

ROYAL BOROUGH OF GREENWICH

PLANNING BOARD

12 FEBRUARY 2020 AT 6.30PM

MINUTE

PRESENT:

Members:

Councillor Sarah Merrill (Chair); Councillors Norman Adams, Angela Cornforth, Gary Dillon, Adel Khaireh, Clive Mardner, Linda Perks, Geoffrey Brighty and Nigel Fletcher

Officers:

Assistant Director Planning & Building Control, Planning Manager (Major Developments), Principal Planning Officer, Assistant Head of Legal Services and Corporate Governance Officer

Under Standing Orders:

At the commencement of the meeting, the Chair announced the procedure which would be followed for considering the item(s) before the Board. The Chair confirmed the names of members of the public who had registered to speak on the item(s) and clarified that only those members of the public included on the register would be called to address the Planning Board. The Chair advised that all attendees were welcome to film, record, blog or tweet during the meeting so long as this did not disturb proceedings and flash photography was not permitted. The Chair advised that Board Members would be using electronic devices to access the agenda, reports and documents published and submitted for consideration at the meeting.

Item

No.

I. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received for Councillors Linda Perks.

2. Urgent Business

The Planning Board noted and accepted the Planning Officers' Addendum Report's, circulated in advance of the meeting, in relation to;
Item 4 –

Further, that public submissions had been circulated, in advance of the meeting, in relation to 4.

3. Declarations of Interest

Resolved –

That the list of Councillors' memberships as Council appointed representatives on outside bodies, joint committees and school governing bodies be noted.

4. Royal Parks, Greenwich Park, Blackheath Avenue, Greenwich - I9/3497/F

The Planning Board accepted an illustrative presentation of the report from the Principal Planning Officer who advised that subject to the conditions detailed at Appendix 2 and in the Addendum, the proposed development was considered to comply with the relevant policies of the development plan. Accordingly, it was recommended that permission be granted for application reference I9/3497/F, in line with Section 1 of the report.

In response to Board Members questions, the Principal Planning Officer advised that the length of time given to the ground restoration and reinstatement works was dependant on the level of work required.

The Planning Board invited those speaking in objection to the application forward to address the Board.

A representative on behalf of the Friends of Greenwich Park advised the Board that the idea of a fan zone was welcomed however, Greenwich Park was the wrong venue and wholly unsuitable to accommodate 30,000 people. The representative suggested that if the Board was minded towards approving the application that it do so only after imposing stringent controls.

A representative on behalf of the Westcombe Society stated that it shared similar concerns to those raised by, other local amenity groups and the MP opposed to the application. The Board was advised to include a condition limiting fans to no more than 22,000 as the proposed figure of 30,000 was

said to be excessive and would deter future visits to the park. The representative added that the introduction of alcohol into the mix would make the prospect of crowd control difficult to achieve and was a major safety concern.

A representative on behalf of the Greenwich Society stated that they were opposed to the report presented to the Board as the 29 conditions contained therein were merely procedural and the report failed to provide evidence on which a well-informed decision could be based. It was expressed that the recommendation for approval was largely premature and thus the Board should refuse the application.

A representative on behalf of the East Greenwich Residents Association (EGRA) commented that it had been less than 6 months since a climate emergency was declared in Greenwich, yet the proposed event would see diesel generators running 24 hours a day for the duration of the event. In closing he added that it appeared security were more concerned with the prevention of outside food being brought into the event than the prohibiting of dangerous objects such as knives.

The Board was addressed by 3 local residents speaking in objection to the application. They urged the Board to give weighted consideration to the concerns of their constituents and not bow to the pressures of the Greater London Authority (GLA) and the government. In emphasizing the unsuitability of Greenwich Park as a venue for hosting the event, they mentioned that seating would not be available for spectators which meant they would be required to stand. Continuing, that there appeared to be no provision to segregate rival fans which would potentially lead to clashes. They referred to the Hillsborough incident and asked the Board to remember the very serious issues relating to public safety of football grounds.

