

## **USE OF THE COUNCIL'S PUBLIC OPEN SPACES**

### **Item CE 22/11 referred from Communities and Environment Scrutiny Select Committee of 19 October 2022**

Members reviewed the new policy and fees and charges for the use of Borough Council owned space which was introduced in January 2022.

The Policy setting out criteria against which each request for an event was assessed together with the approved fees and charges was attached at Annex 1. Information on the number and type of events held during 2022 was set out in Annex 2.

There had been no obvious or evidenced detrimental impact on the number of events taking place. In fact, there had been a 32% increase since 2021. The existing charges, included in Section 6 of the Policy, had not had a negative impact on the number of events taking place and in line with corporate guidance it was suggested that the prices be increased in line with inflation.

Members discussed the principle of whether bands or organisations should be charged if they were providing entertainment. In response, it was noted that bands and organisations had already been invited to participate in events during 2023/24. Details of the charging policy had been provided at the same time and it was confirmed that all dates were filled. This demonstrated that bands and organisations were willing to pay the charges as set out. It was also noted that the current £25 charge did not fully cover the costs incurred by the Council when administering, authorising and supporting such events.

**RECOMMENDED:** That

- (1) the outcome of the review be noted;
- (2) the Policy (attached at Annex 1) be approved with no changes identified; and
- (3) an inflationary increase of 10% in charges for 2023/24 be commended to Cabinet.

**\*Referred to Cabinet**