Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee

10am, Tuesday 5 November 2013

Review of Events Governance

Item number	7.6
Report number	
Wards	All

Links

Coalition pledges	P24
Council outcomes	CO20
Single Outcome Agreement	SO1

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Executive summary

Review of Events Governance

Summary

The purpose of this report is to present findings from the Review of Events Governance, seek approval for key principles which will underpin the new processes, and outline the next steps for the Review.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Corporate Policy & Strategy Committee:

1.   Notes the findings of the Review of Events Governance;

2.   Approves the key principles to be incorporated into revised processes, shown in appendix 2; and

3.   Notes that a further report will be submitted to this committee setting out the revised application and approval processes. This is expected to be early in the new year.

Measures of success

A measure of success will be a more streamlined and transparent approach to events governance.

Financial impact

The review has involved contributions from staff mainly in Corporate Governance and Services for Communities and at no additional cost to the Council.

Equalities impact

There are no impacts on equalities as a result of this report but an impact assessment will be undertaken as part of the review.

Sustainability impact

None.

Consultation and engagement

The review has included consultation and engagement with officers, elected members and external event organisers. Further detail is provided in the report.

Background reading / external references

Review of Events Governance – Corporate Policy & Strategy Committee 6 August 2013

Inspiring Events Strategy – www.eventsedinburgh.org.uk

Inspiring Events Guide – www.eventsedinburgh.org.uk

Festivals and Events Champion – City of Edinburgh Council 28 June 2012

Festivals and Events Core Programme for 2013/14, Proposed Investment – Culture and Sport Committee 12 March 2013

Report

Review of Events Governance

1. Background

1.1 A report was submitted to this Committee on 6 August 2013 to inform members of the intention to carry out a review of events governance and to report the outcome back to this committee. The review has been led by the Corporate Programmes Office with contributions from officers in Services for Communities and Corporate Governance and is intended to produce the following deliverables:

- a clear definition of an event for the purpose of determining when an approval process is required;

- a clear and transparent application and decision making process for approving events, which includes both forward planning for known events and suitable arrangements for unforeseen events;

- an assessment of the current charging arrangements; and

- recommendations for establishing a "one stop shop" approach for event organisers when dealing with the Council.

1.2 The purpose of this report is to present findings from the review, seek approval for key principles which will underpin the new processes, and outline the next steps for implementing the improvements.

2. Main report

2.1 A fact finding exercise was undertaken which included reviewing existing documentation and processes, and meeting with a variety of stakeholders to find out how the processes operate in practice, what works well and what could be improved. Stakeholder meetings included Council officers from a range of services critical to events hosting and organising, external event organisers and elected members specifically: Council Leader and Depute Leader; opposition Party Group Leaders; Convenors of Transport & Environment, Culture & Sport, Planning and Economy; and Councillors representing city centre wards.

2.2 The review specifically excluded activities which are subject to separate review but since they are related to the events process it was important to gather information on these related activities. The specific exclusions were: review of the Parks Manifesto; review of licensing processes; advance programme of events. A new charging policy was also excluded from the review but it is being

recommended that this can be taken forward within the next phase of improvement.

2.3   Draft findings were discussed with the Council's Events Management Group (consisting mainly of Council officers) who are supportive of the improvements being recommended and are already focused on taking them forward subject to agreement of the governance principles set out in appendix 2.

2.4   In general the review has found that there is evidence of good practice but there is a lack of consistency and transparency in how the Council deals with events. There was a high level of agreement among those interviewed as to the suggested areas for improvement. The detailed findings are shown in appendix 1 and have been grouped into the following headings:

- policy & strategies which support event promotion and delivery;

- arrangements for consultation and engagement;

- core application and approval processes;

- forward planning and timelines;

- information and guidance for event organisers;

- charging arrangements; and

- the various officer groups which support event promotion and delivery.

2.5   The review found that the following arrangements work well and should continue to feature and be strengthened in any new arrangements:

- the Council has recognised the importance of events to the city which is reflected in: the Events Strategy: the appointment of a Festivals & Events Champion; allocation of funding to events; and success in attracting new events;

- the Council approves a core programme of Council supported events for the forthcoming year;

- the Events Planning Operational Group (EPOG) is held in very high regard by everyone who was interviewed and is considered to be an example of superior practice; and

- Officers have a "can do" approach to supporting events and are highly experienced.

