

Report for: Cabinet Member decision

Item number: 4

Title: Applications by Manning's Amusements Ltd to hire Finsbury Park for an Easter and summer half term funfair 2017

Report authorised by : Stephen McDonnell, Assistant Director – Commercial and Operations

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Ward(s) affected: Haringay and Stroud Green Wards

**Report for Key/
Non Key Decision:** Non Key Decision

1. Describe the issue under consideration

1.1 This report seeks a determination of two applications made by Manning's Amusements Ltd (1) to hire Finsbury Park over 17 days in April 2017 in order to stage an Easter funfair, and (2) a 9 day funfair over the summer half term in June 2017.

1.2 The applications are required to be determined pursuant to the Council's Outdoor Events Policy (the Policy), which was approved by Cabinet on 17 December 2013, and implemented on 7 January 2014.

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

Not applicable.

3. Recommendations

3.1 The Cabinet Member for Environment is recommended to:

(a) Take note that no comments were received from recognised stakeholders of Finsbury Park in response to the event notifications being sent as part of the decision making process.

(b) Authorise the Assistant Director – Commercial and Operations, to approve conditional in principle agreement to hire Finsbury Park to the event promoters for the events detailed in this report as set out in para 6.4.

- (c) Agree that the conditions which are to be attached to any final approval of authority are as set out in the comments of the Assistant Director, Corporate Governance at paragraph 8.2.7 below.

4. Reasons for decision

- 4.1. Under the terms of the Policy, applications of the type detailed in this report are required to be determined with the prior agreement of the Cabinet Member.
- 4.2. If authority is given, then officers will give in principle agreement to the applicant for the event applications to progress. The events will then be subject to discussions with relevant authorities before final agreement is given.
- 4.3. The rejection of the applications would have implications for the Parks Service budget, and reduce the opportunity for reinvestment into Finsbury Park (the Park) and other parks. It would also mean that the wider cultural and economic benefits to the borough were lost.

5. Alternative options considered

- 5.1. In adopting the Policy, the Council established its commitment to using the Park for a limited number of fairs each year. Accordingly, the only other alternative option which could be considered would be to reject the application. That option was rejected, on the grounds that the events did not fall within any of the grounds set out in paragraph 5.3 of the Policy for automatic refusal.

6. Background information

- 6.1. In January 2014, the Council adopted the Policy to recognise the value and benefit that a varied, and well managed, outdoor events programme can offer the residents of Haringey.
- 6.2. The Policy assists the decision making process behind building a sustainable and varied programme of events. It also seeks to protect the community and the parks and open space infrastructure and minimise or mitigate any negative impacts which events may cause.
- 6.3 Some of these restrictions as set out at paragraph 5.2.2 of the Policy specifically relate to the Park to ensure a balance of income generation and that of continued public use of the park through the busiest summer months is achieved. These restrictions include, but are not limited to, the following:
- *“Fairs will be limited to up to 3 occasions per year and where possible the location of fairs within the Park will be varied.”*
- 6.4 On 3 November 2016, the Council received two applications from Manning’s Amusements Ltd to hire the Park to stage an Easter funfair between 1 and 17 April 2017, and to stage a June half term funfair between 27 May and 4 June. If

approved, this would be the 43rd successive year that Manning's has operated in the Park.

6.5 The Policy details the approval process for determining applications. Paragraph 5.2.3. of the Policy requires prior authority for the event to be given by the Cabinet Member as a non key decision before officers give in principle agreement whenever the following criteria applies:

- *“Event lasts more than 7 days”*
- *“Organiser occupies a site for more than 14 days including set up and take down periods”*

6.6 Both of the criteria detailed above apply to these applications, and so hence this referral to the Cabinet Member.

6.7 As part of the approval process, the Policy stipulates the need for consultation on the applications to take place. Paragraph 5.1.6. of the Policy states *“Consultation will involve all stakeholders, including Friends Groups, Area Parks Managers, Ward Councillors, Cabinet Member for Environment and the members of the Haringey Safety Advisory Group. Other consultees may be added where appropriate to the specific park or open space”*.

6.8. In discharging the requirement to consult, officers sent details of the applications to 36 stakeholder groups by e-mail dated 5 and 6 January 2017. Details of the list of consultees appears at Appendix 1 to the report. Stakeholders including local resident associations, Hackney and Islington council officers, park user groups and leaseholders; councillors from 6 adjoining wards including in Hackney and Islington; internal council stakeholders including licensing and emergency planning; and statutory bodies including the Metropolitan Police and London Fire Brigade were given 10 working days to respond.

6.9. None of the consultees submitted feedback to the consultations.

7. Contribution to strategic outcomes

7.1. Hosting events within the Park contributes to supporting the local economy, developing the cultural offer in the borough and provides an opportunity for local people to enjoy this type of event with minimal travel.

7.2. The recommendations made will contribute to policy and practice primarily in relation to Priority 3 of the Corporate Plan: ‘A clean, well maintained and safe borough where people are proud to live and work’.

