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| Committee(s): | Date(s): | |
| Streets & Walkways Sub Committee | 9 June 2014 | |
| Planning & Transportation Committee | 1 July 2014 | |
| Policy & Resources Committee | 3 July 2014 | |
| Culture, Heritage & Libraries Committee | 14 July 2014 | |
| Subject: Review of Guidelines for Special Events on the Public Highway | | Public |
| Report of: Director of the Built Environment | | For Decision |
| <u>Summary</u> | | |
| <p>This report summarises the findings of a review of the current procedure for considering applications to hold major special events in the Square Mile. This review has resulted in seven proposals being made to Members for their agreement. These cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The establishment of an Event Assessment Matrix; • A revised Event Diary assessment process; • Three year 'root and branch' reviews for regular events; • An amended Member engagement and Committee reporting process; • The consideration in the future of a Special Events strategy; • A revised set of fees and charges; • Improvements to the liaison between City Corporation departments. <p>This report also informs and updates Members on three events, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's Parade for the City of London Festival (27 June) • The Royal Marines 350 Year Anniversary Parade (25 July) • Walk a Mile in Her Shoes (proposed for March 2015). | | |
| Recommendations | | |
| Members are recommended to: | | |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree the proposals for a revised Special Events consideration process. 2. Agree the revised fees and charging structure. | | |

3. Note the changes to the Children's Parade event, which will be subject to a full post-event review.
4. Agree to support the Royal Marines Parade.
5. Agree to accept the application for the 'Walk a Mile in Her Shoes' event.

Main Report

Background

1. The annual report summarising the major special events for 2014 was brought to Members of the Streets & Walkways Sub Committee and the Policy & Resources Committee for their consideration in January.
2. The current process for receiving and assessing event applications has been in place since 2011, and the above report recommended that officers undertake a review of the current procedures.
3. This report now summarises the outcome of that review, which has involved officers of the Highways Team within the Department of the Building Environment, the Film & Event Liaison team and Policy Officers from the Town Clerks, the Visitor Development team at Culture, Heritage & Libraries, the City Police, and officers from the Environmental Health group within Markets and Consumer Protection.
4. This report also summarises other major event requests and issues since the annual report in January.

Current Special Event Approval Structure

5. The Director of the Built Environment has delegated authority to make traffic orders to allow roads to be closed for special events. As such, formal Member approval for each major event is not required but an annual summary report of planned events is presented for Member information.
6. Typically, more than 60 applications to hold events on the City's streets are received annually, of which around 15 might be considered to be major as they require roads to be closed.
7. These applications are considered in the first instance by officers of SEEG, the Significant External Events Group, which comprises representatives from Highways, Public Relations, Culture, Heritage & Libraries and the City of London Police. The merits of each event are considered against a 'test of reasonableness', which can include some, or all, of the following factors:
 - Public safety
 - Traffic impact & proportionality

- Environmental / community impact
 - Clash with other activities
 - Capability of event organiser
 - Past / likely complaints
 - Cost to the City Corporation of implementation
 - Advertising / branding
 - Inappropriate content or scope
 - Available notice & resources
8. SEEG also confirms whether any fees should be charged to an event based on whether it is deemed to be commercial, community based or statutory in nature.
 9. Should an event pass this test of reasonableness, it is given provisional approval subject to a technical assessment of the event by the Safety Advisory Group. The purpose of this group is to receive and assess the fine organisational detail of major events from organisers in order to enable the event to proceed safely. This meeting typically covers a wider range of interests, including external parties such as the emergency services and Transport for London.
 10. There is a further level of large-scale event management for London, with the London Events Steering Group established by the GLA to consider and coordinate pan-London event proposals. Its aim is to ensure effective collaboration and liaison between agencies on planned major events, and to advise on transport, people movement and crowd management policies.

Approval Process Review

11. Given the City has become an increasingly attractive location to hold events since the 2012 Olympics, it was thought appropriate to reconsider whether anything more than a test of reasonableness needed to be applied to event applications. This review has now been concluded, with the following findings:

Relative Strengths of the Current Process

12. The review reiterated that the current procedure has worked well for most applications and circumstances. In particular, its strengths briefly include:
 - Highly experienced, joined up and committed staff within DBE, City Police, Public Relations and Culture, Heritage & Libraries, who understand the needs of City stakeholders and the 'art of the possible'.

