Brent

MINUTES OF THE BARHAM PARK TRUST COMMITTEE
Held in the Conference Hall, Brent Civic Centre on Tuesday 9 September 2025 at 10.00 am

PRESENT: Councillor M Butt (Chair) and Councillors Farah, Rubin and Krupa Sheth.

1. **Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair for the 2025-26 Municipal Year**

RESOLVED to confirm the appointment of Councillor Muhammed Butt as Chair and Councillor Mili Patel as Vice Chair of the Braham Park Trust Committee for the 2025-26 Municipal Year.

2. **Apologies for Absence and Clarification of Alternate Members**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mili Patel and Councillor Donnelly-Jackson with Councillor Rubin attending as a substitute.

3. **Declarations of Interests**

No interests were declared at the meeting.

4. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 24 February 2025 be agreed as a correct record.

5. **Matters Arising (if any)**

None.

6. **Barham Park Trust Annual Report and Accounts 2024/25**

Ravinder Jassar (Deputy Director Finance) introduced the Trust Annual Report 2024-25, which included the Trust Accounts for consideration and approval prior to submission to the Charity Commission.

In presenting the Annual Report and Trust Accounts the following areas were highlighted for the Committee:

- The Annual accounts had been prepared on a receipts and payments basis using the current template provided by the Charity Commission. The receipts and payments template was deemed to be more appropriate due to its concise format and the size of the Trust having reflected the transition from an accruals to cash accounting basis. This change had been implemented to facilitate a smooth transition to the Trust's newly established bank account and to simplify internal financial processes.

- A new bank account for the Trust had been opened with cash funds of £712,207 accumulated up to 31st March 2025 having been transferred to the bank account following review and approval of the draft receipts and payments accounts for 2024/25. Confirmation was provided that the Trust therefore now operated two separate bank accounts: an interest-bearing deposit account offering an Annual Equivalent Rate (AER) of 2.50% and a non-interest-bearing current account. To optimise interest earnings on the available funds, £700,000 had been transferred to the interest-bearing deposit account with the remaining £12,207 allocated to the non-interest-bearing current account to cover operational liquidity needs.

- The outline of work undertaken on behalf of the Trust during the year, which included the repair and improvement works on the park and ongoing work to secure tenants for the various buildings on the site as detailed within the Annual Report attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

- During the 2024-25 financial year the Trust had incurred total expenditure of £75,716 including building maintenance and insurance premiums with this paid using receipts generated within the same financial year. In terms of income the Trust had received a total of £149,717, which had been derived from activities such as funfairs, rental charges, and interest earnings with the Trust's assets as at 31 March 2025 identified as £342,228 unrestricted funds; £369,978 restricted funds; £22,577 other monetary assets and £939,071 asset representing the valuation of the Barham Park Building Complex.

  At the end of the 2024-25 financial year, the Trust had reported a current liability of £16,034 which it was noted primarily reflected the outstanding costs associated with a recent rental review, ongoing building maintenance, and a cash advance related to unpaid invoices owed to Brent Council. The Trust had achieved a surplus of £74,001, net of receipts and payments, and increased its total cash funds from £638,206 reported in 2023-24 to £712,207 in 2024-25 with members also noting the wider comparison between performance during 2023-24 and 2024-25 as set out in sections 3.11 – 3.14 of the report.

- In terms of restricted funds, the balance as of 31st March 2025 amounted to £369,978 reflecting resources designated for specific purposes in accordance with the Trust's policy. Members were reminded that approval from both the Committee and the Charity Commission was required before the restricted fund could be utilised, with the Committee needing to be satisfied that their proposed use was in accordance with the terms of the Trust. On this basis, it was reported that £352,221 out of the current restricted fund was expected to be used for urgent repairs in 2025-26, subject to approval by the Charity Commission.

- Given the size of the Trust falling below the threshold set by the Charity Commission, there was no formal requirement for the Trust's financial statements to be independently audited with the provision of an Independent Examiner's Report therefore regarded as acceptable practice. On this basis, confirmation was provided that the Trust accounts had been subject to an independent examination by the Brent Council's Deputy Director

Organisational Assurance & Resilience with the Independent Examiner's Report attached as Appendix 3 to the report and no findings raised.

The Chair thanked Ravinder Jassar for the update provided and then invited comments in response to the report, with the following raised:

- In response to clarification being sought on the process for approving use of the Trust's Restricted Fund, members were advised this would require formal agreement by the Trust prior to an application being made to the Charity Commission for the funds to be released.

With no further issues raised the Chair thanked officers for their ongoing work and presentation of the Accounts and the Trust Committee **RESOLVED** to:

(1) To approve the Annual Report and Barham Park Trust Accounts 2024-25.