2.6   The review found scope for improvement in relation to the following.

- the Council deals with a wide range of events but there is no clearly defined set of categories which would then be used to determine the application and approval process which should be followed;

- the Parks Manifesto has had a positive impact on the utilisation of parks and greenspaces but there is no equivalent for other high profile public spaces where there may be competing demands;

- consultation tends to take place in association with statutory functions which means that views on the principle of holding particular events which impact on a range of stakeholders are not sought early enough in the process;

- local members are not informed of events in their area in a consistent and timely manner;

- separate application and approval processes exist and they are not fully documented;

- there is no central database or co-ordination point covering the full range of events;

- timelines are not aligned particularly when a range of statutory approvals are required such as licensing and road restrictions;

- there is no clear charging policy covering all categories of event and services provided by the Council – opinions were fairly consistent that this should be based on full cost recovery with concessionary arrangements; and

- the Events Management Group should be strengthened and have a greater focus on strategy and managing risks, issues and dependencies across the events programme.

2.7 A number of workstreams have been identified to address these weaknesses. In discussion with the Events Management Group it was agreed that the priority workstreams are to define events within categories and to review and document the processes associated with each of those categories. Work has already commenced with the assistance of process review experts currently working in the Council.

2.8 In order to assist the process review elected members are asked to approve a core set of principles to be adopted and incorporated into the detailed process maps which will emerge. The proposed principles are shown in appendix 2. Members are asked to note the principle 5 would shift reporting on the programme of events from Culture and Sport Committee to Corporate Policy & Strategy Committee. This is to recognise the support required across the Council to support events in the city.

2.9 Once the process review is complete it is envisaged that future workstreams will include:

- revising the Events Strategy;

- documenting roles and responsibilities between officers, elected members, committees and event organisers;

- establishing a consultation and engagement protocol;

- considering how to ensure greater transparency, consistency and assessment of stakeholder impact, when taking decisions about events on key public spaces;

- revising the application form;

- improving the website and central database of information;

- establishing a comprehensive charging policy; and

- workforce planning to ensure the continued availability of suitably skilled staff.

2.10   A further report will be brought to this committee setting out the revised application and approval process once the review is complete.

3.   Recommendations

3.1   It is recommended that the Corporate Policy & Strategy Committee:

3.1.1   notes the findings of the Review of Events Governance;

3.1.2   approves the key principles to be incorporated into revised processes, shown in appendix 2; and

3.1.3   notes that a further report will be submitted to this committee on 25 February 2014 setting out the revised application and approval processes.

Alastair Maclean

Director of Corporate Governance

Mark Turley

Director of Services for Communities

Links

Coalition pledges	**P24** – Maintain and enhance support for our world famous festivals and events.
Council outcomes	**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.

Single Outcome Agreement	**SO1** – Edinburgh's economy delivers increased investment, jobs and opportunities for all.
Appendices	**Appendix 1** -Review of Events Governance – Findings and Areas for Improvement
	Appendix 2 - Key Principles to be incorporated into new events application and approval processes

Appendix 1 – REVIEW OF EVENTS GOVERNANCE – FINDINGS AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

		What works well?	Scope for improvement
1.	Policy & Strategy	- The Council's Events Strategy (2007) recognises the importance of events and sets out intended outcomes and assessment criteria. - The Strategy guides the annual programme of events which are supported by the Council. - A Parks Manifesto has been agreed which governs the permitted utilisation of parks and greenspaces in the city.	- The Events Strategy is being updated and this provides an opportunity to strengthen the positioning of events within the Council and identify new opportunities. - There is no common definition of an event which reflects the fact that there are a range of event categories. The Council would benefit from having a firm definition for each category which would guide other aspects of the events process. - There is no equivalent of the Parks Manifesto for other high profile public spaces. - There is a lack of common branding.
2.	Consultation & Engagement	- Consultation and notification arrangements are in place for specific aspects of the events approval processes, e.g. licensing, roads closures. - The Festivals & Events Champion is consulted on Council supported events. - Elected Members and relevant officers have access to the detailed calendar of events on the EPIC system. - EPOG (Events Planning Operational Group) provides an excellent forum for close engagement between organisers, Council and other agencies in relation to specific events.	- There is no formal consultation with elected members or stakeholders such as business and residents, on the principle of hosting larger events which may be contentious. - Local members are not informed of events in their area on a consistent and timely manner. - There is a low level of awareness of information on the EPIC system

| 3. | Core application and approval processes | • A documented process is used for the core programme of festivals and events which allows for escalation to committee when appropriate.
• Committee approvals are sought in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation.
• The core programme of events which the Council supports is agreed by the Committee for the year ahead.
• The role of the Festival & Events Champion is clear and has been approved by Council. | • Separate processes exist, they are not properly documented, and interfaces with other processes are not clear.
• The powers of the respective committees mean events which require a suite of approvals cannot go ahead unless they are all in place. This can appear disjointed and be difficult for organisers to navigate. Confusion may also arise around when an event has complete approval.
• The majority view of elected members is that the approval process is not transparent and it is not always clear who has authority to approve events. This probably reflects the lack of properly documented processes for each category of event. |

