

Committee(s)	Dated:
Epping Forest and Commons	10 09 18
Subject: Application for major event on Wanstead Flats: consideration of pre-application options (SEF 35/18)	Public
Report of: Colin Buttery – Director of Open Spaces	For Decision
Report author: Jacqueline Eggleston - Epping Forest	

Summary

Major event organisers MAMA & Company are proposing a series of large scale music concerts to take place on Wanstead Flats during the summer of 2019. The proposals are in accordance with the recently approved Open Spaces Events Policy Parts 1 and 2 and the City of London (Open Spaces) Act 2018.

Members are asked to give consideration to the proposals and provide guidance as to the number of events that might be accommodated, with reference to the policy position provided in the Open Spaces Events Policy Part 2.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- approve one of the three options proposed (in paragraphs 14,16 and 17 below) for further development, so that an event application can be worked up in more detail and brought back to this Committee in November for final decision.

Main Report

Background

1. At your Committee of 14 May 2018, a site-specific events policy (Part 2), relating only to Epping Forest, was approved, subject to the approval of an over-arching Policy (Part 1) being subsequently approved at Open Spaces Committee. On 16 July 2018 the Open Spaces Departmental Events Policy (Part 1) by Open Spaces Committee and the Epping Forest sites policy became active. The policy (Part 2) sets a framework for making decisions in relation to external hirer's use of Forest Land. It also identified the process for approving events for those events above a threshold of 5,000 participants and/or of 3 or more days duration, which would require separate approval to be sought from the relevant Committee.

2. The agreed Policy determines the following parameters for timing and frequency of events:
 - No more than one large event will normally be approved to take place on the same day;
 - Events will not normally be approved on consecutive weekends over the period from May to September in each locality;
 - The overall number of events approved will be restricted to maintain the balance of public enjoyment and unfettered access of the normal character and environment of the Forest;
 - Large events will be limited to three per year throughout the Forest and will have restrictions on noise, scale and impact
3. The largest events held on Forest Land in the past have been the Newham Fireworks Display, held annually on Wanstead Flats with an average attendance of 20-30,000, and the in-house 'Forest Festival' held on Chingford Plain with an attendance of approximately 10,000 over the course of the event. The London Borough of Newham also held a MELO on Wanstead Flats on a number of occasions in the 1990s when the attendance was around 30,000 across the day.
4. When considering efficiency savings, the Service Based Review and absorption of staff pay awards and incremental progression, the net local risk expenditure budget has decreased by 22% in the last five years. Epping Forest is likely to continue to face a decreasing budget settlement in the near future and in common with many other open spaces, therefore, needs to seek ways to generate additional funding, through 'added value' activities.

Current Position

5. Officers receive occasional enquiries for the use of Epping Forest for major events. In the past these have been rejected due to a lack of clarity about the powers under which such large-scale events may be held.
6. The City of London Corporation (Open Spaces) Act received royal assent on 15 March. The Act makes the explicit provision to temporarily use or permit others to use land forming part of the open space for the purposes of an event.
7. Budgets for 2018/19, approved by your Committee, include a total £80,000 of new savings, which remain to be identified. This is in addition to the Service Based Review (SBR) savings already applied, which now require £165,000 to be raised as new income from existing facilities. These facilities also need significant investment before any income can be fully realised and this investment has necessarily been delayed until the passing of the City of London Corporation (Open Spaces) Act, referred to above.
8. Further budget savings, including absorption of inflation and salary uplifts have yet to be quantified for 2019/20 onwards
9. With a new approved Events Policy framework and new legislation, Epping Forest officers are now in a position to bring forward for Committee approval well-

organised and larger-scale events, which would also be scrutinised and licenced by the local authority.

10. Large events introduce new audiences to the Forest and can have an economic benefit to a local area, in this case the area would include the boroughs of Newham, Redbridge and Waltham Forest. Benefits could include secondary spend, employment and trading opportunities and the wider visitor economy.
11. Large events can generate significant income to the landowner. The proposed events income will need to be negotiated on a case-by-case basis, according to the size and scale of each event and the scope of facilities offered. However, sums range from tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands of pounds for comparable events held elsewhere. As per the Events Policy, all CoL costs would be charged to the event organiser, a damage deposit would also be required to fund any remedial works and a hire fee negotiated in addition.
12. A significant income, therefore, could be generated for Epping Forest from a large event, which would be re-invested in to the management of the Forest.

