

Civic Hospitality – Policy Guidelines

Finance and Resources Committee

11 November 2008

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 On 26 June 2008, Council approved a motion by Councillor Gordon Mackenzie to update the guidance on civic hospitality. Revised policy guidelines are proposed for approval.
- 1.2 The report also comments on the adequacy of the corporate budget to fund the level of eligible applications.

2 Summary

- 2.1 The revised guidelines address the issues raised in Councillor Mackenzie's motion.
- 2.2 The corporate budget for civic hospitality remains under pressure.

3 Main report

Background

- 3.1 The current policy guidelines were approved by the former General Purposes and Consumer Services Committee in February 1997. The context in which they were introduced was a 50% reduction in the corporate budget for civic hospitality in the coming financial year, in response to the Council's financial circumstances at the time.
- 3.2 The guidelines were therefore designed to contain expenditure within the reduced budget. Key features of the guidelines are:
 - where the event or function for which an application for civic hospitality has been submitted has a close relationship with the service functions of the Council, it is referred to the relevant service Department for decision or recommendation and funding.
 - applications in relation to significant events or functions, or where there is no direct link with the Council's local government functions, are funded from the corporate budget.

- applicants for hospitality in connection with an association or similar conference are offered a conference reception. The Lord Provost or his representative will host the reception but the applicant is asked to meet the costs of the food and drinks supplied from within their conference budget.
- except in exceptional circumstances, receptions are held in Council premises and the number of invited guests is restricted to the capacity of those premises. Hospitality grants are limited to the equivalent cost of holding a reception in Council premises.

3.3 In 2001, authority was delegated to Heads of Department to approve expenditure of up to £1,000 on hospitality, subject to consultation with the relevant Executive member and keeping to the approved guidelines. Following the change in political management arrangements, applications estimated to cost in excess of £1,000 are now referred to the Finance and Resources Committee, if they are to be met from the corporate budget, or to the relevant Executive Committee if they are to be met from a departmental budget.

New Guidelines

3.4 The text of the motion by Councillor Gordon Mackenzie approved by Council on 26 June 2008 is as follows:

“Given the increasing demand to recognise the large number of worthwhile organisations, historical establishments and significant events associated with the city of Edinburgh, there is a need to update the guidance determining how the Council celebrates relevant anniversaries and achievements.

To ensure a consistent approach, Council therefore agrees that:

- events recognising local or neighbourhood anniversaries and achievements should be supported and, if appropriate, funded through the Neighbourhood Partnership arrangements;
- city wide achievements or significant anniversaries, such as centennial celebrations, are more appropriately recognised through the Council’s civic hospitality arrangements; and
- there should be guidance produced for members on the approval of requests received on an annual or otherwise recurring frequencies.

Council therefore instructs the Director of Corporate Services to update the appropriate guidance and report back to Council in the autumn.”

3.5 Revised guidelines are attached at Appendix 1 for approval. The changes of substance are as follows:

- The introduction of a category “Neighbourhood Reception” in response to the Council decision of 26 June
- A proposed definition of the major anniversaries which will qualify for a reception

- An increase in the expenditure threshold of the delegated authority to Heads of Department from £1,000 to £1,500.

3.6 The Council decision also called for guidance on the approval of requests received on an annual or otherwise recurring frequency. It has been custom and practice to allocate £20,000 of the corporate budget for hospitality associated with the Edinburgh International Festival. Receptions are arranged under the guidance of the Lord Provost. Hospitality in connection with church services is also regarded as a prior commitment. A list of other recurring requests since 2002 is attached at Appendix 2. In many cases, these go back many years before 2002. These will only come to Committee for decision if they are estimated to cost more than £1,000 or £1,500 in the future, if the new guidelines are agreed. The Committee may wish to confirm that it is content for me to continue to fulfil these requests indefinitely.

