



Outdoor events policy review

Engagement summary report

29 May 2019

Engagement summary report

Introduction

This report is a summary of information and findings from a range of engagement that has taken place across Southwark over the last two months.

We would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone who took time to participate. Your valuable comments and feedback is shaping the next version of our outdoor events policy and how we support these vital cultural and community celebrations across Southwark.

Background information

Why are we doing this?

Outdoor events form an integral part of Southwark Council's cultural strategy, '[Creative Southwark](#)'. The strategy outlines a range of commitments that support the long term ambition of Southwark to be the first choice for people to live, work, study and visit.

In delivering the strategy, the council manages over 160 outdoor events each year, which take place in its various parks, squares and streets. The council's events team processes applications for these events, offers advice to event organisers, scrutinises event management plans, consults and engages with local stakeholders and partner agencies and monitors these events as they take place. The outdoor events policy plays a critical role in governing these events. It sets out the principles and procedures that aim to provide clear and transparent processes for event organisers, stakeholders and partners, providing consistent control, management and monitoring.

In alignment with this, the council funds an annual programme of free community events such as Camberwell Fair, Bermondsey Carnival, East Dulwich Christmas Cracker, Peckham and Nunhead Free Film Festival and the annual firework display. The free events programme contributes to making Southwark a vibrant borough, as set out in Creative Southwark. However, after ten years of significant central government cuts, it has become increasingly difficult for the council to continue this investment, and so in 2018, the council decided to allow two major commercial events to take place. The income

generated from these events enabled the annual free events programme to take place.

Many lessons have been learned from the experience of hosting these two events and the council feels that it is now an appropriate time to review the outdoor events policy and associated site specific conditions to ensure they are documents that continue to be fit for purpose.

How have we engaged with the community?

- 11 March a digital survey was launched
- 20 March a public workshop was held

Both were advertised widely to residents with invitations sent to partner organisations, residents and tenant groups, 'Friends of' and individuals who were known to have a vested interest in the topic.

The content of both the survey and workshop were aligned. The first part of each took a generic look at events across Southwark with the second allowing participants to talk about specific locations that were of interest to them.

Who took part?

23 people attended the public workshop and 108 people took part in the public survey.

The audience demographic for survey participants is shown in Appendix 1.

The results reveal that most participants overwhelmingly identified themselves as White British, with a majority stating that they were within the age range of 45 to 65 years of age and that there were nearly twice as many responses from females than there were from males.

Audience demographic information was not collected for workshop attendees.

The survey and workshop results and feedback

Part one

Q.1 How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about outdoor events?

Appendix 2 – survey results at a glance.

The results to this question show overwhelmingly that people are in favour of events taking place in public spaces and that they recognise the important part they play in terms of community cohesion and creating a positive reputation for the area that they live in, whilst providing activity and entertainment for the people who attend them.

Positive headline themes

People have indicated strongly that they are in favour of activities for families and they want the opportunity to attend free events.

Both the workshop and the survey results reveal that people are very aware of the sense of community spirit and engagement that events can create and the positive influence that this may have on an area.

Although problems to do with parking, anti-social behavior and restricted access to usual spaces were highlighted and discussed by the people who attended the workshop, they seemed not to be significant issues with a majority of those who completed the survey when taking neutral responses to the question into consideration.

Some positive quotes about this question are captured below;

“They are a fantastic use of public space to create memories”

“Of course there will be litter... but I assume this will be cleared by the council/organisers. Yes, there might be a bit of trouble, but does this mean we should never have public events going on? Of course not! I think it's great for the community to experience events in our open spaces. Make use of the great surroundings”

“I would be very sad to see a reduction in events in the park. I might not enjoy them all but all the parks are public spaces and should therefore be accessible to all members of the community.

Appreciate that some of them might increase traffic and litter in the parks but it tends to short term. Events are a good thing. We love going to many different events in Southwark”

Negative headline themes

As much as results show support for outdoor events, there are still some concerns about the potential impact that they have on a site, or an area.

Litter and waste management and noise nuisance were the key problems were the most highlighted both at the workshop and in the survey.

People who attended the workshop also raised concerns about the impact that events might have on wildlife and the environment and the restrictions placed upon their usual use of a space, but this did not seem to manifest itself to the same extent in the results of the survey when taking neutral responses to the question into consideration.

Some negative quotes about this question are captured below;

“The park should be for the people of Southwark, a green space available for all at nearly all times. I understand the need to monetise but if smallish parks with an ever increasing population (thanks to crazy overbuilding in the area with no new parkland) are compromised with commercial activities it just leads to more stress and overcrowding. On balance I would prefer no activities and green spaces to breathe”

“As London is such a busy, noisy place it is essential to keep the local parks as havens of peace and quiet. It is also essential to provide safe places where parents can take children to learn about nature and enjoy outdoor activities such as learning to ride a bike. They are also area where informal or formal sports can be enjoyed. The parks are very crowded on sunny days and room taken up for ‘events’ impinges aon space for others. If people wish to listen to music or watch films there are already many places they can do so in the borough. There is nowhere else to enjoy open air safe green spaces except our parks. They were designed by the Victorians to improve the health of the population and they should be kept for this purpose”

Q.2 Which types of events would you like to see more of?

