

Large Event Guide, Introduction and General Guidance

Thank you for choosing to hold your event in Aberdeen.

Aberdeen City Council recognises the role that events play and in adding to the quality of life of those who live, work or visit Aberdeen and appreciate the hard work and dedication that goes in to organising these events. The suite of guidance documentation provided by Aberdeen City Council is intended to support events by empowering organisers to plan and manage their events effectively, safely, legally and in line with the standards expected by Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeen's Safety Advisory Group (SAG).



First things first Get in touch

When you, or the organisation you represent, decide that you want to hold an event you should contact the City Events team to let us know. This allows the team to check whether the space is available, suitable for your proposed event, to pencil your booking and to provide you with some initial advice on how best to proceed and what you will be required to do in order to organise your event safely.

Upon enquiry you will receive a copy of the [event organiser journey flow chart](#), which is key planning tool detailing the process, advised minimum timescales, likely requirements and deadlines for delivering your event on Aberdeen City Council land. If you have any questions about the process then please email, cityevents@aberdeencity.gov.uk

How much will it cost to use the land?

Once Aberdeen City Council have received your application, it will be scored against our parks and open spaces scoring matrix to determine the costs for the use of the land. This scoring system is designed to ensure that events are charged on a sliding scale depending on the size, scale, format and objectives of the proposed event - smaller events will be on the lower end of the scale and commercial events at the top end.

Why do Aberdeen City Council need to see my event documentation?

As the landowner and licensing authority in Aberdeen, Aberdeen City Council have a legal obligation to ensure that events which receive a licence, or which take place on our land, are safe and legal and that the level of impact to non-attendees is appropriate.

To allow officers of Aberdeen City Council to carry out their duties and assess the event, event organisers will be required to provide documentation to evidence that their plans and procedures are suitable and sufficient for the risk posed by their event.

How can Aberdeen City Council help?

Aberdeen City Council's events team are responsible for the management of the external event process and will be responsible for granting permission for your event to take place on Council land. The events team will be your direct contact throughout the process and will provide advice and guidance where they can and will act as a way finder, signposting to other departments where specific advice is required.

The events team are also responsible for organising and managing Aberdeen City Council's events and for the management of Aberdeen's Safety Advisory Group and as a result have a wealth of knowledge and experience which can be passed to event organisers in order to improve the standard of events in Aberdeen.

You can contact the events team at: cityevents@aberdeencity.gov.uk



Understanding your responsibility as the event organiser

Event organisers have a legal responsibility to plan, manage and monitor their events in order to reduce risk and ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of their employees and those persons not in their employment, such as attendees.

It is important that the individual, organisation or organising committee responsible for the event understand this, accept this and put measures in place to reduce the risk of accident or injury to those at the event.

Event organisers will also be responsible for ensuring that the land is being used appropriately and that it is returned to Aberdeen City Council in the condition which it was provided.

Agreeing the aims, objectives and desired outcomes of your event

Before beginning to plan your event, it is important that the aims, objectives and scope of the event are agreed as this will help to ensure a focussed and coordinated approach to the planning and delivery of the project. It is important that you have thought about why you want to hold an event – is it a celebration, a fun day, or a fundraising event.

For events which are being organised by way of organising committee, it is strongly advised that the aims and objectives are either agreed by all members of the committee or accepted by all members as the preference of the majority, as changes to the scope during the planning and delivery phases will cause frustration, disruption and put the event at risk of failure.

Event organisers are advised to read Chapter 1 of [Event Scotland's Event Management Guide](#) which provides useful guidance as well as tools and processes for:

- Determining the event concept
- Defining and communicating the event's vision and mission
- Setting objectives
- SWOT analysis, and
- Deciding on event dates and venues

Choosing the right venue for your event

Aberdeen City Council maintain and manage multiple parks and open spaces in the City and to assist event organisers to decide which space best suits their needs, Aberdeen City Council have produced a [Parks & Open Spaces Event Information booklet](#) which details the spaces, facilities and infrastructure available at each location.

Planning your event

Once the scope, objectives and need for the event have been assessed, reviewed and agreed it is important to put a plan in place to deliver an event which meets these objectives. There are many options available to organisers such as basic to do lists & task lists, but the method recommended by Aberdeen City Council is a Gantt Chart.

The key principle of this planning tool, is to schedule all of the project's tasks against a defined chronological timeline, with each task and milestone allocated a defined timeframe to be undertaken and deadline to be

completed. Project planning tools are invaluable for allowing organisers to plan their work, monitor progress and effectively manage the event through to delivery and completion.

This planning exercise will help to scope the scale of the project and allow organisers to assess whether the event project is achievable within the timescales and with the staff resources available to them.

