

MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Monday 9 March 2022 at 6.00 pm
Held as a hybrid meeting

PRESENT: Councillor Ketan Sheth (Chair), and Councillors Afzal, Sangani and Thakkar.

Members in attendance remotely: Councillor Daly, Mr Alloysius Frederick

In attendance: Councillor Knight (in remote attendance), Councillor Nerva (in remote attendance), Councillor McLennan (in remote attendance), Councillor M Butt, Councillor Krupa Sheth, and Councillor Tatler

1. Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members

Apologies were received as follows:

- Councillor Colwill
- Councillor Aden
- Councillor Ethapemi
- Mr Simon Goulden
- Rev. Helen Askwith

2. Declarations of interests

None.

3. Deputations (if any)

There were no deputations received.

6. Casey Review

A presentation from the Football Association (FA) was presented by Tom Legg (Head of External Operations, FA) and Chris Bryant (Head of Tournament Delivery, FA). The presentation covered the process of the independent review of events at the Euro 2020 Final, which had been done by Baroness Casey. It was highlighted that the review had involved interviews with numerous stakeholders representing all key delivery partners, analysis of substantial documentation and CCTV footage, a survey of ticket holders, and independent reports from experts and academics across the field. The presentation detailed that the review had made 4 recommendations in relation to FA governance, including changes to the categorisation of matches of a certain scale, a review of stewarding, a national campaign regarding attitudes and supporter behaviour, and the strengthening of penalties for disorder. Those recommendations would involve the FA working closely with the government and police, supporting the Sports Grounds Safety Authority (SGSA) with the review of stewarding, working with the Premier League, English Football League and 'Kick It Out' on behavioural change campaigning, and developing a proposal for legislative and football banning order changes. Two recommendations for Wembley operational matters were made to strengthen plans for safety ahead of events and matches of significance.

The Committee wanted an understanding of the planning and preparation that had gone into the organisation of the Final. Chris Bryant advised that the event was very thoroughly planned and all mitigating actions were taken where possible. He highlighted that the planning that went into delivering the event was greater than any event he had been a part of and there was stakeholder buy in from everyone. The events of the Final had been what was referred to as a 'perfect storm' and brought about by events that stakeholders had never seen previously. Councillor Muhammed Butt (Leader, Brent Council) agreed that the preparations that went in to making the event happen were incomparable. Many meetings took place, and the situation regarding Covid-19 had meant things had to be changed several times. Conversations were taking place with central government, UEFA and all relevant stakeholders and the Covid-19 regulations were changing constantly. The FA, Stadium and Council all had to respond appropriately to those changing regulations and work within the constraints they were given. Councillor Butt highlighted that the recommendations made in the review had strengthened the conversations that had happened since, and all stakeholders were taking into account everything in the review to make sure partnerships were strengthened and the Stadium continued to work effectively for the residents and visitors.

In relation to the Covid-19 national research programme, the Committee queried how the findings from those programmes contributed to the planning and preparation for the event. Dr Melanie Smith (Director of Public Health, Brent Council) highlighted that the national research programme had been answerable to central government, which had determined that, on the advice of Public Health England and the Science Board, the dispensation would be given to allow the Euros to take place. Phase 1 of the event research programme was not designed to show and would not have shown any impact on transmission but instead explored the feasibility of the mitigations that had been put in place and allowed observational studies to be done around behaviour. It also allowed measurements around air circulation in specific areas. Carolyn Downs (Chief Executive, Brent Council), Chris Bryant and Melanie Smith had been involved in daily meetings about Covid-19 infection control, which was led by central government, and they had not been prepared to sign off infection control measures related to the event and insisted that Public Health England be the main sign off for the event, as they were not satisfied with the home testing regime. They were happy with the testing regime in place in Brent and the control measures of the Stadium, but did not accept that the home testing regime was robust, and Carolyn Downs continually raised the issue throughout the whole programme.

