

BUSINESS PLAN 2024-27

Presented by the Chief Executive

SUMMARY

Following a 3 year period of annual business plans, a 3-year plan has been developed to provide a medium term direction for the Authority.

The business plan is comprised of the following sections:

- Vision/mission/values/strategic objectives;
- Business objectives and targets;
- Financial Plan; and
- Communications Plan.

The plan is an internal document for staff and Members and the final version will be sent to everyone in the organisation. In addition, a synopsis of the business plan will be produced for partners and stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATION

Members Approve: (1) the Authority's 2024-27 Business Plan attached as Appendix A to this report.

BACKGROUND

- 1 The most recent 3 year business plan concluded in March 2020. As a result of the Covid pandemic and the more recent energy crisis, it was felt that one year plans in the short term was a necessarily prudent approach. The Authority is now in position to plan its business on a more medium term basis and so a 3 year plan is being proposed.
- 2 The development of the 3 year plan provided the opportunity to refresh the Authority's vision, mission, values and strategic objectives (from the 2010-20 Business Strategy) reflecting the changing business context and the organisation's new priorities.
- 3 Two areas of major focus will be: a) the Environmental Policy and the delivery of projects and initiatives, which will drive the organisation towards a carbon net zero position; and b) the Biodiversity Action Plan (2019-29) where the Authority will build on the good work of recent years, enhancing and protecting the Lee

Valley's precious ecology.

- 4 Ongoing investment across the Authority's 4,500 acre estate will also be a key theme for open spaces and venues. In addition the activation of the Park through its community outreach programmes, events and schools activities will continue to be a vital part of what the Authority delivers.
- 5 The financial plan looks towards building on the Authority's current solid budget position, with the overriding objectives being to improve resilience, through growing the reserves fund and to improve the revenue budget position via income growth and/or cost efficiencies. The financial plan also highlights challenges around the capital programme. With capital funds significantly depleted, the Authority will need to consider a range of measures to fund its capital programme.
- 6 The organisational development section of the business plan focuses on the health and wellbeing of the workforce, which includes ensuring we have the capacity to deliver the business plan. In addition, effective succession planning will be determined for critical business areas.
- 7 The business plan has been developed over the past 6 months with officer input from across the organisation. A draft of the plan was presented to Members at the AGM in July and Member comments were taken on board. The final draft of the business plan was sent to Members in mid September. Comments and suggestions were invited ahead of the October Authority meeting.

MONITORING PERFORMANCE OF THE PLAN

- 8 The Chief Executive will update Members on performance against targets on a six monthly basis, in January and July. In addition, the delivery of the business plan will be incorporated into the performance Scorecard and reported to the Scrutiny Committee.

COMMUNICATING THE 3 YEAR BUSINESS PLAN

- 9 The business plan is an internal document providing staff and Members with a clear and detailed direction for the organisation over the next 3 years. Staff briefings on the plan have already taken place and these will continue over the coming months.
- 10 It is important that we communicate our 3-year plan to partners and key stakeholders. To this end, we will produce a 2-4 page synopsis document, which will be distributed widely towards the end of 2023.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11 There are no environmental implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 12 There are no financial implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 13 There are no human resource implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 14 There are no legal implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 15 There are no risk management implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 16 There are no equality implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

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APPENDIX ATTACHED

Appendix A Business Plan 2024-27

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Our Business plan 2023-27

(Version 8 Sept 2023)

October 2023

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1 Introduction

This business plan comes at a time of sustained uncertainty about the long-term national and global economic situation, and increased focus on the climate crisis.

During the life of this plan there will be a General Election and ongoing local elections across London, Essex and Hertfordshire. The pressure on local authority budgets is likely to continue. London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) will have reduced functions and a changed Board and governance structure which has implications for our Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park venues – both of which mark 10 years since they opened to the public next year.

In the past we worked to a five year business plan cycle but, in common with many organisations, we moved to one year plans during the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite continued uncertainty in many areas, we feel the time is right to set out our broad plans up until March 2027.

Of course, we have been grappling with the huge impact of inflation, particularly energy price rises. We are still rebuilding our finances following the pandemic and earlier this year the Authority raised the levy, which partly funds our work, by 9% – part of a series of measures to keep us financially robust.

We are acutely conscious of the need to be as cost effective and efficient as possible, while delivering for communities across the region. We remain popular with these communities – attracting 8.3m visits last year, 900,000 up on our pre-pandemic numbers.

We have established a new operating model for our main sports venues through a 10 year relationship with our operator Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL). This relationship is bedding in as the venues are returning to their pre-pandemic popularity.

This year, for the first time since 2019, we are running major international championships in all three of our London 2012 legacy venues giving audiences across the region the chance to be inspired by top class competition.

Below we set out a series of projects and initiatives which will continue the development of this exceptional park – a journey we have been on since 1967. Our founders' vision still drives us – protecting and opening up green space for people to enjoy, and providing chances for healthy living through an unrivalled series of sports venues and leisure opportunities.

Four themes will drive all our activity over the life of this business plan:

- **Our Environment Policy.** This was adopted in April and is driving a new detailed plan to improve our environmental performance, which will be embedded into everything we do. As well as aiming to reduce our carbon footprint, we are developing a strategy and action plan to improve our sustainability, reduce our water and energy usage and deliver improvements to the park's landscape and biodiversity
- **Continuous Investment in the park's infrastructure across sport, leisure and open space.** There are three key components of this, all driven by the absolute necessity to keep the park's offer relevant and of the highest quality.
 - A continuous programme of improvements to our sports venues and open spaces to ensure they carry on appealing to their many audiences and attract new visitors, and to maintain their infrastructure to the highest possible standard
 - To make sure that our campsites and marinas carry on providing popular and reasonably priced services for visitors to the region, and produce a financial surplus. We again see the need to have investment in these to maintain, improve and enhance them, making them more appealing to visitors. Alongside this we will review their operational structures and marketing programmes
 - To seek out and facilitate external partnerships which bring new attractions, experiences and visitor accommodation to the park. Our founding legislation gives us a wide scope – and these partnerships would always be in keeping with our vision and mission, and be focused on improving the visitor offer
- **Maximising the impact of the land we own.** The Authority owns 4,300 acres of the 10,000 acre Regional Park and is looking to get more value from our estate, and use income to concentrate our efforts on visitor centred, biodiversity enhancing projects. In some cases, this will mean selling or leasing land that is no longer needed for the park and investing the money in a range of improvement schemes; in others it would mean buying new areas which will improve access and enhance the park's overall offer

