

Report subject	Events Framework
Meeting date	1 October 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	The Events Framework provides clear, auditable process linked to both council and non-council delivered and managed events on outdoor council land to ensure transparency, aligning all processes and policies into one clear document alongside easy to use updated guidance for community event organisers. The paper also explores the current levels of safety related paperwork checked by officers and recommends a future approach to third party paperwork.
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Notes the contents or the framework and agrees the process and policies for events b. Agrees to option 2 with regards to the future approach for safety related paperwork for external event organisers c. Notes the detail in the summary of legal implications d. Delegates to the Director of Commercial Operations in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Destination, Leisure and Commercial Operations, the implementation of these decisions
Reason for recommendations	The development of the Events Framework is in line with audit recommendations for a clear auditable approach to events. The council has a duty of care to ensure events on its land are safe and well managed reducing risk whilst also ensuring the process enables communities to deliver events.

Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Richard Herrett – Portfolio Holder for Destination, Leisure & Commercial Operations
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Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Decision

Background

1. Events play an important role in delivering economic and cultural benefits to Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole.
2. The safety of outdoor events is paramount to ensure they can be enjoyed by everyone without the risk of injury. The paperwork and considerations required for an event covers a wide range of areas and is integral to a robust event plan. Many of the measures are statutory and have legal requirements attached to them.
3. Failure to ensure events are suitably assessed and appropriate and proportionate measures are in place can lead to injury or death of the public, staff or contractors with many high profile cases where this has happened in the past across the country.
4. In addition, the visible presence of safety initiatives such as security and clear signage provides reassurance and fosters a positive environment aiding a successful and enjoyable event.
5. The events team deal with all events taking place on BCP Council land from promotions and filming to large major events.
6. All events have an agreement with larger events having a more detailed licence. Both agreements and licences contain the requirement for organisers to obtain third party safety paperwork for their event.
7. The events team currently collate and check all third party safety paperwork which includes elements such as insurance, gas certificates and risk assessments.
8. An audit of event processes identified there was no formally defined events approach in place. Whilst processes existed these were not collated into one framework as an agreed approach.
9. The recommendation was to formally articulate BCP Council's approach to events, clearly aligning to the corporate strategy with regular review.
10. Following research from across other local authorities, work has been undertaken to develop the Events Framework with relevant information being taken across for the external Events Policy.

11. Research of other local authorities' practices has been undertaken through a Local Authority Event Organisers Group (LAEOG). Five of the eight authorities that responded collate third party safety paperwork with others putting it within their terms and conditions for the organiser to undertake. There was a varying level of third party safety paperwork with some concentrating on high-risk items such as catering and inflatables only.
12. In 2024 an internal review was done on third party safety paperwork compliance. A random selection of paperwork from 34 events was reviewed to understand what percentage of paperwork was being submitted with errors. Overall, 42% of the third party paperwork checked was incorrect and needed amendments prior to the event (34% from major event paperwork and 53% from minor event paperwork). The most common trends included missing paperwork, and out of date insurance or below the limits requested. There were also a number of third party risk assessments missing pertinent information such as valid review dates, event specifics, and risks.
13. When reviewing the options for paperwork it is vital that any way forward safeguards the council's position and goes hand in hand with robust agreements and compliance checks.
14. Feedback from organisers is that the process is difficult to navigate especially when events are being organised in a voluntary capacity, however as organisers should be checking the safety paperwork themselves this should not be causing additional work to send them to the council.
15. The Council's obligations in having a duty of care as a landowner, together with statutory and regulatory responsibilities to ensure compliance of relevant legislation for organising events, means ensuring events are delivered in a safe and controlled manner and in line with public expectations.
16. In addition to paperwork requirements, it is intended that the framework shown in appendix 1 will:
 - Give clear guidance in relation to those events that will/will not be permitted to take place on council owned/controlled land
 - Ensure a fair, consistent and transparent process
 - Outline the Council's role and the role of council officers in relation to the events process
 - Provide a comprehensive framework, which will be detailed in the Events Policy document shown in appendix 2 and the events handbook shown in appendix 3 for the benefit of event organisers, to ensure their events meet with our policies and procedures including best practice.
17. The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025, also known as Martyn's Law gained Royal Assent on Thursday 3 April 2025. The anticipated implementation period is 24 months before the Act comes into force.
18. BCP Council is currently working through the known requirements of the Act for both internal sites and external event organisers. These will be statutory requirements and once the requirements are clearer, these will be added to the Events framework and communicated to event organisers.

Options Appraisal

19. With regards to third party paperwork the following options have been considered.

Option 1 - Continue to request all third party safety paperwork from event organisers

- 20. This is the current position within BCP Council and covers the duty of care for events on our land, or council controlled land, or highways land.
- 21. This option is resource intensive for the council and is open to officer error should the council miss paperwork and has also been raised by external event organisers as a resource intensive approach for them.
- 22. This option has been discounted due to the resource for both council officers and community organisers.

Option 2 – Request third party safety paperwork for higher risk items as per table 1 below and continue to monitor compliance (recommended)

- 23. This option gives a risk based approach to reduce workload for lower risk items such as trader stands and gazebos, however, continues to cover duty of care for events by ensuring third party paperwork is checked for any higher risk items that could cause injury
- 24. Table 1 below shows the specific categories of what paperwork would and wouldn't be checked however the organiser will still remain responsible within their agreement for checking and collating all paperwork.

