

LEE VALLEY REGIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

**ADDITIONAL AUTHORITY MEETING
26 JANUARY 2017**

Members Present: Paul Osborn (Chairman) Maggie McEwen
John Bevan Valerie Metcalfe
Stephen Carr Gordon Nicholson
Christine Hamilton Mary Sartin
Denise Jones Alan Searing
Christopher Kennedy Syd Stavrou
Gerry Lyons Ken Ayling (Deputy for Lyn White)
Graham McAndrew

Apologies Received From: Derrick Ashley, David Andrews, Malcolm Cowan, Gwyneth Deakins, Nick Draper, Zuber Gulamussen, Linda Haysey, Ross Houston, Heather Johnson, John, Knapman, Sarah McDermott, Alan Smith, Simon Walsh

Officers Present: Shaun Dawson - Chief Executive
Beryl Foster - Director of Corporate Services
Simon Sheldon - Director of Finance & Resources
Stephen Wilkinson - Head of Planning & Strategic Partnerships
Stephen Bromberg - Head of Communications
Alex Farris - Greenspace Manager
Sandra Bertschin - Committee & Members' Services Manager

Also Present: London Borough of Waltham Forest
Jane Custance - Director of Strategic Planning & Development
Carolyn Seymour - Regeneration & Sustainability Programme Mgr
Richard Tomkinson

Public Speakers
Vicky Sholund
Laurie Elks
Paul Charman
Len Weiss
Bob Sullivan

19 members of the public

Part I

27 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Name	Agenda Item No.	Nature of Interest	
Chris Kennedy	3 & 4	Knows several members of the public present	<i>Non-pecuniary</i>

ADDITIONAL AUTHORITY MEETING MINUTES 26 JANUARY 2017

28 PUBLIC SPEAKING

The Chairman agreed to equally split the permitted public speaking time between the 4 registered public speakers.

Members agreed to permit a late request from Bob Sullivan to speak at the meeting.

Vicky Sholund addressed the meeting, including:

- there was a petition of over 4,000 signatures against building on Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) at The Waterworks;
- land around The Waterworks and Thames Water site was MOL and therefore protected from inappropriate development under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and London Plan;
- approval of development on MOL would unlock all MOL and Green Belt for development;
- although you may think development on MOL in the poorer southern end of the Park is acceptable the richer northern end would not find it acceptable in their locality;
- land around The Waterworks is used for leisure and recreation by local people and therefore the Lee Valley Regional Park Act 1966 (the Park Act) does not empower the Authority to sell it;
- the land is flood plain and therefore development is against the NPPF;
- at no point during consultation about the new twin pad ice centre was it said that it would be funded by selling off open land. If the twin pad can't be built without selling off open space then it cannot be justified;
- The Waterworks is only under-used as those managing it have let it be run into the ground. So much more could be done to turn it into a vibrant community hub. If The Waterworks building is no longer required then the land should be returned to nature;
- the marshes habitat provides a home for many species. The nature reserve cannot exist as an island surrounded by noise, light and air pollution from residential development;
- as predicted in 2012 we have seen piecemeal development on open space and in each case local people have been told that they are only losing a small piece of land. The cumulative effect of these has a serious impact on local residents quality of life. None of the green spaces that have been lost have been replaced with green space; and
- the Authority's statement in 2011 when opposing the Essex Wharf development applies equally to the proposed development.

Paul Charman addressed the meeting, including:

- the proposed development was the reverse of the Authority's purpose as stated in the introduction to the Park Act;
- the Authority would be enabling urban development in what it was created to defend;
- the Authority was not a provider of sports, but leisure activities most compatible with open land;
- the proposed development together with an enlarged ice centre would result in a significant loss of open land;
- how does the Authority intend to argue that the land is not required for any of its functions as all the land it owns is serving its purpose; and
- it was very sad that instead of doing its utmost to combat urban sprawl the Authority was seeking to increase it.

ADDITIONAL AUTHORITY MEETING MINUTES 26 JANUARY 2017

Len Weiss addressed the meeting, including:

- air pollution levels in London have already exceeded danger levels this year necessitating the issue of public health warnings;
- green open space was a precious element in combatting air pollution;
- the Authority and the London Borough of Waltham Forest should work together in a more purposeful way to put the reduction of environmental pollution and the promotion of biodiversity first;
- the Authority's strategic framework states that it is a cohesive and sustainable green lung for London, therefore it should manage the reduction of pollution to air, water and soil;
- the Authority should meet its current needs without compromising future generations;
- one of the main messages of the Vision document is that the green open spaces of Leyton Marsh should be more accessible to residents as they are hidden and there are obstacles to access;
- Waltham Forest Council does not have a sufficiently robust masterplan or action plan against which to require developers to consider public concerns about height and density in new developments;
- new developments, such as 97 Lea Bridge Road, would provide the Park with a large new access group;
- to take away a purpose built facility such as The Waterworks cannot make sense and the proposed housing would create another barrier to the green open space;
- the Markhouse Corner and Lea Bridge Residents Association set out the following:
 - the Authority to keep green space and wild areas as unspoilt as possible whilst reinstating the golf course;
 - no to rezoning The Waterworks for 6 storeys;
 - object to the Authority running down The Waterworks which was not a legitimate reason to sell it, with the suggestion that it be turned into a cycle hub or community centre with essential housing on an upper floor;
 - support for expansion of the ice centre but the Authority should look to its reserves and borrowing to finance it;
 - the need for better access to the marshes by means of crossings over the river and railway; and
 - to think again about rezoning and hence weakening of the essential green lung.

