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**Environment Policy**

**December 2021**

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**Lee Valley Regional Park Authority,**

Myddelton House, Bulls Cross,

Enfield, Middlesex, EN2 9HG

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1. **Mission Statement**

The Authority is governed by the Park Act and has a specific remit under this act which states the general duty of the Authority is: “to develop improve, preserve and manage or to procure or arrange for the development, improvement, preservation and management of the park as a place for the occupation of leisure, recreation, sport, games or amusements or any similar activity, for the provision of nature reserves and for the provision and enjoyment of entertainments of any kind.”

Coupled with this the Authority produces a periodic business plan which will link to and consider this environment policy and vice versa along with other relevant documents such as the Park Development Framework and Biodiversity Action Plan.

The Authority’s mission statement for how it will consider its development and management from an environmental perspective under the remit through the Park Act and Business plans is set out below:

“The Authority aspires to deliver environmental innovation and best practice in the design, delivery and management of its operation, open spaces and venues. In the context of its statutory remit the Authority will work to contribute to the international aim to limit global warming and address the climate crisis by developing and delivering a strategy and action plans which will reduce its impact on the environment”

The overarching aims of this policy seek to follow the circular economy principles. A circular economy is based on three principles:

• Design out waste and pollution

• Keep products and materials in use

• Regenerate natural systems

The Authority will keep these principles at the heart of its policy, strategy development and as initiatives developed will investigate options and continually revisit these principles.

1. **Background**

Why Develop a Policy?

The IPCC 2018 report on climate change found that meeting a 1.5°C target is still achievable, success is dependent on an ambitious international effort and an increase in investment. Exceeding the 1.5°C target would affect weather patterns, cause sea levels to rise further, create food and water shortages, and affect human security and economic growth. The special report Global Warming of 1.5°C (IPCC, 2018. Summary for Policymakers) shows that 420 million additional people will be exposed to extreme heat and up to 270 million additional people to water scarcity if global temperatures rise by 2°C, compared with a 1.5°C scenario. The world is now clearly in the midst of a climate and ecological emergency and there is now a unanimous consensus from the scientific community on the need for rapid action.

There is clear recognition that this challenge can only be overcome by taking urgent, radical action. This crisis is something that will have an effect on us all, and for some the impact of climate change is already being felt. The UK is committed to playing its full part in meeting the international target to limit the global average temperature rise to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels by the year 2100, and aiming for 1.5°C, known as the Paris Agreement within the United Nations Framework on Climate Change.

Whilst the Authority has no remit within the act or legal obligation all organisations (including the Authority) have a moral duty to look at what they can do to support international, national, regional and London targets where they can. Understanding climate risk, in particular to our own organisation, and what implications it may have to the public and our users is key to developing a robust policy and strategy for the Authority. There are many reports alongside the 2018 IPCC report, which detail short, medium and long term risks. These have informed the development of this policy and are listed in section 9. The Authority needs to develop a policy and strategy that is resilient and can adapt to climate change, new technologies and flex as new information unfolds as well as having the key aim of contributing to limiting global warming. However, the Authority recognises that most individual organisations cannot provide all of the solutions, as combating climate change needs system-wide change that involves world leaders, governments, communities, businesses, individuals and stakeholders across all sectors of the economy, across the country and the wider world. This Policy will seek to adapt where it can as other changes to how we live start to take shape. The reputation of the Authority is key and developing a policy and strategy seeking to support the current global issues on climate change will demonstrate that the Authority is seeking to play its part and contribute to the solution.

The scale and pace of change needed will require major investments, changes to the way in which we use and interact with energy and changes to how we live our lives and define success. It will also redefine how we manage and interact with our environment. Above all, it will involve a collective leadership and shared ambition to deal with this challenge head on.

The Challenge

The Lee Valley Regional Park Authority recognises that the current balance between economics, climate change, sustainability, carbon reduction and resource usage is a major challenge to many organisations and governments. It also recognises that the field of environmental management is an ever changing subject and some organisations are only currently able to have a small impact due to the nature of their business or the constraints of their core objectives, some of which will only change as larger industries and governments make headway with proposed changes.

The Authority wants to play its part in helping to tackle one of the significant challenges of our time: a changing climate, loss of biodiversity and overconsumption of resources. Much of the Authority’s work involves activity such as improvements for biodiversity and provision of cycling and walking routes throughout the park. These already contribute to nature recovery, reduced use of resources through greener travel, health and wellbeing as well as provision of a carbon sink in green open spaces. These things will remain as core objectives and this policy should also recognise the value of this work and the Authority’s remit in this area.

