



**LEE VALLEY REGIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**  
**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**  
**20 OCTOBER 2016 AT 11:00**

**Agenda Item No:**

**10**

**Report No:**

**E/465/16**

## **MARKING THE 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF LEE VALLEY REGIONAL PARK**

Presented by the Head of Communications

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

2017 is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the creation of Lee Valley Regional Park and the inception of the Authority.

This milestone is an opportunity to mark the transformation of the Lee Valley from a neglected wasteland into a major destination, which now attracts more than six million visits a year from the whole of the capital, all parts of Essex and Hertfordshire, the rest of the UK and, increasingly, from overseas.

Officers have been working on a programme of 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary themed activity for stakeholders and visitors. The aim is to communicate these vast, positive changes and to encourage visits to what is now a world class leisure destination.

Member input is now sought to shape this programme and approve funding required to carry out additional activity.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members consider: (1) the programme outlined below and provide feedback and guidance as to the scale of activity they would like to see; and

Members approve: (2) £78,000 of funding from reserves for activities outlined below.

### **BACKGROUND**

- 1 In 1944 Sir Patrick Abercrombie described the Lee Valley as London's "privy and backyard" – a place characterised by derelict industrial and bomb sites, quarries and polluted land. Twenty years later the Civic Trust chaired a conference at which 18 local authorities plus MPs and other interested parties considered a far-sighted report by the Civic Trust which outlined the broad concept of what a park in the Lee Valley could be. The Duke of Edinburgh, who addressed the conference, described the Lee Valley at that time as "a pretty

average mess.”

The conference, and subsequent activity, led to a Bill which became the Lee Valley Regional Park Act 1966, and the establishment of the Regional Park and the Authority the following year.

Vast swathes of the Lee Valley have been remediated, brought into public use and are now hugely popular leisure destinations. The Lee Valley has been turned into a unique collection of award winning parklands, world class sports venues – including three London 2012 venues – nationally and internationally significant wildlife refuges and a host of other attractions.

- 2 Officers have created an indicative programme designed to mark this major milestone and connect with key audiences – particularly visitors, potential visitors and stakeholders. They now request Member feedback to determine the size and scale of activity Members would like undertaken to mark the year.
- 3 The suggestions have been designed with the principles of:
  - ensuring that all activity will reach key audiences and/or drive visits;
  - focusing on the transformation of the Lee Valley over the past 50 years and the Regional Park’s key activation offer – walking, running, cycling, enjoying nature and taking part in sport; and
  - wherever possible, use existing budgets and workstreams.

However in order to appropriately mark this significant milestone, there is a need for some extra resource to create, pay for and deliver the additional activity.

## **STAKEHOLDERS**

- 4 Officers have suggested a package of activities to reach stakeholders: key funding bodies, central government, political audiences, levy paying authorities, sports and environmental bodies and potential partners.

Suggested activities within existing work-plans and budget include:

- exhibiting at the annual London Councils Summit, an opportunity to engage with around 300 councillors from across the capital;
- a “roadshow” by the Chairman to funding authorities, using the anniversary as a reason for engagement and as a vehicle to discuss ways of working more closely in the future; and
- the creation and launch of a new Biodiversity Action Plan.

Activities which require £45,000 extra budget are:

- the publication and distribution to select stakeholders of a brief history of the Regional Park focusing on the transformation of the Lee Valley over the past 50 years and looking forward to future challenges and developments;
- the staging of a number of discussion events about the future of parks in the

capital, the role of the Lee Valley, and an exhibition on the history of the Regional Park, in partnership with a central London public policy forum; and

- a major stakeholder engagement event – initial discussions have already taken place with a potential partner.

## VISITORS

- 5 Officers are currently creating an events programme for the spring, summer and autumn of next year. This includes negotiating a series of private hires for sites across the Regional Park which will bring in new income and attract new audiences. Examples are a commercial country fair, food and drink festivals and half marathons. These opportunities will be shared with Members as they are secured. Wherever possible they will be "badged up" as 50<sup>th</sup> events through negotiation with the event promoters.
- 6 A series of sports events have already been secured. These include a programme of hockey championships at Lee Valley Hockey and Tennis Centre and elite cycling events at Lee Valley VeloPark.
- 7 Suggested activities within existing workplans and budget include:
  - an increased number of led walks and cycle rides, utilising volunteers and existing staff resource;
  - a fuller series of events taking advantage of key national weeks / days such as National Bike Week, Love Parks Week and World Nature Conservation Day;
  - the creation of a new set of walks which cover the whole Regional Park. They will be promoted on the Lee Valley website, through printed materials and with partners;
  - limited free access to some of the Vibrant Partnerships-run venues to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This includes road and mountain biking, paddle up and public skating sessions, plus competitions to win free tickets and access;
  - a more substantial series of events and activities at Myddelton House Gardens;
  - partnering with a new heritage trail promoting the industrial heritage of the Lee Valley;
  - promoting new activities such as bushcraft to show that the Regional Park continues to reach out to new audiences.
- 8 Activities which require an extra £18,000 budget and resource are:
  - the production of a short video for hosting online and on video screens at venues showcasing the transformation of the Regional Park and what is possible to do now;
  - a coach travel bursary for schools to visit the Regional Park. £5000 would provide coach travel for 10 schools to bring one year group. The experience

of the Community Access Fund has shown that these visits lead to future bookings;

- new online and hard copy material for visitors to promote the opportunities the Regional Park offers. To theme around the 50<sup>th</sup>, materials would feature such things as 50 things to do in the Regional Park and 50 plants to spot; and
- extra promotional and advertising activity to draw in key audiences.

### **NEW PARKLANDS**

- 9 Officers have made contact with bodies which are opening new pieces of parkland within the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority area to see if these areas can be included in the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary programme.
- 10 They are also investigating potential new Lee Valley Regional Park parklands to open during the 50<sup>th</sup> year as a permanent marker for the year. A separate paper will be brought before Members as funding will be required to achieve this.

### **ONLINE OPPORTUNITIES**

- 11 Officers have been looking at online engagement and web activity. This includes giving people the opportunity to share their memories of the Regional Park from the past, old photographs of the Regional Park, share ideas for the future, say what the Regional Park means to them. The cost for this can be met within existing budgets.

### **VOLUNTEERS**

- 12 The volunteer's team will have an increased programme during Volunteers' Week which is 1 – 12 June. This can be met within existing budgets.

### **EX-MEMBERS, STAFF AND EX-STAFF**

- 13 Officers are investigating the costs of modest events to bring together ex-Members, staff and ex-staff to mark the anniversary. This can be met within existing budgets and would also be used as chances to create content for online opportunities above.

### **RESOURCE**

- 14 While much of the activity can be funded through existing budgets, in order to deliver this work Officers request a one off time limited increase in resource which will help organise activity and ensure that it is fully promoted. The estimated costs for this are £15,000.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 16 Members are requested to release £78,000 from reserves to fund the programme.

**HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 17 There is a one off time limited post – details in paragraph 14 required to deliver the campaign.

**LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

**RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

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

**EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

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

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