

<b>Committee(s):</b>	<b>Date(s):</b>
Epping Forest and Commons	11 03 2019
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Public</b>
Major Event Wanstead Flats Update (SEF 08/19b)	
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>For</b>
Colin Buttery, Director of Open Spaces	<b>Information</b>
<b>Report Author:</b>	
Jacqueline Eggleston - Head of Visitor Services	

### **Summary**

Major event promotor MAMA Festivals Ltd has applied to hold a large-scale music concert to take place on Wanstead Flats in September 2020. The proposals are currently in the process of being scoped and are in general 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. This report provides an update on how the proposal is being assessed.

### **Recommendation(s)**

Committee Members are asked to:

- Note the report

### **Main Report**

#### **Background**

1. Wanstead Flats has played host to a range of large-scale events including the Newham Mela occupying a 19 acre pay perimeter with 30,000 visitors in 1994 and 35,000 visitors in 1993. The annual free-to-view Newham Fireworks display has also attracted audiences of up to 30,000 visitors in recent years. In 2012, a Police Muster, Briefing and Deployment Centre occupied 8 acres of the Flats for 4 months between June and September.
2. An initial proposal for a series of concerts to take place on Wanstead Flats during the summer 2019 was considered by your Committee at your meeting of 10 September 2018. It was agreed that the committee would consider a further report on the application for final agreement to the event, subject to consultation with the Epping Forest Consultative Committee and the provision of the

necessary licensing consents from the Licencing Authority, the London Borough of Redbridge.

### **Current Position**

3. The promotor MAMA Festivals Ltd has listened to the concerns expressed by some local residents and the Epping Forest Consultative Committee. The company is now proposing to apply for a three-day concert over one weekend in September 2020.
4. MAMA Festivals Ltd has had pre-application discussions with the London Borough of Redbridge to hear residents' concerns in order to plan methods to mitigate against issues raised.
5. City of London officers are meeting with licensing officers at London Boroughs of Newham, Waltham Forest and Redbridge to discuss the wider implications of the proposals.
6. Feedback from the Consultative Committee and local community will be presented in a report to the Epping Forest and Commons Committee when it makes its decision on the final scoped event application.
7. The applicant will then need to apply formally to the London Borough of Redbridge for a premises licence under the Licensing Act 2003. MAMA Festivals Ltd will be required to undertake comprehensive public consultation.
8. The licensing decision as to whether the event as scoped can take place will rest with the London Borough of Redbridge as the Licensing Authority.
9. Comments made by the Consultative Committee of 10 October 2018 will also be presented to the Epping Forest and Commons Committee when it considers a decision-making report detailing the final proposal.
10. The application from MAMA Festivals Ltd is for a series of three concerts to take place over one weekend in September 2020, likely to be on Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings.
11. The detail of the main acts and line up will not be decided for some time but the proposal is for main stream 'A list' pop acts.
12. The application is suggested for an audience up to 50,000 but this will be subject to further discussion with the Licensing Authority.
13. For all events MAMA Festivals Ltd undertakes comprehensive event planning all of which will be scrutinised by multi-agency experts including: 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

14. Funding of the event and preparations will be entirely the responsibility of MAMA Festivals Ltd.

15. The event promotor will need to consider taking on responsibility for activities off the event site or covering the costs incurred by neighbouring authorities through negotiations

16. The Wanstead Flats Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) is a non-statutory designation of Metropolitan Importance because it includes one of the largest areas of acid grassland in London and is of 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.

17. The proposed site for the event is an area of the Flats that has been managed as football pitches for many decades. 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. 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.

18. 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.

19. The Skylark breeding season is between March to early September. Therefore, the September event is unlikely to have any impact on breeding.

## Strategic Implications

20. **Consultative Committee Comments:** Members of the Consultative Committee sought clarification regarding the two-stage approval process. Members also requested details for the draft heads of terms for any event; how the impact of the event would be investigated and questioned the full extent of the event 'footprint'. The Director emphasised that the most appropriate time for residents to represent their views would be through the local authority licencing consultation.
21. **Legal:** 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.
22. 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 for the recreation and enjoyment of the public, 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.
23. The proposed event will be accompanied by a comprehensive community engagement plan to answer queries and build solutions to concerns in to the planning process. 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.
24. 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.

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## Appendix

- Appendix 1 - Application Timetable