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| Cabinet Decision |  TOWER HAMLETS |
| 29 November 2023 | |
| Report of: Raj Mistry, Corporate Director, Communities | Classification: Unrestricted |
| Major Events Policy for Events in Victoria Park | |

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| Lead Member | Councillor Iqbal Hossain, Cabinet member for Culture & Recreation |
| Originating Officer(s) | Catherine Boyd, Head of Arts, Parks and Events |
| Wards affected | All wards |
| Key Decision? | Yes |
| Reason for Key Decision | Significant impact on two or more wards |
| Forward Plan Notice Published | 27/06/2023 |
| Exempt information | N/A |
| Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome | 4. Boosting culture, business, jobs, and leisure |

Executive Summary

The Arts, Parks and Events team manages a range of community, commercial and corporate events across the Council's parks and open spaces.

This report sets out the current Major Events Policy for Victoria Park. Benchmarking against other local authorities and venues in London that hold major outdoor events has been undertaken and a review of the Major Events Policy (for events in Victoria Park) is recommended to enable the Council to broaden the range of well managed events that can be considered for Victoria Park.

It is proposed that the number of major event days in Victoria Park increases from ten to twelve per calendar year; that the capacity threshold of major events is altered in line with other local authorities and comparable venues; and that the categorisation of major events is amended to allow a wider variety of events to take place in addition to the major commercial events programme.

The proposed amendments to the Major Events Policy would enable the Council to programme more events in Victoria Park, increase opportunities for residents to

access high quality events and cultural programmes, benefit the local economy and support the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) through revenue generation.

Recommendations:

The Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Amend the Major Events Policy for Victoria Park to allow for up to 12 Major Event Days per calendar year as set out in paragraph 3.13 of this report.
2. Amend the Major Events Policy for Victoria Park to increase the capacity threshold for a major event from 5,000 persons at any one time to 20,000 at any one time, and amend the thresholds for small, medium and large events accordingly as set out in paragraph 3.16 of this report.
3. Amend the Major Events Policy for Victoria Park to change the categorisation of events considered to be major events, thereby allowing a broader range of events to take place in addition to the major events programme.
4. To note the Equalities specific considerations as set out in Paragraph 4.

1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 Under the current policy for major events in Victoria Park, approved by Cabinet on 6 January 2021, up to ten major commercial event days are permitted per calendar year in Victoria Park; the policy allows for six major event days with a capacity of up to 49,999, and four major event days with a capacity of up to 39,999 per annum.
- 1.2 A major event is currently defined as an event with an attendance of more than 5,000 at any one time. Major events are generally held in Victoria Park, which is the largest park in the borough.
- 1.3 A review of the Major Events Policy for Victoria Park is recommended in terms of the number of major event days, thresholds for major event days and categorisation of major event days. This will enable the Council to programme a higher number and broader range of events in Victoria Park that support income generation, the local economy and provide cultural and entertainment opportunities for residents and visitors.
- 1.4 With a growing population, there is an increased need for well-maintained parks and open spaces. As a result of ongoing reduction to government funding, the Council, like other local authorities, has continued to face budget pressures that have been further impacted by the rising cost of services and cost-of-living crisis. As a result, local authorities have to

identify alternative income streams to continue to be able to fund non-statutory services including parks and open spaces.

- 1.5 Tower Hamlets Council, like other London local authorities including Haringey, Lambeth and Southwark, has utilised parks and open spaces to generate income from events including large scale commercial events since 2005. The live events economy is an important source of income for boroughs to be able to maintain parks and contributes to the wider local economy as well as providing opportunities for local engagement.
- 1.6 As part of the budget setting process for 2023/34, Full Council approved an income target of £1,588,000 from commercial event activity in parks and open spaces. This is likely to increase in future years.

2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Not alter the existing policy, therefore restricting the number and range of events that can be considered for Victoria Park.

3 DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 In January 2021, Cabinet approved an amendment to the Major Events Policy for events in Victoria Park to allow for up to ten commercial events, with four event days at a capacity of up to 39,999 and six event days at a capacity of up to 49,999 per calendar year in Victoria Park.
- 3.2 All of the major event days are currently allocated through the Major Events Concession, which allows for ten event days per calendar year. This excludes Council organised events and mass participation runs.
- 3.3 A Major Event is currently defined as an event that has or is expected to have more than 5,000 attendees (capacity) at any one time. Any reference to a capacity in this report is to actual or expected capacity.
- 3.4 Under the current Major Events Policy for events in Victoria Park, the Council is unable to consider third-party community, cultural or commercial events that have a capacity of more than 5,000 attendees at any one time in Victoria Park beyond ten event days per calendar year.
- 3.5 A benchmarking review has been undertaken by the Arts, Parks and Events team of other London outdoor venues, including local authorities, to review the number of major event days, capacity thresholds and event categorisations.
- 3.6 Details of the benchmarking review are provided in Table 1 below, which gives an overview of the number of major event days permitted by other local authorities and comparable venues.

