

Agenda Item	11f
Report No	CIA/46/19

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: City of Inverness Area Committee

Date: 29 August 2019

Report Title: Inverness Events and Festivals
Review of 2019-20 to date and proposals for 2020-21

Report By: Inverness City Area Manager

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report updates Members on the 2019/20 Events and Festivals Programme to date;
- 1.2 Reports on the results of the requested examination of sponsorship and the feasibility of charging for the Hogmanay event (**Appendix 1**);
- 1.3 Provides analysis of the suggestion that more collaborative working with partners would enable the Hogmanay event to become self-financing in the future (**Appendix 2**);
- 1.4 Seeks approval to deliver the proposed 2020/21 Events and Festivals Action Plan Programme with a budget of £275,000, subject to the addition on a 10% contingency; and
- 1.5 Seeks approval to work with partners to establish a programme of events based in the Northern Meeting Park to generate the additional funding required to deliver the 2020/21 Events and Festivals Programme.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
 - i. To note the 2019/20 update;
 - ii. Note the research undertaken into Hogmanay and budget cutting;
 - iii. Approve the 2020/21 Events and Festivals Action Plan;
 - iv. Approve the 2020/21 Budget of £275,000 (**Appendix 3**) subject to the addition of a 10% contingency (£25,000) noting that the agreement of the City of Inverness

Area Committee will be required prior to the contingency being allocated against expenditure ; and

- v. Agree that Officers support the Events and Festivals Working Group to work with partners to deliver a programme of events in Northern Meeting Park to generate the additional income required to deliver the agreed programme; subject to ensuring that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that any current users who may suffer detriment are given advice and support where appropriate

3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource – The transfer of the programming of activity at Northern Meeting Park to the City of Inverness Area Committee through the Events and Festivals Working Group (EFWG); with the income generated being used to offset the £65,000 budget deficit required to deliver the 2020-21 Events and Festivals programme and establish new events at the site; with any surplus being used to contribute towards the cost of maintaining the site by the Council. Members are asked to note that the Northern Meeting Park grounds and buildings are assets currently not held on the account of the Inverness Common Good Fund.
- 3.2 Legal – Northern Meeting Park is currently under the management of Highlife Highland (HLH). Any implications for the agreement in place between HLH and the Council would be managed in discussion with HLH and Officers. Otherwise there are no legal implications because of agreeing the recommendations contained within this report.
- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island) - In considering the terms of the report the Committee should note that any City Priorities agreed will be applied within the terms of current Policies.
- 3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever - The proposals have been prepared in the context of Council Policies in support of Climate Change/Carbon Clever initiatives and objectives
- 3.5 Risk - The Proposals have been prepared noting the need to reduce risk to the Council.
- 3.6 Gaelic - There are no Gaelic Implications because of this report.

4. Background

- 4.1 The City of Inverness Area Committee (CIAC) agreed on 21 February 2019 that a report should be submitted examining the options for increasing the commercial activity undertaken by the Events and Festivals Working Group (EFWG); and that consideration should be given by the EFWG to more collaborative working with partners and partner agencies with a view to reducing the funding required to deliver the annual Events and Festivals programme.
- 4.2 This report provides an update of a review of the funding arrangements for the Red Hot Highland Fling Hogmanay Show (RHFF); and provides details of actions suggested by the EFWG to enable it to work towards the financial objective requested by the CIAC for the 2020-21 Financial Year. To deliver the Events and Festivals programme for £275,000.
- 4.3 It should be noted that the EFWG's recommendations link to both the EFWG's agreed Action Plan and the Highland Council's agreed Programme, while supporting the delivery of the agreed City Priorities programme.
- 4.4 The recommendations seek approval for consideration to be given to the reorganisation of the current management and programming arrangements for Northern Meeting Park (NMP) with effect from the commencement of the 2020-2021 financial year

