

# Culture and Sport Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 8 March 2016

## A new Events Strategy for Edinburgh

<b>Item number</b>	8.1
<b>Report number</b>	
<b>Executive</b>	
<b>Wards</b>	All

### Executive summary

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This report summarises the results of an independently-led review of the Council's existing Events Strategy, first adopted in 2006, and notes that consultees wished to see a new Events Strategy for the city which would be delivered by partners.

A new strategy is in development and will be presented for approval to the Committee this summer. This will incorporate key principles of the refreshed National Events Strategy, which was published in 2015. It is proposed that this new Strategy will focus on how to deliver three specific categories of events for Edinburgh, as detailed in this report. Approval is sought for this categorisation within the new Events Strategy for Edinburgh.

### Links

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<b>Coalition pledges</b>	P24, P31
<b>Council outcomes</b>	CO8, CO20, CO26
<b>Single Outcome Agreement</b>	SO1, SO3

## A New Events Strategy for Edinburgh

### Recommendations

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- 1.1 Note the importance of the role of events in complementing Edinburgh's 12 major Festivals, in making Edinburgh a successful city and therefore a great place in which to live, work, study and invest, and a great place to visit.
- 1.2 Note the diversity of events that are delivered and supported by the Council and their significant contribution to the city through positive economic impact, and reputation-enhancing promotion at national and international levels.
- 1.3 Note the intended alignment of Edinburgh's Events Strategy with the National Events Strategy.
- 1.4 Approve the proposed categorisation of events into three levels, as outlined in paragraph 3.4 below.
- 1.5 Note that the new draft Strategy, together with a proposed governance structure, will be presented to this Committee in the summer for approval.

### Background

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- 2.1 Edinburgh's events contribute to the economic and cultural vitality of the city. Alongside the major Festivals, Edinburgh's events help make the city lively all year round; reflect the political and civic importance of Edinburgh as the capital city; and provide significant promotion of the city as a great place in which to live, invest, study and work, and as a great place to visit. Some examples of successful events held in the city in 2014 and 2015 include the diving competition of the 2014 Commonwealth Games, the public art installation Field of Light, the Edinburgh stage of the Gumball 3000 Rally, the IFSC European Youth Climbing Championship, the Great Edinburgh Cross Country Run and a stage of the Tour of Britain. These complemented the programmes of the 12 major Festivals, which introduced enhancements to their programming over 2012 to 2014, with support from the Council and other stakeholders. The Edinburgh Mela's [\*King of Ghosts\*](#) and the Edinburgh International Festival's [\*Speed of Light\*](#) are two examples of this enhanced programming.

- 2.2 The original Events Strategy was approved in 2006. The Council commissioned a refresh of the Events strategy in 2014 to ensure that it is fully fit for purpose and to take account of developments in the events sector, and the current events marketplace, since the creation of the original document in 2006.
- 2.3 An independently-led review process comprised one-to-one consultation with event stakeholders; an Events Sector Seminar with sector practitioners; and a session with the Strategic Implementation Group of Edinburgh's Tourism Strategy. This consultation process established the strengths of Edinburgh's current events offer and one main challenge. The views of those involved in delivering events in Edinburgh and the wider tourism sector were also sought on the future direction of events in Edinburgh and where support could be best delivered.
- 2.4 In 2015, EventScotland published the refreshed [National Events Strategy](#) for 2015 to 2025. This will be reflected in the content of the new Strategy for Edinburgh.

## Main report

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- 3.1 In 2014 the Council commissioned a consultant to undertake a refresh of the Events Strategy. Key individuals within Edinburgh's events sector, including officers and elected members, were interviewed about their perception of the Council's role in delivering and supporting events and what should be delivered in future. The details of the organisations consulted are listed in Appendix 1.
- 3.2 Consultees were agreed on the strengths of the city, which they identified as: the major festivals; the Events Planning and Operational Group (EPOG) process; opportunities arising from Edinburgh's capital city status; the Universities; the Council's experience in delivering events; unique venues; and the city's green spaces.
- 3.3 Consultees identified this challenge: Edinburgh has two specialist indoor venues of an international standard in the form of the Royal Commonwealth Pool and the Edinburgh International Climbing Arena, which allow the city to host major aquatics and climbing championships. However, with the Meadowbank Sports Centre and Stadium now in decline, Edinburgh lacks other venues capable of hosting major sporting events, and this limits its ability to bid for the majority of mainstream sports championships. Looking ahead, the new facilities currently under construction at Oriam, the national performance centre for sport, the potential redevelopment of Meadowbank, and the University of Edinburgh's aspirations for new sporting infrastructure may collectively help ameliorate this position.
- 3.4 There was a unanimous view from consultees that rather than the current strategy being refreshed, it would be more appropriate and useful to review and create a new Events Strategy for the city.

