

WEST HAM PARK COMMITTEE

Monday, 4 December 2023

Minutes of the meeting of the West Ham Park Committee held at Committee Room -
2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 4 December 2023 at 11.30 am

Present

Members:

Caroline Haines (Chair)
Andrew McMurtrie (Deputy Chairman)
Eamonn Mullally
Wendy Mead
Oliver Sells KC
Catherine Bickmore
Rafe Courage
Richard Gurney
Justin Meath-Baker

In Attendance:

Benjamin Murphy
Councillor Joy Laguda MBE
Councillor John Whitworth
Tim Hodgson

Officers:

Emily Brennan	- Environment Department
Anna Cowperthwaite	- Comptroller and City Solicitor's
Simon Glynn	- Environment Department
Clem Harcourt	- Chamberlain's Department
Joanne Hill	- Environment Department
William LoSasso	- Environment Department
Bob Roberts	- Environment Department
Joseph Smith	- Town Clerk's Department
Blair Stringman	- Town Clerk's Department

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED – That, the public and non-public summary of the minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2023 be agreed as a correct record.

MATTERS ARISING

- a) The Chairman gave thanks to Richard Gurney acknowledging his final meeting. It was noted that Richard has been a dedicated Member of the committee since the early to mid-1990s, serving for a remarkable period of almost three decades. The Committee expressed its gratitude for Richards significant contributions, especially considering the unique role he has held as the heir-at-law.

4. **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk concerning the review of its Terms of Reference.

RESOLVED – That, the terms of reference of the West Ham Park Committee, be approved for submission to the Court of Common Council in April, and that any further changes required in the lead up to the Court's appointment of Committees be delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman.

5. ***ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S UPDATE**

The Committee received a report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment concerning an update to Members of the West Ham Park Committee on management and operational activities at West Ham Park since July 2023.

The Assistant Director provided an update on the nursery site, focusing on community engagement, stakeholder involvement, and the timeline of the project. Members noted that the community engagement process was set to begin in early 2024 and aimed to understand public needs and aspirations related to the park. Stakeholders include the Friends of West Ham Park, local sports clubs, schools, residents, and businesses. Members were informed that that the goal was to gather input on an acceptable and viable redevelopment of the former nursery and consider planning permission requirements.

Members highlighted the importance of involving volunteers, acknowledgment of the Gurney family's support, and plans for celebrating the 150th anniversary of the park's transfer to the City of London. Additionally, there were suggestions to invite the Friends of West Ham Park to present at future meetings and explore collaboration with the probation service for unpaid work opportunities.

Members raised questions about public consultation plans, a dedicated website for the project, and ensuring clarity in communication with London Borough of Newham. The discussion also touched on the importance of aligning project costs properly and the need for a clear project cost centre. The Committee acknowledged the need to explicitly distinguish between London Borough of Newham and the local planning authority to avoid confusion.

RESOLVED – That, the report be noted.

6. ***BUSINESS PLAN 2023/24 – PROGRESS REPORT (MID-YEAR, APRIL-SEPTEMBER 2023)**

The Committee received a report of the Chamberlain concerning an update on progress against the Environment Department's high-level Business Plan 2023/24.

RESOLVED – That, the report be noted.

7. ***OPERATIONAL FINANCE PROGRESS REPORT (PERIOD 6 APRIL – SEPTEMBER 2023) 2023/24 – WEST HAM PARK**

The Committee received a report of the Chamberlain concerning an update on the operational finance position as of period 6 (April – September 2023) 2023/24 for West Ham Park's local risk revenue budget to date and projected year-end outturn position, current live capital projects and outstanding debt position.

Members noted a projected overspend of £37,000 on the local risk budget, attributed to reduced income from tennis and additional expenditure on equipment and premises-related costs. Officers additionally provided updates on capital projects, outstanding debts, and reserves held by the charity, noting, an extra £80,000 from the operational property reserve was allocated to support community engagement, particularly related to the disposal of the nursery site.

In relation to the West Ham Park Playground Project, concerns were raised about potential overspending, and questions were posed regarding the design and material issues. Officers responded, providing clarification on the current approved budget and the potential for additional budget release as the project progresses through the next gateway. A suggestion was made by a Member to provide a clear tabulation of outstanding works against available resources for the playground project at the next committee meeting. This detailed list could offer greater clarity on what has been spent, what is yet to be spent, and any potential funding gaps. Discussion also touched upon the impact of COVID-19 on the playground project, with the loss of lottery funding and subsequent support from the city. The historic context was emphasised, and it was acknowledged that the next meeting would provide more up-to-date figures.

A Member raised a question regarding the Superintendent's confidence in bringing the projected overspend under control before year-end. The response highlighted that figures provided were until the end of September and that ongoing financial monitoring and management were in place across all charities.

RESOLVED – That, the report be noted.

8. **REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGETS 2024/25**

The Committee considered a report of the Chamberlain concerning approval of the proposed revenue and capital budgets for the West Ham Park Committee for 2024/25, for subsequent submission to the Finance Committee.

Members noted the proposed net expenditure budget for the committee was 1.182 million, indicating an increase of 72,000 compared to the previous year.

Officers highlighted that Appendix 2 provided details on the total net local resource base of 752,000 for 2024-25, with adjustments made for inflation. Officers noted that budget adjustments included considerations for the TOM Structure implementation and the transfer of staffing budgets between divisions. Additionally, officers informed Members that the proposed budget encompassed budgets for central items such as capital charges, recharge, and support service budgets. It was noted that these were distinct from local risk budgets and are outside the control of the chief officer.

RESOLVED – That Members,

- a) Approve the Committee's proposed revenue budget for 2024/25 for submission to Finance Committee.
- b) Approve the Committee's proposed revenue budget for 2024/25 for submission to Finance Committee.
- c) Agree that amendments for 2023/24 and 2024/25 budgets arising from changes to recharges or for any further implications arising from energy price increases, changes to the Cyclical Works Programme (CWP) and capital charges during budget setting be authorised to the Chamberlain in consultation with the Interim Executive Director Environment.

9. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

There were no questions.

10. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT.**

There was no urgent business.

11. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED – That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

12. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED – That, the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2023 be agreed as a correct record.

13. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

There were no questions.

14. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

The was no urgent business.

The meeting ended at 12.48 pm

Chairman

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