

LEE VALLEY REGIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

REGENERATION & PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES 17 JANUARY 2019

Members Present: David Andrews (Chairman) Derek Levy (Deputy for Christine Hamilton)
Chris Kennedy (Vice Chairman) Valerie Metcalfe
John Bevan Paul Osborn
Denise Jones Mary Sartin
Heather Johnson

Apologies Received From: Christine Hamilton, Gordon Nicholson, Syd Stavrou

Officers Present: Stephen Wilkinson - Head of Planning & Strategic Partnerships
Beryl Foster - Director of Corporate Services
Jon Carney - Head of Parklands
Nick Powell - Estate Surveyor
Claire Martin - Policy Officer
Lindsey Johnson - Committee Services Officer

Also Present: Laurie Elks
Abigail Woodman – Save Lea Marshes
Joyce Fiddeman – ESSA
3 x Members of the public

Part I

53 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Name	Agenda Item No.	Nature of Interest	<i>Prejudicial</i> ✓
Mary Sartin	-	<i>Member of Epping Forest District Council on the Area Planning Sub Committee</i>	<i>Non- Prejudicial</i>
Chris Kennedy	8	<i>Member of London Borough of Hackney</i>	<i>Non- Prejudicial</i>

54 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

THAT the Minutes of the Regeneration & Planning Committee meeting held on 22 November 2018 be approved and signed.

55 The Head of Planning & Strategic Partnerships informed Members that the next two items would be taken jointly with two public speakers and a discussion on both before the recommendations were considered. He then gave Members a brief background on the history of the Park Plan and Park Development Framework and the legislation behind their requirements. He also informed Members that we now had comments back from Natural England who have raised no objections.

The first public speaker Laurie Elks was invited to speak, key point included:

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- I made a detailed submission which has not been shared with you or adequately summarised in paper RP/25/19, nor have officers discussed it with me.
- You have co-existing duties, a green lung and active leisure.
- You have a lot of work in progress, especially north of M25, but more to be done particularly in the south with landscapes to be improved, eyesores corrected and links made.
- You've concentrated on built facilities, with little work on the landscape.
- The LV Association in 1980s advised the LVRPA and a revised Park Plan in 1986 was made which set new directions with creation of a country park and landscape strategy, footpaths and reedbeds. This was a vision, followed through.
- The situation is not the same today, although there are similarities, but too much powerful emphasis on built facilities which is dominating your budget.
- The Landscape assessment is not a strategy; it does not say what you intend or hope to do.
- It follows methodology by Natural England, this is not recommended or appropriate for the Authority.
- It falls short of landscape thematic proposals in PDF, which is now a suite of documents.
- I ask you to get officers to commission a study to see landscapes improved and connections made, will add time but its already taken more than 10 years, adopt the PDF but make it a spring board, set out aspirations, look at Walthamstow Wetlands as inspiration, millions of pounds from 3rd parties were used for this project which increased enjoyment of Authority estate.
- Chris Kennedy suggested I make a list of projects, I suggest Low Hall in Waltham Forest, it is a dead end cut off from Marsh, you say connections should be made but no commitment, no budget to do it. To say landscape proposals exist is not enough.
- Changes have been made to L1-L7, ask officers why.

The second public speaker, Abigail Woodman was invited to speak, key points included:

- The original version of the *Strategic Planning Policies* contained many sentiments Save Lea Marshes could support. However, we cannot endorse this document and we urge you not to do so, not in its original form and not in its current form: sentiments are not strategies or policies. The document does not tell us what the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority actually plans to do.
- It is also interesting to note that those sentiments Save Lea Marshes were able to support in the original version have been so watered down as to be meaningless.
- To take just one example, the original version of the document contained the following three statements:
 - L5: Resist tall buildings within the Park and consider the impacts of proposed tall buildings adjacent to the Park, in light of a full landscape and visual impact assessment.
 - L6: Protect views that promote a sense of orientation and/or appreciation of the natural and physical environment of the Lee Valley.
 - L7: Protect the openness of the Park, which is predominantly designated as Green Belt or Metropolitan Open Land.
- Now, as L3, L5 reads: Require full landscape and visual assessments to be made of all proposals for tall buildings for sites both within and adjacent to the Park. L6, as L4, remains unchanged, but L7 has been deleted in its entirety.

