

PUBLIC EVENTS SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP (PESAG) REVIEW GROUP

FINAL REPORT

Introduction

1. This is the Final Report of the Public Events Safety Advisory Group (PESAG) Review Group, established by Place Scrutiny Committee to contribute to both the promotion and protocol for Darlington Public Events Safety Advisory Group (PESAG) and make appropriate recommendations to Cabinet.

Background

2. At a meeting of the Place Scrutiny Committee held on 3 September 2014 it was agreed to establish a Public Events Safety Advisory Group Review Group. Terms of Reference were developed and approved by Place Scrutiny Committee and all Members of that Committee were invited to participate in the Review.
3. The Review Group has met on four occasions and a wide number of issues have been discussed and considered at those meetings and these are referred to in the notes attached (**Appendix 1**). This report describes the outcome of the Review Group, it summarises the work undertaken, the findings from the processes and the subsequent recommendations.
4. Contributions were received from Durham Police; County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service; Sadberge Festival Organisers; Friends of North Lodge Park; Darlington Community Carnival; and the Licensing Officer, Traffic Manager, Events and Programming Manager and Environmental Health Officer, Darlington Borough Council.

Differences between Private and Council-owned Land

5. Council-owned parks and open spaces have a Premises Licence granted under the Licensing Act 2003. The following is a required condition
 - (a) 'For all events involving the sale of alcohol and/or regulated entertainment an event plan must be submitted to the Police, Environmental Health Manager and the Licensing Authority not later than 56 days prior to the event. Event specific risk assessments must also be submitted no later than 28 days prior to the event. The event and associated risk assessments must be agreed by all parties and complied with by all staff, hirers and contractors at the event.'
6. The organiser can fulfil this requirement by submitting a completed PESAG application form and then providing any additional information that is requested. If PESAG are unable to support the event then the Council, as the landlord, does not

allow the event to go ahead.

7. Generally open spaces that are privately owned do not have a premises licence. For events involving the supply of alcohol, or a licensable activity with less than 500 persons attending, requires the event organiser to submit a Temporary Event Notice. The responsible authorities who are consulted then have the opportunity to object. If more than 500 attend, a Premises Licence is required and this involves consultation with the responsible authorities. The Licensing Team process these applications and actively encourage applicants to submit completed PESAG application forms.

Membership of the Review Group

8. All Members of Place Scrutiny Committee were invited to participate in the Review and the following Members participated in the meetings :-
 - (a) Councillor Carson
 - (b) Councillor Cossins
 - (c) Councillor Culley
 - (d) Councillor Harman
 - (e) Councillor L Hughes
 - (f) Councillor Long
 - (g) Councillor E Richmond

The Group was led by Councillor Long

Acknowledgements

9. The Review Group acknowledges the support and assistance provided in the course of their investigations and would like to place on record its thanks to the following :-
 - (a) Paul Emmerson, Durham Constabulary
 - (b) Christopher Hockaday, County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Services
 - (c) Councillor B Jones, on behalf of the Sadberge Festival Organisers
 - (d) Ken Major, Traffic Manager
 - (e) Patrick Montgomery, Licensing Officer
 - (f) Marion Ogle, Events and Programming Manager
 - (g) Barry Pearson, Environmental Health Manager and Chair of the Darlington Public Events Safety Advisory Group
 - (h) Steve Petch, Place Strategy Officer
 - (i) Graham Robinson, Friends of North Lodge Park
 - (j) Steve Rose, Darlington Community Carnival
 - (k) Karen Graves, Democratic Officer

Methods of Investigation

10. The Review Group met on four occasions between 1 October 2014 and 23 February 2015 and the notes containing the discussions held at those meetings are attached (**Appendix 1**)

Findings

General

- Admin support for PESAG is provided by the Environmental Health Section of DBC with no funding provision from other sources;
- PESAG is a free service, not accountable to any body or organisation, that costs approximately £50k per year to administer;
- Members felt that PESAG was necessary and represented excellent value for money;
- Many issues and problems arose from the technical and event management knowledge of the organisers who did not fully appreciate the issues including financial obligations;
- Land owned by the Local Authority is licensed and one of the conditions of holding an event is that PESAG be consulted;
- Event Organisers holding events on private land must apply for a premises licence;
- Premises Licences which cover live bands negate the need for individual applications although agreement to the event plan is required;
- There was some evidence that PESAG 'put people off' organising events;
- DBC Officers receive PESAG applications and circulate to all members of PESAG for consideration as a virtual group;
- Contact between PESAG and the event organiser is normally by e-mail;
- The various sizes and locations of events provided different types of risks;
- DBC was often asked for financial support in respect of road closures;
- There was a lot of information available on the Council's website including templates to write event plans and written risk assessments, however advice was often sought on completing the necessary forms;
- A Council Officer cannot take on the role of Health and Safety Advisor, unless managing an event on behalf of the Council, and any advice should be sourced

