

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 20 NOVEMBER 2012
title: REVIEW OF EVENT SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP
submitted by: CHIEF EXECUTIVE
principal author: MARSHAL SCOTT

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To update Committee on the review of the Event Safety Advisory Group.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At the Council meeting on 9 October 2012 Councillor Knox proposed a Notice of Motion in respect of the Community Bonfire in Clitheroe and the role of the Event Safety Advisory Group.
- 2.2 Council required me in conjunction with a working group of 5 members to review the Event Safety Advisory Group's policies, constitution and procedures to ensure that all advice it provides is done in a constructive, helpful and timely manner.
- 2.3 Council required the outcome of the review to be reported to the next meeting of this Committee.

3 PROGRESS WITH REVIEW

- 3.1 The working group, comprising Councillors Terry Hill (chairman), Allan Knox, Kevin Horkin, Jim Rogerson and Jan Alcock, have met three times since the Council meeting. The minutes of the first two meetings of the group are attached at Appendix A.
- 3.2 Whilst it is acknowledged that the Event Safety Advisory Group has been successful in the past, there was a clear need to review its operation to ensure everyone involved understands their roles and responsibilities.
- 3.3 The working group agreed that the main problems of the existing Event Safety Advisory Group related to:-
- conflicts of interest between the various roles of officers involved and the role of the chairman;
 - the public perception that the chairman of ESAG was solely acting on behalf of the Council and not the other agencies involved;
 - that the Event Safety Advisory Group was still seen as a regulatory / enforcing body rather than one being helpful and advisory.
 - a lack of clarity regarding governance, the role and responsibilities of individual members of the Event Safety Advisory Group and the relationship between the Group and the local authority.

3.4 With this in mind the review group has looked at a protocol which would address all the above issues whilst retaining the important safety advisory role of the Event Safety Advisory Group.

3.5 The draft protocol which has been produced:-

- clarifies that event organisers are responsible for organising and managing their events safely;
- will make it clear that the Ribble Valley Safety Advisory Group is there to advise and give guidance to those planning events;
- will recommend that a Senior Officer of the Council chairs the new Ribble Valley Safety Advisory Group;
- will recommend roles and responsibilities for council officers and other agencies that make absolutely clear the involvement of Ribble Valley Council Officers, Lancashire Police, Lancashire Fire and Rescue and other bodies in advising and guiding those organising events;
- clarifies the governance arrangements including meetings, minutes, reporting lines and member involvement.

3.6 The Review Group has also begun a review of the Event Safety Management Plan template to ensure that event organisers have available a useful, plain English guide to assist them in organising their event.

3.7 The work of the Review Group is ongoing and hopefully will be concluded by the next meeting of this Committee in January 2013.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications:

- Resources – none
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – none
- Political – none
- Reputation – the Event Safety Advisory Group has a significant impact on the public perception of the Council's role in advising on event safety.
- Equality & Diversity – none

5 **RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE**

5.1 Note the progress with the Review of the Event Safety Advisory Group.

NAME

AUTHOR

For further information please ask for Marshal Scott, extension 4400.

