

Sustainable Development Select Committee			
Title	Beckenham Place Park Regeneration Scrutiny Paper	Item No	3
Contributors	Executive Director for Customer Services		
Class	Part 1	Date	14 January 2016

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report to the Sustainable Development Select Committee sets out the reasons why officers are seeking approval from Mayor and Cabinet on 17th February 2016, to continue to work up designs and plans for Beckenham Place Park's regeneration, in order to submit a phase 2 bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund. Restoration of the park is planned in accordance with the phase 1 bid approved by the Heritage Lottery Fund's Parks for People programme. If the phase 2 bid is approved and restoration goes ahead as proposed, this will result in the closure of the existing golf course by 31st December 2016.
- 1.2 The Select Committee is asked to consider a ~5000 signature petition campaigning against the closure of the golf course.
- 1.3 The Council's Petition Scheme requires that a petition of 4000 signatures or more is brought before the relevant Select Committee for scrutiny, and that petitions of over 8000 signatures trigger a full Council debate.

2. Summary

- 2.1 On 10th July 2013, Mayor and Cabinet approved the submission of bids to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for financial support for a Beckenham Place Park regeneration project.
- 2.2 The HLF Parks for People bid was successful in phase 1 and funding of £4.9m was set aside for the project in summer 2014.
- 2.3 The petition campaigning against the proposed closure of the golf course has been running since this time, at the golf club throughout the period, and at other locations at times. Signatures have therefore been collected over a period of 18 months and in various locations.

2.4 The petition states

“We, the undersigned, wish to register our opposition to any attempt by Lewisham Council to change the golf course at Beckenham Place Park from 18 holes to 9 holes. We believe the retention of the full 18 holes is essential to the maintenance of the character, challenge and community role of the course.”

As the Council’s plans became clearer, this was then altered (by page 52 of the petition) to read

“We, the undersigned, wish to register our opposition to any attempt by Lewisham Council to close the 18 hole golf course at Beckenham Place Park. We believe the retention of the full 18 holes is essential to the maintenance of the character, challenge and community role of the course – and the uniqueness and diversity of activity and use of this wonderful park.”

- 2.5 A small proportion of the Heritage Lottery Funds (~£320k) are made available to carry out consultation, engage partners and work up the initial designs to become detailed designs and plans for the park. These detailed plans are then submitted in a phase 2 bid, and approved by the HLF. Once approved, the remaining funding is made available to implement the plans for the park.
- 2.6 Since summer 2014 consultants have been appointed and background surveys and studies of the site have been carried out to inform the future design of the park and homestead buildings, using some of the phase 1 money made available to the Council.
- 2.7 However, before more extensive public consultation is carried out and design work is progressed further Council officers will be seeking approval from Mayor and Cabinet to progress the project as proposed.
- 2.8 The restoration of the park in accordance with the earlier plans submitted to the HLF, and to achieve the outcomes required by the Parks for People Fund, necessitates the closure of the existing golf course. It is proposed that this takes place by 31st December 2016.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 The Sustainable Development Select Committee is requested to consider the petition. .

4. Policy Context

- 4.1 Lewisham's long standing vision is: 'Together, we will make Lewisham the best place in London to live, work and learn'. This vision was developed following extensive consultation with Lewisham residents, public sector agencies, local business, voluntary and community sector organisations, and has been adopted by all our partners. It continues to be a bold ambition that stretches and motivates the Council and its partners to set priorities and deliver services in ways that achieve our vision.
- 4.2 The restoration of Beckenham place park could create a significant open space, venue and leisure facility that genuinely impacts the quality of life of thousands of residents. A park of this scale and history could make a substantial contribution to the regeneration of the south of borough, helping to engender a sense of place and pride in the area. This opportunity to transform Beckenham Place Park offers a key moment to make a further a step towards making Lewisham the best place in London to live, work and learn.
- 4.3 The key strategic document for Lewisham and our partners is the Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2020, "Shaping our Future". In this document, the strategic partners set out six priorities – creating communities that are:
- Ambitious and achieving
 - Safer
 - Empowered and responsible
 - Clean, green and liveable
 - Healthy, active and enjoyable
 - Dynamic and prosperous
- 4.4 A large and thriving open space can make a contribution to local communities in each and every priority area above. Yet Beckenham Place Park is not having this positive impact on the locality currently. The Heritage Lottery Funds, made available to the Council for the regeneration of the park, offer the opportunity to harness the potential of the park for the benefit of the local community. However, officers believe that if an 18 hole golf course continues to operate in the park, the potential of the open space to make a positive contribution to each of the six priorities above is significantly curtailed. In addition, the Heritage Lottery Fund is not willing to fund the restoration of the park if golf remains in the curtilage of the mansion, nor to fund the relocation of the golf course in the park.