from an experienced and qualified consultant; and

- PESAG did not remove risks – it made event organisers aware of the risks of holding an event.

Traffic Management

- many events posed no risks with minimal congestion, access and egress issues;
- Events held on the highway posed their own set of issues;
- There are two types of road closure, one through the Town Police Clauses Act, which was free, and the other through the Road Traffic Act (also used for road works), with individuals having to find their own road closure signs at a cost of around £70 each, only one road closure was allowed per twelve month period otherwise permission has to be sought from the Secretary of State; and
- Organisations are not always aware that Public Liability Insurance is required and without PESAG intervention some would not consider paying for traffic management, traffic signage or insurance.

Licensing

- Council parks and open spaces are already licensed for most types of events, many other outdoor spaces e.g. Darlington Rugby Club, are not licensed for public events and the South Park has no alcohol licence which would cost a lot of money if required; and
- The Licensing Team check to see if the relevant licences are in place, not many applications require an alcohol licence.

Durham Constabulary

- The role of the Police was to advise on public safety and disorder;
- The Police cannot always support community events;
- Steward marshalling required no training although for larger events, such as music concerts, specialist training was required to ensure Stewards recognised signs of trouble and reacted accordingly; and
- All members of PESAG knew of each other's existence and where to signpost event organisers for information/advice, there was always an alternative contact who could fulfil the role as legislation was adhered to.

County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Services

- The Fire Authority had two roles in relation to PESAG, legislative and operational with the Authority only interested in indoor events or events being held in a large marquee and mainly checked for a suitable means of escape in the event of an incident;
- Fire Risk Assessments have to be undertaken for indoor events and a template is available on the Fire Authority's web site although the Fire Authority could not legally write the Assessment it could advise as much as possible;
- The Fire Authority often found little problems associated with large events and as firework displays were outside there was little input from the Fire Authority; and
- All relevant information relating to events was available on the Fire Authority's web site.

Community Groups

- Minor issues raised causing added pressure and stress on individuals;
- Police should be more involved especially for the community aspect;
- Recent withdrawal by the Police caused concern but it was hoped Community Police Support Officers could provide a presence;
- Questioned the effectiveness of the role of PESAG;
- Blanket approach to applications for events held on the same premises should be considered;
- Volunteers felt controlled rather than advised;
- Community meetings would be useful to train and advise volunteers;
- Conflicting information was received from the DBC Team and PESAG;
- Positive statements should be attached to responses from PESAG; and
- Some Community Groups find it difficult to follow guidance but Members are assured that sufficient information is provided.

Recommendations

- (a) That, as PESAG was helpful to the Police, a case should be made to encourage Police funding;
- (b) That PESAG be more widely promoted and publicised by various means including DBC, Police, County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Services websites, social media and Darlington Together magazine;
- (c) That a community organisation be encouraged to train community volunteers to manage road closures;
- (d) That the benefits of PESAG be highlighted to all events organisers;
- (e) That a single application for multiple events at one location be submitted with a schedule of events incorporated;
- (f) That more customer-friendly web pages be implemented;
- (g) That the Events Manager role be more clearly defined as a facilitator and not to undertake the responsibilities of the Event's Organisers; and
- (h) That provision of an online feedback form be investigated

Public Events Safety Advisory Group Review Group

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 non-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 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 DBC 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.

PUBLIC EVENTS SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP (PESAG) REVIEW GROUP

4 December 2014

PRESENT – Councillors Cossins, Culley, Harman, L Hughes and Long.

APOLOGIES – Councillors Bladwin, Carson, Donoghue, Lawton, Richmond and Wright.

OFFICERS – Steve Petch, Place Strategy Officer, Barry Pearson, Environmental Health Manager, Ken Major, Traffic Manager, Marion Ogle, Events and Programming Manager, Patrick Montgomery, Licensing Officer and Karen Graves, Democratic Officer.

