

## LEE VALLEY REGIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

### AUTHORITY MEETING 29 APRIL 2021

|                                |   |  |
|--------------------------------|---|--|
| Members<br>in remote presence: | Paul Osborn (Chairman)<br>David Andrews<br>Ken Ayling<br>John Bevan<br>Frances Button<br>Rowena Champion<br>Rokhsana Fiaz OBE<br>Ricki Gadsby<br>Mike Garnett<br>David Gardner<br>Steven Heather<br>Ross Houston<br>Heather Johnson | Denise Jones<br>Christopher Kennedy<br>Graham McAndrew<br>Valerie Metcalfe<br>Gordon Nicholson<br>Dilip Patel<br>Nigel Quinton<br>Mary Sartin<br>George Savva MBE<br>Simon Walsh<br>Terry Wheeler<br>John Wyllie |
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Also remotely present: Ian Kemp (Deputy Member, East Herts District Council)

Apologies Received From: Derrick Ashley

|                                 |   |  |
|---------------------------------|---|--|
| Officers<br>in remote presence: | Shaun Dawson<br>Beryl Foster<br>Dan Buck<br>Jon Carney<br>Keith Kellard<br>Victoria Yates<br>Stephen Bromberg<br>Paul Roper<br>Jeremy Northrup<br>Gavin Pearce<br>Sandra Bertschin<br>Lindsey Johnson | - Chief Executive<br>- Deputy Chief Executive<br>- Corporate Director<br>- Corporate Director<br>- Head of Finance<br>- Head of Human Resources<br>- Head of Communications<br>- Head of Project & Funding Delivery<br>- Regional Manager South<br>- Ice Centre Manager<br>- Committee & Members' Services Manager<br>- Committee Services Officer |
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Also in remote presence: Matt Bowmer (London Borough of Enfield officer, Authority S151 Officer)  
Tracey Webster (Chair, Lee Valley London Ice Skating Club)  
Caroline Day (Save Lea Marshes)  
Laurie Elks (Member of the public)  
Marika Humphreys-Baranova (Elite Skating Co-ordinator)  
Vicky Sholund (Save Lea Marshes)  
Dianne Joseph (Fixtures Secretary, Lions Ice Hockey Club)  
Richard Arnold (Wrenbridge)  
Jessica Gavaghan (Wrenbridge)  
Will Dahlgreen (Member of the public)  
Tara Fehilly (Member of the public)

#### Part I

#### 33 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

34 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

**THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2021 be approved and signed.**

35 PUBLIC SPEAKING

Caroline Day of Save Lea Marshes, spoke on Agenda Item 6 (Corporate Work Programme), key points included:

- the Area 2 Proposals in the Park Development Framework state that the Waterworks site is for learning, volunteers and heritage;
- she would like to see plans which maintain these essential functions, with an educational centre, base for Rangers and public facilities;
- due to Covid there has been an increased footfall at the meadow. This footfall is likely to increase due to more tower blocks being built in the surrounding area. Green space was vital for these peoples wellbeing;
- there are many environmental and sustainability groups in the local area who would welcome a base at the Waterworks. The café at the site could help to meet any shortfall in income; and
- there are many rare and protected species on the meadow, which could attract outside funding.

Laurie Elks spoke on Agenda Item 6 (Corporate Work Programme), key points included:

- he supported the possibility of the Waterworks site being used as youth hostel visitor accommodation, which is consistent with the Area 2 Proposals in the Park Development Framework;
- he thought the Youth Hostel Association (YHA) would be interested in this site and he hoped that the Authority will speak with them during the soft marketing stage;
- if this were to go ahead, he hoped that it could be made more outward facing and visible to the public, unlike the one at Cheshunt; and
- it would be good to have an open day, along with explanatory bulletin explaining plans for the Spitalbrook site.

Tracey Webster, Chair of the Lee Valley London Ice Skating Club, spoke on Agenda Item 5 (Lee Valley Ice Centre Redevelopment), key points included:

- consider what closure of the ice rink without a temporary ice rink will mean for users, especially children who will have to go to various different centres and coaches who will have to relaunch their business. What support will Ice Centre users get?
- please ensure that there are penalties for late completion of the build;
- can consideration be given to opening one of the ice pads halfway through the build? and
- coaches will struggle to work at other rinks so she hoped there will be a financial package for them.

Marika Humphreys-Baranova, Elite Skating Co-ordinator, spoke on Agenda Item 5 (Lee Valley Ice Centre Redevelopment), key points included:

- we are reeling from your decision not to have continuous use of the ice rink, however, we do understand the reasons behind this;

- we request that the closure date be put back until 27 June, to enable us to have one final skate; and
- trust and goodwill with Ice Centre users will need to be rebuilt. We hope you will consult with us throughout the build, as our wealth of knowledge will help to ensure the success of the centre.

