

TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE 8th March 2006

PROPOSAL TO CHARGE FOR HOLDING EVENTS ON PUBLIC OPEN SPACES

(This is responsibility of Executive Councillor D Bradley)

Report of Leisure Development Manager

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A logical method for calculating hire charges for the use of public open space for events will ensure that all event organisers are treated fairly. By basing the calculation on the area of land used, the length of time of occupation and the nature of organisation hiring the land, the Council is able to generate income for the parks service whilst reflecting community involvement.

1. PURPOSE

To set out the proposals for a charging framework to determine the amount to be paid to the Council for hiring public open space to hold outdoor events.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Members will recall that a report concerning a charging framework for events hiring public open spaces was taken as a policy development item to the Health and Leisure Panel on 30th September 2005. This followed a discussion on a charging proposal to the March 2005 meeting. In September the Panel RESOLVED that:-

(1) the Executive be recommended to approve:-

- a) the further development of the charging calculation framework;
and
- b) consultation with organisations which would be significantly affected by the introduction of charging.

(2) it be agreed that no formal recommendation be made in relation to the categories of organisation that should be charged for the use of public open space for events and the basis for calculating any such charge, pending the receipt of further information.

2.2 The officer's interpretation of the Panel's conclusions is as follows:

- o The proposed exclusions for charging were agreed as: community groups organising an event on the council's behalf or an event which will directly raise funds for that park (usually run by the Friends of the Park); low level activities which contribute to the ambience and enjoyment of the park eg band concerts, morris dancing etc.

- The basis used to calculate the charge will be the most operationally efficient, which is the method originally proposed in February 2005 using the cost to the Council of maintaining the area occupied by the event
- Charities will not receive an automatic discount
- A discount will be given for events serving the Council's Corporate Priorities
- Additional charges will be levied on events which are earning money from the Council's asset eg those charging exhibitors for car parking, those allowing more than the minimum of catering concessions, etc but incidental catering will be exempted
- Time taken to set-up and take-down the event infrastructure will be charged

3. THE REVISED PROPOSAL

3.1 The basis of the proposal is that whilst an outdoor event is occupying public land, members of the public are unable to use it for recreation and the event organiser should therefore compensate for this by way of a hiring fee. This can sensibly be based on the cost to the Council of maintaining the area of land occupied by the event.

3.2 The proposal also applies the exclusions, inclusions, discounts and levies outlined in section 2.2 of this report.

3.3 The hiring fee has two different elements to it: operating days and set-up/take down days:

Operational Days	On the days when the event is operational, the hiring fee will reflect whether the show is trading and whether it is run by a commercial or voluntary organisation.
Set-up Days	On the days when the event is being set up and taken down, the hiring fee will reflect the degree of obstruction to the public.

3.4 The original proposal included two additions to the operational day charge: one if the event was ticketed and the second if the event had on-site trading. Following discussions with stakeholders, it is now proposed to only make one addition to the charge, subject to the level of reserves held by the event not exceeding that necessary to cover possible liabilities and the ability to demonstrate that the double levy would hinder the event's viability.

3.5 Set up and Take Down Charge

The calculation for set-up and take-down days is equal to the daily cost to the Council of those areas that are inaccessible to the public during set-up and

take-down. This is not necessarily the entire event area, but the working areas used during the set-up and take-down.

3.6 Operational Days' Charge:

The calculation for those days on which the event is operating is calculated as follows:

- a) The cost to the Council of the area occupied by the event. This is the Basic Daily Charge (BDC)
- b) If the event is run entirely by volunteers, the BDC is reduced to half to give a Voluntary Sector Daily Charge. (VDC)
- c) If the event is run by a commercial organisation BDC is multiplied by 2 to give a Commercial Sector Daily Charge (CDC).
- d) If the event is allowing significant commercial trading on site and/or charging for entry, the VDC or CDC is doubled for one of these and doubled if both apply. Significant means more than suitable catering provision for the event audience
- e) If the event can prove it is contributing to corporate priorities, VDC or CDC can be reduced by up to 15%

3.7 Examples to illustrate how the system will charge for fictitious commercial sector and voluntary sector events of a similar scale, both using 20% of Vivary Park for a 5 day event are in Appendix 1. The result is that the commercial event would pay 3-4 times as much as the community event.

5. CONSULTATION AND RESEARCH

5.1 Other Councils' Charges

Many Councils were contacted for examples of best practice in charging for events. There was little consistency and only one example of a framework for charging, at Bexley. The details are in appendix 2

5.2 The Moscow State Circus

The charge for a circus over 5 days, using the framework, is likely to be around £3,470. This compares to an equivalent of £5,540 charged for a site in the city by Plymouth City Council.

5.3 Taunton Town Centre Company

The Town Centre Manager currently organises the May Fair in Vivary Park with the Taunton Carnival Committee, and the Christmas events which this year include the ice rink on Goodlands Gardens. The Town Centre Manager is not in favour of being charged a site fee for events which she holds on Council land, but appreciates the Council's need to do so.

Officer response: community events could be held in less prestigious sites which are a cost less for the Council to maintain such as Goodlands Gardens or French Weir Park. A Community Organised event such as the May Fair in

Vivary Park held in 2005 which was set up and operated all in one day such would be charged £174 under the proposals.

