



London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

Wormwood Scrubs Charitable Trust Committee Minutes

Wednesday 24 June 2015

PRESENT

Committee Members: Councillors Elaine Chumnerly and Wesley Harcourt (Chair)

Co-opted Members: Miriam Shea and David Jeffreys

Officers: Mark Jones (Director of Finance and Resources, ELRS) Jem Kale (events Manager), Dave Page (Director for Safer Neighbourhoods), Mike Rumble (Parks Inspector), Jackie Simkins (Principal Planning Projects Officer)

Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation: Alexandra Day (Senior Community Engagement Officer) and Tom Cardis (Principal Strategic Planner)

1. APPOINTMENT OF A CHAIR AND A VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED -

That Councillor Wesley Harcourt be appointed as the Chair of the Wormwood Scrubs Charitable Trust for municipal year 2015-16.

That Councillor Joe Carlebach be appointed as the Vice-Chair of the Wormwood Scrubs Charitable Trust for municipal year 2015-16.

2. APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTED MEMBERS

Councillor Harcourt ask that it be noted that the non-voting status of the co-opted member positions did not reflect upon the proposed appointees and was due to the timescales involved with taking the decision to appoint voting members to Full Council.

RESOLVED-

That Miriam Shea and David Jeffreys be appointed as co-opted members of the Wormwood Scrubs Charitable Trust.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Harcourt asked that it be noted that he maintained an interest in the Old Oak and Park Royal Opportunity Area Planning Framework as he was a member of the Planning Committee of the Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation.

4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Joe Carlebach and Ian Ross, Parks Manager.

5. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED -

That the minutes of the meeting held on the 4th March be approved as an accurate record subject to the following amendment:

That Ian Ross's title be amended from "Leisure Manager" to "Parks Manager"

6. OLD OAK AND PARK ROYAL OPPORTUNITY AREA PLANNING FRAMEWORK BRIEFING

Alexandra Day, Senior Engagement Officer, and Tom Cardis, Principal Strategic Planner, presented an overview of the Old Oak and Park Royal Opportunity Area Planning Framework (OAPF) and the work of the Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation (OPDC).

The OPDC had been formalised on the 1st April 2015. Since then an engagement exercise had begun, looking to involve key partners in the delivery of the project. The OPDC was now the local planning authority for the OPDC area and would be reviewing planning applications as well as developing the Local Plan for the area. It was confirmed that some planning applications had already been received.

The consultation on the Local Plan would commence in the autumn and take approximately 18 months for the plan to be formally adopted.

The OAPF

The OAPF was a GLA document that had been started before the creation of the OPDC. The framework served as a pre-local plan guide for dealing with the early stages of the development.

Revisions were currently being made to the OAPF in response to the consultation exercise that had taken place. The revised document would be sent to the planning committee for review prior to endorsement by the OPDC and adoption by the Mayor. The OPDC would not formally adopt the OAPF until the Local Plan is adopted.

It was reported that there had been 11,000 responses to the consultation on the framework; these had been received from 3000 separate respondents, including the Trust and the Friends. It was noted that the Friends, The Local Authority and the Trust had raised similar concerns.

How these issues were likely to be addressed in the revised framework was discussed. References to the objectives of the Trust and the Scrubs would be made more prominent in the document and details of the planned density around the boundary of the Scrubs would be specified. There would be clarity over the amenity spaces in the development north of the Scrubs.

The response to comments on the OAPF would be going to the planning committee in early July, and then to the OPDC Board two weeks later. A track changed version of the OAPF would then be submitted to Planning Committee and OPDC Board in September 2015 for approval.

Governance

It was asked whether the Trust would be keen to hold a position on one of the panels that comprised the governance structure of the OPDC. Suitable panels were advised to be the "Place Review Panel", the "Communities Panel" or the "Public Sector Advisory Panel". It was agreed that members of the Trust needed to have a discussion about where they felt they best aligned and where they would be able to have the most impact.

The timescale for a decision was questioned and it was reported that it was unlikely that all the committees would have been set-up by the time of the Trust's next meeting on the 24th September. Alexandra Day agreed to check the timescales for the creation of the panels.

Action: Alexandra Day

The membership of the board of the development corporation was discussed. It was confirmed that the OPDC was made up of 15 members, chaired by Ed Lister and including the leaders of three local authorities and representatives from HS2, TFL, The Department of Transport and the community. The planning authority comprised Cllr Harcourt and cabinet members for Brent and Ealing, as well as three development and regeneration experts.

Miriam Shea questioned whether an application had yet been submitted for the development of the Car Giant site, around 20 hectares in size. The application was thought to be for 9000 new homes. Tom Cardis reported that this application was currently in pre-application stage and was likely to be submitted in late 2015, early 2016. It was confirmed to be for a residential led scheme. The details of the scheme were still to be confirmed. Tom Cardis to arrange for Car Giant and QPR, another significant stakeholder to attend the next meeting of the Trust.

