

## **APPENDIX 1 – LOCAL MEETING NOTES 13/07/2023**

### **Councillor Peter Bernards**

Welcomes participants to the meeting and explains running order for the night. Advised the participants to switch off their cameras until they are invited to speak to avoid interference and assist the smooth running of the meeting. Asked the panel to introduce themselves.

### **Antigoni Gkiza**

Informed everyone that the meeting is being recorded in order to take notes for the minutes.

### **Councillor Peter Bernards**

Asked the panel to provide a short presentation on the scheme.

### **Fergus Feilden**

Yeah, sure, I'm just going to share the screen. One moment please.

### **Nick Merriman**

I will begin by spending the first minute giving an overview of the project and then hand over to Fergus Feilden to talk about the specific elements. So, at the Horniman, our 2 main priorities overall are to widen access to our facilities and to engage people in the climate and biodiversity crisis and the Nature and Love project does both of these. It's called nature and love because research shows that one way to overcome anxiety and paralysis in relation to climate is to appeal to the love of one's children and grandchildren the next generations.

During the COVID lockdowns, the gardens remained open as a hugely appreciated place for physical and mental wellbeing, and we began to understand much more their vital role. We know from research that outdoor activities attract more diverse audiences. The project will refurbish the very outdated Natural History Gallery in the museum and two rather neglected outside spaces with links between inside and outside and an ongoing program of activities for children, volunteers and target groups, such as those dealing with mental health issues.

Our overall aims are to engage a wider range of people in positive actions around climate and nature, to enhance existing facilities and to improve biodiversity. The project addresses a wide range of national, London and Lewisham strategies around things like well-being, place making, learning, play, climate and biodiversity. We've consulted very widely and amended our plans accordingly and we've raised 90% of the funding. Over to you, Fergus.

### **Fergus Feilden**

Great. Thank you, Nick. Yes, so as Nick describes, it's been a widely consulted scheme. There are many benefits. I'm sure everyone here has experienced the wonderful setting that the Horniman has and the diversity of this setting.

But in particular, there are three components that this project focuses on. So, the Natural History Gallery as part of the main museum and then we have what's currently the kind of maintenance area over to the eastern side of the site and then the former boating lake. And so these three images show the current state of each of these areas and anyone who's been there recently will have seen that there hasn't been a huge amount of investment in them and inevitably you know the museum is doing a wonderful job. It has recently won one significant art fund prize for Museum of the Year but inevitably it's a real struggle to maintain

these spaces and what this project does is really open up some of these areas that have been slightly less invested in and unloved over a period of time and make them publicly accessible.

I won't focus for very long on the areas that the questions don't focus on. So, the Natural History Gallery, this element is really a combination of bringing it up to the 21st century in terms of interpretation and understanding the current themes around climate change, loss of biodiversity and the species within it but also about how we can make this element of the museum far more sustainable in terms of the energy use. There is a component that is connected with reroofing the Natural History Gallery, improving the lighting so that actually all of the exhibits are far better displayed and then working on things like accessibility and visitor flow. As I mentioned, some of those other aspects, such as refurbishing the showcases so that they don't suffer from degradation through the environmental performance. For example, some of them are not very well sealed, there's humidity to be controlled and temperature and this project addresses all of that.

Moving up to the second element, we have the Sustainable Gardening Zone in the northeast of the site. That's currently the maintenance area with a series of glasshouses, polytunnels and it's a real back of house area, which the public don't benefit from currently. And then off to the right-hand side of this image the land falls away and we have an area which many people have not visited. It is used by local school children and families, but it's completely inaccessible to anyone in a wheelchair currently. And we've started to look to how to make that accessible. The proposals introduced this path which is kind of mainly a 1 in 21 path connecting down to this area off to the east. We're looking at things like rainwater harvesting and it's a demonstration of sustainable gardening. We have the nursery which is then going to be publicly visible. There's a community area, a teaching and learning area, and really critically there's also a community well-being garden. Those are kind of the key components.

This area is currently completely screened and private, and that's being opened up. J&L Gibbons, who are one of the country's leading landscape architects, have done a fantastic scheme around the planting around the biodiversity and making this all fully accessible. This is a view as though one was walking up from the main Horniman Museum of that glasshouse area. It's actually not visible from outside of the site, but it makes it much more accessible from within the site.

And then finally moving down to the Nature Explorers Zone to the northwest of the site. There's the former boating pond which has some football goals on it and is used sporadically for play, certainly a lot of dog walkers but at other times of the year it's an underutilized area of the site. Anyone who's been to the current cafe will know of some of the congestion problems and the way that it becomes congested with buggies and things and so this also spreads the flow of visitors across the site and offers kind of very quiet and explorative play down in this part of the site and the cafe footprint sits on the former boating pond. There are no green spaces taken away. In fact, we're increasing it through the planting in some of these areas and that's very positive.

Just to touch on some of those benefits, it alleviates the pressures on the existing museum facilities, creates a kind of non-museum educational offer because I'm sure everyone here is probably aware that the threshold to museums, arts and culture is sometimes sensitive and then very sensitive treatment of the historic structures. So, the former boating pond outline is going to be maintained and then there's facilities which support this and the focus is very much on natural play and engagement with nature and some of the current themes that both Britain and the world is facing.

