

 Executive 7th February 2018		Agenda Item No. 12
Title	Events Review Update	
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Wards of the District directly affected	All	
Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006?	No	
Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number	28th November 2017 (O&S Scrutiny) Minute no. 57	
Background Papers	Report to O&S Scrutiny 30/8/17 Report to O&S Scrutiny 28/11/17	
Contrary to the policy framework:	No	
Contrary to the budgetary framework:	No	
Key Decision?	Yes	
Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)	Yes (832)	
Equality Impact Assessment Undertaken	No	
Officer/Councillor Approval		
Officer Approval	Date	Name
Chief Executive/Deputy Chief Executive	12/1/18	Bill Hunt
Head of Service	11/1/18	Tracy Darke
Section 151 Officer	12/1/18	Mike Snow
Monitoring Officer	12/1/18	Andy Jones
Finance	12/1/18	Mike Snow
Portfolio Holder(s)	11/1/18	Cllr Noel Butler
Consultation & Community Engagement		
Engagement with event organisers and other stakeholders has taken place as part of the review of events		

1. Summary

- 1.1 A review of events was commenced in early 2017 to:
 - a) To identify and deliver opportunities to enhance the strategic planning of events to maximise the economic and community benefits of events
 - b) To ensure the operational management of events delivers safe, successful and vibrant events, which maximise economic and community benefits
 - c) To ensure that the service delivered to customers is efficient, transparent and accessible aiding in delivering a diverse calendar of events
 - d) To consider the financial implications of supporting events both in terms of the Council's costs and resources and in terms of charges to event organisers
- 1.2 This report sets out the steps to be undertaken to complete the review and as part of this highlights particular issues that need to be addressed. It recommends an action plan is agreed and implemented to improve the events service. The report also recommends that charges for events that take place in the Councils Parks and Open Spaces should no longer be made with a consequential adjustment to the budget required.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Action Plan set out in Appendix 1 be agreed and implemented
- 2.2 That progress on the delivery of the Action Plan be reported to Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the second and fourth quarters of 2018/19.
- 2.3 That event organisers are no longer charged for using WDC parks for events and that members note that the resulting loss of income of around £3000 will be reflected in an adjustment to income forecasts for 2018/19 and thereafter reflected in the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 Recommendation 2.1: Arising from the review officers have developed a series of actions which seek to address the issues and to build on the ideas arising from the Stakeholder Engagement. This Action Plan is set out in Appendix 1 and an explanation of each action along with proposed timetable is also included. In many cases, alternative options that have been considered are also set out. If agreed, a number of the actions will lead to further work to consider in detail the way forward in relation to some of the more complex issues. Overall, it is expected that the Action Plan will provide for a more consistent and supportive approach to events which recognises the vital economic and community value that events bring.
- 3.2 Recommendation 2.2: Overview and Scrutiny Committee has received two reports on progress during the events review. If the Action Plan set out in Appendix 1 is approved, it is vital that this is implemented during 2018/19. It is therefore proposed that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee received six monthly updates on progress during 2018/19 so that implementation can be tracked.
- 3.3 Recommendation 2.3: At present events organisers are charged for using parks on a sliding scale with the maximum charge being £180 per day. This charge has been made to cover the cost of damage to parks resulting from events so that parks can continue to be maintained at a high standard. In total, this

charge brings in an income of around £3000 per annum (£2830 in 2017) to the events budget.

- 3.4 Whilst this approach helps to cover some of the Council's costs, there are anomalies in that similar charges are not made to cover the other costs such as waste collection, relocation of taxi ranks or the provision of parking permits where parking bays are lost. As a result, events that take place on the street are not charged for (even though these often result in more work and potentially more disruption), whilst events in parks are charged for. It is therefore proposed that the charge for use of parks for events is no longer made. As well as enabling a fairer approach to events charging, this reduction in costs to event organisers will help events in the District to continue to thrive in the context of increasing costs elsewhere (road closures, security measures, licensing etc). It has been clear from the stakeholder engagement, that event organisers are increasingly concerned about rising costs and the implications of this for their events. By ceasing to charge for the use of parks, the Council is recognising the vital importance of events to economic and community well-being. The impact of this will be to reduce annual income by around £3000.

4. Policy Framework

4.1 Fit for the Future (FFF)

The Council's FFF Strategy is designed to deliver the Vision for the District of making it a Great Place to Live, Work and Visit. To that end amongst other things the FFF Strategy contains several Key projects.