(2) To note the Independent Examiners Review of Barham Park Trust Accounts for 2024-25.

(3) To authorise Officers to update the Charity Commission with the Barham Park Trust Annual Report and Accounts for 2024-25

7. **Operational and Strategic Update Relating to Barham Park Estate, HA0 2HB**

Denish Patel (Head of Property) introduced an update on the operational and strategic property matters related to the Barham Park Estate providing an update on operational and strategic property matters related to the Barham Park Estate. The update included progress on lease renewals, arrears management, and building works as well as 776 and 778 Harrow Road whilst also outlining the current financial position of the Trust. Details were also provided in relation to the ongoing strategic tenant engagement process in support of future redevelopment and the proposed expansion of the estate's charitable purposes

In presenting the report, the following key areas were highlighted:

- In terms of lease renewals and lettings good progress had continued to be made in regularising tenancy arrangements across the Barham Park Estate, aligning with both operational requirements and the Trust's long-term strategic objectives. Following the approval of delated authority granted by the Trust Committee to the Director of Property and Assets the lease renewal for Unit 1 (occupied by Tamu Samaj UK) had been completed with the renewal for Unit 2 (occupied by the Veterans' Club) reported as being at an advanced stage with both leases including the provision of phased rent increases. Members were advised that the rent increases had been informed by independent professional valuation advice and structured to align with the Trust's strategic priorities, ensuring leases were now set on a more sustainable path enabling greater consistency with prevailing rental values, while remaining appropriate to the charitable use of the estate with Members having noted the details provided on the valuation and new rents (as detailed within the exempt Appendix circulated with the report).

In relation to Unit 8, confirmation was provided that the Council had formally yielded the property with vacant possession at the end of April 2025 and agreed to pay rent to the Trust up to that date. Following a marketing exercise, the unit had been allocated to a new community-focused tenant, EchoVibe Hub, subject to finalisation of the necessary lease agreement which it was confirmed had been structured to reflect market-aligned terms while supporting the Trust's broader charitable objectives.

Once the lease renewals and new lettings had been completed (including the re-letting of vacant Unit 8) the Trust's annual rental income was expected to increase by £17,820, reaching a total of £87,991. An additional £2,250 was also anticipated from scheduled rent uplifts for units 1 and 2, bringing the total to £90,241 per annum in the long term.

- Members were also advised that Heads of Terms had been agreed with the Friends of Barham Library for the temporary occupation of vacant Unit 7. This arrangement would provide the Trust with short-term income while preserving flexibility for future redevelopment. Following this agreement, the prospective tenant had expressed interest in making external alterations, i.e., a new front entrance to improve accessibility, which had not been included in the original terms and would therefore in the process of being assessed in relation to the impact on any planning, heritage and future redevelopment requirements with final approval subject to consideration by the Director of Property and Assets, ensuring alignment with the Trust's legal obligations, charitable objectives, and strategic plans for the estate.

- Moving on to cover rent arrears and lease letting arrangements, the Trust was advised that arrears across the estate had continued to decline reflecting positive engagement with tenants and the establishment of repayment plans backed up by the Trust reserving the right to take legal action, including forfeiture, under the lease terms, if necessary, as a last resort. In terms of further updates, members were advised that the proposed re-gear of ACAVA's lease to release Unit 6 had not yet advanced with discussions ongoing alongside legal proceedings with Virgin Media relating to their outstanding arrears. Confirmation was also provided that all rent reviews had been completed (resulting in an annual rent increase of £15,671) with the next cycle of rent reviews due to be undertaken within the next 5 year period, aligned to the expiry of leases and progress of relevant redevelopment plans.

- Reference was then made to the progress on Year One building works (under the pre-planned maintenance programme) with the Trust reminded that the scope of works identified had been on the Watts report and OCR Surveying Ltd.'s site-specific recommendations. Planned improvements included priority roof repairs to make the building weather-tight, render repairs, selective window replacements, external redecorations, and façade enhancements to both the park-facing and Harrow Road elevations with the project expected to take approximately 10–12 weeks from start-on-site. Members were advised that the works would be funded from the Trust's restricted funds (inclusive of VAT and professional fees) which, as a result, had increased the final estimate to £355,221 based on the breakdown of costs listed with section 3.15 of the report and would lead to the Trust's restricted reserves being almost fully committed. Confirmation was provided that approval had been received from the Charity Commission for use of the restricted funds for this purpose.

