

Committee/Meeting: Cabinet	Date: 9 March 2011	Classification: Unrestricted	Report No: CAB 099/101
Report of: Corporate Director Community, Localities and Culture Originating officer(s) Heather Bonfield, Interim Service Head, Cultural Services		Title: Commercial Activities in Parks Wards Affected: Primarily Bow East and Bow West	

Lead Member	The Mayor
Community Plan Theme	A Great Place to Live
Strategic Priority	2.2 Strengthen and Connect Communities

1. **SUMMARY**

The report considers a policy for Major Events in Parks, the future tendering of the opportunity to stage commercial events in Victoria Park and agreement to spaces further develop income generation opportunities in other parks and open spaces where these do not impact unduly on the local community and planned sporting arrangements

2. **DECISIONS REQUIRED**

Cabinet is recommended to agree:-

- 2.1 The number of commercial and non-commercial event days in Victoria Park be restricted to ten days (excluding 2012). This limit to exclude events such as charity fun-runs.
- 2.2 The current closing time (11.00pm) remain unchanged
- 2.3 One consecutive weekend of commercial music events be permitted
- 2.4 Officers continue to monitor levels of security, stewarding and traffic management and improve these as necessary in response to need
- 2.5 Noise control levels continue to be monitored and adjusted as necessary in the light of ongoing experience
- 2.6 Negotiation for the Live Site in 2012 be considered outside of these arrangements

- 2.7 Arrangements to allow a maximum of ten commercial events in Victoria Park in 2011 continue
- 2.8 The two-day Paradise Gardens event no longer proceed
- 2.9 In place of a single major fireworks event in Victoria Park, four smaller community fireworks events take place, one in each paired LAP.
- 2.10 The opportunity to promote events in Victoria Park be tendered for the year 2013 and onwards
- 2.11 That income generating opportunities in other suitable parks continue to be pursued where these do not impact unduly on the local community and planned sporting arrangements

3. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 3.1 The programme of events in Victoria Park has been developed over a number of years and arrangements for the management of these events has been developed concurrently with appropriate professional advice.
- 3.2 Council on 8 December 2010 resolved that officers should bring forward a policy for events in Victoria Park and this report sets out such a policy

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 An income target for events in parks is proposed within the 2011/12 budget setting process; in addition income from events is used to support events for the community for which there is no budget provision. A substantial income target has been set for Victoria Park within the Management Plan approved by the HLF. Furthermore the events are enjoyed by many thousands of people and generate relatively few complaints. The option to cease major music events in Victoria Park was considered but rejected.
- 4.2 The arrangements proposed by Council on 8 December were fully considered as well as other combinations of days, but the proposed programme offers optimum income opportunity with the least disruption to neighbouring communities whilst remaining comparable with the number of events resolved by Council.

5. BACKGROUND

- 5.1 Prior to 2004 there were occasional major events in Victoria Park in addition to the summer programme e.g. Radiohead 2000 and Paul Weller 1998. However since 2005 the programme has grown with events such as the Lovebox Weekender, High Voltage, Underage / Field Day and LED taking place. Ten commercial event days took place in 2010 and discussions have taken place with promoters since last summer to progress a similar

programme of 10 commercial event days in 2011 to generate a savings target and support free community events.

5.2 Council on 8 December 2010 discussed the impact of major events in Victoria Park on the local community. Council noted that events in Victoria Park are both an opportunity for our community to come together and bring new users to the park and should be supported; that commercial events in the park are an important revenue stream for the future upkeep of the park after the Lottery-funded restoration and that this must be balanced with the needs of local residents. Council resolved to ask officers to bring forward a policy that limits the number of large commercial music events in Victoria Park to six each year; prevents the park being used on consecutive weekends throughout the summer, with at least two weekends free after a weekend of events; brings forward the closing time for events to 10pm; increases the level of security, stewarding and traffic management in the streets surrounding the events; reduces the noise levels permitted at events; and includes a separate policy that addresses the particular needs of the 2012 Live Site during Olympic year, recognising that this is a one-off occasion but also recognising the needs of local residents. This resolution of council is to be taken as a request to the Executive to consider the motion of Council in deciding future policy in the Park.