4 Financial Implications

4.1 The corporate budget for civic hospitality is £51,190.

4.2 While the guidelines were effective in reducing expenditure from the previous, much higher level, it has rarely been possible to restrict expenditure to the level of the corporate budget. In particular:

- The budget has remained unchanged since 1997/8. By contrast, catering charges are subject to annual increase for inflation, so each year the budget purchases less
- As the pressures on Departmental budgets have increased, Heads of Departments have been reluctant to release funding for hospitality events. As a result, some applications which were eligible under the guidelines have been rejected while others have become an additional imposition on the corporate budget.

4.3 The size of the corporate budget continues to dictate that the provision for Departmentally funded hospitality remains in the guidelines. There is an opportunity to review the financial provision through the budget process.

5 Environmental Impact

5.1 There are no adverse environmental impacts arising from this report.

6 Conclusions

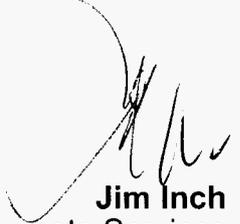
6.1 The revised guidelines address the issues raised in Councillor Mackenzie's motion.

6.2 The corporate budget for civic hospitality remains under pressure.

7 Recommendations

7.1 To approve the revised policy guidelines for civic hospitality in Appendix 1.

- 7.2 To confirm that the recurring applications listed in Appendix 2 be regarded as a continuing commitment.
- 7.3 To recommend to the Council that the expenditure threshold of the delegated authority to Heads of Departments in para 2.15(a) of the Scheme of Delegation to Officers be increased from £1,000 to £1,500.
- 7.4 To address the resource issues in the budget process.


Jim Inch
Director of Corporate Services
31/10/08

Appendices	1 Civic Hospitality Guidelines (Draft) 2 Annual or Otherwise Recurring Receptions – 2002/08
Contact/tel/Email	John Sturt, Council Secretary, 529 4136 john.sturt@edinburgh.gov.uk
Wards affected	City wide
Single Outcome Agreement	
Background Papers	None

THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL
CIVIC HOSPITALITY GUIDELINES (DRAFT)

1. RECIPIENTS

1.1 The provision of civic hospitality by the Council, on its own initiative or in response to applications, will take one of four forms:

- A City Reception
- A Committee Reception
- A Neighbourhood Reception
- A Conference Reception

The Council will use the following criteria to determine which type of reception is appropriate in individual circumstances.

1.2 City Reception

- To welcome distinguished visitors to the City
- To mark special achievements and/or present awards
- To celebrate the major anniversaries of organisations which have contributed to the general wellbeing of the City
- Hospitality in connection with prestigious conferences or events taking place within the City which will:-
 - (a) generate exceptional economic benefit to the City; and/or
 - (b) attract favourable media coverage for the City on a national or international scale; and/or
 - (c) promote the Council's corporate objectives and policies; and/or
 - (d) otherwise promote the City as a centre of excellence to the invited guests.

Hospitality traditionally associated with the Edinburgh International Festival will be deemed to fall within these criteria.

- Hospitality in connection with the civic services at St Giles Cathedral.

1.3 **Committee Receptions**

- To welcome visitors to the City, in connection with the Committee's area of responsibility
- To mark special achievements and/or present awards relevant to the Committee's area of responsibility
- To celebrate the major anniversaries of organisations which have contributed to the wellbeing of the City in the Committee's area of responsibility
- Hospitality in connection with conferences or events taking place within the City which will:-
 - (a) generate substantial benefit to the City in the Committee's area of responsibility; and/or
 - (b) promote the Committee's policies and objectives; and/or
 - (c) otherwise promote the City as a centre of excellence in the Committee's area of responsibility.

1.4 **Neighbourhood Receptions**

- To celebrate special achievements and/or the major anniversaries of organisations serving a neighbourhood partnership area.
- Hospitality in connection with local events

1.5 **Conference Receptions**

Hospitality may be granted for an association or similar conference.

- 1.6 The celebration of major anniversaries shall normally be restricted to multiples of 25 years up to 100 years and multiples of 50 years thereafter.