7.3. In addition there are links to the Corporate Plan in relation to:
Priority 2: ‘Enable all adults to live healthy, long and fulfilling lives’
Priority 4: ‘Drive growth and employment from which everyone can benefit’

- 7.4. The Medium Term Financial Plan sets out a £600,000 increase in income during the period up to March 2018. All money raised by events is ring fenced back to the Parks budget to maintain and improve parks in the borough.
8. **Statutory Officers comments (Chief Finance Officer (including procurement), Assistant Director of Corporate Governance, Equalities)**
- 8.1 **Chief Finance Officer (including procurement)**
- 8.1.1 This information is exempt and is attached as Part B of this report.
- 8.2 **Legal**
- 8.2.1 The Assistant Director, Corporate Governance has been consulted in the preparation of this report, and makes the following comments.
- 8.2.2 The law which governs the Council's powers to hire the Park in these circumstances was challenged in the High Court on an application for judicial review brought by the Friends of Finsbury Park against the decision to permit the application to stage Wireless 2016 in the Park.
- 8.2.3 The case was heard on 8th and 9th June 2016, and the judge delivered his judgment on 22nd June 2016. In summary, the judge ruled that the provisions of section 44 of the Public Health Amendment Act 1890; The Ministry of Housing and Local Government Provisional Order Confirmation (Greater London Parks and Open Spaces) Act 1967 and section 145 of the Local Government Act 1972 – all of which govern the ability to permit entertainment in open spaces such as the Park – *“creates different powers for different places subject to different limitations”*. Accordingly, the judge went on to rule that *“s145 of the 1972 Act, of itself and standing alone, provides the Council with the necessary power to permit Wireless 2016 to take place in the Park”*.
- 8.2.4 The significance of that ruling, was that the restriction placed on the amount of the Park which could be enclosed or set apart to facilitate the event, and the duration for such enclosure as prescribed under the 1890 and 1967 Acts – *“one acre or one tenth of the [Park] whichever is greater” / “12 days in any one year, nor four [six in London] consecutive days on any one occasion”* – simply did not apply.
- 8.2.5 It is understood that the duration restriction applies to this application, but that less than 10% of the Park is required to be closed off to the public in order to stage each event. Accordingly, it is for that reason why it is important for the Cabinet Member to be made aware of the fact that on 19th December 2016, the Court of Appeal granted the Friends of Finsbury Park permission to appeal on the 'legal powers issue'. The basis for the decision was because the issue *“raises a point of considerable importance for London local authorities and ought to be considered by the Court of Appeal.”*
- 8.2.6 It is understood that the appeal could be heard on a date between February – July 2017, but by no later than 31 October 2017.

8.2.7 Given the proximity of the appeal to the events – and notwithstanding the fact that the law remains as found by the High Court unless or until it is overturned on appeal – it is important that the Council takes all necessary, proportionate and reasonable steps to protect its position when considering all applications in the interim. Accordingly, if the Cabinet Member is minded to adopt the recommendations in this report, then the following non exhaustive list of conditions should also be attached to any approval to permit these applications:

- (1) Approval is conditional on the outcome of the appeal to the Court of Appeal being to uphold the decision of the High Court
- (2) Approval is given subject to contract
- (3) Delegated authority is given to the Assistant Director, Commercial and Operations, acting on advice from the Assistant Director, Corporate Governance, to attach any other conditions as deemed appropriate

8.4 Equality

8.4.1 The Council has a public sector equality duty under the Equality Act (2010) to have due regard to:

- tackle discrimination and victimisation of persons that share the characteristics protected under S4 of the Act. These include the characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (formerly gender) and sexual orientation;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share those protected characteristics and people who do not;
- foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not.

8.4.2 An equality impact assessment was completed to accompany the decision in December 2013 to adopt Haringey's Outdoor Events Policy which governs the assessment of event applications to Finsbury Park. The policy does not permit events where the sole purpose is as a religious act of worship. The impact assessment acknowledged that this restriction could have the effect of discouraging religious or belief organisations from using the park for major worship based events. However, it reasoned that this restriction could be justified because such religious/belief based events by their very nature could exclude others who don't share that religion/belief from attending the event or using the park more generally.

8.4.3 The Policy aims to strike a balance between ensuring that parks, such as Finsbury Park, can be used as a community asset for all groups to access for the majority of the year, against the need to generate income from hosting events and for these events to contribute to our borough's cultural and leisure offer.

8.4.4 The council is committed to working with event organisers to reduce the effects of events on all residents living near the park, and will enforce the individual conditions that accompany the event's permission including those related to reducing disruption, number of days (including set up) and maximum event space.

9. Use of Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1 – List of Finsbury Park stakeholders who were consulted

9.2 Park B – Not for publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972

10. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

10.1 Haringey Outdoor Events Policy -

<http://www.minutes.haringey.gov.uk/documents/s48887/OEP%20-%20CLEARED%20COVERING%20REPORT.pdf>