

Lambeth Together Care Partnership Board Public Forum

Thursday 16th November 2023



Question 1

Rich Wiltshire, PPV Member

Are there any statistics on visits to parks throughout the year? Anecdotally I see a significant drop off of visits. This is of course due to various reasons - it is colder and wetter after all. However, I have been wondering what we could do to mitigate this drop off.

My local park, Brockwell, is an interesting example. As the clocks go back the gates closing time quickly recedes to 17.00 then to 16.15. Is this necessary? I saw people commuting home through the park on bikes and foot this past week which will soon be impossible to do as the gates will be closing before most folk have left their place of work. In Brockwell Park's case the Lido gate remains open until very late - I think until around 11pm. So residents on the Lido side can continue to walk their dogs and enjoy the park until late. It therefore seems a little strange to close all the other gates at 4.15pm.

I imagine safety issues are a factor - however would a compromise be possible? Say 7pm closure of park gates - at least in Brockwell Park's case. That will allow most commuters to continue to commute home and give those needing outdoor nature connection more time to do that.





Questions from members of the Public

Answer from Dr Iain Boulton, Environmental Compliance Office

Our main concern with regards to when park gates are locked is always public safety, especially for large and complex open spaces and where parks are unlit, i.e. there is no path-side lighting or any lighting at main entrances. Brockwell Park is not a lit park, with no current plans to change that status, which is why most gates are closed at or as close to dusk as possible, and then reopened in the morning, usually by 7.30 am. Our position is that when gates into the park are closed by our staff, then the park is 'closed to businesses for activities associated with and permitted in it, which includes walking, cycling, running, sports and play.

This is because the park is too dark for these activities to occur, and we have no staff on site able to provide cover and assistance to the public if they get into distress. If members of the public decide to stay in the park after closing time and gates are locked, or climb in over gates or through fencing, then they do this at their own risk, and we can't be held liable for their actions.

We do operate an emergency call out service to travel to site and help the public get out if they do manage to get locked in, but this is an ad hoc response service and we need to keep the number of cases we attend to the minimum possible, which is why we always dissuade people from staying in a closed park too late and to take notice of any gate closing times.

For the gates that lead into the Brockwell Lido on Dulwich Road, which consists of a vehicle and two pedestrian gates, these are managed under agreement with the operators of the Lido, which is Fusion Leisure; 400 Rabbits, which is the café in the Lido are also part of that agreement. They are permitted to – subject to an ongoing review and liaison with the Council – keep these gates open for access to the Lido and the adjacent car park to deliver their operations during their normal opening and closing times, which can run until 11 pm although we know times this is over by 10 or 10.30 pm.

Questions from members of the Public

Answer 1 cont:

There is lighting around the car park and the Lido's main entrances, along with CCTV, which means people using the car park and Lido can follow a number of safe and well-monitored routes in and out of the park gates on Dulwich Road. However, this does not mean the rest of the park is 'open' to the public, and facilities in it, including paths, sports and play equipment, can be used – it is still closed to normal park business.

We know that some members of the public take advantage of the gates on Dulwich Road remaining open whilst the Lido is in use, but if they move away from the Lido and car park curtilage, they are then entering a unlit park and doing so entirely at their own risk. In an ideal world there would be some form of internal fencing or barrier around the Lido and its car park that can be closed at dusk to separate these off from the remainder of the park, but this is not feasible for reasons of cost, planning policy and the Council's general presumption to keep all of its public open spaces as free of enclosures and internal fencing as reasonable.

Although the proposal to keep certain gates into Brockwell Park, and indeed other currently 'closed' public open spaces, open later into the evening after dusk, is a reasonable one to raise, we would not support this for a number of reasons. The first one has to be staff resources and cost – our Council staff drive round and close the gates to the park at dusk and have a well-honed routine to both alert the public to the fact the gates are being closed and then shut them in a smooth sequence so the public can safely leave and not get trapped inside.

To have some gates left open until 7 pm in the winter would mean staff potentially having to revisit the site at a much later time than at present to again ask people to depart and then close gates, meaning we would need to separate shifts of staff closing gates (and not just for Brockwell Park). This would have impacts upon the staff's own welfare, eating into their own free time, and could also result in additional costs for staff overtime – and at a time when we are trying hard to contain our current expenditure and balance budgets that are already under significant political and community pressures.



Questions from members of the Public

Answer 1 cont:

Our other concern is that we would – by leaving certain gates open until well after dusk – risk the impression we are ‘inviting’ the public to go back into an unlit park when there are no staff on site and it is too dark for park activities to take place. If the public did decide to go back into a park, then yes, they do this at their own personal risk, but it would be publicly and politically embarrassing (or worse) if an incident took place after dark and no staff are available to provide an immediate response, and a person involved in an incident was unable to be found or receive assistance, with the consequences that would follow for them and the council.

We do have some public open spaces in Lambeth which are not locked at night, either because they don’t have any boundary fencing or have been risk-assessed to show that gates can be left open due to their size, because they are don’t contain anything that attracts the public in or surrounding residents are comfortable with them remaining open. However, all such ‘left open’ sites are still closed to public use, and we actively discourage people from entering or using them, and if they do so again it is at their own risk.