Laurie Elks addressed the meeting, including:

- the decision being considered was whether the land could be sold for housing;
- the land adjoins the open land of the Regional Park;
- the legal duty of the Authority was to develop, improve, preserve and manage the Regional Park;
- the Regional Park was created to be a green lung;
- the relevant local authorities came together to preserve the Regional Park as a place for leisure, provided places like the ice centre do not clash with that objective;
- to sell land is not preserving the Regional Park for leisure;
- the report on the Corporate Land & Property Strategy was coy about the legal advice received, with new advice being verbal and general, but a policy of maligned neglect was legally a very dubious strategy;
- following consultation in 2011 local resident groups had suggested a variety of schemes to improve the area but other than the ice centre none of these had been progressed;

ADDITIONAL AUTHORITY MEETING MINUTES 26 JANUARY 2017

- the Authority is obliged to protect MOL;
- he had attempted to engage the Authority on a number of occasions but had been met with a dead bat;
- the Authority's estate in London was unloved and had been abandoned;
- not one penny of the £17m receipt for the sale of land for the London 2012 Games had been spent for landscape purposes;
- this looks like being a black day for the Authority; and
- normally when responding to planning consultations the Authority is asked to approve a letter of response, in this case there is delegation. Stakeholders need to be able to make a contribution to the Authority's response.

Bob Sullivan addressed the meeting, including:

- disagree with some of the criticisms of the Authority;
- was a Member for many years and was proud to fly the flag for open spaces;
- where the Authority did not have a voice on developments such as Essex Wharf because it did not own the land, now surprised to find that the Authority is selling its own land for residential development;
- the Authority's own report acknowledges that aspects of the proposal are counter to its adopted planning proposals and the Park Development Framework, such as ensuring no development adjacent to the Regional Park adversely affects it and to avoid built development which compromises the purpose of areas of Green Belt and MOL; and
- it was disappointing that the Authority was proposing development on open land, it should keep the flag flying for open space.

29 CONSULTATION BY LONDON BOROUGH OF WALTHAM
FOREST ON LEA BRIDGE EASTSIDE – VISION

Paper A/4238/17

TABLED Lea Bridge Eastside – Vision

The Head of Planning & Strategic Partnerships introduced the report, including:

- all of the area, including the Ice Centre, Riding Centre and The Waterworks was MOL;
- from its inception the Regional Park has been about large scale venues;
- Walthamstow Marshes was a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a site of importance for nature conservation; and
- the Authority's adopted planning proposals and Park Development Framework were designed to protect the Regional Park but also recognise that the Regional Park includes large venues as well as Green Belt.

Jane Custance, Director of Strategic Planning & Development, London Borough of Waltham Forest, introduced the Lea Bridge Eastside Vision, key points included:

- there were 6 planks to the Vision;
- the borough of Waltham Forest was a good place to live but by looking at some sites which are not giving the best it was hoped to make the borough an excellent place to live;
- the Council wanted to retain existing businesses and grow and attract others;
- new viable neighbourhoods could be established providing new facilities, retail, new or expanded schools and GP surgeries through to health hubs;

ADDITIONAL AUTHORITY MEETING MINUTES 26 JANUARY 2017

- connectivity was also being reviewed with a view to providing new bridges to improve access;
- people were moving out of Hackney to Waltham Forest so there was pressure on development;
- the Council's vision aimed to provide a framework where it could proactively drive applications coming forward and be a platform for transport improvements;
- overall the Vision, through regeneration and modernisation, looked to deliver 4,350 new homes and 300,000sq metres of commercial space;
- the reopened Lea Bridge Station was exceeding anticipated passenger numbers but the land around it was isolated and desolate. It was proposed to use some of the Council's land assets to create a new centre;
- Low Hall would be reviewed to see if it could be rationalised to make new employer space;
- growth of the Church Road industrial estate had been unplanned and therefore there were problems with connectivity. It was proposed to relocate GBN Waste from the site and have an employment led regenerational scheme;
- improvements to Dagenham Brook would also be reviewed;
- the Council was working closely with Transport for London for possible improvements to Leyton underground station and was lobbying for another new station at Ruckholt Road;
- redevelopment of Leyton Mills as a new centre was being reviewed;
- the Council was working with the Corporation of London regarding better use of the new Spitalfields market to provide a better facility;
- the Thames Water site was identified as potential for regeneration with 50% open land use. However since its purchase by the Educational Funding Authority it was likely that a schools plan would come forward;
- consultation on the Vision would conclude on 31 January and it was planned to submit the Vision to Cabinet in February 2017. However it was likely that a petition would be received which may require decision by full Council;
- the Vision was a pre pre-application opportunity for people to comment and was also pre-work for a review of the Local Plan;
- a direction of travel would be submitted to Cabinet in the Spring; and
- the Council was pleased to give an opportunity for people to engage at an early stage and comments received would be taken into account.

