



North Devon Council

Report Date: September 5th 2022

Topic: Sustainable Events Guidance

Report by: Donna Sibley, Sustainability and Climate Officer

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Plastic Free North Devon (PFND) contacted us in 2021 regarding the sustainability of events being held in North Devon, and concerns about large amounts of litter and single-use plastic. Our licensing team routinely provide PFNDs advice to event organisers as part of our application process.

1.2. Following discussion with Climate Leads at both Councils and with the Licensing teams, it was agreed we would produce simple, joint guidance on sustainable events to complement other guides available.

1.3. It is intended that this guidance is sent out to anyone who approaches either North Devon or Torrington District Councils for advice on events or an event licence (eg) for sale of alcohol. A link to the relevant webpage can be added to any correspondence we send out.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. S&R to note publication of this Sustainable Events Guidance.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1. North Devon Council's Carbon, Environment and Biodiversity Plan contains an action "to develop guidance for supporting and promoting sustainable events through licensing function and Safety Advisory Group."

4. REPORT

4.1. The guidance (see Appendix 1, text only not in final format) comprises a simple 'checklist' with 25 questions that take an event organiser through the steps needed to run a successful event and get them to think about how to reduce the environmental and social impacts, and maximise the benefits.

4.2. For each question on the checklist, there is accompanying information which provides further help and support, if needed.

4.3. The guidance has been developed in consultation with Cllr climate working groups and Licensing Teams. There were concerns that the draft version was too long, so it has been substantially reduced to ensure it is user friendly.

4.4. It has been tested with a couple of local events and event organisers have found it very useful.



4.5. The guidance is intended to be published on our website. It will be designed by Torridge Communications team to be visually appealing (whilst remaining accessible) and a shorter, simpler version with the checklist only will be produced.

4.6. Specific advice on making events inclusive was provided by a local Community Interest company, Waymakers, committed to neurodiversity acceptance and inclusion.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Council officers are already in regular contact with event organisers, for events taking place on our own land and those taking place elsewhere. There is no significant additional resource required to add a line to correspondence publicising that this guidance is available.

6. EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

6.1. None identified

7. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

7.1. The guide will support delivery of the Council's environmental and equality policies for events that it licences or that take place on its land.

8. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

8.1. What impact, positive or negative, does the subject of this report have on:

8.1.1. The commercialisation agenda: n/a

8.1.2. Improving customer focus and/or: The guide will support local groups organising events and engages them in the Environmental agenda.

8.1.3. Regeneration or economic development: Supporting events can help the economy by attracting visitors to and promoting the local area.

9. CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

9.1. Article of Part 3 Annex 1 paragraph: 1

9.2. Delegated power?

10. STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

This report contains no confidential information or exempt information under the provisions of Schedule 12A of 1972 Act.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.



12. STATEMENT OF INTERNAL ADVICE

The author (below) confirms that advice has been taken from all appropriate Councillors and Officers:add name and job title.....

Appendix One: Sustainable Events Guidance

Sustainable Events Guide

Introductory text for website

We want every event in North Devon and Torridge to be successful, to be enjoyed by visitors and surrounding neighbours, and to protect and enhance the outstanding environment which we live in.

North Devon and Torridge District Councils have declared a 'Climate Emergency', recognising that climate change is a threat to our communities and that we need to take action, now. We are committed to promoting positive changes in North Devon and Torridge to meet our goal of net zero carbon emissions for northern Devon by 2050.

The two Councils are committed to meeting their obligations to remove inequality and promote fairness.

This checklist and guidance can be used to help you plan and deliver a more sustainable event.

Using this guide

The Event Management Checklist is a simple way for event organisers to review their plans and assess how sustainable they are. The accompanying guidance explains what's important, and suggests ways in which you can maximise the environmental and social benefits of your event.

Both Councils have a Safety Advisory Group with members from the emergency services and other agencies which help people organise events within the districts. Organisers of events that present a significant public safety risk (whether in terms of numbers and profile of people attending, or the nature of the event activity and/or the challenge of the environment) are encouraged to notify SAG of their event.

North Devon Council Safety Advisory Group

<https://www.northdevon.gov.uk/business/licences-and-permits/safety-advisory-group-sag/#:~:text=The%20SAG%20is%20made%20up,%2C%20Maritime%20and%20Coastguard%20Agency>)



Torridge District Council Safety Advisory Group - insert link once mended

Sustainable Events Checklist

Your Team

Is there a person/people who are responsible for identifying and managing the main environmental and social impacts of your event?

Your Event

Have you identified the biggest environmental and social impacts from your event?

Have you taken steps to avoid or reduce these impacts?

Have you maximised the benefits of your event?

Your Aims

Do your event aims include appropriate sustainability considerations?

Venue Planning

Does your venue have an environmental policy?

Is your venue safely accessible by walking and cycling?

Is your venue safely accessible by public transport?

Is your venue suitable for those with mobility needs?

Can you accommodate those with additional needs?

