

Changes to the provision of Midsummer Fair in 2016

1.0 Background

1.1 Midsummer Fair is the most complex of all the events which take place on Midsummer Common, with prolonged 10 day event duration, a significant number of articulated vehicles and many adults and children temporarily living on the site. There is a multiplicity of contractual arrangements with up to 80 separate fair traders (the Fair is not run under the umbrella of a single organisation or individual). The event covers a number of paths over the common for its entire duration, all of which are used frequently by local cyclists and pedestrians. This year the event is due to take place between 22-27th June.

1.2 The Council is under no direct legal obligation to hold Midsummer Fair. The amusement element forms no part of the historic Midsummer Fair. The background to the historic fair is that it provided a concourse of buyers and sellers as a seasonal traders' market.

1.3 On 4th November 2015, a member of the public was injured during the set-up of the funfair for Bonfire Night. A Health & Safety Executive (HSE) investigation is still ongoing. The City Council has been advised by the HSE investigator that it should refer to HSE guidance on temporary workplaces in order to inform arrangements for vehicular movements and the safety of employees and pedestrians at future events. Cambridge Live is also reviewing its procedures and has been served a HSE improvement notice. The City Council has reviewed its processes accordingly and has been working with Cambridge Live to implement changes to the City Events (the Council events run by Cambridge Live).

1.4 The HSE requirements mean the footprint of the event, its scale and its management must be completely reconfigured to ensure vehicle and pedestrian separation. A significant number of footpath closures are inevitable and a range of temporary and permanent closures would need to be agreed with the County Council for the 10 day period which includes set-up, the event, and get-out.

1.5 The timescale for achieving this work is extremely tight and does not allow any room for slippage. All large-scale outdoor events are referred as routine to the City's Safety Advisory Group (SAG). SAG would want to appraise fully formed plans at their meeting on 7th April at the latest. The actions taken to remove the mixing of pedestrians and vehicles has the potential to create new risks around crushing, mass evacuations, and fire, all of which need to be considered, and which require input from the full range of emergency services. The City Council, Cambridge Live, the County Council and the local SAG need to have full confidence in the event management plans and their ability to implement these. The City Council and Cambridge Live now believe the timetable is too tight to pursue with confidence and

have examined other options, including not running any aspect of the event, and operating a smaller funfair. In summary, the assessment of these reached the following conclusions:

Traders' market: The Council recognises the traditional traders market is an important calendar date for traveller communities and would want to support this event if there was demand.

Funfair: Providing a funfair at the event in 2016 presents the following issues:

- The time needed to undertake a fair and transparent process to select a smaller funfair
- Footprint redesign work will require footpath closures which cannot be guaranteed
- There will be considerable additional expense in providing safety measures
- There is still uncertainty that plans can be formatted in time that are adequately compliant with HSE guidance and meet with SAG approval
- In principle it is a desirable option but there is too much uncertainty about deliverability

1.6 The Council and Cambridge Live have concluded that the funfair element is the aspect which underpins the concern around compliance and deliverability. Following discussion on this option at the SAG, Cambridge Live was been asked to plan for a Traders Market only. This was felt to be the only option with certainty of deliverability in the timescale. The SAG reviewed the option and saw no reason not to proceed with the plan.

1.7 Discussion will now take place with representatives of the market traders to ascertain whether this option is viable for them. If the market traders do not wish to attend the reconfigured event, then no event will take place. The Council will work with all stakeholders to reconfigure the event in a way which meets the health and safety requirements and looks at opportunities for adding value.

1.8 Cambridge Live will also discuss the plans for 2016 with local ward councillors and residents groups

1.9 The Council will continue to work with all parties in order to plan a safe and successful event in 2017