

Transport and Environment Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 12 January 2016

Annual Review of Major Events in Parks

Item number	8.2
Report number	
Executive/routine	Routine
Wards	All

Executive summary

A report detailing the review of the Parks and Greenspace Edinburgh Parks Events Manifesto was presented to and approved by the Transport and Environment Committee on 28 August 2014. The Committee requested that the annual review of events carried out by the Parks and Greenspace Service be reported to Committee on a yearly basis. This report details the results of the 2014/2015 events review. It notes the concerns raised and the mitigating actions which will be taken to ensure continual improvement in the planning and management of future events.

Links

Coalition pledges	P24 , P48
Council outcomes	CO20 , CO23 , CO24
Single Outcome Agreement	

Annual Review of Major Events in Parks

Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that Committee;
 - 1.1.1 notes the content of this report;
 - 1.1.2 agrees to consult with local community groups and other stakeholders on proposal to extend the open procurement process, on the dates specified (during which events are currently held) as detailed in para 3.28 below; and
 - 1.1.3 agrees to receive a further report on the outcome of the consultation with a view to any new arrangements coming into force in 2017.

Background

- 2.1 An annual review of large events was undertaken in September 2015. Event organisers, local councillors, neighbourhood teams, internal partners, sports users and local stakeholders were asked for their feedback following the major events which were held in their local park.

Main report

- 3.1 There were 15 major events reviewed (including Edinburgh's Christmas), which were held over five locations: The Meadows, Leith Links, Inverleith Park, Princes Street Gardens and Calton Hill. An online survey was sent out to 86 relevant groups and individuals on 2 September 2014 and was run until 1 October 2014. The recipients were encouraged to forward the link to other interested parties. Full responses are detailed in [Appendix 1](#).
- 3.2 In summary, the review suggests that, with a few exceptions, respondents were generally happy with how the events proceeded and were managed.
Princes Street Gardens
- 3.3 Stakeholders were contacted for comment regarding four events held in Princes Street Gardens:
 - Oktoberfest (7 responses);

- The Winter Festival (17 responses);
 - The Summer Festival Wheel (4 responses); and
 - Magners Summer Nights (2 responses).
- 3.4 The comments received mainly highlighted concern regarding the damage to the gardens and the length of time for recovery following the Winter Festival. In addition, concerns were raised regarding deliveries for the market operators and whether there could be set times introduced.
- 3.5 There was one comment regarding the aesthetic look of the Summer Festival Wheel and whether it was in-keeping with the gardens.
- 3.6 An additional point was raised regarding a perceived underuse of the Ross Bandstand.

Inverleith Park

- 3.7 Stakeholders were contacted for comment regarding two events held in Inverleith Park:
- The Moonwalk (13 responses); and
 - Foodies Festival (4 responses).
- 3.8 The Moonwalk was considered by some consultees to cause significant damage to the site. Insufficient tracking was also cited as an issue, and the clear up operation by the event organiser and the damage left was considered by some as unacceptable. Public access during the whole event was mentioned and comments from sports users suggested that there was severe disruption to sporting fixtures (although one consultee suggested there was no disruption).
- 3.9 It should be noted that The Moonwalk has recently secured Holyrood Park as a venue for its 2016 event and so will not be located at Inverleith Park in 2016.
- 3.10 The Foodies event received some criticism for traffic management.

The Meadows

- 3.11 Stakeholders were contacted for comment regarding 4 events held in the Meadows:
- Meadows Festival (7 responses received);
 - Meadows Festival Funfair (7 responses received);
 - Underbelly Circus Hub (16 responses received); and
 - The Fringe Festival Funfair (8 responses received).
- 3.12 Concerns were raised regarding the length of time the Underbelly Circus Hub was on site, along with specific concerns over the last minute decision to agree an extension allowing them on site five days early and a perceived lack of local consultation.