5. Background

5.1 The park

- 5.1.1 Beckenham Place Park is Lewisham's largest park by far. At 98 hectares it is 30% bigger than Greenwich Park. It boasts ancient woodland, meadow, parkland, a river and several historic buildings, as well as a golf course. It was originally acquired by the London County Council to be the key amenity space for the new estates of Bellingham and Downham.
- 5.1.2 Yet the park remains little known among the wider community and is used significantly less than many other Lewisham parks, despite its size. A usage and movement survey of the park was carried out by Building Design Partnership (BDP) in 2013. This survey was conducted using low resolution image cameras at the 9 entrances of the park during two days in August – one weekday and day at the weekend. The results were compared with the usage of Ladywell Fields on the same day, and despite Beckenham Place Park being over four times larger than Ladywell Fields, the number of people entering the park between 10-4pm was three times higher in Ladywell Fields than Beckenham Place Park.
- 5.1.3 The report concluded that Beckenham Place Park currently faces the following barriers to use:
- Lack of attractions and features
 - Presence of unusable and derelict features
 - A large area (the golf course) feels out of bounds to many visitors
 - Woodlands are difficult to navigate and, due to the lack of use and therefore informal 'policing' of the area, feel unsafe to some users
- 5.1.4 As well as 98 hectares of land, Beckenham Place Park also boasts several historic buildings. Both the mansion and the stable blocks (also known as the homesteads) are listed buildings, and stand at the heart of the golf course. Following an arson attack in 2011, the homesteads are in very poor condition and require major investment.
- 5.1.5 The Heritage Lottery Funds offer the Council a significant opportunity to address each of the identified barriers to use, to provide new features within the park, and new facilities to attract visitors. The proposal includes the restoration of many of the key heritage buildings, as well as the stable block courtyard, and the creation of a significant water body in the park which will draw visitors and act as a key focus for the landscape.

5.1.6 The vision is to create a park offering:

- Outdoor adventure
 - high ropes, kayaking, mountain biking, adventure play
- An attractive historic setting
 - restored homesteads, courtyard, carriage drive to the mansion, historic lake and parklands and restored 'pleasure grounds' and garden
- Extensive educational opportunities
 - ecological education for children and adults, horticulture and curriculum studies in geography, history and science, a chance for all to experience nature first hand
- A unique events programme
 - from small scale community events to commercial film, music and arts ventures
- Sport and fitness opportunities
 - cycling tracks, running routes, new skate park, walking trails, Park Run, triathlons
- An attractive haven to engage with nature, relax and play
 - picnics, children's play, space to explore

5.1.7 Landscape designs for the park are being developed. The current masterplan, shown in Appendix 1, indicates the emerging design at the present time, showing the proposed location of the major new features proposed and indication of other elements to be included.

5.2 Buildings within the park

5.2.1 To date it has not been possible to secure funds to restore the mansion itself. Although it is currently in a reasonable state of repair, it requires significant investment to bring it into use, and to enhance and protect its heritage features. The presence of golf in the curtilage of the mansion has made it more challenging to attract funding for restoration to date. The Heritage Lottery Fund have indicated a willingness to consider a further bid to support its restoration once the landscape designs demonstrate how the mansion's immediate surroundings will be transformed to become more historically appropriate for the eighteenth century mansion, and show how the park will become a popular open space.

5.2.2 The gatehouses and Southend Lodge are also listed buildings, and require some renovation. Beckenham Place Park and its buildings need major

investment if this historic open space is to offer the facilities, opportunities and landscape of a large and popular urban park.

5.2.3 Council officers have sought affordable means of investing in the park and its buildings for almost two decades. Many options have been explored within this time, including commercial operations for the mansion and the golf, and reworking the site to create a 9 hole golf course. All previous plans encountered major obstacles in terms of securing sustainable funding and maximising the potential benefits of the space for local people.

