

**MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MONDAY, 6 JANUARY 2014**

Councillors Councillors Adamou, McNamara, Newton, Bull (Chair) and Scott

Apologies Councillor Winskill

Also Present: **Co-optees:** Yvonne Denny and Evan Reid
Councillors: Bevan, Reece and Wilson
Officers: Stephen McDonnell, Graeme Beattie, Daliah Barrett, Rob Mack, Alison Vydulinska and Felicity Parker

**MINUTE
NO.**

SUBJECT/DECISION

<p>OSCO11.</p>	<p>WEBCASTING</p> <p>The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting.</p> <p>As the meeting was not being held in the Council Chamber, the meeting would not be webcast.</p>
<p>OSCO12.</p>	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Winskill.</p> <p>Councillor Scott attended as a substitute for Councillor Winskill.</p>
<p>OSCO13.</p>	<p>URGENT BUSINESS</p> <p>There was no such business.</p>
<p>OSCO14.</p>	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>Councillor Scott advised that he was a member of the Alexandra Palace and Park Board, and although this was not a disclosable pecuniary interest, he wished to make the Committee aware of it.</p> <p>Councillor Egan requested legal advice on the comments made by Councillor Reece that “The Liberal Democrats have opposed plans to massively increase the number of concert days at Finsbury Park”, and asked whether this meant that all Liberal Democrats would have a prejudicial interest in the policy.</p> <p>Alison Vydulinska – Legal – advised that as the purpose of the meeting was to make a decision on the call-in and not the policy, the Liberal Democrat members would not have a prejudicial interest.</p>
<p>OSCO15.</p>	<p>DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS</p> <p>The Chair advised that there would be seven deputations made by local residents.</p>

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Konrad Borowski – Stroud Green Residents Association

Mr Borowski had previously addressed the Cabinet at the meeting on 17 December 2013 where the decision had been made. He felt that the consultation seemed to have been ignored, and it had been presented to residents as a Finsbury Park consultation, not as a wider policy.

The Stroud Green Residents Association requested that the decision be referred back to the Cabinet for them to reconsider the policy and reduce the days back to the 2002 policy, which was for five one-day events. This generally resulted in the five days being spread over two weekends, rather than five separate events.

The income target for Finsbury Park was £165k. Based on Mr Borowski's calculations (using figures from the report), a two day event would produce an income of £378k, and a three day event would produce £450k – a total of £828k, which was significantly more than the income target. It was therefore difficult to understand why the number of event days needed to increase when the existing five days more than met the income target.

Each event also required set up and take down time – increasing the event days to fifteen would result in an extra ten weeks of disruption.

Martin Ball – Friends of Down Lane Park

Mr Ball raised deep concern over the exploitation of park areas in the borough. Parks were public places for residents, and should not be for sale. Consideration should be given to local people.

Events in parks had not been well managed and had caused disruption to the local environment and people. It was unrealistic to expect that events were not going to take place, but they needed to be managed in a better way. The scale of events currently being held was out of context with the size of the parks.

If the policy was not sent back to the Cabinet, it would set a precedent for other events.

Lynn Percival – Friends of Finsbury Park

Ms Percival presented the Committee with a petition containing over 400 signatures from local people who felt that the consultation had not been carried out correctly.

Friends of Finsbury Park were not completely against events in the park, but there were concerns that the recreational use of the park was lost when events took place. There were also safety issues, accessibility issues, and the affect on wildlife.

The local community already had to put up with five event days in a year, increasing this to fifteen was excessive. The set up and take down of events was extremely disruptive to park users – the trucks destroyed the grass, fence panel and trees had been broken, and people were unable to use large areas of the park.

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Friends of Finsbury Park were keen to work with the Council in order to protect the park.

In response to a question from the Chair, Ms Percival explained that although Simon Farrow had attended a couple of FoFP meetings, it was very difficult to engage with the Council. It would be useful to have a senior contact within the Council.

Sally Billott

Ms Billott explained that she was the Vice-Chair of the Finsbury Park Trust, and a former Haringey Councillor (although she was no longer a member of any political party).

Finsbury Park is a public amenity, surrounded by residential areas. The use of the space for large events would lead to a deterioration of the park, and eventually could lead to the park ceasing to be a public place and becoming a dedicated music venue.

50,000 people attended the Stone Roses concert in July 2013, and there was extreme disruption for local residents. The promoters, SJM, had not managed the concert well.

The policy made no financial sense. SJM made millions from the Stone Roses concert, whereas Haringey Council made £130k. Haringey Council should charge more money to promoters, and hold one large event per year in the park so that local people could have full use for the rest of the time.

Carrie Anker

The impact on residents was more than could be imagined. However well the Council tried to manage events, there were always issues. The policy should remain as it was until the current levels were managed better.

The information in the report was disingenuous. The report stated that 75% of the park was available to use when events were taking place. This was not strictly true, as some of the space included areas which could not be used for general use, such as the cricket ground.

There were many issues with regards to events in the park – litter, broken trees / branches, burned areas of grass, anti-social behaviour and disruption to the use of the park.