- 3.13 Damage to the ground caused by vehicle movement, parking, the use (or not) of tracking were highlighted as issues by some of the respondents and related to the funfairs and circus.
- 3.14 Fuel spillages from the funfairs were mentioned.
- 3.15 The Circus Hub received some criticism for the amount of vehicles on site, traffic movement outwith specified times and deliveries made without the presence of a banksman. Suggestion was made that for 2016, greater controls around traffic movement, the number of vehicles, and weight of equipment, should be introduced.
- 3.16 Concerns were raised regarding the methods used for the reinstatement of the ground and why the site is not re-turfed (like Princes Street Gardens following Christmas events).
- 3.17 Noise was cited as a problem in relation to the funfairs and the circus. There were contradictory reports regarding which event was responsible for the noise.
- 3.18 Positive comments were received regarding the general site management of the Circus, the onsite 24-hour security presence, and how the event was moved off site. Staff were commended for being friendly and approachable and the operators were in contact with the local community throughout the event.

Calton Hill

- 3.19 Stakeholders were contacted for comment regarding two events held at Calton Hill:
- Dusherra (3 responses); and
 - Beltane (3 responses).
- 3.20 There were no concerns highlighted regarding these two events.

Leith Links

- 3.21 Stakeholders were contacted for comment regarding three events held at Leith Links:
- Leith Festival Gala Day (5 responses);
 - Leith Festival Funfair (3 response); and
 - The Mela (7 responses).
- 3.22 The only concerns highlighted related to The Mela. Comments were made regarding restricted public access during the set up of the event, lack of tracking, traffic management, signage and Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs).
- 3.23 The poor cleanliness of the site during and after the event received some negative comments.

How Will These Comments and Concerns Be Addressed?

- 3.24 All of these events are subject to Event Planning and Organisational Group (EPOG) consideration, which is a multi-agency group lead by Public Safety and includes representatives from Events, Licensing, Roads, Neighbourhoods, and Parks & Greenspace, along with external partners such as the Police, Ambulance, and Fire Safety. Each event has its own individual EPOG group organised for it. The concerns and issues raised by this review will be addressed by these groups and, where possible, mitigated for future events. In addition, consideration of the comments will, where appropriate, be reflected in future event lease instructions.
- 3.25 The Council will be working with Underbelly for the second year of its contract to mitigate and avoid the issues that led them to request early entry on to the Meadows in 2015.
- 3.26 The Meadows are not re-turfed after the Festival events due to the drainage system installed and difficulty in protecting newly laid turf in an open park. Seeding is the preferred method of reinstating grass.
- 3.27 A question that ran throughout the survey was whether it was obvious to members of the public who should be contacted in the event of a problem or complaint. The results were mixed and this has highlighted a potential weak point for many of the events. Discussions will be held with all organisers to identify ways in which to improve this position, including the possible use of additional signage.

2017 Events

- 3.28 Generally events in 2016 will be processed using the current procedure. However, following the open-procurement trial in The Meadows for the 2015 and 2016 Edinburgh Festival, officers are proposing to widen this approach from 2017 for specified dates in the following venues:
- Inverleith Park – 2 weeks in August;
 - Princes Street Gardens – 1 week in October;
 - Princes Street Gardens, the hard standing events area during the Edinburgh Festival; and
 - Funfairs in the Meadows during June and August, and Leith Links in June.
- 3.29 The local community will be consulted during the drafting of specifications for these events.

Measures of success

- 4.1 Next year's review of the events held will show an improvement with regard to those issues highlighted as concerns noted in this year's review.

- 4.2 The successful tendering of an additional six annual events to the portfolio of events from 2017.

Financial impact

- 5.1 It is anticipated that extra revenue may be generated following the extension of procurement led annual events from 2017.

Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 N/A

Equalities impact

- 7.1 There is no relationship between the matters described in this report and the public sector general equality duty. There is no direct equalities impact arising from this report.

Sustainability impact

- 8.1 There is a need to balance the requirements of event operators with the wishes of local communities and park user groups.

Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 The review was carried out with relevant stakeholders including Culture and Sport and Public Safety as shown in [Appendix 1](#).

Background reading/external references

N/A

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Links

Coalition pledges	P24 - Maintain and embrace support for our world-famous festivals and events P48 - Use Green Flag and other strategies to preserve our green spaces
Council outcomes	CO20 - Culture, sport and major events – Edinburgh continues to be a leading cultural city where culture and sport play a central part in the lives and futures of citizens CO23 - Well engaged and well informed – Communities and individuals are empowered and supported to improve local outcomes and foster a sense of community CO24 - The Council communicates effectively internally and externally and has an excellent reputation for customer care
Single Outcome Agreement	None
Appendices	Appendix 1 Full Responses