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- Are we to take from this that the LVRPA has absolutely no intention of protecting the openness of the Park? It's hard not to be shocked and dismayed at the message this sends.
- Regarding the Landscape Character Assessment and Strategy, this also contains sentiments rather than concrete strategies. Experience tells us that, as an organisation, the Lee Valley Regional Park uses sweeping statements to justify just about anything.
- What is arguably more upsetting, though, is the decision not to take the very valid concerns about the lack of investment in the south of the Park seriously. It is not enough to tell those of us who live in the south of the Park that the money you have invested has 'resulted in considerable change to the benefit of the whole of the Lower Lea Valley'. That investment has focused almost exclusively on the built environment within the Olympic Park. Whether or not the changes wrought are beneficial is still open to debate but what is not up for debate is that the investment has absolutely failed to bring benefits to the wider area.
- As the body scrutinising these documents, you have a great responsibility to ensure that they do what they need to do. Do you really believe these documents are the best they can be? Do you really believe their existence, in their current form, will guide the officers of the LVRPA to make good decisions in the future? My answer to this last question is an emphatic 'no' and it is for this reason that I ask you not to approve these documents.

The Chairman thanked the public speakers and asked if the documents were an assessment and not a strategy. The Head of Planning & Strategic Partnerships replied that the strategy does outline specific areas, defines character and identifies principal characteristics which might be worthy of protecting, it doesn't go into detail as that is what the area proposals are for. These documents cannot be definitive as that would require a commitment to resources we do not have at present. The documents provide a broad statement of the Authority's intent.

The Chairman asked if officers had seen a list of projects mentioned by Laurie Elks. The Head of Planning & Strategic Partnerships replied that many of the projects are covered by the area proposals. He also pointed out that the Authority had an enabling role for sites outside its ownership as has been the case of Walthamstow Wetlands project which was initiated by LVRPA. In other sites within its ownership the Authority has to lead on delivery.

The Chairman asked why changes had been made to L5 and L6 and why L7 had been removed. The Head of Planning & Strategic Partnerships responded stating that they had been amended to reflect consultation comments and the changes do reflect how local planning authorities deal with proposals for large scale developments which require full landscape and visual assessments. L7 was removed as existing Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land policies already operate to that effect and was therefore regarded as unnecessary.

A Member pointed out that at a previous meeting the Vice Chairman of the Authority had suggested that a list of potential projects be drawn up so that we can act quickly when planning developments occur near our land and that the work submitted by Laurie in advance of the meeting could provide a basis for projects. The Member suggested that we should commission a study. The Head of Planning & Strategic Partnerships responded that we should be mindful that we are a corporate body therefore potential projects should be in

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both the north and south of the Park and not just in the area referred to in Laurie's note. He also stated that commissioning another study would result in more paper with nothing happening on the ground and reminded Members that we should be delivering projects.

Another Member suggested coming up with five projects in consultation with today's speakers and put them into next year's budget so that they can be implemented. A Member pointed out that we cannot commit to projects until they have been properly costed.

A Member pointed out that this is a strategy document therefore it will be aspirational and doesn't need to be specific.

Members agreed that a prioritised list of projects should be compiled and funding for this would be added to the recommendation for the Budget and Levy Paper which is due to be heard at this afternoons Authority meeting.

56 LEE VALLEY REGIONAL PARK ACT 1966 SECTION 14
PARK DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK PROPOSED DRAFT
STRATEGIC POLICIES Paper RP/25/19

(1) the revised draft strategic policies (attached as Appendices A and B to Paper RP/25/19), amendments to the Evidence Base and the Strategic Environmental Assessment, Habitats Regulations Assessment as set out in the consultee response spreadsheet (attached as Appendix C to Paper RP/25/19) and their referral to the Authority meeting in April 2019 was approved.

57 PARK DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK PROPOSED
REVISIONS TO DRAFT LANDSCAPE CHARACTER
ASSESSMENT AND STRATEGY Paper RP/26/19

The report was introduced by the Head of Planning & Strategic Partnerships.

