

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE KING GEORGE'S FIELD CHARITY BOARD

HELD AT 6.20 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 20 FEBRUARY 2013

**COMMITTEE ROOM, 1ST FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE
CRESCENT, LONDON, E14 2BG**

Members Present:

Mayor Lutfur Rahman (Chair)

Councillor Rofique U Ahmed
Councillor Shahed Ali
Councillor Abdul Asad
Councillor Alibor Choudhury
Councillor Shafiqul Haque
Councillor Oliur Rahman

Officers Present:

Jill Bell	– Head of Legal Services (Environment), Legal Services
Bob Bennett	– (Crossrail Project Manager)
Heather Bonfield	– (Interim Service Head Culture, Learning & Leisure Services , Communities Localities & Culture)
Michael Rowan	– (Head of Parks and Open Spaces, Communities Localities and Culture)
Evelyn Akoto	– (Democratic Service)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors, Rania Khan, Rabina Khan and Ohid Ahmed.

Apologies were also sent from Owen Whalley

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

There were none

3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the unrestricted minutes of the ordinary meeting of the King George's Field Charity Board held on 18 July be agreed and signed by the Chair, as a correct record of the proceedings.

4. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

4.1 Stepney Green/Mile End Park Update

The report was introduced to the Board by Bob Bennett, Crossrail Project Manager. He stated that the main purpose of the report was to update the Board on the Crossrail project as it impacts upon the Trust land at Mile End Park and Stepney Green, and to authorise the granting of the necessary licences to undertake the mitigation works as set out in the report and recommendations. The report also seeks the Board to grant delegated powers to officers to undertake any actions considered necessary to protect and enhance the Trust lands affected by the Crossrail project. Bob Bennett also highlighted the following:

- In a bid to mitigate the temporary loss of part of the farm, the council has secured the provision of a new animal barn and the provision of a rural craft centre to make up for the loss of existing buildings on the site.
- All works have been completed and a lease has been granted to the Stepney City Farm Charity which is now managing the site. The cost of the mitigation works was in the region of £2million which is more than Crossrail originally envisaged.
- The land occupied by Crossrail construction will be reinstated before being returned to King Georges Field Trust.
- Crossrail have finally agreed to construct new changing rooms at Stepney Green Park, in place of existing vandalised and unusable ones, and to remove the existing changing rooms and reinstate the site.
- Crossrail have agreed to pay £100,000 for the early release of areas required for the site. This is in addition to replacing and enhancing facilities at Mile End Park as part of the scheme; the compensation moneys will be used to enhance sporting offer through match funding.

In response to questions, officers gave the following answers:

- As well as contributing £100,000 to compensate for the temporary loss of the football facilities, Crossrail will also be providing new changing rooms, coach park, car park space and also a brand new pitch.
- A subsequent reduction in the size of the construction site at Stepney Green meant that the pitch is now unaffected and so Crossrail did not have to stick to the original plans of relocating the football pitch. However, after negotiations Crossrail has agreed to provide the needed new changing rooms.
- Officers have recently met with the Football Association and they have agreed to support a bid for a new football pitch, a 3G pitch and railings at Stepney Green.

- Crossrail is committed to public consultation, and always informs local residence of the work they are undertaking.
- The new pitch in Mile End Park will be completed in a couple of months, the recommendations presented at this meeting was to regularise the activities there.

The Mayor raised concerns at delegating powers to officers to act on behalf of the Board, just in case such actions incurred costs to the Trust. The Mayor requested that he be consulted before decisions are made. Bob Bennett stated that the request was to allow officers to give Crossrail routine permissions to carry out work, but agreed that the Mayor will be informed of decisions being taken.

RESOLVED

1. That Crossrail be granted a Licence to enter on the Trust land at Mile End Park in order to undertake the necessary mitigation works arising from the construction of the Mile End Intervention shaft on the football pitch at Mile End.
2. That the provision of new changing rooms and other open space works at Stepney Green provides appropriate compensation for the permanent and temporary loss of open space in Stepney Green Park.
3. That Crossrail be granted a Licence to enter on the Trust land at Stepney Green football pitch in order to construct the new changing rooms.
4. That officers of the council be authorise to act on behalf of the board and undertake any urgent actions considered necessary to protect and enhance the Trust lands affected by the Crossrail project at Mile End and Stepney Green.
5. That the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services) be authorised to execute all necessary documents necessary to implement the above recommendations.

4.2 Mini-restructure of the Parks Service

At the request of the Chair, Heather Bonfield, Interim Service Head Culture Learning and Leisure Services presented the report to the Board and highlighted the following:

- The HLF Grant to improve Victoria Park was conditional upon the council creating a dedicated staffing structure for the park, and therefore it was necessary to identifying additional revenues to fully fund the Victoria Park Structure, as well as a staffing structure to manage all other parks and open spaces and contribute towards the increased Victoria Park maintenance budget also required by the HLF; the mini restructure will achieve this.
- It is proposed that the posts of Head of Parks and Head of Arts and Events be deleted and replaced by the post of Head of Arts, Parks and Events. This new post will be ring fenced to the two current managers.

- The merged services will ensure a cohesive approach as well as reducing costs and generally benefiting Mile End Park.
- The proposed structure has gone through the required consultation and no objections have been raised. It is anticipated that the new structure will be implemented on 1 March 2013.
- With further reduction in management cost, the council's financial contribution to the park will reduce further, assisting in achieving the aim of making the Park financially self-sufficient.

Members raised concerns about the sensitivities around new appointments. The Mayor stated that he wanted to better understand how the new structure will work and therefore would not comment at the meeting.

Members proposed that the Mayor and Councillor Choudhury be given delegated authority to look into matters raised and make the final decision on this matter.

A member of the public, John White who is a member of 'Friends of Mile End Park Committee' expressed his appreciation for the way in which Michael Rowan has successfully managed and developed Mile End Park, and indicated his wish that this good work should be continued.

The Mayor commented that the decision should take into account the contents of the letter submitted by the Friends of Mile End Park.

RESOLVED

1. That the proposed mini-restructure to form a single service delivering arts, parks and events be noted.
2. That the financial implications be noted.

5. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Chair Moved and it was: -

Resolved:

That in accordance with the provisions of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting for the consideration of the Section Two business on the grounds that it contained information defined as exempt or confidential in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government, Act 1972.

6. EXEMPT MINUTES

Please refer to part 2 minutes

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT

There were none

The meeting ended at 7.00 p.m.

Chair, Mayor Lutfur Rahman
King George's Field Charity Board