

PUBLIC EVENTS SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP (PESAG) REVIEW GROUP

1 October 2014

PRESENT – Councillors Carson, Cossins, Harman, Long (in the Chair) and EA Richmond.

APOLOGIES – Councillors Culley, L Hughes and Wright and Steve Petch.

OFFICERS – Barry Pearson, Environmental Health Manager and Karen Graves, Democratic Officer.

Purpose of the Meeting – To give consideration to the Quad of Aims and to agree a planned approach for the Review Group.

Points Discussed and Considered –

- Admin support for PESAG is provided by Darlington Borough Council (DBC) alone and there is currently no funding provision from any other sources;
- PESAG is currently not accountable to any body or organisation – does it need to be accountable?
- Not all local authorities have a PESAG although they are actively being encouraged and the Emergency Planning College at Easingwold can provide training regarding PESAG's if required;
- Examples of events where PESAG had an involvement were discussed i.e. Tall Ships Race, Hartlepool, events which involved the Cleveland CCU, Elton John Concert at the Darlington Arena in 2007;
- It was stated that on many occasions the problems stemmed from the technical and event knowledge of the organisers who did not fully appreciate the issues, including the finance, in delivering an event (large or small). Some organisers of small community-based events who intended to raise funds for a charity initially had expectations that the local authority would contribute towards the provision of fencing and stewards;
- Group were advised that to deliver a musical event Darlington Arena was a better location than South Park or other open spaces as the infrastructure was already in place. Specialist fencing would need to be provided at South Park to exclude persons without tickets and a noise impact assessment would need to be completed by a noise consultant;
- All Stewards and relevant staff involved in an event are aware of a code word for use when an emergency evacuation is required and react in accordance with an agreed Evacuation Plan;
- It was confirmed that any large event required a Licence from the Local Authority and that Licences were issued conditional on working with PESAG;

- If a premise had a Premises Licence which covered live bands there was no need for an application to be made each time there was a performance. In the case of the Arena the Premises Licence and planning permission allows a limited number of no sporting events (e.g. pop concerts) and the organiser notifies PESAG and looks for agreement that their event plan is appropriate. They do not obtain a licence for each event;
- It was confirmed that Circuses were exempt from Licensing and that licensable events intended for less than 500 people were above to submit a Temporary Event Notice (TEN). The Licensing Team advise people submitting TENs to also submit a completed PESAG application form;
- The Review Group expressed a view that it needed to be clear on what the local authority did and at what level did PESAG become involved? Was there a region-wide body for large events?
- A member expressed the view that there was sometimes too much detail on some issues e.g. stewards every 30 feet, and that small events could utilise public parks for small events;
- It was suggested that PESAG could 'put some people off' organising events and that it was possibly seen as too big for small events and organisers;
- Barry Pearson confirmed that an Officer from sent received application forms to all members of PESAG and liaised between the group and the event organiser normally by e-mail;
- It was stated that all local authority open spaces were licenced via a Premises Licence with limited conditions stating that the applicant had to consult with the Police or the Environmental Health Manager of DBC in case PESAG no longer existed;
- Although PESAG is a free service it was stated that it cost approximately £50k per year to administer and the Group were keen to look more closely at whether PESAG gave value for money and the funding issues surround PESAG;
- The Group were keen to investigate the differences between events on private land and council-owned land and small community events compared with large Arena events as it acknowledged there were different risks associated with different types of events;
- Group were advised that moving road closures were dependent on a Police presence of specialist motorbike police and Durham County Council no longer had moving road closures;
- It was confirmed that there was a facility to charge for road closures although DBC presently did not charge and communities often asked for financial support which the Council does not give;

- The Chair stated that as PESAG was helpful to the Police, a case could be made to encourage Police funding;
- The Group were surprised to learn how full the Events Calendar was for a Year; and
- It was stated that Community Organisations needed to realise that, although the first PESAG application may be challenging, subsequent ones for similar events would be much easier.

IT WAS AGREED – (a) That the members of the Review Group look at the information on the Council's website in relation to PESAG prior to the next meeting.

(b) That the Planned Approach and Quad of Aims be amended to represent the comments made at this meeting.

(c) That the Environmental Health Officer, Principal Licensing Officer, Traffic Manager, Highways and the Events and Programming Manager be invited to attend the next meeting of this Review Group.