



REPORT of DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMERS AND COMMUNITY

**to
COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE
16 JANUARY 2018**

REVIEW OF 2017 SEASON

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Members with, an update on events held on Council land during the 2017 season and an overview of the support provided by the Council.
- 1.2 To consider whether the Council should review its current land hire policy to help cover the cost of events and potentially generate more income to protect front line services.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the contents of the 2017 Events Programme (**APPENDIX 1**) and agree that the existing events policy is reviewed by Officers for future consideration by Members.

3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

3.1 Background

- 3.1.1 Members will be aware that there is a district wide events programme which is promoted by the Tourist Information Centre. There are numerous events that held in the Promenade and Riverside Parks or other venues owned by the Council. These events provide interest points throughout the year for visitors and local residents.
- 3.1.2 Events are not only a focus for local people to come and enjoy the different activities the District has to offer, but they also encourage visitors as well, adding to the prosperity of the district. Some events generate additional income for the Council for example by increasing likely car parking revenue or as a result of a hire charge.
- 3.1.3 Events on Maldon District Council (MDC) land are primarily managed within the Leisure, Countryside and Tourism Team. The Events and Physical Activities Coordinator has the lead role in coordinating events and is supported by colleagues depending upon the nature of the events planned. This team also supports events elsewhere, for example, by providing street closures.
- 3.1.4 In managing events it is important to understand the role of the Council. When an organisation approaches the Council to hold an event on Council land a number of

steps need to be taken to ensure public safety is maintained and the event is run safely. Duties include:-

- checking Risk Assessments have been completed;
- checking emergency plans are produced;
- checking insurance is in place (and in the case of funfairs and circuses each item of equipment is specifically detailed);
- checking operating procedures are in place;
- facilitating Safety Advisory Group meetings;
- attending event on behalf of the Council;
- coordinating potential road closures;
- coordinating the hire of equipment.

3.1.5 It is worth noting that a large number of events do not come to fruition for a variety of reasons but all of these preliminary enquiries require officer time to be spent with potential organisers.

3.1.6 Events provided by the Council have the same level of checks undertaken but of course the documentation has to be drafted by officers rather than just inspected for each event.

3.1.7 A number of other teams can be involved in supporting events including the Countryside and Coast Team (formally Parks Team), Tourist Information Team and Environmental Health.

3.2 Key Events

3.2.1 A full list of events that the Council supports in some form is detailed at **APPENDIX 1**. This also indicates the amount of time that is spent preparing for each event to ensure that it is as successful. An update on events and other activities undertaken this financial year are detailed below:

- **Maldon Mud Race** - The event had 300 participants viewed by 10,000 onsite visitors and apparently televised internationally.
- **Carters Steam Fair** – A very popular vintage funfair hosted on the events field which included two firework displays.
- **Essex Outdoor Cinema - Five weekends** were booked for the Prom this year and one in Riverside Park with a variety of films were shown including family orientated films. Most evenings were great success with over 800 people in attendance on both nights.
- **Armed Forces Day** – Held at Stow Maries Aerodrome, the Council supported in event planning and equipment delivery and set up. It was well supported with a large public presence and a variety of activities on site.
- **Classic Car Show** – A very popular and longstanding event that uses all key areas of the Promenade Park. Event management plans were in place for effective delivery. Public attendance in large numbers with a positive impact

on local economy and on car parking income. A cost recovery charge is made to entrants of classic cars parking in the public display area.

- **Saltmarsh 75** - The fifth Saltmarsh75 event took place in 2017 with around 250 participants trying to complete 75 miles of the District's coastline over two days. This event now has a national profile and has seen participants from all over the country. There is a significant amount of officer / volunteer time required to ensure this event is run safely and to a high standard. It should be noted that the majority of support is provided by Members and Officers in their own time.

3.3 Land Hire

- 3.3.1 As stated above events within the Promenade Park generally will increase footfall and therefore car parking income also increases. The Council currently has a set of land hire policies that are embedded within the Council's fees and charges. Currently charitable organisations are not charged for hire of land used and in some cases, for example the Mud Race, a percentage of car parking income is also donated to charities or used to offset any costs that that Council incurs which it chooses to recover from the event organiser. These might include items such as additional litter picking.
- 3.3.2 These arrangements in principle worked well over the years however with an increased emphasis on encouraging events, it has been noted that an increased number of events make donations to charitable causes, possibly, to avoid hire charges. In addition income sharing arrangements have not always been consistent with other charitable events. It is the view of officers that a review of charges is required.
- 3.3.3 It is proposed that the simplest solution would be to apply a standard set of land hire charges for all events held within open spaces. It is felt that by reviewing and potentially giving notice of changes, it will allow long established charitable events time to ensure that their fixed overheads are covered through income. Many already hire in specialist support for example, stewards / security.
- 3.3.4 The existing scheme of delegation and fees and charges policy does allow the Director of Customers and Community to decide on the charge made for one off events within certain parameters. It is felt this flexibility is useful and allows officers to work with new organisers to establish the success or otherwise of an event.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The Council's events programme continues to grow. The events programme delivers activities for the local communities as well as draws in visitors. The Council also plays a crucial part in ensuring organisers of events are supported but also meet their responsibilities to ensure activities are safe for the public to enjoy.
- 4.2 The Council does not specifically employ an officer to manage events, rather responsibility is included with other roles and this can have an impact especially during the summer months on capacity. Funding is also restricted and the Council relies on lieu time for staff which can have an adverse effect upon core job activities.

- 4.3 Land hire charges have, over time become, quite complex and it is thought that there is a need to simplify them and to apply them consistently. It is proposed that current event and land hire policies and charges are reviewed and then considered by Members at a future meeting of this Committee.

5. IMPACT ON CORPORATE GOALS

- 5.1 Tourism has been identified as a key issue in the Council's Economic Prosperity strategy and events are a crucial part of any well-developed visitor offer. As well as making a significant contribution towards the local economy, events also generate income which offset some of the operational costs of providing services such as parks and open spaces. Individual events can contribute to the Councils Corporate goals for example parkrun is a community event that encourages everyone to take part in regular exercise.

6. IMPLICATIONS

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – A good local events programme will have a positive impact on customers, increasing the likelihood of attracting people to visit from neighbouring areas but also in keeping local people within the District. Local residents would benefit from a wider variety, quality and frequency of events which might reduce travel away from the District at weekends. Visitors should see an improved offer and more coordination between providers making their experience better. The local economy should be stimulated by increased numbers.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – None identified.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk** – There are no corporate risks associated with this report.
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – There is currently no formal budget for event support. When staff are required to work at weekends to support events this is normally carried out using lieu time. Apart from the Saltmarsh75 any other events are funded within existing budgets which are very limited.
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – As highlighted above the majority of event support is provided by staff on a lieu time basis. This can have an impact on capacity on other core activities especially during the spring / summer months.
- (vi) **Impact on the Environment** – None identified.

Background Papers: None.

Enquiries to:

Ben Brown, Group Manager, (Leisure, Countryside and Tourism), (Tel: 01621 876210).