To touch on the distances to the boundaries, we are actually quite a long way from neighbouring properties. When you're designing streets for example, it's normally a 21-meter back-to-back distance and you can see here we're actually over 40 meters to any of the properties and this just gives you a little bit of context for the scale of it. And then to the Nature Trail access, Vicki, do you want to briefly touch on this?

**Victoria Sutherland**

Yes. Thank you for this. You'll all be familiar with this picture of the Night Walk that currently bisects the Horniman Museum Gardens site with the Nature Trail. I think on the next page there's a plan of the proposals for the new access. It's very simple in its intervention. We are proposing a new gate to be inserted at the southwest corner of the boating pond that will provide access onto the Night Walk and then a second gate over the other side of the path that leads onto the Nature Trail. The ramp itself is a series of landings and ramps with handrails to ease movement and what this is doing is providing a great opportunity for more people to be able to or to a wider audience of people being able to access the Nature Trail that currently are unable to use the stepped access that's there.

**Fergus Feilden**

Brilliant, thank you. And then this is an image along that path of the proposal and the way that it sits within that kind of tree belt and it's very discreet. As we mentioned lots of those themes around increased biodiversity and the way that all of these projects tie together and it's a very kind of holistic, community focused project, increasing access, lots of interpretation, lots of educational elements. It's a proposal that we're really proud to be working on and I think that there's been an awful lot of thinking within the way that these are developed. And as Nick mentioned, there have been extensive consultations with all sorts of different user groups. We've had public consultations, school groups, etc. and targeting the whole range of different people who may benefit from this. I think that's everything, thank you. I'll stop sharing and we can answer some questions.

**Councillor Peter Bernards**

Thank you very much for that presentation. The themes of these questions will be on design impact upon neighbouring amenity, trees, ecology, transport, construction, equalities considerations, community consultation. I'm going to be reading some pre-submitted questions and they are going to follow in that order that I've just read. I'm starting with design and the first question is 'How do you justify being part of the creeping urbanization that would increase to 10 the number of buildings added to Hanuman Garden since 1979'.

**Fergus Feilden**

Great, thank you. I'm going to answer this one. The proposals that form the current application, they actually seek and enhance the public space by providing additional facilities for the local community and visitors whilst they visit the garden. They're actually a minimal footprint. We're far less than 0.01% of the area of the Horniman of the actual built proposals and each of these structures have been developed in consultation with Historic England. Also, we've done pre-applications, we've gone through a really extensive process to make sure that the footprints are absolutely minimized and that they meet the needs of the local community. All of the built form is associated with the Horniman's existing wonderful activities. So, that's the justification.

**Councillor Peter Bernards**

'Why is another café needed when there are 3 food and drink outlets across the Horniman and green triangle campus already?'

**Nick Merriman**

Thank you, I will answer that one. The existing cafe by the museum is already massively oversubscribed and many people just simply can't get served there, which is a real cause of frustration and obviously it's a wasted income generation opportunity for us. So, we can't meet the demand and we can't expand the current cafe where it's located. So, the new facility will help support the needs of visitors and gardens users and it's proposed in the part of the garden some way away from these facilities. So, it'll help reduce pressure and overcrowding around the entrance to the museum and provide an alternative location in a quieter area for those who are participating in the nature theme play. We also think that by physically moving to a different part of the site, they will reduce congestion themselves.

**Councillor Peter Bernards**

Thank you. "The Horniman Triangle across the way, a field that is basically unused, why not revert the children's cafe and winter garden there, then the gardens can be saved."

**Nick Merriman**

Despite the name, the Horniman Museum and Gardens doesn't own or manage the Horniman Triangle. It's nothing to do with us, it's managed by the Council. We have nothing to do with the cafe. So even if we wanted to, we couldn't do anything there and we would not get Heritage funding to be able to do anything because of that.

**Councillor Peter Bernards**

Thank you. A resident is "particularly concerned about the plans for the boating lake which include a new cafe, toilet block, a new entrance and some kind of gardening/exploration zone. At the moment this area is a peaceful and unstructured corner of the park which allows for a variety of free, un-ticketed activities and diverse uses by a wide range of people and groups. I am concerned by the incremental urbanisation and building over recent years and also the loss of free peaceful open space that everyone can enjoy without paying or buying things. How does the applicant justify this in relation to its founding charter which mentions the provision of free open public space which is surely what it can uniquely offer?"

**Nick Merriman**

Thank you. The point about additional buildings has already been, I think, addressed in the first question. But just to say that we're not building on anymore green space. We're building on a rather unattractive concreted area. So, the other part of this question is to do with the perception that there will be increased less free activities. Just to be really clear, the Nature Explorers Zone will be entirely free and the cafe obviously is paid for in the usual way. We are taking account of the cost of living crisis in terms of pricing. So, there's no increase in paid activity. It's all actually much better free access to improve facilities.

