



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Licensing Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Update on Outdoor Events Policy</b>
<b>Date:</b>	11th December, 2013
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Trevor Martin, Head of Building Control, ext 2450
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Stephen Hewitt, Building Control Manager, ext 2435

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Members may recall that, at your meeting on 19 <sup>th</sup> June 2013, you considered a number of applications relating to Outdoor Entertainments Licences including Bruce Springsteen at the King's Hall, Tennents Vital at Boucher Road and Belsonic at Custom House Square.
1.2	Arising from discussion on those applications, the Committee agreed that an appropriate policy be formulated to deal with applications for Outdoor Entertainments Licences for venues within the City.
1.3	A key aim of the policy will be to help streamline the current process for dealing with outdoor events that must be considered by Committee to enable promoters and licensees to plan their events more effectively. The policy will also enable Members and Officers to make better informed decisions when dealing with these types of applications.
1.4	This report is presented to provide Members with an update on the progress with the development of the policy.

2	Key Issues
2.1	As Members are aware there are an increasing number of outdoor events that take place on an annual basis across Belfast ranging from large major concerts to local community led events.
2.2	In order to secure international acts promoters must book them well in advance of the event, sometimes even as early as a year before the event is due to take place.
2.3	Moreover, despite recent successes for events such as Tennents Vital, promoters find it difficult to attract major acts to Belfast, in comparison to cities such as Dublin and London. In addition to having a wider commercial appeal these cities also have superior infrastructure and transport facilities in place and a wider selection of public spaces and venues that are capable of holding large audiences.

2.4	The main intention of the policy will be to help provide greater certainty to prospective applicants and promoters about the availability of a variety of venues licensed for outdoor entertainment which can be secured in good time to facilitate their event. It is also expected that the policy will help reduce the workload for Members in considering the array of annual reports that Officers produce.
2.5	<p>Members are reminded that you currently consider the following types of Outdoor Licence applications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• applications for the Grant of an Outdoor Entertainments Licence;</li> <li>• applications where objections have been received;</li> <li>• applications which relate to major events, where the impact and potential for disruption is deemed to be significant;</li> <li>• events where the applicant is proposing to provide entertainment later than the standard hour of 11.00pm;</li> <li>• applications which the Director of Health and Environmental Services deems appropriate for the Committee to consider; or</li> <li>• applications which the applicant or an Elected Member has requested to be considered.</li> </ul>
2.6	As part of the research for the policy we have identified a range of venues and created an inventory of those locations that have the potential to be used for outdoor events.
2.7	In order to appropriately describe and present the information to you we have developed spreadsheets and designated the various venues into categories of Large/Major, Medium, Small or Community events. Each of these venues is then listed under their respective owners. We have also developed maps showing the location of the venues in relation to their proximity with other destinations, wards and electoral areas.
2.8	As part of our research we have identified a total of 50 potential sites across Belfast which may be suitable to host events. Some of these venues will be familiar to Members and regularly host annual events while others are fairly new and may be considered as options for concert venues.
2.9	Of the venues, 38 are owned by Belfast City Council, 10 are owned by private organisations and 2 are owned by the DSD.
2.10	For each venue we have developed an assessment sheet which provides a brief summary of key aspects of the site, such as the surrounding infrastructure, previous events held at the location, previous problems experienced including complaints and a brief comment from key stakeholders, such as the PSNI, DRD, etc.
2.11	A sample assessment sheet is appended to this report for your information along with a map of the venues and a spreadsheet listing the various sites/venues and their owners.
	<b>Stakeholders</b>
2.12	In order to develop the policy, Officers have been in liaison with various stakeholders, such as event promoters, licensees, the statutory authorities and service providers, e.g. PSNI, NIFRS and Translink to get their thoughts on the viable use of potential venues.
2.13	We will also liaise with other services and departments within the Council, such as Environmental Protection, Community Safety, Corporate H&S and Events Section of the Development Department.

2.14	The Service will also consult with Legal Services regarding how such a policy may be implemented in conjunction with standard Committee procedures.
2.15	Discussions with these groups and individuals have centred on the suitability of the venue in terms of access/egress; infrastructure problems/concerns; history of complaints (if any); previous events and lessons learnt from them; proximity of residential accommodation in relation to the venue and any noise concerns, etc.
2.16	Promoters have already provided some details about these venues and their thoughts as to what makes certain venues more suitable than others and what possible remedial works could be carried out in order to make them suitable.
2.17	We will continue to liaise with these groups and individuals until the policy is finalised and they agree with its content and format.
	<b>Other Councils</b>
2.18	<p>Early feedback from research to date has shown that the following matters are commonly considered by councils when deciding whether to grant permission for an Entertainments Licence for an event:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noise – balance between enjoyment of music and disturbance of neighbours.</li> <li>• Topography – what effect will the surrounding topography have on noise?</li> <li>• Promotion of cultural events – balance between promoting events and the disruption caused.</li> <li>• Financial interests – will it help generate income or affect existing trade in the surrounding area.</li> <li>• Ecological concerns – protection of the environment; trees, wildlife, etc.</li> <li>• Transport links – will it be easily accessed or will people/vehicles have to cross sensitive/restrictive areas causing possible environmental damage, disturbing residents, etc.?</li> <li>• Parking provision and public transport – will the event impinge on existing traffic on public highways?</li> <li>• Sanitary provisions – can toilets, fresh water, etc. be easily accessed/installed?</li> <li>• Prevention of crime – could the event possibly attract criminal activity, drugs, violence, etc.</li> <li>• Health and Safety – is it fire safe; is there sufficient medical/first aid provision?</li> <li>• Protection/promotion of children and vulnerable people – could it be disruptive to, or a negative impact on, children or vulnerable people or will it be beneficial or educational, etc.?</li> <li>• Disruption to other users of outdoor spaces – such as public parks, etc.</li> <li>• Timing of event/s – too many clustered around the same time of year.</li> <li>• Disabled access and provisions.</li> </ul>

<b>3</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
3.1	<p><b><u>Financial</u></b> None.</p> <p><b><u>Human Resources</u></b> None</p> <p><b><u>Assets and other Implications</u></b> None</p>

<b>4</b>	<b>Equality Implications</b>
4.1	There are no equality and good relations issues.

<b>5</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
5.1	The Committee is requested to note the information contained within this report and provide any feedback or further guidance to assist with the formulation of the policy.

<b>6</b>	<b>Documents attached</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map of the venues</li> <li>• Spreadsheet listing the various sites/venues</li> <li>• Sample assessment sheet</li> </ul>	