5. Review of 2019-2020 to date

- 5.1 The Inverness Events and Festivals Programme has provided a foundation for the expansion and development of the events staged in Inverness and Area since its inception in 2009 and this year saw a continued increase in activity. To date the 2019 - 2020 programme has seen the successful development and delivery of the Proud Ness (Summer LGBT + event) and Ruff Ness (Summer Dog Show) while support was provided to the successful delivery of The Gathering Festival, several concerts by external promoters, and the return of the European Pipe Band Championships to Inverness after an absence of 12 years.
- 5.2 The Working Group also supported the launch of Inverness Highland Games merchandise and the launch of the Thrifty50 Lottery by the Inverness Highland Games Committee.
- 5.3 The EFWG is on course to deliver the already expanded programme within its current budget of £340,000 with additional savings expected to be generated by the Highland Games Committee via their Thrifty50 lottery between Halloween and Hogmanay.
- 5.4 All expenditure is monitored by the EFWG for governance purposes with an annual report scheduled to be presented to the CIAC at the end of the financial year which will detail the full accounts for the 2019/20 Budget.

6. Red Hot Highland Fling

- 6.1 The results of the requested examination of sponsorship and the feasibility of charging for the Hogmanay event are shown in **Appendix 1**.

7. Collaborative Working with Partners and Partner Agencies

- 7.1 The results of the requested examination of collaborative working opportunities with partners and partner agencies are detailed in **Appendix 2**.
- 7.2 The above examination gives a basis for CIAC to consider making better use of Northern Meeting Park in line with the agreed Priorities for the City of Inverness and Area. The City Priorities are designed to support the growth and development of our Communities and provide for Localism to make an increasing contribution. The focus on increasing the public use of NMP will enhance city vibrancy and increase the benefits generated by the site.
- 7.3 The suggested changes will also support a return to the delivery of the original objectives agreed with the Northern Meeting Society when they transferred NMP to Local Authority ownership.

8. Governance

- 8.1 The governance of the Inverness Events and Festivals programme remains strong, with all the events in the programme being well received, delivered safely and staged within the allocated budget. The revised revenue reporting format has been agreed with Financial Services which will see quarterly reports distributed as attachments to the City of Inverness Area Committee Common Good Fund expenditure reports.

9. Events and Festivals Programme for 2020/21

- 9'1 **Appendix 3** details the proposed budget for 2020/21. It shows that the EFWG will require to decide on adjusting the 2020/21 Events and Festivals Programme to reduce cost to the budget of £275.000. Necessary adjustments to the events programme will be considered by the EFWG according to resources available. This will allow for income from revenue generating activity to be assessed as the year progresses. If it becomes necessary for the EFWG to utilise the contingency of 10% recommended to be allocated, then this will be subject to a further report to this Committee.

Designation: Inverness City Area Manager

Date: 16August 2019

Author: David Haas, Inverness City Area Manager
Gerry Reynolds, Inverness Events Manager

Background Papers:

Examination of Sponsorship and the Feasibility of Charging for the Hogmanay Event.

BACKGROUND

Minute of CIAC 21 Feb

Concern was expressed at the level of money being spent on the Hogmanay event and it was queried whether spending such a significant sum on a single event was value for money. It was further suggested that a report should be undertaken examining the feasibility of charging for such an event.

Review of the Red Hot Highland Fling

Founded by the CIAC in 2008 as a free Hogmanay concert; the RHHF annually attracts crowds of between 10,000 and 12,000 spectators. The event costs approximately £120,000 to stage and is conservatively estimated to generate economic benefits outside of the Tourist Season of between £300,000 and £350,000 using the Event Scotland approved methodology. In terms of its social and cultural contribution to Inverness; and its additional value as an effective marketing and promotional tool; the UK's largest free Hogmanay concert is a success.

When viewed in isolation, it has been concluded that the EFWG in its current format cannot be delivered for zero cost or have its expenditure reduced by the £65,000 savings currently being sought.

The alternatives that have been considered were: -

1. Cancelling the Event
2. Securing Commercial Sponsorship
3. Charging Admission to attend the event
4. Inviting Commercial Promoters to tender to stage the event at no cost to the Highland Council
5. Working with Other "partners"

Cancellation

Cancelling the Red Hot Highland Fling is not recommended by the EFWG.

