

Report Title: **Report of the Director of Property & Regeneration, Alexandra Park and Palace**

Report of: Kerri Farnsworth, Director of Property & Regeneration, Alexandra Park and Palace

**1. Purpose**

1.1 To advise members of the Board on a number of areas relating to property and regeneration at Alexandra Palace and Park, and seek views on the development of a planning application and contract for the installation of a high ropes course in the NE corner of the Park.

**2. Recommendations**

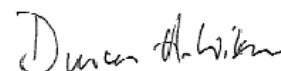
2.1 That the Board notes progress with the regeneration programme and in particular the HLF RIBA Stage 2 presentation (separate agenda item) as the basis for developing the design.

2.2 That the Board notes the position regarding Dinosaurs Playgroup at the Campsbourne Centre and the intention to commission a section 36 Charities Act report and prepare a tenancy for approval of the Board.

2.3 That the Board notes a number of other items and agrees to give Landlord's consent for location of the climbing frame outside Little Dinosaurs playgroup in the Grove following planning consent (now obtained by the tenant).

2.4 Approves the development of the "Go Ape" proposal, in the light of comments from the Statutory Advisory and Consultative Committees which will be reported at the Board.

Report Authorised by: **Duncan Wilson, Chief Executive Alexandra Palace and Park**



Contact Officer: Duncan Wilson, Chief Executive Alexandra Palace and Park

**3. Executive Summary**

3.1 HLF Project Progress

3.2 Fabric Conservation

3.3 Park Update

3.4 Update from Regeneration Working Group (RWG)

**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. Regeneration Programme**

### Key Stakeholder Relationships

- 6.1 Following discussions, it has been agreed that AP's relationship with the BBC now needs to be formalised by way of a Memorandum of Understanding due to the extent of required interrelationship between the HLF project and the BBC. This is being progressed currently with senior staff within the BBC.
- 6.2 Relationships with other key stakeholders such as the Science Museum Group (including National Media Museum) and the BFI remain positive. At this stage these relationships do not require formalisation, but this does not rule out the possibility and/or need to do so in the future.

### HLF Professional Team

- 6.3 The final appointment to the professional team has now been made, with James White from the British Film Institute (BFI) appointed to lead the delivery of a Collections Management strategy and plan. His work programme has been dovetailed into the existing HLF project programme.

### HLF Design and Consultation

- 6.4 A number of surveys and investigative works - essential to fill gaps in existing available data and knowledge - have been procured, completed and/or are underway. The outputs have been used and will continue to be used to guide design development and associated cost testing over the next few months.
- 6.5 The design is currently at the end of RIBA workstage 2 - concept design (previously known as RIBA Stage C). A full presentation on the current iteration of the design of the HLF project will be given at the meeting under a separate agenda item.
- 6.6 The current design proposals have been discussed with several key external bodies including English Heritage, LB Haringey Planning/Conservation/Transport and the Theatres Trust. The response has been very supportive to date. The formal 2-week statutory consultation period for the design will be in the autumn (see table under 'HLF Project Programme below') but informal sharing of the concept proposals has already commenced by offers of presentations to scheduled meetings of Area Forums, Residents Associates, etc, across Haringey.
- 6.7 Consultation has also begun on the Activity Plan, which sets out in detail the types of activities that the newly-opened spaces will offer and how this will expand further AP's engagement with its local communities. It is also an essential requirement of the HLF funding. A printed survey has been created which can be completed and returned by post; the same version of this survey is also available on the AP website via the blue 'Have Your Say' survey link at <http://www.alexandrapalace.com/about-us/regeneration/>. AP staff are taking survey forms to all presentations, forums, etc, and encouraging as many people as possible to complete them to ensure the best and most representative response.

### HLF Project Budget

- 6.1 The construction cost estimate for the current RIBA Stage 2 design is £847k above the HLF Round 1 submission budget of £16.333m (+5.1%), at £16.48m. This figure

is made up of a £703k increase in construction inflation and £144k increase in construction cost. The construction inflation allowance is driven by the external construction market and reflects the current buoyancy in the London area.

- 6.2 Anecdotal feedback is that a 5.1% project cost estimate increase at this stage is relatively low compared to that being currently experienced by other HLF- and non-HLF-supported development projects in the wider market.