Many local authorities, governments and organisations have declared a climate emergency from which they are directing resource and activity to a range of initiatives to try to slow down and reverse climate change. Other organisations are also seeking ways they can support action or change how they operate to contribute towards a reduction in climate change. Much has been made of reducing carbon emissions and the current aim for many is to become carbon neutral or net zero. This can be achieved in two ways – either reducing the carbon footprint or offsetting by investing in projects which reduce or remove carbon. Organisations will need to find what works for them and seek initiatives that deliver benefits for the climate whilst also ensuring they can remain viable as a business. However, environmental contribution is not just about carbon reduction or net zero. Restoring and protecting land for recreation and to benefit wildlife, managing land to conserve and enhance biodiversity, can be just as important and should be recognised. Biodiversity net gain will be something used in the future and organisations can look at integrated approaches to create overall benefits. The Authority is in a unique position in that part of its operation involves work to enhance biodiversity, protect land and develop resilient open spaces, which will contribute to a range of climate change objectives in the future, whilst part of its operation involves work which may create excess carbon emissions and we will investigate these areas to reduce our impact.

We recognise many Local Authorities and similar organisations have declared a climate emergency and have set target dates to become carbon neutral or “net zero”. Some organisations are looking at contributing elements to support international or regional targets by smaller contributions such as net zero mobility or carbon zero new builds. To meet a target of full carbon neutral for the Authority as a whole would be difficult unless we offset our enhancement activities against venues and services. This policy and associated strategy seeks to determine what can realistically be achieved as a meaningful contribution rather than seeking to aim for the unachievable. Rather than declaring an emergency and setting a date to become net zero our current aim is to support the international, national, regional and London effort to reduce global warming. We will do this by investigating all the things we can change to make our landholdings climate resilient including reducing our carbon footprint, investigating how we can improve biodiversity, improving air quality, educating people, supporting ecosystem services, creating flood resilience, health and wellbeing and developing targeted actions under each theme set out in Appendix 1.

The actions

The Authority recognises it has a responsibility and needs to do what it can to minimise the negative impacts on the environment and support the climate change emergency within the requirements of the Park Act, the need to operate as an effective business and the requirement to reduce the burden on the taxpayer. It also acknowledges the contribution it can make to protecting and enhancing the land and buildings in its custody whilst being sensitive to environmental, economic and social considerations. The Authority is also in a position to lead by example and educate others, in particular park users to develop awareness and behave in an environmentally responsible manner. The Authority has an opportunity to develop an integrated approach to its environment policy and strategy.

It will seek to develop appropriate solutions to the different types of sites, venues and open spaces that it owns and manages. This Policy and strategy also seeks to address options for contractors, leaseholders and other bodies operating within the Park and ensure a joined up approach to maximise the benefit. The Policy aims are set out in more detail in section 3.

The Authority recognises that it has a number of distinct areas of activity and operation . These can be divided into five broad themes as set out in Appendix 1:

* New Builds,
* Open and water Spaces,
* Venues,
* Events
* Corporate.

The conundrum is that Open Spaces and their activities in the main tend to contribute to positive environmental activity (climate change mitigation, biodiversity enhancements and habitat protection). New builds can use technology to deliver carbon neural builds but these are often cost prohibitive or difficult to implement and truly achieve a neutral build. The venues contribute in many positive ways for example to the health agenda, social cohesion and much of the remit of the Park Act but from an environmental perspective this generally contributes to negative environmental activity (energy use, travel and resource use) as do many elements of the events we run along with our corporate activity. The Authority does however need to operate and this policy and supporting strategy will seek to construct a framework which outlines the most effective actions each theme can take to maximise its environmental credentials within any individual constraints but with an overall aim to make improvements that support the international effort to reduce climate change and the Authority vision.

The Authority owns assets (in the main venues) which are leased to, managed/operated by a third party who will have their own requirements, environmental standards or policies. The Authority’s policy will include a requirement to ensure that all these organisations have their own environment policy in place, which is acceptable to the Authority. Whilst the Authority cannot impose its own standards onto other organisations it will however through its procurement process seek to ensure they all operators meet or exceed our own standards of environmental practice. Operators will be required to provide data and monitoring on a range of KPI’s as set out in each contract.

The Authority uses a large number of other contractors for a wide variety of contracts from design and delivery projects through to standard operational maintenance and repair works. As part of the general procurement process it will be the Authority’s policy to ensure all contractors have a good standard of environmental practice and an appropriate environment policy in place.

Customers, visitors and regular park users can also play a part and the Authority will seek to ensure it is demonstrating good practice and leading by example and provide information and interpretation via its website and onsite to engage with people about how it is supporting environmental measures.

This policy and the framework set out in Appendix 1 will link to an overall strategy that the Authority will adopt. The strategy will be a working document and develop specific activity and actions within each theme and a range of common threads to maximise the contribution to the climate emergency. We will to seek to become as environmentally supportive as we can be in either our own actions or in influencing the actions of third party operators and contractors.

Environment Group

The strategy will be steered by an “Environment Group” and specific working groups convened from relevant Authority officers reporting back to Members as set out from the Scrutiny Committee Review. The group should seek to champion the policy and strategy including developing ownership and cooperation from specific areas that will be required to deliver the strategy. This will develop a “Golden Thread” running through the organisation which is committed to supporting the objective of ensuring our operations contribute towards the international objective of limiting climate change.