Commercial Sponsorship

Since 2008 securing commercial sponsorship has been suggested on many occasions as the way to significantly reduce the costs of staging this event. There is no evidence to suggest that such sponsorship was ever available with our Agents Scottish Provincial Press confirming that that the Red Hot Highland Fling does not offer the type of return on investment that would be of interest to Sponsors.

While disappointing, it is necessary to accept the feedback being given in the current uncertain economic climate and to consider the use of a different and more sustainable approach which could be managed by the EFWG on behalf of the CIAC.

Charge Admission to attend the event

Charging for admission has been suggested as an appropriate way of reducing the cost of staging the Red Hot Highland Fling. This suggestion is not supported by the EFWG.

While noting that 20% of any ticket price would automatically be lost in VAT; at this stage it is not possible to forecast what the ticket price for this event should be (as discussed in more detail below) or to predict what effect such charging would have on the £300,000 and £350,000 economic impact that our city currently enjoys.

. The main risk to the Council/ICGF is that The EFWG cannot forecast at this stage what, if any, additional income or expenditure would be generated by the introduction of charging for this event. Such information is unknown.

There are several significant operational risks which need to be taken into consideration. These include, charging's potential impact on attendances, arrival times, queueing, behaviour, staffing, security and the suitability of the fixed number of admission gates that are currently available for use at the site. All of which would require detailed consultation with the Council's Civic Government Safety Advisory Group (SAG) as part of the licencing process before implementation.

Members are asked to note that the Safety Advisory Group would ultimately be responsible for identifying and requesting what additional measures would be required on the night; measures which would generate currently unknown additional costs.

There are additional risks to charging at an established free event; relating to economic viability.

Any 'ticket price generated fall' in crowd numbers would inevitably lead to a fall in the trader income which would in turn reduce income to the ICGF; with such a fall being a predictable consequence of reducing the event's attractiveness to local and visiting family groups and others.

One way to counter a price generated fall in attendance would be to engage artistes who would guarantee the ticket sales income being sought. This would generate additional expenditure and such commercial risk that would place the event outside of the parameters in which the E&FWG currently operates.

Invite Commercial Promoters to tender to stage the event

Consideration could be given to offering the opportunity to stage the 2020 Red Hot Highland Fling or an alternative Hogmanay event in Inverness to a commercial promoter. To date no expressions of interest have been received and it should be noted that all major outdoor Hogmanay events currently being staged in the UK are heavily subsidised. Any offer would be subject to the application of the Council Financial Regulations and Contract Standing Orders. It is not recommended at this time.

Other "partners"

Rather than solely focusing on making the RHHF independently self-financing; the EFWG has focused on reducing the funding required to deliver it. They have sought to deliver the programme for £275,000; a reduction of 19.12% from the current 2019-20 budget of £340,000.

To do that, the EFWG has worked with partners and partner agencies to identify what revised arrangements could enable them to do more with less using all the available resources at their disposal.

The first “partners” to be considered during this process were the other events in the CIAC’s events and festivals programme as discussed in **Appendix 2**.

Collaborative Working in Support of the Events Programme.

Following the examination of the RHHF (discussed in **Appendix 1**) consideration was then given to examining the potential for collaborative working with other partners (with a view to assisting the Hogmanay event in being self-financing in the future). This task is challenging noting the reduction of the baseline Budget from £340,000 to £275,000.

City of Inverness Highland Games Committee (CIHGC)

At the CIHGC meeting held on 11th March 2019 consideration was given to the question “How can the Games Committee best support the Hogmanay Show?” and it was agreed that this could best be achieved by reducing the cost of staging the Inverness Highland Games by fundraising. A new constitution was then adopted which established that the Games Committee’s role would be extended from delivering the Games to significantly raising funds to do so, with all additional funds generated being used to support the Events and Festivals programme.

