

Events Policy

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1. Purpose and Background

Merton Council is committed to enabling events within the borough and recognises that a diverse programme of varied and well-managed activities contributes to the promotion of a vibrant multi-cultural community.

This policy sets out the key principles by which Merton Council, with its key partners including the emergency service, Transport for London, British Transport Police and other key stakeholders, approach the authorisation and management of events.

The principles are based on a range of requirements which arise from legislation, guidance and other council policies. By setting these out clearly, the Council aims to make applying to hold an event in Merton transparent, leading to more successful and efficiently planned events.

This policy applies to all public events held in the borough that meet the definition below.

It sets out roles and responsibilities and acknowledges the considerable time and effort that can be involved in facilitating them.

2. Benefits

A well-managed and appropriate events policy brings positive benefits to the borough, including:

- Helping promote the area as a place of business, culture and community
- Playing a key part in Merton's vision of Civic Pride by drawing visitors to the borough.
- Enhancing the image of the borough
- Increasing the number of event applications as Merton is seen as a place to do business
- Providing residents with an interesting, fun, and diverse range of things to do
- Enhancing Merton's cultural offering and reputation as diverse and thriving borough
- Developing a strong community by increasing and improving cross community relations
- Providing business opportunities both at events and surrounding area
- Stimulating inward investment and regeneration

3. Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Ensure effective planning and management of events
- Ensure that pre-event consultation and planning takes place with event organisers and stakeholders
- Maximise the safety of the public, event attendees, the events workforce and ensure that safety is placed as a priority in decision making
- Provide a framework for the event application process
- Minimise disruption to residents and businesses
- Ensure that events are accessible to all

- Promote the Licensing Act objectives of public safety, prevention of crime & disorder, prevention of public nuisance & protection of children from harm
- Provide a fair and consistent and well co-ordinated approach to how events are supported and facilitated by the council

4. Definition of Events

An event is defined in this policy as:

A planned activity in a defined area or a specific location that will take place for a limited period that members of the public can attend. The activity can take place either indoors or outdoors, on public land or on private property. The activity or occasion can reasonably be expected to cause a public gathering that is not part of the normal course of business at that location and time.

5. Categorising Events

When applying, the following information will be required to determine what safety measures may be required and what fees and charges apply.

(i) The size of the event

Size	Audience Capacity*	How to apply	When to apply	Documentation and SAG
Small	Up to 799	Online application form	Minimum of 10 weeks before the event	Risk assessments must be submitted – for over 100 attendees there must be consideration of Martyns Law. Insurance should be considered for all events.
Medium	800 – 2000	Online application form.	Minimum of 18 weeks before the event	Risk assessments and proof of insurance must be submitted.
Large	2000 – 4000	Online application form.	Minimum of 24 Weeks before the event.	Full event management plan must be submitted, including risk assessments, contingency plans and

				copies of insurance
Major	Over 4000	Pre-consultation with events officer and evidence of discussion of the landowner/operator. Then submission of online application form.	Minimum of 36 weeks before the event	Full event management plan must be submitted, including risk assessments, contingency plans and copies of insurance

Note: (a) the audience capacity is the maximum number of attendees expected at the event at any one time.

(b): medium, large and major applications will need to be considered by the Safety Advisory Group (SAG). Small events considered by SAG are high-risk activities that could include live animals, Temporary Structures - Marquees, Spectator Stands, viewing platforms, fairground rides, ice rinks, etc. or fireworks.

The SAG meets at least every two months, so this should be considered when submitting applications. SAG do not approve events but can offer recommendations to event organisers. In rare cases, the SAG may direct (recommend) that the event does not proceed on safety grounds.

(ii) event type:

Commercial:

Commercial events are those that are intended to make a profit, including product launches, corporate events, other marketing and promotional activities. This also includes circuses, fairgrounds, and ticketed festivals.

Community:

These are events organised by local not-for-profit, community or voluntary groups that directly benefit the residents of Merton and do not provide significant advertising or other commercial benefit to a profit-making business or organisation.

Charity:

Events organised by registered charities, are predominantly fund-raising or awareness-raising events for the benefit of the charity. A registered charity number should be provided.