- Experienced event managers, who have worked with the City over a number of years to deliver safe events with the minimum of impact.
- Established channels for communication with the public about the impact of upcoming events through the City website, e-mail and Twitter account.
- A well rounded formal application process with guidelines for applicants, and appropriate officer forums to consider applications, namely SEEG, SAG and the London Events Steering Group.

Relative Weaknesses

13. The review did identify a small number of relative weaknesses in five areas.

14. Comparisons between events

- There is a lack of clarity around the relative merits of events, with the focus being on branding events in black and white terms, rather than recognising that all events have their relative merits and weaknesses.
- Direct comparisons between events are over simplified, so that they can revolve around whether an event is primarily charitable or commercial, whereas most events involve elements of both.
- The lack of a policy context to indicate whether events support the wider City agenda amplifies this lack of balance in considering the relative merits of events.

15. The Review Process

- Although operational problems are dealt with before, during and after an event, and some major events (such as the Lord Mayor's Show) do have a full debrief process, others are not subject to a comprehensive root and branch review, with a full pan-organisational debrief.
- Once an event has been granted approval for the first time, event organisers take this to imply a semi-permanent agreement that can be difficult for officers to overturn.
- Without an established path for Members to raise problems with past events, concerns can lie dormant and unresolved, allowing them to surface and become amplified when the annual report reaches Committee.

16. The Annual Report to Members

- The importance of the annual report is over-emphasised, so that it's seen as an 'all or nothing' discussion, rather than part of a regular process of appropriate Member dialogue and engagement.

- The positive benefits of some events can be under-valued as they are not necessarily drawn out in the report, which tends to focus on the volume, concentration and cumulative impact of events.
- Members are unclear as to their purpose in considering the annual report. Are they endorsing approval already made under delegated authority, or are they still effectively able to veto event applications before final permission has been granted?
- Event organisers are typically unaware that the annual report can represent a significant risk to their event, in that comments made at Committee can effectively unravel permission for an event.

17. Fees and Charges

- The current structure for fees and charges looks to band events into three types; statutory, community and commercial. However, in practice, the difference between these bands can be marginal, leading to the vast majority of events being deemed to be community events, and therefore supported largely free of charge.

18. Co-ordination with Private City Events

- There can be gaps in information between the City's on-street event management teams in DBE and the City Police, and its private hospitality and event teams with the Remembrancers and Public Relations. This can have consequences if private events are affected by matters on the highway, or vice versa.

Key Principles of the Revised Event Consideration Process

19. Seven key proposals have been set out that are intended to form an improvement plan for considering special events.

Proposal 1: Event Assessment Matrix

20. *Question: 'How do you assess the relative merits of a not-for-profit event that raises small amounts for charity vs a commercial event that generates £'000s for charitable causes?'*
21. **Recommendation:** Events will no-longer be assessed in terms of good vs bad, but rather in the context that an event can create more than one type of positive benefit, whether in terms of policy deliverable, charitable contribution, community support etc, and that all events cause some degree of disruption and have the capacity to cause complaint.
22. It is proposed that an Event Assessment Matrix (see Appendix 1) will be used to highlight the relative benefits and disbenefits of different events. In particular, it will focus on an event's disruption and potential for complaint, versus its level of community or charitable benefit, and whether it fits with the City's corporate strategies. This EAM will be applied to all major event

applications, provided they still pass the 'test of reasonableness' outlined earlier.

23. Being able to better visualise the respective pros and cons of an event will help inform the decision making process as to whether an event should be supported, and an event's individual assessment can be reported to Members as part of the consideration process. Appendix 1 indicates how this year's current list of major special events would be assessed on this basis.

Proposal 2: Event Diary Assessment

24. *Question: It is often suggested that 'The Event Calendar is full, and there's room for no more', but how can space still be found or justified when a sufficiently prominent event such as the Tour de France is proposed?*
25. Recommendation: The idea of a fixed and simple cap on the total number of events is not an effective concept of control. Instead, it is proposed that the assessment process will account for the concentration of events at different times of year, as well as their cumulative impact.
26. Breaking down each event's impact by 'time of year' (see Appendix 2) challenges the perception that the City's diary is full of events, and clearly indicates that there are times when another event can often be accommodated. Equally, there are other times when the event calendar clearly is 'full' and no further events can be supported, or where room must be left for other highway works to take place (eg utilities, major City schemes, Crossrail etc).
27. In terms of the geographical location of events and their particular impact on residents, an assessment of the current events would suggest that organisers tend to favour the City as a destination, and so look to focus on iconic sights such as St Pauls, Guildhall and Bank, or they are looking for distance events that typically pass through the City along Upper / Lower Thames Street and Victoria Embankment (often taking in Tower Bridge).
28. Of the City's four major residential estates, three (Golden Lane, Middlesex Street and Mansell Street) are rarely impacted by events, with the fourth (the Barbican Estate) affected by just two; Lord Mayor's Show and the Great City Race. However, the new process described above would ensure that any additional major event application that might affect any of these areas would be received and considered by Members before approval.
29. In fact, the impact of events is felt most by the residents around Globe View in High Timber Street due to the frequency of events organised by TfL along Upper Thames Street, but again this visibility of process will better enable officers to raise issues with TfL for both current events and future requests.

