



Environment and Climate Change Committee

14 March 2023

Title	Events in Parks Policy (2023-2027)
Report of	Chair of Environment and Climate Change Committee
Wards	All wards
Status	Public
Urgent	No
Key	No
Enclosures	Appendix A – Draft Events in Parks Policy (2023 – 2027) Appendix B – Changes to sites
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Summary

The Councils existing Events in Parks Policy has been in place for over ten years, since 2012. As such, a review of the policy has taken place and a new policy has been developed.

A new Events in Parks Policy sets out the arrangements required to ensure residents and event organisers deliver safe, well run, and inclusive events within the borough. It seeks to balance the interests of residents and users by working with event organisers, services and partners to ensure that events hosted in our parks are safe, protect the environment and provide enjoyable experiences for everyone.

The policy sets out the application process from receiving an initial query to providing event approval. It also includes an improved approach to engagement which incorporates member, stakeholder, and community interests through an enhanced system. In addition, a review of all the sites included in the previous policy has taken place, resulting in the removal of some sites, and clarity about upper limits of attendance for each site. A summary of the key changes for specific sites can be found in Appendix B.

The new Events in Parks Policy supports the borough's ambition to become a borough of fun and this report requests Committee approve the new Events in Parks Policy (2023-27), included at Appendix A.

Officers Recommendations

- 1. That the Environment and Climate Change Committee approves the new Events in Parks Policy 2023-27 (located at Appendix A).**

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 In 2012 the Council adopted its first Events in Parks Policy which was developed through stakeholder engagement and aimed to set parameters and controls on how the borough's parks would be used for events. The policy has not been refreshed since its inception, and a review was undertaken in 2022 to develop a new policy, addressing strategic priorities, enhanced procedures and due consideration of health and safety.
- 1.2 The Council receives between 40-60 applications for events in parks each year, and numbers have been increasing since the pandemic. The Events in Parks Policy describes arrangements in relation to the hiring of parks and open spaces for organised events. It is required to promote a varied calendar of events that are held in the right locations, with the appropriate frequency, so that all events are conducted safely.
- 1.3 Any organisation or individual seeking to hold an event in a park, be it for commercial, charitable or private use, must adhere to the requirements of the policy and its supporting documents.
- 1.3 The Events in Parks Policy does not apply to sporting activities (e.g. football/rugby matches, running clubs and fitness classes/programmes etc) which are organised under the Council's sports bookings process.
- 1.4 As the programme of events in parks has grown over time, the following changes are important for the new policy to ensure safe, well run and diverse events:

Event size classifications

A large event is referenced within the existing policy as an attendance of 1,000+ attendees, with no stated upper limit. The service receives many applications each year which fall within this category. This classification is not representative of 'large' scale events, which require the production of event management plans. These plans vary considerably in detail between a 1000-person event to a 10,000-person event.

Event consultation and engagement

The 2012 policy refers only to communicating a list of approved events via the Council's website. It does not include any requirements for specific engagement with residents and stakeholders.

Site Listing

The site listing included locations that are no longer under the Council's management and did not reflect new sites or those which have been improved through capital development.

Site Suitability

In the 2012 policy each site and the proposed size classifications were assessed via a desktop exercise based on service information. This resulted in some inconsistencies in how the sites were classified.

Events in Parks Policy (2023)