2. **FORMAT OF RECEPTIONS**

- 2.1 Receptions shall, wherever practical, be held in Council premises. If accommodation in Council premises is not available or is insufficient for the number of guests considered appropriate, alternative locations may be agreed.
- 2.2 The number of invited guests shall be restricted having regard to location and costs.
- 2.3 The Lord Provost, Depute Convener or nominated Bailie, will host City Receptions and Conference Receptions. The appropriate Committee Convener, or his/her nominee, will host a Committee Reception. The Convener of the relevant Neighbourhood Partnership will host a Neighbourhood Reception.

2.4 Hospitality options provided will include the provision of appropriate drinks and food eg:-.

- tea, coffee and biscuits
- wine and savouries
- wine and fork buffet

Food will be provided at a level appropriate for the nature of the event.

2.5 Where an applicant specifically requests use of a venue outwith Council premises for the convenience of their event and a City reception or a Committee reception is approved, a Civic Hospitality grant may be awarded. Normally the grant shall be limited to the equivalent cost of holding a reception in Council premises.

3. FUNDING

3.1 In the case of a Conference Reception, the Council will negotiate with the applicant a suitable financial arrangement to meet the cost of food and drink provided.

3.2 Committee Receptions will be funded from the relevant Departmental Budget.

3.3 Neighbourhood Receptions will be funded from the budgets allocated to Neighbourhood Partnerships.

3.4 City Receptions and miscellaneous receptions will be funded from the corporate Civic Hospitality budget held by Corporate Services Department.

3.5 When considered appropriate, a reception may be hosted jointly, and the costs shared, between:-

- (a) the Council and another organisation; or
- (b) the Finance and Resources Committee and another Committee of the Council; or
- (c) two or more other Committees of the Council.

In such circumstances, the format of the hospitality shall be determined as appropriate to the individual event.

4. DECISION MAKING

4.1 The Director of Corporate Services shall have delegated authority to approve Conference Receptions where the applicant agrees to meet the cost of the food and drinks provided.

- 4.2 The Director of Corporate Services shall have delegated authority to approve City Receptions and Committee Receptions, costing up to £1,500, and funded from the corporate Civic Hospitality budget, subject to consultation with the convener of the Finance and Resources Committee.
- 4.3 Heads of Departments shall have delegated authority to approve Committee Receptions costing up to £1,500 and funded from their Departmental budget, subject to consultation with the convener of the appropriate Executive Committee.
- 4.4 The Director of Services for Communities shall have delegated authority to approve a Neighbourhood Reception, subject to consultation with the relevant Neighbourhood Partnership.
- 4.5 Applications for Committee Receptions costing more than £1,500 shall be determined by the appropriate Committee.
- 4.6 Applications for City Receptions and for other receptions costing more than £1,500 which fall outwith these guidelines shall be determined by the Finance and Resources Committee.
- 4.7 When approving receptions, the Committee or Head of Department will also determine the level of hospitality to be provided (para 2.4).
- 4.8 The Lord Provost's and Members Services Manager will co-ordinate the organisation and administrative arrangements for all civic receptions, unless it is mutually agreed that another Department should do so.

CIVIC HOSPITALITY

ANNUAL OR OTHERWISE RECURRING RECEPTIONS – 2002/08

The Opening of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland

Edinburgh Medal and Address - 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007

Scottish Youth Theatre Summer Festival - 2002, 2004, 2008

The Edinburgh Mela – 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008

Annual Conference of the Edinburgh Interfaith Association – 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008

The William Y Darling Bequest for Good Citizenship – 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008

The Annual Award Ceremony of the Edinburgh and SE Scotland Blood Transfusion Service – 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008

The AGM of the Old Edinburgh Club – 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 (tea and biscuits)

The AGM of the Edinburgh Festival Voluntary Guides Association – 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008

The EID Festival – 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008

Diwali – 2006, 2007, 2008