**3. Policy Aims**

The Authority aims to seek to undertake all environmental actions and initiatives that it reasonably can relevant to the achievement of the vison within the constraints of its remit. It will investigate all areas of sustainability and new technologies to support the Policy, Strategy and associated action plans.

The following list of policy aims is not exhaustive and will be reviewed on an annual basis by an “Environment Group” as to how we will seek to maximise our environmental action:

Organisation Policy Aims

* Follow the five themes that have been approved to develop a strategy under each theme as set out in Appendix 1
* Within the five themes, investigate and ensure appropriate and achievable environmental objectives and actions are set.
* Investigate and review new technology and initiatives through an “Environment Group” which will meet once a quarter to develop and progress a strategy and action plan.
* Consistently consider the environmental implications and opportunities of policies, projects, decisions and working practices.
* Ensure we identify environmental risks, prioritise and manage these in an appropriate and timely way.
* Seek to mitigate the impacts of past land uses and activities, in particular remediating contaminated land where possible.
* Manage our operations (directly and through contractors) in ways that are environmentally sustainable and economically feasible.
* Meet or exceed all the environmental legislation that relates to the Authority and suppliers/contractors.
* Ensure the environmental impacts of goods and services are considered within our procurement decisions.
* Raise and maintain environmental awareness amongst staff with appropriate training and awareness activity.
* Develop a set of measures to effectively monitor our environmental performance
* Develop a baseline of performance in 2022/23
* Ensure we work on public awareness of what we are doing and how the public can contribute

**4. Responsibilities**

 All Authority staff are responsible for considering the impact on the environment of any action or activity. Senior Management Team and an Environment Group are responsible for the overview, monitoring and evaluation of the Environment Policy.

**5. Legal Considerations**

 There is a range of environmental legislation the Authority is required to adhere to, from simple acts within planning applications though to work undertaken in the open spaces. As an organisation we have a duty and it is our policy to keep abreast of changes in legislation and ensure we are compliant at all times.

**6. Relevant Policy & Procedures**

Environment Strategy

**7. Monitoring & Evaluation**

 A set of KPI’s specifically relating to the effectiveness of our environmental performance, will be developed to check if we are meeting targets that we set in our strategy.

 The strategy will identify a range of measures which we will develop a baseline in year one (2022/23) then monitor on an ongoing basis through agreed KPI’s to identify areas for improvement under each theme and strategy thread. The effectiveness of this policy will be measured against the targets set within the strategy and ongoing monitoring of the environmental KPI’s for the Authority.

 The implementation of this policy informs the day to day operation of the all officers and the discharge of their duties.

The policy will be rolled out via Compass for all staff and via staff training. The

policy will also be available on the Lee Valley Visit and Authority Corporate web

sites.

**8. Glossary of Terms**

Some of the terminology used in this document may be unfamiliar so this glossary has been attached to clarify some new terminology.

**IPCC** – Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

**KPI’s** – Key Performance Indicators

**9. Appendices and References**

There are several references and documents which have informed this policy:

**IPCC, 2018: Summary for Policymakers**.

In: Global warming of 1.5°C.

**COP24 Special Report Health and Climate**

Change World Health Organisation 2018

Net Zero The UK's contribution to stopping global warming

Committee on Climate Change May 2019

**East Herts Environment and Infrastructure Service Plan** 2021-2026

**Enfield Physical and Environmental Security Policy** 2020

**Essex Environmental Statement** - Essex County Council 2021

**Sustainable Hertfordshire Strategy** 2020

**Sustainable Hertfordshire Action Plan** 2020

**What Do Londoners Think About Climate Change?** Results from London Council’s 2020 climate change polling

**London Councils Joint Statement on Climate Change** March 2020

**Mayor of London - London Environment Strategy** 2018

**Tower Hamlets Net Zero Carbon Plan** 2020

**London Legacy Development Corporation** **Environmental Sustainability** **Report** 2019/20

**Waltham Forest Climate Change Strategy** 2008

**Understanding Climate Risk** – Buro Hapold LLDC report May 2021

**Appendix 1 – Broad Themes and examples**

**New Construction**

* New builds and major projects
* Minor construction works

**Open and Water Spaces**

* Multi use Parklands
* Water bodies
* Nature Reserves or designated and non-designated sites
* Event Spaces
* Gardens

**Venues**

* The six contracted out venues
* Leased out Venues
* Other buildings and venues

**Events**

* Lee Valley Park Events
* Major External Provider Events
* Community Events

**Corporate**

* Procurement
* Travel
* Vehicles and Machinery
* Public Awareness
* Waste and recycling
* Energy suppliers

These themes will be carried through to the strategy, developed along with suggested actions to take forward. The examples under each theme is not an exhaustive list and as business plans are reviewed and technologies develop there may be further additions under each broad theme.