**Councillor Peter Bernards**

Thank you. "A wider concern is whether the new facilities are in fact designed to facilitate even more large events. How many ticketed events did the applicant run in the park in 2022 resulting in the closure or part closure of the park? We have noticed more days/evenings when the park is closed altogether for ticketed events. Recently the whole park was closed on a Saturday for 'a plant sale'. I'd be interested to know whether maintaining and increasing

the number of events is part of the overall strategy and whether the new building plans are partly to support that? How does this sit with the terms of the Gardens' charitable status?

**Nick Merriman**

Thank you. Just to be really clear, there is no intention to use this development to facilitate more and bigger events. The existing ticketed events do help generate much needed income to keep the Horniman open because it's all used for our charitable purpose and for a small number of large-scale events each year it is necessary to close the gardens so that we can manage capacity and safety for those attending the events but they're very few in number. To answer the question, in 2022, we had a total of five of these events out of the 360 odd days we're open and the total during 2023 will also be 5. We do not plan for this to increase after the project is concluded.

**Councillor Peter Bernards**

Thank you. The following question is for the Council Officer to answer. "Could the Council's Conservation officer please advise as to whether these proposals are considered compatible with the Horniman Gardens designation as an Historic Park and Garden, and how and in what way they enhance the special architectural and historic interest of the conservation area as required by statute?"

**Antigoni Gkiza**

Thank you Chair. Regarding the proposed Sustainable Gardening Zone, the proposed structures will expand the functionality of this area, improving accessibility and creating a new space for community use. In addition, the proposals to the South Downs Area are sensitive to the historic character of this space and will not harm the character of the Registered Park and Gardens, nor the setting of the Listed Buildings or the Conservation Area. With regards to the proposed Nature Explorers Adventure Zone, the Council's Conservation Officer considers the proposed new structures would cause some harm at the lower end of less than substantial in NPPF terms to the historic integrity of the Registered Park and Gardens as a result of the loss of the eligibility of the former model Boating Lake's original function and the development of a formerly open part of the park.

However, the NPPF paragraph 200 states at any harm or loss requires clear and convincing justification. The justification to support children's play and education and to augment the existing cafe and WC facilities, which are currently in high demand and distant from this part of the park, is clearly and convincingly set out in the submitted documentation. The proposals to increase accessibility between the park and the Nature Trail by works to the paths and additional gates will not harm the significance of the conservation area nor the setting of the registered park and gardens or the listed buildings. They will be beneficial in terms of enhancing access to both the Nature Trail and the Registered Park and Gardens. It is noted that the Council will impose the necessary conditions to address any remaining concerns regarding the impact of the proposed development. Thank you.

**Antigoni Gkiza**

Thank you very much. "Does the proposal constitute a move away from the Free Museum concept towards increased commercialisation and the exclusion of poorer families?"

**Nick Merriman**

We are doing what we can to recognize the challenges of the cost-of-living crisis by targeting work, particularly with schools, at those with a high proportion of free school meals. We've used some of our prize money from winning the Museum of the Year award to offer free outdoor learning activities to children from the same schools. We also distribute free tickets to the Horniman to targeted schools and community groups. And as before, the great majority of our offer is available free to anybody who wants to visit.

**Councillor Peter Bernards**

Thank you. "How does the proposal offer value for public money relative to investment in health, education, or other infrastructure?"

**Nick Merriman**

The Museum and Gardens are free, as I said before, to the public to visit. Only the Aquarium, Butterfly House and temporary exhibitions are ticketed and therefore investment in the Horniman Museum and Gardens will be for the benefit of everyone who wishes to visit the site. Public investment, such as is proposed for this project, is important as it supports the public benefit that museums can provide through learning, education, outreach and partnership. And it's important to note that the funding that will deliver the Nature and Love project from the Heritage Fund, the Department for Culture and various heritage and ecological charities is not available for other non-heritage purposes. So, if it wasn't used on this project, it wouldn't be transferred to other projects like health, education or infrastructure.

**Councillor Peter Bernards**

Thank you very much. "How does the proposal support DCMS and Government core objectives as this is particularly relevant to an arms-length body like the Horniman Museum and Gardens?"

**Nick Merriman**

We are directly funded by DCMS, and we have a funding agreement with them in which we have to serve DCMS core priorities. Generally, for DCMS and government, it's around supporting the recovery of the economy to improve the quality of life of people living in London and the southeast and working to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity. And, as I hope I've already indicated, the core of Nature and Love is to widen access and to deal with issues of well-being and also climate anxiety. There is a strong economic argument for the project as well.

Specifically, for the Horniman, there's a whole series of other things that we have to meet for the DCMS, which is to protect our collections, to maintain free entry to the collections and the site, continue financial recovery after the pandemic, continue working in partnership, prioritize access for disadvantaged young people and communities, and there's a specific requirement in our funding agreement to progress the Nature and Love capital project, which will expand the Museum's offer through the redisplay of the Natural History Gallery and creation of new spaces. So, this project is specifically mentioned in our DCMS priority funding agreement.

**Councillor Peter Bernards**

Thank you. "Would it not be cheaper to work in partnership with local communities and facilities to increase space and reach? Examples include churches/temples, Dulwich Picture Gallery, cinemas, pubs and coffee shops etc."