Sarah Caton – Chair of Governors, Stroud Green Primary School

Major events in the park had a huge impact on the school. The set up and take down of events limited the use of the park, which was a main route for children walking to school. People attending the Stone Roses concert had congregated near the primary school, and children were subjected to abuse when they had to walk past these drunk people. The school had suffered from the huge numbers of people walking past it after the concert had finished, with rubbish and beer

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	<p>bottles being thrown over the fence, and people had urinated around the perimeter.</p> <p>It was not acceptable that young people should be subject to this behaviour, and until existing problems had been resolved, the policy should stay the same.</p> <p><u>Amanda Smith</u></p> <p>Noise was a major issue for local residents. Regardless of the size of the event, noise affected all local residents.</p> <p>Live Nation, who now had a licence for Finsbury Park, had previously held the licence for Hyde Park. The residents in the area had experienced the same issues as residents in the Finsbury Park area.</p>
<p>OSCO16.</p>	<p>CALL-IN OF CABINET DECISION - 17 DECEMBER 2013 - CAB575 - HARINGEY OUTDOOR EVENT POLICY</p> <p>Councillor Reece introduced the call-in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The damage to the park from major events was extensive. Information on how the damage would be repaired was required. Hyde Park had reduced the number of events in the park due to the damage caused by them.• Objections to the policy had been received from both Islington and Hackney, yet this did not seem to have been taken into account.• Cross-borough co-ordination was required. The Police have stated that they would not be able to cope with an event at Emirates and Finsbury Park at the same time.• A consultation had been held with the Stroud Green Residents Association, but this had not been advertised to all members of the public.• There were issues around the budget – what would happen to the income from events?• Had benchmarking exercises been carried out with other comparable parks with regards to charges?• The policy states that there would be no major events in the school holidays, but this would probably lead to events taken place over a 10 week period from May-July, which would restrict the use of the park for local residents.• The closure of the Oxford Road gate would not necessarily stop people from congregating in that area, as many would visit the Faltering Fullback pub on that road.• It was suggested that the policy should be put on hold, to see how the next two events were managed, and then the policy could be revisited after this time. <p>Councillor Bevan responded to the call-in, and the deputations made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Since becoming Cabinet Member for Environment, he had become aware of the deterioration in Finsbury Park. It was clear that investment was required to maintain standards in parks.• The Council was taking independent advice to ensure that the charges to hire the park were high enough.

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- 7000 leaflets had been distributed to local residents – only 262 responses had been received, with only 182 from Haringey. This indicated that there were not many people who had concerns.
- Privatisation of the parks had been considered to save money, and then decided against. Therefore it was important to make money to maintain the standards. Finsbury Park alone cost £350k per year to run.
- With regard to event clashes, there was a process to check whether events were running at the Emirates at the same time as Finsbury Park.
- He offered residents the opportunity to be involved in the monitoring of events.

Councillor Bevan and officers responded to questions from the Committee:

- The assumptions in the policy with regard to set up times was based on the theory of having 15 event days, in order to set up the policy. In reality, it was not known how the events would work i.e. 15 separate days or 5 events over 3 days. In the last five years there had not been many large concerts – an increase in the policy did not necessarily mean that all 15 event days would be used.
- The average income over the past five years for Finsbury Park was £41500, and it cost £350,000 to maintain the park.
- If there was extra damage caused to the park which required extra spend, this would be charged to the promoter.
- The Cabinet Member had the authority to agree to an additional event if the maximum number of days had been reached.
- A yearly report was produced as part of the budget to show the income generated from the parks.
- The consultation predicated three things – income target, supporting community events and putting money back into parks.
- Whenever there were events in Finsbury Park, residents would be able to access an area as big as any other park in the borough.

Councillor Wilson addressed the Committee:

- The parks service did not make use of the existing policy over the past five years. There was no need for extra concerts to meet the income target, the target could be met using the existing policy.
- It was disingenuous to imply that there was no impact. Residents and local ward councillors had raised concerns. These concerns should be listened to.
- The problem with the process of the consultation was that it gave the impression that extra event days were required to generate income, when this was not the case.

Councillor McNamara made a number of recommendations which could be taken forward:

- That a stakeholder group be introduced, chaired by Councillor Bevan, and comprised of-
 - Friends of the Parks
 - Local Residents Associations

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- London Borough of Hackney
- London Borough of Islington
- Ward Councillors
- Officers
- Increase of small / medium events to generate income in place of major events.
- To carry out licensing reviews of each event.
- To investigate how better to deal with noise and anti-social behaviour – possibly increase the use of Fixed Penalty Notices.
- Increase the number of bins and toilets at events.
- Provision of tickets for local young people.
- To investigate altering the design of the part to include multi use surfaces for a small section, to prevent damage to the park.
- To look at increasing the charges per event.
- A report to be provided to OSC each year to see if the policy was still meeting its objectives.

Councillor Newton proposed that the report be taken back to Cabinet with a recommendation that the implementation of the policy be postponed until after the two events had taken place and been subject to a review.

A vote was taken, with 2 Members in favour and 3 against.

The chair **MOVED** that no further action be taken, and the Cabinet Member to take on board the recommendations as set out by Councillor McNamara.

A vote was taken and carried; 3 in favour, 1 against and 1 abstention.

RESOLVED that no further action be taken.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **That a stakeholder group be introduced, chaired by Councillor Bevan, and comprised of-**
 - **Friends of the Parks**
 - **Local Residents Associations**
 - **London Borough of Hackney**
 - **London Borough of Islington**
 - **Ward Councillors**
 - **Officers**
- **Increase of small / medium events to generate income in place of major events.**
- **To carry out licensing reviews of each event.**
- **To investigate how better to deal with noise and anti-social behaviour – possibly increase the use of Fixed Penalty Notices.**
- **Increase the number of bins and toilets at events.**
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	The chair thanked all for attending.
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Chair