



LEE VALLEY REGIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
ANNUAL AUTHORITY MEETING
7 JULY 2016 AT 14:00

Agenda Item No:

9

Report No:

A/4232/16

2016/17 WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

Presented by the Chief Executive

SUMMARY

Members approved the new 3 year business plan for 2016/17-2018/19 in January 2016 (paper A/4221/16). This paper updates Members on the 2016/17 work programme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members Note: (1) the report; and

Members Approve: (2) a) that over the next 6 months officers develop a strategy to allow for further reduction of the levy over the next 4 year period 2017/18-2020/21;

b) that a Member working group comprising the Executive Committee Members provide oversight and direction for this exercise.

BACKGROUND

- 1 The Authority's 3 year business plan (2016/17-2018/19) was approved by Members in January 2016. From this 3 year plan officers have developed a work programme for 2016/17.
- 2 The 2016/17 Authority work programme covers a wide range of areas, from major capital schemes, e.g., ice centre and Pickets Lock, to significant policy development, for example, Land and Property Strategy and Levy Strategy. Other major work areas include a commissioning strategy for the Leisure Services Contract and a service review programme for all Authority services and activities.

PARK DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

3 Project description

A corporate document involving the development of proposals for all areas of

the Regional Park.

4 Update

Work this year will focus on completion of proposals for Areas 6, 7 and 8 which has been paused following the Valley Grown Nurseries appeal, complaint and the land and property review.

LAND AND PROPERTY STRATEGY

5 Project Description

Develop a Land and Property Strategy for the Authority which will be recommended to the Executive Committee and finally Authority. Members have set up a task and finish group and their terms of reference are as follows:

- To review the land and property portfolio in support of delivery of the Authority's statutory remit and overall objectives
- To review adopted land acquisition policies
- Develop a land and property acquisition/disposal strategy within the parameters of the Lee Valley Regional Park Act 1966

6 Update

Since the Land and Property Working Group was set up in December 2015 it has met on 5 occasions. Members have reviewed the land/property work already undertaken by officers across the whole of the Regional Park including those areas for potential acquisition as well as those areas for potential disposal. They have reviewed land purchases over the last 10-15 years and also considered historic acquisition policies for the Carthage and Wharf Road areas. The Working Group also undertook a number of site visits to look at land that could be considered as no longer required for Park purposes. The next step for the Working Group is to start to discuss what the Authority's approach to acquisition and disposal should be in the future, with a fresh approach and development of a Land and Property Strategy for consideration by the Executive Committee and then full Authority.

PICKETTS LOCK

7 Project Description

Following the opening of Lee Valley Athletics Centre in 2007, and the consequent closure of the former Leisure Centre which has since been demolished, there has been an opportunity to fill the void on the central development site with other leisure related facilities. A landmark scheme such as a snowdome or wave park was contemplated in 2009, but was abandoned in the face of the poor rental returns for use of the land and the predicted procurement costs.

8 Update

Officers revisited development of the Picketts Lock site alongside the ice centre feasibility study. A market testing was started at the end of 2015 for medium and smaller sized leisure led operators. Strong interest from a number of leisure companies has been received. The range of interest includes ten pin bowling, indoor trampolining, a fitness gym, indoor adventure golf and a range of food and beverage outlets. Theoretically this gives a viable scheme, and so currently under consideration are options for the use of an external investor/project manager versus running the project in-house with specialist support. It is

envisaged that the selection of a project partner will have been made by the end of 2016/17, and progress will be advancing on the designs of the scheme and firming up the leisure operators on binding agreements. Officers are working closely with Lee Valley Leisure Trust (the Trust) to ensure that the optimum outcome is delivered for the whole site.

- 9 The Picketts Lock project will be discussed in detail at the next Land & Property Review Working Group meeting on 21 July, with a report recommending a way forward going to an Executive Committee meeting in August.

ICE CENTRE PROJECT

10 Project Description

The project should Authority Members approve the findings and recommendations in June 2016 is to progress the Ice Centre twin pad development. This will be a multifunctional project with a variety of work streams taking place at the same time, for example; planning, funding, design and associated enabling works.

The project will, in its first stage post the anticipated Authority Board approval in June run through to the end of 2016 to develop the work around planning, funding and how the development fits within the wider Waltham Forest master planning exercise. The timescales post this will be dependent on this work, but it is hoped that a new facility would be operational in 2019/2020.

11 Update

Authority approved the recommendation's following the third stage of the Ice Centre feasibility report to:

- select the current site as the preferred site for a new twin pad;
- give approval to move to the next stage (RIBA stages 0-2);
- the allocation of £350,000 to the next stage of the project;
- to accept £50,000 from the London Borough of Waltham Forest towards the next stage of the project.