- 3.5 Feedback also indicated that the most effective strategy Edinburgh can adopt is to be distinctive, using the clear strengths of the city rather than trying to re-fit and emulate other city's events strategies. Consultees felt that Edinburgh should seek to develop and attract the following three categories of event, which work well within the capital: level one – major international events; level two – major national events; and level three – events bespoke for the city.
- 3.6 This approach follows the guidance within the National Events Strategy on [developing a portfolio of events](#). This states: “A portfolio approach to events and festivals works best for Scotland – a carefully selected mix of free and paid events of various types and categories being staged throughout Scotland and throughout the year should continue. A portfolio approach also works for business events, allowing us to use smaller venues and locations all over Scotland.” The categories of event used by the National Events Strategy have been amended to reflect Edinburgh's position. These are described in more detail below.
- 3.7 **Level 1: Major international events** (eg MOBO Awards, Commonwealth Youth Games, the Grand Depart stage of the Tour de France). These would be one-off, major international events with significant global interest. Such events would be led by national government or EventScotland, in the first instance. ‘Extraordinary’ funding would have to be realised through national partnerships, as the budget for these events would not be available through the Council alone.
- 3.8 **Level 2: Major national events** (eg Papal visit; Heineken Cup Final; Commonwealth Games Baton Relay, Edinburgh's Hogmanay – the latter being one of the city's 12 major Festivals). The Council would identify a strategic event opportunity, and identify a one-off additional funding resource in order to pursue the opportunity. These events could also be led nationally with the Council acting as a key player in mobilising local resources and ‘activating’ the city through city dressing, destination marketing, business partner promotions, satellite events, etc. This would require some separately identified financial resource and/or a major contribution in-kind from the Council.
- 3.9 **Level 3: Events bespoke for the city** (eg Field of Light, Writer on the City, KEYFRAMES and Edinburgh's Christmas). The Council's Events team would continue to identify appropriate tailored events across the calendar year, focusing on the shoulder months outwith the Festival periods. Events would be flexible and bespoke for the city, designed to fill gaps in the city's calendar with animation and excitement. These events would be chosen to leverage investment in the city's events/festivals through commercial and public partners. The significant number of civic and royal events also add important profile and variety, and attract substantial interest from local residents and visitors.

- 3.10 Consultees also agreed that in order to be strategic and meaningful, the Events Strategy should be for the entire city, with the Council as custodian. In other words, the delivery of the Strategy should be the responsibility of many partners, while the Council should retain the responsibility for ensuring it is monitored, implemented, and updated.
- 3.11 Level 3 events would be managed through the Council's existing decision-making structures. Events in levels 1 and 2, which could not be funded solely by the Council, will require an additional preliminary step in the governance process – a decision by a citywide steering group, involving other funding agencies and potential partners who would meet regularly to review proposed events and indicate their respective potential commitment to these events, to allow the city to compete effectively. This would allow the city to combine collective support for events and use events as a key tourism driver for the city. This is a proven model for successful events programmes and their delivery in cities such as Birmingham, Glasgow, Liverpool and Manchester.
- 3.12 A Visitor Levy or equivalent mechanism on a citywide basis was cited throughout the consultation as a potential way to support investment in a core events calendar in the city, as well as other strands of cultural activity. It is proposed that the Strategy would advocate for consideration of such a Levy and the continuing exploration of how this might be introduced.
- 3.13 The Council's Events Management Group is responsible for ensuring that the Council takes a co-ordinated approach to the delivery of events in the city. It is composed of officers from a number of Council services and has representation from Marketing Edinburgh. It is not intended to act as a steering group for the strategic development of events. Instead, the group focuses on operational issues and ensures events are delivered through internal partnership working. A key role of the Group is to alert stakeholders to any significant impact an event may have on either the city or the Council's services (through an internal Red Flag Alert system).
- 3.14 The draft Strategy will be produced in consultation with the Events Management Group and key stakeholders within the city, including those listed in Appendix 1. The draft Strategy will then be presented to the Culture and Sport Committee for final comment and approval. A proposed membership structure for the Steering Group will be presented with the draft Strategy to the Culture and Sport Committee in the summer.

## Measures of success

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- 4.1 The measure of success will be a new Events Strategy for Edinburgh that aligns with the National Events Strategy while reflecting Edinburgh's status as a capital city, delivering events that complement the major Festivals and continuing to contribute as a core strategic planning mechanism making Edinburgh a great place in which to live, work, study and invest, and a great place to visit.