The Games Committee secured a licence to run a 50/50 Raffle (called Thrifty50) Raffle tickets which launched at the Inverness Highland Games on July 20 and generated a prize of £532.50. Members are asked to note that the Thrifty50 Lottery will provide a means for spectators to show their support by providing them with a means of donating to the events programme in an appropriate and auditable manner at the Games, Gala, Halloween, Bonfire, Winter Wonderland and Hogmanay events. Maintaining the free to all inclusive nature of the programme; spectators will have the option not to participate in the Thrifty 50 Raffle.

All funds generated will be banked by the EFWG and reported to the CIAC using the Council’s usual Financial reporting arrangements. In addition to the Lottery; building on the successful launch of the online store at Hogmanay, Highland Games Merchandise is also now available for the first time

Having considered sponsorship, donations, charging, merchandise and a fund raising lottery; the EFWG then considered their options for staging additional revenue generating events. Because the EFWG did not have unrestricted access to an events arena; consideration was then given to maximising the benefits that could be generated using Northern Meeting Park.

Currently Northern Meeting Park is managed by High Life Highland who retain the income generated at these sites for doing so; while the costs for repairs and maintenance, utilities and other services are paid for by the Council.

While appropriate for the current usage of the site; the EFWG considered the opportunities, which could be generated by modifying these arrangements and approaching the creation of an event programme at NMP using the experience that they had gained during the development and delivery of the city’s Events and Festivals programme. After noting that current concerns with the usage of the site had led to the founding of a community group keen to increase the amount of activity taking place at NMP; the EFWG explored the opportunities that they had identified to

work with the community and other partners to deliver and expand the NMP programme and meet their revised financial targets.

A significant amount of work has been undertaken in relation to bringing Northern Meeting Park on stream under the governance of the EFWG with effect from the commencement of the 2020-21 Financial Year.

This included undertaking research into the changes in use of Northern Meeting Park since it was established in 1864 as a gathering place for the people of Inverness following overcrowding at the Highland Games staged on the Longman the previous year. NMP was in the ownership of the Northern Meeting Society before it was transferred to the Local Authority; and when transferred, the Northern Meeting Society stipulated that the NMP must be kept for the benefit of the people of Inverness for “parks purposes”; as decided by the Council Service (or Council Agent) with responsibility for managing the parks under the Council’s control.

Over the last 70 years NMP has seen a significant reduction in the diversity of its use for recreational activity; and while recently it has been used for a modest increase in the number of events that have attracted large numbers of people to the site; the site has not been used as productively as it could have been.

While there are a number of historic reasons why such a reduction was acceptable in the past; especially when the launch of many new facilities such as Eden Court Theatre, the Canal Pitches complex and Inverness Leisure Centre are taken into consideration; significantly increasing demand for facilities in our expanding city and significantly increasing budget pressures in the Council are demanding that a more strategic, pragmatic and commercially focused approach to the use of NMP is considered. To put the possible future role of NMP into context; in recent years, the growth of the population of Inverness and the work undertaken by the CIAC, IEFWG, the Council, professional event companies and community partners has acted as a catalyst for a significant increase in demand for facilities capable of accommodating medium and large scale events; and there is no evidence of any future reduction in demand for Inverness to provide and establish additional events for locals and visitors.

While noting that realigning the existing resources at NMP in new ways meant change for some, the EFWG has identified that such realignment would enable them to generate new opportunities for others; enable them to attract, develop and nurture new events; while providing greater support to previously unsupported or under-supported community groups in the city.

In addition to its reduced use as a venue over time; Northern Meeting Park’s inability to be used as a dedicated playing field for the children of Central, St Joseph’s and Bishop Eden Primary Schools all year round remains.

A solution to these challenges has been identified by the EFWG who believe enabling as much varied access to the Northern Meeting Park as possible for recreational purposes; while making the best use of existing facilities and spare capacity in Inverness should be a priority.

