

<b>Committee(s):</b> West Ham Park Committee	<b>Dated:</b> 17 October 2024
<b>Subject:</b> West Ham Park Former Nursery Site	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	<u><i>City's Corporate Plan 2024-29</i></u>  <u><i>Diverse Engaged Communities</i></u> <u><i>Leading Sustainable Environment</i></u> <u><i>Providing Excellent Services</i></u> <u><i>Vibrant Thriving Destination</i></u> <u><i>Flourishing Public Spaces</i></u>
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	<b>No –within approved project budget of £595k; spend to date is £567k with outstanding commitments of £23k and a balance remaining of £5k</b>
<b>If so, how much?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Katie Stewart, Executive Director of Environment	<b>For Decision</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Simon Glynn, Assistant Director, Culture and Projects, Natural Environment Division	

## Summary

This report provides an update on West Ham Park charity's community and stakeholder engagement activities in relation to the former nursery site.

It describes the community engagement activities undertaken by the charity between March and July 2024 culminating in a final written report, which is provided in Appendix 1. The majority of public feedback favoured a sensitive redevelopment of the site that secures much-needed public amenities and benefits. The feedback was gathered from people local to the park and who are representative of Newham's demography.

Additional engagement was undertaken with LB Newham as part of their Local Plan review, resulting in a written response to Newham's Local Plan consultation. Finally,

the report provides an update on engagement with Historic England to ascertain the heritage value of the site.

In consultation with the City Surveyor, it has been recommended that a commercial agent is instructed to undertake a review of the market viability of the site to ensure that the City Corporation, as trustee, achieves best value for the West Ham Park charity on any future disposal and/or development.

### **Recommendation(s)**

Members are asked, acting for and on behalf of the City Corporation in its capacity as trustee of West Ham Park (registered charity number 206948) to:

- Note the community engagement report provided in Appendix 1
- Note the on-going engagement with Historic England with an outcome of that engagement to be reported to the next meeting of this Committee
- Note the on-going engagement with LB Newham and submission of written representations as part of Newham's Local Plan review.
- Note the instruction of a commercial agent to review the site's current market viability for a future disposal and development.
- Authorise officers to share with Newham the results of WHP charity's community engagement activities.

### **Main Report**

#### **Background**

1. In October 2023, this Committee gave approval to officers to work towards a positive pre-application outcome (in relation to the redevelopment of the former nursery site) with LB Newham, informed by the charity undertaking comprehensive stakeholder and community engagement.
2. The approved community engagement exercise would be undertaken by an engagement consultancy and supported by officers in the Natural Environment Division and City Surveyors' Department, conducted as soon as possible to fully understand the public aspirations associated with the park and to increase public awareness of the proposed redevelopment of the site.
3. The Committee also approved further engagement with the local authority and statutory consultees to establish the heritage value of the site.
4. Formal appointments of a planning and heritage consultant (Montagu Evans) and community engagement consultant (make:good) were made in February 2024.
5. Community engagement planning commenced in February 2024 with the following tasks undertaken:
  - a. A review of demographic data

- b. Stakeholder Mapping
- c. Creation of an Engagement Plan
- d. The establishment of a framework for engagement conversations
- e. Update of project webpage

### **Current Position: Public Engagement**

6. Between March and July 2024, consultants make:good, supported by officers carried out a range of engagement activities with local residents, park users and other stakeholders to discuss the opportunities for the 50% of the nursery site approved by this Committee for community and operational uses.
7. A draft community engagement brief was created at the end of the first phase of public engagement in June. This brief was tested during a second phase of engagement in July. The final consultant report details the results of all engagement activities and includes a final version of the community brief. The purpose of the community brief is to ensure decision-making on the future of the former nursery site, considers the views of the public.
8. The engagement programme directly engaged with over 1164 individuals and 1080 people contributed ideas. 947 adults completed feedback on-line or in person. 124 models were created by young people in workshops, plus there were 9 further contributions by young people through the Young Designer's Programme.
9. In terms of public sentiment, 67% of feedback received was positive, 11% positive with reservations and 22% negative.
10. Feedback received as part of this engagement was overwhelmingly local in nature.
  - a. 85% of people who gave us their postcode live within a one-mile radius of the site
  - b. 95% of people who gave us their postcode live in the borough of Newham
  - c. 5% of people who gave us their postcode live in either Tower Hamlets, Hackney, Redbridge or Waltham Forest.
11. Having spoken to over 1000 people who represent the local area, make:good identified that the main priorities for future use of the nursery site are a café, play for older children and indoor community facilities according to those who were consulted.
12. Whilst some people have concerns about housing or are opposed to the proposal to introduce housing on this site, 92% of people agreed with at least one of the four priorities identified through the engagement process for the remaining 50% of the site.

