

Events & Festivals Meeting

Date: 10th December 2015

Venue: Edinburgh International Conference Centre, Edinburgh

ATTENDANCE

- Anna Mackenzie, AECC
- Sam Barker, Belladrum Tartan Heart
- Judy Rae, Business Tourism for Scotland
- John Diamond, Diamond Events / Scottish Events & Festivals Assoc (SEFA)
- Marshall Dallas, EICC
- Hamish Miller, EventBase
- Stephen Maclean, EventScotland
- Susan Russell, Festivals Edinburgh
- Elaine Miller, Marketing Edinburgh
- David Allfrey, Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo (Chair)
- David Jackson, Royal Highland Show
- Elisa De Waal, SEFA
- Caroline Warburton, Scottish Tourism Alliance
- Michael Grieve, Sub Club
- Ricky Scoular, Sub Club
- Jane Ali-Knight, Edin Napier Univ / SEFA
- Brendan Miles, The List

APOLOGIES

- Louise Lonie, AECC
- Joe Gibb, Belladrum
- Geoff Ellis, DF Concerts
- Marie Christie, EventScotland
- Susan Deighan, Glasgow Life
- Katriona Holmes, Knockengoroch
- Chris Lawson, MCL Create
- Tom Clements, National Outdoor Events Association
- Nicola Thomson, Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo
- Dominic McKay, Scottish Rugby Union
- Roger Goodyear, Scottish Traditional Boat Festival
- John Langford, SECC
- David Trotter, Sodexo
- Pete Irvine, Unique Events
- Steve Harris, Visit Aberdeen
- Lotte Stevenson, Vision Events / SEFA

1. Welcome, Introductions & Note of Previous Meeting

DA welcomed everyone to the meeting, and thanked Marshall Dallas for hosting the meeting at the EICC. The note of the previous meeting was approved and the actions discharged.

2. Scotland – The Perfect Stage

Stephen McLean of EventScotland provided an update on the ‘refreshed’ Scotland - the Perfect Stage (STPS) strategy which was launched in September 2015. The strategy centres on three core pillars (which include the issues shown):

1. Developing Events

- a. Portfolio of Events
- b. Event Impact
- c. Investment & Support

2. Developing the Industry

- a. Partnership & Collaboration
- b. Education & Knowledge Sharing
- c. Quality, Organisation & Delivery

3. Developing Scotland

- a. Infrastructure & Services
- b. Reputation
- c. Visitor Economy

To deliver the strategy a ‘one Scotland’ approach between industry, public sector, Government and others will be required. The strategy is there to be used by the industry and DA invited observations & comments from the floor which included:

- Unanimous support for the strategy which was welcomed as a good strategic framework for the sector.
- General awareness by industry of STPS is felt to be low. Everyone needs to help get the message out in order to embed the strategy and its priorities across the sector.
- Need to quickly focus on delivery and implementation.

- Use STPS to better link events & festivals and business tourism (industry & within EventScotland).
- Need to ensure appropriate balance between mega- and other one-off high profile events and recurring events which ultimately provide a greater and more sustainable economic contribution.
- Need to ensure balanced approach to city and rural issues.
- Role of the night-time industry in the events & festivals sector (and STPS).
- Increase in demand by students for events-related courses is one indicator of how the sector has grown and professionalised.

3. Towards an Operational Framework

DA outlined a recent presentation he gave to the National Events Conference (EICC, 3rd Dec) where an operational framework for the industry was proposed. This approach aimed to make the connection between STPS and the industry by providing a framework of capabilities. Within this, industry issues and opportunities could be noted and more significantly priorities could be identified. The 10 capabilities were:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. People | 7. Training & Education |
| 2. Information, Intelligence & Knowledge Sharing | 8. Finance |
| 3. Operations, Programming & Quality | 9. Stakeholder Management, Partnership & Collaboration |
| 4. Infrastructure & Services | 10. Sustainability |
| 5. Planning & Project Management | |
| 6. Communication, Branding & Marketing | |

DA invited comments about the framework which included:

- General agreement with the approach, however discussion on the number of capabilities and whether they could be reduced.
- Important to ensure that the language is simple and accessible if industry is to engage.
- Broad agreement that 'technology & innovation' should be added as an additional capability.
- Policy should be included, possibly within 'Planning & Project Management' capability.
- Sustainability is too broad a term and would benefit from further definition. Should it focus on social inclusion and environmental sustainability for example?
- Need to make sure that the customer is at the heart of the framework. DA suggested that this was the unifying purpose of the whole framework. This needs to be articulated.
- Customer service should not be overlooked. Felt to be included within 'Operations, Programming & Quality' capability, but should it be more explicitly stated?
- Is the capability framework internal for the industry group or external for the wider events & festivals sector? Need to identify the balance between influencing delivery (e.g. agency responsibilities and advocacy) and direct delivery of activities by industry group.

AP1: DA/CW agreed to review comments and provide draft framework for next meeting (if not before).

4. Prioritising the Sector's Challenges

The group then provided their views on the main challenges facing the sector. These are shown below against STPS Core Pillars and will be reflected in the draft operational framework:

1. Developing Events

a. Portfolio of Events

- i. *Ensuring a good spread of events across the year (seasonality) as well as across a city and across the country.*

b. Event Impact

c. Investment & Support

- i. *Scottish Government Subvention support not consistently supported across the cities.*

- ii. *Increasing regulation on businesses having an impact of ability to hold events, such as police-charging, National Living Wage, pension auto-enrolment, licensing fees plus others.*
- iii. *Local Authority and Government procurement policies and processes: industry understanding the language used, competing on price not value.*
- iv. *Licensing: inconsistencies between Local Authorities, inconsistencies within Local Authorities for different types of events (arts, cultural, music, sporting etc). Felt to be difficult and inflexible and a real barrier to growth of businesses.*

2. Developing the Industry

a. Partnership & Collaboration

- i. *Need for the destination, in particular tourism & related services to buy in to importance of events & festivals.*

b. Education & Knowledge Sharing

- i. *Recruitment of people with the right skills, predominantly people skills (i.e. soft skills)*

c. Quality, Organisation & Delivery

- i. *Data: industry needs to be more adept as using data to improve performance and identify opportunities, e.g better use and interpretation of ticketing data.*
- ii. *Staff Retention: enabling employers to provide quality year-round employment (need to address seasonality – see above).*
- iii. *Consistency of quality of events, relating to professionalism of the sector.*
- iv. *Need to create an operating environment where sector can thrive and not be constrained by regulation (see above) and bureaucracy.*

3. Developing Scotland

a. Infrastructure & Services

- i. *Police-charging: transparency of tendering process / appropriate timelines for event organisers.*
- ii. *Using technology (and innovation) to ensure Scotland remains able to perform at an international level.*

b. Reputation

- i. *Maintaining the relevance and authenticity of events to audiences.*

c. Visitor Economy

- i. *Maintaining profile of events, particularly when agencies are always asking for ‘something new’. This results in recurring events losing profile to the mega-events. Difficulty of responding to Themed Years.*

5. Other Industry Initiatives

This part of the agenda was cut short due to time.

- **Events Base:** Hamish Miller outlined the new events & festivals industry magazine, Events Base, and also highlighted Scotland’s new events & festivals trade show – Eventit – which is being held at EICC on 18th March (<http://www.eventit.org.uk/>) as part of Scottish Tourism Week (see below).
- **Scottish Tourism Week (11 – 18 March):** Caroline Warburton highlighted this week of events across the country, culminating with The Signature Programme, Eventit (see above) and Scottish Thistle Awards on 17th and 18th March at EICC. An industry networking event to which all MSPs have been invited will take place on 17th March (evening) within Eventit. CW encouraged all to support it.
- **Scottish Events & Festivals Association (SEFA):** the group is going to suspend activities for the current time and focus its efforts on supporting this Events & Festivals industry group until there is greater call for a representative association.

6. Any Other Business

There was no additional business.

Date of Next Meeting: April / May