Table 1 – third party paperwork checks

3rd party category	BCP Council to check
Caterers	Yes
Large scale infrastructure, i.e. big top marquee and staging	Yes
Security and medical personnel	Yes
Traffic management measures	Yes
Funfair rides & inflatables	Yes
Facepainting / henna tattoos	Yes
Animal involvement	Yes
Alcohol provision	Yes
Small scale infrastructure, i.e. fencing	No
Traders & exhibitors	No

- 25. This option doesn't not take away the potential for council officer error when checking paperwork however, this is reduced by having more focus on the higher risk paperwork only.
- 26. This is the recommended option.

Option 3 – Do not request any third party paperwork leaving all checks for the organiser solely to undertake

27. This option would mean no checks are carried out on third party event paperwork and would require additional measures to ensure we are safeguarding the council with warnings on spot checks for compliance.
28. Whilst the organiser is responsible for the checks on all options, the percentages of incorrect paperwork detailed in point 9 would leave both the council and public open to risk.
29. Event management plans and main risk assessments and insurance documents would be the only documents checked with this option.
30. This option would reduce resource requirements enabling events team to spend more time proactively focusing on income generation
31. There is a higher risk of injury and death to members of the public, contractors and events staff if the council does not check that all relevant paperwork, risk assessments, health and safety checks, necessary consents, licenses, Public Liability Insurance (and all other relevant documentation) have been maintained for any event or item. There are many past incidents across the UK where inflatables have collapsed and killed children and there is a risk of food poisoning from not checking all elements are compliant.
32. This option has been discounted due to the potential health and safety risk.

Summary of financial implications

33. The framework outlines the requirements for events in terms of the financial regulations.
34. The framework lays out the process for the charging of events. The scale of charges remains consistent across all options on paperwork.
35. There will be some reduction in officer resource with option 2 however, this resource will be used on the additional work from the film office and the running of markets which has been integrated into the staffing structure through a restructure as part of an existing MTFP saving.

Summary of legal implications

36. The council has a duty of care to ensure events on its land, or on council controlled land, or on highway land, or events that it authorises, on are safe and well managed reducing risk.
37. There remains a risk of injury and death to members of the public, event staff and contractors, regardless of whether an event (or any item in relation that that event) is deemed to be low risk.
38. It is important to distinguish between the following:
 - a. The Council itself performing risk assessments, health and safety checks, and securing all necessary consents, licenses, Public Liability Insurance (and all other relevant documentation).
 - b. The Council checking that a third party has carried out the relevant risk assessments, health and safety checks, and the third party has secured all necessary consents, licenses, Public Liability Insurance (and all other relevant documentation).

39. Ultimately, the Council could be held accountable for any incidents that occur on property it owns or controls or during any event it authorises, regardless of whether the event is managed by a third party.
40. Therefore, it is important to note that the risk of liability to the Council would increase if the Council does not check that risk assessments, health and safety checks, consents, licenses, Public Liability Insurance (and all other relevant documentation) have been maintained by a third-party organiser or by the Council.
41. For example, an organiser might lack the sufficient funds for the Council to make a claim against them, which would leave any liability in relation to costs, claims and losses with the Council. Similarly, if an organiser becomes insolvent (in the case of a company) or dies (in the case of a person), the Council may face liability and claims related to the event without having an organiser to hold accountable.
42. Consequently, it would be in the Council's interest to check and keep records of the organiser's risk assessments, health and safety checks, necessary consents, licenses, Public Liability Insurance (and all other relevant documentation). This is because the Council may need to rely on these documents if any incident or accident occurs at an event, or if there is a claim against the Council.
43. Therefore, it is advised that terms and conditions contain requirements for organisers to obtain third party safety paperwork for the event and provide the same to the Council for checking.
44. If the relevant event is held on highway land, the council's Highways Authority (or the relevant Highways Authority) will impose additional requirements (such as a separate highways licence containing additional requirements).

Summary of human resources implications

45. Whilst the amount of resource required to undertake third party paperwork checks may reduce, any resource saved will be redirected to the proactive commercial event work of the team.
46. Laying out the event processes in a clear framework will be of assistance in officer time to be able to proactively work with event organisers with clear procedures in place.

Summary of sustainability impact

47. The Events Framework lays out the environmental policy for events in section 8 of the framework.
48. All event organisers are required to demonstrate the ways in which they are reducing the impact of operational activities.
49. When planning events event organisers are encouraged to develop transport and travel plans that promote more sustainable modes of transport (walk, bike, bus, coach, train) with the aim of encouraging as many staff and attendees as possible to travel in this way, reducing their environmental footprint.

Summary of public health implications

50. Events provide a positive impact the BCP conurbation and support active lives and wellbeing with many of the local events aiming to bring communities together.

51. The Events Framework provides a clear approach to events for BCP Council which supports communities to make organising an event clearer.

Summary of equality implications

52. An EIA has been completed for this work and discussed with an EIA panel.

Summary of risk assessment

Risk	Level	Mitigation
Officer error in checking paperwork	Low	Full training of event officers in health and safety and the writing or risk assessments
Duty of care	Medium	Agreements in place with event organisers, checking the high risk items mitigates risk. Organisers will have their event insurance checked alongside their main risk assessment for the event
Compliance	Medium	Monitoring of compliant third party paperwork will continue to identify any trends in low compliance with event organisers.
Reputational	Medium	Keeping a level of checks to high risk items reduces the health and safety risk, therefore mitigating any reputational damage
Financial	Low	Event licences and a clear event framework mitigate financial risk through an agreed process in line with financial regulations.

Background papers

n/a

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Events Framework

Appendix 2 – Events Policy

Appendix 3 – Events handbook