

King George's Field Charity Board Wednesday 30 October 2024	
Report of: Simon Baxter, Corporate Director Communities	Classification: Unrestricted
King George's Field Trust Investment Programmes	

Lead Member	N/A
Originating Officer(s)	Catherine Boyd, Head of Arts, Parks, and Events Tim Clee, Head of Culture Capital, Projects and Quality Assurance
Wards affected	All wards
Key Decision?	No
Reason for Key Decision	This report has been reviewed as not meeting the Key Decision criteria.
Forward Plan Notice Published	N/A
Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome	N/A

Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of proposed investment programmes that would enable the Charity to improve its sports offer, benefiting residents of Tower Hamlets and park users. The proposed programme includes cricket practice nets and a new five-a-side pitch at Stepney Green. In addition, it is proposed that the hard surface sports courts at Mile End Park are upgraded. It is proposed that external funding is secured to support these programmes, where possible.

In addition, this report seeks a decision from the Board on the allocation of grant funding from Fields in Trust, including potential match funding for the sports improvement programmes at Mile End Park and Stepney Green Park.

Recommendations:

The Board is recommended to:

1. Note the proposed investment programme for Mile End Park and Stepney Green Park including options for leveraging in external funding.
2. Review the options and take a decision on the allocation of Fields in Trust funding in Appendix 1.

1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 The Council is the trustee of the Charity, and the Council is the freehold owner of the land which is subject to this report.
- 1.2 The King Georges Fields Charity Board (the Board) is established by section 3.3.12 of the Council's Constitution, which gives the Board the following functions:
 - 3.2.1 *To administer the affairs of the King Georges Fields Charity and discharge all the duties of the Council as sole trustee of the Charity;*
 - 3.2.2 *To administer the affairs and discharge the duties of trustee of such other charities controlled by the Council as the Cabinet might authorise by resolution.*
- 1.3 The Board is required to take a decision on how the funds from Fields in Trust are utilised to further support the King George's Fields Trust charitable objectives.

2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Decide not to review options to improve sports facilities, which would reduce the number of people benefitting from access to well-managed sports amenities that support health and wellbeing.
- 2.2 Decide not to use the grant funding from Fields in Trust. This would remove an opportunity to improve to use the funds for the maintenance, equipping and improvement of, or the provision of facilities for, any playing field situated in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets and styled "King George's Fields".

3 DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 The Board reviewed and agreed to part allocation of the Fields in Trust funding at the board meeting held on 29 May 2024. An update of the proposed allocation is provided in **Appendix 1**.

- 3.2 Should the Board approve one or a combination of the options proposed, final approval would be required from Fields in Trust.
- 3.3 The Board is required to decide whether to approve the projects outlined in **Appendix 1** for the Charity to seek formal approval from Fields in Trust to release grant funding to these projects.
- 3.4 Some of these proposals were approved in principle by the Board on 29 May 2024 including:
- Match funding practice cricket nets at a KGFT park (Stepney).
 - Creation of a small refreshment kiosk at Stepney Green Astro turf.
 - Match funding towards Playzone scheme upgrades to the pitches at Mile End Park.
- 3.5 It is proposed that improvements are made to sports facilities at both Mile End Park and Stepney Green Park to meet increased demand for football and cricket, as well as providing opportunities to participate in other key sports such as hockey and netball.
- 3.6 The new and improved facilities will be supported and activated by a programme of activities designed to target key under-represented group/s (i.e., women and girls).
- 3.7 Subsequent to the board meeting held on the 29 May, the cricket nets at Stepney Green Park will need to be match funded through Section 106 / CIL funding due to the English Cricket Board (ECB) funding other projects.
- 3.8 External funding has been identified through the Football Foundation's Playzone programme to support the installation of a new 2G floodlight astro turf pitch at Stepney Green Park. The Council is currently working through the application stage with a view to confirming funding towards the end of 2024 and delivered in 2025.
- 3.9 External match funding from the Playzones programme is not available for the pitch upgrades at Mile End Park (upgrading of existing hardcourt games area to a 2G surface suitable for football, cricket, netball and hockey). Therefore, funding will be allocated to this project from Section 106 / CIL funding.
- 3.10 The timeline for the projects is yet to be finalised, however, it is estimated that funding would be confirmed by the end of 2024 / early 2025 with projects commencing shortly after. All projects will be subject to feasibility studies, funding, and planning consent. An update on delivery timescales will be provided at subsequent board meetings.
- 3.11 Indicative costs are still being reviewed but it is anticipated that some match funding would be required, and it is proposed that part of the Fields in Trust funding is allocated to the programmes.

- 3.12 It is proposed that the full £265,000 be spent on the projects listed in Appendix 1. There may be cost savings and pressures within each project and therefore it is proposed that we seek approval from Fields in Trust to allocate the grant within the range of programmes to be approved in Appendix 1.
- 3.13 King George's Fields Stepney (charity number 1001827) (the "Charity") is a charity that manages a fund (the "Fund") which was established to make grants for the maintenance, equipping and improvement of, or the provision of facilities for, any playing field situated in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets and styled "King George's Fields", with a preference to be given to such playing fields situated in Stepney. Fields in Trust (charity number 306070) is the sole trustee of the King George's Fields Stepney Charity (the "Trustee").
- 3.14 Fields in Trust, as Trustee of the "Charity" referenced in 3.13, have been administering an endowment for several years on behalf of London Borough Tower Hamlets, which they are no longer able to continue to do. Fields in Trust have proposed and confirmed with the Charity Commission that the entire fund can be transferred as a grant to KGFT.
- 3.15 The transfer of the grant from Fields in Trust to KGFT will be accompanied by a grant agreement, outlining the purpose of the grant and the required evidence of completion.

4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The King George's Field Trust manages lands and facilities which are open to all. Where charges have to be made, such as artificial football pitches, charges are kept at affordable levels for the local community.

5 OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no further statutory implications.

6 COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 This report is seeking approval for the allocation of grant funding from Fields in Trust to provide cricket practice nets and a new five a side pitch at Stepney Green and to upgrade the hard surface sports courts at Mile End Park.
- 6.2 The Council has also applied for external funding on top of the grant with an application having been submitted through the Football Foundation's PlayZone programme. Confirmation of this funding will be known towards the end of 2025.

6.3 The programme of works has factored in contingencies, any expenditure on the listed schemes over and above the allocated funding of £0.26m will need to be met within existing budgets for parks improvement works on sports facilities.

7 COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

7.1 As trustee, the Board must act in the Charity's best interests and manage the Charity's resources responsibly.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- NONE.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Fields in Trust allocation of grant options

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012

Officer contact details for documents:

Catherine Boyd, Head of Arts Parks and Events