- **Investigating funding streams through emerging Biodiversity Net Gain opportunities.** Assessing all sites in the park to decide which are appropriate to put forward for biodiversity and habitat improvements creating biodiversity net gains

2 Our vision, mission and values

We have refined the elements that frame what we do. Our new refocused vision, mission and values are:

Vision

- **Lee Valley Regional Park: a world class leisure destination for nature, sport and discovery**

Mission

- **Lee Valley Regional Park Authority will continue to lead the development of Lee Valley Regional Park, championing the protection and enhancement of the environment and working with a range of partners to maximise investment, improving the health and wellbeing for communities across the region**

Values

- **Environmentally Focused:** reducing our carbon footprint and delivering nature-based solutions by applying the principles of sustainability and nature conservation in everything we do
- **Community Centred:** working with communities across the region and actively promoting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
- **Commercially Driven:** maximising investment and delivering additional income streams to underpin a resilient budget position
- **Innovative:** at the leading edge of new thinking and developments in sport, leisure and conservation
- **Empowering colleagues:** through continuous professional and personal development
- **Collaborative:** with partners and stakeholders to deliver the greatest possible outcomes

Strategic Objectives

- **For ecology:** working with partners and communities to conserve, restore and enhance the natural environment and biodiversity of the Regional Park
- **For environmental impact:** applying best practice in environmental innovation across land, water and air in the park, and all our business areas, addressing the climate crisis
- **For visitors:** investing in and promoting the Regional Park as an accessible, must visit destination for regional, national and international visitors
- **For communities:** providing activity and engagement programmes, funding and events in open spaces and venues to help get communities across the region more active and healthier – delivering social, health and well-being benefits

- **For financial resilience:** maintaining a sustainable financial position through investment, exploring new income opportunities and delivering efficient services and activities
- **For our workforce:** empowering, inspire and training our colleagues and volunteers to become a highly skilled, innovative and flexible workforce

3 Key projects and initiatives

3.1 ENVIRONMENT POLICY

Our new Environment Policy will guide all our work going forwards. The policy has just been adopted and is our response to the climate emergency. This is a complex and evolving field and is linked to core areas of existing work such as our Biodiversity Action Plan and spend-to-save programmes at venues.

We have already installed £600,000 worth of LED lights at Lee Valley VeloPark, have carried out similar schemes at other venues with more planned, have replaced diesel vans which our Rangers use with new electric vehicles and will install charging points for these in key locations. The new Lee Valley Ice Centre is the first in the UK to be fully electric, includes a host of energy saving and energy efficiency innovations and is the most sustainable in the country.

The Environment Policy recognises the uniqueness of the Authority, our role in flood mitigation, habitat improvement and the management of open spaces, as well as our ability to reduce water and energy usage, and travel and examine commercial green energy options. The policy is to be backed up by a strategy and action plan and a full communications plan.

It is based on the three principles of the circular economy which are to:

- design out waste and pollution
- keep products and materials in use
- regenerate natural systems

Targets

- Develop costs and timescales for our Environmental Action Plan and prioritise delivery of improvements
- Reduce our carbon footprint by 10 tonnes each year
- By July 2024, to investigate the feasibility, cost implications and technologies for retrofitting Lee Valley White Water Centre to become operationally carbon neutral
- By 2025 to effect a cultural change in our staff team to work cross functionally with environmental considerations as a golden thread through all day to day activity and new projects

3.2 BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

The ten year Lee Valley Regional Park Biodiversity Action Plan (2019 – 2029) provides a framework for delivery of priority habitats and species across the Regional Park. Partnership

working with landowners, stakeholders and communities is key to the successful delivery of these targets. The Authority plays an important role in drawing together these partners, to both lead on and contribute to valley-wide strategies and multi-agency projects but also on the delivery of targeted conservation work within our landholdings which help deliver these strategic aims.

Targets

- Investigate funding opportunities for on-going management and enhancement of our open spaces. This will include:
 - Entering into Environmental Stewardship schemes, with at least two new schemes (covering 170 ha) entered into over the next two years
 - Scoping the potential opportunities within our landholdings to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain and offsetting to projects within or nearby to the park.
- Continue to engage with partners to see delivery of aims outlined in key ecological reports such as the Lee Valley Wetlands Assessment (2021) and the Lee Valley Water Vole Report (2022)
- Raise awareness of the biodiversity value of the Regional Park and engage regional communities with its wildlife and habitats through a series of public events and education programmes including guided walks, Bittern Roost Watches and representation at external events

3.3 OPEN SPACES AND LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

We have created a programme to continue investment in the park's open spaces over the next five years much of which we are funding through planning agreements. Some of these, including Section 106 agreements (legally binding agreements or planning obligations between a developer and us as a landowner as part of the granting of planning permission) relate to new development taking place next to, or inside, the park. As mentioned above, there will also be opportunities for the Authority to discuss with local planning authorities the prospect of the park to be used for Biodiversity Net Gain off setting. We have produced [a comprehensive five year plan](#) for open spaces investment and have allocated funding of £250,000 to deliver these. Four key open space projects are:

3.3.1 St Paul's Field

We are aiming to open up this area near Nazeing, Essex, which has been closed to the public for many years. The project involves a new 2 mile footpath making it easier and more appealing for visitors to reach new areas of open space. Ecological enhancements such as invertebrate refuges, new native planting and nest boxes will be installed as part of the project.

Targets

- Deliver completed works by March 2024

3.3.2 River Lee Country Park improvements

We have up to £750,000 worth of pathways, visitor facility and ecological improvements planned in the north of the park. These will improve the visitor experience and mitigate impacts of anticipated increased visits associated with adjacent residential developments on

our internationally important wetland habitats, part of the Lee Valley Special Protection Area and Ramsar site.