We are currently discussing, with support at a senior level and alongside stakeholder consultation, trialling keeping more gated parks unlocked at night in addition to those that are currently left open. This is partly due to budget pressures, but also to help staff have a better work-life balance and reduce the number of sites and gates they have to travel to/around and close in the evenings. However, this initial trial doesn’t include Brockwell Park, as there are concerns about its sheer size and that fact we would have a large unlit open space where the risks of incidents of harm to the public would be significantly greater than for those much smaller sites that are included in the new trial. It would also need to have some internal path lighting for it to be safe, given its size, complexity and topography.

As for lighting in parks and open spaces, though we do have some sites with internal lighting where they are unfenced, such as Clapham and Rush Commons, most are not lit, and we don’t have any immediate plans to change this; Brockwell Park is not being considered for internal lighting, as the costs to provide this would certainly be considerable – and we would never have enough resources to cover all of the numerous paths and gates that are associated with the park.



Question 2

Carole Milner MBE North Lambeth Elders Group



My questions today regard our need for nursing care.

Once we can no longer stay in our own homes, richer or poorer, we do not wish to be isolated and moved off somewhere else but to remain as close as possible to our friends, our neighbours and our communities. There appears to be one real possibility of achieving this and that is Coin Street Community Builders' (CSCB) long-term project for a nursing home in North Lambeth – to be precise, on Site 9 of the Site Allocations Development Plan. This is a cross-subsidised project that has been thoroughly researched, planned and costed, we applaud CSCB's social enterprise ethos, the demographics speak for themselves and, to be absolutely clear in the few minutes I have, we who live here are full-square behind it.

The Elders group is growing and growing and there is no question but that there is very widespread support for all that we are aiming to achieve. We therefore have three questions:

- i) **We understand that, to secure the right planning context for such a development, the nursing home use of that site has to be recognised in Lambeth's emerging Site Allocations Development Plan. Is that correct?**
- ii) **We understand that the Plan is now entering a critical phase and is on the agenda for the Cabinet meeting taking place in January 2024. Is that so?**
- iii) **Despite all the work that has already been done and support from other interested parties, it appears that the nursing home use of Site 9 has still not been included as an option. If that is the case, what do we need to do to ensure that it is?**



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- i) We understand that, to secure the right planning context for such a development, the nursing home use of that site has to be recognised in Lambeth's emerging Site Allocations Development Plan. Is that correct?

Allocating a site for a particular use would clarify that use is acceptable in principle to the council in planning policy terms. An application for a use different to what a site is allocated for would potentially represent a departure from the Development Plan. Applications should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless there were material considerations that indicate otherwise.

- i) We understand that the Plan is now entering a critical phase and is on the agenda for the Cabinet meeting taking place in January 2024. Is that so?

The current intention is to present the proposed submission version of the SADPD to Cabinet and Council in January, the agenda for which will be confirmed early in the new year. If agreed it will then be published for consultation (Reg19).

- i) Despite all the work that has already been done and support from other interested parties, it appears that the nursing home use of Site 9 has still not been included as an option. If that is the case, what do we need to do to ensure that it is?

The Proposed Submission Version of the SADPD will be made available for consultation in early 2024. Officers are not able to comment on the details of this until the Cabinet and Council decision has been made for this to be published. Anyone can submit comments on the proposed submission version SADPD. At this stage these may only address the legal conformity and soundness of the plan and will be considered by the planning inspector at examination.



Questions from members of the Public

- Question 2 continued by Michael Johnson:

When people get older, some want to live in central cities and there seems very little accommodation in the northern area of the borough.

The elderly make very good employees and contribute to the local community so the opportunity would be very welcome.

From our engagement with older people we would agree that elderly people have a hugely positive and important contribution to make in to our local communities including for the economy and through civic activity which our Age Friendly Lambeth programme aims to capture and enable. We would like to see further accommodation options for older people in the borough and those were discussions we have had with Coin Street Community Builder developer.



Answer for Question 2:

Jane Bowie, Director of Integrated Commissioning (Adults) answers in blue on previous slide.

Cllr Jim Dickson suggested that Carole contact Cllr Danial Adilypour, Deputy Leader of the Council, Sustainable Growth and New homes, to represent residents and stakeholders in giving their views on the development.

Cllr Marcia Cameron confirmed that Age Friendly will be going to Informal Cabinet in January 2024 to give an updated presentation but in answer to Carole's question about people going into care homes, as part of the Age Friendly priorities, they hope to have more preventative measures so that people are able to remain in their homes for much longer. For example, technology going in to flats to upport them and make it easier for them to access help, particularly in emergencies.



Question 3 from Maureen Simpson,

I was very concerned to learn that in order to have a blood test at St Thomas', Guy's, Gracefield Gardens and Tessa Jowell Centre, I now have to book online. However, if I am not able to book online for some reason - maybe age, maybe a disability or maybe I am not able because I do not have / or capable of using a computer or a mobile phone, I am - in my best English - stuffed!

Please can you raise this as there are so many people who cannot handle this and could Lambeth Together take this up to persuade Synnovis to retain the "turn up and pull a ticket" or arrange to pay the GPs to take blood tests for the those that really won't or can't handle it any other way. Why does it have to be wholly digital?



Questions from members of the Public

Answer to Question 3

Sarah Austin, Chief Executive Integrated and Specialist Medicine, GSTT explained:

They are aware of the concerns however, most GP practices either in practice or via phone, will assist with Swiftque booking. Friends and family booking is already a feature of the platform and allows for more accessible features for the patient visit.

There is still some provision in some practices for phlebotomy, but this is not universal amongst GP's in Lambeth and Southwark

