

REVIEW OF MEETING VENUES FOR THE AUTHORITY

Presented by the Deputy Chief Executive

SUMMARY

Following a Member discussion at the AGM, the purpose of this report is to inform Members of potential venues for future meetings of the Authority.

Currently Authority meetings are usually held at Myddelton House, other than the Annual General Meeting which has been held at Lee Valley White Water Centre for the past 3 years, or remotely. Please note that references to Authority meetings in this report are to the full Authority meetings at which all 28 Members would potentially be attending.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Members Consider:
- (1) alternating the venue of Authority meetings; and
 - (2) subject to (1) above to review the impact on attendance at these meetings at the end of the year.

BACKGROUND

- 1 The Lee Valley Regional Park Authority was created by a private act of parliament, the Lee Valley Regional Park Act 1966 (the Park Act), which provides that the Authority may make Standing Orders with respect to the proceedings of its meetings.
- 2 The Schedule to the Park Act requires that in addition to the annual meeting of the Authority and any additional or special meetings convened by the Chairman or by Members of the Authority, at least three meetings for general business shall be held as far as is possible at regular intervals every year. This is also set out in Standing Order 10.
- 3 Emergency legislation (The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020) which came into force on 4 April 2020 for a time limited period (to 7 May 2021), enabled remote meetings to be held through "electronic, digital, virtual locations and telephone conferencing", but did not apply to the Authority as it is not a Local Authority.

Under the Schedule to the Park Act the Authority is able to make its own standing orders relating to proceedings of Authority and committees. It adopted the provisions of the Emergency Legislation whilst it was in force but when it ended on the 7th May 2021 the Authority updated its Standing Orders to expand the definition of "place of meeting" to include virtual and hybrid meetings, whereby Members must be able to hear and (where practicable) see and be heard and (where practicable) be seen by other Members and meeting attendees.

- 4 The first Authority meeting to be held virtually was 2 July 2020 in response to public health guidance (i.e. social distancing) introduced to combat coronavirus. Since then 8 meetings have been held virtually.
- 5 The Authority did previously trial holding Authority meetings at external venues in 2014: 24 April at Hackney Town Hall; and 23 October at Camden Town Hall; which were kindly facilitated by Members Chris Kennedy and Heather Johnson.
- 6 An Authority meeting was held at YHA Cheshunt on 24 November 2005 but Members should note that the mezzanine meeting room is galleried and it is not therefore completely private for any part 2 confidential discussions.
- 7 Authority meetings are usually held at Myddelton House, other than the last 3 AGMs which were held at Lee Valley White Water Centre which was mainly to allow an offer of a hot lunch outside on the terrace area.
- 8 If Members are minded to explore possible alternative meeting venues then wider considerations would need to be taken into account, such as cost, accessibility (including disabled access), facilities available at the venue e.g., wi-fi and audio/visual, and loss of officer working time due to travelling.

POTENTIAL ADVANTAGES OF DIFFERENT MEETING VENUES

- 9 Journey times and distances in attending meetings will be more equally spread amongst Members.
- 10 Greater accessibility and opportunity may be provided for members of the public to attend meetings and speak.
- 11 Using other Authority venues would provide Members with the opportunity to visit and become more familiar with venues across the Regional Park and venue staff would have the opportunity of interacting with Members.
- 12 Holding virtual meetings would reduce travelling time and car journeys (for some Members) and would support the valuable work undertaken by the Authority's Environmental Policy.
- 13 Holding virtual meetings could lead to consideration being given to paperless meetings, which would also support the Authority's Environment Policy.
- 14 If premises of constituent councils could be utilised it would provide an opportunity for promotion of the Authority directly with councillors of levy paying authorities.

DISADVANTAGES OF USING DIFFERENT MEETING VENUES

- 15 The use of external meeting rooms, unless provided free of charge, would incur

room hire costs, increased catering costs, officer travel costs and loss of officer working time from travelling to meetings. Some officers would need to use public transport and therefore consideration would have to be given to reducing equipment and papers as these would need to be carried to meeting venues.

- 16 Potential for inconsistency in quality, accessibility and catering provision offered at different venues.
- 17 Less flexibility than using Myddelton House for short notice room changes, access to office equipment, such as photocopying, and opportunity for Members to speak with officers other than the core group of senior officers present at Authority meetings.
- 18 Confusion could arise as to meeting venue if a variety of venues were used.
- 19 Unless multiple meeting rooms were available at external venues, political group meetings would all have to be held in the same room which may include officers unless other space was available for them within the premises which may incur additional room hire costs.

