

# Events and Festivals Policy

Cllr Iain Eadie, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for the Visitor Economy and Local Plan

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Agenda Item: 6

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Key Decision? NO

Local Ward All

Members



**CABINET**

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to consult on a draft Events and Festivals Policy. The policy follows reports to EGED and work commissioned to recognise the value of events to Lichfield District.
- 1.2 The aim of this policy is to facilitate the continued delivery of high quality, well run events and festivals in Lichfield District, to ensure that they are well managed, consider the impacts on existing businesses and residents and add to the economic growth of the district.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Cabinet approves for the purposes of consultation the draft Events and Festivals Policy attached at **Appendix 1** to this report.
- 2.2 That the Cabinet delegates authority to the Cabinet Member for Visitor Economy and the Local Plan in consultation with the Head of Economic Growth and Development to approve and adopt the policy following consultation unless there are material changes which need further consideration by Cabinet.
- 2.3 That subject to the policy being endorsed following consultation, Cabinet recommends to Full Council that the Council's constitution be amended to formally acknowledge the formation of a cross-service officer panel for determining an annual events programme in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Visitor Economy and the Local Plan.
- 2.4 That Cabinet recommends to Council an update the Medium Term Financial Strategy to include a supplementary budget of £20,000 per annum to help meet the costs of new events intended to support local communities across the district.
- 2.5 Cabinet delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for Visitor Economy and the Local Plan in consultation with the Head of Economic Growth and Development to determine requests where these are submitted.

## 3. Background

### Context

- 3.1 A key theme of Lichfield District Council's Strategic Plan 2020 - 2024 is that "we will work collaboratively to shape our place and develop prosperity" by encouraging increased visitors, increased spend in our local economy and more overnight stays.
- 3.2 Events and festivals are recognised as a key part of this, as an engaging and varied events programme helps us build on our heritage, tourism, and cultural offer and encourages more footfall, both to the events and afterwards as events help showcase the city for future repeat visits.

- 3.3 The District Council commissioned in 2019 Bournemouth University (BU) to undertake an Economic Impact Assessment of the key events and festivals held within Lichfield City. This research provided the council with information about how these events contributed to the local economy, what effects they were having on local businesses, what visitors' perceptions were and to provide information about if and how they deliver economic, social and cultural benefits to the city.
- 3.4 As part of its work the University carried out a number of surveys with different stakeholders examining economic impacts, social and cultural impacts, perceptions of the key events and motivations for visiting.
- 3.5 The findings of this research were presented to the Council's Economic Growth, Environment and Development (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee earlier this year and members discussed various areas where improvements could be made in our approach to hosting events and where further work was needed. This included in respect of:
- Consideration of the relationship between events and existing businesses located in the city centre
  - Developing a more diverse events programme
  - Health and safety at events, including road closures
  - Marketing of events
  - Potential resource for co-ordinating events
  - Application process for event organisers
- 3.6 It was resolved at the meeting that the BU report should be noted and the views of the committee and recommendations of the BU Study on improving events and festivals be reflected in the development of an events and festivals policy.

### **Proposed Policy**

- 3.7 Lichfield District Council as a landowner hosts events for example in its parks, it also has a major role in facilitating events via its various roles and responsibilities. Through its regulatory service it provides the necessary licences and consents to allow activities to take place; it considers the health and safety of events through chairmanship of the Safety Advisory Group and ensures food safety guidelines are adhered to for food-related events. In addition, the Council via its visitor economy team helps to promote events and provides opportunities for event organisers to use the various Visit Lichfield marketing platforms. Operational Services provides support for street cleaning and rubbish removal, for events on council owned land as well as in the city centre. Democratic Services deal with requests for road closures.
- 3.8 Currently applications for a licence to run special events<sup>i</sup> are considered by officers in Regulatory Services.
- 3.9 Currently applications for events to take place in Beacon Park and Stow Fields are considered and decisions made by senior managers in the Operational Services Parks Management Team.
- 3.10 Outside of the District Council and across the district, events are promoted and hosted by a variety of other organisations and landowners. In seeking to develop a policy the intention has been to capture the varied interests and partners who play a part in providing for events and festivals so that the approach is one which reflects a shared vision and which will truly be of benefit to all parties including local residents and business.
- 3.11 A further consideration with the formulation of a policy has been to bring together the various services that operate within the District Council to promote, regulate and support events and festivals as described above so that a single, clear message can be communicated and also where possible related internal processes and procedures can be streamlined.
- 3.12 Attached at **Appendix 1** is a draft policy and procedure which is the product of the work requested by the EGED Committee. Cabinet will note the reference to an overarching vision to provide for a suitable

range and mix of events that will appeal to different sections of society, that will allow for the involvement of local residents and businesses, that will bring economic benefits and furthermore, help to promote the District as an attractive place to live, work and play.