The current users of NMP include Northern Counties Cricket Club (the Club). Cricket is an established Sport within the Inverness, already being played at Fraser Park by Highland Cricket Club. While the Club are naturally keen to continue training and

playing home matches at Northern Meeting Park; the consequence of having a 32m x 28m (896sqm) cricket square in the centre of the Park are clear. Cricket makes the site more expensive to use for some; impossible to use for others; and significantly reduces the potential income that can be generated at the site throughout the year.

There is an opportunity to work with the Community of users to address this challenge noting that it is appreciated that the Cricket Club's volunteers have dedicated time and energy into maintaining their cricket square at their own volition. However, the outfield and Northern Meeting Park's listed buildings, have been maintained by the Council at significant cost in the past. While the Council's obligations to maintaining this listed building and grounds will continue in the future; future expenditure at NMP will increasingly need to be justified in terms of the site's usage, the income being generated at the site and the site's contribution to Inverness.

The EFWG has considered the income currently generated by its users. While there are no plans whatsoever to introducing charging for the Primary School children currently using the site; analysis of the costs of using the site for cricket reveal that expanding the user base by utilising the Cricket Square and Outfield, could provide a significant benefit to the wider Community. For example, the protection of the cricket outfield regularly generates additional expenditure for event organisers. A minimum of £9,000 per year is currently spent laying temporary trackway to protect the Glenurquhart Road end of the cricket outfield when the site is used for concerts or access to the RHHF.

Protection of the cricket square also reduces the capacity of the site and therefore the income generated at NMP for both Event Promoters and the Council's agents High Life Highland. The maximum lost capacity is estimated to be 1,792 per concert (using the accepted 2 persons per metre formula) but for the purposes of illustration a conservative figure of 1000 lost sales x 3 concerts per year was considered.

Currently this equates to a loss of income of £3,000 per year from site fees; but for Event Promoters, the income lost from operating with a reduced capacity is in the order of £90,000 - £135,000 per year. For Inverness itself 1000 additional customers attending three concerts would generate at least £150,000 per year for the local economy. Clearly the current arrangements (even before a discussion about potential additional revenue generating opportunities commences) is unjustifiable; especially when alternative facilities are available within the city.

Our Agents, Highlife Highland have confirmed that both Northern Counties Cricket Club and Highland Cricket Club can be accommodated successfully by using the surplus capacity that currently exists during the 40 weekend and 100 midweek dates of the season at Fraser Park. Members are asked to note that Northern Counties Cricket Club have regularly used Fraser Park in the past without difficulty. Discussions will also continue with both Council colleagues and HLH in respect of the best use of the opportunities that increased use on NMP can bring to the benefit of the Community.

Members are also asked to note that returning the Cricket Square area at NMP to general use would allow the site to be used for a variety of sports by the pupils at Central, St Joseph's and Bishop Eden Primary Schools all year round.

Noting the above, it is recommended that the objectives for the use of Northern Meeting Park Arena encompass:

- a. The protection and maintenance of this historic site; and
- b. The generation of the maximum possible social, cultural and economic benefits for the people of Inverness and surrounding area as requested by the City of Inverness Area Committee within the City Priorities.

Proposal

Currently responsibility for the management of buildings and grounds within the Northern Meeting Park rests with the Council and its agents High Life Highland. There is no specific responsibility for the management and development of activities within the Northern Meeting Park.

It is proposed that this work is undertaken by the EFWG through the Inverness Events Manager. This activity falls under the governance of the City of Inverness Area Committee.

Pilot work is already underway with the consent of the instructing Service being Care and Learning to assess how a transfer of management responsibilities from Highlife Highland to the Council will work.

To achieve maximum benefit, especially noting the current interest in a Community asset Transfer of the NMP, discussions are proposed with:

1. The Community Group 'Love the Park' who are considering similar plans to improve use of Northern Meeting Park which may lead to further discussions with Northern Counties Cricket Club and Highland Cricket Club to enable both Clubs to play Home Matches at bespoke facilities at Fraser Park;
2. Inverness High School and its 3 feeder Primary Schools on the establishment of a new club based at NMP for the three primary schools; and
3. Additional partners on the development of a programme of activities and events for delivery in 2020-21.

