

**Report of Event Manager**

**Report to Chief Libraries, Arts and Heritage Officer**

**Date: Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2013**

**Subject: Proposal to introduce charges for Party in the Park**

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): All	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

**Summary of main issues**

1. The Events Programme is facing a significant reduction in corporate funding. In 2011 charges were introduced for Opera in the Park and Classical Fantasia but, at the time, the popular music industry would not support free appearances of their artists arranged through commercial radio stations if charges were made. There has now been a recognition within the industry that modest charges may be required to enable an event to happen. If this charge is kept low no fees will be incurred.
2. It is therefore proposed to introduce charges for Party in the Park. It is proposed to make charges consistent across all three major outdoor summer events: Party and Opera in the Park and Classical Fantasia.

**Recommendations**

The Chief Officer Libraries, Arts and Heritage is requested to approve the charges for tickets to Party in the Park, Classical Fantasia and Opera in the Park and to introduce new packages as part of the ticket offer across all three events.

## **Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 To propose the introduction of charging for Party in the Park and set the same charges for Classical Fantasia and Opera in the Park.

## **2 Background information**

- 2.1 Leeds City Council has organised a number of large outdoor events over many years. In 2011 the Council introduced charges for Opera in the Park and Classical Fantasia. This left two large scale events – Party in the Park and Leeds Lights switch on. The Lights switch on event would be very costly to ticket and very difficult to manage as a ticketed event in the space on the Headrow. It is therefore not proposed to charge this family focussed event while it is delivered in its current format.

Party in the Park has been held for the last 20 years. It shares the stage, event management and therefore costs with Opera in the Park. Over the last few years high profile major acts of the day have been an integral part of the programme such as McFly and One Direction. This has attracted about 50,000 – 60,000 young people and families.

Ticket charges were introduced for Opera in the Park and Classical Fantasia. They were not introduced for Party in the Park due to the arrangement with the industry which enable the acts to perform free. Introducing charges at the time would have resulted in the industry withdrawing the arrangement leading to prohibitive costs rendering the event untenable. There has been a shift in attitude and a recognition that in these financially challenging times modest charges are required.

- 2.2 Changes were however introduced for Party in the Park in partnership with Radio Aire. A new ticketing system enabled a fair distribution of tickets to Leeds Council tax postcodes. This move has resulted in a much greater use of tickets, and demand for tickets has increased significantly in 2011 and 2012 to approximately 60,000. At the same time, with the help of the accessibility officer and in consultation with young people significant improvements were made to accessing the event for disabled young people and their friends and family, and children facing the most challenging lives were supported through separate ticket distribution via Children's Services.

## **3 Main Issues**

- 3.1 The events budget is under significant pressure due to the economic position. Rather than cancel both Party and Opera in the Park it is proposed to implement the same charges for Party as the other two events. It is also proposed to introduce an early bird offer for purchasers of tickets in May. There will also be opportunities to win tickets through offers and competitions run by various media partners.

### 3.2 Ticket prices for Classical Fantasia, Opera and Party in the Park

The ticket prices are as below. Tickets bought at the box office in person are not subject to a booking fee. Those buying over the phone will incur a transaction fee of £2.50 per booking, and those buying on the internet will pay a transaction fee of £1.00 per ticket. Under-fives go free but require an under fives ticket to enter.

<b>Ticket category</b>	<b>Price</b>
Breezecard holders	£5.00
Leedscard Extra	£6.50
Leeds Active, LibraryCard and Leedscard holders	£8.00
Group ticket (for between five and ten people of any age)	£7.00 per person
Full price tickets	£10.00
Earlybird tickets Book before the end of May	10% discount

## 4. Corporate Considerations

### 4.1 Consultation and Engagement

4.1.1 Consultation was undertaken by Radio Aire during the 2012 Party in the Park

4.1.2 A number of those consulted identified charging as something they would accept if it remained modest. More details of the consultation is included in the Equality Impact Assessment attached.

4.1.3 A number of complaints were received during 2011 and 2012 about a perceived unfairness that classical music followers were feeling when compared with popular music followers.

4.1.4 As part of the city's consultation You Choose with local people on the budget, a number of residents suggested charges for Party in the Park.

4.1.5 Discussions of the outcome of the consultation and the proposals to charge have been held with the leader of the Council and Executive Member for Leisure who are both supportive of the proposal to charge rather than abandon the event.

### 4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

4.2.1 A full impact assessment has been completed and is attached.

4.2.2 To maintain access by those young people living the most challenging lives in the city 2,000 tickets will be allocated to Children's Services by Cash for Kids, Radio Aire.

### **4.3 Council policies and City Priorities**

4.3.1 Events are vital to making Leeds a great place to live, and being able to maintain a wide ranging programme while introducing modest charges demonstrates the Council's responsive approach to the ambitions of an active family friendly city spending money wisely.

### **4.4 Resources and value for money**

4.4.1 A reduction of £330,000 has been included in the 2013/14 budget to the net cost of the event programme, and the budget report highlighted an option to reduce the cost by including scope for new charges. Whilst the anticipated fall off in the number attending Party in the Park is difficult to project, a reduction to 30,000, for example, would still produce income of £160,000 at an average ticket price of £6.

4.4.2 Introducing charges to Party in the Park while maintaining charges for Classical Fantasia and Opera in the Park will contribute to meeting the reduction in the Event budget.

4.4.3 The introduction of charges will result in charges from Radio Aire to Leeds City Council and discussion is underway on the level of the costs which will be met. There will also be charges from the Police and consultation is also underway on the level of these. The sale of tickets will be handled by Leeds City Centre Box Office and the Visitor Centre.

4.4.4 There will be competitions across a range of media for the public to win tickets as prizes. This results in no cost marketing for the events in the media.

4.4.5 Meanwhile Classical FM have confirmed a second year of support to Opera in the Park giving free on-air advertising for the event.

### **4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

4.5.1 There are no legal implications of this report and it is not subject to call in.

### **4.6 Risk Management**

4.6.1 It is anticipated there will be a significant fall off in the take up of tickets. The weather plays a significant role in ticket sales and the move to charge, while proposed in consultation, is always challenging in implementation. It is impossible to predict the drop. At the same time the line up will impact on ticket sales and the record industry is volatile. The event is now linked to events in Manchester and Liverpool to help ensure quality acts.

4.6.2 In previous years tickets have been placed on Ebay after being received. In the past we have worked with Ebay and Gumtree to take these tickets off. It is highly likely that with a price tag now associated with the ticket that people will seek to gain from these tickets. We will find it much harder to remove these tickets from the sites but will plan to include in our communication strategy the price of tickets bought directly from the Box Office.

## **5 Conclusion**

5.1 Introducing charging for Party in the Park is not done lightly, particularly as the event is a fundamental element in the Child Friendly City ambition. However the Council recognises that new opportunities within the record industry will now enable a modest charge without a negative impact on the line up and charging is preferable to abandoning the event.

## **6 Recommendations**

6.1 The Chief Officer Libraries, Arts and Heritage is requested to approve the charges for tickets to Party in the Park, Classical Fantasia and Opera in the Park and to introduce new packages as part of the ticket offer across all three events.

## **7 Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

7.1 There are no background documents.

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.