The improvements are mainly funded by Section 106 monies and will deliver ecological enhancements which help the Authority to achieve targets outlined in the Biodiversity Action Plan. The planned works include:

- a new bird hide
- installing footpaths, benches and signage
- reedbed improvements
- wet grassland enhancement
- lake edge management
- enhancing visitor infrastructure
- improving the Dog Agility Course

Activities will be organised to engage with new and existing visitors to encourage positive behaviour within, and understanding of, the park. These will complement existing work through the Robbie Lea Water Safety Partnership, and our Learning and Engagement Team who carry out a programme of visits to groups and schools. A new homeowner leaflet has already been produced and will continue to be circulated to new residents within the adjacent developments to reinforce these messages.

Targets

- Work with local boroughs to draw down the first phase of Section 106 funding by October 2023
- Develop work plan and procure contractors by March 2024

3.3.3 WaterWorks Nature Reserve and Middlesex Filter Beds

We have been working on a project to restore the biodiversity value of the degraded reedbed habit on the site by installing a sluice and pipe to provide a water supply to the filter beds. Rewetting this site will restore valuable wetland habitat that has been lost. It will create 1.5 acres of new reedbed and bring lost species of birds and insects back to the area.

Targets

- Deliver an agreed interim solution by March 2024
- Continue to develop the option of a green electricity feed to power the pumps and remove the generator by March 2025

3.3.4 North Wall Road, Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park

We have developed a project plan for this redundant road near Lee Valley VeloPark, which we want to transform to green space with biodiversity habitat improvements, new green infrastructure, benches and parkland features. The project has already received a feasibility study grant from the Greater London Authority (GLA).

Targets

- Use the award of the GLA's Green and Resilient Spaces Fund to develop the project with LLDC including delivery, cost projections and designs by June 2024
- Make application to the GLA for a capital delivery grant by September 2024
- Subject to the capital funding position, deliver the scheme by 2026

3.4 MAJOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

3.4.1 Spitalbrook, Broxbourne Leisure Pool and surrounding landholdings

We will be building on positive exploratory conversations with Broxbourne Borough Council, capitalising on the desire that the council and ourselves have to develop the closed off former gravel workings at Spitalbrook, the Broxbourne Riverside site where our now-demolished Broxbourne Leisure Pool once stood and the immediate surrounding areas of landholdings.

We see a possibility of creating a new country park within the 200 acre site with significant habitat enhancements including the restoration of the River Lynch to a naturally functioning chalk stream. The new park would benefit from the nearby Broxbourne railway station and easy connections for visitors from London.

Site Constraints

Parts of the site had been worked for gravel extraction and the area has not been open to the public for decades. We have carried out a soft market testing exercise which revealed that the site is not viewed as 'oven ready' for development and poses several challenges.

Almost every party expressed concern around the deliverability of the site, notably due to the contamination and potential remediation concerns, the flood risk, and other ecology and planning issues. However, the site would be attractive to some interested parties due to the suitability of the landscape to a low built development and the potential to integrate the natural environment of the site into a leisure development.

The wider site next to the former Broxbourne Leisure Pool site is now also being included in the review of the whole area, as there is benefit in a detailed vision and masterplan for the site which will be expected to be the foundation for any planning application.

Over the next three years, we will work to resolve these issues, deliver the country park with an active leisure component, enabling development and investigate the possibility of it being a site for new Authority offices.

Targets

By 2029 we will:

- Create a masterplan for Spitalbrook and the wider area
- Carry out a site evaluation
- Carry out detailed market testing
- Develop a business model
- Secure third party investment
- Complete the planning process securing all permissions required

3.4.2 Lee Valley White Water Centre

This venue remains one of the standout centres of the park, home to the continually successful Great Britain canoe slalom squad, acknowledged as the best venue in the world by international athletes and canoeing's international federation, and popular with visitors.

This year we welcomed athletes from around the globe for the 2023 ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships. It used the new permanent start ramp for Kayak Cross, a newer thrilling variety of extreme slalom where competitors race each other down the rapids, which will make its Olympic debut at the Paris 2024 Games.

The site - in particular the section known as Area 4 in the south eastern corner and not included in the lease to GLL - has a lot of potential and we have long thought it would be an ideal place for visitor accommodation, something which Broxbourne Borough Council supports. The site also benefits from an allocation in the Local Plan for leisure-led development, and proposals to expand the site as a leisure facility are supported in principle by the Council. A Soft Market Testing exercise was carried out on the 6.25-acre site in Autumn 2022 to gauge interest in the opportunity from the developer/operator market. We received interest from leisure and hotel operators with parties saying that the location was of great interest, due to its excellent transport links and proximity to the M25 and wider road network, and synergy with the existing Lee Valley facilities.

Formal marketing of the site started in June with expressions of interest and bids received over the summer and the whole process will conclude by the end of 2023 or early in 2024.

Targets

- Carry out and conclude marketing exercise
- Evaluate responses
- Facilitate the delivery of a significant sport/leisure investment on the Lee Valley White Water Centre site

3.4.3 Rammey Marsh West

This site adjacent to the M25 is hard to access and receives few visitors. The Authority believe that any income received from a lease or sale could fund improvements across the park. Exploring the income potential for the 14 acre site is a key objective for the Authority. The land has been included in Enfield Council's draft Local Plan with the intention of its Green Belt status being removed. If this happens, this would open up the possibility of this land being developed. The next publication of the Local Plan is now expected in Winter 2023 and it is anticipated that the site will be included.

Targets

- Continue to engage in the London Borough of Enfield Local Plan process
- Continue to engage in collaborative discussions with Enfield and potentially Transport for London who own adjacent land
- Carry out Stage One desktop studies relating to highways design, ground conditions, utilities and services, topographical surveys and development capacity. These studies will additionally provide more certainty during the examination stage of the Local Plan process
- Joint disposal at the point of London Borough of Enfield's Local Plan adoption in 2025/26

3.4.4 Lee Valley Leisure Complex

This site is currently home to Lee Valley Athletics Centre, Lee Valley Golf Course, Lee Valley Camping and Caravan Park, Edmonton, the Odeon Luxe Lee Valley and the Ark Royal wedding and events venue.