5.3 **Attracting investment**

5.3.1 It is in this context, following a twenty year struggle to secure substantial appropriate external investment in the park, that officers are now seeking approval to continue to work up designs for the park, and to close the golf course. Significant funds have now been allocated, from the Heritage Lottery's Parks for People Fund. This represents a key opportunity to transform Beckenham Place Park from a little used open space, to a substantial public asset – offering a taste of the countryside in an urban environment, and giving local people a sense of history, of heritage and access to nature. Officers believe that Beckenham Place Park has the potential to become one of the best parks in London.

5.3.2 Local people have been involved throughout the long journey to secure investment for the park. The Beckenham Place Park Working Group, consisting of councillors and representatives from several local community organisations, was established to guide the regeneration of the park back in 1995 when the David Lloyd proposal came forward. The group is still in operation. Public consultation was carried out in 2008 (Continental research) and again in early 2014, prior to the submission of the bid to Heritage Lottery. The purpose of the 2014 consultation was specifically to explore to what extent the local people wanted to retain golf in the park. Four options were presented, which respondents ranked in order of preference: 18 hole golf, 9 hole golf, family par 3 golf, no golf.

5.3.3 The survey methodology chosen was face to face consultation, primarily through drop in sessions where the public had the opportunity to review the options and to ask questions in a relaxed and informal atmosphere. In addition a workshop session was arranged with pupils from Conisborough College to gather the views of younger people, which had been overlooked in previous consultations.

5.3.4 Those invited to the sessions included:

- Current park users including golfers and friends group
- Community Groups
- Sports Groups
- Heritage and Conservation Organisations
- Local residents (through assemblies contact lists for local wards and Phoenix Community Housing's contact lists)
- Local children and young people including the Young Mayor and Young Advisers
- Local assemblies (a drop in session at Whitefoot Assembly and a presentation/drop in session at Downham Assembly)
- Key parties e.g. English Heritage, Heritage Lottery Fund, Environment Agency etc.

A full list of organisations invited to participate in the consultation can be found in Appendix 2.

5.3.5 Through the consultation officers spoke to around 300 people. 175 of these completed the questionnaire which set out the four options. The results clearly showed that respondents favoured a significant reallocation of park land away from golf. 77% of respondents favoured the cessation of 18 hole golf in the park. 9 hole golf was the least popular option, with only 5% support. A significant proportion of people (37%) preferred the option which included a par 3 family golf course, but very few of these people were keen to make use of this possible facility themselves and instead saw it as a suitable compromise offer to existing golfers. 35% of respondents stated that their preference was for no golf within the park.

5.3.6 Although the majority of respondents did not opt for 'no golf', it was clear from the consultation that respondents did favour a park which was much more substantially public park, and less substantially golf course. Currently the golf course accounts for 34 of the park's 98 hectares. Those responding to the consultation clearly expressed a desire to reduce this footprint. Respondents were also asked to rank the importance of twelve other factors so that more detailed analysis of priorities could be established to inform design development.

5.3.7 The phase 1 bid and masterplan was submitted to the HLF in February 2014, on the basis of this consultation. The masterplan illustrated full restoration of the parkland, including reinstatement of the historic lake, restoration of the homestead buildings and courtyard, and the creation of several new facilities – cycle tracks, children's play, a renewed skate park, pleasure gardens, café and

toilets. (The current masterplan, which will continue to be developed through the coming months, if approved by Mayor and Cabinet, can be found in Appendix 5.) The funding award left room for the possibility that a small family golf facility could be included within the open space, provided its footprint was reduced and brought away from the historic core of the park. However, the HLF would not fund the relocation of golf holes, and the Council would need to demonstrate how golf added to the park's offer, and was self sustaining in revenue terms.