Options

Your Committee is asked to agree to receiving a further, more detailed report at your meeting in November for one of the following options:

13. **Option 1: An option of two large-scale events** (Kayam and Steel Yard – for details on each of these see *Proposals* Section below and Appendices 2 & 3) on Wanstead Flats over the period 17 June to 15 September 2019. This will bring a maximum return in income for reinvestment into the Forest, will be held in one location and will therefore necessitate only one restoration period at the end. The area utilised is proposed to be contained by security fencing and would cover no more than 6 hectares, which represents 3.2% of the total area (187ha) of the Wanstead and Bush Wood Flats area. This will remain closed to the public throughout the period and may cause adverse reactions as a result.
14. The actual events will take place from 17 June – 4th July for Kayam including build and setting down and 25 August- 20 September including build and set down for Steel Yard. Each event will have a capacity audience of between 20,000 - 40,000. This will be a change for local residents from relatively few small events to a prolonged large event and may cause adverse publicity.
15. **Option 2: One event proposal only.** The promoter's preferred option, if only a single event, would be for Kayam, a music concert, which will take place over two consecutive weekends in June 2019, with an audience of 30,000. This event also has the potential to rouse adverse reaction from local residents who will not be accustomed to the scale of an event such as this, as well as its timing in mid-summer. However, it will also generate local employment opportunities, may appeal to many residents and will generate a substantial income for the Forest.
16. **Option 3: An alternative option for one event only**, called Steel Yard, would consist of a series of concerts held over a number of days in September 2019

each with a capacity of 20,000. A minimum of five concerts and maximum of 12 would be held on different days within the period 4-15 September. The promoters would prefer more nights if acceptable to your Committee. As a series of evening concerts this would be different from most “single events” envisaged by the Events Policy but would be similar to the circus events and other big-tent attractions which have been staged on the Forest for many decades.

17. As with the previous option, the event would be of a scale that local residents would not be accustomed to and there is likely to be a reaction against this change and the anticipated disruption. Counterbalancing this would be the substantial income that would be provided for the Forest and wider economic benefit that could be generated (see paragraph 20 below).

Proposals

18. MAMA & Company Festivals is a London based company, with 50 staff. They have a long track record of delivering successful large-scale events including Lovebox and Citadel (since 2003), Wilderness (since 2011) and The Great Escape (since 2006). MAMA & Company is now a wholly-owned subsidiary of Live Nation Entertainment, the world’s largest live events business.
19. MAMA & Company have considerable experience of working with local authorities, Safety Advisory Groups and the police to create safe and well-controlled events.
20. They also undertake community engagement plans for all their events, including public consultation meetings to build feedback into the planning; a dedicated community engagement website; dedicated residents’ phone line staffed throughout the event.
21. They give priority to local residents and businesses for employment and trading opportunities
22. They also offer free and discounted tickets to local residents and involve as many local groups as possible.
23. MAMA & Company have applied to hold either one or two events on Wanstead Flats in 2019. They have prioritised these and will be guided by your committee as to how many of their proposals they can work up into a full application.

The Kayam Project

24. The Kayam Project is a proposed new event to run across up to 6 days on two consecutive weekends in June. The ‘footprint’ area covered by the event would be 5.98 hectares. (See Appendix 2).
25. It is predominantly a main-stage show, more akin to a concert than a festival, supported by a high-quality food and drink offering.
26. The expected capacity is up to 30,000 per day. Weekends proposed are Friday 21 – Sunday 23 June and Friday 28 – Sunday 30 June. The build and ‘break

down' would be from Monday 17 June to Thursday 4 July during which time the public would be excluded from the concert area. There is no camping, it will be a concert only and the event will end at a specified time agreed under the licence.

