

Conference organisers speak up against council cuts to marketing body

Edinburgh's Disgrace: City's global promotion in jeopardy as Europe's top destination marketers descend on the Capital

Leaders from one of Europe's most prestigious gatherings of Destination Marketing Management Organisations (DMMOs) which is meeting in Edinburgh this week have had their say on proposed council budget cuts.

The City of Edinburgh Council propose to axe the funding to Marketing Edinburgh, a body which they set up, by 89% in two years.

The not for profit marketing body European Cities Marketing (ECM) are holding their spring meeting in the capital from today. They have voiced their disbelief at the 'short-sighted' and 'embarrassing' consequences for Edinburgh, if proposed council budget cuts go ahead next week, which would most probably mean that Marketing Edinburgh would have to close its doors.

More than 200 leading international experts and event owners from over 80 European cities have come to the three day meeting in the capital today at The Sheraton Grand Hotel and Spa. This is taking place against the possibility of host city Edinburgh becoming the only city in the developed world without a DMMO.

Marketing Edinburgh won the bid to bring the high-profile

event to the capital back in June 2018. And yet despite this and other marketing coups, more than £560,000 of Marketing Edinburgh's 2019/20 budget hangs in the balance as councillors prepare to vote on the proposed cuts next week.

An international leading association for tourism organisations, ECM aims to improve the competitiveness and performance of leading European cities. Senior destination leaders from across the continent have gathered in the city to foster critical thinking and debate on topical tourism issues relevant to Edinburgh, such as destination management and future travel trends.



Dieter Hardt-Stremayr, President of European Cities Marketing and Managing Director of Graz Tourist Office said: “I am shocked that leaders of any city would dismiss and undervalue the role of a DMMO in contributing to its ongoing and future success. Such a drastic cut is unheard of in our circles.

“At a time of Brexit uncertainty, I find it incredibly short-sighted. Through its work with ECM, Marketing Edinburgh plays an integral part in strengthening ties with other European

cities, sharing good practice and promoting innovation. This is a time when Edinburgh should be investing in its destination marketing, not abolishing it.”



John Donnelly

John Donnelly, Chief Executive at Marketing Edinburgh, said: “While we are honoured to welcome ECM and all the delegates of its Spring Meeting to Edinburgh, the timing could not be worse. Destination marketing leaders from across the continent have travelled to the Scottish Capital to hear insights and inspiration from our industry experts. It is frankly embarrassing to be in this position.

“Should the cuts be approved, Edinburgh will be the only major city in the developed world without a DMMO. We remain hopeful that councillors will challenge the proposed budget on 21 February and work with us to find an alternative funding model.”

Edinburgh was announced as the host of the coveted conference in June last year, following the successful bid proposal by Marketing Edinburgh which showcased its World Heritage and Festival City status. ECM recognised Edinburgh’s dedication to make cultural, sporting and business events a principal tactic in the city’s efforts to connect and communicate with the world.

Supported by Festivals Edinburgh, the programme on 'Eventful Cities! Featuring Festival of Failures' will address both the successes and failures of some urban events' organisation.

The European Cities Marketing Spring Meeting 2019 starts today at The Sheraton Grand Hotel & Spa, Edinburgh and runs until Friday 15 February 2019.