

PERTH COMMON GOOD FUND COMMITTEE

7 October 2015

PERTH CHRISTMAS LIGHTS SWITCH ON**Report by Director (Environment)****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The report notes the activities for the Christmas Lights Switch On event on Saturday, 21 November, which is part of the overall Perth winter programme, and to consider additional financial support to extend the events to Sunday, 22 November, and to enhance the dressing of the city centre over the festive season.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Perth Common Good Fund has traditionally supported the costs associated with the Perth Christmas Lights including erection, maintenance, storage, rent, feu duties and electricity charges. In addition, the Common Good Fund has supported the Christmas Lights Switch On event which has grown significantly since 2012 in terms of scale, scope and attendance. In 2014, it was estimated that attendance peaked at 27,500 members of the public in Perth City Centre for the Christmas Lights Switch On event with an estimated £1.9 million generated for the local economy.
- 1.2 At its meeting of 13 May 2015 (Ref 15/187 refers) the Perth Common Good Fund Committee approved the budget for Financial Year 2015/16 which includes a provision of £81,300 for Christmas events with £39,000 from this allocated for the Switch On event. This is scheduled for Saturday 21 November and this report outlines the proposed breakdown of expenditure associated with the event.
- 1.3 In line with the Council's Events and Festival's Strategy, the Perth Winter Festival was developed in 2013/14 as an overarching programme of events and celebrations lasting from Bonfire Night on 5 November until the Chinese New Year in February. The objective of the programme is to generate additional economic benefits for the city through increased visitation and expenditure by visitors and residents while also contributing to the vibrancy and cultural life of the city and raising the profile of Perth as a leading events destination. The winter programme comprises the Christmas Lights festival as a stand out feature which has established a reputation as a major event in the area's annual calendar, while reinforcing the message "Christmas starts in Perth".
- 1.4 Events and marketing expenditure for the Winter Festival is met from the Environment Service's revenue budget with private sector sponsorship also forthcoming for specific elements. In 2014/15 overall expenditure for the Winter Festival, including marketing and events support, was £170K. The Common Good funding is intended to support specific elements on Saturday, 21 November when the focus is on the Christmas Lights celebrations.

- 1.5 A report on the development and performance of the Perth Winter Festival was made to the Council's Enterprise and Infrastructure Committee in March 2015 (Report No. 15/126 refers). The committee approved the approach to the 2015 winter programme which included a review of the public space locations in the city centre for events along with enhanced monitoring and evaluation of the programme. Subsequent to the Committee meeting, there has been a series of workshops with elected members to outline and discuss the overall programme and the practical considerations of hosting large scale public events in the city centre. This has been necessary particularly in view of the construction works at the Council offices at 2 High Street. These impact on the space where traditionally the main stage for the Christmas Lights events has been located, but it also has a reflection of the large volume of people in the city centre that day along with the need to consider the parade route. Discussions with elected members also covered the dressing of the city centre over the winter period. Officers were asked to consider what enhancements could be made, to supplement the core Christmas lights network, in order to create a more festive ambience in the public areas of the core retail centre.
- 1.6 The rerouting of the parade has been agreed in conjunction with Police Scotland in response to the increased attendance at the event to better ensure public safety. It is intended that the parade will leave from Thimblerow, proceed along the Old High Street, Scott Street, South Street to Tay Street where the main stage will be located.

2. PROPOSAL

Christmas Lights Switch On Event

- 2.1 For 2015, a full programme of events and entertainments is being planned to create a weekend of celebrations in the city which will appeal to a broad range of age groups. As with the past few years, it is intended that there will be opportunities for local community groups to participate in street and stage performances including a community stage in King Edward Street for choirs and musical groups at Horsecross Plaza. Artists for the main stage programme are currently being investigated. An outline programme for Saturday, 21 November is as follows:-

- 1100 - 1800
Funfair Pleasure Rides
Street Food
Ice Sculpting
Street Art
Themed Streets
Street Entertainers
Community Stage programme (from 1200)
Main Stage programme (from 1400)

- 1700
Parade: from Thimble Row, High Street, Scott Street, South Street to Tay Street
- 1810
Christmas Lights Switch On, special effects lighting and pyrotechnics display
Main stage entertainment continues
- 1830 onwards
Funfair Pleasure Rides
Main stage entertainment continues until 1930

2.2 In line with last year, it is proposed that the Perth Common Good Fund contribution supports the following elements of the programme on Saturday, 21 November:

Main stage (lighting, sound, pyrotechnic effects, and related infrastructure)	20,000
Community Stage at King Edward Street	1,000
Santa's Parade and street entertainments	10,000
Children's stage / family area at Horsecross Plaza	3,000
Health, safety and welfare (medical cover, stewarding, toilets, waste services and cleansing)	5,000

2.3 Consideration is being given to extending the programme to Sunday 22 November again this year. The Committee is asked to consider whether additional funding of £10,000 could be provided to support this with this additional funding going towards:

Community Stage	1,000
Street entertainments	7,000
Children's stage/family area at Horsecross Plaza	1,000
Health, safety, welfare	1,000

2.4 In 2014, the Common Good Fund Committee approved this additional expenditure which allowed the programme to be extended into the Sunday. This resulted in a significant uplift in pedestrian footfall on the Sunday in comparison with both the previous week and the equivalent Sunday in 2013;

- 23 November 2014 11,100
- 16 November 2014 7,500
- 24 November 2013 8,800

2.5 A survey of businesses in relation to the Winter Festival programme was also undertaken to assess the impacts of the different events in the programme. 725 businesses were surveyed with 79 completed questionnaires received. For Sunday 23 November, the responses were as follows;

- Respondents reporting a positive impact on their business 35.4%
- Respondents reporting a neutral impact on their business 59.5%
- Respondents reporting a negative impact on their business 5.1%

2.6 For 2015/16, the impact of the programme of events will be assessed by public and business surveys along with analysis of visits to the city.

3. City Dressing/Activities

3.1 The Committee is also asked to consider whether additional funding of £2,750 could be provided to assist with dressing the city centre for the festive season. This dressing scheme would be additional to the core Christmas lights installations and would be installed prior to the Christmas Lights Switch On, remaining until the beginning of Jan 2016 when it would be removed. The additional funding would provide the following:

Large Christmas wreaths to be hung from 26 banner lampposts in the High Street and King Edward Street and dressing for the Provosts' lampposts	1,000
3 large Christmas trees (25 feet) for various locations	1,000
10 Christmas trees (various sizes) for display on the High Street	750

3.2 The Street Lighting Partnership has been consulted on the proposed enhancements to the city dressing scheme and would continue to advise on the technical requirements for installation to ensure compliance with issues such as height clearance, power supplies, etc. The installation of features is subject to the necessary consents and permissions being obtained.

3.3 The success of the winter programme has been the range of activities and how this has been spread across the City centre. This has included a winter zone, including an ice rink. The Common Good Fund Committee is asked to contribute £2000 towards the cost of a 9 day hire, with the rink to be based in South Methven Street.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 The Christmas Lights Switch On event has been greatly enhanced since 2012 and is seen as a key feature of the Perth Winter Festival, which in turn is a new approach to branding and promoting a range of events in the city over the winter months. An enhanced dressing scheme in the city centre, additional to the Christmas lights, will complement this events programme and reinforce the appeal of Perth city centre as a retail and leisure destination.

4.2 The Committee is asked to:

- i) Note the current budget provision from 2015/16 in respect of the Christmas Lights Switch On programme for Saturday 21 November 2015 and approve the expenditure outlined in the report.
- ii) Consider the additional events and activities outlined in the report and whether additional funding can be provided to support, once again, an extension of the events to Sunday 22 November 2015.
- iii) Consider the enhanced city dressing as outlined in this report and whether additional funding can be provided to support this scheme.
- iv) Consider a contribution towards the cost of an ice rink to be based in South Methven Street.

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Approved

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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Strategic Implications	
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	Yes
Corporate Plan	Yes
Resource Implications	
Financial	Yes
Workforce	None
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	None
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	Yes
Strategic Environmental Assessment	None
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	None
Legal and Governance	None
Risk	None
Consultation	
Internal	Yes
External	None
Communication	
Communications Plan	None

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement

1.1 The Perth and Kinross Community Planning Partnership (CPP) brings together organisations to plan and deliver services for the people of Perth and Kinross. Together the CPP has developed the Perth and Kinross Community Plan which outlines the key things we think are important for Perth and Kinross.

- i) Giving every child the best start in life
- ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens
- iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy
- iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives
- v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations

1.2 It is considered that the strategy and related actions will contribute to the following objective: Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy.

Corporate Plan

1.3 The Council's Corporate Plan 2013-2018 outlines the same five Objectives as those detailed above in the Community Plan. These objectives provide a clear strategic direction, inform decisions at a corporate and service level and

shape resource allocation. It is considered that the actions contained in the report contribute to objective (iii) outlined in paragraph 1.1 above.

