

CRYSTAL PALACE PARK CONFERENCE 20 MAY 2011

Paxton Suite, The Lodge, Crystal Palace Park

Chairs' summary

The conference saw a coming together of a number of threads of thinking which suggest that positive movements towards Park regeneration will now take place.

Firstly we heard about the state of the Park and its history leading up to the Master Plan. The Master Plan itself was, for the first time since the Sydenham Crystal Palace burnt down in 1936, an overall, integrated vision for the Park's regeneration. Further, since *outline* planning permission was signed off (by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Eric Pickles), and because of the nature of its structure, it could act as a means for the development of regeneration ideas within its framework.

Secondly the authorities that hold the ownership and responsibility for the Park - Bromley Council, the LDA and GLA – clearly stated their interest in moving matters along possibly through the medium of a trust. In any case they were keen on setting up a project team to develop this governance issue and to suggest the best way forward. This was a very encouraging message and, we believe, the first time it has been stated openly in front of such a large stakeholder group.

The third issue is that of governance. Not only was the work done to investigate governance models, as part of the Master Plan, re-iterated the but it was also narrowed down to only a few viable options for the Park. In spite of these very difficult economic times, we saw an example, Chiswick Park, where a regeneration project had been successfully initiated, carried through the 'capital spending phase' and carried passed its first year of implementing the business plan.

We therefore have good reason to be hopeful that the work on regenerating the Park will begin in earnest with the setting up of a Project Team by Bromley Council. It is important that this team will be representative of the main stakeholders but that its primary composition will be the expert experience needed to define the governance and business approach. It is also very important that its selection will open and transparent since we must avoid the mistakes made in recent confrontations with the Council (long past...) when a fait accompli was presented with disastrous results.

Ray Sacks
