

## City of Inverness Area Committee

Minutes of Meeting of the **Events and Festivals Working Group** held in 1st Floor Committee Room, Town House, Inverness on Thursday 10 December 2015 at 2.00 pm.

### **Present:**

#### Highland Council

Mr F Parr

Mrs G Sinclair (until 3.00 pm)

Mr H Wood

#### Other Representatives

Mr M Smith, Manager, Inverness BID

### **Officials in Attendance:**

Mr D Haas, Inverness City Area Manager

Mr G Reynolds, Inverness Events Manager

Ms R Cleland, Corporate Communications Manager, Chief Executive's Office (Item 8)

Mr D Macleod, Digital Services Manager, Corporate Development Service (Item 8)

Miss J Green, Administrative Assistant, Corporate Development Service

Miss L Mackay, Administrative Assistant, City Manager's Office

### **Mrs G Sinclair in the Chair**

### **Business**

#### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr G Ross, Highland Council, Mr G Ambrose, CEO, Visit Inverness Loch Ness, Ms J Cuddy, Manager, Eastgate Shopping Centre, Mr C Marr, Chief Executive, Eden Court Theatre and Ms A Windsor, Cluster General Manager, Columba Hotel, Inverness Hotels Association.

#### **2. Exclusion of the Public**

It was **AGREED** that, under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public should be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following items on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 6 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

#### **3. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 4. Minutes of Previous Meeting

There had been circulated Minutes of the previous Meeting held on 8 October 2015 which were **NOTED**.

#### 5. Update on 2015 Events

An update was provided at the meeting by the Events Manager on recent events, including the Halloween Show, Civic Bonfire and Fireworks Display and the Christmas Lights Switch On, and future events, including Winter Wonderland which had been rescheduled due to flooding, and the Red Hot Highland Fling Hogmanay Show.

Members reviewed the new format of the Christmas Lights Switch On event during which positive feedback was shared and suggestions for improvements for next year's event were made which included ensuring safety tape was used to separate spectators from the torchlight parade, increasing the publicity to encourage the public to join the parade and exploring expanding the parade by inviting pipe bands.

During discussion on the arrangements for the Hogmanay Show, Members expressed support for the following suggestions:-

- that the Inverness Events and Festivals Team met with Craig Hill on the 30 December 2015 on the same basis as previous years;
- there be a big screen in the Northern Meeting Park;
- the addition of the MS Therapy Centre marquee be included in the advertising of the event;
- there be music for the VIP reception in the Members' Lounge at Council Headquarters;
- the invitations for the VIP reception be sent out in writing; and
- all Members, MSPs, MPs, Chamber of Commerce, BID and TBID be invited to the VIP reception and further suggestions of invitees be sought from Mr M Smith and Ms J Cuddy.

Further discussion took place during which Members stressed the importance of gathering feedback from partners, particularly statistics from a selection of hotels and B&Bs, to determine the economic impact of events for Inverness and the wider area, which had been discussed at the previous meeting. In response, it was suggested that a briefing for all City of Inverness Area Committee Members be arranged with independent speakers, Mr Scott Armstrong, Visit Scotland and Prof Joe Goldblatt, Queen Margaret University and attendance or information from Chamber of Commerce, BID, TBID and IHA focussing on the comments made during discussion at the previous meeting. It was further suggested that social media be used to survey public opinion on the impact of the events programme on Inverness.

Thereafter, the update was **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** that a briefing be arranged for all City of Inverness Area Committee Members to take forward the comments raised during discussion at the previous meeting.

## 6. Financial Reporting

The Inverness City Area Manager reported that he had met with Councillor Caddick in relation to her request for information on the Events and Festivals budget. He provided assurance that the budget was run in accordance with the governance procedures and that detailed financial information was reported appropriately with background information being available when required. The Inverness City Area Manager and the Events Manager were working with the Finance Service to improve the format of the financial information presented to the City of Inverness Area Committee in an appropriate format which would be implemented by the 1 April 2016. Thereafter, the update was **NOTED**.

## 7. 2015 Budget Forecast

An update was provided at the meeting by the Events Manager on the budget forecast during which he predicted an underspend in the current year. A copy of the budget forecast was tabled. Thereafter, the budget position was **NOTED**.

**At this point Mrs G Sinclair left the meeting and Mr F Parr took the Chair.**

## 8. Improving Social Media and Digital Media Communications

There was circulated Joint Report No EF/1/15 dated 16 November 2015 by the Inverness City Area Manager and the Corporate Communications Manager which explained that the success of the Inverness Events and Festivals programme, under the governance of the City of Inverness Area Committee had resulted in an increasing need for a review of digital communications and support from the Corporate Communications and Digital Team to enable new arrangements to be put in place. Members were invited to note proposed revisions to the current social media arrangements and to agree an allocation of funding from the Inverness Common Good Fund.

During a summary of the report, the Corporate Communications Manager confirmed that formal pages for Facebook (Inverness Events and Festivals) and Twitter (@EventsInverness) had been created. She also outlined the additional benefits this would now provide to the Inverness Events and Festivals Team.

In response to questions raised it was explained that:-

- it was not possible to transfer followers. Instead it was suggested that a link be posted to encourage people to follow the new Facebook page or Twitter feed;
- current Facebook events did not have to be cancelled. Facebook events for future events should be created on the new Facebook page;
- Members and Officers could request permissions to access Facebook and Twitter from their mobile and electronic devices;
- the [www.invernessfestivals.com](http://www.invernessfestivals.com) and [www.invernesshighlandgames.com](http://www.invernesshighlandgames.com) websites would still be accessible via a search engine;

- both positive and negative feedback were important but where necessary comments could be deleted or users could be blocked which was in line with the Council's Social Media Policy;
- Corporate Communications and Digital Services staff were provided out of hours for structured events on a planned basis such as Facebook chats with other Council departments;
- in an emergency situation during an event Police Scotland had an on call system for communications officers who could issue a message from their systems; and
- a payment method could be set up to allow the use of promoted posts to take advantage of marketing opportunities.

During discussion, concern was raised in relation to the capacity of staff to monitor and update social media during events particularly to provide dynamic public information and to respond in an emergency situation. In response, assurance was provided that a proper support structure would be in place for the next series of events.

Thereafter, the Corporate Communications Manager offered to attend a future meeting to demonstrate the Facebook and Twitter pages and show the insight reports.

Following discussion, the Group:-

- NOTED** that a business Facebook and Twitter pages had been set up by Digital Services. The Events Manager would maintain control of these and training and advice would be provided by Corporate Communications;
- NOTED** that the [www.invernessfestivals.com](http://www.invernessfestivals.com) and [www.invernesshighlandgames.com](http://www.invernesshighlandgames.com) sites would be hosted in house;
- NOTED** that a Service Level Agreement would be drawn up for agreement at a later date; and
- AGREED** to allocate funds to support training requirements as detailed under the Resources section of the report.

## 9. Date of Next Meeting

It was **NOTED** that the date of the next meeting would be confirmed in due course.

## 10. Any Other Business

In terms of Member availability to provide press comments during the preparations for the Hogmanay Show and noting the absence of Mr F Parr and Mr H Wood at the Hogmanay Show it was **AGREED** that press comments would be sought from the Chair.

The meeting ended at 4.05 pm.