

Committee(s)	Dated:
Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee	16 April 2018
Subject: Open Spaces Department Events Policy	Public
Report of: Colin Buttery, Director of Open Spaces	For Decision
Report author: Gerry Kiefer, Open Spaces	

Summary

The City's Open Spaces, managed as charitable trusts, have a long history of hosting public events under existing enabling powers. To reflect the increasing volume and complexity of event requests being considered by each Open Space – as well as to address the new opportunities and obligations under the City of London Corporation (Open Spaces) Act 2018, which received Royal Assent on 15 March – the Director of Open Spaces is proposing both a Departmental Policy and site specific local policy arrangements. This will ensure that events are properly managed; the impact of any event on the Open Space, areas under statutory protection and adjoining communities is minimised and that the costs of hosting the event are properly reflected in any charge.

It is intended that this Departmental Events Policy will be reviewed after 12 months.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Approve the Open Spaces Departmental Events Policy as attached as Appendix 1.

Main Report

Background

1. The City of London Corporation holds in trust and manages a number of Open Spaces around London and beyond. Many of them have a long history of hosting public events such as fairs, concerts, charity and community events and sporting competitions. There has been an increasing number of requests to hold events on the City's Open Spaces under existing enabling powers.

2. A policy is necessary to ensure that best practice in event management is implemented by event organisers, that a fair and transparent system exists for decision making and that permitted events are appropriate for the location and that there will be no material damage, or impairment of the public's enjoyment, of the Open Space.
3. The City of London Corporation (Open Spaces) Act 2018 has recently received Royal Assent. This Act makes additional provision for events, subject to a suitable events policy being in force.

Current Position

4. The proposed policy framework draws upon current best practice and experience of licensing and running events; the existing statutory obligations for each site and wider legislative requirements regarding public safety and local authority licensing procedures. Benchmarking with policies from several other London boroughs and City's has informed the proposed policy.
5. The Open Spaces, managed as charitable trusts, which are covered by this policy are:
 - Ashted Common
 - Burnham Beeches & Stoke Common
 - Coulsdon Common
 - Epping Forest and Epping Forest Buffer Land
 - Farthing Downs
 - Hampstead Heath
 - Highgate Wood
 - Kenley Common
 - Queen's Park
 - Riddlesdown
 - West Ham Park
 - West Wickham and Spring Park
6. The City Gardens is not covered by this policy as a separate City Gardens Events Policy was agreed by this Committee on 6 June 2016 and this is being reviewed within the next 12 months.

Proposals

7. In recognition of the differing characters of the Open Spaces managed by the City of London Corporation, an Open Spaces Department-wide policy has been developed in collaboration with officers from all sites. The policy seeks to protect the environment and character of each distinct site from pressure of events, whilst recognising the value that amenity events can bring to the spaces and local communities. The Departmental Events Policy is attached as Appendix 1. It is intended that this Policy will be reviewed after 12 months.
8. The policy sets out the requirements of event organisers, the decision making process, outlines what type of events will not be permitted and those which sit outside this policy and the principles of charging for events.

9. More detailed site-specific policies with associated charges are being developed by the individual Open Spaces. These site-specific policies are/will be subject to consultation with the local consultative groups before being submitted to each service Committee for approval; as per the timetable below. The site-specific policies recognise that each site has limits in terms of the location, number, size and scale of the events it can accommodate. The site-specific policies should be read in conjunction with this overarching Departmental Events Policy. An example template for the site-specific policy is attached as Appendix 2.

Epping Forest Consultative Group	24 January 2018	Local Consultation
Open Spaces & City Gardens Committee	16 April 2018	Committee approval
Epping Forest & Commons Committee	14 May 2018	Committee approval for Epping Forest Site Specific Policy
Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee	16 th April 2018	Local Consultation
Highgate Wood Consultative Group	18 th April 2018	Local Consultation
Queen's Park Joint Consultative Group	24 th April 2018	Local Consultation
Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee	23 May 2018	Committee approval for Site Specific Policy
West Ham Park Committee	2 nd October 2018	Committee approval for Site Specific Policy
Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common Consultation Group	January 2019	Local Consultation
West Wickham, Spring Park and Coulsdon Commons Consultative Group	January 2019	Local Consultation
Ashted Common Consultative Committee	January 2019	Local Consultation
Epping Forest & Commons Committee	11 March 2019	Committee approval for City Commons Site Specific Policy

Corporate & Strategic Implications

10. A Departmental events policy will help deliver two of the aims of the Corporate Plan 2018 – 2023, to:

- Contribute to a flourishing society.
- Shape outstanding environments

In particular, it will help achieve the Corporate Plan outcomes:

Contribute to a flourishing society.

1. People are safe and feel safe
2. People enjoy good health and wellbeing

4. Communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need

Shape outstanding environments

11. We have clean air, land and water and a thriving and sustainable natural environment
 12. Our spaces are secure, resilient and well-maintained
11. It will also deliver the Open Spaces Departmental Business Plan top line objectives:
- A. Open spaces and historic sites are thriving and accessible.
 - B. Spaces enrich people's lives.
 - C. Business practices are responsible and sustainable.

Implications

12. The holding of events gives rise to costs for the charitable funds from which the City manages its Open Spaces. These costs arise from administration, staff support, works which are required to facilitate the event and any necessary remediation works. The policy sets out the approach to recovering these costs whilst the site-specific policies will propose detailed event charges for Committee approval.
13. The Department events policy aims to meet the City of London's statutory obligations and charitable objectives to preserve its open spaces and to provide recreation and enjoyment, and to meet the specific requirements of the City of London Corporation (Open Spaces) Act 2018.
14. The careful assessment of event requests through a clear and consistent policy approach should ensure fairness and equality of access. It provides a clear requirement for event managers to engage with the appropriate legislative and licensing regimes and should ensure that events are run safely and professionally.

Conclusion

15. There is an increasing demand for the City's Open Spaces to host events. The introduction of a Departmental events policy supported by site specific policies will ensure that there is a clear decision-making process to approve event requests and ensure the ecology and environment of the location is not harmed.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Open Spaces Departmental Events Policy
- Appendix 2 – Example template site specific events policy

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