(iii) Other Considerations:

- Location
Is the event taking place within a park, on a highway, or in a building?
- What is the purpose of the event
For example, is it a family fun day, a concert or a political demonstration?
- What structures and activities will be included
For example, is there a circus big top, funfair rides, a large stage or tent, an inflatable, or a fireworks display?
- Audience:
Who is expected to attend the event? For example, is this predominantly a family event, or would the activities attract large groups of teenagers or young adults? Is it for local people or will there be transport issues resulting from people traveling some distance to attend?

6. The application and Consultation process

The stages of the application process are:

- Pre-consultation (Pre-application discussion) *Please note this is mandatory for major events only
- Application and payment of fees
- Processing and validation
- Planning meetings and Consultation with agencies
- Parks Friends groups will be informed of intended events and their comments considered by the council and event planners
- SAG meeting *
- Confirmation

- Evaluation and debrief

The applications process will be managed online, and all applications forms must be sent electronically via the council website. Application fee payment must be made at time of applications (see fees in section 10)

All applications will be checked by an events officer and once verified as complete, applicants will be informed about whether the event will be subject to consultation.

Consultation will involve meetings (to be known as event planning meetings) taking place with the necessary departments within the Council and external agencies to ensure all affected groups are aware of and prepared for the event. Planning meetings should always take place.

Consultation will be partly dependent on the size of the event being planned. Small events will not be subject to full consultation as they may have virtually no impact on the venue or the surrounding area. If a small event does require consultation this will generally only occur on the first occasion unless there are concerns raised once it has taken place.

Consultation on medium and large events must involve members of Merton's Safety Advisory Group and may involve stakeholders including Ward Councillors, Cabinet Members, and Friends Groups depending on the impact the event is likely to have.

Event planning meetings must have taken place before attendance at Safety Advisory Group.

7. Safety Advisory Group

The remit of the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) is to advise on whether an event should proceed on safety and not any other grounds. The consent of the council or 'landlord' may be withdrawn upon advice of the SAG on safety grounds only.

The core members of the SAG are Merton Council (Food and Safety Team, Licensing, Highways, Public Space (including Leisure, Parks and Waste, Metropolitan Police, British Transport Police, London Fire Brigade, and London Ambulance Service.

Members of the SAG will expect to review an Event Safety Management Plan (ESMP) before any event. An ESMP is required for all large and major events and some elements may be requested for medium and small events.

It is suggested that the ESMP will include, but not be limited to:

- Access/Egress Plans for attendees
- Cancellation procedure including adverse weather conditions
- Child and vulnerable adult protection
- Complaints procedure
- Concessions and caterers
- Crowd management
- Emergency control

- Emergency Contingency Plans
- Entertainment details
- Environmental / Sustainability impact
- Equal opportunity statement
- Event communication plan including named contacts and responsibilities
- Fire safety and evacuation
- First aid / medical
- Food safety
- Licensing requirements
- Lost children and property procedures
- Marketing
- Noise management
- Public liability insurance
- Resident and Business Liaison
- Risk assessments
- Security and stewarding provision
- Site plans
- Signage around the site
- Statement of intent
- Production and event timetable – including set up and break down
- Ticketing Procedure (If ticketed)
- Transport management plan – including parking and public transport
- Volunteering Plan
- Waste management
- Welfare and Sanitary Provisions

Event organisers can use their own form but a template event management plan for smaller events is provided on the website [here](#).

The SAG will also co-ordinate any safety debriefs meetings that take place post event. A debrief is required by Merton Council for all large and major events. A debrief will also take place for small and medium events to see if there have been any safety concerns noted by the council or any of the partners. Safety concerns must be notified to the Events Officer in writing/email to trigger a debrief for small events.

The decision-making structure for events is based on a bronze, silver and gold model. Bronze is the officer level input where the technical knowledge lies. It is bronze officers that attend planning and consultation meetings. Bronze level have practical/technical advice that can be shared with organisers, departments and external agencies. Silver is the management level group and for most events would have responsibility for making decisions through the Safety Advisory Group (SAG). Gold would be at Director/Executive level and consider recommendations from the SAG where there are significant potential risks to safety and/or reputational and legal issues to be considered before an event can be agreed.

All issues will be discussed with event organisers so that the safety risk can be resolved. It is recognised that cancellation of an event is the last resort but in cases where there is increased risk to public safety if the event proceeds, this recommendation will be passed to Director/Executive level.

