

Council Led Christmas Switch-on Ceremonies for 2018	9th October 2018
To: The Leisure and Development Committee For Information	

Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)	
Strategic Theme	Resilient, Healthy and Engaged Communities
Outcome	Develop and promote stable and cohesive communities across the Borough
Lead Officer	Head of Tourism & Recreation Events Manager
Cost: (If applicable)	£35,000 (dependant on grant uptake and extent of road closures)

The purpose of this report is to present proposals for the delivery of pre-Christmas activities by Council's Tourism and Recreation Events team.

Background

In September 2017, an Elected Members' Workshop considered the Event Team remit in the delivery of the 'Christmas Switch-On' events. At this workshop financial constraints and resources were considered in relation to the geographic extent of the Council area. An approach for 2017 and subsequent years was agreed and approval for this taken to the October 2017 Leisure and Development Committee meeting. The approach was to deliver nine 'Switch-On Events' in the towns and villages across the Borough and promote and administer the Christmas Festive Fund Grant for settlements not captured in the nine towns and villages.

Options for Delivery

The capacity for the Tourism and Recreation Event team to deliver on the 'Christmas Switch-On' events is constrained by the requirement to balance planning for the 2019 event season with the need to maintain appropriate Time in Lieu an Annual Leave balances of Events staff. For this reason Council Officers have sought quotations from a number of event management companies to assist the Events Team in the planning and delivery of the 'Switch On' events. A number of companies with event management expertise were approached but unfortunately no submissions were received by the deadline for return. The implication of this is that the Events Team will need to deliver the Christmas schedule without any external assistance.

Proposed Activities

The following outlines the key components for the nine towns and villages:

- **Ballymoney – Thursday 15 November 2018**

Entertainment begins at 6pm with DJ introducing the event and the upcoming activities – to include local school choir performances, local singers, face painters/balloon artist and seasonal characters mingling with the crowd. Band usually begins at 7pm. Santa and Mayor arrive by 7.15pm followed by Mayor's speech prior to the switch on. After the countdown at approx. 7.30pm children queue to see Santa in his grotto and under

11's receive a selection box. Band provides further entertainment until 8.45pm when event ends.

- **Limavady – Saturday 17 November 2018**

Entertainment begins with DJ introducing the event and the upcoming activities – to include local school choir performance, local drama group singing and seasonal characters mingling with the crowd. 5pm Santa and Mayor arrive by dray cart prior to the switch on. This will be followed by children queuing to see Santa, under 11's receive a selection box. Band provides further entertainment until 6pm when event ends.

- **Coleraine – Friday 23 November 2018**

Entertainment begins at 6pm with DJ introducing the event and the upcoming activities – to include local school choir performance and seasonal characters mingling with the crowd. 6.35pm the parade leaves Coleraine Leisure Centre and arrives at the Town Hall, with Santa and the Mayor arriving by dray at 6.50pm prior to the switch on at approx. 7pm. This is followed by children seeing Santa in his grotto, under 11's receive a selection box. Band provides further entertainment until 8.30pm when event ends.

- **Dungiven – Saturday 24 November 2018**

Entertainment begins at 4pm with DJ introducing the event and the upcoming activities – to include local school choir performance and possibly local harp school with seasonal characters mingling with the crowd. 4.55pm Santa and Mayor arrive by dray cart prior to the switch on at approx. 5pm. This is followed by children queuing to see Santa in his grotto, under 11's receive a selection box. DJ provides further entertainment until 6pm when event ends.

- **Portstewart – Saturday 24 November 2018**

The event commences at 4pm with a DJ to warm up the crowd followed by local school choir, the arrival of Santa and the Mayor at 4.45pm, Santa's interview, the Mayor's speech, countdown and finally switch on at 5pm followed by queue to see Santa in his grotto and under 11's receiving a selection box until around 5.45pm.

- **Ballycastle – Thursday 29 November 2018**

Entertainment begins at 6.30pm with DJ introducing the event and the upcoming activities – to include local school choir performance and seasonal characters mingling with the crowd. Simultaneously Community Carol Service & Readings inside the Parish Centre – muted music outside. 7.10pm Santa and Mayor arrive by horse drawn carriage with Mayor's speech and countdown. Thereafter at 7.15pm Switch-On followed by queue to see Santa in his grotto and under 11's receiving a selection box accompanied by further stage entertainment until event end at 8pm.

- **Portrush – Friday 30 November 2018**

This event commences at 6pm with the DJ warming up the crowd followed by local school choir and local theatre group, the arrival of Santa and the Mayor at 7.20pm. Then Santa's interview, the Mayor's speech, countdown and finally switch on at 7.30pm followed by queue to see Santa in his grotto and under 11's receive a selection box until around 8.30pm.

- **Kilrea – Saturday 1 December 2018**

The event commences at 4.00pm with a DJ to warm up the crowd followed by local school choirs, the arrival of Santa and the Mayor at 4.50pm, Santa's interview, the Mayor's speech, countdown and finally switch on at 5pm followed by queue to see Santa in his grotto and under 11's receive a selection box (queue closes at 6pm).

- **Garvagh - Monday 3 December 2018**

The event commences at 6.30pm with a DJ to warm up the crowd followed by local school choirs, the arrival of Santa and the Mayor at 7.15pm, Santa's interview, the Mayor's speech, countdown and finally switch on at 7.30pm followed by queue to see Santa in his grotto and under 11's receive a selection box.

An Elected Members workshop is scheduled for 10th October and at this the Christmas Switch-on events and Christmas Festive Fund Grant will be given consideration along with other operational aspects of the Council's event remit.