4.	Forward Planning and timelines	• A calendar of events is maintained on the Council's Events website and officers and elected members have access to more detailed information on the website.	• There are separate forward plans held by separate services – whilst this may serve the needs of individual services it would be better to have one comprehensive database. • There is a low level of awareness of the calendar information already available on the website. • Timelines are not aligned particularly when statutory approvals are required. E.g. TTRO requires 8 weeks but event applications require just 4 weeks' notice. • Special arrangements are not documented for applications which require to be processed at late notice. • The majority of events are repeated and there is an opportunity for the Council to initiate the application process thereby having greater control over the timeline.
5.	Information and Guidance for event organisers	• Comprehensive advice and information is provided on the website. • EPOG is held in high regard by event organisers and provides a forum to discuss and agree the details of specific event with input from all interested agencies. • Lead officers are assigned to all Council supported events and those which require public safety input.	• There is a low level of awareness of the information available on the website. • Organisers, particularly those who are inexperienced, can find the process daunting and do not always appreciate the costs involved.

6.	Charging arrangements	• Council provides funding to support the core programme of events and to bring new events to the city. • Feedback from major event organisers interviewed was that the level of charges is broadly in line with other cities.	• Charging arrangements differ according to type of event. • There is a lack of transparency. • There is no clear policy regarding the extent of cost recovery and concessionary arrangements.
7.	• Events Management Group • Events Planning Operational Group • Major Events 2012/14 Corporate Working Group • City Wide Transport Management Group	• Events Management Group exists to support delivery of the Events Strategy and brings together different services of the Council. • EPOG exists to support delivery of specific events and is universally highly regarded and a model of superior practice bringing together Council, agencies and event organisers. • Officers have a "can do" approach to supporting events in the city and are highly experienced.	• EMG does not have a formal reporting/escalation route. • EMG should have a greater focus on strategy and managing risks, issues and dependencies across the events programme. • EMG, with its membership of experienced officers, has the potential to ensure a more joined up approach and identify issues at an early stage. • Attendance at EMG and EPOG is inconsistent. • The relationship between EMG and the other groups needs to be clarified with a view to removing duplication.

Appendix 2 – KEY PRINCIPLES TO BE INCORPORATED INTO NEW EVENTS APPLICATION AND APPROVAL PROCESSES

1. There will be a single point of co-ordination for all event applications supported by a single database.

2. Event applications will be assessed against the criteria contained in the Council's Events Strategy.

3. Event applications which require the use of public space will be assessed in accordance with policies and regulations associated with the use of the space, e.g. planning, licensing, parks utilisation.

4. Consultation and/or notification will take place with local stakeholders and elected members as early as possible to obtain views on the principle of holding specific events. This will be in addition to consultation required as part of any regulatory process.

5. "In principle" approval of the Corporate Policy & Strategy Committee will be required for events which require funding and non funded events which are new and are likely to have a significant impact on stakeholders or the Council's reputation. Approval will be subject to any other regulatory agreements.

6. Local members will be notified of events in their area at the earliest point.

7. When a bid is being made for a new event which requires to be treated confidentially this will be delegated to the Director of Corporate Governance in consultation with the Festivals & Events Champion and other relevant Convenors, with a report being brought to Corporate Policy & Strategy Committee in due course.

8. Applicants will be advised of timescales to process applications. In the event that applications need to be fast-tracked the process will set out the delegated authority arrangements.

9. Council officers and agencies will work together to enable events to succeed, explore wider opportunities and minimise any negative impact on stakeholders. This will be achieved through a strategic role for the Events Management Group and an enabling role for EPOG.

10. There will be a comprehensive charging policy for Council services. This will be based on full cost recovery with concessions of up to 100% depending on the category of event and the circumstances of the organising body.

11. Common branding will be applied to all strategic and operational documentation.