OUTSIDE REPRESENTATIVES – Christopher Hockaday, County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Services and Paul Emmerson, Durham Constabulary.

Purpose of the Meeting – To consider the individual roles of the members of the Public Events Safety Advisory Group as outlined in the Protocol circulated to the Group.

The Chair, Councillor Long, advised all attendees why Place Scrutiny Committee was undertaking a review of PESAG, current financial constraints of the Council, how community involvement for PESAG could be encouraged and health and safety considerations.

Points Discussed and Considered –

The various roles of the members of the Darlington PESAG were defined for Members with the limitations on all of those Groups as detailed within the Protocol. Members thereupon heard individual roles and responsibilities of the Group members as follows :-

Events and Programming Manager

- The Events and Programming Manager stated that there was a lot of people in attendance with a vast amount of knowledge and that it was helpful to have a discussion around the role of PESAG for big events such as The Torch Relay. In relation to smaller events, organisations approached the Events Team as, in many cases, the Council owned the land. All organisations were advised that the information was available on the Council's web site although many queries were in seeking advice on how to complete the relevant forms;
- Concerns were expressed by the Environmental Health Manager that the Events Team were drawn into many applications as organisations were unclear or unable to accept their responsibility for the event planning process and had an expectation that management support would be provided. The Team although experienced in writing event plans for Council events could not take on the health and safety role unless they managing the whole event on behalf of the Council. A Darlington Football Club event in the Market Square was given as an

example where the Events and Programming Manager managed an event and a member of the Football Club shadowed to gain experience and take control of future events;

- Following a question, the Group were advised that nobody in the Council could take on the role of Health and Safety Advisor to an event organiser. The Events Team had experience of delivering events and could provide general guidance and identify suppliers of stewards, fencing, staging etc. They could sign-post community groups and event organisers to sources of published information on the planning for delivery of a safe event and give examples of previous successful events. Any specialist Health and Safety advice that an event organiser required should be sourced from an experienced and qualified consultant;
- Group were also advised that there was information in the form of templates available on the Council's website regarding the writing of Event Plans and written risk assessments. To assist organisers to write risk assessments a list of the most common hazards and appropriate management controls had also been published;
- The Environmental Health Manager explained that he was aware of community groups that had no experience of organising events utilising the guidance published by PESAG and applying the knowledge, experience and skills of its members to produce a very personal events plan that demonstrated understanding of the process to deliver a safe event; and
- It was suggested that, as some Community Groups found it difficult to follow guidance, perhaps information sessions in relation to health and safety issues may be needed.

Traffic Manager

- The Traffic Manager advised the Group that he was responsible for the Highway and any event organiser should have contacted the Highways Department, through PESAG, to discuss possible road closures and impacts on the highway of holding an event;
- It was stated that many events posed no risks although there could be minimal congestion, access and egress issues;
- Events were also held on the highway itself, the 10k run being an example, which posed its own set of issues;
- Again the Group were advised that events on not on Council land such as the Festival of Thrift, meant that organisers had to undertake their own traffic management although advice could be sought from the Council's Traffic Manager;

- It was stated that contact from organisations was minimal as most of the information came through PESAG, ;
- Group were advised that there were two types of road closure, one through the Town Police Clauses Act, which was free, and the other through the Road Traffic Act which was also used for road works. Only one road closure was allowed per twelve month period otherwise permission had to be sought from the Secretary of State. During 2012 street parties were done under the Road Traffic Act with individuals having to find their own road closure signs at a cost of around £70 each;
- Group were informed that some organisations were not aware that Public Liability Insurance was required and without PESAG intervention some would not consider paying for traffic management, traffic signage or insurance;
- It was also stated that many events occur on a week-end and that early discussions had often resulted in organisations locating to another area that has no effect on movement of traffic;
- It was also stated that Park and Ride for large events was an issue with organisers being encouraged to source use of car parks at Darlington College or the Rugby Club when holding events with 5000+ attendees. Consideration also had to be given to providing drop-off points for taxis and buses. Consideration had to be given to parking provision in fields or on park areas but there was the risk of damaged land and effect of mud on roads causing hazards to other traffic;
- Members were advised that the Northern Echo Arena already had established travel management plans although there were still problems with people walking along the A66 at the Elton John Concert in 2008 and future events would have to provide more adequate pedestrian signage; and
- Group were advised that to deliver a one night entertainment event on at the Northern Echo Arena would mean an investment of approximately £1m to pay for a star performer, promotion, ticket sales, security, stage, traffic management etc. with no guarantee of making a profit

