

Equality Impact Assessment

Open Spaces Events and Lettings Policy

What is being assessed?	Open Spaces Events and Lettings Policy
Department	Parks
Name of assessor/s	Paul Anderson
Strategic Management Lead	Graeme Kane
Date	December 2013
Is this a new or existing function or policy?	New

Please note that guidance (revised in November 2013) for completing this template is available on the intranet. This template was also revised in November 2013.

Section 1: Introduction and background (see p.10 of the guidance)

Please describe your service or function. This should include:

- **The aims and scope**
- **The main beneficiaries or users**
- **The main equality, accessibility, social exclusion issues and barriers, and the ‘protected characteristics’¹ they relate to (not all assessments will encounter issues relating to every protected characteristic)**

If this EIA is part of a project it is important to focus on the service or policy the project aims to review or improve.

The Council is often approached for permission for use parks and open spaces for a variety of reasons, such as private parties, filming and other events. Decisions around these requests are currently made within the Parks Team, in consultation with the relevant ward Members. The purpose of this report is to present a policy which will be used as a basis for making decisions on requests.

Whilst the Council owns its parks and open spaces, it is recognised that this is for the benefit of the communities it serves. Therefore, in addition to setting a policy for decision making, a key aim of this policy is to motivate and enable our communities to participate in the decision making process.

This will be achieved by decision making being devolved to Parish Councils, Residents Associations or recognised Community Organisations, who wish to have the power to make decisions on applications devolved to them.

Depending on the nature of these community organisations, different approaches to enabling this decision making will need to be put in place. The Council will work with individual organisations to facilitate this.

For any community organisations that don’t want the devolved power, the Council will work with community groups on making decisions on applications for the use of the Council’s parks and open spaces. We will operate under the principle of agreeing with the view of the local community, except where their view is contrary to the

¹ More information and definition of protected characteristics can be found [here](#)

Council's policy or our legal responsibilities or is not objectively justified.

Preliminary engagement has been undertaken with community organisations about this proposed new approach to letting out the Council's parks and open spaces to ensure that the policy is one that they would welcome. As part of this, income from the hiring out of land will be retained by the community organisation. The Council will work closely with relevant organisations to ensure the smooth and effective rolling out of the policy. For those that want to take advantage of Parish Councils and community organisations have been made aware of the

The Policy clearly sets out the terms and conditions of hiring land for events, and sets out all of the issues which applicants will need to address. Therefore in addition to opening up the possibility of delegating decisions to community level we are also improving the application process, so that potential applicants can clearly understand the application process, what is required of them and how applications will be assessed.

Now describe how this fits into the Council's Corporate Priorities, Sustainable Community Strategy or other local, regional or national plans and priorities.

Access to Services – Helping residents to access the services they need

Our Parks and Open Spaces are important facilities that are there for the benefit of everybody in our community. Equally, we know that events (such as funfairs) on our land can bring further benefits to the community, and that local people may want to use our land for special occasions (fetes, weddings etc).

This Policy seeks to ensure a consistent approach to the use of our land that maintains community use and access, whilst enabling and balancing other 'one off' requests.

The Policy has been developed to promote community participation in decision making at the Council and wherever possible to devolve decision making to local communities.

Environment - Maintaining the character and environment of Mole Valley

Our parks and open spaces are a crucial part of the District's environment. This Policy sets a framework to ensure that any applications for the use of our land are handled in a sustainable way and maintain the quality of the parks and open spaces.

Value for Money - Delivering quality, value for money services

The Policy sets out the charges that will be set for people wishing to hire our land to ensure that income from events is optimised.

If you are not carrying out an equality impact assessment, briefly summarise reasons why you have reached this conclusion, the evidence for this and the nature of any stakeholder verification of your conclusion.

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Section 2: Analysis and assessment (see pp. 10-13 of the guidance)

Given available information, what is the actual or likely impact on minority, disadvantaged, vulnerable and socially excluded groups?

Indicate for each 'protected characteristics' whether there may be a positive impact, negative impact, a mixture of both or no impact.

Protected characteristics	Positive	Negative	No impact	Reason
Age			X	The Policy has been developed in line with the Council's Equality Policy and explicitly states "The Council expects that any event taking place in public parks and open spaces is accessible to visitors with mobility impairments and be inclusive of differing ethnic and religious groups" The Policy will not have positive or negative impacts but seeks to ensure that a equitable approach is taken to all applications to hire land.
Disability			X	
Gender reassignment			X	
Marriage and civil partnership			X	
Pregnancy and maternity			X	
Race			X	
Religion or belief			X	
Sex			X	
Sexual orientation			X	
Other aspects to consider	Positive	Negative	No impact	Reason
Carers			X	See above
Rural/urban issues	X			The policy allows decisions to be delegated to local communities which gives local communities more ownership and control over decision making.
HR issues			X	See above

What can be done to reduce the effects of any negative impacts? Where negative impact cannot be completely diminished, can this be justified, and is it lawful?

No negative impacts have been identified.

Where there are positive impacts, what changes have been or will be made? Who are the beneficiaries? How have they benefited?

The main positive impact is on community organisations rather than individuals or groups within any of the protected characteristics. However, in allowing decisions to be delegated to local community organisations, we are enabling decisions to be made by local communities in line with our policy.

Section 3: Evidence gathering and fact-finding (see p.14 of the guidance)

What evidence is available to support your views above? Please include:

- A summary of the available evidence
- Identification of where there are gaps in the evidence (this may identify a need for more evidence in the action plan)
- What information is currently captured with respect to usage and take up of services.
- What the current situation is in relation to equality and diversity monitoring (where relevant)

The Policy has been developed to ensure a fair and equitable approach is taken across the District to applications for using the Council's open spaces, with decisions delegated to local community organisations, where they want to take on this responsibility. As such, in developing the policy, it has not been considered necessary to undertake an analysis of the demography of the District or a specific exercise about the impact on the protected characteristics.

How have stakeholders been involved in this assessment? Who are they, and what is their view?

Community organisations have been engaged in the process to ensure that the approach to developing the policy is in line with their requirements.

Recommendations

Please summarise the main recommendations arising from the assessment. NB If it is impossible to diminish negative impacts to an acceptable or even lawful level the recommendation should be that the proposal or the relevant part of it should not proceed.

None

Section 4: Action Plan (see pp.15-16 of the guidance)

Actions needed to implement the EIA recommendations

Issue	Action	Expected outcome	Who	Deadline for action

Summary Sheet

Review date	
Person responsible for review	
Strategic Management Lead signed off	
Date completed	
Date forwarded to Policy Officer for publishing	

- Signed off electronic version to be kept in your team for review
- Electronic copy to be forwarded to the Policy and Performance Team for publishing