Proposal 3: Three Year Root & Branch Reviews

30. *Question: Why do we always have the same events every year, run by the same companies, and why can't we say no to those events that always seem to cause problems?*
31. Recommendation: In order to make it clear to event organisers that an existing event approval does not constitute approval in perpetuity, it is proposed to run a rolling cycle of three year 'in principle' agreements, allowing organisers to plan in the long term for their events, but equally offering the City a natural opportunity to end its support for an event if it is deemed appropriate to do so.
32. An informal feedback loop already takes place as part of the learning process for annual events, but it is proposed that a full root and branch review should take place every three years, at which point a decision is taken as to whether to support that event for a further three years. Correspondingly, this root and branch review could recommend that the City end its association with a particular event, subject to Member approval.
33. This root & branch review would cover:
 - A structured debrief of the event over the previous three years.
 - The safety of the event.
 - The community impact.
 - The effectiveness of the event planning.
 - The effectiveness of the event communications.
 - The number, type and severity of any complaints.
 - The benefits to the City Corporation and City stakeholders (including economic impact).
 - The amounts raised for charitable causes and where this has been distributed / spent?
 - The responsiveness and flexibility of the event organisers.
34. These reviews would be staggered over a three year period to allow for the potential to gradually turn over events. Event organisers would also be on notice regarding where their particular event would sit in the three year cycle. It is accepted that some events are fully fixed in the City's or TfL's respective diaries (eg Lord Mayor's Show, London Marathon), but the discipline of holding a full root and branch review every three years would still be desirable
35. It would still be made clear that a three year rolling cycle would not prejudice the City's right to cancel an event due to poor management or other extenuating circumstances without liability before the three years are up.

Proposal 4: Amended Member Engagement and Committee Reporting

36. *Question: What form of reporting would allow for improved dialogue between officers and Members on special events?*
37. Recommendation: Instead of a singular annual report, a new reporting protocol will be established with shorter but more regular reports covering:

- Any major new proposals considered by SEEG and requiring an EAM assessment (when there is sufficient time to do so);
 - A summary on feedback from 'first year' events;
 - Recommendations for supporting or rejecting those events that have been considered as part of the three year review process.
38. Event organisers will also be informed that their particular event will be the subject of a report, discussion and decision, so that they have the opportunity to attend the public gallery if they so choose.
39. With the inclusion of policy matters (such as the City's Visitor and Cultural Strategies) for the first time in the event assessment process, it was thought appropriate to bring this report to the Culture, Heritage & Libraries Committee. The assessment of how far an event meets the City's policy aims and objectives would typically be made by officers from the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Department, in conjunction with the Public Relations Office and the Town Clerks.
40. However, given that planning for major events is a dynamic process, there needs to be a way in which Members can still have effective oversight when the structured Committee reporting process is not sufficiently responsive to matters on the ground, or able to cover the depth of information that an event may require.
41. For such circumstances, a protocol will be established to engage more regularly with Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen of the respective committees to seek their informal views at an early stage of event planning, or where there is insufficient time to allow for the standard reporting process to be followed.
42. It is not intended to relinquish the delegated authority of the Director of the Built Environment to make traffic orders to facilitate special events, but rather this authority will be enacted in conjunction with the views of Members, either through this dynamic engagement or the more structured reporting process to Committee.
43. This enhanced level of Member involvement would be of particular assistance in dealing with applications that arrive through a political rather than an operational route, for example via the Mayor's Office and the GLA direct to the Town Clerks.