The FFF Strategy has 3 strands – People, Services and Money and each has an external and internal element to it. The table below illustrates the impact of this proposal if any in relation to the Council's FFF Strategy.

FFF Strands		
People	Services	Money
External		
Health, Homes, Communities	Green, Clean, Safe	Infrastructure, Enterprise, Employment
<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Improved health for all Housing needs for all met Impressive cultural and sports activities Cohesive and active communities	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Area has well looked after public spaces All communities have access to decent open space Improved air quality Low levels of crime and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Dynamic and diverse local economy Vibrant town centres Improved performance/productivity of local economy Increased employment and income levels
Impacts of Proposal		
A vibrant range of community events across the District	Maintenance of high quality public spaces	Events that directly support the economic wellbeing of the District
Maintenance of high quality public spaces		Events that enhance the reputation and perception

		of the District as a great place to visit with resulting ongoing, indirect economic benefits
Internal		
Effective Staff	Maintain or Improve Services	Firm Financial Footing over the Longer Term
<u>Intended outcomes:</u> All staff are properly trained All staff have the appropriate tools All staff are engaged, empowered and supported The right people are in the right job with the right skills and right behaviours	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Focusing on our customers' needs Continuously improve our processes Increase the digital provision of services	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Better return/use of our assets Full Cost accounting Continued cost management Maximise income earning opportunities Seek best value for money
Impacts of Proposal		
Well trained staff who provide consistent support and are enable to ensure events are safely managed and provided to a high quality	Staff work together to ensure the impact of events on public spaces and other facilities is managed and where necessary remediated	Effective use of Council assets to bring economic and social benefits to the District

4.2 **Supporting Strategies**

Not applicable

5. **Budgetary Framework**

- 5.1 In 2017 the budgets available to support events (excluding Christmas Lights) totalled £57,400. They were made of:
- Funding to directly support priority events for which the 2017 costs were: Women's Cycle Tour (£20,000); National Bowls (£22,900); Smith Street Party (£2525) and Bands in the Park (£4000)
 - Funding to support other events: £7975 gross (offset by an income of £2830), £5145 net
- 5.2 If it is agreed to that charges should no longer be made for the use of parks, the annual income by around £3000 (£2830 in 2017) would no longer be received. The resulting loss of income of around £3000 will be reflected in an adjustment to the quarter 1 income forecasts for 2018/19 and thereafter reflected in the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 5.3 It is also recommended that events are routinely required to pay a bond to the Council. The details of how the bond will operate will be developed by 1st April 2018. However, the principle is that event organisers will not be charged unless damage or other costs have occurred as a result of event organisers failing to adhere to the requirements of the specific event plan or the events manual.

6. Risks

- 6.1 The risk of damage and/or other costs occurring as a result of events will continue to be an issue. To mitigate this risk, the recommendations propose that a bond is taken in advance of events. This will be repaid unless unwarranted remedial costs are incurred (see para 5.3 above).
- 6.2 By no longer making charges for the use of parks, there is a risk that demand for events in parks will significantly resulting in further pressure on the quality of parks and maintenance costs. The impact of this is unknown and it is possible that reduced costs for events will result in increased demand and therefore additional costs to the Council. It is therefore proposed that this is carefully monitored during 2018/19 and if necessary, a limit on the use of some open spaces for events can be considered
- 6.3 An associated risk is the impact that increased demand and more rigorous application of standards could have on staff resources, and particularly on the capacity of the team to support businesses. Currently, it is believed that the team does have sufficient resources to support all events (without having to ration or prioritise) at the same time as delivering all the ambitions of the Business Support Review. However, this will continue to be monitored and managed during 2018.

7. Alternative Option(s) considered

- 7.1 The Action Plan in Appendix 1 includes a number of alternative options.
- 7.2 There are two Actions of strategic importance where alternative options have been considered and are worth highlighting.

Charging for Events

- 7.3 In line with recommendation 2.3 of this report, Action 9 of the action Plan proposes that the Council no longer charges for the use of parks for events. In making this recommendation, officers have considered three broad strategic options regarding the future costs and funding of parks as follows:
 - a) **Option1: a commercial approach:** charges would be set at a level that increases income for the Council. This option views parks as assets which can bring an income and, combined with more effective cost recovery for waste, parking bays etc, could theoretically make a useful financial contribution. Officers have not recommended this option primarily because it is likely to have a significant negative affect on events in the District. The review has shown that the cost of putting on events has risen in recent years and significant additional costs to be paid to the Council is likely to negatively impact on the number and quality of events. This in turn will have knock impact on the economic and social wellbeing of the District. It is also unlikely that a commercial approach would bring significant income. All but three of the events that took place in 2017 were community-led events (the exceptions being the Food and Drink Festivals in Warwick and Kenilworth and Heartbreak Productions in Leamington). Significant additional charges for these community events are likely to reduce demand and therefore also reduce income. Commercial charges could be applied only to the more commercial events, but given the small number of these, this is likely to bring in a negligible amount of money and could still have an impact on the cultural and economic benefits these events bring.

