

Culture and Communities Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 5 October 2023

Bonfire Night

Executive/routine
Wards

Routine
All

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 Culture and Communities Committee is asked to note this update on current planning for Bonfire Night 2023 and on the development of a Community Safety and Anti-Social Strategy for the city.

Paul Lawrence

Executive Director of Place

Contact: Simon Porteous, Family and Household Support Service Manager

E-mail: simon.porteous@edinburgh.gov.uk | Tel: 07769960956

Bonfire Night

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report provides an update on planning for Bonfire Night 2023 and outlines plans for the development of a Community Safety and Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy for the city.

3. Background

Bonfire Community Improvement Partnership

- 3.1 Following extensive damage to property during Bonfire Night 2017, partners created a Bonfire Community Improvement Partnership (CIP) in January 2018 to develop a co-ordinated and consistent partnership response to resource planning for Bonfire Night focussing on keeping people safe.
- 3.2 The CIP has continued to operate since its inception and its membership includes Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS), Lothian Association of Youth Clubs (LAYC), Lothian Buses, Scottish Ambulance Service, the City of Edinburgh Council (including officer representatives from areas across the Council.
- 3.3 Throughout 2022, the Bonfire CIP hosted regular CIP meetings to support Bonfire Night safety planning and preparations.
- 3.4 On 25 November 2022, a Bonfire CIP debrief meeting took place to review the planned activities implemented on 5 November 2022, and to evaluate the impact of the co-ordinated approach on levels of disorder and antisocial behaviour reported during the bonfire period. Delivery of bonfire safety preparations took place against a backdrop of COVID-19 recovery which is likely to have reduced the number of public gatherings planned during the period. The CIP debrief also considered opportunities for improvement and agreed recommendations for Bonfire Night preparations in 2023.

Bonfire Night 2022

- 3.5 Bonfire CIP partners individually and collectively carried out a range of preparatory activities in the lead up to Bonfire Night 2022 including:

- 3.5.1 Each partner completing an agreed standard bonfire procedure template outlining planned activity to support a co-ordinated citywide approach to bonfire safety planning and consistency in reporting;
- 3.5.2 Conducting spotter patrols to communal stairs and green spaces to ensure areas were free from combustibles;
- 3.5.3 Registered Social Landlord (RSL) patrols conducting spotter and uplift activity;
- 3.5.4 Patrols inspecting fly tipping hotspots for hazardous material and removal of accumulations identified as a potential risk to keep public areas safe;
- 3.5.5 Removing fly tipping and bulky items from open spaces and hotspot areas;
- 3.5.6 Week of action activities in the South West and North West in mid-October with Council officers and community volunteers tidying Wester Hailes and the surrounding area including fly tipping removal, litter picking and free removal of bulky items for a limited period ahead of Bonfire Night;
- 3.5.7 Dedicated joint patrols conducted with key partners (Police Scotland Community Officers, SFRS, Council officers) providing safety advice and public reassurance;
- 3.5.8 Lothian Buses and Police Scotland joint patrols, including police officers boarding buses in hot spot areas to engage with passengers and young people;
- 3.5.9 Liaison with local RSLs to agree joint working protocols in areas of mixed tenure;
- 3.5.10 Engaging with young people and their parents through targeted joint partner visits to provide advice in relation to safety and antisocial behaviour during the bonfire period;
- 3.5.11 Joint educational letters sent to parents/guardians of school pupils requesting their co-operation and support for the emergency services on Bonfire Night and encouraging appropriate behaviour to reduce the risks of harm;
- 3.5.12 Liaising with youth clubs and diversionary activity providers to ensure that plans were in place for Bonfire Night to discourage people from engaging in antisocial behaviour;
- 3.5.13 Licensing and trading standards officers visiting all premises licensed to store and sell fireworks to conduct safety checks and provide advice on safe fireworks storage, underage sales, unlicensed sales and penalties for non-compliance;
- 3.5.14 SFRS delivering educational presentations in secondary schools on bonfire and fireworks safety delivered either by face to face or video formats according to each school's preference and circumstance;

- 3.5.15 Raising awareness amongst young people in schools and through young people engagement activity to improve understanding of dispersal zones and their impact;
- 3.5.16 Communications planning to promote a co-ordinated public safety message across communities, residents' associations, and the third sector; and
- 3.5.17 Highlighting the importance of bonfire safety through social media and posters, as well as delivering safety awareness letters to residents in hotspot areas.

Amendment approved by the Council

- 3.6 On 24 November 2022, in response to a motion by Councillor Campbell on Bonfire Night, the Council approved an [amendment](#) by Councillor Thornley. The amendment noted the concerns about incidents related to fireworks disorder and requested a report to Committee which, following a meeting of stakeholders, should outline the options for the Council to pursue a city-wide anti-social behaviour strategy.

4. Main report

Planning for 2023

- 4.1 LAYC has now routinely started to engage with local area CIPs to support the co-ordination of preventative and other activity in the lead up to and on Bonfire Night 2023. LAYC was also able to offer small grant funding to four organisations across the city to provide diversionary activity; engaging with 232 children and young people over the bonfire weekend and supplementing the contributions awarded by the Bonfire CIP. Activities included arts and crafts sessions, haunted house activity, trampolining, laser tag, some food provision, bonfire safety sessions and a drop-in youth club. Additional diversionary activity is highlighted below.
- 4.2 Partners shared their bonfire plans within the Bonfire CIP, setting out the safety activity taking place in each locality area and provided contact details for all staff working on Bonfire Night to ensure the swift and efficient sharing of relevant information between partner agencies. Partnership activity locally and citywide on Bonfire Night included:
 - 4.4.1 Council co-ordination of CCTV cameras in collaboration with Police Scotland, to gather any relevant evidence on Bonfire Night;
 - 4.4.2 Deployment of movable CCTV cameras to provide coverage of known hotspots;
 - 4.4.3 Waste and street cleansing staff and Housing Operational staff removing fly-tipping and accumulations, responding to requests to pick up identified flammable materials needing transported to a refuse site;
 - 4.4.4 A day/evening inclusive trip to Alton Towers for young people in collaboration with Goodtrees Neighbourhood Centre in the South East of the city;