Licensing Officer

- Group were advised that the Northern Echo Arena and Council parks and open spaces are already licensed for most types of events. However many other outdoor spaces e.g. Darlington Rugby Club, are not licensed. The Arena Premises Licence had been written to allow a limited number of non-sporting events and the South Park had no alcohol licence which would cost a lot of money if required;
- Once an application is received the Licensing Team check to see if the relevant licences are in place, not many applications require an alcohol licence;

- It was also stated that Street Traders can and do attend some events. Some are traders/pedlars who attend events unannounced and, for example, sell glow sticks or balloons; typically they will possess a Pedlars Licence. Street Traders at community events occasionally need a Street Trading Consent but often the goods being sold contribute to a charity and therefore a Street Charity Collection permit is sufficient. As many as possibly 70 per cent of all applications did not require the Licensing Officer to pursue the issue of a licence, as none are required.
- Following a question Members were advised that an individual with a table on High Row would be classed as a Highway Obstruction and would be dealt with by Highways Department;
- Group were also informed that pavement cafes have to be licensed as they are creating extra floor space for the café, obstructions could occur, there may be Health and Safety Issues and DAD were usually consulted; and
- Police assistance would always be requested if someone was required to move and/or relocate to a more suitable place. A person was not classed as an obstruction, however, a person with a table or some form of structure was seen as an obstruction on the highway and they were advised of several identified areas where they could relocate.

Durham Constabulary

- Group were advised that the role of the Police was to advise on public safety and disorder;
- Many events were small, well-established events that did not cause problems; larger events such as the 10K run were seen as official events with a Community Police presence. The most problematic event for the Police used to be the Fireworks Spectacular held in the South Park.
- Members were made aware that the Police cannot always support community events and that stewarding and traffic management was the responsibility of the event organiser. Steward marshalling required no training although for larger events such as music concerts specialist training was required to ensure Stewards recognised signs of trouble and reacted accordingly;
- It was also stated that all Darlington events were well run and the Police were aware when they were being held. Occasionally police would attend but Organisers were aware that Officers would be relocated if a major incident occurred;
- A Boxing Event at the Dolphin Centre could result in extra Police presence in the Town Centre, dependant on who was fighting. Police generally liaise with other Police Authorities to determine if any problems could occur, dependant on the fighters involved; and

- It was also stressed that all members of PESAG knew of each other's existence and where to signpost event organisers for information/advice. If the relevant contact was not available there was always an alternative who could fulfil the role as legislation was adhered to.

County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Services

- Group were advised that the Fire Authority had two roles in relation to PESAG, legislative and operational and the Authority was normally only interested in indoor events or events being held in a large marquee and mainly checked for a suitable means of escape in the event of an incident;
- Reference was made to the Lumiere event held annually in Durham where Officers need to think of certain eventualities such as 'What would happen if the Cathedral was on fire?', in this example a fire engine is located nearby;
- The Fire Officer advised the Group that there were many events which required no Fire authority involvement or contribution as Durham Cathedral had its own escape plans as did the Northern Echo Arena;
- It was however stressed that Fire Risk Assessments had to be undertaken for indoor events and that there was a template on the Fire Authority's web site. Although the Fire Authority could not legally write the Assessment it could advise as much as possible;
- The Fire Authority often found little problems associated with large events and as firework displays were outside there was little input from the Fire Authority;
- It was stressed that if a member of the public held an event in a marquee on their own land they would be liable if there was a fire;
- All relevant information relating to events was available on the Fire Authority's web site although the public were largely unaware of its existence;
- If an event was accessed by the purchase of a ticket then the Fire Authority had more chance of being made aware of it although it was generally up to the event organiser to inform the appropriate Authorities;
- Overcrowding and blocked or lost fire escapes raised concerns for the Fire Authority and it was stressed that PESAG alone could not stop the event, it was only an advisory body and could signpost to relevant contacts;
- PESAG did not remove risks – it made event organisers aware of the risks of holding an event;
- It was also stated that lessons were learnt from the Dreamscape tragedy and as the inflatable was not on fire the Coroner's inquest had determined that the incident was nothing to do with the Fire Authority; and

- Following a question the Group were advised that suppliers were liable for inflatables as they were the contractor and should have a plan and advise what they are providing for you.