- 3.13 Through applying the policy and its promotion via various channels, it is hoped that event organisers will wish to bring forward proposals for events and festivals in line with the vision and stated objectives, building upon the already high profile the district has for hosting the same.
- 3.14 To ensure that events are indeed suitable and will deliver the necessary benefits to the district and its communities, alongside the draft policy is a process which it is suggested should be followed to allow the District Council and its partners to assess and evaluate proposed events when these come forward. A two part process is proposed involving an initial stage whereby proposals will be judged by a panel of officers against a set of criteria and scored accordingly. Where an in principle approval is duly granted and confirmed in consultation with the respective Cabinet Member for Visitor Economy and the Local Plan then event organisers will be invited to submit detailed proposals and subject to the details being acceptable, then the granting of the relevant consents through existing procedures.
- 3.15 Assuming the policy is subsequently confirmed and to avoid any confusion with other functions relating for example to the granting of licences and consents it should be formally recognised that the Cabinet Member for Visitor Economy and the Local Plan will be responsible for determining an appropriate annual events programme.
- 3.16 To support the new policy and its implementation & following previous feedback from the EGED Committee, work is in progress to develop a guidance document for event organisers that contains all of the information an event organiser would require to propose and run an event in Lichfield District. This document will be an operational guide informed by the various service areas referred to in paragraph's 3.7 to 3.9 above.
- 3.17 It is expected that the policy and its implementation will be delivered by those services within the Council that already have relevant roles and responsibilities. It will be important however to have a single 'gateway' in to the Council and a single point of contact (SPOC) to help prospective event organisers access/navigate the procedures. It is suggested that the Council's Visitor Economy Manager should be that SPOC. To monitor the effectiveness of the policy and associated procedures it is also suggested that an officer group be established made up of representatives from the said services.
- 3.18 If Cabinet is minded to approve for consultation the draft policy and the process for facilitating appropriate events it is proposed that the views of EGED members, key external partners and those of other interested parties are now sought.

### **Community events**

- 3.19 As stated in the draft policy, subject to proposals meeting the relevant criteria new events particularly those that derive from and support local communities across the district would be welcome adding variety to the annual programme. To encourage new events that serve to meet local community needs and recognising that meeting associated costs may be an issue for some events, it is proposed that the Council agrees a fund that organisers could bid in to where necessary. It is suggested that a fund of £20,000 per annum be available for this purpose with authority given to the Cabinet Member for Visitor Economy and the Local Plan in consultation with the Head of Economic Growth and Development to agree or otherwise requests for support where submitted. It is not possible to accommodate the aforementioned sum within existing budgets and therefore if the Cabinet is minded to support the proposal a recommendation will need to be made to Council to agree a supplementary budget to the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

### **Covid -19**

- 3.20 Finally, in the current climate of the COVID19 pandemic, it is recognised that opportunities for a full events and festivals programme are by necessity limited. The policy is aimed at a post CV19 situation whereby any restrictions are removed. In the interim however it is acknowledged that any events that

may be proposed and agreed will be required to comply with relevant government advice and guidance.

### Concluding Remarks

- 3.21 Key events attract more than 340,000 event visitors throughout a typical year to the district, and generate more than £9 million in visitor spend, with more than £5 million of this attributed to visits to Lichfield that would not have occurred if the events were not held. As well as the economic benefit, there are a number of community benefits created by the key events within Lichfield. The events are a source of community spirit and pride for local residents, and help to create a positive image of Lichfield and one that is inclusive for all.
- 3.22 A policy of the kind being suggested in this paper will help ensure events and festivals take place which building upon the successes that have occurred to date and going forward assist in maintaining a high standard and accessible events programme.
- 3.23 It is recommended that Cabinet approve the draft policy and approach for the purposes of consultation and seek the views of relevant partners and other interested bodies.

Alternative Options	The Council could decide not to have a policy or to agree an amended policy to that emerging. The view of the EGED Committee which has considered the matter is that the Council and the district would benefit from having a suitable policy to facilitate an appropriate events programme that benefits the district.
Consultation	Internal consultation with all relevant service areas has taken place. If approved for consultation the views of EGED members would be sought as well as external partners and stakeholders.
Financial Implications	The report suggests the creation of an annual fund to support the development of new events serving local communities. A sum of £20,000 per annum is proposed. This sum cannot be met within existing budgets and hence would be a budgetary pressure.
Contribution to the Delivery of the Strategic Plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. A key theme of Lichfield District Council's strategic plan 2020-2024 is we will work collaboratively to shape our place and develop prosperity across Lichfield District.</li><li>2. Events and Festivals are recognised as a key part of showcasing our district, and encouraging economic growth. A varied events programme, helps us build on our heritage, tourism, and cultural offer and encourages more footfall, both to the events and afterwards as events help showcase the district for future return visits.</li></ol>
Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. An equality impact assessment has been undertaken.</li></ol>
Crime & Safety Issues	A well prepared event management plan, should consider the impact events may have on crime and disorder, plans should be put in place to prevent any disorder, working with the Safety Advisory Group can help to mitigate any impact.

	Events provide a social activity for residents and visitors.
Environmental Impact	The environmental impact of any event will be assessed, managed and mitigated through the event booking enquiry/assessment process. The draft policy includes a set of environmental criteria against which to judge any EoI.

GDPR/Privacy Impact Assessment	A Privacy Impact Assessment has not been undertaken at this stage.
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	Risk Description	How We Manage It	Severity of Risk (RYG)
A	Will this new policy be implemented in time to develop a varied events programme for 2021?	This will be dependent upon the outcome of consultation and the subsequent timing of the policy's introduction. In the event of delay or other issues emerging, the existing policies and processes will offer a fall-back position. However, the current impact of CV19 is likely to be a significant factor in determining the scope for events in the near future (see below)	Likelihood: Yellow Impact: Yellow
B	Will the environment be right, post covid, to develop an events programme for 2021	Continually review the guidelines issued by government with regards to mass gatherings/events.	Likelihood: Red Impact: Yellow
C	Consideration should be given as to whether the policy and associated processes and guidance will deter event organisers from wishing to run events in Lichfield.	Continually monitor and review the policy and its implementation to ensure that it meets the Council's and other stakeholder's requirements.	Likelihood: Yellow Impact: Red

#### Background documents

Economic Impact report from Bournemouth University from January 2020.

#### Relevant web links.

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<sup>i</sup> A special event is defined as an event that has a minimum of 10 stalls and have the potential to deliver significant economic impact