We see the 125 acre site having major leisure potential and our aim is to deliver significant leisure development here.

We have been working with inland surfing specialists The Wave to create a new destination at the Complex, looking at leasing them land currently used for golf and camping. We had an “Exclusivity Agreement” in place with The Wave, a common practice which gives a company the time to develop their plans and apply for planning permission. This agreement expired in April and, while both parties are keen on the concept, we will explore other investment options if The Wave does not progress.

Targets

- **Secure The Wave or other third party investment on the site by 2025**
- **Upgrading of Lee Valley Athletics Centre**
- **Carry out improvement works to the common areas**

3.4.5 Lee Valley Ice Centre

The stunning new Lee Valley Ice Centre is already open and delivering for communities across the region.

This cutting edge centre opened on 17 June less than two years after the old venue closed.

This opening was the culmination of a £30 million investment by the Authority, with support from the London Borough of Waltham Forest, to create a world leading ice venue on the site of the old Lee Valley Ice Centre on Lea Bridge Road in Leyton.

The centre, which has been completed within budget, is one of only three venues in the UK to have two Olympic sized rinks and the only one in the South of England and has drawn on knowledge from our involvement in the Olympics to shape design, access, community involvement, project management and promotion.

Lee Valley Ice Centre has a gym, dance studio, community spaces and café, and includes £1.5 million-worth of landscaping, native planting and environmental improvements to the surrounding area including ponds, wildflower meadows and wetland swales.

We see this venue becoming a community hub and operating in a similar way to Lee Valley White Water Centre – a setting off point for exploring the nearby open spaces of the park.

A range of programmes including a Targeted Crime Prevention Programme, Mental Health and Wellness Programme, Biodiversity and Wellbeing Awareness Learning Programme and an Employment and Apprenticeship Scheme, will run with the support of £1 million funding from the London Borough of Waltham Forest.

In addition, we will deliver a £250,000 Community Engagement Programme over the next 10 years. The fund will support access to the venue for community groups and schools across Waltham Forest and Hackney and is designed to give 68,000 people the opportunity to participate in and try out different activities at the new venue free of charge.

Targets

- By 2027 to attract 550,000 visitors a year with 2,000 Fitness memberships a year, 500 Learn to Skate pupils at any time, 73,000 public skate visitors a year and 80 hours of community access a week
- To engage with 232 different community groups and schools each year by March 2025 targeting communities who are new to the venue or ice sports
- To deliver Biodiversity and Wellbeing learning programmes to 30 different schools and groups a year by March 2025

3.4.6 WaterWorks Centre site

This site, near the new Lee Valley Ice Centre and opposite our ever-popular Lee Valley Riding Centre has great potential for youth hostel style visitor accommodation. This would help underpin the viability of both these venues and open them up to wider audiences as well as provide a new focus for the area.

Targets

By 2026 we will:

- Work with the planning authority, the London Borough of Waltham Forest, to establish the type of development which would fit with the ongoing regeneration of the Lea Bridge Road area
- Engage the market
- Secure an investment

3.4.7 Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park estate

The Authority owns significant areas of land on Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park - roughly a third of the park belongs to us.

For the last few years, we have focused our efforts on Eton Manor, the northern gateway to Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and home to Lee Valley Hockey and Tennis Centre, which we have always felt could deliver much more. We have investigated the possibility of hotel accommodation here which, as with the WaterWorks area above, would underpin the viability of Lee Valley Hockey and Tennis Centre – particularly around its large events programme. We are continuing to do this but are combining this with a wider piece of work looking at the entire 100 acre landholding we have and taking into account that both our Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park venues will have been open for 10 years in 2024.

This includes:

- reviewing how to keep Lee Valley VeloPark relevant and leading edge
- examining how best Lee Valley Hockey and Tennis Centre can serve communities even better, including looking at the sports mix at this venue
- investigating ways to maximise the benefits of the large amounts of open space around these two venues, opportunities it presents and how it integrates with the rest of Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park
- transforming the unused North Wall Road detailed above at 3.3.4

Targets

- **Develop and implement a long term venue investment plan to ensure the venues remain best in class and relevant, and deliver on their full potential while being commercially viable.**
- **Masterplan the north of Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park**
- **Establish an agreed position with relevant local authorities**

3.4.8 East India Dock Basin

The project, on the banks of the Thames opposite the O2, is being carried out in partnership with the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. It includes the restoration of the lock gates at this historic site, the removal of silt, restoring and enhancing the biodiverse habitats and developing a visitor centre and education and engagement activities. This is a long held ambition for the Authority and would enormously improve the southern entrance to Lee Valley Regional Park.

Targets

- **Subject to funding, finalise the site masterplan by November 2024**
- **Secure funding to deliver the project by October 2025**
- **Start the project by March 2026**

3.5 VISITOR ACCOMMODATION AND MARINAS

We own four campsites and two marinas across the 10,000 acre park which give thousands of people the chance to spend time in our open spaces, explore further afield, have a short break or enjoy time in a holiday home.

We have invested £300,000 over the past year in new playgrounds, improved Wi-Fi and an expanded product range at our campsites. This includes six new glamping pods and the conversion of two former staff houses into Airbnb properties.

The Authority is now examining a range of projects aimed at increasing income and enhancing the customer experience over the next three years. These include:

- **new hotel pods at Lee Valley Camping and Caravan Park, Edmonton**
- **creating new holiday home pitches, cocoons and hotel pods and expanding the woodland walk at Lee Valley Campsite, Sewardstone**
- **installing a new playground, shower facilities and accommodation villages at Lee Valley Caravan Park, Dobbs Weir**

At Lee Valley Marina, Stanstead Abbots, we are looking at:

- **an onsite launderette for both moorers and passing boaters**
- **improvements to security, staff and customer facilities and the workshops to increase capacity and income**
- **increasing mooring capacity and dredging the backwater channel to remove silt so that it can be used for moorings**
- **buying a new crane which would increase reliability and the range of work we can do**
- **increasing sales from the chandlery by becoming a chandlery superstore**

At Lee Valley Marina, Springfield we are examining:

- increasing mooring capacity
- extending the chandlery
- offering new portable welding facilities to service larger boats and expanding the capacity of this important part of our operations
- creating a dry dock
- installing canoe racks
- improving flood defences
- installing LED lighting

Targets

- Develop a planned and costed improvement programme across the two marinas and four campsites
- Prioritise projects against income potential and customer improvements
- Deliver the programme

3.6 VOLUNTEERS

The park is fortunate to have 1,300 dedicated volunteers involved in tasks at venues and open spaces. We have the Investing in Volunteers accreditation – the national standard for organisations which maintain quality volunteer management programmes. We want to expand this programme over the next three years, increasing opportunities and building our volunteers' skills.

