

Lambeth Local Plan Examination in Public October 2020

Statement by Jubilee Gardens Trust in relation to Matter 9.

Jubilee Gardens Trust

1. The Jubilee Gardens Trust is a registered charity whose prime charitable objective is to 'provide a park and facilities at Jubilee Gardens, for the benefit of the public...' The Trust's membership structure reflects the mix of the South Bank/Waterloo community - members are drawn from resident organisations in the area, local enterprises and adjoining landowners.

2. The new Jubilee Gardens was created in 2011-12, with the capital cost funded by s106, Mayoral grant and private donations. It was a condition of the s106 funding that the Gardens should become the responsibility of a local community-based Trust, and in 2012 Southbank Centre granted the Jubilee Gardens Trust a long lease (until 2138) including full responsibility for the management and upkeep of the Gardens.

3. In normal times Jubilee Gardens is one of the most intensively used public spaces in the country. Sample visitor counts provide a reliable estimate of annual footfall of 7 million to 8 million on an area of only 1.5ha, (comparable to the numbers using Regent's Park which is 166ha). It is exceptional that such a prime and heavily used central London open space should be the responsibility of a small local charity.

4. In 2016 the Trust carried out extensive user research, with over 700 responses from local employees and residents and visitors from London, the rest of the UK and abroad. In all user categories 98.5% rated the Gardens as 'good' or 'very good', with high levels of approval for management, maintenance and safety. The research provided evidence of the importance of the Gardens to the local community and economy. 95% of respondents saw the Gardens as good/very good for the local community and 97% agreed/strongly agreed that they improve the quality of the South Bank area. 98% agreed or strongly agreed that 'The greenery of Jubilee Gardens is a welcome relief from the busy South Bank'.

Proposed Extension of the Gardens

5. The ambition to extend Jubilee Gardens onto the adjoining section of Metropolitan Open Land on Hungerford Car Park goes back many years and is strongly supported by all relevant stakeholders and the local community. The potential extension provides a unique opportunity to create substantial (0.6ha) additional green space in Central London.

6. The Trust notes and endorses the recognition in para 11.16 of the assumption by all parties that the extended Gardens will be managed by the Trust. As implied by the policy, the extended Gardens are intended to be a unified public green space and it would be highly illogical and inefficient if there were any division of responsibilities in the management of the enlarged Gardens. Nor is the Trust aware of any other body willing to take on the challenge.

7. The Jubilee Gardens Trust generally welcomes the changes to Policy PN1 and its supporting text – the new Plan wording provides helpful additional guidance on Hungerford Car Park and the Jubilee Gardens extension. Trustees appreciate the inclusion of the Trust in the new para 11.4 about South Bank and Waterloo stakeholders and, subject to the proposed wording, welcomes the willingness of the Council to agree to

- clarification of para 11.10 to make maximum use of the provisions of policies D4, EN1 and ED13 to secure planning obligations to mitigate pressure on the management and maintenance of open space.
- changes to part (h) to make reference to servicing provision.

8. However, the Council's responses to the main representations by the Trust on financial provision for future management and maintenance of the existing Gardens and their extension threaten to undermine the ability to deliver the extension and subsequently to manage and maintain the whole area to the requisite standard.

The Trust's Financial Position

9. This has been set out in some detail in all the Trust's responses to previous Local Plan consultations and in all its responses to consultations on local developments. The Trust's medium/long-term finances are far from secure, because a covenant precludes commercial activity on the existing Gardens, and because there has been no additional provision from s106 for many years. As a charity the Trust would be legally precluded from taking on the additional responsibility of the extension if

- a) its current long-term funding is not secure
- b) it could not see a clear route to funding the further cost of taking on the additional responsibility of the extension.

It should be noted that the area identified for the extension is not covered by the covenant excluding commercial activities and the Trust would make maximum use of any opportunities arising. These would however be constrained by the need for 'openness' both because of policies relating to MOL and because of the need to maximise the green open space for the benefit of the Gardens' many users.

Proposed Amendments to the Plan and Additional Factors

10. The Trust proposed amendments to the Plan to

- a) support, within the constraints of MOL, the provision of infrastructure facilitating the generation of income to fund management and maintenance. It should be noted that the Council was ready to agree such a provision in relation to previous development proposals by BFI for the Hungerford Car Park site.
- b) reinforce the need for contributions from development to support the future management and maintenance of the extended Gardens.

The Council's unwillingness to consider such amendments is not consistent with its statement in response to the Trust's representations that 'the concerns of the JGT and the scale of the funding challenge is fully understood by the Council.'

11. Though there are policies relating to the use of planning gain to support green space and its management they operate in competition with many other requirements for the application of planning gain and in the South Bank and Waterloo are rarely applied in such a way as to meet the need. There have been no significant s106 contributions to green open space in the neighbourhood since the early 2000s when the London Eye and Shell contributions to Jubilee Gardens were secured. The only exception to this was the Shell Site 2013 s106 which incorporated an annual revenue contribution of £60,000 for 10 years (to expire in 2023-24). However, at the same time, and without notice to the Trust, this cancelled the terms of the 2003 s106 agreement with Shell under which the Trust was receiving an indefinite index-linked revenue contribution which at that time amounted to £84,000 annually.

12. The low priority accorded to green space was reflected in the consent for Elizabeth House where the s106 provided for a one-off contribution to Jubilee Gardens of £50,000, out of nearly £40m. The Council's response to the Trust's representations on this matter imply that the provisions of policies D4, EN1 and ED13 might even not be applied to a development on the adjacent 1/3 of Hungerford Car Park.

13. Since the Trust's representations on these matters were first made the Neighbourhood Plan has been adopted. More recently still, its Projects List has been updated, reflecting the priority given to green space in the plan and identifying the need for contributions to revenue and capital to support this.

14. The Trust's user research in 2016 identified that, despite its position in the heart of the South Bank cultural and tourist area, Jubilee Gardens was also the open space in the neighbourhood most used by local residents. The need for high quality local green open space in urban areas has been particularly highlighted by the Covid pandemic, as has the lack of private open green space available to residents in the South Bank and Waterloo neighbourhood. Figures by Centre for Cities

<https://www.citymetric.com/fabric/covid-19-highlighting-cities-unequal-access-green-space-5168>

show that in an area equivalent to Bishop's Ward only 27% of all homes have access to a private garden (compared to 88% in England, and 75% in Lambeth as a whole) and only 21% of flats have access to private space (compared to 65% in England and 68% in Lambeth).

15. This is the context in which the Trust seeks changes to the Plan to reinforce and prioritise the application of support from development. This is vital both to enable the extension of the Gardens to proceed and to ensure that the extended Gardens can be properly managed and maintained.



Jubilee Gardens Trust

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