

Report Title: **Heritage Lottery Funded Landscape Development Project update**

Report of: **Matthew Baker, Development Manager – Parks**

1. Purpose

1.1 To update the Committee of progress towards the items outlined in the HLF refurbishment of the Park.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Committee notes the report.

Report Authorised by: **Matthew Baker, Development Manager:**

Contact Officer: **Matthew Baker, Development Manager**

3. Executive Summary

3.1

4. Reasons for any change in policy or for new policy development (if applicable)

4.1 N/A

5. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

5.1 No specific background papers were used in compiling this report. Further information about this report can be obtained from Matthew Baker, Development Manager – Parks, Alexandra Palace & Park, Alexandra Palace Way, Wood Green, London, N22 7AY. Telephone number 0208 365 2121

6. Background

- 6.1 Blakedown Southeast are making good progress with the phase two package of works as specified by Land Use Consultants in accordance with the approved purposes of the Heritage Lottery Grant.

The contractor had previously prepared a programme of works with the intention of completing all the works by July 2006, leaving a six month period between August 2006 – January 2007 for any additional works and to attend to defects. Unfortunately due to the early announcement of a national hose pipe ban and potential water restrictions a decision has been taken to postpone the majority of the planting phase until the end of the summer 2006 to ensure the best conditions for establishment of new stock.

In addition to this all tree work has been suspended until the autumn in order to prevent disturbance during the nesting season.

Please note general tree maintenance/Emergency works will be still be carried out in order to reduce the risk to visitors.

- 6.2 Blakedown are contracted to complete the improvements to the main road as part of the Civil engineering package of works. Work commenced in February following the Motorcycle show and has been phased over a seven month period. Colin Buchanan and Partners who were responsible for this aspect of the project have continued to liaise with Highways Authority and Transport for London to ensure the design proposal satisfies all of the requirements.

Due to changes in the regulations for new bus stops introduced in January 2006 it has not been possible to reduce the number of Bus stops to the West of the Palace as previously reported. Transport for London have stated that they would not support the removal of the existing stops as they are networked to there electronic timetable system. In addition to this the location which had been identified for the single stop has does not comply with their new regulations.

For reasons of Health & Safety it will be necessary to operate temporary traffic lights during much of the Civils works. Blakedown have contracted 'A-Plant' Traffic Systems assist with all traffic management issues to ensure that the works are in accordance with the regulations for highways work.

In broad terms these improvements are focused at reducing the speed of vehicles within the park, increasing the number of pedestrian links between the Palace and Park and improving the general road layout.

The improvements which fall outside of the Park Boundary will be completed by the highway authority and LUC will liaise to ensure that these works are carefully phased with Blakedown programme.

6.2.1 Bedford Road Entrance

The Gantry will be removed and the main entrance realigned with a speed table constructed to slow vehicles when entering and exiting the

Park. The speed table will be constructed to pavement level in order to provide improved access for pedestrians and mobility impaired visitors. The retaining wall to the north of the carriage way will be repaired and the pavement to the south realigned with the main footpath leading to the train station. All old road markings will be removed and replaced with new ones; new road traffic and site signage will be installed.

6.2.2 Muswell Hill Entrance.

The Gantry will be removed and the section of road from the entrance down to the traffic lights re realigned with a speed table constructed to slow vehicles when entering and exiting the Park. The speed table will be constructed to pavement level in order to provide improved access for pedestrians and mobility impaired visitors. The area directly in front of the Historic gates will be reorganised to provide two clear lanes connecting the exit & approach with the junction with the main road adjacent to the traffic lights. This will reduce the number of spaces available for parking outside the palace gates, provide clear access to the lower road and improve the visual aspect of the park entrance. All old road markings will be removed and replaced with new ones; new road traffic and site signage will be installed.

6.2.3 Alexandra Palace Way

The section of main road leading from the Bedford Road Entrance towards the Palace will be reduced from three lanes to two. This will reduce the temptation for vehicles to speed up hill in order to overtake slower vehicles. This will effectively mean that the existing downhill lane will be surplus and sections of this will be reorganised to provide a single lane of additional parking bays. All old road marking will be removed and replaced with new ones; new road traffic signage will be installed.

6.2.4 A mini roundabout will be constructed at the entrance to the East Car Park and the approaching sections of road realigned to improve visibility. New signage and warning lighting will be installed.