ATTENDANCE AT AUTHORITY MEETINGS

- 20 Using different venues for Authority meetings may impact attendance at meetings.
- 21 Attendance at the Authority meeting held at YHA Cheshunt in 2005 was:

Venue	Member Attendance	Member Apologies	Officers Present	Meeting Date
YHA Cheshunt	23	6	11	24 Nov 2005

- 22 Attendance at the 2 Authority meetings which were held at external venues in 2014 was:

Venue	Member Attendance	Member Apologies	Officers Present	Meeting Date
Hackney Town Hall	16	10	5	24 Apr 2014
Camden Town Hall	19	10	7	23 Oct 2014

- 23 Attendance at 9 Authority meetings held virtually (2020 to 2023) was:

Venue	Member Attendance	Member Apologies	Officers Present	Meeting Date
Zoom	22	2	7	23 Apr 2020
Zoom	23	3	11	2 July 2020
Zoom	22	1	10	22 Oct 2020
Zoom	23	3	9	21 Jan 2021
Zoom	25	1	12	29 Apr 2021
Zoom	23	2	8	21 Oct 2021
Zoom	26	0	9	20 Jan 2022
Zoom	19	7	7	10 Mar 2022
Zoom	23	3	8	28 Apr 2022

- 24 Attendance at 3 Annual General Meetings held at Lee Valley White Water Centre (2020 to 2023) was:

Venue	Member Attendance	Member Apologies	Officers Present	Meeting Date
Lee Valley White Water Centre	23	4	7	8 July 2021
	22	6	13	7 July 2022
	25	2	8	6 July 2023

- 25 Attendance at 4 Authority meetings held at Myddelton House (2020 to 2023) was:

Venue	Member Attendance	Member Apologies	Officers Present	Meeting Date
Myddelton House	21	5	10	23 Jan 2020
	19	5	13	20 Oct 2022
	20	6	12	19 Jan 2023
	23	2	8	27 Apr 2023

REQUIREMENTS OF MEETING VENUE

- 26 Meeting venues should be close to public transport hubs to enable easy access for both Members and officers, have disabled access, capacity to seat a minimum of 34 people (average number of attendees both Members and officers) boardroom style, with space to seat a few members of the public and press (if attending), wi-fi and audio-visual equipment, and catering provision.
- 27 An analysis of potential meeting venues has been undertaken, please see Appendix A to this report.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 28 Dependent on the location of meeting venues, there could be either positive or negative environmental implications in terms of mode of travelling.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 29 The cost to the Authority of using Myddelton House for meetings is difficult to quantify, other than for catering provision, as facilities are included within overall premises costs. However hire of the Boardroom at Myddelton House to external parties is offered at £75 per hour.
- 30 Additional budget will be required to accommodate meetings held at venues other than Myddelton House.
- 31 Meetings at venues other than Myddelton House would incur travel costs for officers.

HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 32 Should meetings be held at venues other than Myddelton House officers and potentially additional support officers such as IT would be required to travel to venues and transport meeting papers and equipment, e.g., name plates, signing in register, promotional materials, portable microphones and speakers, etc.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

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

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

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

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APPENDIX ATTACHED

Appendix A Meeting Venue Analysis

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

the Park Act Lee Valley Regional Park Act 1966

Meeting Venue Analysis

Lee Valley Venues

Venue	Meeting Room	Meeting Room Capacity	Microphone	Hearing Loop	Commercial Hire Cost	LVRPA Hire Cost	Access by Public Transport	Car Parking Available	Catering
Myddelton House	Boardroom	30	No	Yes	£75 per hour	£0	Turkey Street -- 15min walk	Yes -- Free	In-house
	Exhibition Room	30	No	No	N/A	£0	Lea Bridge -- 5min walk	Yes -- Free	External
Waterworks Centre	Exhibition Space	60	Yes	No	From £110 per hour	£0	Ponders End -- 20min walk or bus	Yes - Free	External
	Track Centre Studio	40	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Stratford -- 25 min walk	Yes -- Free	In-house
Hockey & Tennis Centre	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A			
	Meeting Room	24	No	No	From £80 per hour	£0	Stratford -- 20min walk or bus	Yes -- Free	In-house
	Track Centre	60	No	No	From £600 per hour	£0			
VeloPark	Concourse	36	No	No	From £80 per hour	£0			
	Meeting Room Studio	20	No	No	From £50 per hour	N/A	Lea Bridge -- 10min walk	Yes -- Free	In-house
Ice Centre	Meeting Room	36	No	Being installed	Half Day £895 Full Day £1200	£0	Waltham Cross -- 15min walk or bus	Yes - Free	In-house
	Meeting Room	40	No						

• Athletics Centre and VeloPark Track Centre and Concourse -- not private, meeting may be impacted by venue activities, no facilities for presentations

Partner Venues

Venue	Meeting Room	Meeting Room Capacity	Microphone	Hearing Loop	Commercial Hire Cost	LVRPA Hire Cost	Access by Public Transport	Car Parking Available	Catering
Timber Lodge QEOP	Meeting Room	40	Yes	No	£150 per hour	10 days use per year	Stratford -- 15mins walk	Velo -- 5mins walk	In-house
YHA Cheshunt	Mezzanine	40	No	No	From £79 a day		Cheshunt -- 5mins walk	Yes - Free	In-house
Constituent Councils	Yes	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?

• Mezzanine at YHA -- not private, meeting may be impacted by public use of the lower floor

Lee Valley sites not appropriate for Authority meetings

Lee Valley Riding Centre	Lee Valley Golf Course	Lee Valley Campsite, Sewardstone
Lee Valley Caravan Park, Dobbs Weir	Holyfield Hall Farm	Lee Valley Camping & Caravan Park, Edmonton
Lee Valley Almost Wild Campsite	Lee Valley Marina, Springfield	Lee Valley Marina, Stanstead Abbots