

Report Title: **Park Update**

Report of: **Mark Evison, Park Manager,  
Alexandra Palace and Park Charitable Trust**

**1. Purpose**

1.1 To inform the Alexandra Palace and Park Board of various matters relating to the park and its tenants.

**2. Recommendations**

2.1 That the Board notes the contents of the report.

2.2 That the Board approves the proposed scheme to register Exercise Professionals operating in the park.

2.3 That the Board considers whether to make a direct representation regarding the planning application for the Coronation Sidings development and whether to request section 106 funding and delegates authority to the Interim General Manager to progress these matters

Report Authorised by: **Andrew Gill, Interim General Manager**.....

Contact Officer: **Mark Evison, Park Manager, Alexandra Palace & Park, Alexandra Palace Way, Wood Green N22 7AY Tel No. 020 8365 2121**

**3. Executive Summary**

3.1 This report provides an update on general park management issues and an overview of progress regarding the tenants.

3.2 The proposed Coronation Sidings development is described and the potential impact on the views from the palace and park are considered.

**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 N/A

## **6. Park Management Plan & Grounds Maintenance**

- 6.1 Board Members will recall that a ten-year park management plan is in place to guide the maintenance and development of the park. This has been updated for the 2011 round of applications to the Green Flag and Green Heritage Awards and the London in Bloom Competition.
- 6.2 To follow up on one of the most important finds of bioblitz in 2010, conservation volunteers will be constructing two “stag beetle loggeries” this summer. These will increase the amount of suitable habitat for the very rare Stag Beetle (*Lucanus cervus*).
- 6.3 A growing number of ‘Exercise Professionals’ are operating in the park. These people are self-employed or franchisees and offer fitness training and exercise classes to the paying public. They often advertise their services by fly-posting. As a method of managing the increasing numbers and ensuring they are properly insured for public liability, a registration scheme is proposed. This scheme would require the operator to submit the relevant paperwork and pay a fee for undertaking their business on site.
- 6.4 Following the resolutions of the Board on 28 March 2011, the Grounds Maintenance Contract is in the process of being updated. The new items have been added to the work programme and the contractor has invested in some new equipment on the basis of the extension to the term.

## **7. Park Tenants**

- 7.1 A new operator for the Boat Hire facility has taken over and opened for business on 15 April. New boats have been purchased and improvements to the customer experience will be seen along with improved income for the trust.
- 7.2 The 345-Preschool’s redevelopment of the Islands building in the Grove has been delayed by requirements from Building Control to install additional concrete piles. The expected completion date is now mid-May.
- 7.3 The Board will recall that a new lease for the Old Station Building is being negotiated. At the time of writing, the key terms have been agreed and the paperwork is being finalised.

## **8. Coronation Sidings Development**

- 8.1 A compendious planning application has been submitted by Network Rail for the Coronation Sidings Development. The application reference is HGY/2011/0612 and it proposes a new rolling stock maintenance depot and associated works. Officers were informed by the planning team in a letter received on 14 April 2011. Although a response has been requested within 21 days, a proposal of this size is unlikely to be determined that quickly.
- 8.2 Following a proposal several years ago, permitted development rights were withdrawn by Haringey Council in an Article 4 Direction on 13 August 2009 which was approved by the Secretary of State on 25 November 2009. The Council considered this necessary for a number of reasons, including that the proposed depot could harm views from Alexandra Palace.

- 8.3 A new scheme has now been proposed with a number of changes. The footprint of the depot has been reduced by 35% and the total height of the buildings has also been reduced.
- 8.4 The Council's Core Strategy (submitted in March 2011) includes a policy that relates to views, namely:
- "The Council will seek to protect locally important views that contribute to the interest and character of the borough. These may include:
- Views of and from large parks and open spaces, such as Alexandra Palace and Finsbury Park;
  - Views into and from Conservation Areas"
- 8.5 The planning officers required that the impact of the development be considered from a number of viewpoints around the borough, including two in Alexandra Park. Studies by the applicant suggest that the development could have a high visual impact on some areas of the palace and park.
- 8.6 There have been two other developments in this area in recent years, the New River Village and the Thames Water treatment works. Although all three of these schemes are large and do have an impact on the views from the palace, they do not directly impinge on the view of St Paul's Cathedral (protected by the Mayor of London) or the general historic and interesting views of the London panorama (the Olympic site, docklands, the city and central London).
- 8.7 The views to the south-eastern quarter are already fairly 'industrial,' in fact the railway landscape has existed since the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 8.8 Prior to the application being made, the matter was considered by the Joint Advisory and Consultative Committee meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2011 and the draft minutes state that it was **noted** that:
- There was limited information available on the proposals despite requests by the Park Manager for more detail from Network Rail.
  - Committee Members expressed concern about the height of the proposed shed and considered 11 metres to be very high, which would detract from the view to the east from the Palace.
  - The Alexandra Palace Conservation Area Advisory Committee (APCAAC) had objected to Network Rail's original proposals and was likely to object to this proposal.
  - That the Board be encouraged to reject the proposals if more information was not provided by Network Rail.

and it was **resolved**: That Network Rail be urged to provide more information on the proposals for new rail sheds which could be considered by the Committees.

- 8.9 The Advisory Committee also formally **resolved** “that more information on Network Rail’s proposals for new sheds be presented at the next meeting (or at an Urgency Statutory Advisory Sub-Committee meeting) for consideration by the Committee.”
- 8.10 It is felt by officers that this development will have no material impact on the daily use of the palace and park. Dog walkers, ice skaters and garden centre visitors will still continue to use the site as before.
- 8.11 Board members are reminded that as charity trustees they must act exclusively and single mindedly in the best interests of the charity.
- 8.12 The Board may also urge individuals, users groups and residents associations to make their own representations through the planning system directly.
- 8.13 There may be an opportunity for the Board to request some funding through a section 106 agreement for tree planting to provide screening for the development or more general habitat improvement works.

## **9. Recommendations**

- 9.1 That the Board notes the contents of the report
- 9.2 That the Board approves the proposed scheme to register Exercise Professionals
- 9.3 That the Board consider whether to make a representation regarding the planning application for the Coronation Sidings development and whether to request section 106 funds to carry out a planting scheme and delegates authority to the Interim General Manager to progress these matters

## **10. Legal Implications**

- 10.1 The Trust solicitor’s advice has been taken into account in the preparation of the report.
- 10.2 The London Borough of Haringey’s Head of Legal Services has been consulted in the preparation of this report, and advises that there are no direct legal implications arising out of the contents, save to stress the importance of the point made in paragraph 8.8 over the manner in which the Board is to approach it's decision making task.

## **11. Financial Implications**

- 11.1 The London Borough of Haringey’s Chief Financial Officer notes the contents of this report.
- 11.2 The registration of Exercise Professionals will take up some additional officer time and provide a very small amount of income.
- 11.3 None of the other items in this report have a financial impact on the Trust beyond existing work programmes and officer time.

**12. Use of Appendices/Tables/Photographs**

**Appendix 1:** Photo mock-up of the development taken from the developer's Environmental Statement submitted in March 2011 as part of the planning application, reference HGY/2011/0612.