5.4 **Golf Course facilities**

5.4.1 Detailed analysis of the consultation results showed that whilst the option with Par 3 golf included was the most popular of the 4 options consulted on, the provision of a Par 3 golf facility was ranked only 11th most important out of the 12 factors consulted on. The order of importance from respondents overall was as follows:

1st – Opportunities for relaxation and enjoyment

2nd – Enhancement to the heritage setting of the buildings

3rd – Access for all (making more of the park accessible for those with mobility problems)

4th – Enhancements for wildlife and biodiversity

5th – Restoration of the designed landscape

6th – Creation of more shared use routes through the park

7th – Provision of lake activities

8th – Provision of events

9th – Greater diversity of sport provision

10th – Introduction of grazing animals

11th– Par 3 Family golf

12th – 18 or 9 hole golf provision

5.4.2 Despite the relatively low support for the 'family golf' offer officers have had discussions with a commercial golf operator who operates a number of leisure golf enterprises to assess the potential of a smaller course to represent a viable business venture. It is our understanding from those conversations that to

develop a viable business model a number of linked attractions would be needed to generate the necessary visitor numbers. Core elements of the leisure golf business model include the provision of a large driving range, with nets and floodlighting, café/bar/restaurant, gym and extensive parking as a minimum. Without such facilities it is likely that the enterprise is not economically viable. In addition, in order to justify such a large investment any operator would require a long leasehold interest in a substantial part of the park. It is the view of officers that the presence of such a large private facility would detrimentally affect the sense of 'countryside' and openness so many value in the park, and would not be in keeping with the historic setting. It is also very similar in nature to the David Lloyd proposal which stirred up considerable local opposition 20 years ago and is likely to jeopardise the funding currently offered by the Heritage Lottery Fund, as the provision of these commercial golf facilities would not sit easily with the restoration of the historic landscape, nor contribute to the delivery of outcomes they require. (Appendix 4 shows the outcomes required from Heritage Lottery grant of this type.)

- 5.4.3 The proposed closure of the golf course comes at a time when the numbers of people playing golf nationally is in marked decline. Recent research by Sport England and Sports Marketing Surveys (2014) forecast a difficult outlook for golf courses around the country, as numbers participating in the sport frequently continue to decline, making the economics of running a successful course profitably increasingly difficult. Many golf clubs now allow members of the public to play their courses, offering non-members rates, in an attempt to bring in more income. The financial exclusivity of the sport has thus been eroded in recent years, as golfers are not required to pay large sums for club membership in order to access the course.
- 5.4.4 There are many golf courses in the local area, open to visitors at reasonable rates, offering golfers several alternatives to Beckenham Place Park. Appendix 5 lists 18 courses that are within 30 minutes driving distance from Beckenham Place Park. Most of these welcome visitors throughout the week and many have green fees at similar rates to that offered at Beckenham Place Park.
- 5.4.5 Indeed, the increasing openness of other courses locally is likely to have contributed to the decline in use of Beckenham Place Park golf course over recent years. In 2002-3 38,500 rounds of golf were played in the park. Over the next decade this declined steadily, stabilising at around 20,000 rounds per year from 2010 to the present. This is a reduction of almost 50% in usage since 2002, and an even more marked decline from the course's heyday, in the 1990s, when 50,000 rounds a year was typical.
- 5.4.6 Income to the course is clearly dependent directly on the number of rounds played, and yet the costs of maintaining a golf course remain relatively fixed

irrespective of the number of rounds played. The operation of golf at Beckenham Place Park today is therefore much less financially viable than it was in the 1990s. Last year the Council contributed around £139,000 to the maintenance of the golf course, above and beyond the income paid to the Council by the golf operator. This equates to subsidising each round of golf by almost £7.50. Officers would recommend that this is not an appropriate use of public funds in this time of austerity. The table below summarises the Council's costs in 2014-15 for providing the golf facility at the park.

Table 1 – Management and maintenance costs for BPP Golf Course 2014-15

	£k
Staff costs	159
Maintenance equipment and materials	31
Business rates	19
Total cost of managing and maintaining golf course	209
Income received from golf operator	70
Net cost to the Council of golf operation	139