IT WAS AGREED – (a) That the thanks of the Group be extended to Officers of the Council and Christopher Hockaday, County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Services and Paul Emmerson, Durham Constabulary for their valuable input into the meeting.

(b) That the Democratic Officer make the necessary arrangements for the next meeting of the PESAG Review Group to which community groups are to be invited.

PUBLIC EVENTS SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP (PESAG) REVIEW GROUP

27 January 2015

PRESENT – Councillors Carson and Long.

APOLOGIES – Councillors Baldwin, Cossins, Culley, Donoghue, Richmond and Wright.

OFFICERS – Barry Pearson, Environmental Health Manager, Marion Ogle, Events and Programming Manager and Karen Graves, Democratic Officer.

OUTSIDE REPRESENTATIVES – Councillor B Jones, Sadberge and Whessoe Ward Councillor (on behalf of the Sadberge Festival Organisers), Graham Robinson, Friends of North Lodge Park and Steve Rose, Darlington Community Carnival.

Purpose of the Meeting – To consider the views of voluntary groups that have sought advice from PESAG.

The Chair, Councillor Long, advised all attendees why Place Scrutiny Committee was undertaking a review of PESAG, current financial constraints of the Council, how community involvement for PESAG could be encouraged and health and safety considerations.

Points Discussed and Considered –

Members heard the views and comments of the represented voluntary groups as follows :-

Sadberge and Whessoe Parish Council

- Councillor Jones advised the Group that he had encountered problems with PESAG when holding Carnival events. It was felt that some of the issues raised were minor and not necessary, examples given included training required for assembly of trestle tables and gazebos;
- Concerns were also expressed that Durham Constabulary had withdrawn assistance during parades and no longer provided parking cones. It was considered that the Police were an essential part of the Community and it was felt that they had withdrawn from the community due to the requirements of policing of the night time economy. It was felt that the Police should get involved when the opportunity arose; and
- Councillor Jones concluded that PESAG was required and had a role but the effectiveness of that role was questioned.

Friends of North Lodge Park

- Mr Robinson raised concerns over the completion of Risk Assessments and made particular reference to crowd control and sound monitoring. It was stated that although the points raised were valid they had been addressed for previous

events and the need to raise them each time was questioned. It was stated that an event felt 'threatened' due to the standard approach adopted and it was suggested that a 'blanket' approach could be adopted for standard events;

- Group were advised that The Friends had their own safety feature cut-off point and cancelled events if there were too many attendees. It was felt that events had run smoothly for several years although The Friends always felt 'hammered' by PESAG every time an event was held; and
- Reference was also made to the provision of 'burger vans' which didn't require a licence as they were making a financial contribution to the event. The 'refreshment vans' were seen as providing for a community event rather than a business for profit.

Friends of the Denes

- Councillor Carson concurred with the comments of the Community Representatives and commented that The Friends had problems regarding security and insurance due to the financial implications on a small budget. He also advised that as the same events were run each year The Friends encountered less problems due to the repetitiveness.

Darlington Community Carnival and The Rotary Club

- Steve Rose believed that promotion and public awareness of PESAG was vital and although considered that volunteers felt they were being controlled and not advised he stated that, in order to have a successful event, an organiser had to abide by the rules;
- Mr Rose considered that each time an event form was completed for PESAG it became easier and suggested that volunteers were put off by re-submitted annual event plans;
- Mr Rose suggested that it would extremely useful to have regular community meetings as volunteers needed to be trained, trusted and facilitated;
- It was confirmed that the Community Carnival worked well and that the Police supported the event;
- Questions were raised as to why PESAG required information six months in advance as it was not always readily available until 4 to 6 weeks in advance of the Event;
- In relation to alcohol sales in Stanhope Park during the Carnival, Group were informed that the Licensing Officer Group had considered the issue therefore PESAG had no concerns;
- Mr Rose confirmed that the Events Team gave a great deal of time and resources to the Community Carnival but considered that sometimes different

messages were received from the Events Team and PESAG – consistency was needed and perhaps one team was required as opposed to two – it was however confirmed that two teams were required – one PESAG and one the Event Organiser; and

- Mr Rose requested that a positive statement be put on any response from PESAG, for example, ‘We like the idea of and support you but please note you need to be mindful of

