



## ALEXANDRA PARK AND PALACE CHARITABLE TRUST BOARD MEETING

13 DECEMBER 2021

- Report Title:** Proposal to pilot changes to the Consultative Committee
- Report of:** Louise Stewart, CEO
- Purpose:** *This report proposes changes to one of the Trust's stakeholder engagement mechanisms to improve effectiveness, participation and diversity.*

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 – N/A**

### 1. Recommendations

- 1.1 To consider any feedback from the respective meetings of the SAC and CC on 30 November (included at Appendix 3);
- 1.2 To discuss potential objectives, challenges and the criteria for success of the changes to the Committee.
- 1.3 To agree appropriate next steps.

### 2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Since the 2017 Governance Review it has been an aspiration for Alexandra Park and Palace Charitable Trust (APPCT) to improve its mechanisms for regular and effective communication with its stakeholders and beneficiaries, to better meet the requirements of the Charity Governance Code.
- 2.2 This report sets out the existing arrangements for one of the engagement mechanisms, the Consultative Committee (CC), the rationale for change and proposals for achieving that change.
- 2.3 The proposal is to change the existing CC into a forum, open to all. It is proposed to pilot the recommended change for a 24-month period, with consultation during the pilot period to assess the success of the new arrangements.
- 2.4 The scope of this paper covers only the CC and not the Advisory Committee. The Trust does not have the capacity to change both structures at the same time. The Advisory Committee is part of the governing document of the Trust, the Acts and Orders, further work with the Advisory Committee will be required before approaching the Charity Commission with proposed changes to the Act.

- 2.5 However, it is recognised that the Advisory Committee also faces challenges. Although popular in the 1980s Residents associations locally no longer have a large membership. The membership in many cases is not representative of their local community and new forms of residents' structures have merged through social media advances. During the CC pilot period the Advisory Committee should be challenged to come up with solutions or options for addressing these weaknesses. There is also potential that the pilot of an open forum for the Consultative Committee may prove useful for determining a way forward for the Advisory Committee.
- 2.6 The Advisory Committee will continue as normal during the pilot period.
- 2.7 Advisory Committee members, as both stakeholders and members of the public, are able to attend the proposed pilot open forum.

### **3. Introduction & background**

- 3.1 The Consultative Committee of Alexandra Park and Palace was established in the 1980s by the Corporate Trustee Haringey Council to provide a mechanism for the Charitable Trust to engage and consult with its stakeholders and beneficiaries.
- 3.2 The Committee's duties, functions and membership are detailed in appendix 1.
- 3.3 The CC appoints three of its members onto the APPCT Trustee Board as observer members – they have no voting rights but attend meetings to ensure the views of the CC are considered but must act in the best interests of the Trust at all times.
- 3.4 The CC has provided useful feedback, advice, challenge and support for the Trust's work over several decades. The advantage of this approach is that the Trust has been able to communicate to this group of stakeholders in an efficient way. The committees have built up knowledge over time so that there is a reduced need to answer the same questions each time the Charity is held to account.
- 3.5 The 2017 APPCT Governance Review stated that, the Consultative Committee is restricted to representatives of constituted local groups rather than general stakeholders and beneficiaries, which would include individuals. As with the Advisory Committee it is highly likely that this was to formalise and rationalise the task of consultation on the Trust to make it manageable. The Consultative Committee is made up of several 'friends of' and other groups that the Trust now has a separate and more focused and effective dialogue with. Operating as a Council committee, also raises questions as to whether this is the most effective form of engagement and dialogue appropriate for the Charity.
- 3.6 With the introduction of the new Charity Governance Code (see extract at Appendix 2) the Board should assess its stakeholder and beneficiary engagement approach afresh, to decide for itself who are the stakeholders and beneficiaries it needs to engage with and how it wishes to do that.
- 3.7 The two committees, the SAC and the CC, meet jointly as the Informal Joint Committee. The two committees have different status but broadly similar remits but the Board has a different duty to each. This can lead to confusion and frustration by all parties and in particular the Executive Team, who feel this engagement to be

less effective than the general public meetings held on specific issues when consulting on planning or licensing issues.