5.3 In 2010 there were 13 days with major events in Victoria Park, of which ten were commercial and three were community. These are set out in the table below

Event	Date	capacity
Commercial Programme		
Lovebox Weekender	16, 17 & 18 July	75,000 over 3 days
High Voltage Classic Rock	24 & 25 July	50,000 over 2 days
Underage/Field Day	30, 31 July & 1 st Aug	40,000 over 3 days
London Electric Dance	28 & 29 Aug	40,000 over 2 days
10 commercial event days		
Community Events		
Paradise Gardens	19 & 20 June	60,000 over 2 days
Fireworks	7 Nov	90,000
3 community events days		
Total = 13 event days		

5.4 Since the end of the 2010 programme of events discussions have taken place with promoters to develop the 2011 programme. Whilst a similar number of events have been planned, these do not include proposals for three successive weekends of events which occurred as a pilot in 2010. Whilst this arrangement substantially reduced the movement of vehicles and disruption caused by build-up and take-down of the infrastructure for the events, feedback from Members and the local community indicated their concerns about this arrangement and it was not proposed for 2011.

6. BODY OF REPORT

- 6.1 As indicated above, development of the 2011 commercial music events programme in Victoria Park is underway and discussions have been taking place with three promoters since the programme concluded last year. The promoters' plans are in progress and in respect of two events at least, advance tickets are already on sale on their websites.
- 6.2 To implement the Council motion in full would have a profound effect on the level of income and mean an effective end to the carefully managed major events programme which the Council has sensitively developed over the past several years fully recognising the potential impact on the local community. It would also prevent the level of income required for Victoria Park under the Lottery funding agreement being achieved. For example, bringing the end time forward to 10.00pm will mean that customers would perceive events as poor value for money and promoters will therefore be less interested. The inability to hold events on consecutive weekends would mean that two of the annual commercial events (which have the same promoter) would not take place, dramatically reducing potential income and providing no funding for community events.
- 6.3 Many Councils are seeking to get a foothold in the events market to generate income, but Tower Hamlets has the advantage to date of a sound track record of effective and safe management and robust arrangements. Nevertheless the impact of Victoria Park events on the local community, which has clearly raised concerns for Members, has to be carefully reviewed and managed and the limits to its use agreed.
- 6.4 In 2010 a total of 97 complaints were made across the ten days of commercial events (the number of complainants likely to be lower as some people made multiple complaints), this was less than ten per event. This needs to be considered against attendances of over 200,000 people and the income generated by these events. It is regrettable that people are affected by events sufficiently to lead them to complain, but there are no grounds to enforce a reduction in current noise levels based on the above analysis. The current noise control levels and management arrangements were developed with external professional advice, are kept under careful review and are rigorously enforced. It is therefore recommended that noise control levels continue to be monitored and adjusted as necessary in the light of ongoing experience.
- 6.5 The stewarding and cleaning of Victoria Park and the surrounding area are also kept under careful scrutiny and arrangements are adjusted and strengthened in response to any complaints received. For example, THEOs and security staff were deployed in specific streets for the last event of 2010 following complaints of anti-social behaviour and this will now be the norm for the future. It is therefore recommended that Officers continue to monitor levels of security, stewarding and traffic management and improve these as necessary in response to need.
- 6.6 Officers have carefully considered the 2010 programme and whilst the resolution referred specifically to commercial events, it can be seen from the

table above that free community events generate the largest audiences – 150,000 across three event days – and therefore have the greatest local impact. It is therefore recommended that, whilst the loss of this popular event to the community is very regrettable, consideration be given to no longer having the Paradise Gardens event. Furthermore it is proposed to re-provide the annual major fireworks event in Victoria Park with four smaller community events, one in each paired LAP. This will reduce the number of events in Victoria Park to ten, one more than the Council resolution (which supported three community and six commercial events), but it will result no loss of income. It will also ensure that there is only one consecutive weekend and frees up a further weekend without a planned use. It is therefore recommended that the number of commercial and non-commercial event days in Victoria Park be restricted to ten days (excluding 2012); this limit to exclude events such as charity fun-runs. It is also recommended that one consecutive weekend of commercial music events be permitted and that the closing time for events remain unchanged