- b) **Option 2: full cost recovery:** charges would be set at a level that enables the Council to recover its costs including waste collection, taxi Rank relocation, toilet cleaning, parking passes, repairs and extra grass cutting. In this option, charges would be made specifically for the costs incurred. In the majority of cases, this would relate primarily to waste collection. To ensure fairness, no standard charge would be made for the use of parks. Officers have not recommended this option for two reasons. First, the specific costs of each event could be time consuming and would be open to ongoing debate and discussion with events organisers. This would result in an additional layer of complexity that is likely to be counter-productive. Second, this approach will generally increase costs for event organisers with potential consequences for the number and quality of events across the District.

One sub-option would be to charge only for waste collection. This would fall short of full cost recovery, but would enable the Council to recover a significant proportion of its costs. This would offer a more simple and equitable charging regime than the current approach. If this option were pursued, it would be in the gift of events organisers to arrange their waste collection through third party suppliers, subject to demonstrating the minimum standards would be met. Such an approach is likely to bring in an annual income in the region of £6,000 (instead of the current income of £3000). This option has not been recommended for two reasons: firstly it will increase costs for organisers which will be controversial and could impact on the number and quality of events across the District. Secondly it is still a relatively small sum of money which will be costly to administer and is likely to lead to ongoing debates with events organisers.

- c) **Option 3: no charges:** this is the recommended approach for the reasons set out in paragraph 3.4 above.

Strategy for Direct Support to Events

- 7.4 Actions 1 and 2 of Appendix 1 propose that an events strategy is developed to clearly establish the Council's approach to directly supporting and funding events. They propose that the events strategy ensures events of regional or national significance are brought to the District; that a fair and consistent approach is applied to the direct support that is provided to events and that criteria are established to identify which events are directly supported by WDC (such as Bands in the Park). In developing this strategy, officers will consider a number of options which could inform the criteria to inform which events to support:

- a) **Supporting Events of national/regional significance:** during 2017 the Council directly supported two events of national/regional significance: the Women's Cycle Tour and National Bowls. It is suggested that support for these kind of events should continue and that where financial support is required, bespoke reports are brought to Executive justifying the proposed expenditure.
- Do members support continuing this bespoke approach to these kind of events or should a more proactive approach, supported by a major events budget be introduced?
 - Are members satisfied that direct support to these kind of events should continue or should the budgets for these events be reduced?

- Are there any other suggested approaches that should be incorporated in to the events strategy?
- b) **Establishing a fair approach support for secondary/tertiary retail areas:** At present there are apparent inconsistencies about which events the Council directly supports. This is because support has grown up for historical reasons and there are no established criteria for determining which events should be supported and which should not. It is recommended that proposals are brought forward to ensure a fair approach to support the economic wellbeing of secondary and tertiary retail streets such as Smith Street, Warwick; Clemens Street/High Street, Leamington Spa and High Street, Kenilworth. To establish how these locations should best be supported, the Business Support and Events team will therefore liaise with relevant traders to establish whether the model provided by the Smith Street Party provides best value for that budget and whether a more consistent approach can be applied. The alternative would be to reduce the budget by withdrawing support for Smith Street.
- c) **Establishing a clear approach for support for other events:** At present the Council does not usually provide direct financial support for cultural events. The one exception to this is Bands in Park which provides for musical entertainment in the District's parks during the summer months. This collection of small events adds to the positive atmospheres of the District's towns for both visitors and local residents. The criteria for supporting this and any other similar events needs to be reviewed to ensure the Council's funding is bringing maximum benefits. It is not suggested at this stage that funding for Bands in the Park should cease, only that it should be fully justified by demonstrating how it relates to the Council's strategic approach.

