

Tooting Common: planning application 2019/4206: Balham Boxing And Youth Club 366 Cavendish Road and Football Pitch East of 366 Cavendish Road SW12 0PP: Tooting Triangle

Friends of Tooting Common have the following comments on this revised planning application. The comments reflect the views of our members.

We certainly welcome in general the intention of improving the Triangle site, which is currently in a very poor condition, and of providing sports and other facilities to be available to the community. We note the Council's decision, made earlier, to do this by means of a lease to a private contractor. Views may vary on the general case for this approach, which therefore necessarily involves charges for usage.

We welcome the Council's intention that the 25 year lease will include a review and 'break' provision in favour of the Council, linked to the provider providing services to a satisfactory standard. We would emphasise the importance of this, since, otherwise, 25 years would be a very long time to be committing this area of the Common.

FOTC consider that there is much to welcome in the proposed development, including; renovation of the site, sporting facilities, enhanced 'play and stay' provisions, a café, publicly accessible toilets, new and improved pitches, better security at the site and hence reduction of anti-social behaviour, the apparent balancing of community use/health benefits with limiting environmental impact; improved drainage; and (effectively) no encroachment on the rest of the Common.

We appreciate the considerable work that has gone into producing this application.

However we consider that there are also significant concerns about parts of the proposal. These include: charging; new fencing meaning the loss of the Redgra pitch to impromptu free public use; the lack of clarity about the One O'Clock Club/Stay & Play facility; use of floodlights for considerably longer than the current ad hoc usage; noise from games, particularly in the evening; and, possibly, increased parking in nearby streets.

Reflecting these and other points we consider that, if it is decided to approve this planning application, the following points should be established with TFC Leisure, and added as specific planning conditions:

Access to redgra pitch: arrangements should be made for free access by schools and individual children for use of the redgra pitch and, preferably for other facilities. We understand that similar arrangements apply on some of TFC's other sites.

One O'Clock Club/Stay & Play: While we welcome the stated plans for enhanced and further stay and play opportunities for children up to 7 years of age, we understand that there would be a charge for this, while we understand that the current 1 O'clock Club provision is free. The Council should discuss this further with TFC Leisure, with a view to at least some of this planned provision being free.

Children's playground It will be important that, during the development work (which we understand could be up to 6 months) the children's playground adjacent to the site remains in operation, can operate safely, and is not significantly affected (eg by noise or dust) by the development work. As yet, the documents submitted do not appear to specify how this will be done.

Impact of building work More generally, the applicant, in consultation with the Council and Enable, should minimise the impact on the rest of the Triangle Field of the development work, including deliveries. As yet, the documents submitted do not appear to specify how this will be done.

Conditions relating to biodiversity We understand that Enable have commented on the application from a biodiversity viewpoint, and indicated certain conditions which should be added, if the application is to be approved (Ms Selby's email of 6 November to Wandsworth Council Planning Dept). We strongly support these comments and conditions, including those on floodlighting. We are not clear to what extent these conditions are met in the revised application, but consider that these conditions should in any case be included.

Floodlighting In this connection, further discussions should be held with the applicant to ensure that, as well as meeting biodiversity considerations, the floodlighting minimises light pollution during the longer hours of operations. We recognise that new and improved floodlights are proposed, but these could still impact negatively on a quiet and distinctive area of the Common. The revised application is not sufficiently clear as to how it is intended that light pollution will be minimised - more information is needed.

Noise There should be clarification as to what steps will be taken to minimise noise from games and other activities, particularly in the evening. Measures to minimise noise would be important since excessive noise, particularly in the evening, would threaten the distinctive character of this part of the Common. The revised application is not sufficiently clear as to how it is intended to minimise noise - more information is needed.

Events & parties: Partly in this connection, the frequency and size of any events and parties at the redeveloped site should be limited, particularly in the evening.

Parking in adjacent streets: The applicant and the Council should develop policies/advertising to, as far as possible, discourage people travelling by car to the site.