6.2.5 The section of road to the South of the Palace will be coated in a bound gravel surface with speed tables constructed at each of the crossing points. The speed table will be constructed to pavement level in order to provide improved access for pedestrians and mobility impaired visitors. All old road marking will be removed and replaced with new ones; new road traffic signage will be installed.

6.2.6 The coach bay will be reorganised to reduce the visual impact of the area including a crossing point connecting the small island bus stop with the opposite side of the main road.

6.3 Diamond Build are making good progress with the park buildings and estimate full completion by week ending 18th June 2006.

Strutt & Parker, property consultants, have completed a site inspection of the new buildings and will be advising on the commercial value of each. This information will be

used to prepare new contracts for each property prior to advertising the opportunities. Letters will be forwarded to all those that have expressed an interest during the last 3 years informing them of where and when the advertisement(s) will be placed.

7. Description

Progress towards the items outlined in the HLF refurbishment of the Park.

Landscape Works

7.1 Boating Lake

Blakedown has completed the improvement works to the Boating Lake area which include the new designated fishing areas funded by the £10k Environment Agency Fisheries Grant. The timber fishing 'pegs' have all been constructed to provide full access for mobility impaired users and are located along two sections of the pond edge which have been designated for fishing. The main fishing area also includes benches, bins and signage for club members and an Environment Agency notice to inform visitors that fishing permits are required. Land Use Consultants have prepared a list of marginal plants which will be planted to finish the boating lake improvement works.

The water quality of the lake being regularly monitored by the parks team using a standard water testing kit and the data recorded. Samples are also being sent to 'Water Habitat Ltd' for full analysis to ensure we receive an early warning of any potential problems, e.g. Algae blooms, low oxygen, pollutants.

A power supply has been run to the large island which will enable the installation of three ultrasonic units for the control of Algae blooms. In addition to this two aeration units will also be installed to assist with maintaining water quality.

7.2 Redston Road Playing Fields

The tree planting completed in March 2006 has unfortunately presented some unforeseen concerns relating to the potential for future tree/root nuisance arising from their distance from the boundary fence and adjoining properties.

After reviewing with our consultants the design intention to improve the habitat diversity in this area it has been agreed with the Tree Officer that the recently planted trees along the eastern edge of the former playing field will be transplanted so that none of the specimens will cause problems as they mature.

The distance at which they will be transplanted will be calculated based upon the maximum root / canopy spread for each species and the trees will be transplanted in the autumn when the conditions are more favourable.

Civils Work

7.3 Alexandra Palace Way (East Car Park to Bedford Road Entrance)

The first section of road narrowing has been completed to the main road leading from the East Car Park entrance, down the hill, towards Bedford Road entrance as outlined in section 6.2.3. The Bus Stop lay-by adjacent to the Dive Car Park has been extended in accordance with the requirements of Transport for London. The main road now operates as one lane in each direction with parking bays along the northern edge of the road. Several crossing points have also been constructed to provide improved access for pedestrians and mobility impaired visitors.

7.4 Blandford Manor Slip Road

The Bus Stop lay-by adjacent to the Blandford Road Slip Road has been extended in accordance with the regulations provided by Transport for London. The new scheme provided improved access to the adjoining areas and features a crossing point for access to the South Slopes. The slip road barrier has been moved closer to the road to restrict the space available for unauthorised parking. The old timber bollards which were installed to prevent vehicles from accessing the meadow adjacent to the main road have been replaced with an earth bund, approximately 700mm in height.

7.5 Roundabout

Construction of the new roundabout as outlined in item 6.2.4 at the entrance to the East Car Park is well underway and Blakedown's hope to have this completed by the end of June 2006.

7.6 Coach bay

Improvement works to the Coach bay as outlined in item 6.2.6 have been completed and include improved pedestrian access to the Bus Stop and a mobility impaired crossing point. The Coach bay has been realigned in order to improve upon safety during coach loading and unloading.

8. Consultation

8.1 Public Consultation took place prior to the preparation of the Stage II Bid application to the HLF for the Landscape Development Grant 2001. In addition to this a design competition and two days public consultation were carried out in May 2003 to encourage children and parents to suggest what they would like in their ideal play area.

9. Summary and Conclusions

9.1 This updates the Committee as to the progress towards the completion of the works

10. Recommendations

10.1 That the Committee notes the report.

11. Equalities Implications

11.1 There are no perceived Equal Opportunities implications

12. Use of Appendices / Tables / Photographs

12.1 None used