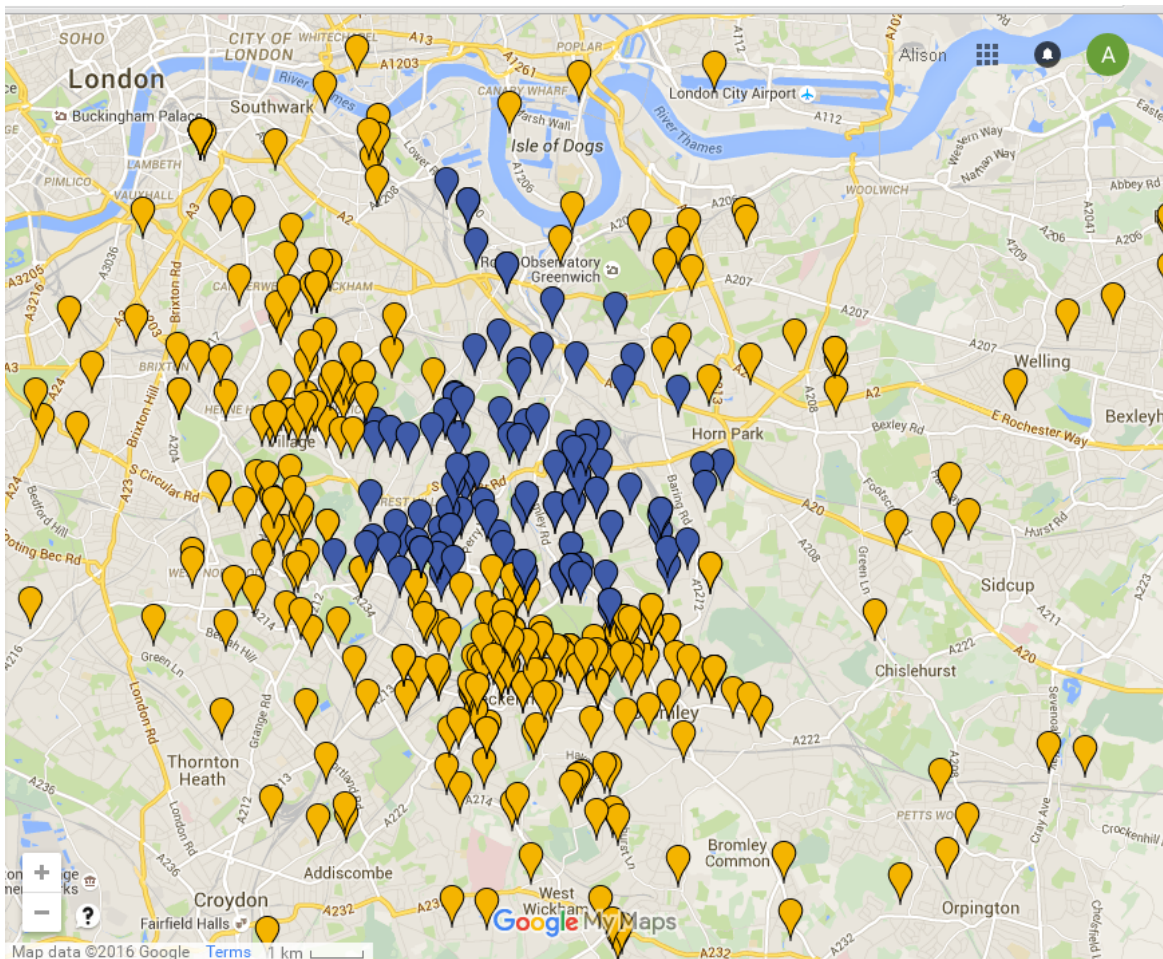
5.4.7 Nevertheless, it must be recognised that the possible closure of the golf course has attracted some significant opposition. A petition of 5000 signatures against closure of the 18 hole golf course represents a substantial body of people who would like to continue to play golf in the park, or seek, for other reasons to protect the status quo. Due to the investment of officer time it would require, it has not been possible to analyse the residence of all the people signing the petition to retain the golf course. However, analysis of a 10% sample of the petition, taken in equal measure from the beginning, middle and end of the petition in terms of the date signed, indicates that the vast majority of people signing the petition, opposed to the closure of the golf course, live outside the bounds of Lewisham borough. It is also interesting to note that only 5% of those signing the petition are from the neighbouring Lewisham wards of Bellingham, Whitefoot and Downham which the park was acquired to benefit.

The following table displays the results of the analysed sample.

Table 2 – Residence of those signing the petition (from 10% sample)

Lewisham residents	24.5%
Non Lewisham residents	75.5%
Residents of Whitefoot, Bellingham and Downham	5%
Residents of other wards	95%

The map below marks the postcode of each person signing the petition. Blue markers demote those living within Lewisham while yellow markers show those living out of the borough. A small proportion of signatories reside outside the bounds of the map below.



