

Report to: Cabinet



Date of Meeting 31 March 2021

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

East Devon Events Strategy and Events Policy

Report summary:

East Devon has a tradition of hosting successful, large events which have been shown to boost the local economy. We have also facilitated many events that are delivered directly by community groups. East Devon District Council currently supports over 300 events per year and a significant proportion of these events are community led.

The events strategy is designed to support the marketing and promotion of East Devon public realm spaces that can be used for different types of events across our District.

The events policy is to ensure local consultation and collaboration, allowing for the delivery of safe, legal, efficient and successful events, avoiding duplication and providing excellent customer service.

The recommendation seeks adoption of the Events Strategy and Event Policy so that there is a clear, One Council consistent approach to grow and facilitate Events on EDDC owned land.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes No

Policy Framework Yes No

Recommendation:

Cabinet adopts the Events Strategy (Appendix A) and Events Policy (Appendix B) for the reasons set out in the report.

Reason for recommendation:

Supporting the Statement of Intent and Council Plan, the objective of the above policies is to promote our outstanding environment and public realm open spaces as events locations to enable us to:

- deliver an events programme that promotes health and wellbeing opportunities for residents and communities,
- celebrates our outstanding environment, builds community spirit, attracts visitors and improves visitor experience
- positively increases the tourism profile and supports local businesses.

Officers: Nick Christo, StreetScene Operations Manager; Angela Gordon Lennox, Events Officer;

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action and Emergencies
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- Culture, Tourism, Leisure and Sport
- Democracy and Transparency
- Economy and Assets
- Finance
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities

Equalities impact Low Impact

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: Medium Risk; Without an adopted Strategy & Policy, EDDC's event income target of £80k will be at risk

Links to background information [Appendix A - Event Strategy](#), [Appendix B – Events Policy](#)

Link to [Council Plan](#):

Priorities (check which apply)

- Outstanding Place and Environment
- Outstanding Homes and Communities
- Outstanding Economic Growth, Productivity, and Prosperity
- Outstanding Council and Council Services

Report in full

1. In 2020, SMT supported that East Devon District Council would greatly benefit from the recruitment of a dedicated Events Officer, recognising that there was an opportunity for an entrepreneurial approach linking up StreetScene, Countryside, Property & Estates, Communications and Licencing into a coordinate events marketing and organisation activity that has the potential to generate a significant income for the council, and add to the resident / visitor experience.
2. Considering the impact that Covid 19 has had and the event industry continuing to pick and plan for the future, it is important that EDDC has a clear strategy for delivering events and a policy which outlines how we will do this.
3. The events strategy is designed to support the marketing and promotion of East Devon public realm spaces that can be used for different types of events across our District. Our aim is to provide maximum value from our assets, in support of our communities, with a cost neutral events programme that generates additional income to be reinvested in our parks, gardens and beaches and running our key services. These events will promote health and wellbeing opportunities, encourage and improve visitor experience, positively increase the tourism profile and generate and maximises revenue opportunities for our communities.

4. The events policy is to ensure collaboration and delivery of safe, legal, efficient and successful events, avoiding duplication and providing excellent customer service.
5. Our **Council Plan** contains an action to offer with a diverse range of events and activities on our green and open spaces. We also state that we will be - funding teams which work in our communities to promote a great range of activities for residents to enjoy. This includes the development of a strategy and delivery plan for the Council and East Devon to become a much stronger place for events, attractions and entertainment.
6. Our **Transformation Strategy** identifies the opportunities to increase event income under the strategy imperative - maximise the value of our assets through commercial thinking with a focus on income generation, sustainability and developing local economies. The strategy identifies an increase in StreetScene income of £30k by 2020/21 rising to £80k over the next 5 years.
7. Our **Green Space Plan** and Service Plans recognise the value of our open spaces and the opportunities to hold more events and activities on our land, particularly where this contributes towards our health and wellbeing agenda.
8. We are blessed with some outstanding open spaces and environment in East Devon and many of these spaces are owned or managed by the Council. Currently several service areas are involved in event organisation and permissions and we already hold a number of events on our land and are beginning to take a more commercial view as the opportunities for hire and use become more apparent to us.
9. We still have many groups and organisations that have charitable or community credentials who expect land hire at reduced rates or free and whilst we like to accommodate such requests it does cut across a more commercial mind-set. This is a tension that we can reconcile through a clear policy and charging structure alongside our Events Officer who is able to work closely with event organisers, other council departments and partner agencies to ensure that all necessary permissions are granted, whilst ensuring mitigating factors are in place where necessary. In the appointment of the Events Officer we anticipate that this post could cover its own costs and generate an income for the council.
10. As you are aware we have organised or hosted successful events such as Sidmouth Folk festival; Exmouth Big Wheel; outdoor cinema and plays; marriage ceremonies in Manor Gardens, Exmouth, Scooter Rally; Surf Championships; Lifeguard Championships, Manorfest, Oktoberfest - to name just a few.
11. Over the past 2 years our StreetScene events income increased from £10k to £42k and by adopting a more commercial approach to the use and hire of our assets, we see the potential to increase our income to circa. £50k over the short-term and higher over time.
12. In order to achieve this target we need some guiding principles for running/enabling/allowing events on our land and attached are the Events Strategy and Events Policy which seek to do this. Both documents have been consulted on by all relevant departments within the Council and have their support, providing a clear approach to the where and how we will enable and deliver events. We are now asking Cabinet to formally adopt them.

Financial implications:

The adoption of the Strategy and Policy is seen as essential in helping the Council generate additional income to assist in the funding of key services to the public. There may be business rate implications that need to be factored into the cost element.

Legal implications:

It is within the remit of the Cabinet to adopt the strategy and policy. If adopted, they will guide future decision making and processes in relation to use of EDDC land for events. There are no other legal implications requiring comment.