8. Confirmation and Promotion

Once consultation has taken place with the necessary agencies, documents have been reviewed and the council is satisfied that all requirements have been met, then an agreement in principle will be issued. This agreement will be subject to compliance with any pre-event conditions, payments (including deposits) and the requirement to obtain any licences etc.

Once the event is confirmed the events will be promoted through the following means:

- Including the confirmed event on the council's calendar of events page on the website at least 4 weeks prior to the event taking place
- Notifying by email and social media to those registered for event updates
- Holding a stakeholder meeting with the event organiser in attendance for any large or major event at least 6 weeks prior to the event taking place

9. Events not normally granted approval

Normally no more than one event will be approved to take place on the same day in any park or open space. (An exception may be when the events are complementary and take place alongside one another with the agreement of both organisers). If multiple applications are received an alternative date or venue will be offered to one or both organisers. Event organisers may be required to move the venue or date for other reasons.

Additionally, the following will not be approved:

- Events that are deemed inappropriate such as those that will have a detrimental effect on the "normal use" of the area and those that fail to comply with the terms and conditions of hire. This will be found on the Council website.
- Events that promote any political campaigns or controversial issues which may be damaging to community relations, are illegal or offensive
- Any event that does not provide adequate documentation or certifications and cannot demonstrate that it should progress to the next stage of the application process
- Any events that cannot demonstrate to Merton Safety Advisory Group that it can be delivered in a safe and robust manner
- Any event that discriminates against race, religions, gender, sexual orientation or disability.
- Any event or activity that is prohibited by council and parks bylaws
- Events on the highway that would have a disproportionate impact on the free flow of traffic

There are restrictions on the use of animals in events that need to be discussed with a Council events officer before approval can be given.

The council reserves the right to refuse any application and impose additional conditions regarding a booking.

Any decision to refuse an event will be made at Director/Executive level

10. Fees and Charges

There are various fees and charges payable by event organisers depending on the location and type of event being organised. These can include:

- Events application fee. (This is a non-refundable fee payable at the time of application submission)
- Parks/open space hire fee (dependent on the size and type of event)
- Damage/reinstatement deposit for parks events
- Road closure fees
- Parking suspension fees
- Licensing fees
- Waste clearance charges

All application fees are non-refundable and must be paid when the application is submitted. A booking fee for the park or highway must be fully paid 45 days before the event.

Full details of the Council's fees and charges can be found on the council website at ["insert link"](#)

Please note that other agencies such as Transport for London (TFL) may also levy charges for their network or bus diversion. Any events held on the Strategic Road Network and Transport for London Road Network will be forwarded to TFL for their consideration.

Council costs must be covered at all times. Some events may meet the following criteria in which case the fees will be waived.

- Where an event is in partnership with the council
- Where an event delivers on Council policy
- Where the event is a new event or being proposed by a starter company in early days

Fees will generally only be waived on a one-off basis and each event will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The decision to waive fees will remain at Director level. The decision to waive a fee will be communicated to the applicant in writing.

If an event organiser would like to be considered under these criteria an email should be sent to events@Merton.gov.uk

11. Exemptions

It is recognised that due to the spontaneous nature of public events there may be occasions where an event cannot be foreseen or planned but there is significant public interest. In these rare cases deviations to this policy may be allowed.

Exemptions to the application process and timelines stated above will only be considered for those events where it is shown that the Council could not have been

notified in advance and there is significant public interest.

Any decision will be made in line with the structure outlined in section 7 of this policy. If an event is notified to the Council at short notice, the event organisers must still provide the documents as outlined above to ensure that the safety of the public has been considered. These documents must be provided to the Council before the event starts. For short-notice events, all partnership agencies are responsible for working together to achieve a safe outcome.

If an event organiser believes their gathering is not a public event and exempt from timelines listed above and all fees or charges an email should be sent to events@Merton.gov.uk

12. General Conditions

The following conditions will apply to all events:

Safety

Responsibility for safety rests with the organiser but the council and its partners have a duty to ensure all relevant health & safety guidance is followed, including the preparation of full risk assessments and method statements. The priority of all involved in managing events must be human safety. Every event should have a designated safety officer.

Role of the Event Organiser and their obligations

- Provide complete and accurate event documentation within the required timeframes and respond promptly to any queries raised by the Council or members of Merton SAG.
- Ensure that any information given on behalf of the organisation they represent is accurate and that they have the legal authority to enter agreements on behalf of that organisation or have the delegated legal authority.
- Ensure appropriate insurance and liability cover is in place.
- Permissions, licences and safety documentation must be sought well in advance, in accordance with the timetables set out in the more detailed guidelines that will be found on the website.
- The event organiser should ensure the event is run according to the submitted plans.