It is important that our volunteers reflect the communities which the park serves. By 2024 we will implement an Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity (EDI) forum with staff and volunteer representatives looking into ways we can encourage positive engagement within harder to reach communities and promote EDI across the Authority. We will also increase the diversity of our volunteers by using new and established links with local authorities, external partnerships, volunteer centres, action groups and community groups.

We want to support volunteers with routes into employment within the Authority and beyond. We regularly attend careers fairs at educational establishments including Capel Manor College, Herts Regional College and Queen Mary University of London and going forwards will increase the number we go to.

Targets

By 2026, we will

- Grow by 15% the number of volunteers who consider themselves to be from minority ethnic backgrounds
- Increase volunteer hours by 10% to 20,500 a year
- Double the number of employment events we attend to 10 a year
- Actively encourage opportunities for Authority staff to volunteer with the aim of all staff giving at least one day of time by 2026

3.7 COMMUNITY PROGRAMMES AND OUTREACH

We work with community groups from across London, Essex and Hertfordshire. We focus our work on targeted community engagement programmes with marginalised communities giving them greater opportunities to participate in physical activity and outdoor learning engagement programmes. We define marginalised communities as any group or individual that faces barriers to participation. Our key focuses are people with a disability, women and girls, older people, people with ill health or low activity rates, young people, deprived communities and minority ethnic groups.

We will continue to support access and engagement for some of the most marginalised communities across the region through our Community Access Fund, a scheme where the Authority funds travel, coaching and entry fees to our sports venues and other activities.

Our drive to channel resources into the areas of most need will also continue, targeting the most deprived communities, areas of health inequality and parts of the region that require intervention programmes and access to green space. This includes crime prevention and community cohesion programmes being run in partnership with the London Borough of Waltham Forest at the new Lee Valley Ice Centre.

Targets

In each year of this business plan, we will

- Effectively target marginalised communities with 90% of our sport and physical activity outreach reaching these groups
- Engage with 80 different community groups and schools through the Community Access Fund programme, ensuring a spread of 63% non-riparian and 37% riparian
- Support 10 different projects through our community grants scheme, through a series of longer-term engagement programmes, targeting groups who are less likely to engage in physical activity, or groups who tend to face additional barriers to participation
- Deliver 30 new community and club engagement projects through our partnership with GLL at our major sporting venues
- Introduce a dedicated programme of activity in the park to directly tackle and address local and regional health inequalities. This will include the development of referral pathways from social prescribers and other relevant services into green exercise
- Continue to promote the park's open spaces as a resource to aid mental wellbeing and physical activity to groups
- Support Biodiversity Action Plan aims to raise awareness of the park's biodiversity and open spaces, and to tackle inequalities and barriers to its use as a resource by certain communities and groups
- Continue to educate communities close to the park about the dangers of swimming in open water, how to use the park safely and its biodiversity value by delivering 80 learning and engagement programmes to schools and groups with 45% non-riparian and 55% riparian usage

3.8 EVENTS

For the first time since 2019, we are, in 2023, hosting world class sports events at all three of our London 2012 legacy venues. This continues an extraordinary run of highly popular World

Cups, World Championships and other events. These bring some of the greatest talents in track cycling, hockey and canoe slalom to the region, helping inspire attendees to try these sports themselves. Alongside this, 28,000 people went to two major music festivals at our Showground site in Waltham Abbey.

We hope to continue with this programme. Our next confirmed event is the FIH Hockey Pro League 2024, and there are proposals to extend the UCI Track Champions League to 2024 and for Lee Valley Showground summer music festivals through to 2027.

Targets

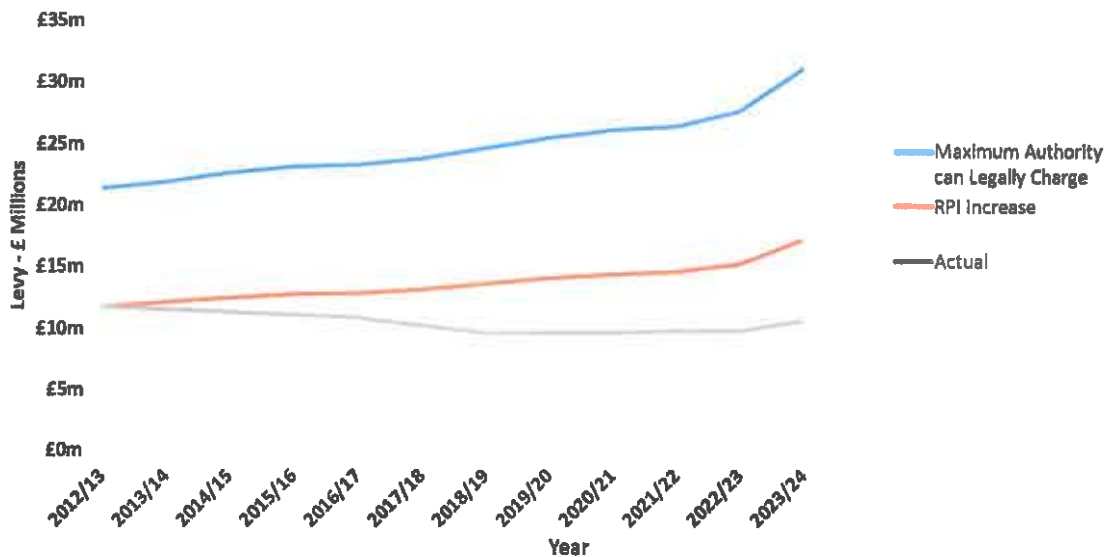
- Support National Governing Bodies and other event organisations to bring high level major events to the park.
- Re-evaluate and produce an events strategy to encompass wider Authority objectives
- Expand the 'offer' of events in the park, looking at new ways to attract new and exciting events to the park
- Continue to explore open space event hires as a source of generating income and new audiences for the park
- Work with National Governing Bodies and International Federations to develop new approaches to major events, create new concepts and reach new audiences. For example, we are exploring how we can work with British Canoeing to host some new Kayak Cross events to bring this exciting new variant of extreme slalom to a wider audience
- Use events to raise the profile of the park, increase the diversity of our audiences and as a vehicle for longer-term participation

