

Briefing Note on introducing a fee/charge for events on the highway involving Temporary Traffic Restriction Orders (TTRO's)

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Purpose:

To gain initial feedback and comment from Leader, appropriate Directors, Portfolio Holders, on the background, considerations and proposals outlined – with a view to presenting a draft policy and fee structure to Scrutiny/Place Overview Committee for consideration and next steps.

Background:

“Events” on the highway which require some form of TTRO (usually temporary road closure and/or temporary suspension of parking) include large annual shows such as Shrewsbury Flower Show, regular local Market events, fairs and festivals and sporting events. Organisers include but are not restricted to; Town & Parish Councils; private; community led and charitable organisations; television and film companies.

The reasoning for temporary road closures and other restrictions to be applied is predominantly to protect participants and attendees and to temporarily allow useable space on the highway to allow equipment and apparatus to be installed and people to attend without risk of traffic conflict.

Historically, whilst Shropshire Council have the ability and facilities to charge event organisers for the assessment, advice, and processing of the legal order if deemed necessary, the process has been largely accommodated as part of a wider ethos to assist event organisers on limited budgets and to promote events as beneficial to community engagement, increasing footfall, trade & tourism whilst raising Towns and County profile.

There is now an initiative to review this policy, look to increase income and introduce a reasoned/defendable charge where appropriate to do so.

Considerations

Whilst the pandemic affected the number of events being applied for and taking place over the last two years – we are now seeing a resurgence with 34 separate events involving a TTRO planned from March to October, so far this year, and 39 Market events.

- Any revised charge/process will be new to regular and historical event organisers. There may be some consideration to ensuring revisions are reasonable, defendable, pass Audit scrutiny and accurately reflect officers time and incurred costs.
- An initial “Benchmarking” exercise with similar neighbouring authorities has evidenced that, predominantly they do impose a charge for this function although the calculations involved are varied.

- How to resolve events led or promoted by Town/Parish Councils or “Business Improvement Districts (BID’s) i.e. community or authority led.
- Consideration of either a fee waiver or “discount” for those events evidenced to be non-profit making and /or led by a charitable organisation where all or a percentage of any takings is donated to charity.
- Consideration of a sliding scale model of charge based on the “disruption effect” for each individual closure. i.e. higher charge for traffic sensitive streets and lower charge for minor roads.
- Confirmation that full consideration has been given to the “pros and cons” of any revised process. Applicable consultation has been carried out, Members are aware and agreeable to any revised process or policy and there is effective communication of any change.
- The current charge levied to process individual TTRO’s for planned “works purposes” (i.e. Public Utility / Statutory Undertakers) is £1635.00 which is based on recouping officers time, legal and advertising costs – and includes a small percentage profit element.

Summary

There is currently a dedicated post of “Events & Contingency Officer” within the Street Works team who handles all applications from event organisers, offering guidance and advice. Any “Officer time” calculated charge could be based on this, plus required legal and advertising costs, or could equally be calculated on a “sliding scale” appropriate to the disruption level / type of event or none of the above - as a set figure taking into account whether the organiser is commercially, community or charity led.

Comments and advice on the initiative and considerations to review and present a revised process to Members are welcomed.