5.4.8 In addition to the petition, it should also be noted that the Mayor has received 487 letters of petition from visitors to the park, objecting to the 'proposed regeneration of Beckenham Place Park and the consequential closure of the

existing 18 hole public golf course'. However, these standard letters assume that the golf is revenue generating, and that the creation of the lake will destroy wildlife habitat. Neither of these assumptions on which the petitions are based are factually correct, and thus some of those signing may not have done so had they understood the real financial costs to the Council of providing golf, and the ecological opportunities created through the creation of the lake.

5.4.9 Like the petition, the majority of the letters of objection (67%) have come from residents outside of the borough, as the table below shows:

Table 3 – Residence of those submitting letters of petition

Borough	No. of letters of petition	% of letters of petition
Lewisham	282	33%
Bromley	356	42%
Greenwich	31	4%
Southwark	45	5%
Other	125	15%
Unknown	4	0%
Total	843	100%

5.5 Planned Consultation

5.5.1 It is also interesting to note that Lewisham residents objecting to the regeneration of the park are predominantly from other areas of the borough, and not from the neighbouring wards of Bellingham, Downham and Whitefoot. Anecdotal evidence suggests that residents from these neighbouring Lewisham wards are not using the park much currently. This is particularly concerning, given that Beckenham Place Park was acquired by the London County Council specifically to be amenity space for the new estates of Downham and Bellingham, recognising that there was, and still is, no other substantial green space in the area. If regeneration plans progress, consultation will be carried out to ensure that the restored park offers activities and facilities that appeal to people within these communities, and help them to gain the health and quality of life benefits that green spaces offer. If the regeneration of the park goes ahead consultation will take place as follows:

5 themed focus groups for invited

4th, 10th, 11th Feb 2016

attendees

Children and young people's online survey advertised through schools	Jan - Feb 2016
'High street' consultation events in Downham, Beckenham, Catford and Bellingham	29 th Feb, 5 th , 9 th , 14 th March 2016
Displays and drop in consultation at the BPP mansion for a session at the weekend	13 th March (provisional)
3-4 open invitation evening meetings in various locations	March
Easter event in the park, including consultation	28 th March 2016
Design verification through public displays and events, to be defined	May- June 2016
Submit final proposal to Heritage Lottery Fund for approval	By August 2016

5.5.2 The project is then expected to progress as follows:

Secure funds from HLF	By Jan 2017
Procurement and finalise detailed designs	Jan- Summer 2017
Works on site begin	Autumn 2017
Works on site completed	By Christmas 2018

5.5.3 The Heritage Lottery grant offers a real opportunity to harness the potential of this park – not only as a beautiful and extensive open space, but also as a regeneration asset for south of the borough.

5.6 HLF investment

- 5.6.1 This is a £4.9m total grant, £324,000 of which has been awarded already for the design and development stage of the project. These monies are being spent by Lewisham Council on staff time, architects, technical experts and consultation with local people.
- 5.6.2 The design phase will be completed by August 2015, when the phase two proposal is submitted to the HLF. The fund will confirm the award of the further £4.6m by Christmas 2016.
- 5.6.3 Grant monies can be spent on any aspect of the designs agreed in the phase two proposal for the park and homestead buildings.
- 5.6.4 It is expected that the capital works will be completed by December 2018. The HLF do not impose strict deadlines by which the grant monies must be spent, but require a 'realistic timescale' for delivery.
- 5.6.5 A modest amount of match funding is required from the Council, as a contribution to the project. This amounts to a total of £1million, which will be made up of insurance monies from the homesteads fire, section 106 contributions and a contribution from the capital programme.