A competitive tender had subsequently issued to appoint a contractor to deliver the Year 1 building works however, all bids had exceeded the available budget with further discussion therefore ongoing with the bidders to explore opportunities for value engineering and scope adjustments to bring the project within budget. Once these revisions had been finalised it was confirmed the Director of Property and Assets would proceed to award the contract under delegated authority.

- Following on, confirmation was provided of the work being undertaken to ensure statutory compliance was maintained across all units in terms of health and safety with officers continuing to work with tenants to ensure all required safety documentation was in place and up to date, including asbestos, fire, gas, electrical and legionella risk assessments with tenants also responsible for complying with all health and safety laws relating to the property and occupation/use. Energy Efficiency ratings had also been updated for all units with an asbestos survey also completed on the whole building resulting in recommendations for very low/low risks asbestos control and management, which it was confirmed would be implemented in due course.

- Turning then to the Park, the Trust were advised that essential tree maintenance works (valued at £18,055 + VAT) had now been commissioned funded through unrestricted funds. Whilst drainage on the event field remained an ongoing concern members were assured that the results of ongoing vertical drainage works being carried out by the grounds maintenance team were expected later in the year which would be used to inform future actions. In the meantime, the field remained subject to a programme of inspection before and after each event. In terms of the funfair, this had been scheduled to take place on two occasions over the year, with the total number of operational days (including set-up and de-rig) likely to exceed the 28-day threshold permitted for temporary uses under Permitted Development Rights. As a result, officers were reviewing the current planning position in consultation with colleagues in the Planning Service to determine whether the continued operation of the funfair would require a certificate of lawfulness or retrospective planning permission. Anticipated revenue from the funfair for the current year had been estimated at approximately £42,313 from two events over 34 operational days.

- In outlining the Trust's financial position (as at March 2025) as detailed within section 3.26 of the report, members noted and welcomed the projected increase in lettings and rental income along with impact of the building repair works on the Trust's Restricted Fund, with the work being undertaken by officers to also explore alternative funding mechanisms for future capital works, including service charges and grant funding, highlighted given the nature of additional longer term works also identified through the building survey in order to maintain the building in a safe and serviceable condition. As a result, the Trust was advised of the need to ensure work in progressing the redevelopment plans for the Barham Park building continued to progress in order to diversify income and achieve the long-term financial stability required for the Trust to fulfil its charitable objectives. As part of the wider approach being developed, members were also advised of the work being undertaken to apply relevant service charges provided within existing lease agreements during 2025-26, following completion of the first year building works once the tangible improvements had been delivered and aligning charges with visible investment in the estate. Officers were currently preparing a service charge budget based on projected ongoing maintenance costs with charges to be allocated in line with the provisions within each lease and designed (in a fair and transparent way) to support the Trust's financial responsibilities while forming part of a broader strategy to improve long-term estate management and sustainability.

- As a further update, members were advised that a decision relating to the application seeking consent to modify or remove the covenants in relation to 776 and 778 Harrow Road in exchange for a one-off payment to the Trust was still pending from the Charity Commission. Subject to a final decision from the Charity Commission, members were advised that officers would then be able to advise on related matters such as the boundary correction, type of development and value of transaction.

- As a final update, members were advised that work remained ongoing to develop the long-term plan for Barham Park, in line with the 'bronze option' approved by the Trust Committee in 2024. Officers were close to completing Phase 1 of the tenant engagement process aimed at gathering feedback on current use and future aspirations with responses received from a number of tenants. For those tenants still to respond, a 14 day time limit had been set for any response and should none be received, their input would be recorded as a nil return to enable work on Phase 2 to progress. In terms of Phase 2, members were advised this would involve formal consultation on redevelopment proposals and was scheduled to commence in 2026. This timeline allowed for planning and analysis of Phase 1 feedback with the outcome of both phases being used to inform the business case to be submitted to the Charity Commission, seeking approval to broaden the Trust's charitable purposes, which members were advised would form a critical step toward enabling limited commercial use of the estate in support of the Trust's long-term financial sustainability and charitable aims.

  In support of the work outlined, the Trust was advised that officers also continued to explore funding options, including the potential use of Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (SCIL) to support the proposed redevelopment, whilst also undertaking a wider review of the Council's Property Strategy to identify best practice approaches that may also be applicable to the Trust. The outcome of these additional reviews would also be considered alongside the ongoing tenant engagement and consultation to ensure that any final recommendations continued to be based on operational realities as well as strategic priorities with a further update to be presented to the Trust once the review and wider engagement process were complete.

