

**LEE VALLEY REGIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

**AUTHORITY MEETING  
18 JANUARY 2024**

Members Present: Paul Osborn (Chairman) Ross Houston  
David Andrews Rick Jewell  
James Asser Heather Johnson  
Ken Ayling Jonathan Kaye (Deputy for Graham McAndrew)  
Susan Barker Christopher Kennedy  
Richard Bassett Barry Lewis  
Nicholas Bennett Gordon Nicholson  
John Bevan Clive Souter  
Janet Burgess Marshall Vance  
David Gardner Steven Watson  
Lesley Greensmyth Terry Wheeler  
Steven Heather John Wyllie  
Calvin Horner

Apologies Received From: Rezina Chowdhury, Mike Garnett, Graham McAndrew

Officers Present: Shaun Dawson - Chief Executive  
Beryl Foster - Deputy Chief Executive  
Dan Buck - Corporate Director  
Keith Kellard - Head of Finance  
Michael Sterry - Senior Accountant  
Julie Smith - Head of Legal  
Marigold Wilberforce - Head of Property  
Stephen Bromberg - Head of Communications  
Sandra Bertschin - Committee & Members' Services Manager  
Lindsey Johnson - Committee Services Officer

Also Present: Kevin Bartle - S151 Officer (London Borough of Enfield)

Part I

20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

21 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

**THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 19 October 2023 be approved and signed.**

22 PUBLIC SPEAKING

No requests from the public to speak or present petitions had been received for this meeting.

The Chairman agreed to move Agenda Item 5 to the end of the meeting.

# AUTHORITY MEETING MINUTES

## 18 JANUARY 2024

23 2024/25 REVENUE BUDGET AND LEVY

Paper A/4346/24

The report was presented by the Chief Executive and Head of Finance, key points included:

- Last years 2023/24 budget included increased costs of £2.6m; an income and energy contingency of £0.6m; savings and efficiencies of £1.9m; a budget deficit of £1.3m; an increase to the levy of 9%; and a use of reserves of £0.4m taking us below the approved level of £3m. A total base budget outturn of £3.457m; and a closing general fund balance outturn of £4.435m.
- Factors affecting the 2024/25 budget include the cost of living crisis; geo political events; high energy prices; high inflation; interest rates and impact on borrowing costs and invested sums; maintaining and increasing income levels; and LSC management fee.
- The reinstatement of budgets cuts from the previous budget include: asset maintenance; general repairs and renewals; community access fund; and community grants.
- The draft budget for 2024/25 includes: a Leisure Service Contract (LSC) management fee payment of £488k to the Authority; LSC energy costs risk share agreement of £950k; repayment of borrowing for the Ice Centre of £1.722m; budget growth of £535k; budget savings of £345k; and an increase in the levy of 3%.
- Budget growth includes: security and grounds maintenance contracts of £150k; employee training of £32k; audit costs of £75k; and Marina restructure of £272k (subject of business case review).
- Budget savings include: investment income of £170k; visitor counter upgrade of £16k; car parking of £25k; reduction of earmarked reserves contribution of £100k; and VeloPark investment of £25k.
- The purpose of a general fund reserve is to cushion the impact of uneven cash flows; contingency against unexpected events; and build funds for future events. Our policy is to have the general reserves between £3-4m; the value for reserves is more prudent than a percentage calculation; and reliance on cash rather than levy means we may be more exposed to future fluctuations.
- Useable reserves are £14.2m; net internal borrowing is £8.4m; cash flow liabilities are £3.1m; total cash in bank is £8.9m, from 2024/25 this will be £5.1; the Authority is financially stable but potential impact is on capital programme.
- Recent investments at LSC venues include: LED lighting which has resulted in 30% reduction in costs; Athletics Centre gym investment; Riding Centre equine simulator; White Water Centre function space and slalom ramp; and VeloPark gym investment.
- Recent investments at non-LSC venues include: additional static pitches, glamping, bungalow and house accommodation at Dobbs Weir Caravan Park; change from diary to beef at Holyfield Hall Farm; Stanstead Marina laundry room; and Springfield Marina workshop and laundry.
- Future income generating projects include: Area 4 at White Water Centre; potential visitor accommodation at Waterworks; Picketts Lock Centre; Eton Manor; Spitalbrook; Sewardstone Campsite; EV charging points; and potential land disposal at Rammey Marsh.

A Member commented that it was important moving forward to create an asset management sinking fund to guard against unforeseen costs at our larger venues.