27. The music offering will be along the lines of George Ezra/ Jess Glynne/Paulo Nutini/ Stereophonics.

Steel Yard

28. This would be a main stage concert series hosted in a 'steel yard' structure and supported by a high-quality food and drink offering (See Appendix 3).
29. Steel Yard is a modular venue structure that can accommodate up to 20,000 per day. The infrastructure and boundaries of this event area would cover 5.33 hectares.
30. This would take place on a number of dates (as many as possible) between 4-15 September.
31. The proposed music offering would be along the lines of Biffy Clyro, The Prodigy, Pendulum and Nine Inch Nails.
32. For all events MAMA & Company undertake comprehensive event planning all of which will be scrutinised by experts in the City of London but also the Metropolitan Police Services, London Fire Brigade and the local authority Licencing officers before the event can be licensed. Event plans include:
- Event Safety Management Plan
 - Noise Management Plan
 - Crowd Management Plan
 - Traffic and Travel Management Plan
 - Crime Management Plan
 - Waste and Sustainability Plan

Location (see maps at Appendices 1 - 3)

33. The proposed location will be on and between the football pitches at the Capel Road/ Aldersbrook Road end of Wanstead Flats. This area is easily accessed by bus and by rail. Access to either of the event sites would be from Aldersbrook Road and adjacent to the Alexandra Lake Car Park.
34. The area of occupation for either or both events that is proposed is over 750m away from the section of the Epping Forest Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) at Wanstead Flats. However, the site is adjacent to the Aldersbrook Conservation Area (to the north) and does fall within the Green Belt (for any relevant planning considerations). The event site is also entirely within the boundaries of the Wanstead Flats Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), which encompasses the whole of Wanstead and Bush Wood Flats.
35. In relation to the Green Belt (GB), the issue that may be considered would be the visual intrusion into the openness of the GB. However, as each of the two events proposed and the associated infrastructure would be in place for a period of

fewer than 28 days, they would be classified as permitted development and be considered to have automatic planning permission.

36. The Wanstead Flats SINC is given the highest classification as an area of Metropolitan Importance because it includes one of the largest areas of acid grassland in London and is of exceptional importance for its insects and other invertebrates, including many rare species. As a result, the London Borough of Redbridge, as local planning authority, may wish to seek the views of the Greater London Authority, Environment Agency and/or Natural England in respect of this designation.
37. The proposed location for the event (see Appendices 1, 2 & 3), however, is sited on an area of the Flats that has been managed as football pitches for many decades. So although it is within the SINC it does not directly impact on the protected acid grassland habitat. Boundary fencing and a clear demarcation of the area would prevent access onto the grassland areas of nature conservation importance (see attached maps). Such protection of an area of the Flats has been achieved to the satisfaction of the local authority in the recent past in relation to the Metropolitan Police Muster Centre for the 2012 Olympics. This particular proposed event area is also on an area that has been used for events previously (such as the MELA – see *Background* above).
38. Any potential impacts of the event(s) that would need to be mitigated would be indirect, largely through disturbance and the visual scale of the structures to be erected. South of Alexandra Lake and to the east of the proposed site there is an area of grassland which has been regularly occupied by breeding Skylarks. Skylark, as a species, is considered by the most recent conservation review carried out in 2015 (entitled *Birds of Conservation to Concern 4*) to have red-listed status in the UK because of a serious decline in its breeding population (62%) across the country in the last 45 years. These birds may be affected by the size of the structure being erected as they require open vistas and are sensitive to vertical intrusions (like trees and buildings) into their favoured open landscapes. Disturbance may also be a factor with the potential for an increase or concentration in human activity in the vicinity of the event area.
39. The Skylark breeding season is between March to early September. Therefore, the June event(s) could have an impact on any breeding attempts but the September event is unlikely to have any impact on breeding. For the June event, in relation to the disturbance issue, there is already considerable summer activity at Alexandra Lake and a car park closure to general visitors during the event may offset this to some extent. On the issue of visual intrusion, there would need to be an assessment of the height of the structure and distance from the Skylark breeding site. If the vertical structure, although closer, can be in line with the backdrop of trees and other buildings this may be sufficient to mitigate any adverse visual impact on the birds. An assessment of this can be made as part of any environmental impact assessment for the event.
40. There would be an impact of the event on visitors, both casual and those participating in football. We would not expect the area utilised to be restored in time for the football season and so there would be a small reduction in available

pitches for use during the football season. However, such a reduction in area occupied by pitches is already being planned for future seasons with more efficient use of the dedicated pitch space.

