Report to Joint Advisory Panel meeting 7 July 2017

Subject: Gunnersbury Estate (2026) CIC / Gunnersbury Development Trust update

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Introduction

Section A of this report provides the members of the Joint advisory Panel with a summary of key areas of progress in the ongoing process to formally establish Gunnersbury CIC as the management organisation for Gunnersbury Park.

Section B of this report summarises the progress made by the Gunnersbury Development Trust in its fundraising activity in support of the Heritage Lottery funded regeneration programme and Gunnersbury Park.

Section A Gunnersbury Estate (2026) CIC

Governance

The two local authority directors, approved the appointment as a representative director of Howard Simmons, Chair of the Gunnersbury Development Trust, at the May 2017 CIC Board meeting.

Two leads as potential directors are being followed up. One a local Ealing resident and businessman with a long career in corporate marketing and communications and a businessman based in Hounslow.

A formal CIC board recruitment policy will be worked up for adoption by the current directors to guide the recruitment and selection process to ensure that a full board complement can be achieved within an agreed timeframe.

Finance

The movement in the Heritage Lottery funded works programme has had impact on the original business plan finances. The anticipated income lines for 2017/18 are not going to be achieved on the scale which informed the previous iterations of the plan as key buildings and areas of the park will not be released for use as early in the year as envisaged.

The lack of funds to repair the external park lighting outside the Museum is of some concern to the CIC as significant use of the museum building for education classes, talks, and special events in the evenings may now have to be revised as access arrangements for the public and staff after dark will need more intensive management.
However, the work carried out so far at Gunnersbury has already produced renewed interest in the park as a potential venue for commercial events (subject to licences). Promotors and organisers are already sensing that the improvements are reinvigorating Gunnersbury and that audiences may be more easily attracted than in recent years.

Discussions with officers from both councils continue with the aim of arriving at an agreed position on the current year financial position. A revised 5 year financial projection has been drafted in partnership with the councils for consideration by the CIC board at its July meeting.

Legal

The Funding and Management Agreement and the Business Transfer Agreement are both subject to ongoing negotiations between the CIC Chief Executive and the lead officers from the two councils. A revision and consolidation of the various leases which cover the current and future tenants and users of the Gunnersbury site is underway to form part of the Management Agreement. It is currently understood by the CIC that it will take on responsibility for the management of the varied occupants of the Gunnersbury site and for the contract management of concessionary leases where applicable. The CIC will also need to take a view, in negotiation with the two councils, in respect of those existing contracts which are in place to deliver services to the park e.g. grounds maintenance, where the current contracts may be transferred to the CIC.

Mobilisation

The lack of significant development of the CIC infrastructure prior to the appointment of the Chief Executive in late April does mean that the organisation requires rapidly building from the ground up, e.g. setting up a bank account, securing an accounting system and setting up a financial management system, VAT registration, procuring IT support, software and hardware, insurances, licences, a policy and procedural framework for staffing, operational management, risk assessment etc.

The necessary focus on supporting the delivery of the Heritage Lottery programme and the detailed work on the management agreement, finances, contracts and leases handled by the Chief Executive does exert pressure on the CIC’s ability to put in place all the business administration systems and processes which will be necessary for the CIC to operate.

However, there is a strong, shared view on the part of the CIC and Council officers that agreement on these founding principles will be achieved by November at the latest and that an agreed mobilisation plan and transfer date can be agreed at that point.

Staffing

The CIC currently employs 4.6 FTE staff (seconded to L B Ealing). A further 2 FTE staff working to the CIC are currently employed by Ealing and will be subject to TUPE transfer to the CIC later this year following appropriate consultations. A gardening apprentice post is currently employed on the L B Ealing apprentice programme (funded by Heritage Lottery) but is seconded to the CIC. An offer has been made to the successful candidate for the
recently advertised 0.6 FTE volunteer coordinator post and the short term contract post of learning assistant is due for interview in early July.

The remaining bulk of the CIC workforce (approx. 17FTE) remains to be recruited. Recruitment to the senior staff vacancies is becoming a priority to resource the mobilisation of the CIC in readiness for transfer, but advertisements have not been placed until the detail of the CIC’s responsibilities to manage a range of contracts and services under the management agreement, have been finalised. Recruitment of the visitor assistants and gardening staff will be tied to the revised completion dates for the Heritage Lottery works.

**Section B - Gunnersbury Development Trust**

The Gunnersbury Museum and Park Development Trust has continued to investigate possible sources of funding and to make applications. The recent success of the bid to the Leche Trust for conservation work on the carriages generated positive publicity.

Currently informal discussions are underway with the Sainsbury Family of Charitable Trusts and the Rothschild family to better identify sources and opportunities for funding.

Following an application to the Garfield Weston Foundation a site visit was organised on 21st June for them to consider funding for the Learning Studios.

The Trust is already working collaboratively with the Friends of Gunnersbury Park and will in future do so with the CIC to ensure a collegiate approach and maximum effectiveness.