- 1.5 The new policy sets out the requirements and processes, from receiving an initial enquiry, application stage, detailed checks, engagement, and approval. It also includes;
- Further details on the size, scale and classification of event which has been amended to provide a broader set of criteria, with alignment with the Council's approved fees and charges structure.
 - An improved and enhanced approach to engagement and consultation, which describes a minimum standard of engagement and further engagement which will be co-ordinated based on the scale, size and complexity of each application. In some cases where further engagement is identified, this may be undertaken directly by the event organiser to deliver a community engagement plan. The Council will carry out engagement by sharing event information (full or limited details) on behalf the event organiser, with the following:
 - Council officers: e.g., highways management, environmental health, licencing, planning, emergency planning, waste management, trading standards or food safety.
 - Ward Councillors
 - Stakeholders: e.g., local friends or user groups, local businesses (i.e., we may inform a local cricket club or cafe if the event is neighbouring)
 - Executive Director
 - The updated Policy also includes how the Council will consult with key stakeholders (such as the Metropolitan Police, London Ambulance Service and London Fire Brigade) to ensure public safety.
- 1.6 The updated Policy also includes how the Council will consult with key stakeholders (such as the Metropolitan Police, London Ambulance Service and London Fire Brigade) to ensure public safety. Further detail is expanded on within sections 5.6 and 5.9 of this report and detailed within the Policy which sets out the full engagement requirements.
- 1.7 A site suitability assessment has been undertaken to review the operational, community and environmental impact of events in each site. The assessment has rectified discrepancies within the existing site listing and has resulted in the removal of 32 locations from the policy, based on their suitability to host events or their management being outside the Council's control due to site specific lease agreements which are in place. A summary of the list changes is located at Appendix B.
- 1.8 The site suitability assessment provides a consistent approach for the classification of sites within the policy based on:
- Size and location of the park (e.g. proximity to properties)

- On site facilities (such as car park)
- Supporting infrastructure e.g., event space, amphitheatre
- Proximity to a transport hub
- Proximity to local/public realm infrastructure (e.g. town centre)
- Environmental considerations (e.g. If a site held a Conservation Designation e.g., Site of Importance for Nature Conservation)

1.9 The revised Policy also provides further protection in mitigating risk, whilst also ensuring that the application process is transparent, and expectations are clear for all parties. Further inclusions also refer to the Council's priorities in relation to sustainability and climate change and the role of event organisers in delivering events in parks.

2. Reasons for recommendations

Events taking place within Council owned parks require authorisation, and the Events in Parks Policy (Appendix A) sets out a revised and detailed process to ensure that: relevant safeguards are in place; there is compliance with the conditions of hire: and that the Council can communicate to the event organiser their obligations should they wish to hire a park or open space.

2.1 The new policy used a template and guidance from the London Events Forum, a network of London Councils with an interest in the delivery of events in parks. The template framework has been adopted across several London Council's to promote a level of continuity in relation to hiring a greenspace to deliver an event. This has been adapted to reflect local priorities and objectives.

2.2 A set of policy goals have been developed to set out the benefits of events, and how they can support in delivering the Council's wider objectives. These are:

- To build a vibrant and diverse events programme across the borough that represents the community, charity, and commercial sectors.
- To ensure that a sustainable number of events are permitted to take place in appropriate Greenspaces throughout the borough.
- To encourage events that have strong community benefit and engagement and, where necessary, remove barriers that restrict accessibility.
- To ensure that there is sufficient consultation with key stakeholders and events have been considered on behalf of the community
- Ensure events contribute to and enrich the cultural diversity, vibrancy, and economic vitality of the borough
- To ensure that events are planned with due consideration to the environment and with sustainability policies in place, to ensure the protection of the borough's assets and with minimal disruption to the environment and wildlife
- Income generated from events in parks can be used to reinvest in parks and open spaces.
- To ensure best practice in all aspects of event management, including the event application process, to ensure that events are being run with due regard to current legal requirements and public safety standards, as well as industry best practice and borough specific policies

3. Alternative options considered and not recommended

3.1 Retain the existing Events in Parks Policy. The policy is now over 10 years old and does not align with corporate priorities or best practice across London, so this is not recommended. The Committee may wish to consider amendments to the proposed policy, but as noted above, it is drafted based on the London Events Forum guidance and template and with the council's aims and priorities in mind.