3.7 Table 1: Major Event Days permitted at other comparable London venues

| Venue | Number of Major Events |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Crystal Palace Park (Trust) | Six event days per annum |
| Finsbury Park (LB Haringey) | Six event days for 2023 |
| Hyde Park (Trust) | Nine event days per annum |
| Brockwell Park and Clapham Common (LB Lambeth) | Six major event days per annum |
| Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park (London Legacy Development Corporation) | Six event days per annum |
| Tottenham Hotspur Stadium | Six event days per annum |
| Victoria Park (LB Tower Hamlets) | Ten event days per annum |
| Wembley Stadium | Nine event days per annum |

3.8 Further details of the benchmarking review are provided in Table 2 below, which compares Tower Hamlets' current event capacity thresholds against other London outdoor venues that hold major events.

3.9 Table 2: Comparison of Event Capacity Thresholds

| Park / venue | Event Category | Capacity Threshold |
|---|----------------|--------------------|
| Victoria Park, Tower Hamlets Council (current) | Major | 5,000 – 50,000 |
| | Large | 2,000 – 5,000 |
| | Medium | 500 – 2,000 |
| | Small | Up to 500 |
| Brockwell Park, Lambeth Council | Major | 20,000 – 50,000 |
| | Large | 5,000 – 20,000 |
| | Medium | 500 – 5,000 |
| | Small | Up to 500 |
| Crystal Palace Park (trust), Bromley Council | Major | 20,000 – 50,000 |
| | Large | 5,000 – 20,000 |
| | Medium | 1,500 – 5,000 |
| | Small | 500 – 1,500 |
| | Minor | Up to 500 |
| Finsbury Park, Haringey Council | Major | 10,000 – 50,000 |
| | Large | 2,000 – 10,000 |
| | Medium | 500 – 2,000 |
| | Small | Up to 500 |
| Hyde Park, (trust), Westminster Council | Major | 19,999 – 64,999 |
| Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park London Legacy Development Corporation | Major | 19,999+ |
| | Large | 5,000+ |
| | Medium | Up to 4,999 |

- 3.10 The Tower Hamlets Council capacity threshold for a major event in Victoria Park is currently significantly lower than other comparable venues. Events with an attendance of more than 5,000 are classified as large events rather than major events by other comparable local authorities and venues.
- 3.11 Following the review of other comparable London venues, officers recommend that Cabinet approves the alteration of the capacity threshold of a major event from being an event with a capacity of 5,000 or more to being an event with a capacity of 20,000 or more at any one time for events in Victoria Park.
- 3.12 It should be noted that events with an audience size of 20,000 require road closures to safely disperse audiences. Road closures are considered high impact and create significant disruption to local residents as well as diversions for bus services and the wider traffic network. Events with audiences exceeding 20,000 at any one time are also more likely to require high impact noise levels which can cause more significant disruption to local residents.
- 3.13 Should the proposed capacity thresholds be approved, the maximum number of major events in Victoria Park is recommended to increase to up to twelve per annum (eight event days with a capacity of up to 49,999 at any one time and four event days with a capacity of up to 39,999 at any one time). A maximum of twelve major event days is recommended due to a number of commercial and statutory considerations including:
- 3.13.1. Event organisers would need to be able to clearly demonstrate how they would manage noise and adhere to the general principles of the Noise Council Code of Practice 1995.
- 3.13.2. There is a limit to the number of ticketed music events that one venue can commercially sustain and therefore a more significant increase to the number of major event days under the policy would not necessarily equate to more income to the Council.
- 3.13.3. Increasing the available number of major event days could be detrimental to future tenders/licences, as bidders/licensees are unlikely to take the commercial risk of buying more dates than they can sell tickets for. If bidders/licensees cannot gain exclusivity by buying out all of the available major event days, it would make any future tender/licences less commercially attractive.
- 3.14 Regardless of whether an event is classified as major, large, medium or small, the Safety Advisory Terms of Reference would apply alongside statutory regulations (e.g., Licensing Act 2003). Therefore, event organisers would need to demonstrate that they have sufficient resources and adequate plans to safely deliver their events programme and minimise impact to the park and residents.
- 3.15 Table 3 below compares the current capacity thresholds against the proposed new thresholds for Victoria Park.

