

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

AUDIT BOARD

17TH MARCH 2008

CIVIC BONFIRE AND FIREWORKS EVENT

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor June Griffiths
Responsible Head of Service	John Godwin

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The report relates to the Civic Bonfire and Fireworks Event that took place on Sunday 4th November 2007, Sanders Park, Bromsgrove and considers the content of a scrutiny proposal put forward by Councillor Pardoe that reads as follows: 'No tickets issued on entry to the event. How can receipts be audited?' and that 'Apparently we do not actually have a record of the exact number of people that attended but the estimates are that it was over 9,000 through out the day'.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Members are recommended to note the content of the report and the proposed enhancement for the 2008 event.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Members will be aware that the 2007 Bonfire event was organised for the first time as a chargeable event to the public. This presented a number of additional organisational challenges to the officers responsible for delivering a successful event.

- 3.2 As a consequence of the introduction of charging the public entry to the event and having risk assessed the additional requirements for the 2007 event, the main considerations that needed to be addressed were as follows:

1. To enhance the level of site security to manage public access, crowd movement and public egress safely within a secured zone
2. To establish a secure fenced zone around the parks perimeter
3. To introduce an efficient gate receipt system and a safe means of securing and transporting the gate receipts collected
4. To provide additional policing and security to manage the increased potential of public order issues that may arise, as advised by the Police
5. To change road closure methods specifically to meet the new operational requirements of the event and as advised by the Police

- 3.3 LMS Security and Events Service were appointed to provide the specialist security events personnel and the specialist events infrastructure required for the event, including the fenced perimeter and the gate entry points.

LMS are experts within the security and events industry and have a long and established history of working nationally and on large outdoor festivals including Glastonbury and the Virgin music festivals.

LMS have been previously successfully employed by the council to manage the crowd dynamics and elements of the event infrastructure for the previously free bonfire event. Their services were extended for the 2007 event to provide additional events infrastructure and security personnel, money collectors and money counting staff, all appointed with the necessary experience and skills.

Council staff were not involved in any actual money transactions and exchanges during the event yet the council did in advance of the event agree with LMS the audit requirements that the company would adhere to, relating to the float for the event and the taking and reconciliation of the gate receipts.

- 3.4 Six gate entry points were established at strategic locations around the perimeter of the park to facilitate safe access and egress to the public. Each gate entry point consisted of a marquee shelter with chairs and tables set out within them to facilitate safe collection of money by LMS operatives.

The event teams in conjunction with LMS and the Police planned the right locations for each entry point based upon previous knowledge and experience of managing the event. This planning determined the size of each gate entry point and specifically identified the number of LMS operatives required to operate each gate entry point.

Each gate entry point had a minimum of two members from the security team appointed to control the queues that formed, in order that each money collector was dealing with only one transaction at a time. Upon payment each member of the public received a printed stamp to the back of their hand to show proof of payment. The stamp was pre-designed to contain a 'flaw' that was unique to the 2007 bonfire event to prevent unauthorised replication. Upon payment a member of the security team guided the public into the park and recorded their entry with the use of a manual hand held 'clicker' counter device. The throughput of people should be therefore recorded as exact at each gate entry point.

Due to the nature of it being a predominantly evening focused event one of the key challenges was to process several thousand people into the park within a short period of time. Pre marketing publicity material, including press releases, were designed to promote to the public to consider arriving at the event earlier than in the past, due to the new charging arrangements.

Paramount of importance to the success of the event was the health and safety of the public. A system of gate entry points was therefore preferred that would facilitate quick and safe entry to the event of all members of the public. To this end and following advisory meetings with other partners including LMS and the Police the 'hand stamp' and 'clicker' counter system was the preferred option, and therefore adopted as the quickest and safe means of ensuring members of the public entry to the event.

- 3.5 Prior to the event the council's events team discussed the preferred option with the council's audit team. The audit team acknowledged that the preferred option would not be able to accurately reconcile the gate receipts with the number of people attending yet accepted the context of why the preferred option was to be implemented. The audit teams preferred option would have been to have a ticketed system allowing the gate receipts to be reconciled with the number of people attending. The audit team prior to the event approved the events teams audit arrangements and procedures with LMS.

The event teams did consider a ticketed system for public entry yet the advice the events team had received from LMS and the Police was to implement a system of entry that was the quickest and safest, the 'hand stamp' and 'clicker,' and that a ticketed system would slow each member of the public's entry to the event.

The money taken from the public at each gate entry point was collected in money belts by LMS operatives. To prevent the risk of theft regular collections throughout the event by LMS senior personnel of the gate receipts, from each gate entry point, were taken to a safe house within the park (located within the Park Information Office). The money was counted by specialist LMS staff under the supervision of LMS senior personnel and in the presence of council employees. At the safe house the gate receipts were counted and another appointed security company (Close Protection Security) removed the takings from the park prior to the end of the event to be taken to be paid into the council's bank account.

3.6 AREAS OF CONCERN

Issue

How can you audit receipts for every paid entry by a member of the public to the event?

Existing control

Using hand stamps to record and denote each paid member of the public to the event.

Failure of existing control

The hand stamp system can only be used to record and denote paid entry by a member of the public to the event and is not a means of auditing receipts for paid entry by a member of the public.

Revised control and enhancement

To introduce a paid ticket system for each member of the public attending the event, the paid ticket system would enable the receipts to be fully audited.

Risk of revised control and enhancement

A paid ticket system would allow all gate receipts to be fully audited and reconciled, if implemented correctly.

Reducing the risk of the revised control and enhancement

To instruct all key events personnel on the correct operation of the paid ticketed system.

Issue

Recording the actual number of people attending the event.

Existing control

Using clickers to record the actual number of people attending the event.

Failure of existing control

The clickers failed to work consistently throughout the event to record accurately the actual numbers of people attending the event.

Revised control and enhancement

To introduce a ticket system to record the exact number of people attending the event, which would produce an exact record of how many children, adults and families attended the event.

Risk of revised control and enhancement

Introducing a ticket system would slow down each member of the public's entry to the event and would put additional pressure on each of the gate entry points.

Reducing the risk of the revised control and enhancement

The gate entry points will need to be redesigned to manage the ticket system to reduce the time it will take to process each ticket sale, the entry of each member of the public and the additional pressure on each of the gate entry points.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The financial implications will be met within existing budgets.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None

6. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

- 6.1 Council Objective 2 Improvement and Council Objective 3 Sense of Community and Well Being

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 None

8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The public will be made aware of the paid ticket system for the annual bonfire event through external communications throughout the year leading up to the event.

9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The paid ticket system will need to accommodate less abled customers.

10. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 None

11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Procurement Issues None
Personnel Implications None
Governance/Performance Management None
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Community Safety support the improvements to the event
Policy None
Environmental None

12. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	No
Chief Executive	No
Executive Director (Partnerships and Projects)	<u>No</u>
Executive Director (Services)	<u>No</u>
Assistant Chief Executive	<u>No</u>
Head of Service	<u>Yes</u>
Head of Financial Services	<u>No</u>

Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	<u>No</u>
Head of Organisational Development & HR	<u>No</u>
Corporate Procurement Team	<u>No</u>

13. WARDS AFFECTED

All Wards

14. APPENDICES

None

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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