5.7 Golf Contract – background and latest decision to extend the contract

- 5.7.1 Golf at Beckenham Place Park has been operated by Glendale Golf since January 2013. The contract was due to expire on 31st December 2015, but the Council has recently agreed up to a 12 month extension to this contract, so that golf will continue to operate in the park for a number of months during 2016.
- 5.7.2 There are several practical reasons for this extension:
 - 1) New arrangements will be required if these facilities are to be offered in the park, prior to the regeneration and the Council needs time to put these arrangements in place.
 - 2) The golf operates from the lower ground floor of the mansion house currently, using the upper ground floor for toilets. The activity and staff help to secure the otherwise vacant mansion, protecting it from vandalism. The Council needs to ensure that suitable arrangements can be put in place to offer security to the building in the absence of golf.
 - 3) Whilst the golf course is not as well used as it once was golfers still use and enjoy the course. They amount to a significant proportion of current park use in non peak periods, and stay in the park for hours. As such they provide parts of the park with a level of informal policing and sense of the space

being occupied, which is useful prior to the regeneration works taking place. Golfers could continue to enjoy the course in the initial interim period.

- 4) If the contract is to be terminated prior to December 31st 2016, the Council is required to give due notice to Glendale golf.
- 5) There are staffing and possible TUPE implications of closing the golf operation at Beckenham Place Park. Time is needed to work these out.
- 6) The golf operation provides toilets and a cafe for all park users. New arrangements will be required if these facilities are to be offered in the park, prior to the regeneration and the Council needs time to put these arrangements in place.
- 7) The golf operates from the lower ground floor of the mansion house currently, using the upper ground floor for toilets. The activity and staff help to secure the otherwise vacant mansion, protecting it from vandalism. The Council needs to ensure that suitable arrangements can be put in place to offer security to the building in the absence of golf.

The exact timing of the cessation of golf in the park will be worked out within these constraints.

6. Proposal

- 6.1 The proposal to continue the work on the masterplan for Beckenham Place Park recognises that in order to achieve the key outcome required by the Heritage Lottery Fund - to significantly increase usage of the park, and the diversity of users, it is necessary to reduce the dominance of golf in the park.
- 6.2 The outline masterplan proposes restoration of the landscape together with the introduction of new facilities and activities in the historic core of the park which will allow the park to become more relevant to those that live nearby. It also opens up possibilities for the restoration and re-use of the listed buildings that would otherwise be less viable.
- 6.3 Initial investigations have cast doubt on the viability of introducing family golf to the park, but our decision to pursue this no further at this stage does not preclude an offer being developed at some future point.
- 6.4 To continue developing the outline masterplan and release the Heritage Lottery capital funding to invest in the park, it is necessary to close the current 18 hole golf course.

- 6.5 The alternative is to halt work on the regeneration of Beckenham Place Park through the HLF award, and forego the further £4.6m investment the HLF have set aside for the open space.
- 6.6 Alternative funds for investment would need to be found in order to bring the historic buildings back into use, and to fund improvements to the facilities in the park. There are currently very few other opportunities to secure significant funds for the park and buildings. It may be many years before alternative funding on this scale is found.
- 6.7 Even if this option was chosen, the Council would still need to make a decision about the continued operation of the current 18 hole golf course in the park, considering the social value offered through the provision of golf, and the costs and revenues to the Council.

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 In accordance with the Council's Petition Scheme contained in the Constitution, the petition has been referred for consideration by Sustainable Development Select Committee who are the relevant Scrutiny Select Committee.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 Capital

- 8.1.1 If Mayor and Cabinet approve the continuation of work on the restoration of Beckenham Place Park, the project team will submit a phase 2 bid to the HLF in Summer 2016. The HLF will consider the bid, and are expected to confirm the total funding award of £4.9m by Christmas 2016. Of this amount, £0.3m has already been awarded and is being spent by Lewisham Council on staff time, architects, technical experts and consultation with local people. The remaining grant funding of £4.6m will then be made available to the Council for the regeneration of the park.
- 8.1.2 Some match funding is required from the Council, as a contribution to the project. This amounts to a total of £1million. This will need to be identified from a combination of insurance monies from the homesteads fire, section 106 contributions and additional capital programme budget.

8.2 Revenue

- 8.2.1 The closure of the golf facility at Beckenham Place Park would save the Council around £139k per annum. Initially this may be required to cover potential once off redundancy costs arising from the closure.
- 8.2.2 It should be noted that there is a cost attached to maintaining the area of the park formerly occupied by the golf course. That cost will depend on the nature of the facilities offered in the redeveloped park. It is expected that costs of maintaining the redeveloped park can be contained within existing budgets, whilst having the potential to offer a saving of up to the £139k in arising from the closure of the golf course.
- 8.2.3 In addition, it should also be recognised that a well restored park of this scale will offer the Council opportunities to make revenue in the longer term, which could in turn be used to fund the maintenance of the park in the future. Such revenue streams could come from events, café facilities, and the commercial operation of outdoor activities such as kayaking or high ropes. In addition, it is likely that if the park is restored and the golf removed from the curtilage of the mansion, opportunities to create revenue through letting space in the mansion house could be found.

9. Equalities Implications

- 9.1 A key objective of the regeneration of Beckenham Place Park is to ensure it appeals to, and is more accessible to the diverse communities of South East London. If the Mayor and Cabinet approve continued progress on the restoration of the park, officers will ensure consultation is carried out with a broad range of audiences, to ensure the park becomes a facility which is enjoyed by a more diverse and representative population in the future.
- 9.2 A key component of the current phase of work is the development of an audience engagement plan which seeks to identify any parts of the community who are not using the space, identify the reasons why and to plan activities that will re-engage them. This targeted work will sit alongside the general principles of good design for the landscape and buildings, which will aim to make the facilities in the park accessible to all.

10. Environmental Implications

- 10.1 In regenerating the park officers seek to improve the ecological value of the open space, introducing new habitats, such as a lake, and enhancing existing habitats through enhanced woodland and meadow management.
- 10.2 The golf course, being intensively managed grassland, requires the use of fertiliser, fungicide and herbicide, and is of very little ecological value. The regeneration of the park would see this virtual monoculture replaced by meadow, open water and parkland which could support a much more diverse range of species, and offer people much greater opportunity to interact with nature.

11. Crime and Disorder Implications

- 11.1 The 'Designing out crime' work carried out in Ladywell Fields through the Quercus Project (2006-2008) demonstrated clearly that the most important factor in preventing crime and disorder in parks is the extent to which the space is used. Crime and fear of crime reduce in open spaces when people are seen and can be seen.
- 11.2 Increasing the use of Beckenham Place Park is key to reducing anti-social behaviour and fear of crime in this open space. Investing in the park and removing damaged and derelict features will also deter anti-social behaviour, helping people to feel safer and discouraging casual vandalism.
- 11.3 In addition, there are plans to engage residents and school pupils extensively in the park, through volunteering opportunities and environmental education. As volunteers invest in the open space, the sense of ownership and pride in the park will grow. This in turn moves them to actively look after the space, and deters anti-social behaviour.
- 11.4 The regeneration of the Beckenham Place Park should therefore reduce crime and fear of crime in the park.

12. Human Rights Implications

- 12.1 There are no specific human rights implications arising out of this report

13. Conclusion

13.1 The Heritage Lottery Funds represent a significant opportunity to transform Beckenham Place Park into a key asset for the people of Lewisham and beyond.

13.2 The park could boast facilities unrivalled in this part of London. Through the regeneration programme the park could become a place of

Community – providing environmental education, interpretation for visitors and an events programme appropriate for local people

Nature – providing a huge range of habitats, from ancient woodland and meadow to a river, wetland, and a lake

Heritage – ensuring the restoration of several listed 18th century buildings, providing a beautiful and historic setting for people to enjoy

Outdoor activity – providing endless opportunities for health and fitness activities, including some not found elsewhere in the borough (high ropes, kayaking)

Relaxation – providing a sense of being in the countryside, of having space giving people the opportunity to unwind in an attractive landscape.

13.3 It is recognised that the closure of the golf course represents a significant loss to a community of people, some of whom have enjoyed playing golf at Beckenham Place Park for decades. However, the Heritage Lottery Fund award offers an opportunity to create a park that offers far more than golf and woodlands for walking. The restoration of the park enables the creation of an open space which will be used and loved by thousands of residents throughout the borough and beyond.

14. Background documents and Report Author

- HLF bid
- Movement and Usage Survey 2013
- Golf contract with Glendale

Appendices:

- Current masterplan – emerging landscape design for the park
- Invitees to the 2014 consultation

- 2014 Consultation summary
- Outcomes required by the Heritage Lottery Fund
- Golf courses within half an hour's drive of Beckenham Place Park

If you require any further information about this report please contact Alison Taylor on alison.taylor@lewisham.gov.uk