

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Epping Forest Consultative Epping Forest and Commons Open Spaces	24 January 2018 14 May 2018 16 July 2018
Subject: Epping Forest Events Policy (SEF 16/18)	Public
Report of: Director of Open Spaces and Heritage	For Decision
Report Author: Jacqueline Eggleston - Head of Visitor Services	

Summary

Epping Forest, in common with many of the City Corporation's Open Spaces, has a strong history of hosting public events on Forest Land including fairs, circuses, firework displays, concerts, sporting tournaments and charity events.

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 which 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 licence fee.

The Open Spaces Departmental Events Policy was approved by the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee on 16 April 2018.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the approved Open Spaces Departmental Events Policy attached as Appendix 1.
- Approve the policy approach outlined in the report and the site-specific Events Policy for Epping Forest and schedule of event locations attached as Appendices 2 and 3.

Main Report

Background

1. Epping Forest, in common with many of the City Corporation's Open Spaces, has a strong history of hosting public events on Forest Land including fairs, circuses, firework displays, concerts, sporting tournaments and charity events. upon previous experience licensing and running events, the existing legal obligations for each site and the requirements of the Open Spaces Bill. In some cases long standing arrangements for managing these individual events do not fully reflect best practice for event management.
2. The proposed policy framework which has been developed draws upon current best practice 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.
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. In recognition of the differing characters of the open spaces and heritage assets managed by the City of London Corporation, an Open Spaces department wide policy framework 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 and amenity events can bring to the spaces. The Policy is attached as Appendix 1.
5. More detailed site-specific policies with associated charges have been developed by the individual Open Spaces. These should be read in conjunction with the Departmental Open Spaces Events Policy. The Epping Forest site specific policy with charges and application form are attached as Appendix 2.
6. Both policies are drawn from extensive experience of managing and hiring spaces for events by officers across Open Spaces, both within City of London Corporation and from previous experience on a wide range of open spaces in London. Benchmarking with policies from several other London boroughs has also informed the policy.
7. Epping Forest has been the venue for several types of event and activity. There are an increasing number of requests to hold events in the Forest. A policy is necessary to ensure that a fair and transparent system exists for decision making and to regulate the number, type and frequency of events that can take place. Such regulation is also particularly important given the environmental sensitivity of the Forest and its statutory protections for nature and heritage conservation.
8. A schedule of possible locations for events within the Forest is shown in Appendix 3. The locations are 'zoned' according to common characteristics but events will need to be considered individually on their suitability for any proposed location.

Options

9. Your Committee can consider three options:
 - 9.1 Option 1 – To approve the Epping Forest Site Specific Events Policy as presented in Appendix 2 and 3. This will provide a robust framework for officers to provide recommendations on the suitability of event proposals. **This is recommended**
 - 9.2 Option 2 – Not to approve the Epping Forest Site Specific Events Policy as presented in Appendices 2 and 3. This will delay implementation of the approved Open Spaces Events Policy and prevent officers from dealing effectively with regular enquiries. **This is not recommended**

Proposals

10. Events will be accommodated on Epping Forest land according to the conditions outlined in the policy.
11. The timing, location and frequency of events will be restricted. A suggested 'zoning' of locations shown in Appendix 3 provides an outline of restrictions based on size.
12. Large events with a more than 5,000 anticipated audience on any one day and/or that are deemed unusual or likely to raise public interest or concern will be brought to your Committee for approval.

Consultation and Committee process

13. The Open Spaces events policy framework and Epping Forest site-specific policy were presented to the Epping Forest Consultative Committee on 24 January 2018. The Committee made observations on the clarity of charging and creating sufficient recognition of large scale charity fundraising organisations. The site-specific policy in Appendix 2 has been amended to reflect these comments.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

1. The Open Spaces and Site-Specific events policy framework 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
2. 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.

Financial

14. The scale of hire charges for events has been benchmarked with a range of other open spaces across a number of London boroughs and is well within the usual pricing. The charges cover the administration and consideration of the event by officers but also raise revenue for re-investment in to the maintenance and upkeep of the Forest.
15. Charging also provides a method of regulating the number of events and activities that take place in the Forest.

Environmental

16. The number, type, frequency and location will be considered for every application for an event to ensure the ecology and environment of the location is not harmed. Seasonality and special designations may prevent events in some locations. In-house ecologists will be consulted as part of the application process. In addition, for events that may be considered by type, size or scale to have the potential for adverse impacts on the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or Special Area of Conservation (SAC) consent (assent) would be sought from Natural England.

Legal

17. Under Section 36 of the Epping Forest Acts 1878 & 1880 the City Corporation can make provision for byelaws to regulate the assemblage of people. Bye-Law 3(21) licences the temporary erection of buildings. The Second Schedule of the Epping Forest bye-laws details regulations for the erection of Booths, Stands, etc. relating to Bye-Law 3(21).
18. The Court of Common Council's 'Scheme of Delegation to Officers' has agreed the principle that authority shall be delegated to the Superintendent of Epping Forest (under section 37) to grant licences for 'events and entertainments' (section 15{k})
19. Consent for some events may be needed under Section 2(E) of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 or assent under the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017

Reputational

20. The careful assessment of event requests through a clear and consistent policy approach should ensure fairness and equality of access. A clear requirement for event managers to engage with the appropriate legislative and licensing regimes will increase the likelihood of events being run safely and professionally.

Property

21. If events are to be permitted on the Forest, they should be governed by suitable licence terms to ensure that COL is suitably indemnified and that consent to use represents best value according to the charitable operating requirements.

Conclusion

22. The City Corporation Epping Forest frequently receives applications to hold events in the Forest. This policy framework creates a fair and transparent system for assessing these applications and regulating the number, type, location and frequency of events that are permitted.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Open Spaces Events Policy Part 1 Departmental Policy

Appendix 2- Open Spaces Events Policy Part 2 – Epping Forest Site-Specific Policy

Appendix 3 - Event Locations

Jacqueline Eggleston

Head of Visitor Services

T: 020 8532 5315

E: jacqueline.eggleston@cityoflondon.gov.uk