Can the venue provide the furniture, fixtures, staging and technical equipment required to run the event?

Does the venue have sufficient power, water and gas for your requirements?

Does the venue generate its own renewable energy?

Use of local or sustainable suppliers

Are you using local suppliers?

Do your suppliers have goods with ethical or environmental accreditation?

Are you catering for all dietary needs?

Marketing, Promotion & Ticketing

Are you using website, social media and e-ticketing?

Are you minimising use of paper or plastic marketing and promotional materials?

Is your printed and online media accessible to a person with disabilities?

Do your marketing and promotional materials have a high recycled content?

Project Management

Have you included sustainability considerations in your project management?

Do staff, suppliers and volunteers understand what is required of them to deliver a sustainable event?

Have you identified sustainability considerations in your contingency plan?

Evaluation & Reporting



Will you capture feedback on the positive and negative aspects of your event?
Will you report these back to e.g. sponsors, venue, suppliers?

GUIDANCE RELATING TO THE ABOVE CAN BE FOUND ON FOLLOWING PAGES

Need to acknowledge Alex's help



Sustainable Events Checklist - Guidance

Your team

If you want to manage the social and environmental impacts of your event, you will need to have a person or team of people who takes responsibility for doing that.

Don't worry if you haven't had to do this before! There is plenty of help and guidance to ensure your success.

Ideally, the person or people you choose will have an interest in environmental or social issues, and will be keen to work with the wider team, venue owners, suppliers etc to make changes in how your event is run.

Your event

All events will have an impact on the environment, and the bigger the event, the greater the potential for harm.

Minimise the impacts

Identifying the biggest environmental and social impacts of your event will help you to plan to avoid or reduce them. If your event needs a licence from your local Council, they will expect you to take steps to prevent crime and disorder and protect public safety, and prevent public nuisance, including noise pollution and littering.

The biggest impacts your event will generate are likely to be:

- **Waste:** This may be food and drink waste, packaging supplied with your goods etc.
- **Litter:** People disposing of rubbish typically take just a couple of seconds to decide how and where to dispose of it so you need to make it easy and obvious for them - think about food and drink waste, cigarette butts and even the 'free' giveaways you might be considering – where will they be at the end of the day?
- **Energy:** Will people travel to the event by car/train/plane? Meals and drinks use energy for sourcing, transporting and preparing. You will probably need to heat and light the event and run equipment. Energy will also be used to deliver goods to site.
- **Noise pollution:** Will you have amplified music, or fireworks? Will you be holding the event at a time when most people are asleep?



- **Water pollution:** If your event is near a stream, river or the sea you will want to protect water from sewerage, diesel from generators etc.
- **An impact on a sensitive environment?** Northern Devon has outstanding landscapes and natural environments. Be aware of what's special in your event locality

Once you've identified your significant impacts, you can take steps to avoid or reduce them. Work with your suppliers – many businesses are keen to develop their environmental credentials and will love being given a chance to do so.

Maximise the benefits

You will want your event to be a financial success. However you can maximise the benefit to the local economy and the environment by using local suppliers for food and drink and equipment, and by providing local businesses the opportunity to sell to your attendees. Make sure that what they're selling doesn't leave you with a waste or litter problem, for example balloons or single use novelty toys, and that their goods are in line with your own environmental credentials.

Think about how to reach all your potential customers by making your event as accessible as possible for people with different needs.

Your Aims

If you want your event to be a success, you need to have a clear set of aims and objectives that the team organising your event know and understand.

A more sustainable approach to event management will typically aim to:

- provide an accessible and inclusive setting for all
- have minimal negative impacts on the environment
- provide a safe and secure atmosphere
- promote responsible sourcing
- deliver excellent customer experience
- encourage more sustainable behaviour
- leave a positive legacy

Once the aims of the event have been agreed you can set objectives that will enable you to understand if those aims are met. Ideally, objectives should be SMART – specific to the event, measurable, achievable, realistic and timetabled.

You could think about having an event that:

- is carbon neutral or low carbon



- has a zero or low waste policy
- is plastic free
- provides fair trade or organic food
- uses sustainable energy to run the event where possible
- makes an explicit statement about inclusion and awareness of different needs
- specifically provides support for those with a specific need, such as autism

If you use volunteers to organise and run your event, you could ask them for ideas and get them to identify what's important for them and their community.

Having a clear set of aims will help you identify any training needs for your event organisers, such as diversity, equality and inclusion training, training in specific conditions such as autism or environmental training.

Venue Planning

Taking care in choosing a venue can make it easy for organisers to minimise environmental and social impacts and maximise benefits.

It's important to consider access for disabled people, and your legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010. Most venues will already have information about this, including signage, a floor plan, staff name labels and banners to indicate the location of a helpdesk or quiet area. You might want to consider having disabled parking or a drop-off point close to the entrance and provide disabled toilets if these aren't already available.