41. The restoration of the land would be paid for through a proportion of the fee levied to MAMA & Company.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

42. Hosting major events will help deliver two of the aims of the Corporate Plan 2018 – 2023, to:

- Contribute to a flourishing society.
- To support a thriving economy
- Shape outstanding environments

In particular it will help achieve the Corporate Plan outcomes:

Contribute to a flourishing society.

- People enjoy good health and wellbeing
- Communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need

To support a thriving economy

- We are a global hub for innovation in finance and professional services, commerce and culture.

Shape outstanding environments

- We inspire enterprise, excellence, creativity and collaboration

43. It will also deliver the Open Spaces Departmental Business Plan top line objectives:

- A. Open spaces and historic sites are thriving and accessible.
- B. Spaces enrich people's lives.
- C. Business practices are responsible and sustainable.

Legal

44. The City of London (Open Spaces) Act 2018 makes the following provisions:

The Corporation may—

- (a) temporarily use or permit others to use land (including buildings) forming part of an open space for the purposes of an event;
- (b) provide, or arrange for another person to provide, equipment, facilities or services for the purposes of an event;
- (c) so far as appears to the Corporation to be necessary in connection with an event, restrict or authorise others to restrict access temporarily to an area of land forming part of the open space; and

(d) charge for permission or provision given or made under paragraph (a) or (b) or charge or authorise others to charge for admission to an area to which access is so restricted.

45. The Corporation must exercise the powers in subsection (2) having regard to a policy concerning the exercise of the powers prepared by the Corporation in consultation with such persons or bodies as it thinks appropriate (which must include any committee or group established by statute for the purpose of consultation about the management of the open space).

The policy must, in particular, contain provision—

(a) requiring that—

(i) in deciding whether, and on what terms, to permit an event under subsection (2), the Corporation must have regard to the character and local environment of the open space (or the part of the open space in which the event is to take place);

(ii) such an event (whether individually or taken with other events) does not cause material injury to the amenity of the open space or significant impairment to the public enjoyment of the open space; and

(iii) the locations in the open space to which events are confined are specified, and, in relation to land to which the London Government Reorganisation (Hampstead Heath) Order 1989 applies, that any structure erected is not on a part of the land which is unbuilt on; and

(b) limiting the frequency and duration of events in the open space.

46. Under Section 36 of the Epping Forest Acts 1878 & 1880 the City Corporation can make provision for byelaws to regulate the assemblage of people. Bye-Law 3(21) licences the temporary erection of buildings. The Second Schedule of the Epping Forest bye-laws details regulations for the erection of Booths, Stands, etc. relating to Bye-Law 3(21).

47. The Court of Common Council's 'Scheme of Delegation to Officers' has agreed the principle that authority shall be delegated to the Superintendent of Epping Forest (under section 37) to grant licences for 'events and entertainments' (section 15{k}).

48. Consent for some events may be needed under Section 2(E) of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 or assent under the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017.

Reputational

49. The proposed events will be accompanied by a comprehensive community engagement plan to answer queries and build solutions to concerns in to the planning process. A detailed communications plan will also be drawn up between

the event organisers and the City of London to provide clear information and response to the public and media. The Events Policy and Licencing legislation provides a clear requirement for event managers to engage with the appropriate legislative and licensing regimes to ensure events are being run safely and professionally.

Property

50. If events are to be permitted on the Forest, they should be governed by suitable licence terms to ensure that COL is suitably indemnified and that consent to use represents best value according to the charitable operating requirements.

Equality

51. The Events Policy requires event organisers to provide an Equality Policy. An equalities impact assessment will be undertaken for the event and any areas for improvement addressed prior to the event.

Conclusion

52. MAMA & Company are a well-established and professional large-scale event organiser. They have made a number of proposals for events to take place on Wanstead Flats during the summer of 2019. Your committee is asked to provide guidance as to how many of these should be worked up in further detail in an application for approval at your November committee.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 Map of Location of Proposed site for 2019 events at Wanstead Flats
- Appendix 2 – Proposed site layout for Kayam event at Wanstead Flats
- Appendix 3 - Proposed site layout for Steel Yard event at Wanstead Flats
- Appendix 4 – Open Spaces Events Policy Part 2

Background Papers

Open Spaces Events Policy Part 1 – Open Spaces & City Gardens Committee, 16 July 2018.

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