NAME

DIRECTOR OF / CHIEF EXECUTIVE

ESAG Review Group
Minutes of Meeting Held
22 October 2012

- 1 PRESENT: Councillors T Hill (chairman); J Alcock; J Rogerson; A Knox; K Horkin; M Scott [chief executive)
- 2 BACKGROUND
 - 2.1 The Chairman reminded the group of the background to the review and in particular the recent discussions and debates around the cancellation of the Clitheroe Community Bonfire.
 - 2.2 Whilst the Event Safety Advisory Group had been successful in the past, there was a clear need to review its operation to ensure everyone involved knew their roles and responsibilities.
- 3 EXISTING ESAG POLICY / TEMPLATE
 - 3.1 The Group commented upon the existing ESAG Terms of Reference and Protocols. In particular they were surprised that whilst the membership referred to local elected members that the involvement of Councillors didn't seem to happen, in particular the example of the Bonfire was cited.
 - 3.2 There was general agreement that whilst the Event Safety Management Plan template was very comprehensive, it was also potentially over-facing for event organisers. Councillor Alcock agreed to rewrite to make the document easier to read and understand.
- 4 POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT – MARCH 2011
 - 4.1 The Chief Executive circulated the committee report and briefly explained the background to the last ESAG Review. He said that many of the findings of that Review appertained even today.
- 5 GUIDANCE ON SAFETY ADVISORY GROUPS FROM HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE, THE CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND GUIDANCE ON PUBLIC SAFETY POLICY FROM ACPO
 - 5.1 The Group commented on these documents which spelt out the role of public authorities in event safety. The clear message in all these documents is that:
 - The organisers of events are responsible for ensuring their events are held safely and comply with all relevant legislation;
 - Safety advisory groups are there to give advice and assistance to event organisers;

- Safety Advisory Groups have no powers to stop events but individual member authorities have their own duties regarding enforcement and ensuring compliance with the law;
- Where the local authority is the landowner they have a responsibility for ensuring events on their land take place safely.

The general consensus was that the problems of ESAG related to:-

- Conflicts of interests between the various roles of officers which appeared often to be being carried out by the Chairman;
- The public perception that the Chairman of ESAG was acting on behalf of the Council;
- ESAG being seen as a regulatory / enforcing body rather than one being helpful and advisory;
- Lack of clarity regarding governance, the role and responsibilities of individual members and the relationship between ESAG and the local authority

5.2 It was agreed that the Chief Executive would look at the structure to see how it could be amended to remove any conflicts of interest, clarify individual roles and responsibilities and promote good governance,.

6 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

6.1 The next meeting to be held on Monday 29 October 2012 at 11.30am in the Members Room.

ESAG Review Group
Minutes of Meeting Held

29 October 2012

- 1 PRESENT: Councillors T Hill (chairman); J Alcock; J Rogerson; A Knox; K Horkin; M Scott [chief executive)
- 2 MINUTES OF MEETING – 22 OCTOBER 2012
- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2012 were agreed as a correct record.
- 3 CORRESPONDENCE FROM REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CLITHER BONFIRE COMMITTEE
- 3.1 The Chief Executive referred to an email and attachments he had received earlier that day from Richard Dugdale which set out the views of the Bonfire Organising Committee on the future role of ESAG, together with 2 witness statements.
- 3.2 He added that Richard Dugdale and Bill Barker had offered to attend this meeting but he and the Chairman had declined their offer.
- 3.3 Members read the information from Richard Dugdale that the Chief Executive circulated. The Group agreed it was useful background information to the review.
- 4 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS OF THE SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP
- 4.1 The Chief Executive went through the paper he had previously circulated on suggested membership and roles and responsibilities of members of a reformed Safety Advisory Group.
- 4.2 The Group agreed with what was suggested with minor amendments. They also discussed the need to keep ward members involved of events in their wards.
- 4.3 The general feeling was that individual members would need to weigh carefully their interaction with event organisers and the Safety Advisory Group.
- 4.4 The Chief Executive would now incorporate the agreed roles, responsibilities and membership of the Safety Advisory Group into a protocol for consideration at the next meeting.
- 4.5 He also stressed, and the group agreed, that the Safety Advisory Group was simply there to give help and advice to event organisers and not to sanction nor stop particular events, although individual agencies might do so in accordance with their statutory obligations.
- 4.6 It was agreed to incorporate the suggested membership roles and Revised Event Safety Management Plan into a new protocol for the Ribble Valley Safety Advisory Group.

4.7 The Chief Executive circulated a revised management plan that Councillor Alcock had helpfully rewritten into a more readily understandable form. Councillor Alcock had further amendments she wished to make but all agreed it was already a significant improvement on the original document.

5 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

5.1 The next meeting to be held on Monday 12 November 2012 at 11.00am in the Members Room.