**Nick Merriman**

Thank you. During the development of the project, we focused on how the project will support the diversification of our audiences and ensuring that what we do is relevant to our local communities. So, one of the core principles of the project has been to work with a wide range of partners, both new and existing ones on co-design and co-production. So not only have we consulted, we've actually worked on the development of the project intensively with families from Lewisham Mosque, from Crofton Park Library and from Honor Oak Estate, primary and secondary schools local to us, local universities, particularly Goldsmiths, health agencies, such as the South London and Maudsley NHS Trust Recovery College. We're also working with London Wildlife Trust to ensure their Great Northwood project integrates with ours. So yes, absolutely collaboration and partnership working are core to this because in the reduced financial circumstances we all got to work together much more intensively. Thank you.

**Councillor Peter Bernards**

Thank you very much. "With the nature trail following the raised abandoned railway line, there is already significant overlooking into the gardens of both Wood Vale and Westwood Park residents. There is mention in the planning documents (specifically the "Construction Management Plan") of "Changes to the route of the pathway, localise path widening" which doesn't seem to have details associated with it. What will these changes mean for the existing vegetation and the already limited privacy screen they provide for the residents? Removal of any trees/plants will increase the overlooking (which will already be exacerbated by the increased foot traffic on the trail)."

**Fergus Feilden**

Thank you. There's actually little or no change to the overlooking. I mean, the path is already fully publicly accessible and any trees that are being removed will be replaced.

**Councillor Peter Bernards**

Thank you. "Concerns are raised regarding the increased noise and footfall from the new entrance and the various entertainments in the (currently) quiet bottom corner of the park. A cafe, toilet block and children's play area/exploration zone will make a significant change to the local environment. How does the applicant justify these significant detrimental impacts for local residents?"

**Fergus Feilden**

I think the first thing to point out is that the boating lake is already used for play. There's a couple of football goals there. People walk their dogs there and there's the associated noise from park use. The proposals may increase usage to this part of the park, but the nature of the noise will not vary. If anything, it may be slightly quieter. The nature of the playground is very much about nature exploring instead of things like swings and slides so that explorative learning area is very different to a usual playground and different from the existing in the area. The only other thing to mention is that the Nature Trail is already a Nature Trail instead of a Nature Reserve.

Just to touch on the noise from the plant for example. There was a misunderstanding about it being a 24-hour plant. That's not true. It will be used during the hours that the Horniman is open. The WC block doesn't have mechanical ventilation and that's worth noting because it's naturally ventilated block. The only one is that the disabled toilet has an extract fan, but the distances and the nature of a very small fan is compared to all of the other fans that people have in their bathrooms, there's no difference. As I've mentioned it doesn't run 24 hours a

day and the cafe hours are not being extended beyond the garden opening hours. So that doesn't affect the plant.

**Councillor Peter Bernards**

Thank you. "The cafe, toilet block and children's play area/exploration zone would also border the nature reserve. This seems a mistake to allow so much building and activity, right next to a wild area. How does the applicant justify these significant detrimental impacts for the nature reserve users and wildlife? The introduction of a loud & busy cafe so close to the nature trail feels at odds with the aim of encouraging natural wildlife to flourish in their natural habitat. How are these initiatives mutually achievable?"

**Fergus Feilden**

So, the first thing is that it is a publicly accessible Nature Trail as opposed to a Nature Reserve and there's quite a difference there. During lockdown, the number of visitors which are monitored across the site, the number of visitors visiting the nature trail actually increased by fourfold which is a good thing in that people were benefiting from it and there was no detrimental effect on the natural environment.

So, the proposals have also been designed and assessed to achieve an overall gain in biodiversity and there's a very extensive process that we went through to prove that. So that's a biodiversity net gain. The cafe is intentionally situated on the footprint of the former boating pond so that it doesn't reduce the green space and in the visuals you've seen there's going to be increased planting.

In terms of the noise from the use, it is already a publicly accessible part of the park and so there is no change there. The only change is to do with use. And then we're going to touch on some of the other aspects around bins and waste with some of the other questions. Thank you.

**Councillor Peter Bernards**

Thank you very much. "Has a partnership work with the London Wildlife Trust been considered as a cheaper and better option for the nature trail as part of a wider green corridor concept?"

**Fergus Feilden**

We've been in consultation with the London Wildlife Trust five times during the development of Nature and Love and to make sure that it integrates with the wider aims and their aims around the Great Northwood project. They've been really supportive of the proposals and they provided a letter of support for the National Heritage Lottery Fund application. We're still in conversation with them about future partnerships around maintenance and how to develop biodiversity along the Nature Trail but it's been a really positive process with them. Thank you.

**Councillor Peter Bernards**

"The development proposed the cutting down of 14 mature healthy trees and then propose to replant 14 new young trees in their place. Why? believe Horniman Gardens is a conservation area, surely you cannot cut down 14 healthy trees. I am writing off to tree conservation organisations to find out whether this is legal and right."