3.8 There was limited appetite for change from the committee members at the time of the Governance Review in 2017. Whilst progress on the Governance Change programme and Governance Improvement Programme has been hampered by the global pandemic and the more urgent financial challenges facing the Trust, the need to modernise the Trust's engagement has been raised several times by members of the public and the committees themselves.

3.9 At a combined meeting of the Consultative Committee and Advisory Committee on 4 October 2021 a consultative committee member raised the issue of membership of the Committees not being relevant, accessible, diverse or reflective of the community and that the bureaucracy of joining processes and the meetings themselves are off-putting. From an external perspective it can also be viewed as a closed circle of influencers. The formality and bureaucracy are off putting to members of the public especially those not versed in local authority committee processes and speaking in public.

#### **4.0 Proposal - as presented to the Strategic Advisory Committee (SAC) and Consultative Committee (CC) on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

***A summary of the key points made by the SAC & CC is included at Appendix 3.***

4.1 To replace the Consultative Committee with an Open Forum;

4.1.1 Two open forums a year. AP presents progress and performance and future plans for the year ahead. And takes questions.

4.1.2 The attendees from AP include representatives from the executive leadership team and trustee board.

4.1.3 Attendees can raise issues to be included on the agenda – but need to give two weeks' notice so that the team have time to prepare.

4.1.4 Attendees should pose questions in advance of the session, if it relates to an item that is not on the agenda, to provide time for the team to prepare an answer or to respond to at the meeting if it is an operational day to day question.

4.1.5 Attendees will be asked if they wish to ask the question themselves in the open forum, or if they would like their question to be read and answered without the need for them to speak in an open forum.

4.1.6 The Forums would be advertised through our stakeholder database, social media, and signs on site.

4.1.7 Attendance would be open to all – but places must be reserved and will be limited to the space available (with an agreed minimum number).

4.1.8 Dates will be promoted to stakeholders and beneficiaries.

- 4.1.9 Stakeholders and beneficiaries will be provided with guidance about the need to raise small operational issues directly with the team as part of our normal business via our VS team or complaints route.
- 4.1.10 Notes of the session will be published including answers to questions posed by attendees and those not able to attend in person.
- 4.2 The different engagement method would be piloted for 24 months. With 4 forums in that period.
- 4.3 Pilot assessment (criteria and assessment methodology)
- 4.3.1 Proposed assessment criteria
- Did the open forum attract a more diverse and representative stakeholder and beneficiary audience
  - Did the open forum attract new people and groups to attend
  - Did the open forum attract existing consultative committee members
  - Were attendees satisfied with the arrangements for attendance
  - Were attendees satisfied with the notice period to submit agenda items and questions in advance
  - Were the forums frequent enough
  - Were people satisfied with the format of the open forum
  - Were people satisfied with the quality and level of information provided
  - Were people satisfied with the amount of time devoted to questions
  - Were attendees satisfied with the formal record of the session and actions identified
  - Would attendees continue to attend in the future
  - What recommendations would attendees suggest for the future if the open forum is made permanent
  - Are stakeholders and beneficiaries happy to have these sessions administered by the Charitable Trust
- 4.3.2 The decision to change the Consultative Committee to an open Forum rests with Haringey Council as Corporate Trustee.<sup>1</sup> In making their decision it is recommended that they will have access to the findings of the pilot assessment, direct feedback from the Trustee Board and direct feedback from existing Consultative Committee Members.
- 4.3.3 Assessment of the open forum will therefore include;
- an assessment by the Trustee Board
  - an assessment by the Consultative Committee
  - a consultation of attendees of the Open Forum
- 4.3.4 It is also recommended that feedback is sought after each forum to identify any issues and improvements during the pilot period.
- 4.3.5 It is proposed that the Open Forums be wholly managed and administered by the Trust. Therefore, if successful, the proposal would reduce the number of Alexandra Park & Palace meetings administered by the Council's Democratic Services Team.

