

CABINET

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 17 th December 2024
Report Subject	Policy for Supporting Events on or Impacting the Highway, Including Cost Recovery
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Transportation
Report Author	Chief Officer (Streetscene & Transportation)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The approved budget set by the Council for 2024/25 included full cost recovery for public events on or impacting the highway. This report sets out the methodology for achieving full cost recovery to achieve the approved budget.

It is recognised that well managed and safe events can bring significant benefit to local towns and communities. Event organisers, such as Town and Community Councils, charities and local interest groups often organise public events across the county, and a number of these events currently requires operational support from Flintshire County Council's Streetscene and Transportation portfolio.

Public events such as civic parades, bonfire displays, festive celebrations and community fairs take place throughout the year, and in many instances the burden to control traffic falls on the local authority, with the assistance of North Wales Police, although their availability to support events has been reduced over recent years.

We currently support all non-profit making (charitable) events with assistance for the design of traffic management plans and provision of necessary signage across the county, in addition to waste disposal, and in some instances, transportation provision. The report provides an overview of the level of support provided by the portfolio to enable public events to be held.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	<p>That in order to achieve the savings target set within the budget for 2024/2025 by Council, Cabinet approves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) the introduction of a formalised policy; and ii) the methodology for achieving full cost recovery for public events impacting or on the highway.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE BACKGROUND FOR THE SUPPORT CURRENTLY OFFERED FOR PUBLIC EVENTS IMPACTING OR ON THE HIGHWAY
1.01	<p>Well managed and safe events can bring significant benefit to local towns and communities. As the Traffic Authority for Flintshire, we aim to minimise disruption to traffic and residents and maximise traffic safety. Flintshire County Council is the Traffic Authority for most roads in Flintshire. The exceptions are the A55 and A494, which are Trunk Roads and managed by the North and Mid-Wales Trunk Road Agency (NMWTRA).</p>
1.02	<p>The Traffic Management Act 2004 placed a statutory network management duty on Traffic Authorities such as Flintshire County Council to ensure the expeditious movement of traffic, which included the need to ensure that actions of others, e.g. event organisers, did not cause unnecessary disruption to the travelling public. There are, on average, 30 public events held on Flintshire's road network each year and most require some form of temporary traffic control to enable them to take place, such as road closures.</p>
1.03	<p>Currently, as the Traffic Authority, we carry out a number of operational responsibilities to assist event organisers, which includes the provision of traffic management and the manning of road closure, the cost of which to do so is nearly £18,000 per year. Additionally, there are often further costs incurred for the removal of waste, waste disposal, diversion of bus routes, car parking and transportation provision amounting to more than £4,000 per year.</p> <p>These costs are 'absorbed' across various service areas within the Streetscene and Transportation portfolio, for which there is no budget, and the total cost to provide this level of service is in excess of £22,000 per year. As an Authority, we are under no statutory obligation to provide these services; however, we recognise the benefits that public events can bring to local communities, but this needs to be balanced with ensuring that events are carefully planned to minimise traffic congestion and risks to safety on the highway.</p>
1.04	<p>In addition to the financial costs, there is also an impact on daily service delivery within the service. The Council does not have designated traffic management teams and, therefore, when providing traffic management support for public events, other scheduled services such as grass cutting, highway repairs and cleansing operations must be suspended so that operatives can be redeployed. In addition to the services provided that are detailed within this report, there is an increasing demand for community-based services for public events such as grass cutting, highway maintenance and cleansing that are not captured as part of this report.</p> <p>Additionally, many events are often held in the evenings or at weekends, which incurs additional costs for out of hours support, as well as hidden costs, as resources are displaced from their daily shifts within normal working hours. Clearly, in the current financial climate, these avoidable costs are unsustainable, and the Council approved full cost recovery for supporting public events affecting the highway as part of the budget setting process for 2024/2025.</p>

1.05	<p>It is proposed that the Council will maintain current levels of support and continue to provide the traffic management needed to facilitate events on the public highway. This will be limited to current support levels, and requests to provide support for new events will be considered and supported on a case-by-case basis if resources allow.</p> <p>Although the cost for continuing to provide this support to event organisers is likely to be in excess of £22,000 per annum, we recognise that the benefits of continuing to do this will provide knock-on benefits in terms of the continuity for insurance cover for the management of events, a standardised approach to traffic management and ensuring duty of care for waste disposal.</p>
1.06	<p>The approved budget set by the Council for 2024/2025 included full cost recovery for public events on or impacting the highway and in order to achieve this and ensure that the resources provided by the Authority are not adversely impacted, we intend to introduce a charge for staffing costs for large public events. The proposed methodology for achieving full cost recovery is detailed within the attached policy (see Appendix 1) for consideration.</p>
1.07	<p>No charge is proposed for small events as detailed within the policy or for national commemoration events, such as Remembrance Sunday. The Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee reviewed the proposed policy document at its meeting on Tuesday, 10th December 2024, and requested that the reference to Remembrance Sunday and national commemoration events are specifically included and worded in the policy, which has been amended for Cabinet's approval.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>Cost recovery will ensure that the approved budget set by the Council for 2024/2025 is achieved.</p>
2.02	<p>Cost recovery is intended to have a positive impact on resources within the service, allowing a more efficient distribution of resource with revenue income used to cover the costs of service delivery.</p>

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	<p>All events are assessed dependent on their scale, with large public events subject review by the Authorities Safety Advisory Group. The current risk management regime will continue.</p>
3.02	<p>This is an operational report and, as such, does not require a full integrated impact assessment.</p>
3.03	<p>The impact of not implementing the recommendations of this report will result in a budget pressure of more than £22,000 per annum and will not achieve the approved budget set by the Council for 2024/2025.</p>

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Transportation.
4.02	Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee 10 th December 2024.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Policy for Events on or Impacting the Highway.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	As detailed within Appendix 1.

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	Contact Officer: Barry Wilkinson (Highway Network Manager) Telephone: 01352 704656 E-mail: barry.wilkinson@flintshire.gov.uk
7.02	Contact Officer: Sam Tulley (Area Manager, Central & Road Space) Telephone: 01352 704810 E-mail: sam.tulley@flintshire.gov.uk

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	None.