A Member expressed concern at an increase to the levy. Outer London boroughs get minimal benefit from the Park and for those in south west London, funding for their own Wandle Valley

## **AUTHORITY MEETING MINUTES 18 JANUARY 2024**

Park has had to be cut in order to deliver other services. A Member responded stating that it was important to note that tax payers in north Essex and west Herts were further away than those in south west London and it is important to find ways to make the Park more attractive and accessible to those people. The Chairman commented that if funding for the Park was not taken via a levy through local authorities, it would come through the GLA, which would result in less accountability for the Park. He added that prior to Covid and the energy crisis we had been reducing the levy and this was something that he is keen to return to. Another Member added that it is important to remember the historic remit of the Park was to clean the degradation of east London to the benefit of all London, Herts and Essex.

A Member asked about the risk of utilities increasing and what had been done about installing solar panels on our buildings. The Chief Executive responded stating that we have a fixed tariff for utilities until the end of October, there is room in the budget to cope if utilities increase in the last 6 months of the budget. We are starting to look at what buildings may be suitable for solar panels.

A Member commented that it is important to get more publicity about the Park into south London, and suggested taster days. The Chairman added that improving transport links was also key. A Member added that there is a transport briefing paper for the Tech Committee, which several Members of this Authority sit on, it could be beneficial if Authority officers provided details on transport issues the Park faces that could be presented to that committee.

A Member queried who would benefit from the reinstatement of community access funds. The Corporate Director responded stating that the monies create opportunities for local clubs and users to access facilities. He added asking that if Members knew of groups or contacts at their own local authorities to please pass the details over as it is often hard to find the right contacts. A Member added that he had recently heard about how these access funds had helped Cycle Sisters (women from the south Asian community), who all complimented the VeloPark and its staff.

A Member asked what effect cutting £100k from the earmarked reserves contribution was having. The Chief Executive responded stating that this was a short term measure which will go back and be built back up. The Head of Finance added that the local repairs and renewal fund was healthy and we could afford to do this in the short term to help the budget following a review of all works that were needed.

A Member commented that better signage to the White Water Centre would be helpful. The Chairman responded stating that it is difficult to get local authorities to improve wayfinding, this is also an issue on the Olympic Park. Another Member added that we also need to consider how people with mobility issues might be directed to the Park.

On a vote with 1 against, 2 abstentions and 22 for, the following was approved:

- (1) the proposed Levy for 2024/25 as set out in paragraph 30 of Paper E/838/24, attached as Annex A to Paper E/4346/24, as recommended by Executive Committee; and**
- (2) allocation of £1.8m to general reserves as set out in paragraph 25 of Paper E/838/24, attached as Annex A to Paper A/4346/24, as recommended by Executive Committee was approved.**

## AUTHORITY MEETING MINUTES 18 JANUARY 2024

25 CAPITAL STRATEGY 2023/24 TO 2027/28 Paper A/4347/24

The report was presented by the Head of Finance, who informed Members that the capital financial requirement is linked to borrowing. Our borrowing is £25m, which is our upper limit and was used to cover the new Ice Centre. If we were to borrow more than £25m we would report back to Members. The Chairman added that whilst borrowing for the Ice Centre is at the top end of our borrowing limits, the investment has a revenue return and there was a solid business case as the money will be recouped and a potential land disposal could cover the entire cost. We also have the ability to cover this in the levy if necessary.

- (1) the Capital Strategy as set out in Paper E/836/24 and its Appendices B-D, attached an Annex A to Paper A/4347/24; and**
- (2) the Prudential Indicators for 2023/24 to 2027/28 as set out in Appendix A of Paper E/836/24, attached as Annex A to Paper A/4347/24, was approved.**

26 PROPOSED CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2023/24 (REVISED) TO 2027/28 Paper A/4348/24

The report was presented by the Head of Finance.

A Member commented that as previously mentioned in this meeting, it is important to have a long term asset management sinking fund, especially for our high profile venues.

- (1) the revised capital programme for 2023/24 (revised) to 2027/28 as set out in Appendix A to Paper E/837/24, attached as Annex A to Paper A/4348/24; and**
- (2) the proposed capital funding to meet the planned capital programme as set out in Appendix B of Paper E/837/24, attached as Annex A to Paper A/4348/24, was approved.**

John Wyllie, Gordon Nicholson and Chris Kennedy left during the next item.