The procurement of a Project Management consultant has begun and once procured (end of August) this consultant will lead the process for appointing a design team. Key areas of work up to spring 2017 are:

- developing the capital funding mix;
- design of and pre planning for a temporary rink;
- 1st stage of new venue design;
- relevant environmental / biodiversity studies;
- business plan refinement;
- public consultation.

The Member Working Group will continue to provide oversight during this stage of the project

REVISION OF LEE VALLEY BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

12 Project Description

The current Biodiversity Action Plan was produced in 2000 and is now due for

review. This revision will seek to provide an updated overarching framework for conservation within the Regional Park. The priority habitats and species identified through the Plan will each have an action plan and SMART targets for delivery within a 10-year timescale. The Plan will seek to draw together key stakeholders both internally and externally to set, deliver and monitor these targets.

13 Update

The reviewed Plan is in draft and consultations are being arranged for the remaining part of 2016, on target to re-launch in 2017.

EAST INDIA DOCK BASIN

14 Project Description

Regeneration of the Basin to improve its 'offer' with a focus on enhancing its historic fabric and the site's importance as a site for 'access to nature'.

15 Update

Officers are looking at the feasibility of an education hub on the site and have met with the local developer Ballymoore to discuss the funding of this initiative.

SERVICE REVIEWS

16 Project Description

All Authority service areas are to be reviewed over the next 2 years. Each service will be looked at in terms of: why the service is provided, how it is provided, the cost and quality of provision, options for delivering in a more cost effective way.

17 Update

The senior officer team, comprising the Chief Executive, Director of Finance & Resources and Director of Corporate Services, is leading this service review process. Two reviews are currently underway, Sport & Leisure (Sports Development, Youth & Schools, Events and the Leisure Contract Client) and Myddelton House Gardens and Visitor Centre. These reviews will be completed by early autumn. Other reviews planned for 2016/17 include Parks Management and Property & Asset Management.

PARTNERSHIPS

18 Project Description

Public bodies are continually looking at ways of delivering their services in a more efficient and effective manner. Collaboration with similar bodies/neighbouring organisations has become an increasingly common approach, notably between neighbouring local authorities with joint procurement and/or merging of services.

The Authority works with a host of partner agencies in and around the Lee Valley Regional Park and there is scope to develop partnerships which could deliver benefits for both parties.

19 Update

Meetings have taken place with Essex County Council, Corporation of London (CoL), Bucks County Council and the Canal & River Trust.

- 20 Essex County Council is looking at their open spaces and how they create income generation, which in the main is car park charging and cafes, but also looking at activities they have developed, such as the stickman trail aimed at toddlers and the Gruffalo trail aimed at families. There is clearly the potential for similar initiatives in Lee Valley Regional Park. Essex County Council is looking at our fixed camping scheme as it is thinking of introducing a similar product.
- 21 The Authority uses its cattle herds to graze areas of Lee Valley Regional Park. This is important for land management and conservation. The CoL also uses cattle to graze areas of Epping Forest so we are discussing shared grazing opportunities. In addition we are discussing joint staff training with CoL Forest Keepers and Authority Rangers. In addition officers are working with both Essex County Council and CoL on a framework agreement with regard to a Park security contract.
- 22 Bucks County Council is developing an app that encourages visitors to become active in open spaces. Officers are looking at how such an app could be applied to Lee Valley Regional Park.
- 23 Together with the Canal & River Trust officers are looking at joint site management improvements at Stonebridge Lock and the surrounding areas. There is also a joint piece of work looking at a Lee Valley wide mooring strategy to address the future mooring demands. Officers from the Authority and the Trust are engaged with Canal & River Trust on this piece of work.

LEVY STRATEGY

24 Project Description

The pressure from some precepted authorities to reduce/eliminate the levy has continued. Whilst the Authority has continued to reduce the levy each year there is a need to have a clear strategy in place. A levy strategy will be produced that shows ambition allowing for further reduction of the levy whilst also ensuring that the statutory role, financial standing and regional relevance of Lee Valley Regional Park Authority are maintained.

25 Update

The first half of 2016 has seen a significant increase in political activity designed to deliver a significant reduction in the Authority levy or indeed see its removal. There has been the proposed amendment to the Housing & Planning Bill which proposed that authorities who pay the levy should have the option whether to pay on an annual basis. Whilst the proposed amendment was withdrawn and didn't progress beyond a short debate in the House of Lords, this action indicated a clear intent from some contributing authorities. Since the House of Lords debate some Borough Leaders have restated their position on the levy.