The new arrangements could be implemented from April 2020 and would release the NMP for full use without the need to apply restrictive protection measures to the current Cricket Square.

This would allow better use of existing Cricket facilities at Fraser Park including the Club House which was the subject of significant renovation at the cost of the Council in 2007. Highlife Highland and Cricket Scotland would be included to consider ways to enhance the current facilities at Fraser Park for Cricket.

Target Market

The customers for the Northern Meeting Park include, but are not limited to, Commercial Concert Promoters, Commercial Event Promoters, Local Community Groups, the Care and Learning Alliance, Tourists and Residents; who would require support in a variety of ways. It is not possible to accommodate everyone who wishes to use the site.

Primary focus would be on the generation of the maximum possible social, cultural and economic benefits for the people of Inverness and surrounding area as requested by the City of Inverness Area Committee.

Activity Delivery Mechanism

To generate the maximum benefits, the programme of activities and events to be staged in the Northern Meeting Park needs to be expanded in tandem with the delivery of the CIAC's Events and Festivals Programme.

This would not only build on the foundations provided by the Event Advisory Group's One Stop Shop Process and the Council's Public Entertainments Licencing Process, it would also build on the existing partnership working between the Council, Eden Court Theatre, UHI, Care and Learning Alliance and various commercial promoters. It would enable a more strategic approach to be adopted towards the programming and development of activities and events in Northern Meeting Park in support of the City's Events and Festivals Action Plan.

It would also enable, via the use of the Council's Financial Reporting mechanisms, for detailed financial information to be provided and enable enhanced financial monitoring to be introduced. Reporting would be through the Events and Festivals Budget report.

Budget Setting – 2020/21

Category	2018-19 Actual	2019-20 Forecast	2020-21
Event Staff	54155	52000	53000
Highland Games	34273	30000	20000
Civic Bonfire	25580	26000	26500
Christmas Lights	5640	6000	6300
Hogmanay	115,711	116000	116000
Halloween	50419	50000	51000
Wonderland	25495	25000	25500
Summer Marketing	12000	12500	12000
Winter Marketing	10026	12500	1000
Bridge Closures	857	1000	1000
Merchandise	4338	5000	-2000
Thrifty50		-5000	-5000
Operational Total	338495	331000	305300
Total Budget Allocated	340000	340000	275000
Balance	1505 CR	9000 CR	30,300 D
NMPARK INCOME TARGET			30,300

APPENDIX FOUR

Inverness Events and Festivals Working Group Action Plan 2020-21

1. Introduction

1.1 Goal

To stage Events and Festivals that will benefit and engage with the people of Inverness and the surrounding area.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

To develop and support Events and Festivals which will connect and bring social, cultural and economic benefits to the City of Inverness.

To use and focus upon the use of local talent to the social, cultural and economic benefit of our community

To use and focus upon the opportunities offered by the imaginative use of the infrastructure and fabric of our community

To develop the active involvement of a broad range of the City of Inverness and surrounding area's residents and organisations in our Events and Festivals

To develop a learning culture around our Events and Festivals encouraging interconnectedness between community groups, by enabling co-operation, joint initiatives and the sharing of resources

To stimulate a positive sense of Festival ownership, Festival design and Festival involvement amongst the younger members of our community

To continue to develop Events and Festivals which will attract visitors to Inverness

To work in partnership with independent promoters and tour operators ensuring that, notwithstanding the fact that they are in a competitive market, the best use is made of the opportunities that are available.

To ensure that the Inverness Events and Festivals Working Group (IEFWG) works partners closely with partners to ensure that the best possible use is made of the opportunities that are available to heighten the profile of Inverness as a destination locally, nationally and internationally.

2. Common Good Fund Sponsored Events

Enhance the core events of the Summer and Winter and Summer by continuing to allow them to grow organically, and by focusing on the cultural heritage of the City and the Highlands; and focus on the introduction of a Spring Festival

Develop links with Businesses within the City through Inverness BID, Inverness Chamber of Commerce, Inverness Hotel Association and the Federation of Small Businesses.

