

# GREATER **LONDON** AUTHORITY

## REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD2164

**Title: Crystal Palace National Sports Centre Sporting Demand and Capacity**

### **Executive Summary:**

The National Sports Centre (NSC) estate at Crystal Palace is owned by GLA Land and Property and managed by Greenwich Leisure Limited. Approval is sought to spend up to £25k to enable the procurement of consultancy services to undertake a sporting demand and capacity assessment that will help to inform the long-term strategy for the NSC estate.

### **Decision:**

That the Assistant Director of Regeneration approves spend of up to £25K to commission consultants to provide advice and undertake feasibility studies to inform a future strategy for the National Sports Centre estate.

### **AUTHORISING ASSISTANT DIRECTOR/HEAD OF UNIT:**

I have reviewed the request and am satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.

It has my approval.

**Name:** Debbie Jackson

**Position:** Assistant Director Regeneration

**Signature:**



**Date:**

23/10/17

## **PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE**

### **Decision required – supporting report**

#### **1. Introduction and background**

- 1.1 There has been a major sporting facility within Crystal Palace Park since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was the original home of Crystal Palace football club from the 1860s and hosted the FA cup final from 1895 to 1914. In addition, the park has hosted other sports including motor racing, cricket, rugby, show jumping and American Football.
- 1.2 The National Sports Centre (NSC) estate at Crystal Palace was constructed in 1964 and was one of five National Sports Centres run on behalf of Sport England. Ownership of the Crystal Palace National Sports Centre was transferred from Sport England to the London Development Agency in 2006 and then to GLA Land and Property Limited (GLAP) in April 2012. The centre is managed by Greenwich Leisure Limited on behalf of GLAP.
- 1.3 Whilst the NSC estate has a rich sporting history, its role has changed over the last 10-15 years. Although called a 'National Sports Centre' it has not been an official Sport England supported venue for some time. Until 2012, it was the main centre for athletics and swimming in London but that role has now been assumed by Olympic venues in Queen Elizabeth Park, Stratford. As a result, a new focus is required for the facilities at Crystal Palace.
- 1.4 The current management contract for the NSC estate with Greenwich Leisure Limited was recently extended by 2 years to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020, via MD2126. The GLA pursued this extension to allow a full and proper consideration of future options and to allow adequate time to procure operator and development options that best meet the needs of local and sporting communities.
- 1.5 Significant investment has been made in the NSC estate (£20m in recent years), largely in M&E to sustain the existing operation. However, the various NSC estate assets are all in need of more transformative investment that secures a longer-term legacy.
- 1.6 The NSC is set within Crystal Palace Park, one of the most famous parks in the country, one with huge potential and heritage value. Created in 1853-5 by Sir Joseph Paxton, it was to be the permanent home for his 'Crystal Palace' that housed the Great Exhibition of 1851 in Hyde Park. Changing use and status over the years have taken their toll alongside an increasing gap between maintenance delivered and required.
- 1.7 A masterplan for Crystal Palace Park was consented in 2013 (Masterplan). The Masterplan aimed to rejuvenate the park and detailed key principles that have implications for existing athletics facility provision at the NSC. The Masterplan included the retention of an athletics track but the removal of the stadium stands. The plans also assumed the demolition and removal of the elevated walkway and podium structures and in turn the indoor athletics facility which sits below.
- 1.8 Over the last 18 months, LB Bromley have been progressing a regeneration plan for the wider park, which envisages a range of fundamental improvements which conform to the key principles of the Masterplan and is funded in part by the sale of two sites at the perimeter of the park for residential

development. Future development options for the NSC estate will need to form part of a coherent park-wide strategy.

- 1.9 A fundamental review of the role of the NSC and its assets in the context of London's wider sports provision is necessary. This is particularly the case for the athletics stadium, where demand and capacity issues are more in need of review given the move of elite level athletics staging to the Olympic stadium. The GLA is therefore prioritising an athletics facility needs and assessment review and will work closely with UK Athletics and Sports England to deliver this work in the coming months. Beyond this, a further options review (building on work undertaken in 2014) for the whole NSC estate is needed to help inform development and operator options and procurement.
- 1.10 This decision seeks approval to undertake an assessment of the current and future needs and opportunities for sporting provision at the NSC in order to provide an evidence base upon which future options for development of the estate can be based. Further approval will be sought in due course to procure consultancy services to undertake a review of development options.

