

<b>Title of Report: Christmas 2020</b>	<b>Officer Presenting: Head of Culture</b> <b>Author: Festivals &amp; Events Manager and Marketing Manager</b>
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## **1 Purpose of Report/Recommendations**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on programming development and marketing for Christmas 2020 and to seek approval for the overall budget spend on this programme.

## **2 Background**

- 2.1 Derry City & Strabane's Christmas programming will begin on the 21<sup>st</sup> November and continue through to 16<sup>th</sup> December 2020 focusing on key weekends throughout this period.
- 2.2 The Christmas programming coordinated by the Business and Culture Directorate is designed to complement the existing calendar of events at this festive time, enhance the visitor and shopper experience while drawing on the district's rich built and cultural heritage through working in partnership with council departments and district wide business and cultural providers.
- 2.3 Officers also work closely with the Environment Directorate to ensure that the various Christmas lighting schemes are complemented by a mix of events and activities to ensure an enriched overall visitor and shopper experience.
- 2.4 Christmas programming has traditionally included a series of events and activities that would draw large crowds, Switch On Events in City and Strabane, weekend animation programmes in the two urban centres, the Guildhall Craft Fair, the Mayor's Christmas activity and the Christmas Markets.

- 2.5 Officer have continued to monitor the most up to date public health guidance due to the pandemic, which has seen a numerous events across Northern Ireland being postponed, rescheduled or cancelled. Significant change in the guidance is not expected and as with Halloween will have an impact on the type of activity planned for the 2020 Christmas period.
- 2.6 However, even with restrictions in place officers are confident that a programme could still be rolled out which would include; Virtual Christmas Switch On Events in City and Strabane, Inside Out Christmas Themed animation programme, Mayor's Community Christmas Programme, Mayors Virtual Christmas Tea Dance and more.
- 2.7 A mix of quality programming and a strong marketing campaign is aimed at maximising the economic opportunities during this period while also creating a memorable experience for citizens and visitors.
- 2.8 The Christmas marketing campaign will focus on a 'shop & gift local', 'support local' and 'your small spend makes a giant difference' messaging themes that will be targeted at local and north west regional audiences. The marketing campaign will feature local businesses across the City & District and will be combined with the Department for Communities funded recovery campaign to build consumer confidence and encourage spend. Marketing activities will consist of strategic outdoor, radio and press placements with an extensive range of digital and social media tactics. The 2020 festive Christmas brand will be consistent with the successful creatives from previous years while being adapted to integrate new messaging themes.
- 2.9 Officers aim to engage and collaborate with key stakeholders such as Visit Derry and CCI in order to maximise marketing campaign opportunities.

### **3 Key Issues**

- 3.1 Proposed Christmas Programming dates in 2020 are as follows:
- 21<sup>st</sup> November – Virtual Christmas Lights Switch On Event – Strabane
  - 22<sup>nd</sup> November – Virtual Christmas Lights Switch On Event – Derry
  - 21<sup>st</sup> November – 'Inside Out' Christmas Themed Animation

- 22<sup>nd</sup> November – ‘Inside Out’ Christmas Themed Animation
- 5<sup>th</sup> December – Walled City Market
- 5<sup>th</sup> December – Council Christmas Animation
- 6<sup>th</sup> December – Council Christmas Animation
- Mayors Community Christmas Programming – Various locations over weekends in November & December
- 11<sup>th</sup> December – ‘Inside Out’ Christmas Themed Animation
- 12<sup>th</sup> December – ‘Inside Out’ Christmas Themed Animation
- 16<sup>th</sup> December – Mayors Virtual Christmas Tea Dance

### 3.2 **Virtual Christmas Lights Switch On – Strabane – Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> November**

The Switch On may be different this year but tune in to see if Santa will complete his secret mission to turn on the Christmas Lights in Strabane!

### 3.3 **Virtual Christmas Lights Switch On – Derry – Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> November**

Will Santa make it on to the Derry Walls this year? Find out how he is going to make sure Derry’s Christmas Lights are switched on for 2020!