Grow the relationship with the University of Highland and Islands.

Work with the Commercial Manager and Highlife Highlands in identifying sponsorship and income stream opportunities which will grow in line with the stature of individual events.

3. Commercial Events

In conjunction with High Life Highland and others, develop opportunities to utilise Council controlled premises such as the Town House, Northern Meeting Park and Bught Park as a base for bringing events to the City;

Continue to enhance relationships with promoters and tour operators to ensure that opportunities are not lost to link their events or visits with the Council's own events and festivals programme;

Work with promoters and tour operators to identify ways in which their events can be enhanced by linking them with either other commercial events or promotional activity (linked to the Marketing Strategy) in Inverness

Identify local events or significant dates which have potential to develop into national and international events.

4. Close Partnership Working

In addition to the work undertaken with the Inverness Events Advisory Group; enhance links with other Local Authorities, National Bodies and appropriate groups to create cohesion and coordination within the Events programme and the Marketing Programme.

Continue to support and develop the multi-agency Safety Advisory Group approach to event design and implementation utilised with others

Ensure that the communication between stakeholders and partners is clear with a consistent message being applied, using Forums when necessary;

Continue to develop a culture of cross working between local stakeholders and the IEFWG to ensure synergy between objectives; and

Enhance the existing events calendar and work with the Inverness Loch Ness Tourism Bid team following the Council's Corporate Strategy on website design and promotion of major events in the Highlands

5. Evaluations

Use Event Scotland's Event Impacts model (<http://www.eventimpacts.com/>) to establish a consistent base line figure for the value of the events staged by the Council in Inverness; and identify those events and opportunities where the economic impact could be significantly increased. Work with external events organisers in determining the economic impact of their events; and develop strategies and take actions to increase their impact, wherever possible, to the Council's events and festivals programme.

6. Sponsorship

Working in partnership with the Highland Council's Commercial Manager, the focus when seeking to attract investment to events facilitated by the Council through the Inverness Common Good Fund, should be on "adding value" by securing direct or in-kind support.

Ensure that a consistent message is developed through media engagement about the significant benefits that events, and event tourism bring to the City; and in support of the aims and objectives and culture of companies within the Highlands and beyond; working with Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Inverness BID, Destination Loch Ness Inverness Tourism BID and others to identify and develop opportunities.

7. Culture Links

Enhance existing cultural links nationally and internationally and where appropriate and resources allow, develop new links. Continue to work with existing overseas contacts in USA, Canada, Iceland, Germany and New Zealand (via Highland Games links), as well as with new European, Asian and other partners to foster cultural exchanges, which enhance the profile of the City and the Highlands within the current resource allocations.

Support the work of the existing, and newly established, multi-cultural groups based in Inverness and continue to assist with the development of their events.

8. Twinned Towns

Work with our existing Twinned Towns of La Baule, Augsburg and St Valery (through the Town Twinning Committee) to develop opportunities for our twinned Towns to take part in our festivals programme and where appropriate to link in with the commercial events.

9. Charities

Work with Charities who bring principle benefit to the residents of the Burgh of Inverness.

Invite applications from Charities to the Council for financial support via the Council's standard application form.

Focusing on:

- The benefits that the organisation can bring to the people of Inverness
- The future programme of investment that the organisation is planning to make in respect of its activities within the City
- What "added value" can it bring to the event which it seeks to seek benefit from and what physical resources can be made available by the charity toward the running of the event such as the supply of publicity / media support or fully licensed stewards.

10. Charging for Certain Events

It has been traditional to make a modest charge for entry to the Inverness Highland Games (currently £10 and £5 with Under 12's Admitted Free).

Noting the need to continue to develop the events portfolio, any policy in relation to charging for additional events requires the approval of the City of Inverness Area Committee.

11. Review

This Action Plan will be subject to operational review by the IEFWG quarterly and Annual review by the City of Inverness Area Committee.