- As a final issue, officer also took the opportunity to update the Trust on a tentative approach from a water company, for the temporary siting of a works compound at Barham Park to facilitate works to water infrastructure on the

Harrow Road. The proposal would cover a five month period from October 2025 with officers awaiting further details of the proposed location and of the size of the compound prior to any formal approval being given. Should the works proceed an assurance was provided these would be subject to the necessary license and fees being obtained, with access being maintained for park visitors and the park's grounds maintenance contractor alongside full reinstatement being undertaken by the licensee once the works had been completed.

The Chair thanked officers for the detailed update provided and then invited comments in response to the report, with clarification provided in response to the following issues raised:

- The process for negotiating and determining rent increases and assurance in relation to affordability with members advised that the increases had been informed by independent professional valuation advice and structured to ensure they aligned with a more sustainable path towards market rental values whilst remaining appropriate to the charitable use of the estate.

- The marketing exercise in relation to Unit 8 and selection of the new community focussed tenant with members advised this had been undertaken via the Council's website and the applicants assessed against a clear criteria aligned with the Trusts charitable objectives.

- The Heads of Terms agreed with the Friends of Barham Library for temporary occupation of Unit 7 with members keen to ensure the Trust remained updated on the submission of any subsequent planning application relating to external alternations to the front entrance to improve accessibility.

- The arrangements for clearance of rent arrears with the tenant referred to in section 3.9 of the report, details were provided on the anticipated timescales with the tenant having indicated they were aiming to clear the outstanding arrears of £14,000 by October 2025.

- The progress on negotiations relating to the proposed re-gear of ACAVA's lease to release Unit 6, which it was noted were subject to clearance of rent arrears on the unit.

- The progress on the status of the legal proceedings with Virgin Media, with members advised that an application had been made to the court in relation to the claim for rent arrears the outcome of which was still pending.

- Further clarification was sought on the tender process and scope of required urgent works based on the Watts report and OCR Surveying Ltd site-specific recommendations. Members asked when the work would commence and process of engagement with tenants. In response, officers advised it was hoped to be able to award the contract in September/October and the process of detailed engagement with tenants, including required access arrangements for the works, due to commence in the next 2-4 weeks.

- The status of drainage works on the events field, with confirmation provided that officers continued to explore a range of solutions recognising the longstanding nature of issues identified. In response, members highlighted what they felt to be the need for a long term plan to be developed in collaboration with Thames Water that would inform future actions given the impact on use of the field, which officers advised they would seek to develop and update members on moving forward.

- The maintenance of health and safety compliance across all units within the Braham Park building and work to progress completion of the necessary checks with members advised of the ongoing programme of work with tenants in order to and gain any outstanding documents, which it was anticipated should be completed by October 2025.

- The legal position of the Trust regarding the planning position relating to the temporary use of the event field by the fun fair. In noting the importance of the income generated for the Trust through the fun fair, members were advised of the balance needing to be achieved in relation to whether the continued operation of the funfair would require a certificate of lawfulness or retrospective planning permission to comply with the necessary planning requirements. As a result, work was ongoing with the Council's planning department in order to identify the action required to regularise the use with members keen to ensure this was addressed as soon as possible given the potential impact on the Trust's income to support their broader objectives and also wider community perspective.

- The process in the calculation and allocation of service charges including engagement with tenants. Responding, officers confirmed that whilst the process would not involve formal consultation a process of tenant engagement was being undertaken prior to their introduction to ensure sufficient notice was provided. Members were reminded that the charges formed part of the lease agreements and would include a breakdown of charges in line with the provision of each lease.

- The position regarding the boundary issue highlighted in relation to 776 and 778 Harrow Road and its relationship with the park. In response, officers confirmed that the boundary correction had now been agreed between all parties and was not expected to impact on final consent being obtained from the Charity Commission to the modification/removal of the covenants relating to the site. As a further update, members were also advised of further contact from the applicant relating to the proposed type of development being sought (given the costs) and value of the transaction. Whilst nothing formal had been submitted, the opportunity was taken to advise members of the approach should it be taken forward at a future stage.

- As a final issue, details were sought on the process involved in any application to be submitted to the Charity Commission seeking to broaden the Trust's charitable purposes aligned with the Strategic Property Review. In response members were assured that any application would be subject to consideration by the Trust prior to submission.

As no further issues were raised the Chair thanked officers for their ongoing work and members for their detailed consideration of the update provided and the Trust Committee **RESOLVED** to note, following the assurances and clarification provided at the meeting, the operational and strategic updates within the report.

8. **Exclusion of the Press & Public**

There were no items that required the exclusion of the press or public.

9. **Any Other Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

It was noted that should any further meetings of the Trust Committee be required during the year these would be arranged as needed.

The meeting was declared closed at 10:54 am

COUNCILLOR MUHAMMED BUTT
Chair