Proposal 5: A Special Events Strategy

44. *Question: Should the City have an events strategy that considers a number of wider questions regarding the role of the City in facilitating major special events?*
45. *Recommendation: As part of this review, officers identified a number of wider points that should be considered in order to help establish a wider events strategy. These would be subject to a later report to Members, but include:*

- How can events better help deliver the City's Corporate Plan, as well as its Cultural, Visitor and Health & Wellbeing agendas?
- Should the City promote and market itself as an event host, rather than just receive and consider those events that are proposed by others?
- Should limits be placed on the number of events that any one particular organiser can promote in the City?
- How can the new powers to authorise street trading be best utilised in the context of major special events?
- What approach should be adopted for considering requests to use the City's bridge lighting over the River Thames for events?

Proposal 6: Revised fees and charges

46. *Question: Is it still appropriate that event applications per se are free of charge, with full cost recovery only applying to what are a small number of fully commercial events?*
47. Recommendation: The vast majority of events are currently supported free of charge because of their community or charitable status, but this does not take into account the officer time in considering applications, which can be considerable. Where there is a direct cost to the City, eg advertising traffic orders or suspending parking bays, full cost recovery is possible, but given the non-commercial nature of most events in the City, full cost recovery of the officer time is unlikely. Fees have therefore been set in order to reflect a reasonable charge for the service.
48. It is therefore proposed to introduce a new set of flat rate fees and charges, irrespective of the type of event, which will help:
- Filter out speculative events
 - Manage demand
 - Contribute to covering administration costs
49. The proposed scale of charges is similar to the existing fee structure used for filming requests by Public Relations and is detailed in Appendix 3. Fees would apply to all event applications (except City Corporation events), but requests to waive fees would only be considered in exceptional circumstances, and an approved 'production credit' would also be required. Any concessions would be reported as a Benefit in Kind as part of the annual report to Members of the Finance Grants Sub Committee, but event organisers would generally be referred to the City's charitable application procedure.

Proposal 7: Improved liaison between the City's public and private-facing departments

50. *Question: How can communications be improved between the respective departments?*
51. **Recommendation:** The Remembrancer's Department will be invited to join SEEG and to bring details of their events that overlap the public highway due to security or road closure requirements, for discussion and review.
52. The Remembrancer, DBE and the City Police will also review contingency plans for major set piece events to ensure the necessary level of close co-operation is maintained.

Update on Previously Agreed Events

Children's Parade (Friday 27 June)

53. Through January's annual event report, Members agreed for a Children's Parade to be held as part of the City of London Festival, requiring approximately a one hour road closure from Guildhall Yard to Paternoster Square via Cheapside, Newgate Street and Warwick Lane.
54. We have since been told by organisers that they have invited around 1,400 participants to take part, instead of the original 1,000, leading to concerns from officers that the closure duration will extend beyond the original one hour. The organisers have assured the City that the event will not require a longer closure, but in accordance with the above revised procedure, officers will look to undertake a full scale review of the event after this year before deciding whether to recommend it taking place again in 2015. The Festival has been informed of this approach and has been asked to co-operate fully with the review.

New Event Notifications / Applications

55. In the context of providing Members with more frequent information regarding major event notifications and applications, two requests are worthy of note.

Royal Marines 350 Year Anniversary Parade (25 July 2014)

56. The Royal Marines will be celebrating their 350th anniversary this year, and have asked to exercise their Privilege to march from the Honourable Artillery Company Grounds in Islington to Guildhall, via the Mansion House, with 'drums beating, colours flying and bayonets fixed'. The Privilege to march through the City dates back to 1664 when the Royal Marines' Royal Warrant granted them the right to recruit from within the City 'volunteer militia' or 'citizen soldiers', which they exercised by marching recruiting parties through the City streets.

57. This march is now routed via Moorgate and Bank junction to Guildhall at around 12 noon, with the Lord Mayor taking the salute in front of Mansion House. A non-public report was agreed by Members of the Hospitality Working Party, the Policy & Resources Committee and the Court of Common Council last year for the City to support this event, including a lunchtime reception at Guildhall at its conclusion.
58. The Remembrancers seek to ensure, where possible, that the number of regiments exercising their freedom to march through the City is limited to one per annum, and the impact of these events (such as last year's Atlantic Parade) is typically limited, with the march managed under a 'bubble' closure by the City Police.
59. This particular event is expected to be larger, with some road closures and diversions of around 30mins required, in addition to a police 'bubble'. It is also likely to attract some media interest, and will be publicised by the national Royal Marine associations.
60. Based on the proposed criteria outlined above, officers would currently assess the event as follows:

Benefit

- Policy Aims & Objectives: +5 (City Heritage)
- Charitable / Community Support: +5 (Overwhelming stakeholder support)

Dis-Benefit

- Disruption & Impact: -3 (Medium impact)
 - Likely complaints: -1 (Small number)
61. This net assessment (+10, -4) would place the event in the green zone of the Event Assessment Matrix. Officers therefore recommend that the event is supported.

