

Appendix 2

Decision:

It was noted that Councillor Ann Jackson could not vote on this item as she had not been present during the entire consideration of the application.

On a vote of 4 for and 1 against the Committee **RESOLVED**

- 1 That planning permission for the construction of a new mosque and community centre be **DEFERRED** pending the following actions:
 - That a Management Plan be developed and presented to the Committee to address the issues around diversity of access which should at least be equivalent to existing uses.
 - That a further condition be added to any planning consent to address the issues around the management of food waste.

Minutes:

It was noted that Councillor Ann Jackson could not vote on this item as she had not been present during the entire consideration of the application.

Owen Whalley (Service Head Planning and Building Control Development and Renewal) introduced the item.

The Chair invited statements from persons who had previously registered to address the Committee.

Mr Geoff Sumnall spoke in objection. He had been asked by the Limehouse Community Forum to represent their concerns. The objections concerned loss of a community facility, open space and amenity issues.

He commented that the existing site provided a valuable area of open space. The new facility however would occupy 40% of the site. Therefore would result in a loss of open space, which was contrary to Council policy. In view of this he questioned whether the scheme could be relocated elsewhere.

He also objected to the access arrangements. Access would now be from an alternative point. Therefore would produce new movements along limited access routes.

Furthermore, the proposed number of visitors and vehicle activity at peak times would have a serious impact on the highway.

He considered that the plans to secure full community use should be agreed in consultation with the community before planning permission is granted. Otherwise this valuable community facility could be lost. He recommended that the application be refused.

Sister Christine Frost spoke in objection to the application. She stated that she was representing the SPLASH organisation. The key issue was the loss of the existing community facility. The portacabins were given to the community for community use in response to a local campaign. They were given to the community to compensate for the loss of a community space.

Ms Frost considered that the existing facility was well used by a diverse range of community groups and activities. (i.e. for children's parties, classes, Councillor's surgeries). She considered that women in particular found the existing facility very accessible and it was available to all faith groups. She queried whether the new community facility would be just as accessible to all groups. She questioned whether another site could be found for the existing community facility which was clearly run by and was for the community.

She feared that the community would lose a longstanding community facility.

Councillor Craig Aston spoke in objection to the application. He declared a personal interest in that he was the local ward Member and held his ward surgeries on this site. He also expressed concern over the loss of a community resource and resultant loss of community events there. He considered that the proposals didn't match the entire community's needs. He doubted the finding that the majority of visitors to the mosque would visit it by foot. Instead there would be traffic implications in the adjacent streets. The Council would be disposing of a valuable community resource for 'nothing'.

Mr Aun Qurashi (Applicant's Agent) spoke in support of the application. He drew attention to the Officers report. The report considered that the scheme would continue to provide a community facility with no adverse impacts and that it complied with policy. Therefore it should be granted.

Mr Qurashi considered that the community facility would be available for use to all community groups, and would provide a much better and larger community facility. It would be available at all times during opening hours save on Friday's during prayer. The only limitations would be anything incompatible with the mosque's activities. A large part of the site would be retained as green open space.

Ila Robertson (Applications Manager, Development and Renewal) presented the report. Ms Robertson explained the existing provision and uses and the new proposal. The application had been subject to a full public consultation as set out in the report. Officers addressed the main issues raised in objections around design, amenity, highways impacts, loss of existing community facility and impact on open space.

Officers considered that the design complied with policy and was in keeping with the area. Overall it marked an improvement on the existing building with no adverse impacts on the surrounding area. In terms of amenity impact, the travel survey indicated that the vast majority of visitors to the mosque would arrive on foot and the area was a controlled parking zone, so there would be no adverse highways impact. Furthermore there would be no loss of community floor space.

It was also noted that, whilst there would be a loss of estate grassed amenity land, this was not widely used for amenity purposes. On balance the loss of this space was considered acceptable given it would be for community space.

The applicant was happy to enter into an agreement securing wider community use of the hall by way of planning condition.

In summary the scheme complied with policy and therefore should be granted consent.

Officers also reminded the Committee that the issues around the disposal of the site were not relevant to this application and that the Committee should focus solely on the planning merits of the scheme.

In reply to the presentation, Members expressed concerns over loss of community space.

Accordingly, Members sought assurances that the community hall would be available to all community groups as at present. In particular they sought assurances that it would be accessible to women, all faiths groups and to a diverse range of groups. They considered that steps should be taken to secure such diversity of access.

Members also questioned:

- The term 'incompatible uses'. Asked that this be clarified.
- The ratio of male/female facilities. Number of disabled facilities.
- Adequacy of the waste storage facilities especially during Ramadan. Could an additional condition be added to deal with the waste produced at such peak times.
- Whether there were any issues between the current mosque and the activities of the existing portacabins.
- Measures to mitigate the loss of mature trees.
- The differences in planning terms between community and religious use and also whether there would be any business activity.

Concerns were also raised that the amplified called to prayer could be very noisy to neighbouring properties. It was also feared that there would be an increase in traffic/parking issues at peak times on Fridays.

In response to the questions, Officers clarified the following points -

- The application could only be used for religious/ community usages. Any proposal to use it for business purposes would be a change of use and require new planning permission.
- The building was designed for use by all groups. No element of the design excluded any group.
- The number and location of the male, female and disabled facilities.
- The awaited Management Plan. It was anticipated the Plan would identify and regulate hours and proposed usages. A key aim of which was to secure widespread community use of the hall equal to the existing provision.