4 Financial plan

4.1 The levy and our 2022/23 financial performance

Our founding Act of Parliament – the Lee Valley Regional Park Act 1966 – includes a levy on all contributing councils in London, Essex and Hertfordshire as part of the prescribed funding mechanism. The respective councils then charge this to households, originally through rates and now through council tax. It is currently 90p per person per year. We are, of course, acutely aware of the pressures which our contributing councils are under and have become less reliant on the levy itself and increasingly adept at generating our own income.

Levy Trend 2012/13 to 2023/24



If the levy set back in 2012/13 had been increased in line with Retail Price Index (RPI) inflation, it would now be £17.17m rather than the £10.65m it is now.

The Lee Valley Regional Park Act also sets out the maximum levy that we could charge. This year this is £31.2m – making the current levy just over a third of what we could legally charge. Over the past 13 years, our community focused and commercially driven business philosophy has allowed the Authority to reduce its overall dependence on the levy for its funding.

We cut the levy for eight years and froze it for three, while at the same time taking on the responsibility for three London 2012 legacy venues and their liabilities without central Government or third party funding. We needed to increase the levy in 2021/22 to help us deal with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, but then froze it again for 2022/23.

During 2022 unprecedented energy price increases and wider inflationary pressures put a strain on all public authorities. We were able to find savings and efficiencies to manage the impacts during 2022/23. The impact on the 2023/24 budget was a £2.6m increase in costs. Significant savings and increases in income were found to offset the majority of these costs, and our Board agreed to a 9% increase in the levy that brought the budget down to a small deficit. The increase was still a real term decrease when compared to inflation at over 12%.

4.2 Our financial plan for 2024 – 2027

The last few years have challenged and tested the resilience of our financial position. Like all public authorities we have been hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, energy price rises, high inflation and interest rate rises. Energy prices and inflation will continue to prove challenging for us, impacting our own expenditure, and the ability of our customers to continue spending their increasingly squeezed disposable income with us.

The challenges of the last few years have required the use of our reserves, and they are now below our target level. Our medium term financial plan (MTFP) aims to re-build these reserves to ensure resilience for future events. However, we have taken a cautious approach and built in a contingency for the next two years which will help to mitigate against adverse movements, but, if not used, will help to rebuild our reserves at a faster rate.

A key element of our financial plan is the outsourcing of the management of our six major sporting venues to GLL through the Leisure Services Contract. The ten year contract ensures that we will benefit from an improved financial position each year whilst ensuring the venues continue to be operated to a high standard.

The table below summarises our current revenue financial forecast for the next three years.

Medium Term Financial Forecast	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s	2025/26 £000s	2026/27 £000s
Authority Base Budget	8,461.8	8,461.8	8,461.8	8,461.8
Base Adjustment for Loan Repayments/Minimum Revenue Provision	189.0	182.8	116.3	50.4
Other Base Budget Adjustments	(203.0)	681.3	661.3	661.3
LSC Management Fee	2,365.9	584.1	542.1	262.5
Cumulative Inflationary Growth	0.0	415.8	803.7	1,256.8
Outturn/Contingency	(5.0)	200.0	0.0	0.0
Total Budget	11,413.7	10,525.8	10,585.2	10,692.8
Levy	(10,646.7)	(10,646.7)	(10,646.7)	(10,646.7)
Budget Deficit/(Surplus)	162.0	(120.9)	(61.5)	46.1
Closing General Fund Balance	(2,796.0)	(2,916.9)	(2,978.4)	(2,932.3)

Key:

(Red) = income

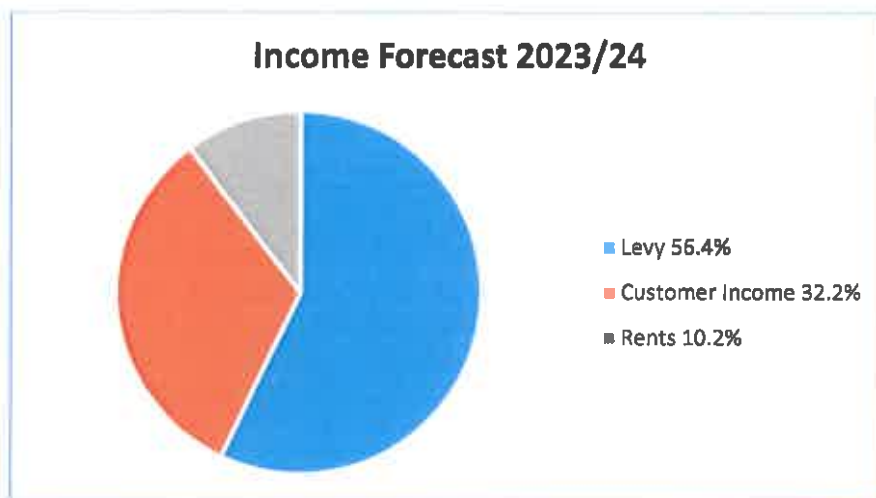
Black = expenditure

A “worst case” assumption on energy has been included in the above MTFP, assuming that prices do not drop from the anticipated levels for 2023/24, and that the Authority will continue to pick up the price risk associated with the Leisure Services Contract, beyond the current two year agreed position. Inflation is also based on the Bank of England forecast as at June 2023 for the next few years, before returning to 2% from 2026/27.

