

LEE VALLEY REGIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES
20 JUNE 2019**

To: John Bevan (Chairman) Christine Hamilton
 Ken Ayling Gordon Nicholson
 Mike Garnett Mary Sartin

Apologies Received From: Claudia Webbe

Officers Present: Beryl Foster - Director of Corporate Services
 Dan Buck - Head of Sport & Leisure
 Jon Carney - Head of Parklands
 Paul Coates - Sports Development Manager
 Karen Wheeler - Youth & Schools Service Manager
 Vince Donaldson - Senior Contracts & Quality Manager
 Lindsey Johnson - Committee Services Officer

Also Present: Nigel Foxall - Lee Valley Leisure Trust Ltd

Part I

164 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Name	Agenda Item No.	Nature of Interest
<i>Gordon Nicholson</i>	<i>Item 5</i>	<i>Member of Broxbourne Borough Council Non-Pecuniary</i>

165 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The Chairman asked when Members would see a report on wild Camping. The Director of Corporate Services responded that it was important to bring it at the right time when sufficient information was available, but it would hopefully be able to come to the next Scrutiny Committee meeting but in any event within the new Scrutiny term after the AGM.

The Chairman asked if there was an update on the cycling operator at Gunpowder Park and if Lee Valley Leisure Trust Ltd (the Trust) had been notified. The Director of Corporate Services responded stating that it was in the marketing stage for rental and the Trust could make an offer to rent if they wish.

A Member asked if the issues with the milk machines at the farm had been resolved. The Head of Parklands advised that photographic instructions have been put on the machines and he would check to see if there are now instructions regarding rejected coins.

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 25 April 2019 be approved and signed.

166 PUBLIC SPEAKING

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

The report was introduced by the Head of Sport & Leisure, including:

- Key Performance Indicators have been hit for the majority of targets;
- the target for visitors was exceeded by 0.2 million;
- the levy has been reduced to 38.8%;
- customer satisfaction is above target at 86%;
- Quest accreditations have met their targets;
- usage counters are in the process of being changed;
- there are continuing traveller incursions;
- complaints are still high due to car park charges;
- a low score at Bow Creek was due to graffiti;
- we have lost a number of staff due to uncertainty over the up-coming Leisure Services Contract and a competitive job market.

A Member asked about Freedom of Information Requests (FOI). The Director of Corporate Services responded that any request for information is treated as an FOI/EIR and from memory were mainly regarding car parking and land related issues.

Members asked about the reasons regarding staff leaving the Authority. The Head of Sports and Leisure responded that there was no particular reason, some were relocating to other parts of the country, career change and career progression. He also stated that the private sector was now offering much more competitive benefit packages. Some staff had been replaced, in others areas there were agency staff and for some jobs the Authority had taken the opportunity to look at its structure and promote existing staff. The Authority currently has around 2/3 vacancies. We will be looking into the possibility of apprenticeships where appropriate.

A Member asked for Members to be circulated with the stakeholder perceptions questionnaire.

Members were informed that car parks had two separate pricing structures. We are currently gathering information as to which structure is working best and will review at the next Fees and Charges Workshop.

A Member queried how we lost the Green Flag award at Rye House. Officers responded that we lost it because the website would only allow for one document of the management plan to be uploaded and ours consisted of four documents. The other documents were emailed separately but the judge would not accept them as they were not on the website. Often a judge will exercise discretion but not on this occasion. We have complained to Keep Britain Tidy but they have told us that the judge's decision is final. Rye House is of Green Flag standard and this is an issue that Green Flag need to sort out as they need to create a website which will take all relevant documents. The Chairman stated that in recent years Green Flag judges have been lapse in allowing some places to gain an award when they shouldn't, they had been pulled up for this now and standards would be higher, therefore the Authority will need to ensure its sites are at their best.

The Chairman noted that cleanliness in the Park had received a low score. The Head of Sport and Leisure responded that this was due to graffiti in the south of the Park and that many of the complaints related to land that bordered ours.

Members agreed that many of the headings need to be removed or changed such as 'External Capital Funding' and 'Complaints'. The Head of Sport and Leisure advised that all of the indicators would be reviewed in the following year. The Director of Corporate Services agreed that in the meantime those headings could be reviewed in time for the next meeting after July and Complaints should be able to be shown separately from FOI/EIR requests.

The Chairman asked why the time to respond to complaints had increased to 10 days. The Director of Corporate Services stated that this was because FOI/EIR's are included in this score and our statutory response time to reply is longer than our complaints time to respond. FOI/EIR's would be separated from this score for the next meeting.

(1) the report was noted.

168 COMMUNITY ACCESS FUND UPDATE

The Sports Development Manager and Youth & Schools Service Manager gave an update on the Community Access Fund (CAF), key points included:

- the CAF has a yearly budget of £80k up to 2020 with 80% used by the Sports Development Team and 20% by Youth & Schools to attract schools from further afield;
- the CAF has supported 230 different community groups and 13,500 individuals to access sporting and physical activity provision;
- outdoor learning has supported 78 schools/organisations from 41 different boroughs across the region, with 6,592 young people benefiting from the programme;
- overall 98% of boroughs have been engaged through the CAF July 2015 to March 2019.

Members asked if officers were looking to increase the budget. Officers responded that this is something they would like to do. A Member reminded Members that it was within their power to look at the budget and make recommendations that the CAF budget be increased. A Member referred to Pupil Referral Units and asked if these schools were or could be included in this programme.

A Member asked if the Authority can apply for funding for the CAF. Officers reply that currently it is only funded by us and that there were issues in applying for funding in terms of resources and restrictions. Schools could do match funding, presently we usually pay for their coach and they pay for the activity. For young carers we usually pay for their activity as they can make their own transport arrangements.

The Chairman asked if schools from outer Essex had used the CAF. Officers responded that four schools from Tendring Borough Council had made use of the CAF. The Chairman expressed his delight.

The Chairman stated that he and Members of the Scrutiny Committee were sympathetic to the CAF and wanted the scheme to continue with an increase in funding. He also thought that we should look to include children from Pupil Referral Units in the scheme. He would like the CAF and its future funding to be discussed at the next Budget Workshop.

169 HOLYFIELD HALL FARM UPDATE

Paper S/50/19

The report was introduced by the Head of Parklands, including:

- all recommendations from the Strut and Parker report have been implemented;
- ventilation for the calf unit is being actioned currently;
- Holyfield Hall Farm (the Farm) currently costs the Authority £30k, however the Authority receives £100k of benefits;
- the Farm is functioning well, there are still some challenges, but as the recommendations become embedded there will be continuous improvements;
- the staff have all grasped the challenge with enthusiasm.

The Chairman stated that he would like the next Members visit to incorporate a visit to the F Farm so that Members can thank staff for their hard work.

A Member asked if a Manager had been found. The Head of Parklands responded that it had and an existing staff member had been promoted.

A Member asked if schools visit the Farm. The Head of Parklands responded that they do and that this is another benefit of the Farm that is not included in the £100k of benefits.

A Member asked if the Farmhouse was being marketed. The Head of Parklands responded stating that it was, but once rented it would show under the Property Team's budget and not the Farm.

(1) the report was noted.

170 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman expressed concern as to the Scrutiny Committee being restricted to 1 hour and requested that this not happen for future meetings.

Chairman

Date

The meeting started at 1pm and ended at 2pm.