Not complying can jeopardise the event and may also affect future events planned by the organiser. Non-compliance may also result in the event organiser being liable for prosecution.

Environment and amenity

With the exception of closed and ticketed commercial events, organisers should minimise restriction of access to public spaces except on safety grounds.

Temporary, reversible decoration (e.g., banners, lights, signage) may be justified in some circumstances. Additions to the street may require planning permission or advertisement consent and advice should be sought before putting anything in place.

Merton Council must agree to any works that affect the highway and associated equipment, including additions to lamp columns, in advance. It reserves the right to carry out any agreed work itself at the organiser's expense. All advertising must have consent from the council as this can undermine the character and image of the borough and may obscure essential information. Removal of all structures and materials relating to an event is to be achieved as quickly and as safely as possible.

Noise

Noise levels generated from an event need to be agreed in advance and kept at a reasonable level. Where the council have cause for concern about the noise from a planned event, they reserve the right to require the event organiser to appoint an independent acoustic consultant to be on site to provide continual monitoring of noise levels.

Noise should not cause an unreasonable impact on any business or residential premises near the event site. The organiser is expected to reduce sound levels on the day if conditions require it. If the event has a Premises Licence, then it must operate in accordance with any sound level limit or conditions attached to the Licence. A sound level limit may need to be set and/or continuous noise monitoring put in place, to ensure compliance with Licence conditions and ensure that the event does not cause a statutory nuisance.

Events must also comply with The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 for staff and contractors on site.

Parking

Additional parking requirements resulting from events must be planned, such as servicing, dropping off visitors by coaches, and space for taxis.

Suspensions of residential and paid-for visitor bays can be arranged for public events (or privately organised events which are open to the wider community or public), at a cost. This cost must be incurred by the event organiser. Details of current costs are available on the website.

Special bay types (e.g., for disabled people, doctors, and ambulances) are only suspended in exceptional circumstances. If such bays are suspended, they must be relocated within a reasonable distance. A further charge will be applicable for this relocation.

For large-scale suspensions of bays used by residents, alternative parking for residents will be provided nearby, by the removal and temporary conversion of paid-for visitor parking bays. The conversion of these bays is chargeable.

Parking will not be suspended to create space for VIP arrivals or departures unless the circumstances are exceptional.

Further details and fees payable are available on the council's website

Traffic and highways management

Merton Council is required to consider all traffic and highway management implications of events to fulfil its duty to keep the borough moving. A minimum period is required to implement traffic management measures, such as Temporary Traffic Management Orders to close roads, advance warning signs of events, diversion routes, and traffic controls. Costs for any traffic management order must be incurred by the event organiser. Details of current costs are available on the Council's website.

There are restrictions on the number of times roads can be closed in a calendar year

so this will be considered as part of the application process and may mean that permission for the event is refused or that an alternative location is suggested.

Structures in the highways such as cranes and scaffolding require a highways licence which must be sought from the council in advance. Merton Council must give permission for any change to the highway, such as removing street furniture to alter the character of a street and would typically insist such works are carried out by its own contractor at the organiser's expense.

Residents, visitors, and those engaged in business must be able to move freely through the borough, and public services should be able to operate without unreasonable disruption. Occupiers must be able to access their premises with minimum disruption. Access for emergency vehicles must be maintained with minimal impact on response times.

Licensable activities

The event organiser is responsible for ensuring that all required licences are obtained in sufficient time and all conditions specified in these licences are adhered to. The costs for any licence shall be incurred by the event organiser. Details of current costs are available on the Council's website.

Such licences could include, but are not limited to:

- Performing Rights Society (PRS)
- Phonographic performance Limited (PPL)
- Street Trading Licence
- Special Treatment Licence
- Premises Licence
- Temporary Event Notice (TEN)

Events that include 'licensable activities' such as the sale of alcohol and regulated entertainment (such as live music) need to be covered by a Premises Licence. Small events can be covered by a Temporary Event Notice (TEN). The council can request conditions to be attached to any licence, and these could address any of the four licensing objectives; prevention of crime and disorder, public safety, prevention of public nuisance and protection of children from harm.