The Head of Planning & Strategic Partnerships highlighted that:

- large venues were reflective of the Regional Park;
- although the release of land for development at The Waterworks was contrary to some adopted policies, a case could be made for its release;
- most of the proposed development area at The Waterworks already had a built footprint and the release of just under 5 acres of open land was included;
- the achievement of a capital receipt had distinct advantages for investment in the new twin pad ice centre and parklands;
- proposals for the Thames Water site were unclear but the Authority would work with the Council and site owners to assess how its proposals could be integrated into the scheme;
- a new station at Leyton would address inaccessibility and low PTAL (Public Transport Accessibility Level) for the Lee Valley Hockey & Tennis Centre and Lee Valley VeloPark; and

ADDITIONAL AUTHORITY MEETING MINUTES 26 JANUARY 2017

- the meeting was not being asked to approve land sale but to formulate the Authority's response to the Lea Bridge Eastside - Vision.

Members made the following comments:

- acknowledgement that the main objection from the public present was the release of open land for development at The Waterworks;
- that when the Authority approved plans for development of a twin pad ice centre at Lea Bridge Road it had stated that the new facility would stay within the footprint of the existing centre, so to consider development outside of the existing built footprint at The Waterworks was completely counter to what was said then;
- support for the twin pad ice centre and enabling development only within existing built footprint and car park at The Waterworks and request for a vote on this;
- development, if at all, of a twin pad ice centre should not be linked to the disposal of land at The Waterworks;
- acknowledgment that places can't stand still, the environment changes and that there were specific instances where building on MOL or Green Belt was permitted for special need;
- enquiry as to London Borough of Waltham Forest's analysis of its housing sequential need;
- whilst commending the London Borough of Waltham Forest on its Vision document, recognition that GLA approval would be required for any scheme;
- the London Borough of Waltham Forest did not want to be a dormitory borough and the Vision document would provide a basis to refuse residential development where there were plans for commercial and industrial development to provide employment;
- whilst the London Borough of Waltham Forest wholly supported the development of a sustainable twin pad ice centre on Lea Bridge Road, the Vision document enabled the Authority to do as it wished with land at The Waterworks and its inclusion in the Vision document had been at the request of the Authority;
- the Vision document was a strategy rather than a specific planning policy;
- opposition to building on MOL;
- support for conformity with policy L3.2 that "new buildings, change of use or other development for non-Regional Park purposes should be located within existing established areas and should not adversely affect the amenity, environmental quality, visitor enjoyment or openness of the Regional Park;
- request that the response include:
 - statements to protect the Regional Park in line with the Park Act;
 - that accessibility and opening up areas of parklands be supported;
 - for the Thames Water site the proposal for a public path on the east side of the River Lee to open up the area and that our existing area 2 proposals for the site stand;
 - any development on The Waterworks site to be less than 6 stories; and
- request that Members have the opportunity to comment on a draft response.

Jane Custance advised that:

- the Vision document was not a planning document and therefore did not have evidence behind it, it was a pre-stage and the Council was in the process of updating its evidence base;
- the GLA was a consultee and the London Plan was one of the reasons why the Local Plan was being reviewed; and

ADDITIONAL AUTHORITY MEETING MINUTES 26 JANUARY 2017

- the Council was not putting forward the argument that MOL had to be released to meet its housing need.

The Chairman commented that the consensus view was that should the Authority be minded to seek residential development at The Waterworks, development should be restricted to the brownfield site. A draft response would be circulated to Members for comment to meet the consultation deadline. Any substantive comments received after the consultation deadline would be reported to Waltham Forest Council.

- (1) the issues raised in this report were noted; and**
- (2) delegation to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairman, based on discussions at the meeting and comments as agreed by Members, compilation of the Authority's response was approved.**

30 DATE OF NEXT MEETING OF THE AUTHORITY

It was noted that the next meeting of the Authority will be held on Thursday, 27 April 2017 at 2.00pm at Myddelton House.

Chairman

Date

The meeting started at 2.00pm and ended at 3.12pm.