

**Subject:** Outdoor Event Strategy  
**Date of Meeting:** 7<sup>th</sup> March 2019  
**Report of:** Executive Director, Economy, Environment & Culture  
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**Ward(s) affected:** All

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 The Council has worked with partners and sector stakeholders to develop a new Strategy to further the significant benefits of the council's Outdoor Events Programme in the city for future years.
- 1.2 The Strategy will be used as the basis for future partnership working and to inform the council's priority actions and targets in relation to the Outdoor Events Programme.
- 1.3 Members have already approved the Outdoor Events Programme for 2019 taking place on council land in parks, open spaces and Madeira Drive. This new Strategy, if adopted, will then shape the development of the Outdoor Events Programme in future years.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That the Tourism, Development & Culture Committee adopts the Outdoor Events Strategy (attached as Appendix 1 to this report) and supports the key actions.

**3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 Outdoor events play a significant role in the city's visitor economy which in 2016 was worth £886 million to the city of Brighton & Hove and supports 21,760 jobs in the city.
- 3.2 The Outdoor Events Strategy has therefore been developed in response to the Visitor Economy Strategy and to align with the Cultural Framework. It is designed to work within the Brighton & Hove Economic Strategy and Action Plan, and inform the 20-year Vision.
- 3.3 The city has developed, over many years, a strong Outdoor Events Programme that is the envy of many cities of a similar size. A new Outdoor Events Strategy gives the opportunity to reflect upon the current programme and identify priorities for future development. Outdoor events bring many benefits to the city, but it

seeks to recognise that there are also negative impacts that need to be minimised.

- 3.4 The Strategy has been developed in consultation with private and public partners and reviews challenges and opportunities for the next five years. It is closely aligned to other local strategies and plans which influence the visitor economy and Brighton & Hove as a place to live, visit, work and invest.
- 3.5 To assist with the consultation of the draft Strategy a number of key questions were identified from the draft Strategy upon which responses were sought (Appendix 3). Tables of the responses received for the closed questions are provided in Appendix 2. In total 145 responses were received which is a good response rate compared with other consultations of a similar nature. The main bulk of respondents were residents (73%) with other responses received from community groups, local businesses and other stakeholders (Appendix 2 Table 1). An overview of the key responses is provided below:

#### Considerations for Staging Events (draft Strategy – p3)

- 3.6 The ways in which Outdoor Events can contribute to a local community is reflected in the range of potential “Considerations” identified in the draft Strategy. A very positive response was received with 90% (124) indicating they “Strongly agree” or “Tend to agree” with the key benefits identified of the social, cultural, economic, skills and sustainability benefits in the hosting of events (Appendix 2 Table 2). The highest number of open responses indicated that there should be a ban on single use plastics at events (20).

#### Vision (draft Strategy – p5)

- 3.7 The proposed vision for the Strategy represents what needs to be achieved over the next 5 years. It recognises the breadth of impact and benefit that a well-run outdoor events programme can deliver. It centres on achieving greater focus on ‘quality’, ‘distinctiveness’ and ‘impact’. The proposed vision is:

“Over the next 5 years the Brighton & Hove Outdoor Events Strategy will deliver events that create distinctive experiences for residents and visitors and that support the image as a ‘Free-Thinking’ city with a reputation for high quality events. It is about thinking bigger and smarter and growing sustainably with economic and social benefits felt by our residents and businesses”

- 3.8 Comments on the proposed Vision included the desire to introduce an Environmental Impact Charge (14), greater consideration to residents not wishing to attend events (9), and general improvements to sustainability (9).

#### Objectives (draft Strategy-p6)

- 3.9 The specific objectives proposed for Outdoor Events in Brighton & Hove to deliver the vision are focussed on achieving a balanced approach where outdoor events are not the end in themselves, but rather a vehicle through which other city-wide needs are met: The objectives are for events in Brighton & Hove to:

- Enhance the city’s national and international profile and reputation;
  - Attract visitors to the city year-round and align with the Visitor Economy Strategy;
  - Deliver measurable benefits for city businesses;
  - Encourage civic pride and community cohesion;
  - Develop capacity and capabilities in the city’s events sector;
  - Support positive engagement between people and the natural environment.
- 3.10 There was strong support for the proposed objectives with 81% (118) of respondents indicating they “Strongly agree” or “Tend to agree” (Appendix 2 Table 3). Comments included adding an objective of the delivery of the most sustainable events possible (14).

#### SWOT Analysis (draft Strategy p13)

- 3.11 A detailed SWOT Analysis was undertaken to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the existing Outdoor Events Programme. Of specific issues identified in the consultation, the inclusion of car use/emissions was the most frequent (12).

#### Key Actions

- 3.12 To sustain and build upon the current success of the Outdoor Events Programme the Outdoor Events Strategy sets out a number of key actions:

#### **Action 1: Provide greater strategic focus to the Outdoor Events Programme (draft Strategy p17)**

- 3.13 There is an aim to move the strategic focus of the Outdoor Events Programme into achieving more with the limited resources. The events in the current programme have been classified into four categories (Community, City, Feature and Headline – draft Strategy p10).
- 3.14 There was positive feedback on the proposed criteria for Headline Events (Appendix 2 Table 4) with 73% (106) respondents “Strongly agreeing” or “Tending to agree” with the criteria. The open question was asked to suggest other criteria with the most responses (15) to introduce an Environmental Impact Charge.
- 3.15 In addition there was support for the development of a winter festival brand (draft Strategy p17).

