

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILCIVIC HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE8 March 2023Report by Director of Business Operations and PartnershipsCIVIC HOSPITALITY COSTS AND USE OF COUNCIL ACCOMMODATION**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. To advise the committee of the costs of various recurring civic events, the current estimated level of funding available for new events in 2022/23, and the extent to which, under delegated powers, authority has been granted to outside bodies to use Council accommodation for meetings and functions which fall outwith the letting arrangements managed by other departments.

**RECOMMENDATION**

2. It is recommended that the committee notes the report.

**CIVIC HOSPITALITY COSTS**

3. On 26 June 2013 the Council approved the establishment of a Civic Hospitality Committee responsible for all civic hospitality matters on behalf of the Council including the:-

- consideration and determination of all requests for the provision of civic hospitality by the Council with an estimated cost of over £400;
- consideration and determination of any proposed new Council events to be funded from the civic hospitality budget; and
- consideration and approval of all protocols and procedures associated with civic hospitality.

4. In September 2021 it was agreed to increase the threshold for approval of the provision of civic hospitality under delegated powers from £400 to £1,000.

5. As well as being used to fund events organised in response to new external requests for civic hospitality, when the committee was established the decision was taken that a number of annual events organised by the Council, such as to mark Holocaust Memorial Day and Remembrance Day, were to be funded from the civic hospitality budget. Examples of some of the other things normally funded from this budget are costs associated with school debates, when these are organised by the Provost, and the purchase of flowers for those known to be celebrating a special wedding anniversary or birthday (e.g. 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, diamond wedding anniversary etc.) in East Renfrewshire.

6. Taking account of the financial challenges faced by the Council, during discussions on the Council's budget proposals for 2021/22, a review of various civic events and related costs was carried out. Whilst in some cases there was considered to be little, if any, scope to reduce expenditure, a number of areas were identified where cost reductions were considered achievable. Ultimately, the Council agreed to reduce the civic hospitality budget by over a third from £18,000 to £11,300 for 2021/22 by no longer arranging Senior Citizens' Concerts, the most recent such event having taken place in September 2018 and demand for these having reduced. It was also agreed to no longer support a Rotary Club charity event which had also not taken place for a few years.

7. Furthermore, during the 2021/22 budget discussions, it was noted that there was no consistency regarding when the Council granted a local organisation a civic reception to recognise a significant anniversary. In relation to this, the committee's views were sought on restricting such occasions, to contribute to savings, by reducing the number of events the Council might host.

8. It was also commented that some events are hosted in Council or Leisure Trust buildings and that considering the scope that exists for some events to be held, where possible, in an organisation's own premises to reduce venue costs could be helpful also.

9. Having considered both of these issues, in September 2021, the committee:-

- agreed that the provision of civic hospitality to mark the anniversary of the establishment of any organisation or body be considered only for their 50<sup>th</sup>, 100<sup>th</sup> and subsequent anniversaries at 50 year intervals; and
- noted that arranging civic events in an organisation's own premises, or one used by it, could be considered whenever possible to help reduce costs.

10. As reflected earlier in this report, all requests for hospitality with an estimated value of £1000 or less can be dealt with through delegated powers, subject to consultation taking place with the Provost and Deputy Provost. Any additional Council hosted events to be funded from the civic hospitality budget, either on a one-off or recurring basis, are submitted to the committee for consideration.

11. As was the case in 2020/21, COVID-19 continued to impact heavily on the organisation of civic events throughout 2021/22, many of which were unable to take place or had to be organised in a different way, such as virtually instead, resulting in reduced expenditure. During 2022/23 in-person events have resumed, including to mark Holocaust Memorial Day.

### **COST ESTIMATES ETC FOR 2022/23**

12. As part of the new arrangements introduced in 2013, it was agreed that each financial year the committee would be provided with the details of the recurring events and associated indicative costs for these and other events, as well as the amount of funding remaining for new civic hospitality requests. A copy of the relevant information is attached (see Appendix 1) to the extent it has been possible to prepare it thus far. Given that the end of the financial year is approaching, detailed arrangements for most events have already been made and therefore, other than where it is indicated that costs are estimated, the costs itemised are final ones.

13. Based on current expenditure estimates, the funding left in the 2022/23 budget to deal with new requests for civic hospitality, should there be any, is currently approximately £6494. This reflects also that incurring non-essential expenditure has been discouraged.

#### **COST ESTIMATES ETC FOR 2023/24**

14. The civic hospitality budget for 2023/24 remains £11,300 as it was in 2022/23. Based on the assumption that the 2023/24 costs for recurring events and expenditure will be similar to 2022/23 which remains to be determined, and also that school debates organised by the Provost will resume, the funding available for other events in 2023/24 is currently estimated to be £6,903.

#### **USE OF COUNCIL ACCOMMODATION GRANTED UNDER DELEGATED POWERS**

15. In terms of the Council's Scheme of Delegated Functions, the Director of Business Operations and Partnerships or Democratic Services Manager are authorised to grant the use of Council accommodation to outside bodies for the purpose of holding meetings and functions etc. which fall outwith the letting arrangements managed by other departments. It was agreed that, under the new arrangements, the committee would be provided with details of all requests granted in terms of these delegated powers. No such requests have been granted thus far in 2022/23.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

16. It is recommended that the committee notes the report.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

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Background papers – Civic hospitality records

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**2022/23 CIVIC HOSPITALITY BUDGET**  
**COMMITTED EXPENDITURE (BASED ON ESTIMATES WHERE APPROPRIATE)**

	<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>		<b>£11,300</b>
<b><u>DATE</u></b>		<b><u>COST</u></b>	
27 May 2022	Barrhead Rotary Club – 50 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event	£250	
25 June 2022	Armed Forces Day *	£368	
15 August 2022	Presentation of BEM to Local Resident	£28	
2 September 2022	Merchant Navy Day Flag Raising *	£89	
4 September 2022	Kirking of the Council	£265	
6 October 2022	Giffnock Bowling Club – 125 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary (See Note 1)	£1366	
19 September 2022	Emergency Services Flag Raising *	£0	
13 November 2022	Remembrance *	£1,292	
December 2022	Annual Citizen's Award * (E)	£100	
23 January 2023	Holocaust Memorial Day Event (See Note 2) *	£428	
13 March 2023	Fly the Flag for the Commonwealth (Flag Raised only) *	£0	
Various	Flowers etc. for East Renfrewshire Celebrants (100 <sup>th</sup> Birthdays, Diamond Wedding Anniversaries etc.) * (E)	£300	
Various	School Debates – Catering * (E) (See Note 3)	£0	
Various	Miscellaneous (e.g. Other Flowers) (E)	£120	
Various	Provost's Guests for Lunch/ Afternoon Tea etc. (E)	£200	
	<b>TOTAL ESTIMATED COMMITTED EXPENDITURE 2022/23</b>	<b>£4806</b>	
	<b>TOTAL ESTIMATED BALANCE REMAINING</b>		<b>£6494</b>

\* *Recurring Events/Expenditure*  
(E) *Estimated final cost*

**Notes**

1. The Giffnock Bowling Club 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary event was postponed from 2020 to 2022, as it could not take place when originally intended due to COVID-19 restrictions.
2. The net cost has been provided for the Council's Holocaust Memorial Day Event, taking account of a £500 grant secured from Interfaith Scotland towards the costs.
3. School debates are not taking place at present. It remains to be determined when they will resume, but it is not expected that any will take place prior to the end of the current financial year.