If a venue already has an environmental policy, it is likely that they understand their environmental impacts and are taking steps to reduce them. This can save you a lot of work! For example, a venue may have considered the type and amount of waste produced, and supply several recycling options for event attendees to use.

If an event can only be accessed by car, this can lead to local congestion and parking issues both outside and inside the venue. Cars are also a significant source of carbon emissions. Ensuring your venue can be safely accessed by walking, cycling or public transport, or promoting car sharing, can reduce your carbon emissions as well as reducing complaints from neighbours about local congestion, inconsiderate parking etc.

Similarly, numerous deliveries to site will increase carbon emissions and potentially annoy neighbours. A venue that can provide the furniture and fixtures you need, as well as any staging and technical equipment required, can be a more sustainable choice.



If you do need to source furniture, fixtures or other equipment from outside the venue, choose a local supplier to minimise journey distances.

If a venue can't provide sufficient power, water and gas for your needs, you will have to import them. Generators can be noisy and produce pollution. Bottled water is expensive and creates lots of waste.

Use of local or sustainable suppliers

Using local suppliers helps to keep money in the local economy, and if they have a social or environmental accreditation then you know you will have an event that is better for the environment and society.

You might want to consider:

- Promoting Local, Seasonal, and Organic Food
- Promoting vegetarian or vegan food
- Using higher standard meat and dairy
- Going Fair Trade
- Using sustainable fish and seafood
- Sourcing local soft or alcoholic drinks

Marketing, Promotion & Ticketing

Your target market will have been identified at the event planning stage, and you should have a good idea of who they are (age, interests, income), why they want to come to your event, where they live, who they will bring with them (partners, children, friends) and how they are going to hear about it (social media, local papers/radio, national papers/radio, specialist publications etc.).

Limit printing and paper use by making best use of a website, social media and e-ticketing. Make sure that printed and online media is accessible by those with visual impairments, for example. Accessibility for readers includes consideration of font type, font size, colour contrast, spacing on the page, iconography, images etc. If unsure, these can be checked using accessibility checking tools eg in Microsoft, and online for web-based material.

Asking for information from those attending the event about any additional needs will help you to have the right measures in place. For example, if a person tells you they will be bringing an assistance animal you can provide a rest and refreshment area for them, and ensure there is somewhere the animal can relieve itself.

Avoid single-use plastic banners to promote the event by excluding specific dates. Similarly, avoid plastic marketing or promotional items, and if you must have them make sure they are made from high recycled content.



Project Management

To successfully project manage your event, it's helpful to break it down into smaller elements such as venue, entertainment, food etc.

Using the checklist, your impact assessment and the guidance above to build in your sustainability thinking at every stage. You might want to produce an event handbook, or information sheets for specific teams/people.

It's unlikely your event will go to plan, so think about your contingency plan - what may go wrong, and what you might need to put in place to prevent harm occurring?

Evaluation & Reporting

You will want to capture information that enables you to understand if you achieved your aims, and how those at the event felt it went.

An excellent way to achieve this is by tailored questionnaires – such as these provided by Visit Monmouthshire:

Event attendee questionnaire https://mediafiles.thedms.co.uk/Publication/MW-Mon/cms/pdf/Part%201a%20Monmouthshire_Event_Attendee_Survey_-_Copy.pdf

Event volunteer questionnaire https://mediafiles.thedms.co.uk/Publication/MW-Mon/cms/pdf/Part%201b%20Monmouthshire_Volunteer_Survey.pdf

Temporary vendor questionnaire https://mediafiles.thedms.co.uk/Publication/MW-Mon/cms/pdf/Part%201c%20Monmouthshire_Temporary%20Vendor_Survey.pdf

Local business questionnaire https://mediafiles.thedms.co.uk/Publication/MW-Mon/cms/pdf/Part1d%20Monmouthshire%20Local_Business_Survey.pdf

Remember you don't have to provide paper copies – they can be provided electronically.



Other sources of help to run a successful, sustainable event

Plastic Free North Devon have produced a general events guide, and one for sports events.

<https://plasticfreenorthdevon.org/what-you-can-do-as-an-events-organiser>

Sailors for the Sea have produced a Clean Regatta toolkit for water-based events.

<https://www.sailorsforthesea.org/programs/clean-regattas>

This website will help you calculate your carbon footprint, and offset your emissions

<https://www.carbonfootprint.com/carbonoffset.html>

The Equality and Human Rights Commission have published a guide for engaging with disabled people

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/housing-and-disabled-people-engaging-with-disabled-people-event-planning-guide.pdf>

This guide also provides advice on accessible events

<https://autisticadvocacy.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Accessible-Event-Planning.pdf>

Download a handy Good Fish Guide at <https://www.mcsuk.org/goodfishguide/>

Identify and celebrate caterers who pride themselves on serving sustainable fish and seafood <https://www.sustainweb.org/sustainablefishcity/>

The Sustain Guide to Good Food also provides lots of advice, although it's not specifically written for events

https://www.sustainweb.org/publications/the_sustain_guide_to_good_food/