26 There is an expectation from some political Leaders that the Authority reduces the current levy (£10.8m) significantly over the next few years. In recent correspondence with the Chairman, the Leader of the Conservative boroughs at London Councils suggested that the London Conservative borough Leaders would like to see a plan which removes the need for the levy completely over the next year years.

27 In response to the current political climate around the levy it is proposed that the

Authority looks at options for a reduction of the levy during the period 2017/18 to 2020/21. A Member working group comprising the Executive Committee Members could provide direction and oversight during this exercise.

- 28 In July-September the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Chief Executive will be meeting key politicians from Government, London Councils, Essex and Herts to discuss their concerns and suggestions around the levy. The outcomes from these discussions will be fed into the levy strategy.
- 29 There are a number of areas that will be looked at over the next 6 months:
- Leisure Services Contract – at the last Authority meeting in June the Trust set out its vision for 2017-27 (current Leisure Services Contract runs until 2020). With modest investment the Trust suggested that the Management Fee could be reduced by 50%, i.e., from the current £3.2M to £1.6M. The Trust further estimated that a medium level of investment could deliver a zero Management Fee in the ten year period and significant investment (circa £25M) could deliver a surplus position. Members will have the opportunity to learn more about the Trust’s investment ideas on the visits to the venues in July. All investment proposals from the Trust will need to make a credible business case and Authority officers will carry out detailed investment appraisals;
Over the next few months Authority and Trust officers will look at where early investment might yield good returns in the next couple of years;
 - Land & Property Strategy - there is the potential for the Authority’s estate to deliver an improved financial return and to potentially support new capital investment and/or a revenue return;
 - Picketts Lock - there has been an encouraging response to the marketing of the site for commercial leisure operators;
 - Review of Authority services as set out in the 2016-19 business plan and including, shared services, improved income generation and staffing costs.

LEISURE SERVICES CONTRACT COMMISSIONING STRATEGY

30 Project Description

A year into the Leisure Services Contract the Authority needs to determine what its long term objectives are for each of the 14 venues and establish a commissioning strategy to deliver those objectives.

There is a bigger commissioning strategy picture which needs to look across all Authority services. The service review process will look at this for each service.

With regard to the Leisure Services Contract there are a number of areas of research and discussion which will inform our commissioning strategy:

- Authority objectives for each venue;
- analysis of the current Leisure Services Contract;
- procurement/legal framework;
- analysis of trends and good practice in the Leisure Services Contract market.

31 Update

Officers are currently looking at the procurement options for the Leisure Services Contract, as the Authority looks beyond the current 5 year contract to a

longer term arrangement. It is important that over the next year the Authority determines its procurement strategy for the Leisure Services Contract and then starts to work towards implementation.

ETON MANOR

32 Project Description

There are a number of strands of work which need to come together to deliver the optimum outcome for the Eton Manor site. The Authority working with the Tennis Foundation is about to commission a feasibility study to look at the covering of the 6 outdoor tennis courts. In addition, as a result of the Ice Centre feasibility exercise, there is a need to determine a development project for the 6,000m² platform. Furthermore work with England Hockey continues with regard to investment in event related infrastructure.

33 Update

The feasibility study looking at the potential covering of the 6 outdoor courts is due to be completed in the summer. Following conclusion of the ice centre feasibility study officers will now start to look at the alternative development options for the Eton Manor site. It is felt that there is a strong case for visitor accommodation on the site and officers will explore this option over the coming months. In addition there are further opportunities to enhance the hockey arena as a major event venue. The Chairman and Chief Executive recently met with the England Hockey Chair and Chief Executive to discuss these options. There is potential for investment in infrastructure which will assist in making future events a more viable proposition and reduce the need for Authority revenue support.

DOBBS WEIR

34 Project Description

In November 2011 Members approved proposals for the phased re-opening of Lee Valley Caravan Park at Dobbs Weir. The overall scheme comprised the creation of 120 holiday home pitches, re-opening the caravan storage area and touring site, staff accommodation improvements, new reception building and minor refurbishment of the touring amenity building.

Phase 1 of the project was completed in 2012 comprising 24 static holiday home pitches and enhanced associated services, as well as all other works detailed above.

Phase 2 was completed in 2015 and comprised a further 34 static holiday home pitches and improvements to the touring field including the installation of 12 Wigwams and associated raised decking.

35 Update

Phase 3&4 of the project is due for completion in 2016/17 and will comprise the remaining 63 static holiday home pitches (34 from Phase 3 and 29 from Phase 4) and further enhancements to the site.

