Pre Board presentation

A pre board presentation was given by Paul Hodgson from Groundwork London and Julie McDonald from GiGL focussing on GIS digital database for the regional Park.

1. **Welcome and Introductions**

Welcome and introductions were made.

2. **Apologies for absence**

Announcement of apologies given on behalf of the directors and observers from the London Assembly listed above.

3. **Minutes of the Board on 25th July**

Correction has been made to the past minutes to include Bruce St Julian Bown’s full name. Agenda item 2: Election of Chair and Vice Chair.

4. **Matters arising from the minutes of 25th July**

The Company Secretary raised the issue of the application to the Charity Commission for registration of the company as a charity. In order to submit the application the Board needs to resolve that the application be made and the Company Secretary also needs written confirmation of funding from all four London Boroughs. Clare George-Hilley and Chris Wright stated they would chase up the Croydon funding confirmation.

**Resolved:** Application be made to the Charity Commission for registration of the company as a charity
The Vice Chair clarified issues regarding conflicts of interest regarding the Wandle Valley Forum, its members and representation. The key point made in the last meeting is being clear about the difference between communication of Wandle Valley Forum member’s views and decision making duties in the interests of the company.

The Chief Executive has yet to arrange reciprocal visits with the Colne Valley Regional Park. This will be explored in the New Year.

5. **Written resolution – provision of banking services**

The board received the minute of the written resolution that the company would bank with Coop Bank.

6. **Recruitment of Chief Executive**

The Chief Executive left the meeting for discussion of this item, having declared an interest in it.

The Chair reported that the Chief Executive had expressed an interest in staying in the role until the end of September 2013. However, he had stressed that he believed the company is at a position where it needs to establish something ‘more solid’ in terms of administration, operational base and resources. These steps are more appropriate for a Chief Executive who will be located closer to London as well as potentially being able to work for the company on a 3-4 day basis when resources allow, rather than 2-3 days as it currently stands.

The recommendation was that the contract with the existing holder of the post of Chief Executive should be extended by 5 months, with a sub committee established from April to recruit a new Chief Executive - with effect from 30th September. The Board endorsed this position adding that a sub committee should ideally be formed at the January meeting, and that it would be particularly useful for the current holder of the post of Chief Executive to support this committee to make the transition effective.

The Company Secretary also stressed the importance of having a permanent base and administrative resource for the company as correspondence at the minute is sent to the company’s registered office, which is his firm’s offices, but the administration function for the company is performed elsewhere, which resulted in the correspondence being then forwarded on - which is neither convenient nor efficient for pressing matters regarding the company’s business.

**Resolved:** The contract with the existing holder of the post of Chief Executive be extended by five months to the end of September 2013, and to establish a sub committee to oversee recruitment of his replacement.

7. **Regional Park interim planning protocol**

The Chief Executive informed the Board that an interim planning protocol had been developed to guide future relationships with Local Planning Authorities and the Greater London Authority. It was proposed to be adopted until next April when any changes could be made in the light of further consultation with the Boroughs and experience of dealing with planning applications.

The Chief Executive reminded the Board that the current resources only cover two days a week of his time and this is the only capacity currently available to manage the company’s engagement in planning. There was potentially an opportunity cost to commenting on planning applications to the detriment of other key business priorities.

The Chief Executive raised the importance of commenting on applications and clarifying policy to determine what is significant for the Board or not. Dave Webb commented that the Board has yet to decide how to balance its potentially competing priorities when commenting on
development, and the Chief Executive agreed that this would be easier when there is a more comprehensive Regional Park Plan in place.

The next step with the Regional Park is to identify catchments using GIS technology where this was available, such as in Wandsworth, to guide the process of establishing the location and types of development that was relevant to the future of the regional park.

Regarding development, it had already been recognised at the July Board meeting that conflicts of interest could be an issue that affect a number of directors and their respective member organisations. Members of the Board are from a number of different organisations so we must consider individual views surrounding planning issues.

The Vice Chair added that the Board needs to keep a note of the locations of priceless views for future planning applications involving large scale development, so a criteria that only establishes significant schemes as close to the boundary of the park needs to be treated with caution.

The Chief Executive explained that the next step was to work with the Development Management/Control teams so that the future planning protocol for the park is agreed by all four boroughs.

Resolved: That the interim planning protocol is adopted to guide future discussions with the planning authorities and Greater London Authority, with a review being undertaken prior to the meeting of the Board in April 2013.

8. ‘Living Wandle’ Landscape Partnerships programme

Stephen Crabtree presented an update on the progress of the ‘Living Wandle’ Landscape Partnership programme to the Board. He explained that the team are applying for funding to Heritage Lottery Fund of nearly two million pounds over a five-year period, starting next year assuming the bid is successful. The overall bid is for a collection of twenty-five projects, some physical and some engagement. Currently the bid is in the development phase working to get through to the next round. Heritage Lottery Fund had approved all twenty-five projects under the Stage 1 submission but since then some have changed or dropped out.

Physical projects:
1. Merton Priory
2. Boardwalk at Morden Park Hall
3. Ravensbury Channel
4. Wandle Gateways – entrances across the river
5. Waddon Ponds
6. Catchment Plan
7. Invasive Species Action Plan

Learning & Engagement projects:
1. Industrial Heritage Recording Programme
2. Climate Change Awareness – Interactive
3. Social Landlords Community Project
4. Discovering the source of the Wandle
5. River Guardians
6. Mapping & Development of trails – put all on a web resource
7. River Education Programme
8. Reflecting the Wandle
9. River Celebration
10. Wandle Flowing Through Time
11. Volunteer and Training Programme
12. Interpretive Strategy
Stephen Crabtree clarified that Heritage Lottery Fund will not just fund a collection of projects, they must be presented together in a sequence so they link together as a strong overall programme.

John Hawks and Marcus Beale then gave a presentation on Merton Priory Trust. John Hawks stated that having a museum on site was a great asset to the community and encouraged community interest in archaeology. There are two phases of the project, with phase one providing better access to the site, and phase two, which includes building glass walls on the South and West of the site. At present the project is led by a small charitable trust, with London Borough of Merton acting as lead on delivery of the capital improvements.

Claire George-Hilley questioned how Living Wandle will ensure volunteer commitment over the project span of five years. Stephen Crabtree stated that there have been lots of pledges of voluntary support within each project and there will be a member of staff in the programme team with specific responsibility for volunteering. Angela Gorman suggested that educational projects are also very important and if necessary the company should ensure this is emphasised in more detailed in the application.

Resolved: The Board welcomed the Living Wandle and Merton Priory proposals and agreed to provide a letter of support for the Heritage Lottery Fund bid.

9. Wandle Trail investment programme

Rebecca Jones from Sustrans gave a presentation to the Board on the Wandle Trail investment programme. Rebecca Jones informed the Board that Sustrans have been working on a feasibility study for the Wandle trail funded by Transport for London.

The feasibility study has uncovered a number of issues that can be addressed, in particular the need to overcome barriers along to trail to alter and unify the route.

Some of the actions proposed are as follows:
1. Re-route trail along Neville Close
2. Create an access point from Waterside Way
3. Complete ‘bridge to nowhere’
4. Replace narrow Morden Hall Park bridges
5. Re-route the trail through Poulter Park
6. Sign the route from Mill Lane to Waddon Ponds.

Rebecca Jones informed the Board that there is a consultation event on 20th November from 2-6pm upstairs in the Snuff Mill where all are welcome to attend and find out more about the emerging plans for the trail.

Rebecca Jones stated that Sustrans wish to integrate the signage to help promote the existing NCN and Avenue Vert cycle routes. The Vice Chair mentioned that he has undertaken a photographic audit of all the current signage to give to the Chief Executive. Regarding street furniture along the Wandle Trail further discussion is required before any conclusion is to be reached.

Resolved: To support Sustrans applying in order of priority to Transport for London for funding the proposed actions, mentioned above and the emerging plans for the Wandle Trail are welcomed, and the Chief Executive is to continue to work with Sustrans and the Boroughs to finalise the bid to Transport for London.

10. Wandle working groups – progress review

The Chief Executive had drafted the Wandle working groups update report for this meeting. With the working groups under the new structure, the broad conclusion is that it was too early to say whether they are going to be an effective way of working, and a fuller review in six
months was necessary. In the light of the importance of this issue and the lack of remaining time, it was agreed that this item would be deferred to the January Board meeting.

It was noted that the Wandle Valley Forum is currently only represented on one of the working groups. The idea of including Wandle Valley Forum members on more working groups is to be taken away for the Forum to discuss.

**Resolved**: That the review of the working groups should be included on the agenda for the January Board meeting, and it was noted that the Wandle Valley Forum will discuss representation on the working groups.

11. **Work programme – progress report**

Due to time constraints it was proposed that any comments or questions regarding the company’s work programme be made directly to the Chief Executive; including finances, where the company is making progress and any ongoing risks.

12. **Future meetings and visits**

a) Board meetings:

The Board noted that future Board meetings are to be held on:
- Wednesday 23rd January 2013
- Wednesday 24th April 2013

All Board meetings are proposed to start at 6.30pm. The venue for future meetings is to be notified to the directors by the Chief Executive.

**Resolved**: That an additional Board meeting to discuss a recommendation that the company should lead the Wandle Gateways project, as part of the Living Wandle programme be held on Wednesday 28th November 2012.