The residents stated that security remained a major concern of theirs particularly as spectators would be leaving the event en-masse after consumption of alcohol, questioning if there were any measures in place to address crowd surges, the security and safety risks that they posed. They commented that it was not at all clear how security would be handled at train stations. They felt that road closures could impede access for emergency vehicles.

One resident queried whether the addendum report had been widely circulated as he had not seen it and stated that the applicant had not hinted on any potential compensation package to residents if they are affected by the event.

The residents advised the Board that Greenwich Park provided a tranquil environment with the north end regularly in use by residents, explaining that it was also the only playground available for children locally. It was emphasized that the loss of amenity far outweighed any potential benefits and as such the Board should refuse the application presented before them.

The Planning Board invited those speaking in support of the application forward to address the Board.

Councillor M Williams, Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and the Third Sector addressed the Board advising that she was in favour of the application. She stated that she had worked closely with the organisers of the fan zone and believed that the event would provide opportunities for the Royal Borough of Greenwich and its residents. She explained that Greenwich Park could be a family friendly ground such as Hyde Park and that there would be 1000s of tickets available for local residents. She emphasised the importance of the visitor economy to the Borough and said she envisaged the economic benefit could be about £15 million.

In response to Board Members questions, the Cabinet Member stated that she did not have the statistics available at the meeting however she could confirm that there was a peak in physical activity following the Olympic games. She clarified that that applicant had approached the council to have a conversation regarding the event and was now coordinating with all the relevant council departments. With respect to the viewing of England games in General Gordon Square (Woolwich) she advised that upon reviewing the programming she would consider the feasibility.

A representative on behalf of the Emergency Exit Arts advised the Board that the proposal presented Greenwich the opportunity to showcase its culture and celebrate its diversity on a worldwide stage such that to turn it down would signal that London was open however, Greenwich was closed.

A representative on behalf of the University of Greenwich stated that the university was proud of its place in Greenwich and that the event provided an opportunity to raise Greenwich's profile internationally whilst offering student employment, community days and allow the university to showcase its activities. He stated that the event was viewed favourably by the student union body.

A representative on behalf of the Greenwich Cultural Forum stated that he had been approached to consult on the opportunity. He expressed that football attracted a diverse following across the socio-economic divide and presented an opportunity to bring all together. In closing he said it was a great opportunity to feature Greenwich on an international scale.

A representative on behalf of the Charlton Athletic Community Trust (CACT) advised the Board that football was but a small part of what the trust did. He stated that the Eurozone was a much bigger brand and welcomed the opportunity to work with them. He said information of the programmes the trust offers would be shared to the attendees of the event and was a great way of engaging with the wider community for greater good. He exclaimed that Greenwich park was a jewel of the borough.

In response to Board Members questions, the CACT representative stated that there had been discussions with the applicant, for CACT to have a presence and profile at the event with the involvement of school children and residents.

The Board was addressed by a local resident speaking in support of the application who stated that Greenwich Park was a fantastic amenity, a national asset and one that should be of benefit to a wider group of people. He said the event should be appropriately staffed with the right numbers and right type of staff i.e. security personnel and stewards. He stated that the grounds should be restored and reinstated to its original condition following the event. He advised the Board that football matches were not a cesspool of violence as had been portrayed by those speaking objections.

The Planning Board accepted an address from the applicant who stated that the Euro 2020 had been years in the making. He said that the eyes of the world would be on Greenwich and wanted to ensure that the community benefited from the event. He expressed that the GLA had an independent relationship with the Council and had submitted its application just as any other applicant.

In response to Board Members questions, the applicant's agent advised the Board that the capacity of 30,000 was a UEFA requirement which wanted a much higher level. She stated that there was a crowd management plan and egress stewarding plan, also that barriers and signage would be utilised. Further that, a Security and Crime reduction plan had been developed in consultation with various agencies including the Metropolitan Police and British Transport Police. She said the plans would assist in reducing crime and anti-social behaviour within the site and its environs. She stated that there

would also be an alcohol management plan in place, explaining that the Kidzone within the area could be used by families seeking a family friendly section. She advised that tickets for Major Event Screening Days would be allocated by means of a free ballot which would be open to all residents and no tickets would be required for the Community Days. She explained that there would be an accessibility manager on hand to go through the requirements for people with disabilities.

