

# ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

16 March 2021

## Guide to Event Management during COVID-19

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development – John Foster
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Visitor Economy & Events Development Manager - Laura Dickson
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	All

### Executive Summary

Event organisers face new challenges due to COVID-19 which will affect outdoor events in the future. The council has existing processes that make sure that events are delivered safely, reacting to changes in the conditions for events as laid out in government guidance.

### Purpose of Report

To inform committee of the council's procedure for managing events during COVID and beyond

### This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. To note the contents of this report.

### Timetable

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee	16 March 2021

# Guide to Event Management during COVID-19

## 1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>	<b>Sign-off</b>
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	<i>A Thriving Place</i> The re-opening of events safely will contribute to economic recovery for many businesses, and establish Maidstone as the place for great events for residents and visitors.	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
<b>Cross Cutting Objectives</b>	No implications – information report	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
<b>Risk Management</b>	No implications. The Safety Advisory Group is already set up.	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
<b>Financial</b>	No implications – information report	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
<b>Staffing</b>	No implications – information report	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
<b>Legal</b>	No implications – information report	Legal Team
<b>Privacy and Data Protection</b>	No implications – information report	Policy and Information Team
<b>Equalities</b>	No implications – information report	Policy & Information Manager
<b>Public Health</b>	No implications – information report.	Public Health Officer
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	No implications – information report	Head of Service or Manager
<b>Procurement</b>	No implications - information report	Head of Service & Section 151 Officer

## **2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

2.1 Maidstone is widely recognised as the events capital of Kent, an industry that supports the visitor economy and provides jobs. All event organisers face new challenges due to COVID-19 which will affect outdoor events going forward.

### **Events on MBC Land**

2.2 MBC manages the hire of MBC parks and open spaces for a variety of events from charity runs to large music festivals. There are existing processes in place to make sure these events are safely run. These processes also include checks to make sure they are planned in line with the relevant Covid secure guidance. This guidance is regularly changed and updated, and the team responds to these changes and discusses with the various event organisers. A summary of the roadmap as it relates to events can be found in Appendix 1.

2.3 Decisions on event applications are made on a case-by-case basis with both the risks and the mitigations in place. Organised outdoor events will be permitted provided they follow all the relevant guidance and adhere to all legal requirements. A condition for all events taking place on council owned land is that they must submit their event safety plans to the Safety Advisory Group. The earliest date for events on council land is in Step 3, no earlier than 17 May 2021. However all events due to take place before 21 June 2021 have been postponed or cancelled.

2.4 In 2020 a few socially distanced events were able to take place, using the Covid secure guidance as the basis for the event safety management plan. All the event management plans were submitted to the Safety Advisory Group, who provided further advice on managing the event safely. These events were an excellent example of how it could be achieved.

2.5 This year many events have been cancelled or have moved to dates later in the year. There are only a limited number of weekends (included event build days) in this shortened events season, and there are no more dates left to move events should the dates for re-opening fall back. Although some events could run with socially distancing measures such as the 6 person pods once again, for many it is not financially viable, and the feedback is there is only a limited appeal from attendees for these types of events.

2.6 Event organisers are aware that there is a risk that the government guidance could change, the road map dates for re-opening delayed. There will be at least 5 weeks between the steps ( i.e. if one is delayed those thereafter will also be delayed). Some organisers cannot afford to take that risk, whilst others have contingencies in place.

2.7 Changes might occur because of a local outbreak. There is no guarantee that additional local restrictions will not happen in the future. The

government states it will continue to protect the public by ensuring local outbreaks are managed quickly and effectively and that we combat new dangerous variants, both within the UK and at the border.

### **Event Guidance Information**

- 2.8 The Event Industry Forum in collaboration with DCMS and Public Health England produced detailed guidance in 2020 'Keeping workers and Audiences safe during COVID-19 ( England). It is updated regularly, the last update in December. The next update will be released soon. The guidance includes an Annex 'Guidance for Local Authorities – Assessing applications for outdoor events.
- 2.9 Over the spring the Government is running a scientific Events Research Programme. This includes a series of pilots to examine how large events can take place without the need for social distancing using other mitigations such as testing. Subject to the outcome, this will allow large events without the capacity restrictions that are in place from Step 3 to start in Step 4. The public can then make informed decisions and consider the risks for themselves.
- 2.10 Once the updated guidance has been published, the event planning information on the council website will be updated including all the necessary links.

### **Role of the Safety Advisory Group**

- 2.11 The Safety Advisory Group (SAG) is there to help event organisers make sure their event is as safe as possible. It is an advisory body and cannot prevent an event from taking place. However if an organiser ignores the advice given by SAG, then further action can be taken by the member agencies acting within their own legal jurisdiction.
- 2.12 Events on council land are required to submit all their event management plans to SAG as a condition of their contract. Should SAG advise against an event, the council has the right to stop that event from taking place.
- 2.13 Events that take place in other venues or locations in the borough should submit their event to SAG if it requires a license for the sale of alcohol, music or requires road closures. It should also be submitted to SAG if it will attract large crowds of people or contains an element of risk. Currently all events contain an element of risk, the spread of Covid, and therefore all event organisers should make their event known to SAG. However this is a voluntary action as there is no legal requirement to do so.

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## **3. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 This report is for information only.
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## **4. RISK**

4.1 This report is presented for information only and has no risk management implications.

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## **5. REPORT APPENDICES**

Appendix 1: Summary of the Government Roadmap to Events in 2021

Appendix 2: Government Material Explaining the Steps

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## **6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-spring-2021/covid-19-response-spring-2021>

<https://www.eventsindustryforum.co.uk/index.php/11-features/14-keeping-workers-and-audiences-safe-during-covid-19>