



Friends of Tooting Common

29 September 2014

HCS Directorate
Wandsworth Borough Council

WBC proposals for lease for cafe on Tooting Common

Dear Sir or Madam

1. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the WBC proposals for the cafe on Tooting Common. We commented earlier, with our main initial comments, in Simon Helmsley's email to you of 8 September, for the initial deadline. We are grateful for the extension of the deadline for comments, and this present note now sets out our comments more fully.
2. As indicated earlier, we are surprised that WBC are proposing to grant a new lease to the current operator without going through a competitive tendering process. In general, putting an externally-provided service to competitive tender is the best way to get the best and improved provision, and we consider that it would be better to follow a competitive tendering process here. We note that the Council are proposing to do this for the intended Triangle youth centre/Redgra pitch lease.
3. We are concerned that the plans for the proposal for the cafe extension which we have seen include an artificial grassed area of about 100 sqm. While we recognise that tree shade may raise problems for a natural grassed area, we do not think that an artificial grassed area would be at all appropriate: this aspect of the proposal should certainly be reconsidered.
4. While it may be too early to comment on specific building plans, we would not want the extension to the café to cause more grassland to be built on or covered in tarmac; or to cause any trees to be cut down. It will also be important that the wording of the lease ensures a good quality design for the extension, and ensures that it blends well with both the existing building and with the general character of the Common.
5. We certainly welcome the plans for a publicly accessible toilet at the cafe. The provision of additional public toilets on the Commons is the biggest issue raised by our FOTC members and by many local residents. It will be important that the toilet is open to all members of the public (not just café

customers) during opening hours, and we assume this will be the case. We also assume that provision of the toilet will indeed be a necessary condition of the lease – this will also be important.

6. It would be helpful to have a further opportunity to comment on the plans for the lease as the project progresses, and we would ask if this can be arranged.

7. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these proposals. We would be happy to discuss our comments with you.

Best wishes

Peter Ramell
Chair, Friends of Tooting Common

Circulated to:
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FOTC members