13. The results of the community engagement process were reviewed by planning consultants, Montagu Evans, in July and were referenced in the written response to Newham's Local Plan review.
14. Spend to date on the community engagement activities is £44,270 with no further commitments.

### **Current Position: Statutory Engagement**

15. Appointed planning and heritage consultants Montagu Evans have undertaken engagement on behalf of West Ham Park charity with LB Newham and Historic England since March 2024.
16. On 4 June, LB Newham agreed the draft version of the Regulation 19 Local Plan for onward public consultation. The formal public consultation period ran from 19<sup>th</sup> July to 20<sup>th</sup> September 2024. At its meeting in July, this Committee authorised officers to prepare and submit written representations to LB Newham as part of its Local Plan consultation. Accordingly, a letter was prepared and submitted, details of which are provided in Appendix 2.
17. Montagu Evans have also commenced their engagement on behalf of West Ham Park charity with Historic England (HE).
18. The north-eastern corner of the registered park comprises the former nursery site. This part of the park is referred to briefly in the list description: "*KITCHEN GARDENS The north-east corner of the site accommodates extensive glasshouses and nursery areas which are used by the Corporation of London to supply bedding plants and displays for the City. They are sited on part of what appears to be a kitchen garden on the OS map of 1868. The area is enclosed by hedges and chain-link fence.*"
19. Montagu Evans has been asked to establish the significance of this part of the registered park given this is not clear from the list description. This will include both the above and below ground features of significance.
20. Historic England (HE) is responsible for the preparation of the statutory lists including Registered Parks and Gardens. Having engaged with HE, the consultants recommended the use of HE's enhanced advisory service (EAS) to review the heritage significance of the site.
21. An application has been prepared, which required additional research and information gathering, as reported to this Committee in July. That process is now complete and a submission to HE was made in October 2024. A decision from HE on the significance of the site and any updates to its records will be forthcoming and will be reported to the next meeting of this Committee.
22. Spend to date on the statutory engagement activities is £2500 with a commitment of £15,200 linked to the on-going engagement with HE and LB Newham.

## **Proposal: Engagement and Project Next Steps**

23. The timeline of the continued engagement and proposed next steps are as follows:

- October 2024: Continue engagement with LB Newham as part of their Local Plan review; share with Newham the results of WHP charity's community engagement activities and seek a response from Newham to the results.
- October/November 2024: Undertake a review of the viability of the site based on the current market and planning context, informed by the engagement results and feedback on these results from LB Newham.
- December 2024: Secure written advice from Historic England on the heritage significance of the site via their Enhanced Advisory Service.

## **Strategic, Charity and Corporate Implications**

24. Strategic implications: In consultation with the City Surveyor, it has been recommended that a review of the site's market viability should be undertaken by a commercial agent to ensure that the Charity can achieve best value for any future disposal and/or development of the site. There are particular provisions that will need to be met in relation to this activity or a similar future assessment of viability in order to fulfil the requirement of s.119 of the Charities Act 2011.

25. Financial implications: The review of the market viability will be allocated under the existing budget and will cost up to £5,000 to undertake.

26. Resource implications: None

27. Legal implications: None at this stage.

28. Charity Implications: West Ham Park is a registered charity (number 206948). Charity Law obliges Members to ensure that the decisions they take in relation to a charity are taken in the best interests of that charity.

29. Risk implications:

30. Equalities implications: The proposed community and stakeholder engagement activities was compliant with the Equalities Act and GDPR.

31. Climate implications: None

32. Security implications: None

## **Conclusion**

33. This report provides information on the stakeholder and community engagement activities that West Ham Park charity is undertaking in 2024, in relation to the old

nursery site. It describes the on-going engagement activities and the proposed next steps for the project.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1: West Ham Park Old Nursery Site Final Engagement Report.

## **Non-Public Appendices**

- Appendix 2: Written representations to LB Newham as part of their Local Plan review (Reg 19 consultation).

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