#### **Action 2: Introduce an Outdoor Events Charter (draft Strategy p19)**

- 3.16 An Outdoor Events Charter is proposed as a public statement to highlight what the city council and organisers are trying to achieve through outdoor events. It is intended to help organisers understand what the city expects from them and to which they publicly commit themselves. It is also a tool to use with local communities who may be impacted by events, to show what is trying to be achieved, to highlight the approach to quality and well-managed events and to build better relationships between those delivering events and those impacted by them.

- 3.17 It has not been possible to identify another UK destination operating a charter such as this and it would be a 'first'. The Outdoor Events Charter is also intended as a means by which to improve the sustainability of events.
- 3.18 Again there was good support for this action with 84% (123) of respondents "Strongly agreeing" or "Tending to agree" with the concept of an Outdoor Events Charter. When asked to identify other requirements for the Charter the main responses were to introduce an Environmental Impact Charge (15) improve sustainability generally (8) and less impact on residents (6).

**Action 3: Develop capacity building in the outdoor events sector (draft Strategy p21)**

- 3.19 There are six specific recommendations in this Action which is aimed at enhancing the impact of the overall Outdoor Events Programme:
- Explore digital tools that can help with event applications to improve efficiency;
  - Use existing digital platforms (e.g. social media groups) to connect the various organisers to support each other;
  - A new role in programme development using clear criteria;
  - Fostering the capacity and capabilities of the local sector and engaging them in the city's challenges;
  - Retain support from other operational teams at the council to deliver this strategy and maintain the reputation as an attractive destination to deliver events;
  - Ongoing review of hire charges and fees.
- 3.20 While this action also received positive support, it was the consultation question that received the highest middle ground responses with 17% (25) neither agreeing nor disagreeing. (Appendix 2 Table 6). While 69% (101) "Strongly agreed" or "Tended to agree" it was the lowest response of the former (27%) of all the questions. This response may reflect this issue is a low priority to residents. Again the highest number of open responses (12) to the open question was the introduction of an Environmental Impact Charge.

**Action 4: Enhance events infrastructure (draft Strategy p25)**

- 3.21 Brighton & Hove is a city that benefits from a variety of large open spaces including Madeira Drive, Preston Park, Valley Gardens, Hove Lawns and Stanmer Park. However, Brighton & Hove's principal spaces are not equipped to support major events, requiring substantial infrastructure to be brought in.
- 3.22 The most frequent responses on the most important elements of Events Infrastructure to develop were more emphasis on managing waste (9) provide water and electricity to sites (8) improved recycling facilities (6).

**Other comments on the draft Outdoor Events Strategy**

- 3.23 The highest number of other comments on the draft Strategy included greater consideration to residents (9) and improved sustainability (7).

## **4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

### Environmental Impact Charge / Levy

- 4.1 A number of responses were received, as part of the public consultation, calling for an Environmental Impact Charge / Levy to be imposed upon event organisers wishing to stage an outdoor event in the city. This has not been recommended to be included in the draft Strategy as it would only serve to increase costs for residents and visitors, passed on from promoters / organisers.
- 4.2 A charge is already made (to event organisers) against any damage to the fabric of our parks and open spaces as a re-instatement deposit. There are also a number of checks and balances, introduced as part of the new Events Charter, which require event organisers to sign up to organising their event considering a broad range of environmental concerns.

### Additional Objective

- 4.3 The objective “Support positive engagement between people and the natural environment” is intended to reflect the importance of sustainability issues linked to events. However, given the number of comments made in the consultation, a further objective in the draft Strategy to “Improve the Sustainability of Events” is proposed. This would reflect the Events Charter which is intended to improve the sustainability of events.

## **5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 The Outdoor Events Strategy was developed in consultation with a range of stakeholders including:

- BHCC departments
- Business stakeholders
- Local stakeholders
- Event organisers
- Public consultation

- 5.2 A four week public consultation was carried out. The overall results were very positive towards the proposed Strategy and a summary is presented as Appendix 2.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 To provide a clear strategy for building on Brighton & Hove’s successful Outdoor Events Programme by identifying priorities and working with partners to address the impacts, both positive and negative.

## **7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

### Financial Implications:

- 7.1 In accordance with the Outdoor Events policy, fees are charged for commercial events and any costs incurred are the responsibility of the organiser. In addition,

a reinstatement deposit is usually held and evidence of adequate insurance cover is required. The fees charged for large commercial events are determined by negotiation based on a number of factors including capacity, whether a new or established event, whether an admission fee is to be charged and infrastructure required; all of these are subject to agreement by officers.

- 7.2 The income generated from fees charged for commercial events in parks and open spaces contribute to the costs of the Outdoor Events Team and enables charitable and community events and free public entertainments to be supported at reduced rates across the city.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Gemma Jackson*

*Date: 07/02/19*

Legal Implications:

- 7.3 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

*Lawyer Consulted: Alice Rowland*

*Date: 06/02/19*

Equalities Implications:

- 7.4 Equalities impacts in the Outdoor Events Strategy include both opportunities to maximise the appeal of the city to diverse visitors and actions to reduce and remove barriers for visitors. This will include improving access (in the public realm and in individual businesses); widening and diversifying the appeal of the city's cultural offer; targeted advertising including to people sharing a protected characteristic; and using diverse visitor voices to inform improvements and assess successes.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.5 A key aim of the proposed Events Charter is to develop the most sustainable events that help protect the environment. Sustainability implications are therefore reflected in the draft Strategy.

Any Other Significant Implications:

Public Health Implications

- 7.6 Outdoor events can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of a local community.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Appendices:**

1. Outdoor Events Strategy
2. Summary of consultation responses.

3. Consultation questions

**Documents in Members' Rooms**

1. None

**Background Documents**

1. None

