**Land Use Policy Portfolio Holder Report**

We consulted on the Land Use policy and the proposed charges and numbers of attendees for all spaces we thought were suitable for public events. The main issues from the consultation are summarised below with a proposed recommendation for each. The recommendations have been incorporated within the attached updated policy. If any recommendations are not agreed by the Portfolio holder the policy will be amended accordingly.

**Summary of Consultation Responses and Recommendations for Changes to Policy**

The consultation was made available on the council website and we e-mailed all known event organisers to make them aware of the consultation. We only received 103 responses and the following highlights the main issues and the recommended changes to the policy as a result of the responses received.

**£50 Application fee** – 51.6% felt that the level of the fee was about right. Of those that felt the fee should be changed the majority felt that there should be no fee.

**Recommendation** - £50 fee to be scrapped for all community events and those organised by local charities. £50 fee to remain for National charities and commercial events.

**Commercial Events up to 1000 attendees –** 54% felt that the fee should be different with the majority stating the amount should be reduced.

**Recommendation** – suggest that the fee for these events be reduced to £350 per day (from the suggested amount of £580). The reduced amount should be sufficient to deal with the majority of events and any more complex events could be required to provide a reinstatement deposit.

**Commercial Events over 1000 attendees –** again 54% felt thefee should be lower.

**Recommendation** – that we bring the charge in line with that for Meridian Park and charge £700 per day – if any days are required for set up it is suggested that these are charged at £100 per day.

**National Charities –** 61% felt that the fee should be lower with the majority of people feeling that we should not charge charities.

**Recommendation** – that the fee remains as outlined within the policy. It is unlikely that any national charities will organise an event in NEL but if they do they will have access to resources to ensure the effective delivery of the event which is likely to be a large event.

**Local Charities –** 58% of responses felt that there should be no fee for these events.

**Recommendation –** small local events organised by charities should not be charged any fee.

**Community Events with less than 200 attendees –** 75% agreed that there should be no fee. Of those that disagreed the majority felt that there should be no fee as stated in the policy!

**Recommendation –** no change to original proposal.

**Community Events with over 200 attendees –** 53% felt that the fee should be different with the majority felling that there should be no charge.

**Recommendation –** remove the fee for larger community events.

**Civic Events –** 73% agreed that these should be free. Of the remaining 27% there was a mixed response of charging at commercial rates to no charge.

**Recommendation –** no change to the original proposal that Civic events should be free.

**Suggested Exemptions**

People were able to suggest events they felt should exempt from fees. The following were put forward;

* Community Events
* Armed Forces Day
* Events that bring trade to the area (although this was countered by comments that events negatively impact on local trade)
* Everything should be free
* Charities

These have been taken in to consideration in the recommendations above.

On the proposal for the prepaid deposit 85% agreed with the proposal **Recommendation** is to keep as originally proposed in the policy.

On the proposal for a reinstatement deposit 72% agreed with the proposal. **Recommendation** is to keep as originally proposed in the policy.

The majority of respondents agreed with the list of open spaces being used for events. The biggest opposition was for Bradley Woods (31.4%) which people felt should be maintained as a wildlife area.

**Recommendation –** no change to the proposal in the policy.

**General Comments**

The following were included in the open comments section;

* Refuse permission for events that use single use plastics (this could align to our response to the climate emergency declaration)
* This is another Council stealth tax
* Shouldn’t charge for events as it boosts local business
* Shouldn’t have events because it has a negative impact on local businesses
* Charging for events could result in wellbeing events such as Santa Stride not taking place (and may impact on Park Runs which are organised by commercial organisations)
* Some areas of land are used for ‘events’ without Council awareness – how will these be charged? (example was a sports club using space at King George V

There was no clear changes to the policy as a result of the general comments but we will need to review the policy annually to see if there are any issues that need to be addressed or parts of the policy that need amendment when the impacts of the policy become clearer.