5.4 Taunton Flower Show

5.4.1 The Taunton Flower Show membership objects to being charged for the use of Vivary Park. The Chairman of Taunton Flower Show has accepted that some level of charge will be levied, but has expressed an objection to the charge for having traders at an event in addition to that made for selling tickets as both are elements essential to funding the event.

5.4.2 It is recommended that this objection is accepted and the calculation adjusted accordingly for 2006. This should be reviewed for future years in the light of the level of financial reserves held by the Taunton Flower Show which in 2004 were £37,218 against a target reserve of £40,000.

5.4.3 The Show also requests a reduction to reflect its charitable objectives in furthering the education of the public in horticulture and in contributing to the economy of Taunton Deane.

5.4.4 Proposed Flower Show Charge

Taunton Flower Show occupies 57% of the park, is organised by volunteers and is both trading and charging for entry.

Calculation information	Flower Show
Total cost to the Council of the whole park	£585
Cost of area used by the event (57%)	£333
Daily charge for voluntary organisation	£167
Levy for on-site trading	£167
Levy for charging for entry	£167 (waived)
Total charge per day	£334
Charge for operating period (2 days)	£668
Set-up/Take-down (11 days) *	£772 *
TOTAL CHARGE FOR EVENT (before corporate priorities discount)	£1,440

** The Flower Show takes 8 days to set up and 3 days to take down. The Council and Flower Show have identified the precise areas that will be out of public use on each of these 11 days and the total charge for this is £772.*

5.5.5 If the Show is allowed the full 15% discount for its contributions towards the Council's Corporate Priorities the final sum charged would £1,224.

6. RECOMMENDATION

Members of the Executive are recommended to approve the adoption of the framework, outlined in this report, to determine charges for outdoor events held on its land.

APPENDIX 1
 EXAMPLES OF THE DIFFERENT CHARGE RESULTING FOR COMMERCIAL
 AND COMMUNITY EVENTS

These examples illustrate how the charge will be calculated for commercial sector and voluntary sector events of a similar scale, both using 20% of Vivary Park, for a 5 day event.

It has been assumed that during the 2.5 days set-up and take-down time the whole event area will be unavailable to the public on 1 day, half of it on the second day and quarter of it on the final half day.

Calculation information	Commercial event	Sector	Voluntary Sector event
Total cost to the Council of the whole park	£585		£585
Cost of area used by the event (20%)	£117		£117
Daily charge	£234		£58
Levy for on-site trading	£234		£58
Levy for charging for entry	£234		£58
Total charge per day	£702		£174
Charge for operating period (5 days)	£3,510		£870
Set-up/Take-down (2.5 days)	£205		£205
TOTAL CHARGE FOR EVENT (before corporate priorities discounts)	£3,715		£1075

APPENDIX 2

EXAMPLES OF THE SUMS CHARGED FOR EVENTS BY OTHER COUNCILS

BEXLEY

(a national Beacon Council of best practice for parks)

Bexley Council in Kent has many parks and operates a system that distinguishes between fundraising and non-fundraising charities, and also commercial hirers.

Commercial hirers are negotiated on a case by case basis except for funfairs which are charged £400 a day and £100 per day for set up/take down.

For charities the 2005 charges are set out below and exclude setting-up/take-down day charging:

Non-fundraising charities			
<i>20% discount for organisations based in the Borough</i>			
Hours hired (min. of 4)	Less than ½ hectare	½ to 2 hectares	More than 2 hectares
First 4 hours	£39.00	£78.00	£156.00
5	£49.00	£98.00	£197.00
6	£58.00	£117.00	£234.00
7	£69.00	£137.00	£273.00
8	£78.00	£156.00	£312.00
Rate per additional hour:	£10.00	£20.00	£40.00

Fundraising charities			
<i>20% discount for organisations based in the Borough</i>			
Hours hired (min. of 4)	Less than ½ hectare	½ to 2 hectares	More than 2 hectares
First 4 hours	£80.00	£160.00	£320.00
5	£99.00	£199.00	£398.00
6	£120.00	£240.00	£480.00
7	£139.00	£279.00	£558.00
8	£160.00	£320.00	£640.00
Rate per additional hour:	£20.00	£40.00	£80.00

- 6.2 BANES: The Recreation Ground in Bath has a policy of charging large scale non sports events on a case-by-case basis using attendances, duration, set up/take down time, fees charged for admission and parking, area used, expenses for event. Large-scale sports events are charged £500 a day for the event and for set up/take down days. Charities are charged a reduced or nil fee where the charity has related Objects and the charge is on the same basis as large non sports event.
- 6.3 EXETER: charges £2000 for a commercial circus, £175 for charities and nil for community groups, but all pay for expenses incurred by the Council on their behalf.
- 6.4.1 MENDIP: Circuses £376 deposit plus £282 per day. Events over 5000 attendances are negotiated fees, 1-5000 attendances £282, 500-1000 attendances £180, under 500 attendances £113, charities £69 or £34.
- 6.5 SOUTH SOMERSET: over 300 attendances £162 a day, 100-300 attendances £108 a day, under 100 attendances £32 a day
- 6.6.1 WESTMINSTER Events usually cost between £800 and £2,570 per day depending on size of event and location. local groups such as Residents and Community Associations who hold events for their local communities (Fun Days, Garden Parties etc are charged a nominal sum.
- 6.6.2 WEST SOMERSET no charges levied