



LEE VALLEY REGIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
AUTHORITY MEETING
20 OCTOBER 2016 AT 14:00

Agenda Item No:

5

Report No:

A/4234/16

AUTHORITY SIX MONTH WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

Presented by the Chief Executive

SUMMARY

This report provides Members with an overview of the Authority's performance over the first 6 months of 2016/17. A detailed performance report focusing on Performance Indicators was presented to the Executive Committee earlier on today.

Key areas of work over the first 6 months of 2016/17 included Ice Centre project, land and property review, levy strategy and development at Picketts Lock.

RECOMMENDATION

Members Note: (1) the report.

BACKGROUND

- 1 The priority areas of work for the first 6 months of 2016/17 reflect the key themes of 2016/17-2018/19 business plan:
 - a) increase income from existing venues/sites through a range of investment opportunities both directly and with or via 3rd parties and pursue the generation of commercial income through Authority owned land and property assets;
 - b) improve the accessibility of Lee Valley Regional Park to its regional constituency through marketing and community engagement initiatives;
 - c) continue to develop new operational models for its services as the Authority moves to being more of an enabling organisation;
 - d) enhance the Regional Park's environmental infrastructure;
 - e) provide a first rate visitor experience and grow the visitor figure to seven million by 2018/19;
 - f) continue to reduce the cost of Lee Valley Regional Park to the taxpayers of London, Essex and Herts.

PARK DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

- 2 Work this year will focus on completion on the development of a series of strategic policies and detailed proposals for Areas 6, 7 and 8. Consultation drafts of each of these will be ready for May 2017 with the intention of adoption by year end. This work is largely dependent on the outcome of consultation and the adoption of the Land and Property Strategy.

LAND & PROPERTY STRATEGY

- 3 Members of the Land & Property Working Group have looked at a draft land and property strategy which is now being revised. This will set out the proposed approach for the Authority in relation to acquisition and disposal. Due to the potential change on approach to disposal it may be necessary to test this approach with Counsel and obtain some written legal advice. This will then be discussed by the Executive Committee and then full Authority in January 2017.

PICKETTS LOCK

- 4 It will be recalled that marketing for potential occupiers commenced in late 2015 and leasing offers have been received from ten pin bowling, adventure golf, indoor trampolining and budget fitness gym operators. Theoretically these anchor traders, which would be supported by food and beverage outlets in the final line-up, gives a viable scheme. The Land & Property Working Group has been briefed with alternative options for the financing and delivery of the scheme, and a report will be presented to the November Executive Committee, prior to full consideration by the Authority.

ICE CENTRE PROJECT

- 5 A three stage feasibility study was completed in March 2016 with Members approving a budget of £400,000 to progress the RIBA stages 0-2. Waltham Forest District Council have committed £50,000 to these first two stages with the procurement process for a design team lead taking place between June and October 2016.
- 6 From the procurement process, 11 companies tendered of which 8 were of a very good standard with Wrenbridge coming out as the preferred bidder costing:
 - £345,000 – Stages 0-2
 - £2.8 million – Stage 0-7

The standstill period is now complete and contract negotiations are taking place with Wrenbridge. The 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;
 - benchmarking visits;
 - public consultation.
- 7 The Member Working Group will continue to provide oversight during this stage of the project.

- 8 Meeting schedules for the officer working group will be devised once the contract is in place with Wrenbridge.
- 9 It's likely that April 2017 will not be the end of stage 2 but a new programme will be issued on completion of the contract.

REVISION OF LEE VALLEY BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

- 10 The reviewed Plan is in draft and consultations are being arranged for the remaining part of 2016, on target to re-launch in September 2017 and will be part of the 50th year anniversary.

EAST INDIA DOCK BASIN

- 11 Officers are looking at the feasibility of an education hub on the site and have met with the local developer (Ballymore) to discuss funding of this initiative. The outcome of Member consideration of the rental for the proposed builders' cabins is still under discussion and will be determined by the decision on the application for planning permission. This will be determined by 30 November 2016.
- 12 Funding options for the long terms development and management of this site are being explored with stakeholders.

SERVICE REVIEWS

- 13 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 the end of 2016. Other reviews planned for 2016/17 include Parks Management. The Levy Strategy Working Group will look at areas where there is the potential for income generation and/or efficiencies and prioritise the reviews accordingly.

PARTNERSHIPS

- 14 Meetings have taken place with Essex County Council, Corporation of London (CoL) and the Canal & River Trust.
- 15 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. Further meetings have taken place and continue to look into the options of grazing, this is focused on a joint approach to using our cattle and their herd mixed together.
- 16 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.

- 17 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. The Canal & River Trust will be launching their mooring strategy in late 2017, with implementation starting in 2018 and delivered over the next 3-5 years. Our approach is to feed into this strategy.

LEVY STRATEGY

- 18 A Levy Strategy Working Group has been established and this had its first meeting in September. This group will meet monthly to develop a proposed levy strategy in parallel with the 2017/18 budget process.