4. Post decision implementation

- 4.1 The Greenspaces and Leisure Service are responsible for the implementation of the Policy, which will be published on the Council's Open Data Portal and Councils website. The service is also responsible for ongoing monitoring and quality assurance as described within the arrangements.
- 4.2 The Events in Parks Policy forms part of delivering the Councils Parks and Open Spaces Strategy (POSS). A new POSS Strategy is currently in development, any amendments or future improvements to Policy will be reported to Committee as part of the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy update.

5. Implications of decision

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

- 5.1.1 Establishing a revised Events in Parks Policy enables an inclusive and diverse events programme within Barnet, supporting the Council's priority to be a 'Borough of Fun.'
- 5.1.2 An updated Events in Parks Policy supports the Council's aim of caring for people, places and planet and will support other corporate strategies such as:
- Growth Strategy
 - Parks and Open Spaces Strategy
 - Arts and Culture Strategy.

5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

- 5.2.1 Events in parks are managed by the Greenspaces and Leisure Service. The implementation of this policy will be managed within existing resources in the service.
- 5.2.2 The Council currently commission the third-party support via The Event Umbrella (TEU) to provide independent assurance to the application process. TEU are responsible for supporting business development opportunities and the administrative process. They are appointed up to 31 March 2023 and the service are currently assessing re-procurement options. Any future procurement and contract award will be in line with the Councils contract procedure rules and the budget available.
- 5.2.3 Any income generated through hosting events in parks is reinvested into parks and open spaces and noted in the Councils medium term financial strategy (MTFS).

5.3 Social Value

- 5.3.1 The wide variety of events that are hosted within parks can support in strengthening communities and provide a diverse range of opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy taking part in the arts, music, fitness and other community activities.
- 5.3.2 Where the Council considers appropriate, event applications which are large scale will be requested to complete a social value report.
- 5.3.3 The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 requires people who commission public services to think about how they can also secure wider social, economic, and environmental benefits.

5.4 Legal and Constitutional References

- 5.4.1 Local authorities have several different statutory powers in relation to parks and open spaces including the Local Government Act 1972 which contains provisions for entertainment in parks and the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, which covers wide powers to provide recreational facilities.
- 5.4.2 The Open Spaces Act 1906 provides that local authorities shall hold and administer open space in trust to allow the enjoyment of it by the public and shall maintain and keep the open space in a good and decent state.
- 5.4.3 The Council's Constitution (Article 7 – Committees, Forums, Working Groups and Partnerships) sets out the terms of reference for the Environment and Climate Change Committee which includes: -
- (1) Responsibility for all borough-wide or cross-area matters relating to the local environment including:
- Air Quality
 - Cycling, Walking and Healthy Streets
 - Biodiversity
 - Transport and Public Transport
 - Grounds Maintenance
 - Highways
 - On-Street and Off-Street Parking
 - Road Safety
 - Lighting
 - Street Cleaning
 - Environmental Crime (including littering, fly-tipping flyposting, and graffiti)
 - The Council's Fleet
 - Waste and Recycling
 - Waterways
 - Parks and Open Spaces (including allotments and trees)
 - Cemeteries, Crematoria and Mortuary
 - Trading Standards and Environmental Health (except Environmental Health functions relating to housing and fire safety)

- (2) Responsibility for the council's response to the climate emergency including:
- Setting and overseeing implementation of carbon reduction targets, both in relation to the council as an organisation and Barnet as a place
 - Developing strategies to meet those carbon reduction targets
 - Developing strategies for the mitigation of the impacts of climate change, both on the council as an organisation and Barnet as a place
 - Implementing the elements of those strategies that relate to functions listed in (1) above.