General Issues

- The Events and Programming Manager stressed that she understood that organising an event entailed a lot of work and the Events Team did try to help however it was stressed that an event was not the responsibility of the Events Team, it was the responsibility of the Organiser of the event, many of which were volunteers;
- In relation to the provision of refreshment vans Group were advised that the Policy was changed by the Council in order to provide a balance for the business trade and fairness to other traders;
- Particular reference was made to ‘blanket requests’ for events and the Environmental Health Manager advised that these would be appropriate in some cases, but not all, as there could be anomalies such as different performers at each event requiring differing needs. Group were advised, however, that a blanket form could be submitted with a Schedule of Events and this would cover all yearly events ;
- Concerns were raised around the information provided by Building Control and the Group were informed that standard advice text was provided for each application and it was stressed that a reply was not required. It was emphasized that the information was not Event specific and Building Control were reluctant to tailor a response to each individual event;
- The Environmental Health Officer stated that he did challenge people and requested an Event Plan that matched the proposed event, he only required a description that assured him the Event could be provided safety, he agreed it was burdensome especially on volunteers, however, the Community representatives were concerned that unnecessary pressures were being placed on volunteers resulting in a reluctance to undertake the task;
- It was stated that stewarding of events become more important once the Police decided not to support community events. Volunteers were normally briefed prior to an event and would normally only undertake crowd control. Larger Event Organisers would employ fully trained and qualified Stewards who could maintain order with the use of body language and voice control;
- Councillor Jones considered it ironic that a small village event was not supported by the Police but the PACT (Police and Communities Together) vehicle was

present at the event. It was suggested that Special Constables could be deployed to community events to gain experience;

- The Environmental Health Officer advised the Group that the Police do not want any event organiser to make any reference to a police presence at an event being involved in the arrangements for crown management. They would, however, generally wish to attend events and engage with the public and if an emergency were to occur the Police would respond to a public safety/public order issue;
- Road closures are a significant issue for the Community Representatives. They felt that volunteers could organise them but were advised that a qualification was needed to ensure the process was done correctly;
- Making arrangements for a sponsor to fund the training of a team of volunteers who could manage Road Closures at community events would remove the need to pay for the employment of a specialist company; and
- Guidance about Road Closures for street parties were detailed on the Council's website and that signs, which had to be returned, were provided by the Council.

The Chair commented that it was important the public were encouraged to do more for their community and community policing needed to be explored and encouraged.

IT WAS AGREED – (a) That the thanks of the Group be extended to Councillors Jones and Carson and Mr Robinson and Mr Rose for their valuable input into the meeting.

(b) That the Democratic Officer make the necessary arrangements for the next meeting of the PESAG Review Group to formalise final recommendations.

PUBLIC EVENTS SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP (PESAG) REVIEW GROUP

23 February 2015

PRESENT – Councillors Carson, Cossins, Culley, Harman, Long and E Richmond.

APOLOGIES – Councillors Baldwin, Donoghue, L Hughes, Lawton and Wright.

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

Purpose of the Meeting – To consider the findings of the Review Group and formulate recommendations for consideration by Place Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.

Points Discussed and Considered –

- Members debated the provision of a simple Fact Sheet or Leaflet for use by Organisations requiring PESAG information although it was suggested that this would not be a simple task;
- Group were advised that the majority of events were held on Council land and when the event is booked organisers are told of the existence of PESAG;
- PESAG is not statutory although Organisers are made aware of it and if PESAG not consulted the Council cancels the booking;
- It was confirmed by the Environmental Health Officer that although talking is the best form of communication all correspondence for PESAG had to be in writing to avoid any disputes of a conversation;
- The preferred method of communication was via e-mail as time was lost very quickly if the postal service was used;
- It was confirmed that Road Closures can cost up to £1500 for a large event and many organisers were offered an alternative venue to avoid road closures;
- Members were advised that road closures occurred on adopted highways with road closure signs being erected by a specialist company with highways knowledge;
- Members learnt that it was normal practice for residents to be permitted to leave the area but not allowed to return before a certain time; and
- Reference was made to the professionals used by the British Triathlon who do an excellent job for the Darlington Rotary Triathlon and Aquathlon held annually in the Branksome area of town.