**Victoria Sutherland**



To address the tree removals, the tree removals are required on the Nature Trail as we've mentioned before to facilitate the addition of a new ramped access and that is aiming at opening up the nature trail to a wider audience that are unable to use the stepped access that's there currently. I can assure you, we've looked at various different options of where this ramp is best placed and the current proposal was selected because that was seen to have the least impact on high quality trees within the Nature Trail. So, of the 14 that are proposed for removal, certain of those have been surveyed as category U and that means that the trees are either already dead or in such poor health and in decline that they cannot reasonably be retained. A further 4 trees, or about 30% are of non-native or self-seeded species such as Laurel and Sycamore and as part of the decision making process, we prioritized native species and ones that are part of the heritage plant pallet of the Great Northwood.

**Councillor Peter Bernards**

Thank you. "Except for vermin, what other species are frequent around the site?"

**Nick Merriman**

I'll answer this one. Last time we did a biodiversity audit for the Nature Trail and we can extend that by implication to the wider site, was in 2021, which recorded 139 different plant species, 26 fungi, 39 different bird species, 5 different mammals, 137 different invertebrates, 1 reptile and four lichens.

**Councillor Peter Bernards**

"I am keen to understand the anticipated usage figures of the proposed nature trail entrance, especially as this may have an impact on parking on our street."

**Fergus Feilden**

Thank you. In terms of the anticipated figures, it hasn't been designed around increasing footfall. The purpose of these interventions is to increase access to people who can't currently benefit from the Nature Trail. I mentioned some of the previous monitoring in 2019 and 2020 about how the number actually went up by fourfold during the pandemic and that actually during that there was no negative impact but also there hasn't been monitoring since that point, but it really is to benefit a wider group of people. That's the purpose of making it accessible. Thank you.

**Councillor Peter Bernards**

"What plans are there for improving litter management which is a problem at present but will potentially worsen?"

**Fergus Feilden**

Thank you. There are new bins which will be provided as part of this proposal and they're regularly emptied by the Gardens' team and there's new strategies for waste management being looked at across the site. Vermin inevitably occur across the whole of London as I'm sure everyone knows but the Horniman is known for its maintenance of its Gardens and it's won numerous awards for that and I think that's taken very seriously by the Gardens' team and by the Museum. So yes, that's certainly been considered at length. Thank you.

**Councillor Peter Bernards**

"Could the applicant please advise as to what specific studies have been undertaken to assess the off-site highway and environmental impacts of construction related traffic on residential properties in the cul de sac section of Horniman Drive, and why they are promoting this route to access the development rather than use the London Road entrance to the site?"

**Fergus Feilden**

We've been in consultation with Lewisham Highways Authority throughout the proposals and the construction management plan has followed Lewisham's good practice guide in terms of pollution, noise pollution, demolition from construction etc. We've been through extensive consultation with all of the right statutory bodies and this has been deemed to be the safest route for the public and the least disruptive as well. So, for a number of reasons, you know all the different avenues have been explored, but that's why these proposals are as they are.

**Councillor Peter Bernards**

Thank you very much. I would like to ask the following question to the Council officer.  
"Would the Highway and Planning Authorities explain why they are not insisting that the London Road entrance to the Horniman Gardens is used for all construction related traffic, as an alternative to the residential route via the Horniman Drive Gate, given that the London Road entrance is already used by street market traffic and has a suitably wide gate for large vehicles, whilst the use of the Horniman Drive route will cause significant and detrimental environmental and access related issues for local residents?"

**Antigoni Gkiza**

Thank you. The Council's Highway Authority has been consulted and requested further information and amendments regarding the Construction Management Plan. More specifically, Highways have requested that all vehicles will be restricted to use A205, Honor Oak Road and Westwood Park to access Horniman Gardens to stop unsuitable traffic using residential roads in the area. The applicant has provided a revised construction and management plan, which includes an updated traffic management section that takes into consideration the comments received from Highways. Further details will be secured by condition. Thank you.

**Councillor Peter Bernards**

"Has an equality impact statement been prepared as the proposal seems to benefit some sections of the community (e.g. the well off) more than others?"

**Nick Merriman**

Councillor Bernards, could I possibly answer that one in conjunction with the next question, which is quite similar, if you'd like to read that out?

**Councillor Peter Bernards**

"How does the proposal help us reach out more to minority communities?"

**Nick Merriman**

Thank you. I'll deal with both of those questions together because of the time. As I said, widening the demographics of the Horniman's visitors is absolutely fundamental to this project and was a major factor in winning our large grant from the Heritage Fund. In 2021, we did a large audience segmentation project in which consultants interviewed 2000

Londoners about their lifestyles and leisure activities. They were segmented into eight groups and their propensity to visit the Horniman assessed. Two priority family audience segments were identified for further development, as were two adult segments. They're all groups which are more diverse than our current audience and potentially interested in our current and future offer.

The group called Active Achievers, for example, are ethnically diverse families who enjoy doing outdoor activities together and are a prime target for Nature and Love. Engagement with the outdoors, nature and play spaces have a universal appeal, attracting diverse audiences that cultural institutions often struggle to engage and research shows that people with a greater connection to nature are more likely to behave positively towards the environment, wildlife and habitats. So, the Nature and Love outdoor spaces and activities in the Gardens will be the gateway for non-museum audiences to start engaging with the Horniman. The Activity Zone, the Nature Trail, the Sustainable Gardening Zone and the Natural History Gallery are all free facilities providing opportunities for engagement for all.