(1) the revised draft Landscape Character Assessment and Strategy and its referral to Authority for adoption; and

(2) delegation to the Head of Planning & Strategic Partnerships to make any further amendments to the draft Landscape Character Assessment and Strategy to take account of comments which may be made by Members was approved.

58 LEE VALLEY REGIONAL PARK ACT 1966 SECTION 14
FINAL PROPOSED REVISIONS TO DRAFT PARK
DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK PROPOSALS FOR
AREAS 6, 7 AND 8 – RIVER LEE COUNTRY PARK TO
WARE Paper RP/27/19

The third speaker, Joyce Fiddeman was invited to speak, key points included:

- We have made representations before regarding Area 7 proposals on 22/03/18.
- After that meeting we had a productive meeting with PO and officers on 04/06/18.

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- We have made written representations to PDF Panel, we weren't able to attend as it was a private meeting.
- Revised wording from the PDF Panel still gives us limited comfort as it refers to our base at Central Lagoon remaining for the 'medium term'.
- The long term aim is to 'explore options with stakeholders to relocate ESSA to Holyfield Lake', this falls short of the reassurances we need and is likely to preclude the long term lease that would be required to enable us to secure funding.
- The threat of imminent relocation as receded it still makes it difficult for us to engage with funders.
- We do not have staff of financial resources involved with moving and refute the feasibility of moving.
- There is no business case for moving so we would not be able to secure external funding for this.
- To relocate would require substantial funding and support from LVRPA's own resources, which we believe would be hard for the Authority to justify.
- At present we operate at no cost to the Authority, pay a full commercial rent and are undertaking improvements to the site at our own cost.
- In 2017 we brought in 3712 young people and 568 adults to the Park, thus supporting LVRPA's strategic objective in improving visitor numbers.
- With so many other pressing strategic matters we are bemused that we are warranting such attention.
- We have found no evidence of a market study or business case indicating a need or cost benefit for an Angling Centre at Central Lagoon.
- Local fishermen have confirmed they do not want additional anglers at Central Lagoon.

The Head of Planning & Strategic Partnerships informed Members that draft proposal was the officer's view following advice from the Fisheries Team, Central Lagoon was preferable for angling, making the best of water space and reducing conflict. The related proposal for Fisher Green sailing club was supported by Sport England. The Chairman asked if advice had been sought from professional bodies for sailing. The Head of Planning & Strategic Partnerships responded stating that they had but had only acknowledged the proposal.

A Member asked Joyce that if the move went ahead whether the facility would be better than where you currently are. She replied that it would be but it would take them 3 years to organise a move and they didn't have the ability to do it. She also pointed out that Holyfield Lake was not safe for what they do as it is deep and would be difficult to cover. She stated further that ESSA was not the only organisation to share a lake with fishing and that they have had no conflicts with fishermen in the last three years.

The Vice Chairman of the Authority stated that we should be able to offer them a long lease and that the Authority is committed to ensuring that ESSA get their funding.

- (1) **the revised draft proposals (attached as Appendices A, B and C to Paper RP/27/19) as the Authority's Park Development Framework Area Proposals for Areas 6, 7 and 8 and their referral to the Authority meeting in April 2019; and**

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- (2) **delegation to the Head of Planning & Strategic Partnerships to make amendments to the revised draft proposals and Area Maps taking into account comments from Members was approved.**

Nick Powell left the meeting.

59 CONSULTATION BY THE LONDON BOROUGH OF HACKNEY Paper RP/28/19
ON THE PROPOSED SUBMISSION (REGULATION 19) LOCAL
PLAN 2033 'HACKNEY A PLACE FOR EVERYONE'

The report was introduced by the Head of Planning & Strategic Partnerships.

- (1) **the draft comments included in Appendix A to Paper RP/28/19 as the Authority's response to the London Borough of Hackney's consultation on the Proposed Submission Version (Regulation 19) Local Plan 2033 was approved.**

Chairman

Date

The meeting started at 12pm and ended at 1.10pm.