

Committee/Meeting: King George's Fields Charity Board	Date: 20 February 2012	Classification: Unrestricted	Report No: 4.2
Report of: Corporate Director Communities, Localities and Culture Originating officer(s) Heather Bonfield, Interim Service Head Culture, Learning and Leisure		Title: Mini-restructure of the Parks Service Wards Affected: Mile End East	

1. **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report provides details of a mini-restructure that impacts on the role of the most senior manager for the Parks Service and therefore the management of Mile End Park which is under the remit of this Board

2. **DECISIONS REQUIRED**

The King George's Fields Charity Board is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the proposed mini-restructure to form a single service delivering arts, parks and events
- 2.2 Note the financial implications

3. **REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS**

- 3.1 The HLF Grant to improve Victoria Park was conditional upon the Council creating and maintaining a structure for the management of the Park. Failure to do so could result in the Council having to return some or all of the grant. The HLF has been monitoring the structure and has expressed concern that it is not yet fully implemented. The maintenance requirements of the Victoria Park Business Plan (also a HLF requirement) are onerous, meaning that revenue must be identified to fully fund the restructure and contribute towards the maintenance budget. The proposed mini-restructure will achieve this.
- 3.2 There are major income targets to be achieved from events and activities in parks; by bringing the two services most involved in achieving these targets together in a single service will assist in delivering the challenging overall target.
- 3.3 A key aim is to increase the number of visitors to our parks and their satisfaction with them. The merged service creates a level of synergy and

strategic focus not possible when the services are managed separately, no matter how closely the managers work together.

- 3.4 Because the change in senior management affects Mile End Park, the matter has been referred to the Board for noting and comment.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 The only alternative is to leave the status quo (i.e. two separate services) but this would not provide the optimum management arrangement and would not enable the required structure for Victoria Park to be achieved whilst ensuring a robust structure for the management of all parks, including Mile End Park.

5. BACKGROUND

- 5.1 When Mile End Park was originally formed from industrial land and opened in 1999/2000, a dedicated manager post was created to set up and establish the park and begin to make it sustainable financially. In early 2011, as the park was now well established, it was agreed to incorporate Mile End Park management into the wider parks management structure. At that time consideration was given to amalgamating the service with Arts and Events, but with the anticipated impact of the forthcoming Olympics and as the Victoria Park Project was still underway, it was decided to defer this until later. Now that the Olympics and the Victoria Park Project have been successfully delivered and new challenges are emerging, it is considered the opportune time to secure this change.

6. BODY OF REPORT

- 6.1 The proposed structure has been subject to staff consultation and it is anticipated that it will be implemented on 1 March 2013. An oral update on this will be given at the meeting.
- 6.2 The posts of Head of Parks and Head of Arts and Events are to be deleted and replaced by the post of Head of Arts, Parks and Events with the post ring-fenced to the two current managers. The HLF require that Victoria Park has dedicated posts and these requirements are reflected in the structure. All parks will have a Parks Manager and reporting to that post will be a Parks Development Officer (Infrastructure), Parks Development Officer (Community Engagement) to whom the Community Rangers report and a Community Engagement Officer (Young People) to whom the play workers report.
- 6.3 Mile End Park has dedicated Community Rangers and this will not change, although they will from time to time assist at special events at other parks designed to attract visitors, or to occasionally assist with volunteering activities at other parks.

- 6.4 A focus for Mile End Park has been the generation of income to help make it self-sustaining. As the accounts reported to the Board last November showed, the Council's financial contribution to the Park fell from £365,840 in 2010/2011 to £267,173 in 2011/2012 and it is expected to reduce further in 2012/13 and 2013/14 as higher rental income from properties is achieved and more income-generating activities are introduced. As a result of the previous restructure, staff salaries accounted for £282 066 in 2011/2012 compared with £348,465 in 2010/2011 (a reduction of £69,812). With the further reduction in management it may be possible to reduce the allocation of staffing costs still further, which will assist in achieving the aim of ultimately making the Park financially self-sufficient

7. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

- 7.1 The proposed restructure is aimed at achieving the Heritage Lottery Funding requirements. Para 6.2 sets out the proposed deletion of two posts, the Head of Parks and the Head of Arts and Events posts and replaced with a combined post of Head of Arts Parks and Events.
- 7.2 The proposal will benefit the King George's Fields Charity Board by reducing the management costs currently charged by £18k The deletion of the Head of Parks post which is currently apportioned over all parks will be replaced by a lower apportionment of the new post as part of the single service delivering arts, parks and events all other staffing costs for the KGFCB would remain unchanged.

8. CONCURRENT REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (LEGAL SERVICES)

- 8.1 The report outlines efficiencies savings which will reduce the costs to the King Georges Trust and are in line with the Trustees wish to make the trust financially self sustaining

9. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1 Parks and Open Spaces play a major role in bringing communities from different backgrounds and ages together. These proposals will help promote further activities within parks and make them more attractive to visitors.

10. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT

- 10.1 The restructure will enable the Council to continue to protect and enhance habitats.

11. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no risk management implications arising from the restructure.

12. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no specific implications arising.

13. EFFICIENCY STATEMENT

13.1 The proposals will enable a more efficient use of staff resources and provide improved value for money.