

Council Led Christmas Switch-on Ceremonies for 2017	10th October 2017
To: The Leisure and Development Committee For Decision	

Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)	
Strategic Theme	Prosperity, Health & Wellbeing & Cohesive Community
Outcome	
Lead Officer	Head of Tourism & Recreation Events Manager
Cost: (If applicable)	£28,000 – £48,000 (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

At the request of the Leisure and Development Committee, a workshop was convened on Thursday 21st September to agree on the approach for 2017 and beyond, in relation to pre-Christmas activities by the Tourism and Recreation Service.

At the workshop, officers outlined the 2016 activities that were led by the Tourism and Recreation Events Team and detailed the process by which community groups availed of a £250.00 Christmas Festivities Grant.

This report outlines the key issues discussed at the workshop. Consideration was given to the needs for 2017 and also for a longer term approach that could be managed by Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council and others, including the Community sector, throughout the towns, villages and hamlets of the area.

Key areas discussed at the September workshop included:

- The Event Team remit within the wide range of Council delivered activities for Christmas.
- The nine ‘festive switch-on events’ delivered by the T&R Events Team in 2016.
- The process used in 2016 for the Christmas Festivities Grant.
- Financial constraints and resources needed for 2018 and beyond.
- Capacity of the T&R Event Team in delivering Christmas ‘switch-on events’.
- Christmas event delivery by other local authorities.
- Potential capacity for community groups to deliver on some of the Christmas switch on events.

Areas for future consideration.

The Elected Members recognised the geographical extent of the Council area and the significant rural population with a high degree of dispersal.

There was a strong consensus that a Council delivered 'festive switch-on event' should take place in the four settlements of Ballymoney, Ballycastle, Coleraine and Limavady.

There was a recognition that from a resources point of view, capacity was already exceeded for the T&R Events team to deliver on all nine 'switch on events' delivered in 2016 and that expansion to this list would potentially have resource implications which would impact on the quality of delivery.

It was discussed and suggested that officers could explore the capacity of the community sector to lead on some of the 'switch on events' with the recognition that the Christmas Festivities Grant would need to be adjusted to take into account for the scale.

In consideration of the above points, the consensus of Elected Members was that the Tourism and Recreation Service should work with the Community and Culture Services Team, along the Funding Unit, to identify ways for greater involvement and potentially delivery of the Christmas Events by the community sector.

For 2017 the consensus from Elected Members was that The Tourism and Recreation Events team in conjunction with the Funding Unit deliver the programme presented in 2016, with Council run 'festive switch on' events in the following locations.

- Ballycastle
- Ballymoney
- Coleraine
- Dungiven
- Garvagh
- Kilrea
- Limavady
- Portrush
- Portstewart

In addition, a 2017 Christmas Festivities Grant should be administered for settlements not captured in the above, and this would be open to geographically located Community Groups to make applications based on the same terms as the 2016 Christmas Festivities Grant. It is anticipated that this will be administered in conjunction with the Funding Unit and up to 60 applications may be received.

Recommendation

The Leisure and Development Committee are asked to consider the findings from the Elected Members workshop, and approve that for 2017 Council's Tourism and Recreation Events Team deliver nine 'switch on events' in the towns across the Borough as listed, along with the promotion and administration of the Christmas Festivities Grant following the same format as 2016.

In addition, approval is sought to look at a new approach whereby the Tourism and Recreation Service, the Community and Culture Services Team and the Funding Unit identify ways for greater involvement and potentially the delivery of the Christmas Events by the Community Sector, with officers reporting back to the Leisure and Development Committee early in 2018 for consideration.