

## SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

**REPORT TO:** Cabinet **DATE:** 21 November 2011

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**WARD(S):** All

**PORTFOLIO:** Cllr Shafiq Chaudhry, Community & Leisure  
Cllr Rob Anderson, Finance & Strategy.

### PART I NON-KEY DECISION

#### PUBLIC OUTDOOR EVENTS POLICY

##### 1 Purpose of Report

This report sets out the background to a new public outdoor events policy for the council. The policy will govern all outdoor events in the town centre and the council's parks and open spaces to which the public is invited or can attend. Having a prescribed events policy will give clarity to event organisers and ensure the council meets its obligations in terms of health and safety, protecting council assets and using resources correctly.

##### 2 Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

Cabinet is requested to:

- a) Approve the public outdoor events policy (at appendix A)
- b) Approve the proposed scale of fees and charges (at appendix B)
- c) Approve the implementation of the policy and fees and charges from 1 January 2012

##### 3 Community Strategy Priorities

- **Celebrating Diversity, Enabling inclusion**  
Events held in Slough contribute to a vibrant community and celebrate all that is good about Slough's history, population, culture and diversity.  
The policy governs all events to ensure they are inclusive and that they adhere to the council's comprehensive equalities plan
- **Adding years to Life and Life to years**  
Events are a vital part of Slough's cultural scene with many attracting people of all ages and encouraging participation.
- **Being Safe, Feeling Safe**  
The policy ensures all health and safety requirements are adhered to, to ensure each and every event in Slough is run to strict safety guidelines including road safety, public safety and fire safety.

- **A Cleaner, Greener place to live, Work and Play**

Many of Slough's events are held within the borough's parks and open spaces. The new policy is designed to protect the parks from any environmental damage caused by events taking place and to mitigate any damage which may occur. It also designed to protect the public amenity for the benefit of residents. Events also help promote parks and the town centre as community venues and facilities as well as fun places to be.

#### 4 **Other Implications**

##### (a) Financial

The policy and the fees and charges are proposed to ensure non-council events in Slough take place with no financial cost to the council.

The policy can be implemented at no cost to the council.

##### (b) Risk Management

The policy has been developed in part to reduce and mitigate the risks of holding public events within the borough. Such events pose potential risks in terms of health and safety, public order and costs to the council. If events are managed in the way set out in the policy such risks will be minimised. Individual risk assessments will be carried out for each event. There is an inherent risk to the council should a fit for purpose policy not be in place.

##### (c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

The policy provides for a clear legal arrangement between organisations and individuals holding events and the council and will protect the council's interests.

##### (d) Equalities Impact Assessment

An EIA has been completed for the policy. Events provide an opportunity for different communities to come together and therefore promote community cohesion.

The policy supports equal access of all protected characteristic groups to access public events.

There is a requirement that events in the town centre and parks and open spaces should not promote a particular religion to ensure that discrimination is prevented. However events related to festivals that are of a non-promotional nature, for example Diwali fireworks or carol singing will still be permitted.

#### 5 **Supporting Information**

5.1 Events in Slough are booked and arranged through the commercial officer, part of the communications team. All events are required to go to the multi-agency safety advisory group (SAG) before the council issues approval for the event to take place.

5.2 Slough's parks and open spaces, population and history make it a popular location for large and small events, fun fairs, commercial activities and promotions.

5.3 Currently, in Slough's parks, there two main events – Bonfire and Fireworks Spectacular and the Canal Festival – which are organised by Slough Borough

Council. In addition to this there are around eight funfairs booked across the borough, two large commercial events and numerous smaller carnivals and charitable events.

5.4 This financial year, Slough's town square has been booked for commercial or charitable activities nearly every week, including block bookings.

5.5 Slough's last events policy was contained within a wider document created in the 1980s. Since then there have been major changes in legislation governing events management and an increase in commercial event applications in Slough.

5.6 The new policy has been drafted after consideration of experience of SBC and non-SBC organised events and sets out principles and procedures with the aim of providing clear processes for event organisers. It also reflects best practice in other local authorities.

5.7 Currently there is no set and approved scale of fees and charges, no administration charges and no set charges for additional work which has led to some events in Slough being charged an amount which does not cover the council's costs. This may leave the council out of pocket and may have the unintended consequence of the council, and therefore taxpayers, subsidising commercial events run at a profit. The council needs to charge a market rate for the hire of its assets and for professional services it provides to event organisers.

5.8 The new policy, fees and charges aims to ensure commercial events take place with no cost to the council and sets out a 90% discount for charitable events in the borough. The discount for charities relates to the hire of the venue (a park or the town centre) but will still ensure costs are covered.

5.9 The fees and charges will be reviewed annually as part of the council's general review of charges.

## 6 **Comments of Other Committees**

None

## 7 **Conclusion**

Slough is very popular as a venue for commercial and non-commercial events, promotions and fun fairs. Events are a vital element of the cultural scene in Slough but events have to be managed effectively with external events putting no financial pressure on the council.

Cabinet is asked to approve the policy and the proposed fees and charges so we can ensure consistent control, management and monitoring of events in Slough.

## 8 **Appendices Attached**

'A' - Public outdoor events policy

'B' - Public outdoor events policy – fees and charges

## 9 **Background Papers**

None