2. Resource Implications

Financial

- 2.1 As part of the 2015/16 budget process, the Committee approved a budget allocation of £39,000 towards the Christmas Lights Switch On event. A breakdown of anticipated expenditure is provided in the report. In addition, a request is made for further funding of £10,000 to support additional elements for Sunday, 22 November in order to extend the programme and a further £2,750 for additional city dressing materials for the festive season in the city centre.

Workforce

- 2.2 There are no staff resource issues for Perth and Kinross Council.

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

- 2.3 There are no asset management issues.

3. Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1 An Equality Impact Assessment needs to be carried out for functions, policies, procedures or strategies in relation to race, gender and disability and other relevant protected characteristics. This supports the Council's legal requirement to comply with the duty to assess and consult on relevant new and existing policies.
- 3.2 The function, policy, procedure or strategy presented in this report was considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome:
- (i) Assessed as **relevant** and the following positive outcomes expected following implementation:
- The needs of equality groups to be addressed in the operational delivery of events in the city centre such as the provision for viewing by disabled visitors, the provision of additional toilet facilities for disabled visitors etc.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.3 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its

proposals. However, no further action is required as the proposals do not qualify as a PPS as defined by the act and are therefore exempt.

Sustainability

- 3.4 Under the provisions of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 the Council has to discharge its duties in a way which contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. In terms of the Climate Change Act, the Council has a general duty to demonstrate its commitment to sustainability and the community, environmental and economic impacts of its actions.

Legal and Governance

- 3.5 The consideration of the report is in line with the Council's Scheme of Administration.

Risk

- 3.6 Risks and the controls required to mitigate any risks will be reported through the Council's risk management process where the Council is the lead on individual projects.

4. Consultation

Internal

- 4.1 The Head of Planning and Development and Head of Finance have been consulted in the development of the report.

2. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

3. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Common Good Funds within Perth & Kinross Area - Criteria

COMMON GOOD FUNDS WITHIN PERTH AND KINROSS AREA CRITERIA

Within the boundary of the relevant common good area and if funding is available, applications will be considered from individuals either in full time education or of senior citizen status and from groups whose members qualify on the same basis or which are operating within the same boundary.

1. Christmas lighting - Firework displays up to a maximum of 50% of the total costs
2. Organisation of events/games/festivals up to a maximum of 50% of the total costs
3. Prizes at events/games/festivals
4. Acquisition of equipment - consideration on merits up to a maximum of 50%
5. Capital grants for provision/improvement of facilities - consideration on merits up to a maximum of 50% (the facilities must be available to the general public)
6. School/youth exchanges
7. School prizes
8. Voluntary work overseas
 - 6 months or more: £100 - **Perth Common Good Fund only**: up to £400 per individual
 - 1 – 5 months: £100 - **Perth Common Good Fund only**: up to £250 per individual
9. Attendance at summer schools/events
 - Less than 1 month but more than 2 weeks: £100 **Perth Common Good Fund only**: up to £150 per individual
 - One/two weeks: up to £100 per individual
10. Excursions/Parties (up to 2 per year per group)
 - Contribution of 50% towards the actual costs. Each organisation is allowed 2 applications during the course of a financial year. **Perth Common Good Fund only**: overall grant to be capped at up to £7 per individual with an overall maximum grant of up to £700.

11. Visits by and from School/Youth/Sport/Music groups

- Contributions of up to £600 for groups less than 20 individuals and up to £1,000 for groups over 20 individuals for youth groups, senior citizen or vulnerable groups for activities exceeding 1 day. **Perth Common Good Fund only and for schools:** Contribution of 50% of the costs up to a maximum of £300 for each young person who due to financial difficulties are unable to participate in an extra curriculum school activity outwith the boundaries of Perth, exceeding 1 day and organised by a school. It will be the responsibility of each school to state the purpose of the extra curriculum school activity and identify such young person and advise the Common Good Fund accordingly.

12. Any purpose where it can be demonstrated that there is a benefit to the community of the common good area

The following is not eligible:

- Assistance with further or higher education fees
- Charity based sponsored walk/cycle/canoe etc.
- Town twinning activities other than those qualifying through the age/occupation criteria
- Organisations with religious/political associations where there are restrictions on usage or availability
- Core funding of the Voluntary sector
- Assistance with rental of premises