MINUTES OF THE Alexandra Park and Palace Board HELD ON Thursday, 29th October, 2026, 7.00 - 8.30 pm

PRESENT:

Councillors: Melanie Gingell (Chair), Daniela Parry (Vice-Chair), Rosie Latchford, Marie Kristensen, Eva Bell, Jason Beazley (Co-Optee) and Nigel Willmott (Co-Optee)

ALSO ATTENDING:

Joy Johnston, Niki Cornwell, Emma Dagnes, Chris Liasi, Louise Johnson and Mark Evison.

1. FILMING AT MEETINGS

The Board noted the arrangements regarding filming at meetings.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies of absence were received by Councillor Nick Da Costa and Duncan Neil

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were none.

4. QUESTIONS, DEPUTATIONS OR PETITIONS

There were none.

5. URGENT BUSINESS

There were none.

6. MINUTES

The Board approved the non-exempt minutes of the Alexandra Palace and Park Board held on 30th July 2026 as an accurate record of the proceedings subject to a minor amendment.

7. FEEDBACK FROM THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE & CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Members agreed that, for the next two meetings, a temporary arrangement would be implemented to combine the SAC and CC meetings. It was considered that this

approach should work effectively. CC members also expressed their support for the proposal. It was further noted that Jason had rejoined CC.

8. CHARITABLE TRUST PROGRESS REPORT

The Board received an update on progress against the Trust's Strategic Plan for 2026/27. Members noted strong performance across the cultural, entertainment and visitor programme, including successful concerts, theatre productions, festivals and leisure activities, alongside preparations for major forthcoming events.

The Board noted that though there was progress towards climate resilience and net zero ambitions, key central government funding options had been closed. Therefore the focus would be on focus energy efficiency projects, as well as ongoing investment in heritage assets where resources would permit, through maintenance, refurbishment and infrastructure improvement projects.

Members received updates on the management of Alexandra Park, including responses to drought conditions, volunteer contributions, community engagement initiatives and the achievement of Green Flag status for 2026.

The Board also noted progress in archive digitisation, community outreach programmes, fundraising activity, development of the Creative & Heritage Skills Campus and Panorama Room project, and emerging partnerships to support heritage skills training and future organisational resilience.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the report.

9. FRRAC CHAIR'S REPORT (VERBAL UPDATE)

The Chair of the FRACC reported to the Board that all reports presented for consideration had been reviewed by the FRACC in advance and that the Committee had considered the matters prior to their submission to the Board.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the report.

10. FINANCE REPORT

The Board received an update on the Trust's financial position and budget forecast for 2026/27. Members noted that the Trust continued to face significant challenges, including economic uncertainty, rising operating costs, labour market pressures, climate-related impacts and increasing competition across its commercial activities.

Members noted that the Trust's budget and operational planning remained aligned with its Vision, Mission, strategic goals and values. The 2026/27 Operational Business Plan continued to focus on achieving financial sustainability, improving organisational

efficiency, delivering strategic projects and embedding organisational policies and standards.

The Board was advised that a sustainable budget position had been achieved for 2026/27 through income growth, including Restoration Levy and Gift Aid contributions, although financial pressures remained. Members noted that 76% of Trust income was self-generated or fundraised, with the remaining 24% provided through grant funding from Haringey Council.

The Board noted a number of continuing financial challenges, including increases in business rates, staffing costs, utilities, insurance and general inflationary pressures. Mitigation measures included revised car parking charges, enhanced fundraising initiatives, operational efficiencies, insurance reviews and income generated from new visitor attractions and commercial opportunities.

Members further noted that the Trust continued to invest in staff development, technology, estate maintenance and restoration works to support long-term sustainability and service delivery.

The Board received the 2026/27 forecast, noting an anticipated surplus of £761,000, which was below the revised budget target due to increased salary and operating costs. Positive performance was reported in relation to Restoration Levy income, Gift Aid and fundraising activity, while car parking income remained below budget expectations.

Members noted that the Trust continued to carry negative reserves and that generating future surpluses would be essential to achieving long-term financial sustainability and compliance with the Charity Governance Code.
The Board also noted the key financial risks facing the Trust, including potential income shortfalls, cost increases, economic uncertainty, regulatory changes and contractual pressures, and the ongoing measures in place to monitor and mitigate those risks.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the 2026/27 forecast against revised budget.

11. PANORAMA ROOM REPORT

The Board received an update on the Panorama Room Replacement Project. Members noted that the existing Panorama Room, which had been in operation since 2003, had reached the end of its serviceable life and was no longer considered fit for purpose. The replacement project was intended to improve sustainability, accessibility, structural performance and operational resilience, while reducing future maintenance requirements and supporting the Trust’s commercial income.

Members noted that design development was progressing following the appointment of a contractor through a competitive procurement process. Updates were provided on the planning and listed building consent process, including ongoing engagement with the local planning authority through a Planning Performance Agreement.

The Board heard that the proposed replacement would maintain a similar footprint to the existing structure and would include improved event, catering and visitor facilities, whilst minimising impact on the historic Palace fabric.
Members noted that the project was expected to cost approximately £3.5 million and that a loan application to Haringey Council was being prepared to support delivery. It was anticipated that increased event revenues would support future loan repayments.

The Board further noted the key project risks relating to planning approval, construction costs, operational disruption and unforeseen works, together with the mitigation measures in place. An update on the project timetable and next steps was also received.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the report.

12. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY UPDATE

The Board received an update on the organisation's carbon footprint, sustainability initiatives and progress towards achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2041.

Members noted that carbon emissions for 2025/26 had reduced to 2,558 tonnes of CO_2, representing a reduction of almost 15% compared with the 2019/20 baseline. The carbon intensity ratio had also improved despite an increase in visitor numbers.

The Board noted the outcomes of the Zero Carbon Accelerator project, which had identified a phased approach to achieving net zero through energy efficiency improvements, renewable energy generation and future heat decarbonisation measures. It was reported that priority would be given to energy-efficiency projects, including improvements to lighting, heating controls and building management systems, subject to external funding.

Members also noted ongoing sustainability initiatives across the estate, including LED lighting upgrades, water-efficiency improvements, installation of air curtains, promotion of sustainability projects through London Climate Action Week and the proposed installation of solar panels at the Boathouse.
The Board received the draft Carbon Reduction Plan, which set out progress to date, the target of achieving net zero by 2041 and a series of carbon reduction objectives and actions. The Board noted that future progress updates would be reported to subsequent meetings.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the contents of this report and approve the Carbon Reduction Plan at Appendix 1.

13. ENERGY PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

The Board received a report on options for the procurement of gas and electricity supplies. Following a review of available public-sector frameworks, the recommended option was to remain within the CCS/GCA framework and move from the current L6 product to the L12 product, which offered the lowest indicative combined annual cost and greater budget certainty.

Members noted that the L12 product had an indicative annual cost of £2.049m, compared with £2.233m under the current arrangement and £2.113m under the alternative YPO framework. Indicative annual savings of approximately £184,000 compared with the current product were highlighted, although it was noted that actual costs would depend on future consumption and market conditions.

The Board also considered sustainability implications, including the potential purchase of REGO certificates, and noted management's recommendation not to proceed with this option at the present time. Key procurement, pricing and consumption risks were noted together with the proposed mitigation measures and next steps for implementation.

RESOLVED:

The Committee approved remaining within the Crown Commercial Service/Government Commercial Agreement (CCS/GCA) framework, retaining EDF for electricity and Total Gas and Power for gas:

- The Board approved the proposed move from the current L6 purchasing product to the L12 product
- Noted that the indicative modelling estimates L12 to be £183,983 per annum cheaper than remaining on L6 and £63,773 per annum cheaper than the YPO bespoke quotation.
- Noted that Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin (REGO) certificates will not be added to the electricity contract at this stage.
- Approved the implementation route with CCS/GCA and the suppliers, as long as the final terms remain consistent with the approved strategy and are reported back through the usual governance process.

14. NEW FINANCE SYSTEM PROCUREMENT

The Board received a report on the procurement of a new finance system to replace the existing Exchequer platform, which was no longer considered fit for purpose due to ongoing technical issues, inadequate supplier support, and the planned withdrawal of industry support.

Members noted that a working group had been established in February 2026 to review options and identify business requirements. Workshops involving Finance and operational teams had highlighted key priorities, including streamlining processes, improving integration with other systems, enhancing reporting and business analytics, strengthening governance controls, and enabling the use of emerging technologies such as AI.

The Board was advised that nine suppliers had been invited to tender, with seven submitting proposals. Following a comprehensive evaluation process, Company Five achieved the highest overall score and was recommended as the preferred bidder. Although its initial implementation costs were higher than some alternatives, it was reported that the proposed Microsoft Business Central solution offered lower ongoing licensing costs, stronger integration capabilities, and greater alignment with the organisation's future objectives.

Members noted that Company Four had also performed strongly but was considered a less suitable fit than the recommended Business Central solution. The current supplier's submission was not supported due to its higher cost and concerns raised during the evaluation process. The Board noted that retaining the existing system had been considered but was not recommended due to its ageing infrastructure, recurring outages, limited reporting functionality, and the risk of future withdrawal of software support.

Key implementation risks were highlighted, particularly the need to ensure sufficient staff resources were available to support system configuration and deployment. It was noted that implementation would be aligned with operational requirements, with the proposed go-live period scheduled following the Summer Series to allow adequate training and embedding of new processes.

RESOLVED:

- The Board noted the procurement approach taken
- The Board noted that the Software system will support both APPCT & APTL (feedback from APTL will be provided under Exempt APTL Chair Update).

15. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

There were none.

16. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

Items 16-23 were subject of a motion to exclude the press and public from the meeting as they contain exempt information as defined in Section 100a of the Local Government Act 1972; Para 1 – information relating to any individual, Para 2 – Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual, Para 3 - information relating to the business or financial affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information), and Para 5 – Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.

17. EXEMPT MINUTES

The Board considered the exempt minutes.

18. EXEMPT FINANCE SYSTEM PROCUREMENT

The Committee considered the exempt information.

19. EXEMPT CHARITABLE TRUST PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee considered the exempt information.

20. EXEMPT FINANCE REPORT

The Committee considered the exempt information.

21. EXEMPT APTL CHAIR'S VERBAL UPDATE

The Committee considered the exempt information.

22. FUTURE MEETINGS

The Committee considered the exempt information.

23. ANY OTHER EXEMPT BUSINESS THE CHAIR CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT

The Committee considered the exempt information.

CHAIR: Councillor Melanie Gingell

Signed by Chair ……..

Date ……