

29 January 2020

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| Report of | Assistant Director of Place & Client Services | Author | Andrew Tyrrell ☎ 2982390 |
| Title | Updates to the Events Policy | | |
| Wards affected | All | | |

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report proposes updates to the Council's adopted Events Policy. The current Events Policy was agreed by Cabinet in October 2016 and is now over 3 years old. The Policy applies to all Council-owned venues, as well as other venues that are not operated by the Council (where relevant regulatory controls apply).

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 To approve and adopt the revised Colchester Borough Council Events Policy in Appendix A.
- 2.2 To agree that any future updates to the Events Policy be delegated to be agreed by the relevant Portfolio Holder (as set out in the Scheme of Delegation to Councillors at such a time as they may be necessary).

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 To ensure that the Council has an up to date Events Policy that sets out adopted guidance for events held in Colchester. To help ensure that all events at Council venues, or where the Council can control them, are operated in a satisfactory and consistent manner.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 Not to adopt an updated Events Policy; but this would mean that the Council would continue to operate a Policy that is already over 3 years old.
- 4.2 Not to delegate further updates to the Events Policy to a Portfolio Holder; but this would mean that all changes to the Policy, no matter how small, would continue to need a Cabinet decision (which may be disproportionate in many practical examples).

5. Background Information

- 5.1 The Council agreed to centralise the majority of its events operations after a decision on 2 September 2015, in accordance with recommendations made by the Council's Trading Board. An Events Policy was then introduced in October 2016, following the commencement of these centralised events within the new Colchester Events Company. This 2016 version of the Policy remains the current adopted Colchester Borough Council Events Policy.
- 5.2 During the intervening time, Colchester Events Company (CEC) have continued operated, but since April 2018 they have been operating within Colchester Amphora Trading Ltd (CATL), after the Council created several wholly-owned companies. Whilst the management of events now takes place through CEC, as part of CATL, the Events Policy remains a Council policy that sets out how the Council expects events to be operated. It remains with the Council as the Council has statutory duties to regulate events, across the borough. The Policy is applied when the Council's companies operate events at Council venues, but it also applicable to anyone using our venues, or anyone holding events that require Council regulations or controls (e.g. licensable events) regardless of the venue ownership.
- 5.3 For our own events, CATL delivers the Council's aspiration to put Colchester firmly on the events map; with a number of place-making events having been successfully promoted, managed and established over the last 2 years. The growth of events is part of the Business Plan for the Council's companies that Cabinet agreed (most recently in March 2019), with the resulting financial return to the Council to reinvest (through a dividend) in valuable public services.
- 5.4 Having an Events Policy gives transparency to the expectations of events management for all concerned. It also helps promote safe and enjoyable events. Whilst applicable to all venues and events, this is especially important for larger events, such as concerts in Castle Park. Approximately 211,000 visitors came to Council-owned venues in 2018/19 and concerts by artists such as Steps, Simple Minds, Tears for Fears, and Craig David helped establish the Park as a regular summer concert venue.
- 5.5 Over 28,000 people attended events in Castle Park this year. Sir Tom Jones attracted 12,000 fans to the most recent event and demonstrates the potential for continued growth, with the significant economic boost that this brings to the town. For Sir Tom Jones over 6,000 attendees came from outside of CO postcodes, some experiencing Colchester for the first time.
- 5.6 Attracting audiences from across the country (evidenced by the ticket sales and visitor data), helps to showcase the town and its other cultural and historic attractions. This also increase secondary economic benefit to the town on event days, e.g. hotels, shops, restaurants and bars, as well as other tourist attractions have all benefitted.
- 5.7 Indeed, research from the Association of Independent Festivals shows that a 5,000-capacity event can generate approximately £800,000 in net gain to the local economy. As well as economic benefits from these events there are also social and cultural benefits through bringing communities together and developing a sense of pride in the borough for our local residents.