### HLF Project Programme

- 6.3 The project remains on programme, and hence there is no change to forward key milestones reported at the last meeting, which were:-

up to mid-July 2014	completion of RIBA Stage C/2 design & associated business planning proposals, and formal approval of these by HLF
July to Sept 2014	development of RIBA Stage D/3 design & associated business planning consultation and preparation of Activity Plan stakeholder presentations on design & business plan <i>NB. where possible consultation on the design and the activity plan will be delivered together</i>
late-Sept/early-Oct 2014	2-week statutory public consultation (req'd for planning application)
Nov 2014	completion of RIBA Stage D/3 design; formal AP Board sign-off; submission of Planning / Listed Building / Conservation Area applications
Dec 2014	submission of Round 2 HLF funding application
March 2015	decisions on Planning / Listed Building / Conservation Area applications
March/April 2015	HLF Stage 2 funding decision ( <i>NB. decision on consents req'd before HLF decision can be made</i> )
spring 2015	technical design & tender package production (part 1) contractor OJEU procurement part 1 (pre-qualification)
spring to autumn 2015	technical design & tender package production (part 2) final contractor OJEU procurement & appointment
autumn/winter 2015	construction commences onsite
autumn/winter 2017	construction complete

### HLF reporting

- 6.4 The fourth required quarterly progress report was submitted on programme to HLF in July.
- 6.5 A second formal project review, delayed from April due to illness of the HLF appointed Project Monitor, took place in June. The HLF Monitor was satisfied with progress to date, and the steps being taken by AP and its HLF team to mitigate key risks around construction cost & programme.
- 6.6 A formal RIBA Stage 2 Gateway Review with the HLF will take place in mid-July. A verbal update from this meeting will be given at the meeting.

### Other (non-HLF) Commercial Leases/Licences

- 6.7 The procurement of the specialist advisors for the Trust's telecoms-related interests reported to the last meeting has almost been concluded, and an appointment is to be made imminently.

## **7. Fabric Conservation**

### Surveyor to the Fabric

- 7.1 The Surveyor to the Fabric, Purcell, completed the 10-year Fabric Maintenance Plan (FMP) in May. Further discussions with AP staff and other current AP advisors, including the HLF team, has indicated the need for further revisions & updates to be made to this document (although it should be noted that the key headlines from the FMP have not changed since last reported to the last meeting of this Committee on 8 April 2014).
- 7.2 These are already being progressed, but will be completed in time for the submission of the HLF project planning, Listed Building and Conservation Area consents, for which the FMP will be a key supplementary document.
- 7.3 The FMP has identified work packages in order of priority over each financial year over the next 10 years. The HLF project will deliver for approx. 25% of the required investment. Some Priority 1 projects have already been delivered (eg. Transmitter Hall refurbishment; repair of the VA/PA system) and many others are underway (North Wall; roof repairs; repair/restoration of lifts; replacement of fire detection & alarm system, etc). AP staff are also actively seeking the potential for drawing in other external investment to deliver priority investments in future years.

## **8. Park Update**

### Update on Campsbourne Section 106 project

- 9.1 The Campsbourne Section 106 - which is an environmental and access improvement scheme for the SE corner of the Park being led by LB Haringey - received full planning consent in May. Unfortunately, tender prices for the scheme came back around £20k above available budget. LBH officers obtained further s106 funding and the contractors have now been appointed.
- 9.2 At the time of writing, a commencement date has not been finalised. The current programme for the works is 12-14 weeks, so it is likely to be autumn at the earliest before the works will be completed.

### Campsbourne Dinosaurs Playgroup

- 9.3 LB Haringey has agreed to fund dilapidations up to the value of £75,000 to the building in the Campsbourne area of the Park used by 'Dinosaurs Playgroup'. The Trust will procure and manage delivery of the works and will invoice LB Haringey as each work package is delivered. The work packages are currently out for tender in order to procure contractors to deliver the works, which will take place over the summer period.

- 9.4 Discussions are also underway to provide Dinosaurs Playgroup a formal lease as a tenant of the Trust. Drawing up a new lease is expected to cost in the region of £5,000 plus VAT and disbursements. A final recommendation on the detailed lease terms will be made to the APPCT Board for Section 36 (Charities Act) approval.

