral
- 21% provided comments and suggestions which were generally favourable and related to timings and specific operational considerations

3.6 To provide an event focus for the early part of the year and act as a strong finale to the Winter Festival programme, the Perth Riverside Light Nights were repeated in 2018. This series of themed sound and light events attracted an estimated 53,518 visits over the 19 nights that it was held (an average of 2,817 visitors per evening). Visitors were surveyed on the two Burns Night themed evenings which opened this year's Light Nights programme. 469 responses were received and the key results from this survey are as follows:

- 5,315 unique visitors to the two Burns themed nights
- 70% of respondents were from Perth and Kinross
- 26% of respondents were from elsewhere in Scotland
- 3% of respondents were from the rest of the UK
- 1% of respondents were from overseas
- 49% of respondents stated the event was the only or the main reason for their visit to Perth
- 15% of respondents stayed overnight as part of their visit
- 90% of respondents rated their experience of the Burns Night Light Night evenings as either "very good" or "good"
- 83% of respondents would have stayed at home/gone to work if they had not attended the event
- Average visitor expenditure on food and drink was £13.60 per person
- Average visitor expenditure on leisure and entertainment was £8.50 per person
- Average visitor expenditure on shopping was £21 per person
- Those who stayed overnight to attend the event spent on average £75 on accommodation

3.7 Taking into account the unique visit numbers, expenditure levels and displacement factors, the estimated economic impact of these two Light Night events was calculated as follows:

Visitor Numbers	5,315
Gross expenditure	£331,911
Displaced expenditure	£243,051
Net direct expenditure	£88,860
Multipliers	1.32
Net additional expenditure	£117,295

- 3.8 The total net additional economic impact generated from the two Burns themed Light Nights is therefore estimated to be approximately £117,000 (Appendix 2).

FREE FESTIVE PARKING

- 3.9 In parallel with the Winter Festival programme and in a bid to boost visitation further, the Council has, for a number of years introduced periods of free parking in Council car parks for part of the festive season.
- 3.10 The “Free after 2” initiative has been run by Perth and Kinross Council for the past 5 years. Initially this scheme ran only in selected car parks but following feedback from consumers and businesses, “Free after 2” was changed to include all council car parks across the whole of Perth and Kinross in December 2015.
- 3.11 Each year, the City Development team consult with businesses to try to establish the economic benefits of the “Free after 2” scheme. Following a review of the impact of the scheme in 2016/17, feedback from the Perth Traders’ Association (PTA) was that while a discounted parking scheme was welcomed, the economic benefit of the scheme was difficult to quantify and was both fairly time limited and a difficult offer to promote.
- 3.12 The PTA asked the Council to consider changing the “Free after 2” scheme to a Free Saturday Scheme during December 2017 for all its car parks in Perth and Kinross. The primary reason was that changing trading patterns show that December is no longer the prime trading month for Christmas and Saturdays are no longer necessarily the key trading day. This request for Free Saturday Parking during December 2017 was approved by the Council’s Environment, Enterprise and Infrastructure Committee on 8 November 2017 (Report No. 17/370 refers).
- 3.13 Feedback on this new scheme was gathered from city centre businesses, with 26 responses received from businesses ranging from Debenhams and the St John’s Shopping centre to smaller independent retailers. A summary of the responses is provided below:
- 100% of businesses felt that the promotion encouraged people to stay longer in the city
 - 80% felt it was well advertised
 - 80% of customers had mentioned using the free parking
 - 84% felt it had a positive impact on their business
 - 68.4% felt it brought additional footfall to their businesses
 - 95% would be in favour of a similar promotion
- 3.14 Footfall for December decreased by 4.5% on the previous year – mirroring the national trend of a 4.7% decrease across Scotland and 3.5% across the UK as a whole. Evidence from the PTA to date shows that the lower footfall does not necessarily equate to lower sales - some businesses reported that they

had strong December trading. However, nationally, footfall figures show that November was the busier month supporting the Council's decision to support businesses in the key month of December.

- 3.15 The parking income has been analysed and the information is shown below. The table below shows income for the off-street parking for Perth only.

Year	Income November	Income December
2013/14	£121,754.21	£123,373.42
2014/15	£120,664.79	£127,581.75
2015/16	£134,528.50	£116,478.63
2016/17	£103,590.96	£108,776.50
2017/18	£146,074.85	£116,522.05

- 3.16 The 2016/17 figures will also reflect the closure of Canal Street Car Park until 14 November along with the free period afterwards for this car park to allow for trials with the new payment system. The income was then further analysed for December in Perth alone and across the region.

Location/Type of parking	December 2016	December 2017
<i>On Street Parking</i>		
Perth	£67,006.75	£66,068.60
Crieff	£2,282.85	£2,065.05
<i>Off Street Parking</i>		
Perth	£108,776.50	£116,522.05
Rest of Perth and Kinross	£8,189.50	£16,867.15

4. PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The Winter Festival, and the Christmas Lights event in particular, highlights the ambition of Perth and Kinross Council and its capabilities in programming an extensive array of events and entertainments that contributes to the city region's cultural life and profile. The audience numbers for the Christmas Lights event have grown significantly since the inception. It is important to note that the city centre is effectively now at capacity in terms of visitor numbers at the peak of the event. As such, the event cannot grow much further. Crowd management remains a key issue and operational considerations regarding health, safety and welfare will continue to be prioritised and addressed in conjunction with emergency services through the Council's Safety Advisory Group processes and in line with emergency planning procedures. In just two years, the Riverside Light Nights have become a key feature of the Winter Festival's programme. Further development will be based on operational experience and feedback in order to offer as strong an event proposition as possible in the first quarter of the year.
- 4.2 It is proposed that there is ongoing engagement with elected members on the design and delivery of the Winter Festival programme for 2018/19, in line with the budget review process. It will also continue to engage with the business

community through the appropriate channels including meetings, on-line and written communications.

- 4.3 The Winter Festival will be the subject of reports to future meetings of the Environment and Infrastructure Committee.
- 4.4 Free festive season parking proposals will also be developed and submitted for consideration to a future meeting of the Environment and Infrastructure Committee.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 This report gives information on 2017/18 Winter Festival programme and an outline of the impact of the key events, in particular the Christmas Lights event.
- 5.2 It is recommended that the Committee:
- (i) Notes the approach to the development of the Perth Winter Festival in 2017/18 and its overall performance
 - (ii) Approves ongoing engagement with elected members on the development of the future Winter Festival programmes
 - (iii) Notes the impact and performance of the 2017/18 Free Festive Parking initiative
 - (iv) Requests the Executive Director (Environment) to bring forward a future report on the Winter Festival 2018/19.
 - (v) Requests the Executive Director (Environment) to bring forward a future report on proposals for free parking in Perth and Kinross Council car parks for the festive season 2018.

Author

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Approved

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IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

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

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement

- 1.1 The activities contribute to the Community Plan's strategic objectives of 'Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy', and a 'Safe Welcoming Environment' and the outcomes of 'a thriving, expanding economy' and 'employment opportunities for all'.

Corporate Plan

- 1.2 Perth and Kinross Council Corporate Plan 2013/2018 sets out five strategic objectives:
- (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; and
 - (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.
- 1.3 This report relates to Objective No (iii) 'Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy' and the outcome of 'Thriving, expanding economy' by encouraging and supporting tourism.

2. Resource Implications

Financial

- 2.1 There are no financial resource implications as a result of this report.

Workforce

- 2.2 There are no workforce implications as a result of this report.

Asset Management

- 2.3 There are no asset management implications arising as a result of this report.

3. Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties.
- 3.2 This section should reflect that the proposals have been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome:
- (i) Assessed as **not relevant** for the purposes of EqIA.

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. No further action is required as it does not qualify as a PPS as defined by the Act and is 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. The activities in this report will contribute towards sustainable economic development in Perth and Kinross.

Legal and Governance

- 3.5 The consideration of the report is in line with the Council's Scheme of Administration and specifically the role of the Enterprise and Infrastructure

Committee in developing measures to support and promote economic activity and to plan key infrastructure. Legal Services has been consulted on these proposals.

Risk

- 3.6 Risks and the controls required to mitigate any risks will be reported through the Council's risk management process.

4. Consultation

Internal

- 4.1 The Head of Legal and Governance, Democratic Services and Finance has been consulted in preparation of this report.

5. Communication

- 5.1 Any communications required will be undertaken by the Council.

2. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 2.1 Perth Winter Festival – Report to the Enterprise and Infrastructure Committee, 8 March 2017 (17/97)

3. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Economic Impact Appraisal: Perth's Winter Festival 2017

Appendix 2 – Economic Impact Assessment: Burns Light Night 2018