6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 6.1 The Events Policy allows for the promotion of equality and does not discriminate in relation to gender, gender reassignment, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age and/or race/ethnicity. Events are planned with inclusivity in mind, and safety plans cater for vulnerable participants as set out in section 12 below.
- 6.2 An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) already exists for the Events Policy and can be viewed on the Council website [here](#).

7. Strategic Plan References

- 7.1 The following elements of the Council's Strategic Plan are relevant:

“GROWTH... Ensuring all residents benefit from the growth of the borough”

- Help make sure Colchester is a welcoming place for all residents and visitors
- Ensure residents benefit from Colchester's economic growth with skills, jobs and improving infrastructure
- Promote inward investment to the borough
- Work with partners to create a shared vision for a vibrant town centre.

“OPPORTUNITY... Promoting and improving Colchester and its environment”

- Promote and enhance Colchester borough's heritage and visitor attractions to increase visitor numbers and to support job creation
- Promote initiatives to help residents live healthier lives.

“WELLBEING... Making Colchester an even better place to live and supporting those who need most help”

- Encourage belonging, involvement and responsibility in all the borough's communities
- Work with Essex Police and partners in the Safer Colchester Partnership to make Colchester an even safer place

8. Consultation

- 8.1 The update to the Council's Events Policy has been drafted in consultation with a number of Council Services, and the Council's wholly-owned companies. Services that have fed into the Policy include Communities, Neighbourhoods, and Policy & Corporate Services; including representation from the Parks Team, Environmental Protection and Licensing.

9. Publicity Considerations

- 9.1 The Events Policy will be published in the Council website and will be communicated to persons wanting to hold events in Colchester, including (but not exclusive to) anyone wanting to use Council venues. Individual events have their own bespoke publicity and marketing plans.

10. Financial implications

- 10.1 The financial advantages of holding events are set out, generally, in the main report section. The Council company CATL manages events for the Council and makes a commercial profit from these. The profits contribute to the Council-received dividend, returned from CATL (and others) through Colchester Commercial Holdings Ltd (CCHL),

to the Council at the end of each financial year. The Council also charges CATL a fee for the use of its venues.

- 10.2 In addition to the direct financial gains for the Council, the main report also indicates that the events in the borough also generate inward investment and economic boosts for other sectors. The town centre, in particular, benefits from increased footfall and secondary spend on event days.
- 10.3 The Council's companies have financial targets, and growth targets set with their Business Plans. The existence of an up to date Events Policy will help them understand how they can plan to operate in accordance with the Council policy, aims and objectives.

11. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications

- 11.1 Health and wellbeing is influenced by a number of factors, many of which fall under the responsibility of the council. These include access to green space, licensing, environmental health protection and economic development and many more. The events that are managed in Council venues, by the Council's companies, include a number of events aimed at promoting health and wellbeing. There are a number of activities such as charity runs, etc, where events focus on exercise and physical fitness. More generally, other events contribute to the opportunities for social wellbeing and encourage good mental health.

12. Health and Safety Implications

- 12.1 Individual events are subject to various scales of safety planning. All Council venues have safety plans for emergency situations such as fire. For larger events, a Safety Management Plan would be necessary, proportionate to the event, and would be submitted to the Council's Safety Advisory Group (SAG). This includes consultation with third parties such as the Police and Fire services.
- 12.2 Matters such as emergency evacuations, roles and responsibilities, communication to the public, and escape routes are usually consulted upon and agreed with safety-related partners. The Fire Service, amongst others, requires this as part of their safety role, but they would usually expect an acceptable event-specific plan should include planning for vulnerable people with additional needs in emergency scenarios. Individual plans would provide for additional assistance to people with a disability, people with learning difficulties, those with limited mobility and children.

13. Risk Management Implications

- 13.1 A risk register is created for events and risk is carefully managed through mitigation methods.

14. Environmental and Sustainability Implications

- 14.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency and committed to being carbon neutral by 2030. Events are being planned in response to this, with discussions about single use plastics, travel planning and other measures being included as part of the booking procedures in order to help promote sustainability.

Appendices

Appendix A: "Colchester Borough Council Events Policy 2020".