Action: Tom Cardis, Fern Aldous

Alexandra Day confirmed she would circulate the consultation details in relation to the scheme.

Action: Alexandra Day

It was confirmed that only small scale planning applications had been submitted, such as the Cross rail depot. Alexandra Day to circulate the link to the page for applications received.

Action: Alexandra Day

It was questioned to what extent the OAPF would inform the Local Plan. It was confirmed that Local Plan, although informed by the OAPF, would have a lot greater level of detail, as well as policy setting powers that the framework did not have.

Jackie Simkins asked that it be noted to the OPDC that the interface between the development area and the Scrubs, particularly along the northern boundary was a critical point in the scheme. The transition between the Scrubs to the development should not be “stark”; this should be made clear in the wording of the revised framework. Tom Cardis reported it was thought likely the area surrounding the Scrubs would be designated as a low density area.

David Jeffreys questioned the solidity of the proposal for the link between the new HS2 station and the Scrubs. It was unclear whether the decision on access would be included within the HS2 Bill. Tom Cardis confirmed that the development of any access would have to be subject to its own planning application as part of the link runs through the IEP Depot site; this was felt to be positive by the committee.

It was asked whether updates from the OPDC could become a standing item on the committee’s agenda. The clerk to circulate the dates of the upcoming committees.

Action: Fern Aldous

The Chair thanked Tom Cardis and Alexandra Day for their attendance at the committee.

7. MANAGER'S REPORT

Opposition to Wetland Mitigation Area Proposed in HS2 Bill

Jackie Simkins highlighted to the committee that the land currently being reviewed for a wetland mitigation scheme could be subject to a compulsory purchase order if an alternative solution with HS2 was not agreed upon. It was however felt unlikely that HS2 would use this option.

A document was circulated detailing the work that had been done to identify alternative enhancement areas that would meet HS2’s mitigation requirements. These were focused around the edge of the Scrubs and included work to remove knotweed, enrich grassland and improve hedges etc.

A meeting had taken place with HS2 where they had accepted the enhancement works in principal. The cost of the scheme was estimated to be £3.3 million,

reportedly more than HS2 had expected. HS2 were to take the proposal to their board.

A decision needed to be made on whether LBHF should continue with their planned petition to the HS2 select committee. It was felt this decision should be based on whether the assurances against the Wetland Mitigation Scheme had been strengthened before the hearing took place in the following week. It was felt to be frustrating that HS2 had asked for any proposed scheme to be equal in price to the Wetland Mitigation Area without supplying information of how much this scheme would cost. The pricing of the enrichment was felt to be robust, spread over ten years with no ongoing costs to the authority.

It was noted that there were other avenues for the Trust if an agreement was not reached with HS2, including petitioning to the House of Lords. However it was felt that HS2 were under pressure to agree to the authority's proposed scheme.

It was reported that the Friends were now likely to withdraw their Overground petition as they were happy with the proposed Option C.

It was asked that the document detailing the proposed enhancement not be circulated outside of the Trust until after the select committee hearing.

Amendment to Scrubs Act

Sharp Pritchard had been consulted on the possibility of strengthening the Act. They had quoted the cost of getting the Bill through parliament at between £55,000-130,000 based on the level of opposition it received. Councillor Harcourt asked that this be noted as an option for the Trust if required, with the progression of the proposal held off until the outcome of the OPDC consultation and plans were known. The OPDC had often publically stated that they would work within the Act.

Filming and Events

Jem Kale, Events Manager, reported that the Scrubs had been advertised to potential clients and that all attempts were being made to build the reputation of the Scrubs as a potential events venue. LiveNation had pulled out from holding an event on the Scrubs, although a payback scheme for structural changes had been discussed. AEG, LiveNation's main competitors had also been approached.

A few sports agencies had shown an interest in hosting supplementary events to large sporting occasions, such as the rugby world cup or the 2016 Euro's, on the Scrubs. Cllr Chumnerly queried the details of the potential rugby event and it was reported that it would likely comprise of a large screen with hospitality provided. In trying to book such events they were in competition with Hyde Park and Battersea Park. But it was noted that the Scrubs had a USP in its transport links, soon to become 24 hour. This was offset by the established reputation of the other parks.

It was noted that Parsons Green were due to hold a Rugby World Cup event, although it was not felt that any event on the Scrubs would impact on their revenue.

The RedGra had been in frequent use, raising £8000 in revenue for the year to date. It was thought there was a possibility of collaborating with a filming site in Kensington and Chelsea to raise extra revenue.

It was asked that quotations were sought for the installation of water and electrical supplies to the site, to increase the likelihood of Olympia re-hiring the area.

Linford Christie Stadium

Dave Page reported that the Trust had been approached by Thames Valley Harriers with a plan to regenerate the Linford Christie stadium. This would be on the same site as the existing stadium and involved rebuilding the changing rooms (with the potential addition of a second floor) and the development of the tennis courts into a tennis academy. It was asked that the planning restrictions in the area be investigated.

