

# RECORD OF A NON KEY DECISION TAKEN BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

**Present:** Cllr Claire Kober, Leader of the Council

**In Attendance:** Simon Farrow

MINUTE NO.	SUBJECT/DECISION	ACTION BY
CMS1	<p><b>Application by Festival Republic Ltd to hire Finsbury Park for major event – 2016</b></p> <p><b>Declarations of interests – None</b></p> <p>The Leader considered a report which advised that an application had been received from Festival Republic Ltd to host the Wireless, a three day music festival, in Finsbury Park on 8, 9 and 10 July 2016.</p> <p>The application also requested to hire the park for a further 1 / 2 day concert the weekend before but this request has subsequently been withdrawn.</p> <p>Festival Republic had requested to move onto site at 8am, Wednesday 29 June and would leave site by 8pm, Friday 15 July, a total of 17 days.</p> <p>The opening times of the event would be as follows:</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;"><b>Friday 8 July</b></p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">Gates open: 1.30pm            First act starts: 3.30pm            Event ends: 10.30pm            Attendance: 45,000</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;"><b>Saturday 9 July</b></p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">Gates open: 11.30am            First act starts: 1.30pm            Event ends: 10.30pm            Attendance: 45,000</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;"><b>Sunday 10 July</b></p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">Gates open: 11.30am            First act starts: 1.30pm            Event ends: 10pm            Attendance : 45,000</p> <p>The Leader noted the replies received in response to the event</p>	

notification being shared with Finsbury Park stakeholders. A summary of these responses was attached as Appendix 1 of the report , and full responses were attached as Appendix 2 of the report.

The Leader agreed the park hire request from Festival Republic Ltd which was in line with the Outdoor Events Policy and signed the non key decision cover page.

### **Reasons for decision**

Major events in Finsbury Park are a long standing feature of the summer season in the park. They are met each year with a mixed opinion from most, with some notable regular objectors.

The rationale for holding events is very much at the heart of sustaining the Parks Service rather than exposing it to further cuts which would mean a lower standard of parks maintenance across the borough and within Finsbury Park itself.

Many people will recall the no-go place Finsbury Park was prior to its restoration in 2005. It has now held a Green Flag Award, the national standard for excellence in parks, for 9 years and has benefited from further investment of £500,000 over the last two years, all funded from event income.

The mixed opinion is further reinforced in the responses that have been received to this consultation. The proposals are now reduced to one weekend rather than 2 weekends and whilst this is positive in reducing disruption, it is of concern in terms of significantly reducing the amount of income available to the council to reinvest in the park.

The council remains committed to improving the experience for local residents and is continuing to work with partners in all three boroughs to ensure these events go ahead and residents see improvements in the delivery from 2015.

A total of 30 stakeholder groups including: local residents associations, Hackney and Islington council officers and 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 sent notification of the application to hire Finsbury Park, and asked to submit their comments.

All stakeholders were given 10 days to respond, as outlined in the Outdoor Events Policy.

A total of 10 stakeholder groups responded to the consultation (attached as Appendix 1 of the report).

In addition, responses were received from Catherine West MP and the Gardens' Residents Association (also detailed in Appendix 1 and 2 of the report ).

In summary:

- (a) 2 responses support the application, recognising the events were enjoyed by the community
- (b) 1 response broadly supports the application and wants to work closely with the event organiser to build local opportunities for members of the community
- (c) 4 responses recognise more work needs to be done with the organiser to mitigate effects on local people
- (d) 4 responses object to the application citing various affects on local residents and the park
- (e) 1 response informed of an event already planned for Clissold Park on the 3 July

In addition to the above one late response was received from the Stroud Green Residence Association. Although this isn't included in the above summary of responses, it is detailed in the attached summary (Appendix 1 and 2 of the report).

At the time the notification was sent to stakeholders, it was made clear that the Council wouldn't accept individual resident responses, but these should be fed back to the appropriate stakeholder group or ward councillor to form part of their overall response. Despite this some groups did encourage individuals to respond directly to the Council through a number of social media forums.

A total of 12 responses were received from local residents. All were against the events taking place due to specific issues arising from previous events including noise, anti social behaviour, litter and large parts of the park not being available to use.

### **Alternative options considered**

With the adoption of the Outdoor Events Policy in 2014, the Council established their commitment to using Finsbury Park for a limited number of major events each year.

The recommendations contained within this report are in line with that Policy and as such no alternative options have been considered other than to reject the Festival Republic application.

The rejection of this application would have significant implications for the Parks Service budget and reduce the opportunity for reinvestment into Finsbury Park.

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