A presentation was given by the Corporate Director, the Chief Executive, S151 Officer, Head of Finance and Head of Communications, key points included:

- the recommendations in this report were approved by the Executive Committee earlier today;
- we need to approve today options for funding/financing; the outcome of the temporary ice rink feasibility study; business continuity and support packages for coaches and clubs; entering into an agreement with the preferred building contractor; and entering into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Canal & River Trust;
- the proposed financing route will be short-term loans during construction and refinance on a long-term loan after construction. The total construction budget will be £30m financed over 40 years;
- it was always anticipated return in the initial years would not cover the repayment cost of loans and this was factored into the Authority's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) in January 2021. The Authority will be able to fund this short-term cash flow pressure from its own reserves;
- discussions were being held with external agencies for additional funding.
- an in-principle offer has been made with London Borough of Waltham Forest (LBWF), which would be in place for 10 years, with LBWF providing £1m over five years in exchange for community benefits;
- penalties for the build time being extended are severe, although there are some mitigating circumstances;
- a temporary ice rink has been rejected due to several factors including, no guarantee that planning permission would be granted; a certificate of lawfulness would be needed for permitted development which would be timely to obtain and likely to be challenged due to the site being on Metropolitan Open Land; its closeness to Essex Wharf and Oxbow Island; the utilities under the car park next to the proposed site for the temporary rink are very complicated; it would cost £1m to build; increase the build time of the new facility; and only be in operation between October 2021 and June 2022;
- the support package for coaches and clubs has been increased to £160k. No money will be paid directly to coaches, support will consist of free ice rental in May and June 2021; 6 months free rental in the new venue; rental fees secured for the first 24 months and restriction of new coaches to give current coaches a chance to expand their business;
- we will need to enter into Heads of Terms with Canal & River Trust over Oxbow Island and Lake. As part of the venue's sustainable water system, a process of re-using the ice melt and rain water through a series of filtration methods has been developed. This filtrated water goes through a series of reed beds before being discharged in a controlled fashion into the Oxbow Lake to help oxygenate the water;
- we have developed a communications strategy, which is proactive and controlled process which will take place at key times and cover key groups; and
- subject to Member approval today, we will be applying to the Secretary of State (SoS) for borrowing on 30 April 2021; May 2021 we will (subject to SoS consent) appoint the contractor and design mobilisation will commence; May/June 2021 ground investigation works; 23 July 2021 contractor will commence construction; August/September 2022 operator fit out; 25 September 2022 contractor completion.

The Chairman stated that if coaches and clubs wished to tweak the proposed support package then we would be happy to look at that, as long as it remained within the £160k allocation and to the processes laid out.

A Member noted that interest rates are very low at the moment and asked if a rise was factored into the borrowing? Matt Bowmer responded, stating that interest rates are historically low at the moment and forecasters predict that they are likely to remain that way for a long time, however, if they do rise we will move to long term borrowing sooner. Another Member asked if we had considered continuing the short-term loans for longer. Matt Bowmer responded that we will continue to look at all options.

A Member sought assurance that our level of confidence on future revenues was sufficient to repay the loans. The Chairman responded that the figures are based on the Leisure Services Contract (LSC), business planning consultants, the trading history of the current Ice Centre and other ice centres around the country.

A Member asked how borrowing in short term from our own reserves would affect them. The Head of Finance replied that the MTFP was factored in and the reserves would not be put into deficit.

A Member asked how confident we were about receiving consent from the SoS. The Deputy Chief Executive responded stating that whilst the decision taken would be subject to consent we have powers in the Lee Valley Regional Park Act 1966 to borrow money and the purpose of the borrowing falls wholly within the remit of the Authority, so there was no reason to believe that consent would not be given to enable the Authority to exercise its borrowing powers.

A Member commented that it was good that we have entered into a partnership with LBWF and suggested we try to enter into more partnerships with other nearby local authorities.

A Member noted that the Ice Centre will be closed over two sets of school summer holidays and asked if this was the high season for the centre. The Corporate Director responded stating that whilst the centre is busy in the summer, the high season was October to March.

Members agreed that the existing facility had reached the end of its lifespan and thought that the new proposal was both exciting and well designed. They offered their thanks to the Corporate Director and other officers who have worked on this project.

On a vote all Members approved the following recommendations:

- (1) the borrowing strategy as set out in paragraphs 4 to 14 of Paper A/4300/21;**
- (2) application to be made to the Secretary of State for consent to borrow up to £30m for the redevelopment of the Lee Valley Ice Centre;**
- (3) the recommendations regarding the outcome of the temporary rink feasibility as set out in paragraph 31 of Paper A/4300/21;**
- (4) the business continuity and support initiatives and budget as set out in paragraph 38 of Paper A/4300/21; and**

- (5) delegation to the Deputy Chief Executive to agree the terms of the agreement with the Canal & River Trust and entering into the agreement as set out in paragraphs 40 and 41 of Paper A/4300/21 was approved.**

37 CORPORATE WORK PRORAMME 2022/21

Paper A/4299/21

The report was introduced by the Chief Executive, key points included:

- there will be a more detailed presentation for Members at the AGM;
- critical venues reopened on 12 April and are trading strongly, combined with furlough our revenue income is looking more positive than at the beginning of the pandemic;
- we have begun looking afresh at The Wave since Covid and will be having detailed discussions with them to take this project forward;
- the approach for the Waterworks is all about visitor accommodation, we will be looking at YHA or something similar for the site and will share ideas over the next year;
- Lee Valley VeloPark will be hosting track cycling for the Commonwealth Games. It will be the only venue to have hosted both Olympics and Commonwealth Games cycling; and
- For 2022/27 we will be looking at strategic objectives and the medium term plan for the Authority.