Action: Dave Page

The project would be entirely funded by TVH, who had yet to get an estimate for the works.

Income from the scheme would be put back into the trust on a profit sharing basis. It was felt that caution was required and lessons needed to be learnt from the Hammersmith Park exercise. Representative from TVH were happy to attend the September meeting of the Trust and it was asked that they be invited. It was agreed that options for the long term future of the stadium needed to be investigated.

Action: Dave Page

Property Issues

Dave Page confirmed that the removal of the artillery wall had been costed and a meeting had taken place with Amey in the previous week to discuss the progression of the plans.

The potential for RE:FIT scheme works at the Linford Christie stadium, with a potential saving of £7.5 thousand annual was noted.

It was reported that the diesel powered boiler at the stadium would be replaced by a gas fired alternative. The works would require a trench to be dug through Scrubs Lane, however there was a possibility that this could be tied to the work on the Red Gra improvements, minimising disruption. It was reported that the funding for this work had been approved with nil cost to the trust.

Community Safety Update

Mike Rumble, Parks Inspector, reported that in 2014/15 there had been 654 patrols undertaken on the Scrubs with 102 incidents recorded. Many of these were related to dog walkers and dangerous dogs. The number of dogs permitted per walker was discussed. It was confirmed that the bye-laws stated that four were allowed, although Little Wormwood Scrubs allowed for 6. It was thought that having more

dogs than was permissible would invalidate the insurance in any incidents that may occur.

It was confirmed that the energy company owned the land that had been subject to persistent fly-tipping. They had now installed bollards to prevent any further incidents.

The parks inspectors had acquired a new fleet of vehicles, including 4x4's that would help to prevent the moped crime prevalent on the Scrubs.

An incident of illegal metal detecting had resulted in the discovery of what was thought to be a landmine; this was confirmed to be a false alarm.

It was reported that a model aircraft had flown dangerously close to a user of the Scrubs; a discussion had taken place with the flying club following the incident. The number of drones being used on the Scrubs had significantly increased and it was reported that the regulations controlling their use were vague. The bye-laws made provision for powered aircraft but there was uncertainty over whether this included drones, which were battery operated. It was asked that the possibility of a change to the bye-laws be investigated.

Action: Dave Page

Jem Kale agreed to share information about the use of Drones at large events.

Action: Jem Kale

Cllr Chumnerly suggested the use of a public space protection order to further protect the Scrubs and define non-permissible usage. It was felt this could help tackle the use of drones, the problems associated with professional dog walkers and the use of mopeds on the Scrubs; evidence of a nuisance would need to be collected. It was asked that this be investigated further.

Action: Dave Page

It was reported that the parks inspectors were now based in Holland Park. This was felt to be an improvement on their previous location and had improved efficiency. Recent cuts to the service had diminished the team by one Sergeant and two constables; this had left periods of vulnerability in the cover of the parks.

It was felt by the service that the Woodman's mews barrier was beginning to fail too frequently. There would be heavy costs involved in its replacement but it was seen as vital for preventing invasion on to the Scrubs.

It was noted that Hammersmith and Fulham was one of only three London Boroughs to retain its parks police service.

Grounds Maintenance Update

Dave Page reported that the waste bins at Braybook Road were being scoped for removal, due to the attraction of fly-tippers to the site. The removal would be for a trial period only and the decision was reversible if proven to be ineffective.

It was confirmed that the 10 year site management plan was on hold until the situation with HS2 mitigation was clarified.

Dave Page agreed to send a reminder to Ian Ross about the need for the trees in Wulfstan Lane to be cut back as they presented a safety hazard.

Action: Dave Page

Fundraising Possibilities

Mark Jones updated the committee on a recent meeting he had attended with the head of SOBUS, an organisation that helped charities to seek out funding. Ways in which the number of users of the Scrubs could be recorded was discussed. Ideas included using car-park data. SOBUS were willing to meet the group to facilitate a discussion on the development of a fundraising strategy. Cllr Harcourt asked that this be arranged as a separate meeting to the committee.

Action: Mark Jones

2015/16 Financial Forecast

The financial forecast was more positive than had been expected, with a loss of only £36,000 compared to the budgeted loss of £79,000. This was due to a slight increase in parking revenue, beneficial inflation adjustments to the grounds maintenance contract and the income generated from activities on the Scrubs.

Mark Jones updated Cllr Harcourt on the level of inflation of the Quodron contract. It was explained that 55% was related to standard council pay rates, 35% was on the Department for Transport index in relation to the use of plant or operating machinery and 10% was on the DoT index for diesel fuel.

The best hope for the Trust to become solvent was for regular (but not frequent) major events to be held on the Scrubs. It was felt the Trust would be in difficulty if this did not transpire.

8. DATES OF THE NEXT MEETINGS

The dates of the next meetings are:

24th September 2015
8th December 2015
15th March 2016

Meeting started: 7:00pm
Meeting ended: 8:45pm

Chair

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