- 6.7 In 2012 the Olympic Live Site will operate and negotiations in partnership with the GLA, Royal Parks, LOCOG and the preferred event organiser are progressing and the recommendations set out in this report are not proposed to apply for that year.
- 6.8 Consideration has being given to the management of commercial events after the Live Site in 2012. It is proposed to tender the opportunity to run commercial events in Victoria Park from 2013 onwards and a report on the proposal will be brought to Cabinet in due course.
- 6.9 Corporate/private events also provide opportunities for income generation and in 2011 c£20,000 income is anticipated. Appendix 1 sets out parks which offer greatest opportunity to generate income, although all opportunities are considered and all parks will be promoted; for example a wedding reception will be held in Stepney Park this summer from which income will be received.
- 6.10 **Corporate Events:** These include charity sporting events sponsored by corporations such as Nike's Limelight run in Victoria Park. Corporates are also interested in locations for hospitality marquees and promotional events. Whilst this area has been affected by the downturn in the economy, there is still a demand for competitively priced venues and there are a number of events agencies working in this market.
- 6.11 **Private Events:** The biggest potential market here is weddings where organisers are looking for attractive locations for receptions in marquees.

It is proposed to continue to promote parks for income generating opportunities where these do not impact unduly on the local community and planned sporting arrangements

7. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

- 7.1 Currently, the net income received from commercial events is utilised to fund free to access community events and has no net income benefit to the current Event in Parks budget.
- 7.2 The Events in Parks budget is required to achieve a net income target of £200k for 2011/12.
- 7.3 Paragraph 6.6 recommends ceasing the Paradise Gardens event and re-providing the major firework event with four smaller community events in LAP areas. These are currently funded from the net income received from commercial events.
- 7.4 Paragraph 6.9 identifies how a further £20k of income can be achieved by providing opportunities for Corporate/private events
- 7.5 The implementation of the proposals in paragraph 6.6 and 6.9 should ensure that the income target set for 2011/12 can be met.

8. CONCURRENT REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (LEGAL SERVICES)

- 8.1 Under the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 as amended the functions exercised by Council and the Executive have been split so that there are clear decision making powers. The Executive has the powers to decide policy. The Council motion is to be taken as a request from Council to the Executive to ask officers to review the policy and take into consideration there motion. Officers have detailed in the report the impact of the motion for consideration of the Executive. The Council. has the power to raise revenue from allowing activities to take place in Victoria Park but it also has a responsibility to act reasonably in all that it does. It therefore must take into account the issues raised by the adjoining residents.
- 8.2 It also has a duty to achieve best value under Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 which includes making best use of the assets it has at its disposal. A balanced view therefore has to be taken about achieving the full potential of assets, the nuisance caused to local residents and the primary purpose of the asset i.e. as a public park. However it also needs to secure funding to ensure the public park can be maintained to a satisfactory standard and the commercial events contribute towards this.
- 8.3 The proposals in this report demonstrate that these issues have been taken into account and adjustments to the previous years' activities have been made.

9. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1 Events in parks, whether free or commercial, provide opportunities for communities to come together in a mutual enjoyment of music, dance and

other arts and entertainment; the council has an excellent record of managing these events to minimise their impact on the local community from noise, litter and asb. The loss of the popular Paradise Gardens is very regrettable; however if the number of events is to be reduced in response to the 8 December 2010 Council resolution and essential income is to be sustained, then it will be necessary to cease this event for 2011.

10. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT

10. Promoters of events in parks are required to provide bonds which ensure that any damage arising from the event is re-instated. They are advised of council's policies on sustainability and required to adhere to them

11. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The proposals in this report provide the least risk to future income generation.

12. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 Whilst major events could have the potential to generate anti-social behaviour they are planned in full consultation with the Police and all plans are approved by the Safety Advisory Group which has Police and other emergency services representation
- 12.2 If complaints are received about ASB following events they are noted and action is taken to increase the presence of stewards and THEOs in those areas.

13. EFFICIENCY STATEMENT

- 13.1 It is proposed to tender the opportunity to promote major events in parks from 2013 onwards; opportunities for income generation from corporate and private events and smaller commercial events in other venues will be marketed in 2011.

**Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)
List of "Background Papers" used in the preparation of this report**

Nil