The MTFP does not yet factor in the financial impact on revenue of the accommodation and marina projects as mentioned in section 3.5. Once these have been fully reviewed, and projected cost and income established, these can then be built into the Authority base budget.

4.2.1 Income

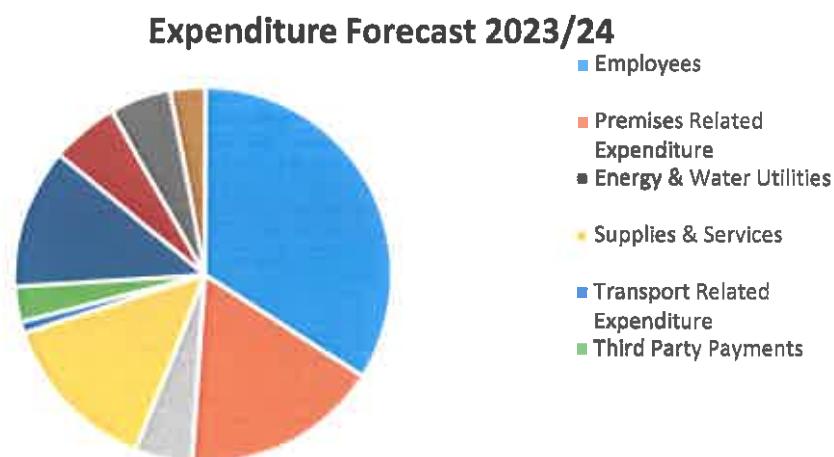
The make up of the Authority's Income has changed with the transfer of operations for the Large Sports Venues to GLL at the beginning of April 2022. Gone now is up to £12m of direct income that would have been received at these venues. What that now leaves us with is a lower expenditure base, as well as less direct income from which to draw our funding.



Income Forecast 2023/24	Amount £000s	Percentage %
Levy	10,646.7	56.4
Customer income	6,090.0	32.2
Rents	1,934.4	10.2
Investment income	213.0	1.1
Total	18,884.1	100

Customer income now represents just a third of our overall direct income, of which around a third can be seen as fixed; receipts from static caravans or marina mooring with the remainder more variable from campsite touring, retail sales, rechargeable works, or caravan sales for example.

4.2.2 Expenditure



Expenditure Forecast 2023/24	Amount £000s	Percentage %
Employees	6,681.7	35.1%
Premises Related Expenditure	3,347.9	17.6%
Energy & Water Utilities	954.7	5.0%
Supplies & Services	2,767.1	14.5%
Transport Related Expenditure	188.2	1.0%
Third Party Payments	599.3	3.2%
LSC Management Fee	2,365.9	12.4%
Capital Financing Costs	1,130.3	5.9%
Interest Payments	1,011.0	5.3%
Total	19,046.1	100.0%

It should be noted that the significant uplift in the LSC Management Fee relates to both the increase in energy costs, and the handover date of Lee Valley Ice Centre that occurred in May 2023, six months later than the original GLL bid position where they would have commenced operations in November 2022.

4.3 Capital Programme for 2023/24 and beyond

We have a plan for continued investment into the venues that will ensure an improved customer experience, increased income and savings from improved energy efficiency. The new Lee Valley Ice Centre opened in June 2023 after a £30m investment. This was funded through external borrowing, the cost of which is built into the base Authority budget from 2023/24.

In addition to the investments above, our capital programme includes a number of exciting projects across the Park's open spaces and other venues that will continue to enhance the Park for visitors and the natural environment.

The table below summarises the current approved capital programme for 2023/24 which is being funded directly by the Authority. Schemes such as East India Dock Basin, and River Lee Country Park will be funded from external sources and are not included in the project costings below.

Capital Resources	2023/24 £000s
Opening Resource Balance 1 April 2023	(11,197)
Usable Capital Receipts Reserve	(200)
External Borrowing	(2,300)
Asset Maintenance (Major Repairs) Reserve	(750)
Total Available Resources	(14,447)
Capital & Asset Management Programmes	
Lee Valley Ice Centre Redevelopment	2,300
Infrastructure and Open Space Projects	1,038

Investment Projects (Non sports venues)	450
Investment Projects (Sports venues)	3,247
Asset & Infrastructure Management	992
Total Capital Expenditure	8,027
Closing Resource Balance 31 March 2024	(6,420)

Key:

(Red) = income

Black = expenditure

To be able to deliver a capital programme in future years, we need to consider how the schemes are to be paid for, and we need to fully consider the requirements and implications of every project going forward, in the wider context of how it impacts the Authority's position going forward.

There are a number of options available to us to finance the capital programme

- Contributions from revenue, via an increase in the levy
- Grant funding (partial or in full)
- External borrowing, as we have done for the Lee Valley Ice Centre redevelopment
- Capital receipts, from disposal, such as Rammey Marsh West, or long term lease

As earlier sections have set out, we are looking to continuously invest in the park, whether that be the open space, leisure or sporting infrastructure. However, this can only be delivered if we do so in a cost effective way that allows us to continue to maintain the park for all communities.

Targets

- Effective Treasury Management, focussing on borrowing required to fund the new Lee Valley Ice Centre, associated investments, and mitigating the risk of interest rate increases
- Proactive monitoring and modelling of energy consumption and cost, including the realisation of savings from LED investments at LSC venues
- Increased use of data-led intelligence to support venues and services to achieve income targets, focussing on areas of risk such as the campsites' seasonal touring business
- Source external funding, either partial or in full, to help deliver a comprehensive capital programme across the park
- Look to maximise return on the whole Authority estate, whether that be from partnerships, leases, or disposal of surplus assets

5 Organisational development

Organisational development is key to ensure effective growth and longevity of the Authority. The key areas of development over the next three years are health and wellbeing, staff engagement and development, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), ways of working, and workforce and succession planning.

With the transfer of our six main sports venues to GLL, our directly employed workforce shrank considerably and the Authority currently employs around 120 Full Time Equivalents. The Authority needs to ensure the right number of people with the right skills are employed in the right place at the right time to deliver our strategic objectives. Workforce and succession planning and staff development is key to the future of the organisation.