The Chairman added that he was pleased that East India Dock Basin was progressing and the London Legacy Development Corporation transition plan would be looking at post 2025 estate management for the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.

The Chairman stated that we would be looking at how we can make the Velodrome more welcoming to people walking past and how we can encourage them to enter.

A Member asked that we consider the possibility of having wild swimming at the Spitalbrook site or somewhere else within the River Lee Country Park.

A Member stated that they were pleased that we would be looking towards the next 10 years business plan and suggested a new Working Group be set up or the Scrutiny Committee oversee this. The Chairman agreed that it would be something the Scrutiny Committee could be involved with.

- (1) the report was noted.**

38 FINANCIAL REGULATIONS WAIVERS 2020/21

Paper A/4298/21

The report was introduced by the Head of Finance, who informed Members of the need to waive Financial Regulations with the transfer back of venues in April 2020. Some contracts which are due for renewal in the next 12 months, we will go to market, for some, however, this may be impractical and we may need to extend existing arrangements.

- (1) the report was noted; and**

- (2) delegation to the Section 151 officer to waive Financial Regulations 568, 569, 570 and 571 as set out in Appendix C to Paper A/4298/21 in relation to competitive quotes/tendering arrangements for supplies and service contracts to be provided at the 6 sporting venues for a further period of up to 12 months for any of the reasons set out in paragraphs 9 and 11 of Paper A/4298/21 was approved.**

39 WRITE-OFF OF IRRECOVERABLE ARREARS 2020/21 Paper A/4296/21

The report was introduced by the Head of Finance, stating that there was only one debt which had been written off, with provision already set aside for it.

**(1) the delegated write-off for 2020/21 as detailed in paragraphs 3 to 4 of Paper A/4296/21 was noted.**

40 TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY Paper A/4297/21

The report was introduced by the Head of Finance, stating that this report has already been considered and approved by the Executive Committee this morning.

**(1) the revised Treasury Management Policy and Procedures as set out in Appendix A to Paper E/721/21 attached as Annex A to Paper A/4297/21 was approved.**

41 REDUNDANCY POLICY UPDATE Paper A/4295/21

The report was introduced by the Head of Human Resources, stating that the policy was revised in January 2021 due to legislative updates, these have changed again due to removal of the public sector exit cap.

**(1) the Redundancy Policy attached at Appendix A to Paper A/4295/21 was approved.**

42 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A table of changes to Standing Orders had been circulated to Members earlier in the day.

The Deputy Chief Executive advised Members that the changes related to the Regulations which had been brought in due to Covid which permitted public bodies to hold meetings remotely ending on 7 May 2021. The Authority has received legal advice to confirm that it was able to make its own Standing Orders relating to how meetings are held under the Lee Valley Regional Park Act 1966. This will give us flexibility to continue to hold meetings either remotely or physically. The proposed changes remove the amendments to Standing Orders due to the Covid regulations and propose changes to allow the Authority to continue to meet remotely without reference to legislation which applies to Local Government.

43 NEXT MEETING OF THE AUTHORITY

It was noted that the next meeting will be the Annual Authority Meeting and will be held on Thursday, 8 July 2021 at 2.00pm.

The Chairman proposed that the Annual General Meeting be held at the Lee Valley White Water Centre but would be subject to Member discussion later in this meeting.

44 **EXEMPT ITEMS**

**THAT based on the principles of Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the items of business below on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information again on the principles as defined in those sections of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act indicated:**

|    | <b>Agenda<br/>Item No</b>           | <b>Subject</b>                      | <b>Exempt Information<br/>Section Number</b> |
|----|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
|    | 14                                  | Lee Valley Ice Centre Redevelopment | 3  |
| 45 | LEE VALLEY ICE CENTRE REDEVELOPMENT |                                     | Paper A/4301/21                              |

The report was introduced by the Corporate Director.

On a vote, all Members approved the following recommendations.

- (1) **the entering into an agreement under Seal with the Preferred Bidder as set out in paragraph 6 of Paper A/4301/21 was approved;**
- (2) **the revised Lee Valley Ice Centre 10 year financial profile from the Leisure Service Contract Preferred Bidder as set out in paragraphs 9-12 of Paper A/4301/21; and**
- (3) **the progress and in principle arrangement for external funding as set out in paragraphs 14-18 of Paper A/4301/21 was noted.**

46 FUTURE MEETINGS

Members discussed how they might hold future meetings and agreed that up until September a mix of both remote meetings for non-decision making committees and physical meetings for decision making committees would be put in place. It was also agreed that the AGM would be held at the Lee Valley White Water Centre.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

The meeting started at 2.03pm and ended at 4.06pm