8. Background

- 8.1 For several years, the events calendar throughout Warwick district has been expanding. In 2017 around 100 events took place in publically available streets and parks. The Business Support and Events Team bridge the gap between event organisers, local businesses and stakeholders to ensure that all of these events operate in a safe manner, whilst providing a positive economic impact to the area.
- 8.2 A vast majority of the events that take place are either charity, cultural or community led – which emphasises the District's diverse population. Amongst these events are festivals of food, arts and culture which take place throughout the warmer summer months.
- 8.3 We are also honoured to be the venue for a wide variety of sporting events. The Bowls National Championships takes place every year in Royal Leamington Spa and as the cooler weather sets in we have a selection of road races for runners, ranging from 5km through to half marathons. We were also the venue for the finish line for Stage 3 of the OVO Energy's Women's Tour 2017.
- 8.4 To finish off our calendar year, we organise the Christmas Lights Switch On events for Kenilworth, Royal Leamington Spa and Warwick. Whilst Christmas Lights are outside the scope of the Events Review, they are spectacular events, and bring communities together to celebrate during the festive seasonal time.
- 8.5 To ensure events that take place in streets and parks are safe and are respectful of the needs of other users of these spaces, the Business Support and Events Team work closely with event organisers. In particular, organisers

are required to prepare an Event Plan well in advance of the event itself so the Team can assess implications and if necessary ensure appropriate steps are taken to enable the events to run smoothly, safely and legally.

- 8.6 During 2017, officers have undertaken a comprehensive review of events. The review has adhered to the Terms of Reference agreed at the start of the review. These are set out in Appendix 2. It should be noted that Christmas lights switch-on events are outside the scope of the Review and these will be looked at separately during 2018 and 2019. The Terms of Reference for this review has involved 3 stages.
- 8.7 Stage 1 involved considering the outcomes and measures that we would like to see from the Review. This stage identified the following:
- Understanding and managing total cost of events;
 - Understanding and managing time commitments from the Business Support and Events Team;
 - Assessing the impact of events (for example, number of stalls);
 - Understanding and managing the impact of events (such the opportunities for local businesses and those which impact on our parks);
 - Understanding and managing the risks associated with events of different types;
 - Collecting feedback from event organisers to understand qualitative issues from their perspective (including charges and other costs);
 - Identifying opportunities to improve future events;
 - Looking at the different types of events and their impact to help prioritise future events.
- 8.8 Stage 2 involved gathering data from 37 events that took place over the summer months and a period of consultation and stakeholder engagement. (This included: internal departments such as the Contract Services, Safer Communities Team and Health and Safety; other stakeholders such as the police, fire and ambulance services; Town Councils and Chambers of Trade, and BID Leamington; and other events organisers). From this work, a number of key issues were identified (detailed in appendix 3) along with some ideas and recommendations from event organisers and other stakeholder (detailed in appendix 4). Broadly, these issues fall in to three categories:
- Strategic Approach and Economic Impact
 - Effective Operations, Communications and Processes to Support Events
 - Funding and Sponsorship
- 8.9 The data collected from the events held during summer 2017 included the following:
- General details (time, date, location, type of event);
 - Size of the event (through expected attendance and number of stalls, if applicable);
 - Costs to the Council (including waste management, parking passes; street and public toilet cleansing and any repairs that might need doing following the event);
 - Costs to organisers (other WDC costs that an organiser might face: street collection/trading permits; Temporary Events Notices; parking bay suspensions; park hire charges and traffic management – although we do not charge for a Road Closure Order, we do ask organisers to have a plan created by a qualified company, which could have a cost associated with it);
 - Operational issues (including late plans; the consistency and clarity of the information that is received from various Council departments).

8.10 The key points arising from the analysis of the data include:

- 23 of the 37 events were either for the community, or had a cultural aspect to them;
- 14 required a road closure;
- 8 events had more than 5000 attendees, whilst 9 had more than 50 stalls present;
- Without the inclusion of events that have a specific budget assigned to them, the Business Support and Events Team spent £6000 on third party events;
- In the same period park hire charges generated an income of £2000;
- 17 events required Street Trading Permits;
- 6 events applied for a Street Collection Licence – allowing their event to raise money for charities and charitable causes;
- 11 events required a Temporary Events Notice – to allow the supply and sale of alcohol at their event;
- Finally there were 11 events that submitted late plans to the team.

8.11 From the 37 events examined, the summary of the costs to WDC 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).

APPENDIX 1: Schedule of Recommendations

APPENDIX 2: Events Review Terms of Reference

APPENDIX 3: Summary of Key issues

APPENDIX 4: Summary of Feedback from engagement and consultation