## **2. Objectives and expected outcomes**

- 2.1 A consultant study will develop a robust assessment of the current and future needs and opportunities for a municipal facility that prioritises sporting provision and will be a public asset to the wider community. This work should deliver an evidence base, upon which a strategy can be formulated.
- 2.2 An effective strategy for the NSC estate will depend on understanding the current and future need within the area and whether indoor and outdoor sporting facility provision both at the NSC estate and in the wider sub region is adequate to meet this. The assessment will look at the quantity, quality, accessibility and availability of this provision and then develop recommendations for facility provision that informs the future need and scale of sporting facility at Crystal Palace. The study will seek to arrive at a point of clarity as to what level of indoor and outdoor athletics provision is required to meet these needs and to what extent provision at the NSC estate meets or exceeds both current and future demand.
- 2.3 A clear understanding of the need for athletics facility provision will inform development management and operational considerations. The assessment will require that athletics facility providers and partners in the public, private, education and voluntary sectors are engaged. This study is supported by Sport England, England Athletics and UK Athletics and their input will be critical to informing the assessment.

## **3. Equality comments**

- 3.1 The NSC estate is an important sporting and community facility for London and the south east. It supports a variety of sporting pathways, from participation to elite competition, and is host to a range of associated events. The work set out in this decision is intended to inform a future strategy for the NSC estate which secures viable and sustainable sports and leisure facilities for use by a broad range of sporting and community users.

#### 4. Other considerations

##### *a) key risks and issues*

Failure to deliver a viable and sustainable development option for the NSC estate will jeopardise an important sporting and community facility for south east London. Extension of the existing operating arrangement beyond the agreed period will bring about a significant procurement risk and in the meantime the NSC estate assets will continue to deteriorate.

To mitigate this, a plan to arrive at a well-informed strategy is being developed with the sporting demand and capacity work outlined in this decision providing an important baseline for future options development. Further development appraisal will use this baseline to engage with a range of stakeholders and develop a set of options.

##### *b) links to Mayoral strategies and priorities*

The Mayor is committed to building upon London's legacy as a sporting city by enabling and encouraging more people to participate and compete at every level.

The Mayor's draft Health Strategy sets out his vision to ensure that London's communities have access to sporting opportunities.

Ensuring that London has the facilities which support a range of sporting pathways is vital to this vision.

##### *c) impact assessments and consultations.*

Successful delivery of a future strategy for the NSC estate will be dependent on engagement with a range of stakeholders and key sporting user groups; including but not limited to athletes, coaching organisations, sporting bodies, centre users, operators and potential funders.

#### 5. Financial comments

- 5.1 The estimated cost of up to £25,000 for this proposal will be funded by a £20,000 budget virement from the 2017-18 Housing & Land 'Estates Revenue' budget to the Regeneration Unit and a £5,000 contribution from Sport England. It should be noted that any additional work required as a direct result of the findings from the feasibility studies will be subject to further approval via the Authority's decision-making process.

#### 6. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Procurement of contract	Late October '17
Delivery Start Date	Late November '17
Delivery End Date	Late February '17

**Appendices and supporting papers:** None

**Public access to information**

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act) and will be made available on the GLA website within one working day of approval.

If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision (for example, to complete a procurement process), it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary.

**Note:** This form (Part 1) will either be published within one working day after approval **or** on the defer date.

**Part 1 Deferral:**

**Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? YES**

If YES, for what reason:

To undertake the procurement exercise.

Until what date: 30 January 2018

**Part 2 Confidentiality:** Only the facts or advice considered to be exempt from disclosure under the FOI Act should be in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

**Is there a part 2 form – NO**

**ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:****Drafting officer:**

Patrick Dubeck has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms that the Finance and –if relevant– Legal teams have commented on this proposal as required, and this decision reflects their comments.

**Corporate Investment Board:**

The Corporate Investment Board reviewed this proposal on 23 October 2017.

**HEAD OF FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE:**

I confirm that financial and legal implications have been appropriately considered in the preparation of this report.

**Signature:**



**Date:**

23-10-17