Merton Council can grant licenses for 'regulated' entertainment' for certain areas of publicly accessible streets and open spaces, which means that these areas are treated as premises, or 'venues' for licensing purposes. Events in these areas will be expected to be run under the conditions of the Premises Licence for these areas and an additional TEN will not be issued.

Food and Safety

All food businesses at an event must provide evidence of food registration with the relevant local authority. It is the event organiser responsibility to ensure that all food traders have been subject to an inspection by a relevant local authority and should ensure that a food hygiene rating of 3 or above has been obtained. Merton Council officers may check this prior to or during the event.

Anyone starting a new food business must register with the council at least 28 days before doing so. Businesses in Merton should have registered for free; a copy of the

registration form is on the Council's webpage.

Based on the activities carried out, certain food businesses must be approved rather than registered. Please check the Council's webpage to find out more.

Waste and recycling

The event organiser must provide a waste management plan which is approved by the council.

The waste management plan should show how the organiser will work with the council to reduce the amount of additional council contractor cleansing that is needed during and after the event.

The waste management plan should show how the organiser will manage, recover and recycle or dispose of waste and street litter safely, and meet all environmental regulations and statutory requirements. Waste should be minimised and recycled as much as possible.

The council has a strict 'No Drinking Glass' policy at events.

Public conveniences and welfare facilities

The event organiser is responsible for the welfare of the public, which includes provision of temporary toilets. An adequate number of toilets must be available for an event including facilities for disabled people and any temporary toilets must not obstruct the highway. All facilities must meet health and safety requirements.

Sharing information

Communications and publicity about events must be coordinated with the council and its partners.

All events are expected to fully disclose any information relating to or impacting upon any aspect of the event, so the council and its partners have no surprises that have not been assessed for risk and danger to the public.

Planning permissions and advertisement consent

All temporary uses within a building, and temporary moveable structures placed within the curtilage of a building, will normally require planning permission. Temporary events on land not within a building's curtilage and associated moveable structures are allowed up to 28 days in any calendar year without planning permission. This reduces to 14 days where events involve street trading and some other activities such as motor racing. Advertisements (including sponsorship branding) visible from the highway normally require consent and advice should be sought from the events team before anything is put in place. This includes the display of sponsors' details on banners and directional signage. Any attachment or alteration to a listed building or listed structure will normally require listed building consent.

Parks and open spaces

There are several parks and open spaces that can be hired for events throughout the borough.

Examples of events that may be held in Merton parks include circuses, charity functions, festivals, fetes and fairgrounds. Please discuss any ideas or plans with the events team before applying, as they will provide advice on the most suitable venues and availability.

13. Cancellations

The council reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to cancel any event booked on council land due to poor weather, unsuitable ground conditions, non-receipt of the required paperwork or exceptional unforeseen circumstances. The event may be also be cancelled due to a risk to public safety and a recommendation from SAG.

All cancellation decisions are made at Director/Executive level.

In these circumstances, the council is not responsible for any costs that the organiser may already have incurred in preparing for the event.

In all cases, if an event is cancelled, the Application Fee is non-refundable.

If the events' organiser cancels the booking less than 4 weeks before the date of hire, there will be no refund on the hire charge.

Where an event is cancelled due to circumstances beyond the event organiser's control, for example adverse weather conditions and natural disasters including force majeure and where the council is provided with reasonable notice, the council may offer a refund of the hire fees, additional service costs and any deposit at its sole discretion but this will only be paid if the costs the council has incurred are covered. The non-operating days would be taken into consideration in these circumstances. The council will be recovering the full costs incurred including any things they have to put in place to assist with cancelling the event.

14. Legislation

All events must conform to relevant legislation, including but not limited to:

- Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
- Health & Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- RIDDOR 1995
- Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2006
- Town and Country Planning Act 1947 and 1990
- Licensing Act 2003
- The Children's Act 1989
- Fire Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Firework Regulations 2004
- Safety at Sports Ground Act 1975
- Private Security Industry Act 2001
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Noise Act 1996
- Merton Council Byelaws
- Traffic Management Act 2004, Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016, Chapter 8 Traffic Signs Manual 2009

15. Equalities and Diversities

Merton aspires to be a place noted for its safety, openness and community spirit where everyone who lives and works here has a strong sense of belonging. As a council and in partnership with others we aim to address the needs and aspirations of local people to create a place of opportunity for all. The application of this policy will have due regard to Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010, which places a general duty on public authorities, who must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