The Committee considered safety away from Wembley and Wembley Stadium, and asked what role the GLA and TfL had in relation to the control of alcohol on trains and stations heading towards Wembley. The Committee were advised that Baroness Casey had interviewed the GLA, TfL, and British Transport Police (BTP) as part of the review, the outcome of those being in the report, and it was acknowledged that there was a need to greater enforce the bringing of alcohol on to the public transport system. The relationship with TfL was important at the Stadium, and they had a good working relationship which was clear on how to work together and requirements ahead of each fixture. The FA shared the Committee's concerns about the ability to consume and transport alcohol on the public transport network and were talking to TfL and BTP about this in detailed planning meetings. Chris Whyte (Operational Director Environment, Brent Council) added that the new approach the Council had to

restricting the consumption and sale of alcohol on event days, which had been introduced for the Caraboa Cup Final, had required significant buy-in from BTP and TfL in helping to administrate that on trains and they had seen a very significant improvement on that day. He felt this demonstrated they had a solution that they would continue to work towards alongside partners and uphold that effort for future games. Jim Brockway (Chief Inspector, Metropolitan Police) advised that the police were in regular contact with the BTP who were a good and valued part of the system. He believed that the response they provided was a very valuable service to the wider operations which were delivered in the capital, but he could not speak on their behalf as they were a separate entity. He advised the Committee that BTP would be involved within the partnership approach as the police moved forward.

In relation to how ticketless fans were managed, the Committee were advised that there was clear signage pointing ticketed and ticketless fans to the correct areas. The system needed to work in the best way possible for all people coming through Wembley. Moving forward, the FA wanted to limit the number of ticketless fans coming to Wembley Stadium, and in mega event capacity deploy fanzones across greater London, which had not been an available option during the Final due to Covid-19. One of Tom Legg's responsibilities was to work with transport operators to ensure there was enough capacity to get people safely in and out of Wembley Stadium, and as the requirements of the operation changed and the FA got closer to the Euros the capacity conversations with TfL became a significant piece of work. The FA had a very detailed demand forecast model where they assigned postcode data from ticket sales to enable them to understand where people were travelling from and what the capacity of those networks were. The FA then worked with operators to increase capacity or maintain existing timetable commitments. In relation to how the police managed ticketless fans, Jim Brockway advised that this was not an issue bespoke to the police but rather an issue for the wider partnership. The police had looked at how they would potentially deal with that issue, as they could only operate within the laws available. Ultimately, there was no ability to move anybody without a ticket from any venue other than through powers of persuasion by partners. The police were willing to take a partnership approach to the issue and do what they could to deal with the problem, but had no law to deal with ticketless fans.

The Committee queried what work had already been done and what was in the pipeline to address the attitudes and behaviour of fans. In particular the Committee highlighted the issues which had manifested themselves during the Final which they described as hooliganism, racism and domestic abuse, and wanted to know what the FA were doing, or planning to do, to tackle these issues. Chris Bryant felt that the FA had been leading on those issues for many years, and the review highlighted that more needed to be done. He was happy to follow up with colleagues who did that behaviour change work, but highlighted some of the work the FA did in those spaces. For example, they worked closely with 'Kick It Out' and other organisations to remove and eradicate discrimination and racism in football. The FA appreciated and understood that some of the incidents raised by the Committee were linked to football fans and they had a responsibility to do what they could, as did everybody, to resolve those issues.

The Committee asked about the impact the events of the Final had on residents and how impact on residents would be reduced in future, to ensure a positive experience for all. The FA wanted local residents not to be negatively impacted by the delivery of

events, and believed there had been great strides across the past 4-5 years to better engage with residents to understand their issues and improve their experience. For example, there were resident Committees the FA engaged with, and they engaged with the Council on issues affecting residents also. They were always open to suggestions for the future in relation to engagement with residents and improving resident experience. Councillor Butt agreed that there had been a lot of resident engagement and residents were active in making sure their views were heard. He highlighted that the employment opportunities that had arisen since the Stadium and LDO had been in place were tenfold.

In response to whether there was any adherence to monitoring the levels of Covid-19 infection following the event, Dr Melanie Smith advised that the events research programme had looked at transmission associated with the events which showed that, for the Final, it was probable that a couple of thousand people may have attended while being infectious, and over 3,000 people may have acquired infection following the event. It was not possible to confirm that those infections were acquired in the stadium, as it could have been transmitted travelling to or outside the stadium. At the time of the Euros and before the Final there had been a rise in infection in the country as a whole, which has since been attributed to the Euros, but she highlighted that this was not attributable to Wembley. A very thorough research study by Imperial College London had concluded that it was likely that the increase in COVID rates in the country associated with the Euros was likely to be due to people mixing socially in front rooms and gardens across the Country rather than with attendance at Wembley. The infection levels in Brent as a community did not increase during this period of the event research programme.