Walk a Mile In Her Shoes (proposed for March 2015)

62. We have been approached by the event organiser for a new event called 'Walk a Mile In Her Shoes'. This would be a first time event with a view to becoming an annual event, intended to link with International Women's Day (Sunday 8th March 2015).
63. The event is for sponsored men to walk in stilettos around a one mile course, and has been inspired by similar events in the USA and Canada. In summary:
 - The proposed date is Thursday 5th March 2015, between 7pm and 8pm, involving 1,000+ participants.

- A number of routes are being considered, each about a mile long, with perhaps multiple routes being used to spread the participants. It would involve a small number of roads being closed in the evening, with the majority of the event confined to the footway.
 - The event will seek to target City workers from major corporations, with a nominated women's charity as the beneficiary.
 - The existing marketing for the event would appear to highlight the opportunities for brand partnerships, public relations and corporate social responsibility.
64. The event plan as it stands would currently pass the City's 'test of reasonableness' in terms of organisation and management, and there is sufficient capacity in the City's event calendar at this time of year not to rule the event out. Based on the new assessment criteria outlined above, this would be sufficient to require the event to be brought to Members for their initial consideration.
65. Based on the proposed criteria outlined above, officers would currently assess the event as follows:

Benefit

- Policy Aims & Objectives: +4 (International significance.)
- Charitable / Community Support: +2 (Small charitable contribution)

Dis-Benefit

- Disruption & Impact: -1 (Minor road closures, equivalent to the current Bloomberg Square Mile Run)
 - Likely complaints: -1 (Small number)
66. Adding the scores together, this net assessment (+6, -2) would significantly place the event in the green zone, so officers therefore recommend that the current proposal is accepted.
67. For information, using the Event Assessment Matrix can help track how the planning for an event can develop over time, as its benefits change or its impact reduces. In this instance, the original proposal involved a significant number of major weekday evening road closures, with London Wall desired as a location. That would have changed the event impact (Dis-Benefit) as follows:

Benefit

- Policy Aims & Objectives: +4 (International significance.)
- Charitable / Community Support: +2 (Small charitable contribution)

Dis-Benefit

- Disruption & Impact: -4 (Evening major road closures, equivalent to the impact of the Great City Race)
 - Likely complaints: -4 (Numerous & political; equivalent to the Great City Race and likely to affect the Barbican))
68. This net assessment (+6, -8) would have placed the event well towards the red zone, and would have led officers to recommend that the event proposal be rejected. Instead, the organisers revised their proposal in order to significantly change this assessment, resulting in a much more reasonable and acceptable proposal.

Legal Implications

69. The City as traffic authority may temporarily restrict the use of roads for sporting events, social events or entertainments held on a road under section 16A Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. In carrying out its traffic authority functions the City must also have regard to its duty to secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of traffic (section 122 Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984), and its duty to secure the efficient use of the road network avoiding congestion and disruption (section 16 Traffic Management Act 2004).
70. The approval of an event does not remove the need for the event organiser to secure all other necessary consents (such as advertising), approvals and road closures, and these are processed separately in accordance with the applicable procedures and statutory requirements. This is made clear in the Guidance issued to applicants.

Corporate and Strategic Implications

71. The proposals align with our Corporate Plan 2013/17 (KPP5) in that they help the City Corporation to better manage events and so deliver the objectives described in its Visitor and Cultural Strategies, specifically those around animating the streetscape, supporting national and London celebrations and enhancing our offer for the enjoyment of all our publics.
72. The proposals also enable the City to better address its Community Strategy Theme of 'A World Class City' and 'A Vibrant and Culturally Rich City' through its encouragement of filming and its management of special events.

Consultees

73. The Town Clerk, the Chamberlain, the Comptroller and City Solicitor, the City of London Police Commissioner, the Remembrancer, the Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries, the Director of Public Relations, and the Director of Markets and Consumer Protection have been consulted in the preparation of this report and their comments included.

Conclusion

74. The City seeks to support a series of charitable, cultural and fund-raising organisations by facilitating special events on its road network, and accommodating similar events on Transport for London's Road Network. This report summarises the results of the recent review of the current event application process, and provides an update on a number of recent issues where the views of Members are sought.

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