A statement of community involvement was submitted as part of the planning application that summarizes the consultations which took place in person, on and off site and online, with the aim of shaping the project to engage wider audiences. Thank you.

**Attendant**

Chair, can I raise a point of order, please?

**Councillor Peter Bernards**

Sorry, we're just about to get to the end.

**Attendant**

Can I raise a point of order? We're the residents and your constituents. We sat in this whole meeting, not even allowed to put our camera on, not allowed to speak, not allowed to ask anything. This is not a meeting. This is a broadcast where you sit there and lecture us about all of this. I mean, if anything is bound to try and alienate your residents and your voters, this is it. I want that minuted in the meeting, please, because he seemed to be systematically ignoring all the points in the chat. No one has answered that. I mean, has anyone at the Council got any idea how to run a meeting? You'd have thought after all these years we'd know how to run a meeting on Zoom. It's utterly un-participatory. We have no voice. We have no ability to make the points that we want to make or get into a conversation. What's the point of having a meeting if you can put this on a YouTube and just we'd all downloaded and looked.

**Councillor Peter Bernards**

Attendant x, at the beginning of the meeting I informed residents that we're going to go through the already submitted questions. After this, I'll have some time to give the residents to ask the direct questions in the meeting. So, we haven't got there yet.

**Attendant**

It's 6 minutes of the meeting left Chair.

**Councillor Peter Bernards**

I'll request for some extra time but obviously let us get run through this quickly.

**Attendant**

No, because everyone's booked this meeting. You should have managed the meeting to do that. People have got other things to do. I'll be writing to you as our Councillor about this and about the whole handling of this meeting because I don't want to delay other points being made.

### **Councillor Peter Bernards**

Thank you very much. "What is the rationale for not engaging, informing, nor consulting with neighbours (including this meeting, which was forwarded to me by a neighbour on a different street)?"

### **Fergus Feilden**

Thank you. I'll answer that one. The statement of community involvement was submitted as part of the planning application details. And as we've mentioned, there's been extensive consultation taking place throughout the project. I'm going to just read out some of those because I think it's useful for people to know just how extensive they've been. We've had planning application advice through a pre-application process. Feedback provided in January 2023, much of which has been incorporated into the designs, a framework plan for the exhibition in the Museum and consultation with visitors, partners and stakeholders in 2019 and more recently these have included public consultation meetings. Access Advisory Groups have been consulted as a long-standing access advisory group to the Horniman. Members of this group are chosen with the aim of representing as diverse range of disabled experience people as possible.

Engagement Advisory Group, a voluntary group comprised of individuals who can offer strategic overview during the project and provided knowledge and expertise in areas relating to the Museum, community engagement and audiences. There's also been a youth advisory panel with people aged 16 to 25 who look at in detail the Horniman's plans and the projects and have helped the Horniman think of new ways to involve young people. Teacher consultation groups and new ways of consulting with teachers have been trialled throughout the development phase of the project with onsite and outreach sessions, focus groups, gatherings of teachers, who specialize in similar projects and with mixed key stages and subject specialist advisors.

I'm probably not going to go into so much detail on all of these because there has been a whole year of them, but I will just name what they are and if people want further detail on them, we can go into it. But yeah, subject specialist advisors, we've had critical friends advice from and guidance with people who've got expertise in decolonizing practice and environmental engagement. The public and neighbours. There've been a number of consultations that we've had with the neighbours and I've been attending those, so has Nick and so has the rest of the design team and then we've taken the feedback. We've had focused feedback sessions. We've had those at weekends as well and during the evening so that everyone could attend. Then we've had non visiting audiences as well. So, in depth consultation with non-visitors on the wide range of Horniman related issues. We've done a digital feasibility study as well. We've got all the specific dates and the relevant public consultations and they've all followed best practice. I've got a long list of them with the specific dates if people want them but anyway we've had the public consultations, which people will be interested in.

So, the framework feedback was during the summer of 2019. Then we've had a public exhibition on Gallery Square. We had an e-mail update on February 2020 sent to everyone who left contact details in response to the exhibition public meeting in October 2022. Hard copy letters were delivered through every door on the neighbouring streets. E-mail

invitations were also sent out to those who previously commented and that was then sent around. There was a Nature Trail walk in November 2022, following up from the October meeting with an e-mail invitation to everyone who had attended and RSVP or said they'd like to be there. That all felt very positive. There's another public meeting in December 2022, again with hard copy letters emails and the details of these were sent around in a newsletter. We've had an online update and questionnaire in January 2023 and Nature Trail walk in February 2023. All of this has been documented and recorded and it's all informed the design. It's been probably one of the most extensive consultation processes we've been through and we work on an awful lot of public projects.

**Councillor Peter Bernards**

Thank you for that. "Why is this meeting only 1 hour when there are so many important issues to discuss?"