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<sup>1</sup> Subject to discussion with Haringey

4.4 For the period of the pilot it is proposed to retain the current nominated appointees from the Consultative Committee on the Trustee Board. However, if the pilot is successful and it becomes permanent it is proposed that the observer positions on the Board from the Consultative Committee are advertised openly to the forum and the wider public, and a selection process undertaken.

4.5 The criteria for selection as with any charity trustee board would be the skills and expertise required and for these roles that would also include having a good understanding of the broad views of the Trust's stakeholders and beneficiaries.

## **5. Is the decision/ action consistent with the Charity's Vision, Mission Purpose and Values? Five Year Plan priority pillars?**

5.1 The proposal seeks to improve direct engagement with the Charity's beneficiaries about the work we do and will contribute to furthering the Charity's mission (*to repair, restore, and maintain the Park and Palace for the enjoyment of the public forever*) and purpose (*to enrich lives, through great experiences, forever*).

5.2 Changing the make of the stakeholder forum demonstrates the organisation's values:

*Resourceful* – new approach to engage with a broader range of stakeholders more representative of the Trusts stakeholders and beneficiaries.

*Collaborative* – bringing diverse groups together to raise issue they want to discuss.

*Passionate & fun* – encouraging a new range of people who are engaged and passionate about Alexandra Palace.

*Bold* - piloting change with the opportunity to review/ revert to previous mechanism.

*Open & genuine* – improving inclusiveness and diversity, welcoming feedback. Reducing bureaucratic barriers.

5.3 The proposals are in line with the main areas of focus in the Trust's Five-Year plan:

- Strengthen our reputation and elevate our status in entertainment, heritage and recreation
- Create a stronger lifelong connection with our visitors, supporters and community

## **6. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion**

6.1 The main purpose is to increase diversity and include people who would not normally be eligible to join or have the desire to engage in the bureaucracy of the existing Consultative Committee, therefore the proposal will have a positive impact on EDI making engagement with Alexandra Palace more accessible.

6.2 No adverse impacts are expected in relation to any protected characteristic groups.

## **7. Risks**

- 7.1 Cost and capacity.
- 7.2 Too many conflicting issues – we have considered having different forums for different interests, Charity does not have the resource to manage several forums. Past experience demonstrates that there is benefit in joint meetings for efficiency and effective communication for all parties.

## **8. Legal Implications**

- 8.1 No changes to the SAC are being proposed at this time. It is acknowledged that if and when such changes are proposed the *Trust would need to apply to the Charity Commission to grant a scheme, under Section 73 of the Charities Act 2011 to alter the provisions the Alexandra Park and Palace Act 1985.*
- 8.2 Other Council Committees have non-voting co-optees in their memberships, however, confirmation would be needed from the Council in relation to the appointment of observers to the Alexandra Park and Palace Board through an open process.
- 8.3 The Council's Head of Legal & Governance has been consulted in the preparation of this report and, in noting the intention to maintain the current structure for the duration of the pilot scheme, and a willingness to take account of any albeit at this stage unanticipated equalities issues, has no comments.

## **9. Financial Implications**

- 9.1 There are no material financial implications for the Trust. Recruitment on the open market for observer trustees if the pilot is successful could incur costs but the Trust has a strong track record in recruiting for non-executive positions directly at minimal cost.
- 9.2 Potential costs for an independent assessment of the pilot if the Consultative Committee feel they would prefer this.
- 9.3 The Council's Chief Financial Officer has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no comments.

## **10. Use of Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Consultative Committee Functions & Duties  
Appendix 2 – Charity Commission  
Appendix 3 – Feedback from the SAC/CC

## **11. Background Papers**

2017 Governance Review Summary Reports to previous meetings