

The Royal Parks Business Plan 2013/14

Purpose

To manage the Royal Parks effectively and efficiently, balancing the responsibility to conserve and enhance these unique environments with creative policies to encourage access and increase opportunities for enjoyment, education, entertainment and healthy recreation.

Context

Over the period of this plan The Royal Parks (TRP) will complete the reinstatement of the parks following our hosting of eleven Olympic and Paralympic events in the preceding year.

TRP will develop and publish a Major Events Strategy which will set out our approach to hosting major events in our parks, as well as guiding principles to help us prioritise the high number of event enquiries we receive each year. Income received from events will continue to support us in maintaining the parks to high standards.

TRP is undertaking an internally led review of its activities, processes and resources " to optimise its future structure and resourcing to deliver its business needs. TRP continues to operate within significantly reduced grant and seeks to improve efficiencies, increase earned income, get best value from its contracts and maintain high quality parks for this and future generations. TRP continues to work with event organisers to maximise safe access for park visitors during events and that reinstatement plans are funded by event organisers and implemented post events.

Finance

The economic climate remains difficult and this is a challenging time for TRP. There is a risk that cuts to services and staffing may be required if TRP cannot generate sufficient income to offset the reductions in government funding. TRP must be ready to absorb these in a way that minimises their impact on the estate and on visitors.

TRP relies on three main sources of income: Government grant (c.£14.1m in 2013/14); self-generated income (c.£18.1m); and grants from other sources (c.£2.2m). The grant from Government has been reducing over time; 2013-14 is the fourth year of severe reductions which have seen our grant reduced by more than 37% over 5 years. TRP has been largely successful in increasing self-generated income to bridge the funding gap and now generates more than 60% of its income.

Tensions remain between those who believe that too much commercialisation threatens the intrinsic qualities of the parks and those who accept that unless more income is generated, investment in the green spaces and park infrastructure will reduce and the quality of the parks could decline. The ongoing challenge for the Agency during the year ahead is to ensure that a balance is struck that allows income growth without damaging the core qualities of the parks.

Governance

The Board, appointed by the Mayor of London, and with representatives from local authorities, oversees the operation of the Agency and ensures that the views of stakeholders are reflected when key decisions are made.

Customer Focus

Collectively, the Royal Parks are the most visited attraction in the UK and TRP has a strengthening focus on the wants and needs of visitors. TRP recognises that with the range of challenges we face, the continued support and contribution of our stakeholders is essential. We will be publishing a Stakeholder Engagement Strategy in March 2014, setting

out future plans for more effective engagement with those who visit, use or have an interest in our parks and informed by market research that we will be commissioning.

Working with Others

TRP works with a range of different organisations to help us enhance the parks, maintain and improve the park environment and biodiversity, deliver improved services and facilities and meet our statutory obligations. These include the Greater London Authority (GLA), Local Authorities, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games, Transport for London, the Environment Agency, the Metropolitan Police, The Royal Household, Historic Royal Palaces, English Heritage, the London Marathon Trust, the Crown Estate, Natural England, The Royal Parks Guild, Friends of the Parks and the Royal Parks Foundation. Our relationship with these and many other organisations will remain important in the year ahead given the level of activity in the estate.

The Agency and TRP's Board are working with the Royal Parks Foundation to develop a complementary approach to philanthropy and fund raising and have agreed that during 2013-14 priority will be given to fundraising for the refurbishment and enhancement of three children's playgrounds.

Major Projects

TRP will continue to manage its Better Buildings Programme to generate income and ensure best value from its estate. This programme involves refurbishment and renting out of temporarily redundant park lodges.

A grant from the HLF is funding a project to enhance the Isabella Plantation in Richmond Park, and TRP will largely complete delivery of this project in 2013-14.

The project to improve golf provision at Richmond Park will conclude with the new clubhouse opening in April 2013.

The refurbished Magazine in Kensington Gardens will open within the period of this plan as a new visual arts space under the management of the Serpentine Gallery. This will be a significant cultural addition to the estate and will include an extension designed by Zaha Hadid.

TRP will submit proposals to HLF seeking substantial funding for a programme of restoration and improvements at Brompton Cemetery, after consulting with stakeholders.

TRP will complete a refurbishment programme of 12 toilets in the first half of the year prior to concluding a tender which will transfer responsibility for the fabric and operation of toilets over the next five years to a single third party. The tender will allow for the introduction of charges to offset the considerable costs of keeping these public toilets open.

TRP will undertake a programme of works across the estate. This will include a major refurbishment of the Duke of York Statue, revetment works to the Longford River, resurfacing of various footpaths, a lighting scheme in Birdcage Walk, irrigation improvements in Richmond and Regent's Parks, and conservation works to the Albert Memorial.

Corporate Objectives

1. To conserve and enhance sustainably, for the enjoyment of this and future generations, our world class natural and built historic environment and our biodiversity.
2. To engage with our visitors, stakeholders and partner organisations and understand their views.
3. To manage the parks efficiently and secure investment in the parks' assets and services through an appropriate combination of government funding, commercial income and philanthropy.
4. To be a centre of professional excellence where people want to work.

