

Committee(s)	Dated:
Epping Forest Consultative Epping Forest and Commons	10 10 18 19 11 18
Subject: Application for major event on Wanstead Flats: further detail for approval (SEF 41/18)	Public
Report of: Director of Open Spaces & Heritage	For Discussion
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.

Proposals for two concert series were approved in principle by the Epping Forest and Commons Committee on 10 September 2018. Further details for the proposals are presented in this report.

Recommendation

Consultative Committee Members are asked to support:

- The proposals outlined in this report.

Main Report

Background

1. At the Epping Forest and Commons 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 requires 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 Mela or gathering on Wanstead Flats on a few 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. The City of London Corporation (Open Spaces) Act received royal assent on 15 March 2018. The Act provides the Conservators with additional statutory powers in relation to the holding of events, including entertainments.
6. An event containing a series of large concerts has been proposed to take place on Wanstead Flats during the summer of 2019. Large events such as this as well as introducing new audiences to the Forest can also have an economic benefit to the local area, in this case the boroughs of Newham, Redbridge and Waltham Forest. Benefits could include secondary spend, employment and trading opportunities and the wider visitor economy.
7. The events will also generate significant income to the City of London Epping Forest charity which will be re-invested in to the management of the Forest.
8. Budgets for 2018/19, approved by Epping Forest and Commons 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.

9. Further budget savings, including the 2% efficiency savings for 2019/20 onwards have yet to be quantified.
10. Extensive public consultation undertaken in recent years around the forward planning of the management of the Forest clearly demonstrated a desire for increased litter management, grounds maintenance and infrastructure provision.
11. Tree and plant disease, flytipping and anti-social behaviour present additional increasing costs for the management of the Forest.

Options

12. Your Committee is asked to support the following option which has been agreed in principle at the Epping Forest and Commons Committee at their meeting of 10 September 2018, subject to consultation with your committee and the necessary consents from the London Borough of Redbridge.
13. 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 10 June to 4 July and 25 August to 20 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.
14. The actual events will take place from 17 June – 4 July for Kayam including build and setting down and 28 August- 20 September including build and set down for Steel Yard. Each event will have a capacity audience of between 20,000 - 40,000.
15. This option may result in some adverse reaction from residents. However, a significant sum will be generated for reinvestment in to the management of Epping Forest.
16. The income generated from the event will be prioritised for investment in to maintenance and improvements across Wanstead Flats including improved signage, interpretation, entrances and conservation works.

Proposals

17. 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.

18. MAMA & Company have considerable experience of working with local authorities, Safety Advisory Groups and the police to create safe and well-controlled events.
19. 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.
20. They give priority to local residents and businesses for employment and trading opportunities
21. They also offer free and discounted tickets to local residents and involve as many local groups as possible.
22. All litter clearing during and after the events as well as security provision and crowd control will be undertaken by MAMA & Co. Access and egress to and from the events will be controlled to designated paths to minimise disturbance to the rest of the flats.

The Kayam Project

23. The Kayam Project is a proposed new event which will take place over 6 days in June. The 'footprint' area covered by the event would be 5.98 hectares. (See Appendix 2).
24. It is predominantly a main-stage show, more akin to a concert than a festival, supported by a high-quality food and drink offering.
25. The expected capacity is up to 30,000 per day. Concerts are proposed to take place on Friday 21, Saturday 22 and Sunday 23 June and Friday 28, Saturday 29 and Sunday 30 June. The build and 'break down' would be from Monday 10 June to Friday 5 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.
26. The music offering will be along the lines of George Ezra/ Jess Glynne/Paulo Nutini/ Stereophonics.

Steel Yard

27. 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).
28. 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.
29. This would take place on 6 evenings in September; 6,7,8 and 13,14,15 September. The site would be closed for public access between 28 August to 20 September.

30. The proposed music offering would be along the lines of Biffy Clyro, The Prodigy, Pendulum and Nine Inch Nails.

31. 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 Licensing 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

32. Both events will need to be licensed by the local licensing authority, in this case London Borough of Redbridge before they are permitted to take place. Part of the requirement of obtaining the licence is for the event organiser to undertake comprehensive public consultation.

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. The site is also adjacent to the Aldersbrook Conservation Area (to the north) and does fall within the Metropolitan Green Belt (MGB) 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 MGB the issue that may be considered would be the visual intrusion into the openness of the GB. Use of the land for the two events proposed and the associated infrastructure for a period of up to 28 days would be permitted development, but any longer period would require 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), 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 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 from 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. The event 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. Under section 7 of the City of London Corporation (Open Spaces) Act 2018 the Conservators may temporarily use or permit others to use Forest land for the purposes of an event; provide, or arrange for another person to provide, equipment, facilities or services for the event; so far as necessary restrict, or authorise others to restrict, access to an area of Forest land temporarily in connection with the event; and charge for such permission or provision, or charge or authorise others to charge for admission to the event.

45. The above powers must be exercised having regard to the approved Events Policy. The general duties of the Conservators to preserve Epping Forest as an unenclosed public open space and as far as possible to preserve its natural aspect also still apply, subject to the above provisions. Any decision taken must be in the best interests of the Epping Forest charity.

46. Consent may be needed under Section 28E of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

Reputational

47. 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

48. 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

49. 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

50. 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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