

Ask for: Ian Rae
Email: ian.rae@walthamforest.gov.uk
Direct line: 07918 766088

28th September 2022

Dear Mrs S Housden & Mrs C Jack,

Waltham Forest Local Plan

1. Introduction

1.1 This letter has been jointly prepared by Senior Officers at the London Borough of Waltham Forest (LBWF) and the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority (LVRPA) to capture the progress made through collaboration between the two bodies on the Waltham Forest Local Plan (Part 1). It recognises the strategic importance of the Plan to both authorities and expresses support for its adoption following a second stage of Examination in Public.

2. Background

2.1 In your initial findings following the first stage of Examination in Public, you were unable to conclude that the Waltham Forest Local Plan (Part 1) would not result in adverse effects on the integrity of the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC) as a result of recreational pressure.

2.2 In order to fully address these concerns, LBWF has undertaken a review of its draft Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace Strategy (SANG Strategy) and developed a new methodology and strategy, in collaboration with LVRPA, the City of London Corporation (as Conservators of Epping Forest), and Natural England. The new Strategy demonstrates the capacity, quality and deliverability of SANGs in the borough.

3. Collaborative Approach

3.1 In recognition of the urban context of Waltham Forest, LBWF have developed a bespoke SANG methodology to calculate the uplift in visitor numbers that could be expected from planned growth in the borough. The new SANG Strategy identifies the greenspaces in the borough that should be designated as SANGs to accommodate this uplift and mitigate recreational pressures on the SAC. This includes sites both owned by LVRPA and under their remit as a statutory body.

3.2 The new strategy sets out the investment that would be needed in these spaces to meet the requirements of SANGs and accommodate the identified uplift in visitor numbers. It

sets out that this investment would be funded through the Community Infrastructure Levy, along with other sources of funding where appropriate, and makes clear commitments for ongoing monitoring and governance.

- 3.3 Where SANGs are either owned by, or under the remit of LVRPA, both parties agree to ongoing collaboration to review the suitability of the sites included and to refine and agree the details of opportunities for investment over the life of the Plan and ensure appropriate management and maintenance is secured.
- 3.4 The Lee Valley Hockey and Tennis Centre at Eton Manor, a site owned by LVRPA, is a key site in the spatial and growth plans found in the Waltham Forest Local Plan (Part 1), and presents a significant opportunity for open space enhancements, as well as future investment in sports and leisure facilities. Although it is currently under the planning remit of the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC), planning powers will revert to LBWF on 1st December 2024. LBWF and the LVRPA have therefore worked proactively together to align our ambitions for this site through collaborative work on the Leyton Mills Development Framework and new SANG Strategy. Both parties agree to continue to work together to deliver the opportunities presented by this site.
- 3.5 Whilst the new SANG Strategy has been developing, LBWF and LVRPA have also worked positively together to agree interim SANG solutions for development proposals that will bring significant investment to the Lee Valley Regional Park. This includes the SANG package agreed as part of the planning consent for the Lea Bridge Station Sites - and captured as part of the wider Lee Bridge Area Framework - which will see a developer contribution of £250,000 invested in measures to improve access to the park and to enhance biodiversity (including tree planting) within it.
- 3.6 LVRPA have also been engaged in the drafting of a vision for the North Circular/Banbury Reservoir area of the borough, commissioned jointly by LBWF and the London Borough of Enfield. The Lee Valley Regional Park presents a vital strategic green infrastructure resource for the area, offering opportunities to improve the accessibility and attractiveness of existing open spaces, to explore the potential for water based recreational activity and to enhance biodiversity and access to nature. It is therefore essential that the emerging vision aligns with the Lee Valley Regional Park Development Framework Proposals.
- 3.7 The Council and LVRPA have cooperated significantly on this matter since May, working together proactively to find a resolution that is suitable for the specific context of Waltham Forest. We have met on four occasions between the end of May and beginning of September and maintained an ongoing dialogue via email. The LVRPA were sent early proposals for sites and a follow-up meeting took place. The draft SANGs strategy was amended to accommodate the comments made.
- 3.8 LBWF and LVRPA are fully aligned in their objectives and committed to working together to ensure the Lee Valley Regional Park benefits from planned growth in Waltham Forest. Both parties are also committed to ongoing collaboration to achieve timely adoption of the Local Plan and ensure that it is effectively implemented, and our shared objectives are realised.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Rae', with a stylized, cursive script.

London Borough of Waltham Forest

Name: Ian Rae

Role: Corporate Director – Regeneration, Planning & Delivery

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shaun Dawson', with a stylized, cursive script.

Lee Valley Regional Park Authority

Name: Shaun Dawson

Role: Chief Executive