

Alexandra Palace & Park Board

on 9 December 2014

Report Title: **Go Ape High Ropes Course Proposal**

Report of: **Kerri Farnsworth, Alexandra Palace Charitable Trust**

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To consider the latest developments in the discussion regarding the proposed course for the Go Ape! High ropes course and to obtain approval to proceed.
- 1.2 To delegate to the Chair of the Board the final decision on approving the lease for sealing.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Board notes the latest developments in the discussions and approves changes to the course as basis for planning application and lease with Go Ape! subject to consideration of any advice from the Joint Advisory and Consultative Committee in January 2015.
- 2.2 That the Board delegates the final decision for approving the lease to the Chair of the Board, subject to a satisfactory valuation under Section 119 of the Charities Act 2011.
- 2.3 That the Board authorises the Chair to instruct, through Officers, the Head of Haringey Council's Legal Services to seal the final lease document assuming planning consent will have been approved.

Report Authorised by: **Duncan Wilson, Chief Executive**.....

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

3. Executive Summary

- 3.1 The report sets out the latest developments in the proposal for the high ropes course.
- 3.2 Amendments to the course have been made following the Joint Committee meeting in July to address the objections of the Friends of the Park, which we now believe to have been met.

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. Background

- 6.1 Members will recall previous discussions about the proposal for a high ropes course in the north-east corner of the Park, the Go Ape! Course. Most notably the matter was discussed at the Joint Meeting of the Advisory and Consultative Committee on 8th July 2014.
- 6.2 At that meeting it was resolved that the Joint-Committee “agree in principle to the proposal to have the adventure course in Alexandra Park, but that in regard to the scheme being taken forward, it be noted that there were a variety of differing views on the proposal; and that the Joint-Committee would wish to see more detailed information on the proposed facility, including how it incorporated the Plane trees on either side of the road.”
- 6.3 Following that meeting Gordon Hutchinson, the Chair of the Friends of the Park met with Officers and a representatives of Go Ape on site. As a result of this discussion the course proposal was amended. The new proposal does not incorporate the London plane trees and a new course loop over the deer enclosure has been proposed – see diagrams at Appendix 1.
- 6.4 Of the three options proposed, version 1 (without the additional zip wires) is preferred by the Friends of the Park. Officers also feel this is the better option as the course will be contained on the northern side of the carriageway.
- 6.5 It was also resolved that the Statutory Advisory Committee would give further consideration to the proposals for the ‘Go Ape’ facility at the planning application stage of the process. It is anticipated that this will be considered at their meeting on 20 January 2015.

Deer Enclosure

- 6.6 The Veterinary Surgeon who advises on the welfare of the deer was consulted and has expressed some concern. The concern relates firstly to the disturbance that the construction phase will cause and secondly to the ongoing disturbance of the deer by participants passing over the enclosure.
- 6.7 The deer can be relocated to the secondary enclosure for the construction phase, this is already part of the annual cycle of the deer.
- 6.8 The longer-term impact can be mitigated by making adjustments to the existing fencing to enlarge the enclosure and to provide more cover and refuges for the deer.
- 6.9 Unfortunately, a site meeting to discuss these mitigation measures has not yet been possible. Representatives from Go Ape! have shown willingness to work with the Vet to make changes to the enclosure at their cost. Any changes requiring planning permission will form part of the Application.

Charities Act 2011

- 6.10 At the time of writing the proposed financial agreement has not been subject to a valuation to fulfil the obligations of the Charities Act. The figures are commercially sensitive and will be reported in the closed part of the meeting.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 That the Board notes the latest developments in the discussions and approves changes to the course as basis for planning application and lease with Go Ape! subject to consideration of any advice from the Joint Advisory and Consultative Committee in January 2015.
- 7.2 That the Board delegates the final decision for approving the lease to the Chair of the Board, subject to a satisfactory valuation under Section 119 of the Charities Act 2011
- 7.3 That the Board authorises the Chair to instruct, through Officers, the Head of Haringey Council's Legal Services to seal the final lease document assuming planning consent will have been approved.

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1 Haringey Council as Trustee has wide powers to grant leases which are set out in the Alexandra Park and Palace Acts and Order 1985 to 2004 (the Act). The powers are complex and it is not necessary for the purpose of this report that they be set out here. The Council exercises its Trustee functions through the Board as Charity Trustees. The overriding obligation of the Board in granting leases is to act within the statutory powers and to ensure that any rent is the best rent reasonably obtainable regard being had to the purposes of the Act.
- 8.2 The Council's Assistant Director Corporate Governance has been consulted in the preparation of this report, and has no comments save to endorse the importance of the legal implications detailed at paragraph 8.1.

9. Financial Implications

- 9.1 The LBH Chief Financial Officer has been consulted on the contents of the report and notes that the agreement to a lease will be dependent on due diligence to ensure that the Trustees can be assured that they are obtaining best value from this partnership arrangement.

10. Use of Appendices/Tables/Photographs

- 10.1 Appendix 1: Plans of the high ropes course proposal.