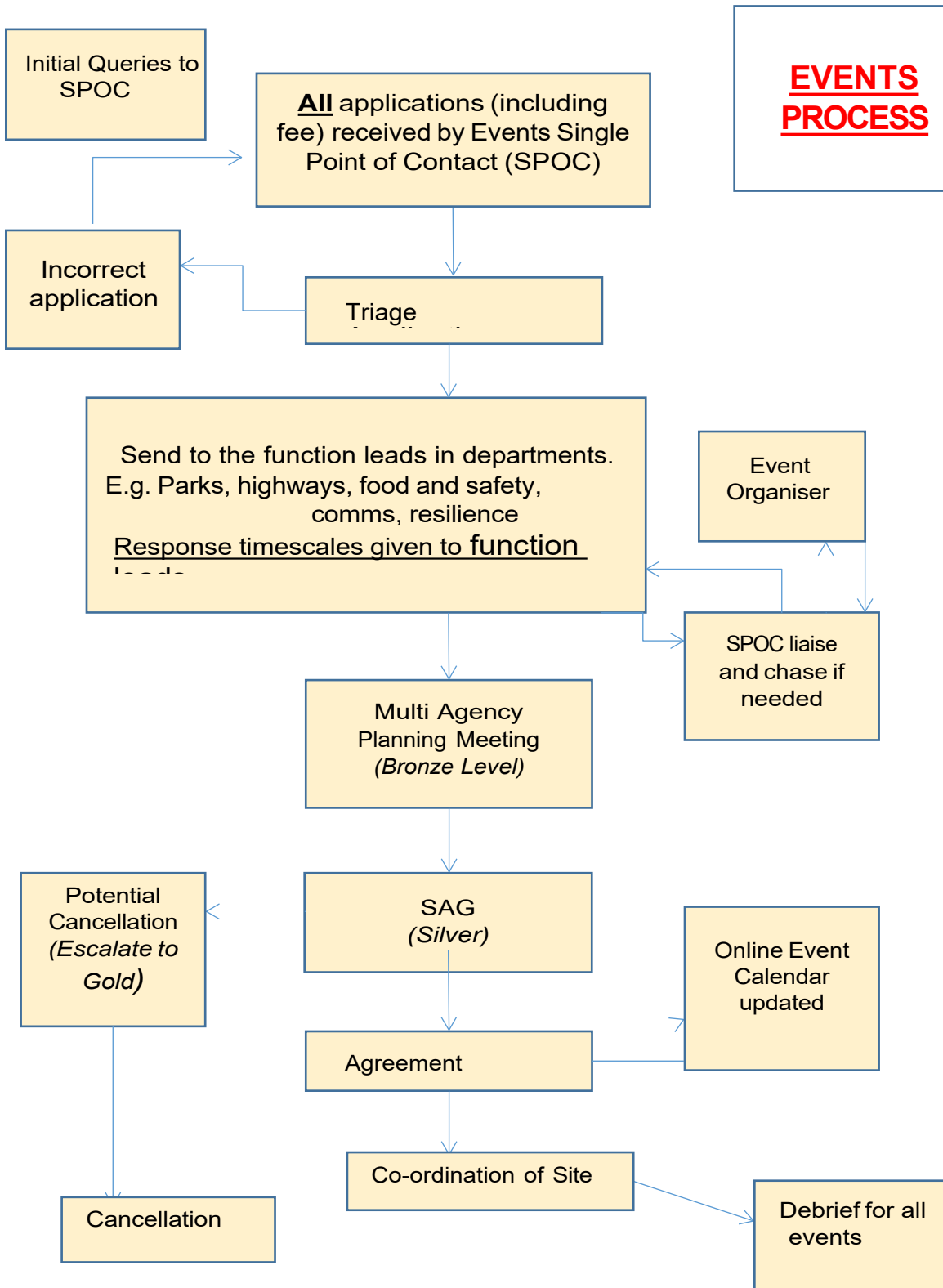
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

16. Review

Events are unique, therefore the challenges posed by each event are different. As events evolve and develop it will be necessary for the Events Policy to evolve and develop accordingly. All the partner agencies recognise the importance of outdoor events to Merton and work together to provide a programme of safe and well-managed events for the benefit of residents and visitors.

Appendix 1

Process map



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