- 4.4.5 Street work engagement with young people in the greater Craigmillar area with indoor activity to encourage them to engage with indoor entertainments and minimise the risk of antisocial behaviour;
- 4.4.6 A trip for identified young people organised by the Ripple Project and funded by LAYC;
- 4.4.7 Activities in Ratho Retreat Centre for young people organised by the Muirhouse Youth Development Group with transport provided by Lothian Buses;
- 4.4.8 Evening streetwork activity conducted by Granton Youth providing community-based support for young people in the North West neighbourhood area;
- 4.4.9 Police Scotland designating 10 dispersal zones in areas of the city previously experiencing vandalism and antisocial behaviour; and
- 4.4.10 A multi-agency command arrangement with the Council, Police Scotland, and SFRS and Lothian Buses in place to ensure efficient and co-ordinated deployment of resources where required, allowing a swift response to address reports of bonfire/firework related antisocial behaviour, criminal activity and minimising the risk of harm to staff, the public and transport/emergency services.

Community Safety and Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy

- 4.5 The current community safety and anti-social behaviour [strategy](#) has been in place since 2020 and runs until the end of 2023.
- 4.6 This is a joint strategy between the Council and Police Scotland. The strategy has three interrelated policy themes:
 - 4.6.1 Reduce harm and safeguard people from antisocial behaviour, specifically the impact of noise;
 - 4.6.2 Reduce the likelihood of children and young people engaging in harmful or offending behaviour; and
 - 4.6.3 Digital strategy: Safeguard people from online harm.
- 4.7 There continues to be a legal requirement under the Anti-social Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004 for each local authority and relevant Chief Constable to act jointly in preparing and publishing an Antisocial Behaviour Strategy. Officers are currently working on the development of a new strategy which will cover the period 2024 - 2029.
- 4.8 As part of the development of a new joint strategy for the city, a consultation will shortly go live on the Council's Consultation Hub. The consultation will run for 12 weeks and will gather feedback about how residents feel about antisocial behaviour and crime within their communities and on the proposed themes for the new strategy.

- 4.9 In addition to the online consultation, a series of stakeholder events will take place. These will include (but will not be limited to) representatives from the Community Safety Partnership, Elected members, Council officers, Police Scotland and representatives from community councils, people with disabilities, LGBTIQ+, faith groups, schools and LAYC.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 A citywide CIP structure is in place, with format central co-ordination of bonfire safety preparation activity and attendance at the Police Scotland multi-agency control centre (MACC) on Bonfire Night. For 2023, planning arrangements are well underway.
- 5.2 The Council continues to support the MACC arrangements used in 2022, to ensure efficient deployment of resources, monitoring of CCTV, and a swift response to reports of bonfire/fireworks related antisocial behaviour and crime.
- 5.3 The consultation on the new strategy will run for 12 weeks and the outcome will be reported back to the Community Safety and Justice Partnership. The approach to this is outlined above in paragraphs 4.8 – 4.10. Culture and Communities Committee will also be kept updated on progress in the development of the new strategy.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 The Community Safety and Justice Partnership (CSJP) contributed to the costs of bonfire safety planning in 2022 and the amounts allocated are shown in the table below which has also been agreed for 2023.

CSP grant recipient	Amount awarded (£)
Locality CIP areas (4 x areas at £1,000)	4,000
Clear up operation (Community Payback)	1,000
Waste services	1,000
CCTV and Community Safety Night Team	1,000
	Total 7,000

7. Equality and Poverty Impact

- 7.1 None An interim IIA has been completed for the community safety and anti-social behaviour strategy. This will be updated with partners as consultation progresses.
- 7.2 This found positive impacts relating to equality, health, wellbeing and human rights including enabling people to have more control of their social/work environment by seeking ways to address anti-social behaviour in the city. This may include ways to reduce anti-social behaviour in both social and work environment and empower people to feel safe in these areas.

8. Climate and Nature Emergency Implications

- 8.1 As a public body, the Council has statutory duties relating to climate emissions and biodiversity. The Council

“must, in exercising its functions, act in the way best calculated to contribute to the delivery of emissions reduction targets”

(Climate Change (Emissions Reductions Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019), and

“in exercising any functions, to further the conservation of biodiversity so far as it is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions”

(Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004)

- 8.2 The City of Edinburgh Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and committed to work towards a target of net zero emissions by 2030 for both city and corporate emissions and embedded this as a core priority of the Council Business Plan 2023-27. The Council also declared a Nature Emergency in 2023.

Environmental Impacts

- 8.3 Smoke from bonfires has negative environmental impacts as they release large amounts of gases and particles such as carbon monoxide into the air.

9. Risk, policy, compliance, governance and community impact

- 9.1 There are no direct risk, policy, compliance, governance or community impact arising from this report as this report, is updating on activity.

10. Background reading/external references

- 10.1 Changes to Legislation on the Sale and Use of Fireworks in Scotland
<https://democracy.edinburgh.gov.uk/documents/s52786/7.7-%20Firework%20and%20Pyrotechnic%20Articles.pdf>

11. Appendices

- 11.1 None.