HOLYFIELD FARM INVESTMENT

36 Project Description

Consider current use at Holyfield Farm and explore the following options to establish if any of these development schemes are viable to take forward:

- making more use of the currently under-utilised and semi derelict listed top barns at Holyfield Farm by relocating the North Ranger team to the Holyfield Farm site, maximising use of Ranger time by reducing travelling time to and from their current location at Myddelton House;
- develop option for securing at least 2 bedroom staff accommodation in the Fisheries Barn to allow relocation of existing staff member from current static caravan home on site which only carries temporary planning permission. Also give consideration to developing the remainder of the Fisheries barn into holiday accommodation to include two 2 bedroom holiday let cottages to produce an income stream and form part of the overall business case.

37 Update

An officer group has been established which has met twice to consider options for the site. Surveys have been undertaken which are currently under review and an informal view has been obtained from the local planning authority. It is hoped that an outline business case can come forward in the autumn with two possible options which will allow Members to consider whether or not there is sufficient merit in moving to more detailed work on feasibility on one of the options.

REVIEW OF IT INFRASTRUCTURE AND OFFICE ACCOMMODATION

38 Project Description

To define the future IT infrastructure and software requirements of the Authority and the Trust and to provide a three year plan to move to a separation of systems/data that meets both organisations business requirements as independent organisations.

39 Update

Task	Completion By
Agreement of Brief	September 2016
Review/Completion of IT Strategy/Action Plan	March 2017
Recommendations to Executive/Authority	April 2017
Procurement for new suppliers	April 2017 – September 2017
Implementation	October 2017 – March 2019

CYCLING STRATEGY

40 Project Description

The commissioning of a strategy to support bids for capital funding from external bodies including Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)/planning obligations and Transport for London and highways authorities.

41 Update

An ITT has been sent to three interested parties and a decision on the successful company will be made by early July.

ESTABLISH LEE VALLEY REGIONAL PARK AS A 'CENTRE FOR OUTDOOR ACTIVITY'

42 Project Description

The Ranger team have run a number of successful "bush craft" events across the Park and there seems to be an appetite for these types of events with the public. Therefore we believe there is an opportunity to capitalise on the public's desire, our location and making use of sites that are currently under used and provide that "wild" experience on the edge of London. The events will cater for various different markets from short fire starting courses to full blown weekend length ones where the participants "live" in the wild over a full weekend.

43 Update

Rangers are working on delivering new bushcraft and crafts activities/workshops. Rangers have attended Tottenham Festival with a small sample of the craft items and promoting the workshops. In June staff from both the Authority and Trust will be trialling bushcraft sessions at Dobbs Weir and the Waterworks Centre. Further sessions will be taking place in September for staff and Authority Members to partake and feedback. As well as the activities a new site for wild camping is being created on Spitalbrook, which is programmed to open in 2017 following feedback from this year's trials. This location has been visited by the Land & Property Working Group and Members will have the opportunity to participate as mentioned above and also visit the location as part of the Member tours in September.

REVIEW OF PAY STRUCTURE AND TERMS & CONDITIONS

44 Project Description

To review pay structures, terms and conditions for Authority staff.

Revise flexible working/working from home, revisit benefits package to ensure it is competitive, affordable and in line with other similar organisations.

45 Update

In the next few months a piece of work will be commissioned which will look at where the Authority is, in terms of pay structure and terms & conditions, in relation to best practice across the public sector and other sport and leisure organisations. This work should be completed by the end of 2016. The outcome of this work will provide a context for any changes the Authority may wish to consider.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

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

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 47 Existing capital resources are fully earmarked to deliver the current approved capital programme to 2020 which in the main focuses on the final development phase of Dobbs Weir (Paper E/451/16), specific site land acquisitions at Aqua-side (now completed Paper A/4217/15) and Waverly Nursery (in progress Paper A4210/15), Asset Protection Management and Development, IT infrastructure and development and smaller site improvements.

- 48 Future major project developments and approvals will require identification of new resources to fund these, either through utilising the unapplied capital receipt from the sale of Olympic land (£17m), future land sales, borrowing and/or third party revenue contributions. Funding proposals will need to be firmly established as part of any business plan and accord with the Prudential Code as being prudent and affordable.

HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 49 There are no additional human resource implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report. Existing staffing resources and budgets will be utilised to deliver the corporate priorities unless specific external resources are required to deliver a project/review, for example Ice Centre feasibility monies.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 51 The major risk to delivering the corporate priorities is ensuring sufficient resources are available to deliver the 2016-19 business plan. The work to deliver a levy strategy and a revised medium term financial plan are about to commence and will be key in identifying and setting out those resources required to deliver the priorities set out in this paper. The external pressure on the levy is identified as a key risk in the corporate risk register and is being monitored closely by Members and officers alike.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

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

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

the Trust	Lee Valley Leisure Trust Limited (trading as Vibrant Partnerships)
CoL	Corporation of London
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy