

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Environment and Infrastructure Committee

19 August 2020

CITY OF PERTH WINTER FESTIVAL

Report by Head of Planning and Development (Report No. 20/134)

This report outlines the 2019/20 City of Perth Winter Festival and its estimated impacts.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The City of Perth Winter Festival is the subject of an annual report to the Environment and Infrastructure Committee. At its meeting of 20 March 2019 (Report No. 19/86 refers) the Committee received a report on the development of the Festival, together with budget breakdowns and an assessment of the economic impact of the key events within the programme. The purpose of this report is to outline the approach to the 2019/20 City of Perth Winter Festival and provide an estimate of the economic impact of the Christmas Lights event and Riverside Light Nights (Burns Nights).

2. PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

- 2.1 As with the programme in previous years, the Winter Festival is heralded by Hallowe'en and Bonfire Night and the Festival is essentially an overarching device for a series of events from November to February that includes as its key features the Christmas Lights event and Riverside Light Nights. As the Festival is now in its 7th year officers are conscious of the need for the programme to evolve. This includes a consideration of new models of delivery, including an enhanced role for the private sector, while also retaining the opportunities for community groups, performers, and enterprises to participate. To this end, for 2019/20 the Hallowe'en event was led by private sector operators and private sector event companies delivered four of the nine themed Riverside Light Nights.
- 2.2 The main events within the 2019/20 Winter Festival were:
- Christmas Lights event – Saturday, 16 November 2019
 - Perthshire Festive Feast – Sunday, 17 November 2019
 - Churches Lantern and Nativity Parade – Saturday 30 November 2019
 - Fair Saturday – Saturday, 30 November 2019
 - St Andrew's Day celebrations – Sunday, 1 December 2019
 - Santa Run – Saturday, 7 December 2019
 - Perth Riverside Light Nights – Saturday, 25 January to Sunday, 5 February 2020

- 2.3 The Winter Festival was introduced by the Hallowe'en Parade and Fun Night on Saturday, 26 October and Bonfire Night on Tuesday, 5 November. The latter is hosted annually by Perth and Strathearn Round Table while the Hallowe'en event in 2019 was organised by three companies working in collaboration: History & Horror Tours; Horne's Funfairs; Castle Horror. The Council's role in respect of Hallowe'en was to facilitate the event, support the organisers and provide some infrastructure support – thereby reducing the Council's direct expenditure on the event programme. This meant that some of the attractions and activities carried an admission charge whereas they had been free of charge in previous years.
- 2.4 A major feature of the Winter Festival programme is the Christmas Lights event which took place on Saturday, 16 November (followed by the Perthshire Festive Feast on 17 November). As in the previous years, the programmes for these days comprise markets and entertainment zones including a children's zone with stage and Santa's Grotto, a central stage where the main focus is on acts and performances from local community groups, and the main stage on Tay Street which remained the principle focus for the switch ceremony for the Christmas lights together with the firework display. The Chocolate, Gin and Things market was located in George Street and St John's Street while the Festive Market took place in the High Street.
- 2.5 For the weekend of 30 November and 1 December an expanded weekend of events for St Andrew's Day was delivered. This included events on Fair Saturday (a Scottish Government initiative) which included the Spirit of Scotland market, music performances, and which coincided with the first of the free festive parking Saturdays.
- 2.6 The Riverside Light Nights were first staged in 2017 at the Norie Miller Walk on Perth's riverside. In 2020 a new approach was taken with the introduction of a mix of free and paid admission evenings. As has been the tradition since its inception, the Light Nights programme commenced with two themed evenings to mark Burns Night on Saturday, 25 January and Sunday, 26 January. On the Saturday evening the event commenced with the Burns Night Parade from the city centre and also included pipe band performances, and children's entertainments alongside the Twilight Market on Tay Street which was a new feature for the evening.
- 2.7 The Burns Nights were followed by a music night on the Monday, then the four paid admission themed nights: Witchcraft and Wizardry on Tuesday and Wednesday (produced by FQT Events); Jurassic Perth (dinosaur theme) on Thursday and Friday (produced by Bigfoot Events). As this was a new venture, and a trial to gauge the private sector appetite to partner in the event, the approach taken with these four nights was that the responsibility for content programming, production, ticketing and sales management lay with each event producer who utilised the venue and the core site infrastructure that was provided by the Council for the whole Light Nights programme. This meant that the Council supported the delivery of those themed nights within the overall Riverside Light Nights programme but reduced its expenditure on the entertainment for those particular evenings. Grant support of £10K was secured from EventScotland for the Burns Night events and there was some additional income from trade concessions.

2.8 The Winter Festival programme also benefitted this year from the recent investment in lighting in the city centre, particularly at St Matthew's Church and Perth Bridge, and which provided an enhanced setting for the Riverside Light Nights especially.

2.9 As in previous years 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.

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

Event	Gross Expenditure	Income	Net Expenditure
Hallowe'en Parade and Fun Night	£4,310	-	£4,310
Christmas Lights event	£219,802	£42,450	£177,352
Festive Feast	£26,826	£2,450	£24,376
Fair Saturday	£2,897	-	£2,897
St Andrew's Day celebrations	£29,862	£1,500	£28,362
Churches Lantern and Nativity Event	£1,402	-	£1,402
Santa Run	£1,250	-	£1,250
Riverside Light Nights	£110,947	£11,449	£99,498
Total	£397,296	£57,849	£339,447

2.11 The key features of the Christmas Lights event included:

- Main stage acts including Nina Nesbitt, Winter Clubland Classics, Atomic Kitten, Giants of British Rock, Stephen Mulhern
- Horsecross Plaza children's stage featuring Basil Brush
- Santa's Grotto at Horsecross Plaza
- King Edward Street stage featuring a varied programme of acts
- Themed entertainment zones and street performers throughout the city (including funfair in Mill Street)
- The Chocolate, Gin and Things Market in George Street and St John's Street
- Festive Market in the High Street
- Ice sculptures & live ice carvings
- Santa's Parade
- The switch on of the Christmas Lights by the Provost which featured a pyrotechnic display

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

Staging and infrastructure	£61,755
Marketing	£6,000
Health & Safety/stewarding	£17,985
Entertainment (all stages and street entertainers etc)	£127,261
Miscellaneous (signs, power charges, etc)	£6,801
Total	£219,802

3. EVALUATION

3.1 A survey was undertaken of 548 visitors to Perth on the day of the Christmas Lights event with an economic impact assessment undertaken based on the results of this survey, grossed to the estimated overall attendance on the day. It was estimated that there were 90,000 visitors to the city on 16th November (91,000 in 2018), with 97% day visitors and 3% overnight visitors (which is consistent with the profile in previous years' visitor surveys).

3.2 Taking account of daily and overnight expenditure levels and average length of stay for overnight visitors, the estimated economic impact of the event was calculated as follows:

Day Visitor Numbers	87,300
Overnight Visitor Numbers	2,700
Gross expenditure: day visitors	£4,357,689
Gross expenditure: overnight visitors	£1,108,655
Total Gross Expenditure	£5,466,344
Displaced expenditure	£3,729,053
Net direct expenditure	£1,737,291
Multipliers	1.32
Net additional expenditure	£2,293,224

3.3 Displacement is a measure to the extent to which the Christmas Lights event has simply moved expenditure from one part of the economy to another. Displacement levels have been assessed using information from the survey on:

- Visitor origin
- Importance of the event in the decision to visit the area
- Counterfactual i.e. what the visitor would have done in the absence of the Christmas Lights event

3.4 The displacement figure therefore accounts for the proportion of the visitors by origin reporting that they would have been in Perth and Kinross irrespective of the event and whose expenditure is therefore displaced i.e. not included in the net calculations. In relation to multipliers, the expenditure generated as a result of the Christmas Lights event will have two types of wider impact on the economy:

- Supplier effect: an increase in sales in a business will require it to purchase more supplies than it would have otherwise. A proportion of this "knock on" effect will benefit suppliers in the local and national economies.
- Income effect: an increase in sales in a business will usually lead to either an increase in employment or an increase in incomes for those already employed. A proportion of these increased incomes will be re-spent in the local and national economies.

3.5 The net direct expenditure generated from the Christmas Lights event was approximately £1.73 million. The Scottish Tourism Multiplier Study provides standard supplier and income multipliers for the tourism sector. This estimates that the combined supplier and income multiplier for Perth and Kinross is 1.32. The total net additional economic impact generated is therefore estimated to be approximately £2.3 million. This is an increase on the figure for 2018 which was approximately £2 million and can be attributed to slightly higher average expenditure levels and average length of overnight stay.

3.6 An online survey was issued to approximately 420 city businesses to gauge impacts and reactions to the Christmas Lights event. Replies were received from 35 businesses and of these responses:

- 24% indicated that the event had had a positive benefit on the business
- 42% suggested that the event had had no impact on their business
- 33% felt that the event had had a negative impact on their business
- 57% provided written comments which included suggestions which were generally to specific operational considerations as well as layout of markets,

3.7 This year's Riverside Light Nights ran from 25 January to 2 February. This series of themed sound and light events attracted an estimated 30,780 visits over the 9 nights that it was held (average 3,420 visits per night). Visitors were surveyed on the two Burns Night themed evenings which opened this year's Light Nights programme, and which attracted an estimated 9,631 unique visitors. 528 survey responses were received and, as with the Christmas Lights event, an economic impact assessment was undertaken based on the survey findings.

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

Day Visitor Numbers	8,957
Overnight Visitor Numbers	674
Gross expenditure: day visitors	£300,685
Gross expenditure: overnight visitors	£204,138
Total Gross Expenditure	£504,823
Displaced expenditure	£254,831
Net direct expenditure	£249,992
Multipliers	1.32
Net additional expenditure	£329,989

3.9 The total net additional economic impact generated from the two Burns themed Light Nights is therefore estimated to be approximately £330K.

4. PROPOSAL

- 4.1 It had been the original intention to bring this report to the March 2020 meeting of the Environment and Infrastructure Committee and which would have comprised a proposal and recommendation regarding the future development of the events. In that iteration of the report it was noted that the challenge remained to develop the Winter Festival, to be innovative and to “ring the changes” appropriately. It was proposed that engagement would continue with external parties to consider opportunities for private sector operators to take more significant roles and in order to reduce the Council’s direct expenditure.
- 4.2 However, circumstances have clearly changed and the Covid-19 crisis has meant that there has been a cessation of public events, with outdoor and indoor events in 2020 either cancelled or postponed until 2021. At the time of preparing this report, and as things stand, the guidelines with regards to the future delivery of outdoor events will be produced in line with the Scottish Government’s phased plan for moving out of lockdown with some relaxation regarding public events announced at Phase 4 and to the effect that mass gatherings may resume in line with public health advice. Nevertheless, the nature of the events within the Winter Festival is such that it would be impractical to hold events along previous lines while still being compliant with social distancing and other public health measures. Furthermore, the lead in time for planning and development of these seasonal events is now too short and the ability of other services, including emergency services, to participate in the required planning process is uncertain. Council officers have also been re-tasked in response to the crisis and in line with the Economic Recovery Plan there may need to be a reallocation of resources to support specific short and medium term actions. Other local authorities in Scotland are facing similar decisions and are cancelling their winter and Christmas programmes. In view of the foregoing factors, and combined with uncertainty around consumer confidence to attend large events, it is not proposed to hold the events which comprise the Winter Festival in 2020/21.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 This report gives information on 2019/20 Winter Festival programme and an outline of the impact of key events, the Christmas Lights event and Riverside Light Nights.
- 5.2 It is recommended that the Committee:
- (i) notes the approach to the development of the Perth Winter Festival in 2019/20 and its performance
 - (ii) agrees that as a consequence of the Covid-19 crisis, the Perth Winter Festival will not take place in 2020/21

Author

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Approved

Name	Designation	Date
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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 2018/22 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 Heads of Legal 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

Perth Winter Festival – Report to the Environment and Infrastructure Committee, 20 March 2019 (19/86)