In relation to stewarding, the FA agreed with the review which recognised that stewarding quality was potentially not where it needed to be, and the industry of stewarding had taken a hit on the back of the pandemic as the workforce had moved on. The FA had taken many steps to ensure the stewarding for the Euros was in the best possible position in multiple ways, such as bringing in more stewards for the research programme and building up numbers so they were in a better place of readiness than they would have been otherwise. For the Final alone the FA had brought in more stewards than had ever worked for Wembley Stadium for any event previously. They had paid for the extra resource with no financial constraints, and in the delivery of the Final there was nothing that was not delivered due to financial constraints.

The Committee queried whether partners felt the Council should have been more robust with licensing and escalated the matter higher. Chris Whyte advised that all partners who had been involved in the SAG meetings between the Denmark game, Germany game and the Final had discussed the licensing issues. The opportunity to review the licensing arrangements was not there as the process to change licensing arrangements would not allow it to happen in time for the Final, and therefore the Council could not issue a blanket ban on the sale of alcohol in off-licenses in the local area. The process to do so required a premises by premises review, with evidence to support that ban in advance of the Final. The mitigating factor was for the police on the day to close any premises creating a problem at any given time, a process that was applied on occasion during the Final. Since the Final, there was now work being

done on licensing arrangements in the area to limit the sale and consumption of alcohol on event days.

The Committee queried whether there was a document setting out the strategic responsibility of the key partners. They were advised that the SGSA was the leading partner on developing the responsibilities for how Zone X worked and who would be responsible for the deployment of all the different types of arrangements outlined during the meeting. Brent wanted to push forward and create some of those new Zone initiatives for the benefit of the local community, but were waiting for some guidance from the SGSA for a national approach to delivery. Since the Final the FA had delivered a number of successful events and the Carabao cup final had demonstrated the operating model outside of Covid-19 restraints. The application of new arrangements would be scrutinised and supervised by the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) and the Council would have its own assurance about the value of these new interventions.

Carolyn Downs advised that the three local partners – the FA, the Council and Quintain – had committed to putting additional resource into arrangements known as ‘best in class’.

The Chair thanked those present for their contributions and drew the discussion to a close, asking for recommendations from the Committee.

The following recommendations for areas of improvement were made:

- i) For Brent Council, the FA / Wembley, the Metropolitan Police and key partners to commit to enforcing any restrictions on alcohol consumption related to events at Wembley Stadium, for supporters travelling to the stadium and those in the Wembley Stadium area.
- ii) For Brent Council to review the event day parking zone and enforcement measures in place for events at Wembley Stadium.
- iii) For the FA to commission and share a report reviewing their campaigns to date to remove hooliganism, racism and domestic abuse from football (including that related to Euro Sunday and England matches). This should include a list of all campaigns with an evaluation and monitoring information.
- iv) For the FA / Wembley to ensure better engagement and communication with local health partners, including London Ambulance Service and Brent Council’s Public Health Team to ensure that health and wellbeing is a key focus at events.
- v) For Brent Council, the FA / Wembley and key partners to ensure better engagement and communication with elected members in regard to high-profile events at Wembley Stadium.
- vi) For the FA / Wembley and key partners to produce and share a memorandum of the strategic responsibilities of those agencies involved in logistical and operational planning for events at Wembley Stadium,

including an overview of the governance, roles, and responsibilities of the Safety Advisory Group (SAG).

- vii) For the FA / Wembley to consider introducing a levy on the price of tickets for events at Wembley Stadium, with the additional funds raised by this levy to be used to support efforts to minimise and mitigate disruption to the local area.

During the discussion, a number of information requests were also made, recorded as follows:

- i) For the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee to receive an update report on the progress made by Brent Council, the FA and key partners in implementing the recommendations made in the Casey Review in the next municipal year.
- ii) To receive information on the FA's plans to remove hooliganism, racism and domestic abuse from football, including information on campaigns, resourcing and collaboration with partner organisations.

The meeting ended at 20:05 pm

COUNCILLOR KETAN SHETH