Organisers are advised to read [Event Scotland's detailed guidance](#) on developing and using an Event Action Plan and to use a tool which they are comfortable with, understand and best fits their specific needs.

Budgeting and business planning

As well as putting a plan in place to organise the event, event organisers are also advised to carry out some immediate, medium and long-term budget forecasting to ensure that the event is achievable with the finances available or to highlight the need for additional financial support, revenue or sponsorship in order to deliver the event as planned.

An event budget is a forecasted assessment of all the outgoings required to deliver the event and the income it is expected to generate. It is essential that this forecasting is accurate and organisers are strongly advised to ensure that the income streams are realistic and that their forecasted budget provides some flexibility to allow for unforeseen or increased costs.

Failure to realistically budget your event during the initial planning phase will most likely result in failure, financial loss and reputational damage to the organiser, sponsor or anyone connected to the event.

Event Scotland have produced a [helpful guide](#) for budgeting and forecasting events which organisers are advised to review. The UK Government have also provided advice for Voluntary Events which can be found [here](#).

Whilst the event budget forecast will ensure that the short-term aims of the event are achievable (e.g. to deliver the event with the finances available) a business plan sets out an event's strategic vision over a longer period of 3-5 years for developing, expanding, adapting or sustaining the event. The event's business plan will look at the current model and set realistic and achievable goals as well as milestones in order to achieve the plan's overriding vision and key objectives.

[Event Scotland's guide](#) provides in depth guidance on the considerations and tools required in order to develop a business plan.

Funding your event

Once the budget forecasting exercise has been carried out it should be clear whether the proposed event is feasible or whether additional financial support is required to make ends meet. Often, organisers will find themselves in the red at this stage with ambitions for the project exceeding the finances available to deliver it.

When this is the case organisers can choose to adapt their plans, cutting back on some of the nice to have's, such as the entertainment budget*, or alternatively they can seek additional financial support in order to maintain the quality of the original proposal for their event.

* It is essential that the safety and security of the event is not compromised due to the financial constraints of

the event.

Funding and revenue can come from a variety of sources such as:

Crowdfunding: Crowdfunding is when events request multiple small donations from supporters in order to raise the total “Goal” required to deliver the event. There are many platforms for setting up a crowd fund, almost all of them online. Crowdfunding campaigns are most successful when there is strong support for the event and key achievable goals for the Crowdfunding campaign.

Sponsorship: Sponsorship is a great way for events to raise the required funds and an opportunity for businesses to promote their service or to be seen to give back to the community in which they are based.

Unlike crowdfunding, sponsorship seeks large donations from a small number of organisations in order to raise the funds required.

If your organisation or community is affiliated with a prominent business, then there may be scope to seek sponsorship or you may decide to approach prominent local businesses to pitch your event as a worthy cause, as a good opportunity for the company to give back to the community or as an opportunity to promote their business.

EventScotland Funding: EventScotland run a series of funding programmes each year aimed at developing events in Scotland, these programmes include: International, National, Beacon Events, Scottish Clan Fund, Scotland’s Winter Festival Fund and the Themed Year programmes. Information on the funds can be found [here](#).

Aberdeen City Council Grants: Organisers may be eligible for a grant from Aberdeen City Council; The Community Gala grant is open to community groups or organisations holding Gala Days. The Small Financial Assistance Grant is open to community groups or organisations who have a one-off request for financial support and do not meet the requirement for funding from other Council budget. Information on the grants can be found [here](#).

Aberdeen City Council also run a Community Festive Fund which was established to encourage organisations and groups to come together within their own communities during the Christmas and Hogmanay period to celebrate community wellbeing and togetherness. Information on the fund can be found [here](#).

Pitch Fees: Events can generate additional revenue by charging fees to businesses, such caterers, funfair operators and stallholders, wishing to operate at the event. Often these businesses will be willing to pay to gain access to the audience who will be attending events. The more attendees and the less competition, the more the pitch fees will be worth. Organisers will need to determine whether the presence of pay to use elements (such as food stalls, funfair equipment etc) is appropriate for their event or whether this will detract for the attendee experience.

Ticket Sales: Most community events are free non-ticketed events designed to attract and accommodate as many people as possible, so ticket sales will not be an appropriate option but if your event’s offering is strong enough then customers may be willing to pay to attend. Organisers are advised to do some market research to see whether similar events charge for entry, and if so what is the value put on the tickets and to find out whether their attendees would be willing to pay to attend.

It is worth noting that you may exclude certain groups from your community by pricing them out.

Donations: If the offering is not strong enough to warrant ticketing your event then you may consider requesting attendees for a donation upon entry. This allows the customer to pay what they can afford or what they feel the event is worth.