#### Planning Applications

- 9.5 *Little Dinosaurs:* The application for changes to the garden and alteration to one section of the external wall was granted permission on 16 June 2014, with a number of minor conditions. The various elements will be implemented over a number of years. Initially the alterations to the wall of the building will be carried out before the coming winter.
- 9.6 As previously discussed, a copy of a plan showing the new climbing frame location and area of artificial grass is attached as Appendix 1. The Board are requested to give Landlord's consent for location of the climbing frame and the artificial grass.

#### WWI Poppy commemoration

- 9.7 After a slow start due to the weather, the WWI poppies are now in full bloom. Two sowings have been made, both to re-disturb the ground (which poppies like to stimulate germination) and extend the in-flower duration. The Park Manager has already received several positive comments from members of the public and is endeavouring to encourage some good positive press coverage.

#### Park Development Projects

- 9.8 Two projects are being developed by AP staff for the Park.

##### *Urban Orchard at AP*

- 9.9 Discussions are underway with the Urban Orchard Project (formerly the London Orchard Project) to develop a community orchard in the Railway Field in the Grove. The Urban Orchard Project works in partnership with communities to plant, manage, restore and harvest orchards in urban areas to help citizens to rediscover the pleasure of eating home-grown fruit and nuts. It was originally established in 2009 as a London project, but now is active across Great Britain, and has restored and/or created over 50 orchards since that time, including in the Borough.
- 9.10 The proposal will incur costs in staff time, soil testing and for the trees and labour. There is an allowance for supply of new trees in the current grounds maintenance contract and furthermore, John O'Conner (GM) Ltd has agreed to provide support for this project by way of volunteer labour from their head office.
- 9.11 A further meeting with the Urban Orchard Project is due in August and more details will be available at the next Board Meeting.

##### *High-level Adventure Course / Go Ape*

#### Background

- 9.15 AP has been in discussions with a company called Adventure Forest Ltd, who trade as 'Go Ape', who have been developing unique outdoor adventure activities involving high-level zip wires since 2002. They are the only international multi-site provider of such facilities & activities, with 29 active sites in the UK. Go Ape have

an excellent track record in terms of user enjoyment, safety and environmental performance, with over 4 million users since they started.

- 9.16 The company set up and operate 'tree top adventures' - namely, courses made up of a series of high-level platforms, ropes and zip wires located high up within the tree canopy. They are designed so that anyone over 1.4m in height can take part. They have since developed their offer to include courses specially designed for under-10s/those of shorter stature, and other related activities such as electric Segway forest adventures.
- 9.17 Go Ape have facilities in many locations across England, Scotland and Wales. They originally focused on established forests in rural areas - having agreed a multi-site arrangement with the Forestry Commission in 2003 - but have increasingly been developing facilities in more urban locations, including at Trent Park in LB Enfield (which staff from AP have visited) and Tilgate Park in Crawley. They are currently in negotiations to develop a number of facilities in urban areas, including one in a large local authority park in South London, for which they are about to submit for full planning consent.
- 9.18 Go Ape offer their services to the general public on both a pre-booked and 'turn up & go' basis, although they strongly encourage pre-booking (which account for 85-90% of their business). They can also host group bookings, for example for school-groups, birthdays, anniversaries and corporate events such as team building, etc. Go Ape will also work with groups with special needs to facilitate visits where possible - as illustrated by their oldest visitor to date, a 96-year old blind woman.
- 9.19 Operating seasons for their facilities vary with demand and local seasonal weather patterns, but generally are open from March to December. Courses do not operate in darkness, and so open after dawn and close by dusk. There is a high concentration of on-site staff at all of their facilities to ensure customer safety and enjoyment.