5.5 **Insight**

5.5.1 None in the context of this report

5.6 **Risk Management**

5.6.1 Event organisers are responsible for and have a legal duty to ensure that no one (members of the public, staff, volunteers, contractors, entertainers, acts, etc.) are adversely affected by any aspect of the event with regard to health, safety and welfare. They are responsible for ensuring that all required permissions and licences are acquired in an appropriate and timely manner prior to event delivery. This includes:

- Consent to use Council land
- Performing Rights Society (PRS)
- Phonographic Performance Limited (PPL)
- Advertising consent
- Planning permission
- Premises Licence or Temporary Events Notice (TEN) may be required by event organisers. The issue of a TEN or premises licence does not itself constitute permission to use the land

5.6.2 All organisers of medium and large-scale events are required to present to the Council's Safety Advisory Group (SAG) as part of meeting agreement conditions. The SAG is chaired by the Executive Director – Assurance and supported by the Group Regulatory Services Manager and the Events & Promotions Manager.

5.6.3 If all Event Management Plans and documents are deemed satisfactory by the SAG an event can be agreed in principle, prior to the formal issuing of a license subject to all the terms and conditions being met by the applicant.

5.6.4 Membership of the SAG includes the following organisations who have an interest in ensuring public safety and protection:

- London Borough of Barnet
- Metropolitan Police Service (MPS)
- London Fire Brigade (LFB)
- London Ambulance Service (LAS)

5.6.5 All risks are managed using the risk management procedure, as set out in the Corporate Risk Management Framework. High level risks are reported as part of the Council's

quarterly performance regime.

5.7 Equalities and Diversity

5.7.1 Under section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010 (EA 2010) the Council must, in the exercise of its functions have due regard to the need to: -

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

5.7.2 Relevant protected characteristics are: - age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

5.7.3 The new Events in Parks Policy promotes improving the availability and accessibility of entertainment and cultural activities across the Borough. It ensures that our parks remain protected and enjoyable for everyone to access. The Policy describes information required to support the review of each application, to ensure that events approved have a strong community benefit and engagement and where necessary, remove barriers that restrict accessibility and promote equalities and diversity.

5.7.4 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) was completed for the 2012 Policy, this concluded that there were no potential negative impact on any protected groups. A screening exercise was undertaken for the 2023 Policy which considered the new policy document alongside the existing EQIA the result of which determined that a new full EQIA was not required as no protected groups were impacted by the updated events policy document.

5.8 Corporate Parenting

5.8.1 None in the context of this report

5.9 Consultation and Engagement

5.9.1 The development of the Events in Parks Policy (Appendix A) has been subject to member and stakeholder consultation via the Councils Safety Advisory Group and Event Management Group. These forums include representation from emergency services, highways, licensing, trading standards, community safety, street scene, arts and culture, communication, greenspaces and leisure.

5.9.2 The Policy (Appendix A) outlines the process to be undertaken when determining the outcome of each application. All events are subject to a standard process and where required (e.g. dependant on the nature, scale, location or content of the proposed event), enhanced engagement will be undertaken.

5.9.3 Examples of where an enhanced engagement may be required include new events, large or major scale events. The Greenspaces and Leisure Service will co-ordinate stakeholder engagement by sharing the event application and supporting documentation, on behalf the event organiser with the following interested parties:

- Council officers: e.g., highways management, environmental health, licencing, planning, emergency planning, waste management, trading standards or food safety – Standard
- Stakeholders: e.g., local friends or user groups, local businesses (i.e., we may inform a local cricket club or cafe if the event is neighbouring) – Enhanced
- Ward Councillors: Enhanced
- Executive Director: Enhanced

5.9.4 All organisers of medium and large-scale events are required to present to the Councils Safety Advisory Group (SAG) as part of meeting agreement conditions.

5.10 **Environmental Impact**

5.10.1 Updated provisions have been included within the Events in Parks Policy (Appendix A) to ensure that individual applications demonstrate how they are supporting the Council to achieve its sustainability and climate change objectives.

6. Background papers

6.1 [Events in Parks Policy – Cabinet 17 July 2012, Agenda item 10.](#)

6.2 [Parks & Open Spaces Strategy: Draft for consultation, the paper included an amendment to the Events in Parks Policy – Environment Committee 11 January 2016, Agenda item 8.](#)