**Antigoni Gkiza**

According to the Council's Statement of Community Involvement, a local meeting will be offered to those that have made representations for the current application. I understand there are some concerns regarding the format of the meeting. That's why we have asked to submit pre-submitted questions in order to be able to read out those and be answered by the applicant team. Because due to the large volume of the questions that we have received, there wouldn't be sufficient time. It's a common practice of the Council to hold these meetings for not more than one hour.

So that is the reason why we are reading out the questions in order to be able to organize and schedule the time accordingly. Thank you.

**Councillor Peter Bernards**

Thank you. It has obviously an hour gone and none of the residents have spoken. Could you be kind enough to give us another 10 minutes for the residents to have a say on this and directly hear what they got to say?

**Antigoni Gkiza**

Yes, that's fine.

**Councillor Peter Bernards**

Thank you very much. We got 10 minutes for the public to ask their questions, but I would like them to raise their hands on the chat so that I can follow the order in which they raise their hands. I've got attendant x.

**Attendant**

Thank you. Yes, I'm here. I'm standing on my driveway, I was going out now, so I'll make it very quick. I have not heard anyone address the fact that there will be increased noise and decreased privacy to the houses which you have specifically identified, which are on the Nature Trail. It's numbers 16,18, 20 and 22 and your one-sentence answer about the trees is not sufficient, nor is the attempted justification that there was a fourfold increase in footfall because that was when we were only permitted to come out for one hour a day. So, there's no equivalence between increased footfall then and the increased footfall which you surely are anticipating now. So please address directly how you will protect the neighbours in terms of privacy and in terms of noise impact. There's no such thing as quiet play when it comes to children in a cafe.

**Councillor Peter Bernards**

Can we have three questions so we can answer them all together, please. Thank you.

**Attendant**

I don't think that's a good idea actually because have one quickly and the next one quickly.

**Councillor Peter Bernards**

I'm running the meeting. Sorry, can we have three questions from others? Are there any other residents? Yes, attendant x, thank you.

**Attendant**

Thank you. So, I guess my first comment is to say that we live opposite the Westwood Park entrance and we have received no official communication. Our first notification was on a tree in the monument. The second point is in terms of consultation, have you actually consulted the people who use the park the most in the moment? And I know there's a number of us on here at the moment who go to the park regularly with our dogs. There's one field where dogs can go off lead and that's now going to have a children's play area and a cafe on it. What provisions are going to be made going forward for the people who use the park fairly on a daily basis 364 days a year?

**Councillor Peter Bernards**

Attendant x?

**Attendant**

Well, just on the point about commercialization, and I accept that this is a slightly separate point but I would like to get further kind of reassurance and clarity about how this fits into the income model of increased events and commerciality. Are you really saying that those facilities will not be used to support that strategy, which is clearly a strategy? I guess our theory is that because you have those great facilities and yet another toilet block and so on that actually that in reality will lead to further commercial events, exclusion from the park, noise and so on. By the way there's been very little consultation about that sort of escalation of very intrusive noise and we feel that it's likely to be connected.

**Nick Merriman**

Can I come in on the latter question and the one about regular users and then go to Fergus for the Nature Trail and noise issue. So, in terms of the commercialization in relation to events, actually you may be reassured that when we've done these very large events in the Meadow Field, we found them actually too large to be satisfactory because of the noise and the litter. They haven't been particularly good in terms of income generation. Actually, we're going to restrict our events to the Bandstand terrace now, which as you know is quite some way away from the model boating pond. There is no intention whatsoever to use the new cafe and the actually very small toilet block as an ancillary for any increased events. Quite the opposite. We're moving to no more than five events a year, not increasing those that would close the park and we won't have those large-scale Meadow Field events anymore because they don't work for us.

And then the issue about particularly regular users in terms of dogs. No, we will be separating off the play area from dogs by a dead hedge and a fence. So, there will be no

interaction but the cafe area and the rest of the Meadow Field will be available as usual for dog owners. Fergus do you want to answer about the Nature Trail?

**Fergus Feilden**

Yeah, thank you Nick. The Nature Trail is only open from 10:00 till 16:00 and those hours are not being extended. I mean you have to take our word for it that it really is about accessibility and enabling disabled users in wheelchairs to be able to access the Nature Trail, who can't currently. There is no intention to drive the numbers, it's to enhance the experience for the people who get to use it but also to diversify the number of people who can use it. So, and as a Nature Trail it is always going to be, you know, quite quiet area. You can't play football or anything like that along there. It's very much a tranquil area and the people who use it, that's why they have visited it so far. Thank you.

**Councillor Peter Bernards**

Thank you very much.

**Attendant**

Sorry, actually you haven't addressed my question about the increased noise and the decreased privacy. He's just said that he thinks there'll be no more people. The issue with you widened access. Are you going to restrict other people who used to come and use it generally? It doesn't make any sense Fergus and you know that you're ingenuous in your response.

**Nick Merriman**

Can I perhaps have a go at this? I'm not clear why given that we're not removing any of the trees on the residential side of the Nature Trail, why there's any less privacy than there is now.

**Councillor Peter Bernards**

Can we have another question from attendant x, please? Can anyone hear me? Though we had a hand on. I had marked her as the next person to ask a question but it looks that they are no longer in the meeting. I don't have anybody else who's willing to ask a question and our time is also coming to an end.