The Group then formulated its initial findings and recommendations as follows :

Findings

General

- Members felt that PESAG is necessary and represents excellent value for money;
- Admin support for PESAG is provided by DBC with no funding provision from other sources;
- PESAG is a free service, not accountable to any body or organisation, that costs approximately £50k per year to administer ;
- Many issues and problems arose from the technical and event management knowledge of the organisers who did not fully appreciate the issues including financial obligations;
- Land owned by the Local Authority is licensed and one of the conditions of holding an event is that PESAG be consulted;
- Event Organisers holding events on private land must apply for a premises licence;
- Premises Licences which cover live bands negate the need for individual applications although agreement to the event plan is required;
- There was some evidence that PESAG 'put people off' organising events;
- DBC Officers receive PESAG applications and circulate to all members of PESAG for consideration as a virtual group;
- Contact between PESAG and the event organiser is normally by e-mail;
- The various sizes and locations of events provided different types of risks;
- DBC was often asked for financial support in respect of road closures;
- There was a lot of information available on the Council's website including templates to write event plans and written risk assessments, however advice was often sought on completing the necessary forms;
- A Council Officer cannot take on the role of Health and Safety Advisor, unless managing an event on behalf of the Council, and any advice should be sourced from an experienced and qualified consultant; and

- PESAG did not remove risks – it made event organisers aware of the risks of holding an event.

Traffic Management

- many events pose no risks with minimal congestion, access and egress issues;
- Events held on the highway pose their own set of issues;
- There are two types of road closure, one through the Town Police Clauses Act, which was free, and the other through the Road Traffic Act (also used for road works), with individuals having to find their own road closure signs at a cost of around £70 each, only one road closure was allowed per twelve month period otherwise permission has to be sought from the Secretary of State; and
- organisations are not always aware that Public Liability Insurance is required and without PESAG intervention some would not consider paying for traffic management, traffic signage or insurance.

Licensing

- Council parks and open spaces are already licensed for most types of events, many other outdoor spaces e.g. Darlington Rugby Club, are not licensed for public events and the South Park has no alcohol licence which would cost a lot of money if required; and
- The Licensing Team check to see if the relevant licences are in place, not many applications require an alcohol licence.

Durham Constabulary

- The role of the Police was to advise on public safety and disorder;
- The Police cannot always support community events;
- Steward marshalling required no training although for larger events such as music concerts specialist training was required to ensure Stewards recognised signs of trouble and reacted accordingly; and
- All members of PESAG knew of each other's existence and where to signpost event organisers for information/advice, there was always an alternative contact who could fulfil the role as legislation was adhered to.

County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Services

- The Fire Authority had two roles in relation to PESAG, legislative and operational with the Authority only interested in indoor events or events being held in a large marquee and mainly checked for a suitable means of escape in the event of an incident;
- Fire Risk Assessments have to be undertaken for indoor events and a template is available on the Fire Authority's web site although the Fire Authority could not

legally write the Assessment it could advise as much as possible;

- The Fire Authority often found little problems associated with large events and as firework displays were outside there was little input from the Fire Authority; and
- All relevant information relating to events was available on the Fire Authority's web site.

Community Groups

- Minor issues raised causing added pressure and stress on individuals;
- Police should be more involved especially for the community aspect;
- Recent withdrawal by the Police caused concern but it was hoped Community Police Support Officers could provide a presence;
- Questioned the effectiveness of the role of PESAG;
- Blanket approach to applications for events held on the same premises should be considered;
- Volunteers felt controlled rather than advised;
- Community meetings would be useful to train and advise volunteers;
- Conflicting information was received from the DBC Team and PESAG;
- Positive statement should be attached to responses from PESAG; and
- Some Community Groups find it difficult to follow guidance but Members are assured that sufficient information is provided.

Recommendations

- (a) That, as PESAG was helpful to the Police, a case should be made to encourage Police funding;
- (b) That PESAG be more widely promoted and publicised by various means including DBC, Police, County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Services websites, social media and Darlington Together magazine;
- (c) That a community organisation be encouraged to train community volunteers to manage road closures;
- (d) That the benefits of PESAG be highlighted to all events organisers;

- (e) That a single application for multiple events at one location be submitted with a schedule of events incorporated;
- (f) That more customer-friendly web pages be implemented;
- (g) That the Events Manager role be more clearly defined as a facilitator and not to undertake the responsibilities of the Event's Organisers; and
- (h) That provision of an online feedback form be investigated.