Appendix 3 – survey results at a glance

Workshop and survey results indicate that people are happy to see community-based events take place whatever scale they may be, although small and medium scale events ranked highest.

There is also support shown for small and medium commercial events in the survey results, overwhelmingly for outdoor cinema and theatre productions and then to a lesser extent, sports/fitness related events, arts and craft markets and food and drink festivals. Some tolerance is also shown for larger commercial events, although supporting comments highlight that different parks lend themselves to different events and to ensure that events are well matched and appropriate to specific sites.

A huge appetite for art installations and free events is also demonstrated in the survey results.

Q.3 How would you like to see events support the community?

Appendix 4 – survey results at a glance

There was a very balanced response to this question, with all options rating highly. The top two responses stated that the desire to see more activities for families and activities for young people – this is a strong correlation to feedback received in Question 1 regarding free family activities.

Feedback from the workshop largely corroborates what the survey results tell us, but also suggests that community benefits such as free tickets for local residents should be considered.

Q.4 What do you think about ticketing?

Appendix 5 – survey results at a glance

Whilst it seems that there is a large contingent of people who are not in support of commercial events and think that all events in Southwark should be free to attend, there is also a very large contingent of people who say that they would be willing to pay a small fee to attend an event. There is also a very balanced response which suggests that people are willing to pay commercial rates to attend commercial events and that overall, people would generally pay to attend an event in Southwark, if it was an event that they wanted to go to – this correlates to the

support shown for small, medium and even large commercial events (outdoor cinema, theatre, food and drink festivals etc.) in Q.2. The suggestion of discounted resident's tickets for commercial events also ranks very highly, which supports feedback received in Q.3.

The feedback from the workshop aligns with the results of the survey for this question.

Q.5 What do you think the policy should focus on?

Appendix 6 – survey results at a glance

The key priorities identified through the workshop and the survey, were around event safety, protection and reinstatement of the environment and clear, early communication and engagement with stakeholders re: event planning.

People at the workshop were generally concerned about the lack of communication they received about events and the impact that events would have on wildlife and parks. Many in attendance had had experience of the Alice in Winterland and GALA events. People also suggested that a direct benefit to the park should be considered to compensate for disruption.

Those with an events background highlighted that there should be no one-fits-all policy and that requirements for smaller events could sometimes be overzealous and daunting to some event organisers.

Part 2 - The second part of the survey focused on questions that were specific to locations. The information gathered is presented in appendices for the purposes of this report. The Culture and Events team will be arranging a series of meetings and engaging with relevant stakeholders to review and discuss this information in more detail.

All of the 108 people who completed the first part of the survey, went on to select locations that were relevant to them in the second part of the survey.

Q.6 Which specific location are you interested in?

Appendix 7 – survey results at a glance

Results show that there are numerous responses to some more notably bigger and popular sites,

renowned for holding events, as expected. There are also responses given in relation to some smaller and/or lesser used for events sites, as detailed in appendix 7.

Q.7 What outdoor events work best in this space?

Appendix 8 – survey results at a glance

There is a range of suggestions, across a range of different sites with varying event-hosting capabilities. Generally community events, outdoor cinema/theatre productions, small music gigs, art installations, food and drink and arts and craft and free events, all feature quite prominently across the board. This supports the feedback received in Q.2, appendix 3.

Support is also shown for large and major commercial events at certain sites, which ties in with the responses and supporting comments for Q.2

Q.8 How often could events take place?

- Small events up to 500 Appendix 9
- Medium events up to 2000 Appendix 10
- Large events up to 8000 Appendix 11
- Major events over 8000 Appendix 12

The most noticeable theme running through results for Q.8 is that people are happy to see smaller and less impactful events take place far more frequently than larger events. There is also clear indication that

large and major events are not appropriate for certain sites.

Q.9 How late could an event in this space operate until?

Appendix 13 – survey results at a glance

Again, a range of suggestions, for a range of sites have been recorded. The most identifiable factor across the board is that events should not go on past 11pm and there is a standard trend of people wanting events to finish at earlier times on Sundays and weekdays.

Next steps

Over the next few months the outdoor events policy will be reviewed and refreshed using all of the comments and feedback we have gathered.

Further engagement will take place with park user groups in regards to site specific information.

The timetable for this is expected to be;

Date	Action
June	Meetings with Friends of groups
July	Draft Outdoor Events Policy paper presented to Cabinet Member Cabinet Member decision