27 2023/24 WORK PROGRAMME PROGRESS UPDATE

The Chief Executive gave an update on progress of the 2023/24 Work Programme, key points included:

- St Pauls Field – The route of the 3.5km footpath has been cleared and completion should be late Spring.
- Area 4 – Looking for an investment that compliments the White Water Centre. We are at the conclusion of the procurement process with 2 preferred bidders, a report will go to Executive Committee in February.
- Rammey Marsh – We own the majority of the land, along with TfL and London Borough of Enfield (LBE). We have a Memorandum of Understanding with LBE and are procuring studies with them for the site before we can consider going to market. We have been unable to enter into talks with TfL yet. LBE are going through their Local Plan and have provisionally allocated the land as 'employment', the plan should be adopted late 2025.

## **AUTHORITY MEETING MINUTES 18 JANUARY 2024**

We also need to consider whether Rammey Marsh is no longer required for Park purposes.

- The Wave – Met with them in the autumn and meeting again this month to consider transport and contamination issues. The exclusivity agreement expired with them last April, but we are allowing more time and will decide in the Spring whether to look afresh at the site.
- Middlesex Filter Beds – We want to get water back into the site and return the habitat. A short term solution has been found and will be completed in the next few months. For the longer term we are working with Canal & River Trust to deliver a solution.
- East India Dock Basin – Issues with lock gates and silting. We applied to HLF for funding to remedy this, but that failed. We are waiting on the outcome of a housing development at Orchard Wharf before deciding whether to reapply. We are in discussions with the developer regarding getting funding for the works and the planning application should be determined in the Spring. We are also in talks with London Borough of Tower Hamlets regarding CIL money.
- Ice Centre – Very successful in first 6 months and ahead by 25% in quarter 2 budget. Gym membership already has 1200 members. The centre hosted its first major event in November. The centre received a London in Bloom award.
- Riding Centre – The centre has a riding simulator that has proved popular.
- Athletics Centre – In order to diversify the offer we have invested in a gym.
- VeloPark – A new gym will open in March which will increase the footfall and make the centre more relevant to people.
- Environment Policy – LED lighting; Marinas restructure; the staff Environment Group who consider ideas and initiatives; staff travel survey; spend to save initiatives; and we have received a report on the decarbonisation of White Water Centre, this is being assessed and will be reported to Members in due course.
- Accreditations – Received many awards for open spaces including retaining 9 Green Flags, our sports venues have received Quest awards, learning teams have received Kite Mark, and Investing in Volunteers.
- Stewardship Scheme – New environmental scheme, we are applying for Cornmill Meadows and Walthamstow Marshes in order to enhance ecology.
- Events – There have been major events at all 3 venues; Hockey & Tennis Centre Hockey Pro League; World Championships at White Water Centre and Champions League Cycling at VeloPark. People from every London borough and district in Herts and Essex attended.
- Media – Country File recently visited the Lee Valley and spoke to our Biodiversity Manager.

A Member commented that it would be good to find a safe walking route from East India Dock Basin to Bow Creek and how local developments could enable this. She added that it would be nice to have a visitor centre at East India Dock Basin and enable the site to be the flagship entry point into the Park. The Chairman added that it would be good if our Member for Newham could look into potential bids for CIL that could feed into this as there is a lot of developments in this area, yet little open space.

A Member suggested that there should be a representative at LBE from TfL who would be able to help in entering talks regarding Rammey Marsh. He added that if that didn't work to try the commissioner of TfL.

## **AUTHORITY MEETING MINUTES 18 JANUARY 2024**

A Member asked if we had considered other sports at our venues such as rugby, football or cricket, he also enquired as to what is done to encourage more females into sport. The Chairman responded stating that we have strong female representation at the Ice Centre and Hockey & Tennis Centre. The challenge is to find other sports that fit with the site without compromising what is already there and not diminishing what are regional centres. Our centres are used by both normal people and elite athletes.

### 28 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Rezina Chowdhury requested an extension to her membership after not attending for 6 months. Members agreed to extend her Membership on condition that she attend within the next 2 meetings of the Authority.

### 29 NEXT MEETING OF THE AUTHORITY

It was noted that the next meeting of the Authority will be held on Thursday, 25 April 2024 at 2.00pm at the Lee Valley White Water Centre.

It was also noted that the next Members Tour would be on 17 April, with an overnight stay on 16 April at Dobbs Weir Caravan Park.

---

Chairman

---

Date

The meeting started at 2.03pm and ended at 3.45pm