## Financial impact

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- 5.1 The total cost for the consultation process was £9,600. This was contained within the Events budget.
- 5.2 The Events budget held by the Culture Service, including Edinburgh's Hogmanay and Edinburgh's Christmas, is £1.7m for 2015/16. (This is projected to reduce by £0.5m by 2017/18.)
- 5.3 There is no direct financial impact from this report. If the final draft Events Strategy is approved, this could entail requests for additional financial support from the Council for a level one or two event. Any such request would be made to the Culture and Sport Committee, following strategic oversight by the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee in the case of any events which would impact on other Council services.

## Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

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- 6.1 There are no risk or compliance issues arising directly from this report. The recommendations of this report would result in the presentation for approval of a new Events Strategy, with an appropriate governance structure, this summer.

## Equalities impact

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- 7.1 The new Strategy will ensure that events remain attractive and accessible to families, and accessible to community groups. The Strategy will suggest a mixture of sporting, cultural and civic events that are accessible to all and inclusive.

## Sustainability impact

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- 8.1 It is a current condition of funding that any events supported through the existing Event Strategy have an Environmental Policy which includes undertaking to minimise impact on the environment by the reduction of emissions; the efficient use of energy; the use of biodegradable and recycled products; and minimisation of waste amongst other activities. BS8901 is used as a guideline and suggestions are made to event organisers on how they can minimise their impact on the environment. The new Strategy would stipulate the same or improved conditions.

## Consultation and engagement

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- 9.1 The Council has engaged a wide range of stakeholders across Edinburgh's events industry through one to one interviews and workshops. The outcomes of this consultation have been used to support and shape the proposed strategy and its implementation.

## Background reading/external references

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The most recent reports on the Council’s annual Core Festivals and Events Programme were presented to the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee on [3 November 2015](#) and the Culture and Sport Committee on [30 November 2015](#).

Edinburgh’s Events Strategy published in [2006](#); Edinburgh’s Events Guide published in [2006](#); and Edinburgh’s Events Review published in [2006](#).

EventScotland [National Events Strategy](#) published in 2015

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**Links**

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<b>Coalition pledges</b>	P24 - Maintain and embrace support for our world-famous festivals and events
	P31 – Maintain our city’s reputation as the cultural capital of the world by continuing to support by continuing to support and invest in our cultural infrastructure
<b>Council outcomes</b>	CO8 - Edinburgh’s economy creates and sustains job opportunities
	CO20 - Culture, sport and major events – Edinburgh continues to be a leading cultural city where culture and sport play a central part in the lives and futures of citizens
	CO26 - The Council engages with stakeholders and works in partnership to improve services and deliver on agreed objectives
<b>Single Outcome Agreement</b>	SO1 - Edinburgh’s economy delivers increased investment, jobs and opportunities for all
<b>Appendices</b>	1 – List of Consultees

**List of Consultees**

**One to One Consultation**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
CEO	EventScotland
International Events Director - Culture	EventScotland
Events Director - Sport	EventScotland
Head of Service - Environment	City of Edinburgh Council (Council)
Strategic Development Manager (Physical Activity and Sport)	Council
Head of Culture & Sport	Council
Festival & Events Champion	Council
Chief Executive	Marketing Edinburgh
Chief Executive	Essential Edinburgh
Director	Festivals Edinburgh
Chair	ETAG (Edinburgh Tourist Action Group)
Director, Edinburgh Institute: Festivals, Events & Tourism	Edinburgh Napier University
	Scottish Enterprise

## **Events Sector Seminar Attendees**

Beltane Society  
Business Improvement District – Grassmarket  
Business Improvement District – West End  
Edinburgh Festival Fringe  
Edinburgh's Christmas  
Edinburgh's Hogmanay  
Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival (and Carnival)  
Edinburgh Marathon  
Edinburgh Rugby  
Essential Edinburgh  
EventScotland  
Festivals Edinburgh  
Great Scottish Events  
Northern Light  
NOVA International  
Previously, Scotland's History Festival  
Rare Management  
Regular Music  
Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo  
Royal Highland Show  
SCO (presumably Scottish Chamber Orchestra?)  
Scottish Rugby  
Underbelly  
Unique Events

## **and representatives from these areas of the Council:**

City Strategy and Economy, City Centre Neighbourhood, Communications,  
Parks and Greenspace, Physical Activity and Sport, Planning, Public Safety and Roads

## Strategic Implementation Group: Tourism Strategy

<b>Title</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Chief Executive	Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce & Enterprise
Chief Executive	City of Edinburgh Council
Senior Director - Food & Drink, Tourism and Textiles	Scottish Enterprise
Chief Executive	Edinburgh Airport
Chief Executive	Marketing Edinburgh
Director General	National Galleries Scotland
Head of Business Partnerships	City Strategy & Economy, Council
Destination Manager	Scottish Enterprise
Chair	Edinburgh Hotel Association
Convener	Economy Committee, Council
Chair	Edinburgh Tourism Action Group