3.16 Table 3: Proposed new capacity thresholds for Victoria Park

| Category | Current | Proposed |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Major | 5,000 to 49,999 | 20,000 to 49,999 |
| Large | 2,000 – 5,000 | 5,000 to 19,999 |
| Medium | 500 – 2,000 | 500 to 4,999 |
| Small | Up to 499 | Up to 499 |

- 3.17 If the new capacity thresholds are adopted, events classified as major or large would remain subject to an enhanced planning process in line with the Council's Safety Advisory Group terms of reference. Note that these terms of reference would need to be updated and approved by the Safety Advisory Group members.
- 3.18 Any event with an audience of 5,000 people or more would still be required to attend multi-agency planning meetings (a sub-group of the Safety Advisory Group). This includes representation by the emergency services (including the Metropolitan Police Service) and the Council's Environmental Health, Environmental Protection, Community Safety and Licensing teams. Through this process the event organiser will be required to demonstrate how they will uphold the licensing objectives; public safety, the prevention of crime and disorder, the prevention of public nuisance and the protection of children from harm.
- 3.19 In addition, an enhanced planning process, including attendance at a multi-agency planning meeting would continue to apply, as per the current Safety Advisory Group Terms of Reference to:
- 3.19.1. Events with alcohol sales (if 500 people or more, i.e., requiring a Premises Licence) that are deemed likely to have a higher risk of anti-social behaviour or associated issues due to nature of the event (i.e., hours of operation, programme, audience profile, location etc); and
- 3.19.2. If the proposed event, regardless of capacity, is likely to be high impact on local residents, businesses (i.e., traffic and parking restrictions, significant noise or other disruption).
- 3.20 In addition to the increase in number of major event days, and the changes to the capacity thresholds, it's also proposed that classification of major events is amended in order to allow for a higher number of major event days and a broader range of events to take place in Victoria Park.
- 3.21 It is recommended that the Major Events Policy for Victoria Park is updated to exclude the following categories of events from the policy restrictions (i.e., outside of the twelve major event days):
- 3.21.1 Council managed events (as per current policy);

- 3.21.2 Mass sporting events (as per current policy);
- 3.21.3 Commercial and corporate events that are not music focussed (i.e., food, comedy and theatre festivals, trade exhibitions, galas etc) (New addition to the policy); and
- 3.21.4 Free to access community event days as part of a commercial events programme using existing infrastructure (New addition to the policy).
- 3.22 For all events, the latest event running times would be up to 11pm on Fridays and Saturdays and up to 10.30pm on other days, subject to licensing conditions.

Corporate and commercial events in other parks

- 3.23 Officers will be undertaking a review of the policy for corporate and commercial events in parks and will report back to Cabinet in 2024.

4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Events income contributes significantly to the maintenance and provision of parks and open spaces across the borough, and the delivery of free to access community cultural events. Parks, open spaces and events are open to all residents from all backgrounds and protected characteristics.
- 4.2 Income generated from a well-managed events programme in Victoria Park enables the Council to continue investing in parks and open spaces and free community events at a time of reducing budgets, thereby benefitting all residents.
- 4.3 Events have localised, time limited impacts. These are not considered to affect any particular protected characteristic disproportionately. Localised impacts are minimised through contractual requirements to continuously improve event management arrangements.

5 OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:
- Best Value Implications
 - Consultations
 - Environmental (including air quality)
 - Risk Management
 - Crime Reduction
 - Safeguarding
 - Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.