Getting a good deal: Organisers are advised to shop around to ensure that they receive good value for money from their suppliers and contractors whilst ensuring the standard and safety is not compromised.

Put the right team together and share the workload

Organising an event can be a time-consuming and challenging project and when the to do list grows and deadlines near, stress can become dangerous. This is especially true for volunteer event organisers who will be required to juggle other work and life commitments as well as the event project.

The risk to the individual suffering stress as well as those they work with and those impacted by the event cannot be understated and it is therefore essential that the workload of the event project is assessed and managed to reduce the likelihood of stress and stress related incidents.

Tasks should be delegated to other competent individuals, organisations or companies to ensure that the workload is managed safely, and the required tasks carried out to a suitable level. To safely manage your event, it is essential that specific roles and responsibilities are not just delegated but are also communicated and coordinated effectively. Detailing specific roles, responsibilities and deadlines in writing will help to ensure tasks are carried out in good time and members of the team understand their role(s).

Further advice and guidance on setting up effective teams can be found [here](#).

Ensuring competency in suppliers and contractors

Procurement exercises involve the event organiser providing would be suppliers with the information on what is required of them and key information which will allow them to determine their capacity to carry out the work, the resources required, and the cost implications.

The information required by contractors will vary but event organisers are advised to consider:

- What equipment or services are required
- Key dates and times including access arrangements, deadlines and derig requirements
- What access will be granted (deliveries, vehicles, plant equipment, staff numbers etc.)
- What resources are available to assist if any (staff, equipment, catering etc.)
- Whether other works are being carried out
- Site rules and health and the safety standards required

This information is often referred to as a specification of requirements. Bidders will be asked to assess the requirements of the event and provide inclusive quotes, to ensure best value, as well as information to evidence their competency.

Event organisers are required to satisfy themselves that suppliers & contractors employed to design, supply, install or manage the required equipment have the skills, knowledge, experience and capacity to carry out the work allocated to them.

To assess the competency of suppliers Aberdeen City Council recommends that either during the procurement process or before contracts are signed, event organisers should request copies of the following from suppliers:

- insurance(s);
- risk assessments;
- method statements;
- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of their work and the health and safety risks involved and evidence of their industry experience;
- membership of any governing bodies or industry association;
- provide evidence that the workforce has the necessary skills, knowledge, training and experience to carry out the work;
- certification for any equipment being used;
- references from other similar events

Guidance on compiling your event manual

What is an event manual and why do I need one?

An Event Manual is a key document which will help organisers, and key staff coordinate and manage event activities and ensure the well-being of employees, volunteers, suppliers, contractors, the public in attendance, as well as others who may be impacted by their event.

Event Manuals are living documents which should be amended and updated as the event planning process progresses and following feedback and input from key contributors.

To be effective, Event Manuals should provide details of all aspects of the planned event including the format, technical set up, contingency plans, emergency procedures and the health and safety measures in place at the event. They should define the roles and responsibilities of key personnel, clearly state lines of communication, management structures and decision-making hierarchies as well as detail the standards, plans and procedures in place for delivering the event safely.

As Event Manuals detail the plans, procedures and key roles/responsibilities required to ensure the safe delivery of the event, they should be developed, reviewed and signed off by those with allocated roles in managing the event in normal, contingency and emergency situations.

As well as a referencing tool for those working at the event, the event manual, if produced adequately, will contain all the information required to satisfy those with enforcement responsibilities (such as the Emergency Services, Licensing Authority and the Landowner) that the event meets the standards expected in terms of public safety and legality.

To assist event organisers, Aberdeen City Council have produced a template [Event Manual](#).

How to navigate the guidance

The headings of the guidance documentation and template Event Manual cover aspects which are commonly required for large-scale events. Limited examples are also included within the template Event Manual to assist event organisers in compiling their own documentation. The size, scale, format and associated risks of your event will determine the level of detail required in your Event Manual as well as the relevant headings which should be included in your plans.

As you read each section of the guidance documentation it is advised that you input your event's information in to the blank Event Manual template or alternatively, if you are developing an already produced plan, you can review the advice, guidance and examples against the current content, details and plans in place for your event. You may decide your plans are robust and make no changes or this review might prompt ideas on how you can develop your plans and procedures and amend your documentation accordingly.

Please note

The contents of this document and the other guidance provided is for general guidance only and will not necessarily include all the information that will be relevant to your event.

This document is not intended to constitute legal advice and should not be relied or treated as a substitute for specific advice relevant to particular circumstances. Organisers are advised to conduct further research or contact the city events team where clarification or greater understanding is required, as the information in each section is intended as introductory only.