



MINUTES OF THE BARHAM PARK TRUST COMMITTEE
Held on Wednesday 12 April 2017 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor McLennan (Chair), Hirani (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Farah, Miller and Southwood

1. Apologies for Absence

None.

2. Declarations of Interests

None declared.

3. Minutes of previous meetings

RESOLVED:

- i) that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 2 February 2017 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting;
- ii) that the amendment to the minutes of the meeting of 7 September 2017, detailed in the excerpt before the committee, be approved.

4. Matters Arising (If Any)

None.

5. Update on Operational Issues Relating to Barham Park

A report summarising the latest operational issues relating to Barham Park was presented to the committee by Chris Whyte (Operational Director Environment Services). The report included an update regarding the activities of the Sudbury Safer Neighbourhood Team whose regular patrols of the park had curtailed incidences of anti-social behaviour. The report also detailed recent and planned actions of the Parks Team which included improvements to the play area to be made before June 2017. Members also heard that there had been an incidence of vandalism at the park with damage being caused to the wishing well in the courtyard area. The area had since been cleared and made safe.

RESOLVED: That the update on Operational Issues relating to Barham Park be noted.

6. State of Finances

Gareth Robinson (Head of Finance) presented a report to the committee on the finances of the Barham Park Trust, clarifying the division of responsibility between

the council and the trust and setting out the level of subsidy provided to the trust. Members' attention was drawn to tables 1 and 2 in the report; the former setting out the significant annual costs borne by the Trust, the latter outlining the extensive use of the council's revenue budget and Section 106 funds on the park. The report detailed the actions that would be taken to ensure that the costs of maintaining the park would be charged to the Trust, including fixing maintenance costs at £50,231 (plus yearly inflation) which equated to the proportion of time spent on the park by the council's public realm contractor Veolia. The council would also seek to isolate the costs associated with planting in the park and proposed to undertake a detailed analysis of the amount of council officer time spent on the park, the results of which would be reported back to the committee at a subsequent meeting

In the ensuing discussion, the committee directed that the report on officer time include a comparative analysis with the borough's other parks and questioned how officer time would be recorded. Gareth Robinson outlined the range of activity undertaken by council officers in support of the park and advised that salary costs proportionate to the time spent by officers on the park would be calculated, with a particular focus on time spent over and above what was considered usual for the borough's parks.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the spend income in 2016/17 and the anticipated financial position in future years be noted;
- ii) That the spend on Barham Park funded by non-Trust resources be noted;
- iii) That the split between Barham Park and the Council and the standardisation of recharges be noted; and
- iv) That officers produce a report reviewing the cost of officer time spend on Barham Park matters, to include a comparative analysis with other council maintained parks in the borough.

7. Options for future investment in park infrastructure at Barham Park

Robert Anderton (Head of Environmental Improvement) and Sarah Chaudhry (Head of Property Services) presented a report to the committee summarising recent investment in park infrastructure for Barham Park and proposing the appointment of a project officer to oversee the development of the park, manage budgets and seek external funding. Members heard that Barham Park had benefited from over £400,000 of infrastructure investment and maintenance works between April 2015 and March. The report set out the improvements achieved as a result of this investment and detailed potential options for future investment including drainage and planting improvements. The committee was advised that any future plans for park development should take into account the investment need identified in the Building Condition and Mechanical and Electrical survey appended to the report, though it was highlighted that a detailed analysis of the required works would be necessary before a final recommendation could be made. The proposed project officer post, the costs of which were estimated to be £60k, would be responsible for taking forward investment projects in the park and ensuring the Trust achieved best value for money.

Responding to questions raised by the committee, Sarah Chaudhry advised that the building condition survey had been commissioned and funded by the Barham Park Trust. Chris Whyte (Operational Director Environment Services) confirmed that the responsibilities and estimated salary of the project officer post were consistent with a PO4 position within the council. A job description had not yet been created but it was anticipated that the duties of the position would be many and varied and would include providing an interface with customers and key stakeholders. Members discussed the benefit of having a dedicated resource for the park and highlighted the importance of ensuring that projects were progressed in a timely manner.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the extent of recent investment in the park and options for longer term investment be noted; and
- ii) That approval be granted for the appointment of a project officer, on a fixed term basis, to oversee the development of the park, manage budgets and seek external funding, and take the proposed projects forward over the coming 18 months.

8. Property Update, Barham Park Building Complex, Unit 2, 660 Harrow Road, Wembley

Sarah Chaudhry (Head of Property Services) introduced a report updating members on the granting of a lease for Unit 2 (the Snooker and Billiards Room) of the Barham Park Building Complex to the Barham Park Veterans Club. The report provided a summary of the activity undertaken since the Trust approved the granting of a lease to the Veterans at its meeting on 28 January 2015. Members were informed that on 20 March 2017 the Veterans had requested a statutory right to renew the lease at the end of the term, a variation to the previously agreed terms. Given that the Veterans had been in occupation of Unit 2 for over 40 years, Officers recommended that the Trust accede to the request provided that the lease was completed within six weeks of the date of the meeting. In all the circumstances, this was considered to be fair and reasonable and the Veterans' solicitors had confirmed that this was a realistic timeframe for completion. If a lease was not completed within that period, the Trust was requested to delegate to the Strategic Director Resources the power to take such steps as may be necessary to terminate the current basis of the Veterans' occupation of Unit 2.

In the subsequent discussion, the committee sought confirmation that equalities concerns previously raised regarding the Veterans had been resolved. Officers confirmed that work undertaken by the council's equalities officer had been reported to the trust previously to members' satisfaction but that further monitoring was required to ensure long term compliance. Members further queried whether the Veterans would retain an automatic right to renew the lease if the club's membership fell to one or two members. Officers advised that this point would be addressed in the work going forward on the lease.

The committee discussed the proposed arrangements to be followed if the lease were not completed within the set period and considered that it would be

appropriate that the Chair and Vice Chair of the committee be consulted before any actions were taken.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the request by the Veterans for a statutory right to an automatic renewal of the lease at the end of the proposed 4 year term of the lease be agreed provided that the lease is completed within six weeks from the date of the meeting, 12 April 2017; and
- i) That if a lease is not completed within the period specified in i), authority be delegated to the Strategic Director Resources, in consultation with the Chair or Vice Chair of the Committee, to take such steps as are necessary to terminate the current basis of the Veterans' occupation of Unit 2 including taking, or responding to any formal action or legal proceedings.

9. Any Other Urgent Business

None.

The meeting was declared closed at 7.27 pm

COUNCILLOR MARGARET MCLENNAN
Chair