- 5.2 **Best Value Implications:** the Major Events Policy for events in Victoria Park will increase to twelve major event days (for events with capacities of more than 20,000 and up to 50,000 at any one time) per calendar year. These events are typically held between May and September. Under the current Major Events Policy, the Council is unable to consider other events (i.e., events with a capacity of more than 5,000 at any one time) across the year that would provide additional income, provide additional cultural and entertainment opportunities for residents and contribute to the local economy. If the proposed amendments to the Major Events Policy are approved, events that could be considered would include winter fairs, theatrical/multi-arts events, comedy festivals, food festivals, exhibitions/fairs, mass participation sporting events and corporate events. Furthermore, free-to-access community events delivered as part of a commercial events programme using existing infrastructure will be permitted in addition to the number of major event days.
- 5.3 **Consultations:** event applications with an attendance of more than 499 at any one time which have regulated entertainment and or the provision of alcohol, require a Premises Licence. It is a statutory requirement for Premises Licence applicants to undertake a 28-day public consultation. Aside from organised running events, the majority of large events under the new policy would require a Premises Licence and would therefore be subject to public consultation. In addition, officers will consult the Corporate Director of Communities in respect of any events that may or will be high impact e.g., events that may require road closures, or operate over several days and remove large areas of the park from general recreational use for a prolonged period.
- 5.4 **Environmental (including air quality):** events held in public open spaces, including those held in Victoria Park, are required to demonstrate through their event planning documentation (including risk assessments), how they will reduce impact to residents and the park. For large and major events, event organisers will be required to provide detailed site plans, demarcating ground protection measures, plus details of site services (including effective waste management and recycling). Organisers will also be required to provide a sustainability plan, detailing arrangements for reducing waste, promoting sustainable practices, and reducing air pollution. Events are required to promote the use of public transport and cycling; no customer vehicle parking (aside from Blue Badge) will be considered. With regards to noise pollution, event organisers will be required to provide detailed Noise Management Plans that will be subject to review by agencies including Environmental Protection to ensure that the Council is fulfilling its statutory duties and following best practice. It is acknowledged that events can have short term impacts on the park in which they take place. These impacts are minimised through contractual arrangements and licensing conditions. Event income also contributes significantly to the Council's budget for maintaining and improving parks and open spaces.
- 5.5 **Risk Management:** all events, regardless of audience capacity, are subject to the Council's Park Hire Application process. As part of the application process, all applicants must be able to demonstrate that they have the

resources and experience to safely plan and deliver their event with minimum impact to the park and residents. This includes providing, relative to the size and risk of the event: Event Management Plans; Crowd Management Plan; Noise Management Plan; Risk Assessment (including fire); Safeguarding Policy; Sustainability Plan; and insurance. In relation to the proposed increase of the major event threshold from more than 5,000 to 20,000 at any one time, this will not adversely impact on risk management of large or major events. The same principles, as covered by the Safety Advisory Group's Terms of Reference (see 3.17 and 3.18) will apply, ensuring that any event that is over 5,000 at any one time (or high impact if under 5,000) will be required to go through an enhanced multi-agency planning process.

- 5.6 **Crime Reduction:** as described in 5.5, all event organisers for large, major and / or high impact events will be required to provide a Crowd Management Plan, which will be subject to review by the multi-agency planning group, which includes representatives from the Metropolitan Police Service. Through this process, event organisers will need to adequately demonstrate how they will meet the Licensing objectives (Licensing Act 2003). Detailed plans must be provided to document on site (event footprint) and off site (park and key external walking routes) arrangements to and from Victoria Park.
- 5.7 **Safeguarding:** through the licensing and multi-agency planning process, event organisers must provide detailed and robust arrangements and measures to protect children and vulnerable adults from harm. These plans are subject to review by the multi-agency planning group. As part of the Premises Licence application and multi-agency planning process the Council's Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service team reviews safeguarding measures.
- 5.8 **Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment:** event organisers do not manage sensitive data held by the Council. They are responsible for compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018) and the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003 (SI 2003/2426) and this responsibility is covered via the Park Hire Contract.

6 COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 Additional income generation from maximum utilisation of LBTH assets can support the Council in long-term saving requirements, increasing the capacity of large events would facilitate that maximisation.

7 COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 7.1 This report does not give rise to any particular legal implications in respect of planning, licensing, etc. Specific advice on licensing, planning and other issues will be given on a case-by-case basis to the relevant Committee or Sub-Committee, as required.
- 7.2 Section 145 of the Local Government Act 1972 gives local authorities a power to do or arrange for the doing of anything necessary or expedient for the

provision of any entertainment. This power includes the power to set aside or enclose any part of a park or pleasure ground that they own or that is under their control. This includes the power to allow such a part of a park or pleasure ground to be used by some other person, on payment or such other terms as the authority thinks fit and allows that other person to make charges for admission.

- 7.3 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the authority, in the exercise of its functions, to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the 2010 Act, to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not, and to foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not. The relevant protected characteristics are age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation. The duty must be complied with at the time that the decision under consideration, in this case the recommendation to adopt the Policy, is taken. It is not a duty to achieve a particular result.
- 7.4 This has been identified as a key decision i.e., an executive decision which is likely to be significant in terms of the effects on communities living or working in an area comprising of two or more wards. That requires, among other things, at least 28 days' clear notice having been given of the intention to make that decision.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- Major Events Policy, Cabinet - ([Public Pack](#))[Agenda Document for Cabinet, 06/01/2021 17:30 \(towerhamlets.gov.uk\)](#)

Appendices

- NONE

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012

- NONE

Officer contact details for documents:

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