With the permission of the Chair, Councillor Golds asked the Applicant to address the concerns around access to the hall.

In reply, the applicant's agent Mr Qurashi addressed the Committee for a further 3 minutes. He considered that all community uses and all faith events would be welcomed to use the hall. There were no plans for amplified calls to prayer. The proposed number of male/female facilities met the minimum requirement in building regulations.

Accordingly in view of the issues,

On a vote of 4 for and 1 against the Committee **RESOLVED**

That planning permission for the construction of a new mosque and community centre be **DEFERRED** pending the following:

- That a Management Plan be developed and presented to the Committee to address the issues around diversity of access which should at least be equivalent to existing uses.
- That a further condition be added to any planning consent to address the issues around the management of food waste.

Appendix 3

Limehouse Mosque & Community Centre

MANAGEMENT PLAN for HIRE OF COMMUNITY HALL at the proposed
LIMEHOUSE MOSQUE & COMMUNITY CENTRE, GILL STREET, LIMEHOUSE, LONDON, E14 8AF.

The Limehouse Bangladeshi Cultural Association (LBCA) is proposing to construct a new Mosque and Community Centre on land adjacent to the railway viaduct at Gill Street, Limehouse. The land is currently owned by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets (LBTH).

Construction of the proposed development is subject to, firstly, the securing of planning permission from LBTH and, secondly, purchase of the land from LBTH.

Facilities and Potential Use

The two main parts of the new building are to be a Prayer Hall and a Community Hall, separated by a common entrance lobby. Sanitary facilities serving both parts are to be provided and the Community Hall is also to benefit from a small open-plan kitchenette area.

It is the intention of the LBCA to make the Community Hall and ancillary sanitary and kitchenette facilities available for public hire and use by other groups or organisations.

The LBCA anticipates that these uses could include, but not be restricted to, the following -

Public meetings and meetings of various groups and organisations, including talks, lectures and workshops; social functions and get-togethers; social welfare and community advice surgeries; Councillor and MP surgeries; adult education classes and exercise classes; adult and senior citizens' day centre activities; children's after-school classes; and children's or youth group activities such as Cubs, Scouts and Girl Guides.

Capacity and Access

The suggested maximum capacity of the Community Hall is fifty people when seated in rows for public meetings or lectures. A looser seating arrangement for classes, functions and group meetings should be able to comfortably accommodate approximately twenty-five people.

The premises are designed to be fully accessible to wheelchair users.

Activities and Inclusivity

The LBCA will welcome the use of the Community Hall for any lawful activity.

In the spirit of community cohesion and in recognition of equality legislation, the LBCA warrants to make the Community Hall facility available for hire to individuals and groups regardless of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, nationality, religion, political allegiance, age, height, weight, disability, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or transgender status.

Hours of Use

The Community Hall will not be available for hire and use during the course of a 60-minute period every Friday afternoon corresponding to weekly Friday prayers. The hall will also not be available for hire on two mornings per year corresponding to the two annual Eid prayers, and for 60-minute periods corresponding to night-time prayers during the month of Ramadan.

General Terms and Conditions of Hire

For 'Occasional Hire', the hirer will be required to complete an application form and make a part-payment of the hire charge as a security deposit. Particulars to be stated on the form will include the name and contact details of the hirer or group, the reason for hire and expected numbers, and the time and date of hire.

For 'Regular Hire', a written agreement between the hirer and the LBCA will be completed giving details as above, and stating the recurring time, days and duration period of the proposed hire arrangement.

Hire charges for 'Occasional Hire' and 'Regular Hire' will be set at the respective prevailing local market rates for Community Hall hire, with due consideration being given to the likely financial standing of other community and charitable groups.

The local community groups 'SPLASH' and the 'St Vincent's Tenants & Residents' Association' will be expected to pay only a minimal charge for hall hire and will be afforded prioritised regular slots for use of the hall for purposes related to their respective community needs.

Detailed 'Terms and Conditions of Hire' will be produced by the LBCA in due course, and prior to the new building coming into use. In general terms, it is anticipated that these 'Terms and Conditions' will include the following clauses -

"the Hirer shall be responsible for all matters relating to food & drink hygiene; the Hirer is to observe health & safety and environmental health requirements, including not obstructing fire exits during the period of hire; the Hirer is expected to clear up after use of the facilities and to leave the premises by the end of the booking period; the number of persons using the premises shall not exceed the number authorised in the booking; footwear with studs is not permitted in the building; the premises shall be left in a clean and tidy condition after use and the Hirer will be charged for any cleaning work required; tables and chairs are to be stacked away, as found, after use; the kitchenette area must be cleaned after use and all food and any rubbish must be taken away and disposed of by the Hirer; the toilets must be left in a clean state; damage of any kind shall be made good or paid for by the Hirer; the deposit or any part thereof may be retained by the management to pay for any damage caused by the Hirer; where the sale of alcoholic refreshments is intended, the Hirer shall be responsible for obtaining suitable licence; smoking is prohibited within the premises at all times; the Hirer should use his best endeavours to ensure that persons entering and leaving the hall do so in an orderly fashion, and is responsible for maintaining good order in the premises."

Management Plan signed on behalf of the LBCA

 **MOHAMMED NEZAM UDDIN** 9/12/2011

~~Secretary~~, Limehouse Bangladeshi Cultural Association.
CHAIRMAN

Limehouse Bangladeshi Cultural Association, c/o
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