The applicant's agent stated that they had over 20 years of experience managing events and had analysed the space within and around the venue. He said the lighting time factors accounted for the worst-case scenarios such as games going into extra time. He advised that a community hotline would be provided to enable residents to report any issues.

With respect to questions from the Board on the restoration and reinstatement works of the grounds, the applicant's agent advised that they would work with Royal Parks to facilitate this and said that it was in the interest of all concerned to finish the works quickly however, nature was also a factor.

The applicant's transport consultant advised the Board that he had 12 years' experience which included working on events such as the Olympics, he stated that there had been extensive liaison between the applicant, TFL and train operating companies all of whom have considered the worst-case scenarios and attempted to address these with the appropriate mitigations. He advised that the proposed uplift services would see DLR services double from 12 to 24 an hour and two additional (10 car) Southeastern Rail services in operation.

In response to questions from Members, the Assistant Director of Planning & Building Control stated that the applicant must provide details of all the required plans no later than one calendar month from date of decision and that the conditions would be put on the Council's website.

The Planning Manager advised the Board that the current conditions were more restrictive compared to those initially set.

In considering the application before them, the Planning Board Members commented that their decision came with some weight, expressing sympathy for those that lived locally who may be affected. They acknowledged the concerns raised regarding transport and safety but felt that on balance the applicant had provided acceptable reassurances and thus were mindful to approve the application.

A Member submitted a contrary view stating that though he agreed that the applicant had given a fair amount of reassurances to the concerns raised by the amenity groups and residents. He felt the applicant had failed to provide sufficient details with respect of the measures, put in place around transport management issues such that he remained concerned over CPZs. Further adding, that upon consideration of the size of the event felt it was far too large for Greenwich park making it an unsuitable venue.

Another Member stated that the Board should not make a habit of approving events of this nature. He put forward a proposed amendment of Condition 8 (as set out in Appendix 2), so that the phrase “to assist in meeting the demand” be changed to read as follows: “to assist in fully meeting the additional demand”.

A Member proposed amendment of Condition 7 (as set out in the Addendum), to the effect that consideration be given to the feasibility of extending Controlled Parking Zones (CPZ) restrictions beyond the Greenwich and the East Greenwich CPZs, including areas such as Westcombe Park Road with suspension of free parking bays where feasible.

The amendments were accepted by the Board.

The Chair put the Planning Officers recommendation to grant planning permission to the vote with 8 Members in favour 1 against and 0 abstentions.

The Board

Resolved –

That full planning permission be granted for the temporary change of use and associated works to create a Fan Zone for the screening of football matches and hosting community events during the Euro 2020 Tournament comprising erection and installation of media screens; PA towers and media deck; main stage; marquees, chalets, gazebos, mobile catering units for food and beverage sales and retail merchandising; sponsor activation zones and associated structures; cabins, marquees and temporary structures for event management and production offices, medical & welfare centre, WCs; external lighting columns; service vehicle parking and associated driver facilities; cycle parking; temporary barriers and security fencing with entrance gates; and associated works.

The resolution to grant conditional planning permission was as summarised in the officers' report, its addendum, and according to the conditions (Appendix 2) to be detailed in the notice of determination subject to the following.

- Amendment of Condition 7 (as set out in the Addendum), to the effect that consideration be given to the feasibility of extending Controlled Parking Zones (CPZ) restrictions beyond the Greenwich and the East Greenwich CPZs, including areas such as Westcombe Park Road with suspension of free parking bays where feasible.
- Amendment of Condition 8 (as set out in Appendix 2), so that the phrase "to assist in meeting the demand" be changed to read as follows: "to assist in fully meeting the additional demand".

The meeting closed at 21:10

Chair