**Antigoni Gkiza**

Can I just ask the applicant's team to address the concerns about privacy and increased footfall because I think that the resident has logged off for some reason and this hasn't been addressed, just to keep it in the minutes. If it is possible Fergus to address that a bit more clearly.

**Fergus Feilden**

Yeah, sure. I can also see the chat and somebody thought somebody had been muted. I don't think anyone was muted. I think it's a connection issue. I wanted just to say that it's a very small proportion of the visitors who may be disabled but this is about inclusivity. Whilst a school group may for example visit the Nature Trail, anyone who is disabled would be unable to access that and I know from my family how that can have a huge impact on people when they are the one person who can't access it. So, we're not talking about huge numbers but it's very important thing that this is a truly inclusive offer that Nature + Love is offering. So, I hope that addresses it, but it's not about driving numbers. Thank you very much.

**Councillor Peter Bernards**

Thank you very much for that. But I think attendant x is the one who was.

**Attendant**

I'm sorry to jump in but you have been muting people on this chat as she the attendant has confirmed and I would just like to say I think this is absolutely disgusting because you're blocking us from talking.

**Councillor Peter Bernards**

I'm asking attendant x.

**Attendant**

Yes, my name is x and yes, I was just muted. But I would just like it noted, because we're coming to the end of the meeting that this has been incredibly disappointing for the residents who want to support an inclusive Horniman. No one is disputing that. So, to keep reversing to that as justification for not addressing our concerns is really outrageous actually.

**Councillor Peter Bernards**

Thank you very much and I'm sorry that you feel that way, but obviously the officers and the developers are here to answer your questions and your concerns and then I'll ask Gkiza to tell us what's going to be happening going forward with this.

**Attendant**

Thank you. So just mentioned nobody has been muted. I don't know if these were connection issues but I am the organizer of the meeting and nobody was muted. So, in case there are any concerns about it, of course nobody was muted. That's why we're holding this meeting in order to respond to your questions.

In case somebody wants to receive the invitation about the committee who hasn't submitted a representation for the current applications, because the invitations for the committee are being sent to the people that have only submitted representations for the current applications. If you haven't submitted a presentation and you wish to be invited, you can send your details, including your e-mail to [planning@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:planning@lewisham.gov.uk). These will be forwarded to me and you will be invited to attend if you wish. And as I said in the beginning the minutes, they will be uploaded in the application file. Also, there was a question in the chat as to whether we have read your questions and if these are going to be included. They will also be included in the minutes report. Thank you very much.

**Councillor Peter Bernards**

I would like to thank you all for participating and I thank the people who had sent their questions in advance and obviously if you have not been satisfied with the answers the officers and the applicant has given you here there is still another opportunity, as Gkiza just said, to send your queries at [planning@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:planning@lewisham.gov.uk) and they will be looked into. I would like to bring this meeting to a close and thank you very much. Have a good evening.

Microsoft Teams chat conversation

**Attendants**

I thought the whole point of a public meeting was to have a dialogue back and forth rather than be broadcast at by the council and park officials. We, the citizens, have to sit silent, with



faces blanked out, while we're spoken at. You could have put this on a YouTube video and saved the trouble. Chair - are we not be allowed any voice in this meeting at all?

I agree.

Even our questions are read on our behalf as if we can't be trusted to ask our own questions - bizarre!

Agreed, they seem to be adjusting our questions to make it easier for them to answer

How can he say this about the boating lake when he just said it was underutilised? This is terrible. Also, no one has addressed the impact of increased footfall in the Nature Trail.

Is there a reason we're not allowed to speak? Fergus Feilden Nick Merriman (Guest)?

And every parent would love the idea of a cafe full of kids and an explorer zone constitutes quiet play! The fourfold increase was while we were restricted in our movements so there's no feasible extrapolation to these proposals. Will these side comments will be incorporated into the minutes? As this is our only voice during the meeting.

Yes I support that - can we have assurance that this that will be incorporated in the minutes

That isn't true as they specifically already said they were all 14 healthy trees!

The power imbalance in this meeting is outrageous. The councillor and the offices are the only ones allowed to speak and have their cameras on - we the residents are expected to sit utterly silent and in the dark with our cameras off.

I'm astonished that Fergus keeps repeating that there will be no increase in noise when the point is that they want more people in the park!! When he says 'wider usage' he means 'more people'.

Agreed! this is wrong. Also, they keep mentioning 'quiet play' how do they intend on keeping the children silent? when the plan increases the number of children visiting

I've taken pics of these comments and will submit them to be included but I have to move onto my mobile now so can someone else take pics of further comments and submit?

Yes, I will.

I might raise a point of order shortly about the handling of this meeting if that would be helpful for the meeting?

So, they have been preparing on how to answer these questions? this seems very set up. they know the order of the questions.

Well said, thank you for raising this x.

The whole set up feels as if it's only about being able to say they've done a meeting and consulted people but just going through the motions.

Did anyone get these emails and letters?

Well said Isabel.

Did they mute you x?

Yes!!

I have to go I am afraid. Why on earth didn't we start this kind of back and forth half an hour ago - would have been so much better for everyone!