### 3.4 **‘Inside Out’ Christmas Themed Animation – Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> November / Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> November / Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> December / Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> December**

Over the coming months Council will launch the ‘Inside Out’ programme to encourage people back onto our streets in a safe but engaging way. During November and December this will consist of Christmas themed animation, Street Dressing and Music to enhance the experience of visiting our shops, bars, restaurants and streets in a creative and safe way. There will also be pop up trading opportunities identified in these areas. It is anticipated this could be instead of a single Christmas Market in one location which may be difficult to deliver given the restrictions. This will be centred in and around the following locations:

- **Derry** – Bishop Street/Ebrington Square/Guildhall Square/Waterloo Place/Waterloo Street/Castle Street
- **Strabane** – Abercorn Square/Castle Street/Main Street

This animation programme will complement the aims of the business grant scheme and infrastructure investment recently administered by Council with funding by Department of Communities and DEARA's COVID-19 Revitalisation and Recovery Programme. The main purpose of this activity is to help organisations and businesses attract customers back into the urban centres.

### 3.5 **Walled City Market – Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> December**

The Guildhall Square will welcome the very best of artisan traders, offering visitors a family friendly shopping experience with a wide selection of specialty foods and handcrafted products. Tickle your taste buds with homemade jams, chutneys & sauces, artisan breads & cakes, a range organic meats and of course some sweet treats!

### 3.6 **Council Christmas Animation – Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> & Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> December**

A weekend of fun and festive delight with all kinds of Christmas characters roaming in and around Derry and Strabane City Centre's to spread yuletide cheer!

### 3.7 **Mayors Community Christmas Programming – Weekends during November & December**

This year the Mayor will visit and bring Festive fun to communities in Derry City and Strabane District accompanied by the main man himself Santa!

### 3.8 **Mayors Virtual Christmas Tea Dance – Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> December**

The Mayor will host a Virtual Christmas Tea Dance to spread some festive cheer. It will feature one of our regular Tea Dance bands who will perform tea dance tunes that the regulars will know and love and of course a few festive tunes also!

- 3.9 **Guildhall Craft Fair** - The Guildhall Craft Fair traditionally kick starts the festive season for Christmas shopping in the city and Council's Christmas Campaign. Due to Covid-19 the possibility of hosting the Guildhall Craft Fair is not possible given the likely level of restrictions and the large numbers of people and traders that traditionally attend this event.

The fair is well established throughout the craft industry and is the event of choice for many makers and artists North and South of Ireland to show at, as no imported or bought-in work is allowed at the Fair, with all of the goods on display being handmade in Ireland.

A number of alternative options for delivering the fair have been investigated however nothing has delivered a viable alternative that is compliant with current restrictions. The local craft community will form part of the focus for the 'Shop Local' Christmas Campaign during November and December reminding shoppers that bespoke gifts made locally can be easily sourced throughout the Council region.

3.10 **Christmas in the Communities**

Due to the ongoing financial pressures that council have been facing the annual Christmas budget of £80,000 may no longer be available. Currently we are working to a revised budget of £20,000. This will enable officers to roll out the above programme. However, this means that budget that had previously been made available to Christmas in the communities will have to be reduced similarly. It is recommended that a maximum of £3,000 grant from the overall Christmas budget be made available to Neighbourhood renewal areas who would have participated in this activity. Historically a grant of £1,000 has been given to communities in Castlederg, Newtown Stewart and Sion Mills for Switch On events. The £3,000 for these 3 areas has been allowed for in the overall activity however there have been requests for further funding from other towns and villages which it is impossible to accommodate within the existing budget. Christmas Switch On events are eligible for Community Festival Funding and any other communities who wish to apply are encouraged to do so as part of this process.

#### **4 Financial, Equality, Legal, HR, Improvement, Rural Needs and other Implications**

Please see below details of up to date budget figures

- Christmas 2020 Total Available Events Budget - £20,000
- Marketing Budget estimated £8,000

If restrictions are lifted to allow for additional programming within a suitable timeframe officers will discuss with Councils Chief Finance Officer to see if additional budget can be made available.

All activity will be procured in keeping with DCSDC Financial procurement & procedures.

#### **Recommendations**

- 5** It is recommended that members approve programming and financial arrangements as set out above.

#### **Background Papers**

**None.**