

Events Review: Key Issues

Effective Operations, Communications and Processes to Support Events

Late Event Plans

- 1 A majority of organisers submit their plans to the team within good time and this allows a thorough assessment of event risks to be undertaken and appropriate support and advice to be provided. However there are few which have either sent them very close to the date of the event, or were late in informing the team of their plans.
- 2 At present the Council does not restrict any events happening in the District and so the team try to follow the normal process for booking in the events, despite the time constraints.
- 3 When the team receive an event management plan, we have to consult with stakeholders. This is a group of approx. 60 people, including:
 - District Councillors
 - CCTV
 - County Highways
 - Warwickshire Police
 - West Midlands ambulance Service
 - Warwickshire Fire Service
 - Building Control
 - Licencing
 - Insurance
 - Contract Services
 - Green Space Development
 - WDC Parking Services
 - Media
 - Health and Community Protection
- 4 It is acknowledged that all of these stakeholders may need to input in to events. However, if late plans put the process under pressure and as a result consultation is sometimes limited to those who will provide direct comments on the safety aspect of the event.
- 5 As well as eliminating the potential for comments from some stakeholders, this also places unreasonable pressure on those stakeholders who are consulted to read the documents and send us comments as quickly as they can. In these circumstances the risk of key considerations being overlooked increases. Whilst we know that there were no incidences at the events which submitted late plans, the restricted timeframes increase the risk of something going wrong during the event.
- 6 Out of the 37 events we studied for this review, 11 sent in late plans.

Street Trading Permits

- 7 Many of the events within the District have some element of selling – whether it is catering for a family fun day, or several stalls at a music event. 17 events required a street trading permit. This is a further cost which adds financial pressure to organisers.
- 8 This year street trading permits were identified as a major issue for organisers, in terms of both cost, and time frame to apply for them. This was partly due to changes in street trading permit regulations which some events organisers were not aware of until event planning was already well advanced. However, going forward there is evidence that most organisers now know about this permit, and can plan accordingly.

Communication, consistency and clarity

- 9 The data shows that occasionally, some organisers have received inconsistent information which has led to confusion and a higher chance of mistakes occurring (Street Trading Permits being an example). During the year a flowchart has been put in place detailing the process that each event should go through, and the order that the officer should be following. This gives the officer some reassurance in the steps to take, and also ensures that nothing is missed.
- 10 Another issue that has been raised around consistency and clarity is with the use of the District parks, and the specifications for each of them. Although there are some requirements that apply to all parks (for example items not being attached to trees, or vehicles not being parked next to them), there are some specific restrictions which apply to some individual parks. This has caused uncertainty and confusion for some event organisers, particularly where the published information is not clear.
- 11 In general, the lack of an event manual and clear guidance can lead to inconsistent communications and misunderstandings. Further, inexperienced event organisers may be uncertain about what they need to discuss.

Funding and Sponsorship

Costs to the Council

- 12 The Business Support & Events Team works closely with many other departments within the Council and the services that others are asked to provide have to be recharged. These charges are not passed on to the organiser, therefore the more events we have in the District, the higher the costs will be. The range of charges identified were:
 - Movement and emptying of bins;
 - The movement of the taxi rank by Market Place, Warwick;
 - Extra public toilet cleansing;
 - The use of parking passes for Warwick District Council car parks;
 - Repairs for some damages that are caused by events;

- One event required an extra cut of the grass at Abbey Fields;
 - The costs of organising the event (when the team are the main organisers).
- 13 From the 37 events examined, the summary of the costs were:
- Waste collection: £2915 (13 events)
 - Taxi Rank relocation: £1225 (5 events)
 - Toilet Cleaning: £284 (2 events)
 - Parking passes: £941 (6 events)
 - Repairs: £265 (2 events)
 - Extra Grass Cutting: £190 (1 event).
- 14 The total cost associated with events organised by other organisations was £5820.
- 15 During the period examined the Council received approximately £2000 income for the hire of our parks, giving a net cost during the period examined of around £3800.
- 16 It should be noted that in addition to these costs the District Council directly organised or funded four major events the (Women's Cycle Tour; the Bowls National Championships; Bands in the Park and the Smith Street Party). Each of these had a bespoke budget and the total cost of these was £54,500

Costs to the Organiser

- 17 The Business Support & Events Team does not provide all the services that organisers will require, although the team will always provide information and advice on other services. These services result in costs for event organisers.
- 18 The most common costs are:
- Traffic management plans (14 events)
 - Street Trading Permits (17 events)
 - Street Collections (6 events)
 - Bay suspensions (3 events)
 - Temporary Events Notice (TENS) (11 events)
 - Park hire charges (applicable to all events that took place in parks)