#### Go Ape Proposal for Alexandra Park

- 9.20 Having thoroughly researched several location options within the Park, Go Ape and Officers have developed a preferred option to develop a facility in the NE of the Park, around the slope opposite the deer enclosure and in the wooded area behind the Lakeside Cafe. There would be 2 courses, both on a continuous belay: a full-length 'adventure' that could take 3-4 hours to complete, and a 'junior' course which anyone over the age of 6 could use, which takes approx. 1 hr. The proposal incorporates some large London Plane trees on the carriageway, which have a relatively open canopy and so are not well-known of hosting nesting birds. A few medium-sized branches may need to be removed as part of the installation, but care will be taken not to significantly alter the shape of the crown of these trees. The secondary woodland strip behind the Lakeside Café has become populated by self-sown ash and sycamore saplings and currently receives very little proactive management, so the tree work required for the installation of the zip-wires will be targeted to remove these weed species and improve the quality of the woodland overall. An illustration of the appearance of the facility is given in Appendix 2.
- 9.21 Go Ape are conservatively estimating annual visitor numbers as 35,000-40,000, and estimate that up to 20 posts could be created at AP, should visitor numbers build up in the way anticipated over the next 5-10 years. Go Ape have prepared a full proposal along with supporting evidence & impact assessments, including visual amenity, user numbers, traffic and noise which are included at Appendix 2. In

summary both Go Ape and AP staff are confident that the additional visitor movements created by the facility could be absorbed by existing public transport and car parking provision to/from and onsite, in conjunction with Go Ape's established system of monitoring & managing visitor transport modes via advance bookings. The Go Ape facility requires no machinery, and so the only additional noise generated is the sound of the participants as they use the zip-wires.

- 9.22 We advise that the proposed facility, delivered by a well-known and reputable operator such as Go Ape, would provide an additional, unique and exciting attraction which would draw additional visitors to the Park and encourage a higher level of multi-purpose trips. Some of the activities Go Ape provide - for example Segways - are already available in the Park and are complementary to others eg. tree-climbing, specialist nature walks & trails, etc. Opportunities for promotional cross-selling of opportunities - for example a 'day out'-style ticket which could combine Go Ape with mini-golf, ice-skating, boating, etc - are high. The operator of the Lakeside Café is supportive of the proposal.
- 9.23 Go Ape have a successful track record of working in partnership with a number of statutory and non-departmental bodies (NDPBs) such as the Forestry Commission, Natural England and English Heritage, which demonstrates their commitment to delivering high-quality experiences with lowest possible impact upon both their host environments and the wider environment. They are also committed to sourcing as many goods & services locally, and hence maximising the local benefit of their business.
- 9.24 Go Ape have had informal discussions already with both English Heritage and with relevant officers from LB Haringey authority about the possibility of developing a facility within the Park at Alexandra Palace. This has guided their options analysis and the development of the proposal attached at Appendix 2. We will also consult the HLF case officer who dealt with the Park Improvement Project.
- 9.25 From the information provided and dialogue with key stakeholders (such as English Heritage) to date, we feel confident that Go Ape have a full understanding of the requirements of AP, including giving due regard to the conservation and ecological sensitivity of the Park and Palace.
- 9.26 **The encouragement of the Board to progress this proposal and for a planning application to be made is therefore sought.** We are addressing issues raised by the SAC/CC and the Friends of the Park which will be reported at the meeting, and are optimistic that they can be accommodated as the final detailed designs are prepared.
- 9.27 A special Board meeting may need to be convened between now and the next scheduled meeting on 28 October to consider final designs and a planning application and contractual terms. The outline proposal is attached at Appendix 2.

## **10. Update by Deputy Chair of Regeneration Working Group (RWG)**

- 10.1 There has been one formal meeting of the RWG since the last SAC-CC, in June. The Regeneration Strategy Workshop held in April was attended by some members of the RWG, including the Deputy Chair, Rick Wills (APTL Board member).
- 10.2 The majority of the June meeting was given over to 2 items: i) an update on the outcome of the recent elections and impact upon LB Haringey governance

structures and APPCT Board membership; and ii) an update on the development of concept designs for the HLF project. The latter was warmly received, with support for formalising the key relationship with the BBC (which is being progressed).

- 10.3 Forward meetings of RWG will align with key dates in the Regeneration programme over 2014/15.

## **11. Legal Implications**

- 11.1 The Council's Assistant Director Corporate Governance has been consulted in the preparation of this report, and has no comments.

## **12. Financial Implications**

- 12.1 LBH comments will be reported at the meeting
- 12.2 The costs for the Orchard Project will be met by current the Park development budget and contributions in kind will be sought wherever possible.

## **13. Use of Appendices**

- 13.1 Appendix 1: plan of Little Dinosaurs
- 13.2 Appendix 2: Information in support of the Go Ape proposal