Our reputation and success depend on the services our staff deliver. As a result, we expect a high level of attendance to deliver an efficient and effective service to all our customers and service users. We recognise the importance of the health, safety and wellbeing of all our staff, and we are committed to improving their physical and mental health and wellbeing. This is currently underpinned by the comprehensive benefits such as an employee assistance programme, annual health assessments, staff discounts, a cycle scheme, a cash plan and flexible working as well as the training we provide, and a health and wellbeing strategy will bring everything together across the Authority.

It is important that our staff reflect the communities which the park serves. As mentioned in 3.6, by 2024 we will implement an EDI forum with staff and volunteer representatives looking into ways we can encourage positive engagement with harder to reach communities and promote EDI across the Authority.

Following the pandemic, we have moved to a hybrid working model with three core office days, though staff can come into the office five days a week if they prefer. However, this is a temporary change which needs reviewing. So, we need to identify opportunities for potential future efficiencies and working arrangements that will balance both the needs of the Authority and our staff, which embraces available technology based on outputs with a focus on results and which reduces the reliance on office space.

Targets

Within this business plan we will:

- Develop a health and wellbeing strategy in partnership with our sports development team, which includes the introduction of mental health champions
- Through succession planning, identify critical roles that are fundamental to the Authority's success and how staff can pass on their skills and expertise, and identify skills gaps to ensure the business plan can be delivered
- Review our flexible working policy and reflect on and assess current and potential ways of working and office accommodation requirements in the context of a hybrid working model

6 Communications

As explained in the introduction, this business plan covers a period of large scale change with a general, Greater London Authority and local elections taking place across the region. The focus on climate change will increase. The pressure on local authority budgets is likely to continue, and LLDC will start its change process next year. 2024 will also be the tenth anniversary of the public opening of our two Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park sports venues and we will continue our programme of international events. This business plan outlines a series of major development projects for our open spaces and our venues and our communications priorities respond and support all of this.

Over the period of this business plan we will:

- Create a full communications programme supporting the new Environment Policy and focus on the benefits the park brings to the region and to stakeholders
- Establish the new Lee Valley Ice Centre as a regional centre, in collaboration with GLL
- Create and run:
 - revenue generating campaigns for our Authority operated activities
 - campaigns which promote the park as a visitor destination, tying in the park's open spaces, accommodation, marinas, sports venues and events
- Maximise the opportunities provided by the 10 year anniversary of our Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park venues
- Continue the productive relationships with GLL, LLDC and other key partners
- Support major developments and events
- Internal communications

6.1 Environment Policy

We will create a communications programme to engage colleagues, partners and visitors in the new environment policy, sharing the knowledge we have built up and encouraging best practice. We will build relationships with partners and stakeholders to promote the park's core work and strategic importance, conveying the value of the park as a green lung for London and the region.

6.2 Lee Valley Ice Centre

This stunning new venue has now launched with a successful public opening, plaudits from skaters, clubs and coaches and strong media coverage.

We carried out communications to stakeholders, the local community, neighbours and environmental groups to pre-empt any disruption caused by the building project, explaining the benefits of the new venue, and bridging the gap between the current centre closing and the new one opening.

We secured good coverage for the launch and alongside marketing activity ensured that the venue's opening day was a sell-out.

The social channels have now been handed to GLL whose job is ongoing awareness raising and promotion of the centre.

We will continue to work with GLL to make sure the venue beds in and becomes regionally significant reaching communities across London, Essex and Hertfordshire. We want it to be seen as an exemplar of the Authority's vision and ability to deliver not just an outstanding new centre at this challenging time for the leisure industry, but also cutting edge community programmes.

6.3 Destination campaigns

We will focus our marketing and awareness raising efforts on our income generating venues promoting the four Lee Valley campsites as places for short breaks and holidays and opportunities at our two marinas. Alongside this, a core part of our work is promoting the valley as a joined up visitor destination. We run campaigns year round to encourage people to visit the park to walk, run and cycle, to enjoy open space and to interact with nature. Earlier this year we were, in common with other major London parks, focusing on free or low cost activities to reflect the cost of living crisis.

We will intensify these destination campaign at the key visitation times of spring and summer and market the park as a place for healthy and active lifestyles. We are also promoting responsible use of the park, not leaving litter, not having fires or BBQs and not swimming in open water.

We will cross promote with the park's accommodation offer to encourage people to visit for longer and use the new Lee Valley Ice Centre – particularly its role as a setting off point for the nearby open space – as a call to action to visit.

6.4 Ten year anniversary

We will maximise the opportunities provided by the 10 year anniversary of Lee Valley VeloPark and Lee Valley Hockey and Tennis Centre, and of the renewed interest in legacy that will come from the Paris Games, to retell the Authority's continuing role in the delivery of the sporting legacy from the London 2012 Games. We will secure new partnerships and opportunities and will particularly focus on the opportunities that these venues have given communities to enjoy sport in inspirational settings

6.5 Productive relationships with GLL, LLDC and other key stakeholders

We have set ways of working with GLL's marketing team and will continue to engage with them intensively to ensure that the marketing elements of the LSC contract are met. We will carry on providing feedback and advice and ensure that all work is brand compliant. This is especially important as the Authority derives a

large part of its identity from its main sports venues, particularly the London 2012 legacy venues, and we will carry on leveraging the profile of these stellar venues to both promote the overall visitor destination and to enhance our links with stakeholders.

We will continue to maximise relationships with LLDC and, as their role changes, we will ensure that stakeholders and partners understand new responsibilities and how we will ensure the highest possible quality offer for the section of Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park we are responsible for.

We will carry out a stakeholder audit to understand our positioning with key audiences and improve our communications.

6.6 Supporting major developments

As mentioned in section 3.2, there are a series of major projects which are likely to move forward in the next few years. We will work closely with colleagues to ensure these are well presented and that key audiences and stakeholders are communicated with during the programmes.

6.7 Internal communications

Our teams are spread across multiple workplaces, have a range of specialisms and have different working practices. Effective and timely internal communications are crucial to bind our teams together and focus on strategic priorities. We already use a range of tools such as staff newsletters, intranet, online communities and in-person briefings and will seek the most effective ways to always reach staff.

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