- 19 There are a number of areas that are currently being looked at by officers and the Levy Strategy Working Group:

- Leisure Services Contract – at the last Authority meeting in June the Lee Valley Leisure Trust (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. All investment proposals from the Trust will need to make a credible business case and Authority officers will carry out detailed investment appraisals;
Authority and Trust officers are currently looking 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;
- Major capital projects: Ice Centre and Eton Manor;
- 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 which includes looking at shared services, improved income generation reducing costs and delivery via 3rd parties.

LEISURE SERVICES CONTRACT COMMISSIONING STRATEGY

- 20 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

- 21 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 which has commissioned a feasibility study to look at the covering of some or all of the 6 outdoor tennis courts. In addition, as a result of the Ice Centre feasibility exercise outcome, 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.

- 22 The feasibility study looking at the potential covering of the 6 outdoor courts is due to be completed by the end of 2016.

Following conclusion of the ice centre feasibility study officers have started to look at 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. 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.

- 23 An Eton Manor working group comprising officers from the Authority and the Trust has started to look at the bigger picture for the site with the aim of producing a masterplan early in 2017.

DOBBS WEIR

- 24 The final phase of the project is due for completion by 1 July 2017 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.

- 25 The works were sent out to tender on 30 September and are due back on 17 November 2016 with works due to commence on site on 16 January 2017.

LEE VALLEY REGIONAL PARK 50th ANNIVERSARY

- 26 Officers have produced a draft plan of events and activities for Members' feedback and discussion at Executive Committee on 20 October. Outline discussions have been held with a number of organisations and partners to evaluate collaborative opportunities. Where possible work and costs will be covered by existing plans and budgets, however extra resource will be required for certain elements.

- 27 Suggested activities include:

- partnering with the creators of a new heritage trail across the Lee Valley;
- a short video showcasing the transformation of the Regional Park and the leisure opportunities possible now – for distribution to venues and online;
- new online and hard copy material for visitors such as 50 activities to undertake in the Regional Park and 50 plants to spot;
- an increased events programme with a particular focus on walking, running, cycling and sport;
- in partnership with the Trust, providing selected limited free access to activities such as mountain biking, road cycling and ice skating;
- the publication of a history of the Regional Park;
- the staging of an exhibition on the Regional Park's contribution to the region;
- a major stakeholder event, in collaboration with a key partner;
- exhibiting at the annual London Councils summit.

- 28 Following Member discussion officers will progress the opportunities and update Members regularly.

HOLYFIELD FARM INVESTMENT

- 29 A structural report and topographical survey has been undertaken of the barn areas and an initial layout option considered which is currently being revised by the Architects. Due to the potential availability of some Heritage Lottery Funding Heritage Enterprises Grant officers will now also look at a further option of converting the listed barn into holiday accommodation instead of the Fisheries barn. It is hoped that an outline business case can come forward to the Executive Committee in December 2016 with three possible options (including the one that may attract grant funding) 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

- 30 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.

31	Task	Completion By	Status
	Agreement of Brief	September 2016	Completed
	Review/Completion of IT Strategy/Action Plan	March 2017	In Progress
	Recommend to Executive /Authority	April 2017	Subject to Above
	Procurement for new suppliers	April – September 2017	Subject to Above
	Implementation	October 2017 – March 2019	Subject to Above

- 32 In the short term work is also progressing on small scale office moves between the Trust and Authority to enable an application for charitable rate relief to be made by the Trust as it will predominantly occupy Abercrombie Lodge. Longer term, officers are investigating the potential for a commercial office let of Abercrombie Lodge to a third party (which may include the Trust) to secure office rental of up to £100,000. This is built into the medium term financial plan for implementation by 2018/19 financial year.

CYCLING STRATEGY

- 33 Steer Davies Gleave have been retained by the Authority to develop the strategy which is being developed with stakeholders. The strategy will be completed by the year end following stakeholder consultation and presented to full Authority for adoption in January 2017.

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

- 34 Rangers are working on delivering new bushcraft and crafts activities/workshops. Rangers attended Tottenham Festival with a small sample of craft items and promoted the workshops. In September staff from both the Authority and Trust trialled Bushcraft sessions at Dobbs Weir and the Waterworks Centre, feedback has been very positive.

- 35 As well these 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 formed part of the Members tour in late September, where a camp was set up so Members could get a feel and idea of the activities.

REVIEW OF PAY STRUCTURE AND TERMS & CONDITIONS

- 36 In the next few months a piece of work will be developed 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. The outcome of this work will provide a context for any changes the Authority may wish to consider.

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Task	Completion By	Status
Agreement of Brief	September 2016	Completed
Review	March 2017	In Progress
Informal Consultation with Staff	June 2017	Subject to above
Recommendations to Executive/Authority	September 2017	Subject to above
Formal Consultation with Staff	December 2017	Subject to above
Implementation	April 2018	Subject to above

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

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

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 39 There are no financial implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 40 There are no human resource implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

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

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 43 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 Ltd trading as Vibrant Partnerships
CoL	City of London