Key Performance Targets

- 1.i Secure ISO 14001 accreditation by March 2014.
- 1.ii Reduce the Accumulated Works Maintenance Liability (March 2010 - as amended 31st December 2012) by £500k by the end of March 2014.
- 1.iii Increase the area of habitat under active conservation management by at least 2 hectares by end of March 2014 and undertake a minimum of 4 targeted surveys per annum to measure and record change in species richness and habitat quality.
- 2.i Publish an interim stakeholder strategy by October 2013 tested against market research by March 2014.
- 3.i Generate commercial income of £16m and additional third party funding of £2m by 31 March 2014.
- 3.ii Complete procurements that deliver future savings of at least £0.5m per annum.
- 3.iii Secure first stage funding from HLF for improvements to Brompton Cemetery.
- 4i Improve the EFQM "People Results" score to a minimum of 51–60% by end March 2014
- 4.ii Achieve an engagement index score of 73% in the Civil Service staff survey 2014 and improve by 10 percentage points the number of staff who state within that survey that they "want to stay working for TRP for at least the next three years".
- 4iii Complete a skills audit of all Royal Parks staff by the end of March 2014.

Resources and expenditure 2013/14
Resource Budget

£k

Income

DCMS Grant-in-Aid- current year cash	13,275
DCMS Grant in Aid – non cash	2,300
DCMS Grant-in- Aid- funding to pay prior year creditors	3,500
Capital	857
Catering	3,095
Event Fees and permits	7,346
Licences & Rents	3,027
Car parking	1,250
Other	5,562
Total income	40,212

Expenditure

Salaries – Administration & Operational	5,209
Support costs	2,452
Landscape Maintenance & Development	10,199
Works Maintenance	7,751
Nursery & Other Horticulture	1,932
Service Contracts	2,275
Other Operating Costs	2,175
Capital Expenditure	2,419
Non Cash Charges	2,300
Total Expenditure	36,712
Creditors - Grant in Aid	3,500
Total	40,212

Strategic Risks

The Agency uses a risk maturity model to measure progress on our approach to risk management and determine how well we have embedded our processes. Consideration of risk has been a key issue in the formulation of our plans.

	STRATEGIC RISK	MITIGATION APPROACH
CO1	Lack of resource capacity to meet all our obligations and also make a positive impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park Managers monitor progress against Park Plans • Director of Parks and CEO have regular visits to Parks
	Loss of status eg, Green Flag and Richmond Park National Nature Reserve designations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor impact of climate change and visitors • Attain ISO 14001 status • Engage with DCMS, Natural England, etc on best practice
	Increased disease and pestilence on wildlife and trees reduces beneficial habitat and impact on biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor DEFRA guidance • Daily monitoring by wildlife officers • Regular monitoring by Ecologist for the Oak Processionary Moth and collaboration with the Forestry Commission on research • Regular inspections for Massaria • Programme of work to inhibit algae blooms in the Serpentine
	Increased use or change of use by visitors damages landscapes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of changes by Park Managers (e.g. <i>desire lines</i>) and taking action as necessary • Events contracts provide for reinstatement funding
CO2	Major accident or incident at event or attraction brings Health and Safety standards into question and impacts on reputation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good pre-planning • On-site monitoring during events • Debrief after events
CO3	Unable to find funding for identified key projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage budgets closely • Regular monitoring by EXCOM and Board

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEO to liaise with Foundation over future funding requirements and priorities.
	Increase in anti-social behaviour and damage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor Police and Park Management Reports • Use Safer Parks Panel meetings to target police operations
CO4	Major infrastructure failure in year requiring diversion of other funding allocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular review of estate • Prioritisation of maintenance • Backlog maintenance report to be refreshed
	Failure of contractors to meet defined service level of contract requires more direct staff involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park Managers monitor contractor KPIs • Regular meetings with Director of Estates
CO5	Economic downturn impacts on income and increases bad debtors and ability to deliver greater value for money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EXCOM monitor income and bad debts monthly • New income streams sought to grow external income
	Local Authorities restrict our ability to hold events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder management plan • Careful monitoring of events • Stakeholder meetings
	Funding from DCMS is further cut or future funding reductions require in year action to reduce operational costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular re-forecasts to DCMS • Develop contingency plans and prioritise projects
	New projects/activities are seen as controversial with certain groups of users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder meetings and engagement • Enhanced use of web engagement
CO6	Failure to get best vfm from contracts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benchmark with similar land owners • Review against Office of Government Commerce rates. • Strategic plan of procurements and review scope of tender activities
	Failure to scope/manage projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular monitoring by Project

	effectively	Approval Group and Programme Boards
	Failure to invest in staff or reward performance, recruitment restrictions limit ability to match skills with roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor occasions when advertised posts go unfilled • Review succession plans • Monitor reasons for resignations • Complete skills audit
	Inadequate procedures and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and amendment of procedures • Provision of training and use of Civil Service on line training.
	Inappropriate use of IT and consequential loss of GSI accreditation and/or paper loss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whistle Blowing policy • Training • Equipment Audits
	Failure to meet Cabinet Office Information Assurance Compliance Review standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-going review • Undertake independent assessment