

Thames Barrier Park Café (TBPC) Operator Opportunity, September 2023

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1. Background

Thames Barrier Park (TBP) is a 7-hectare green space located in the Royal Docks in the London Borough of Newham, recently awarded its fifth green flag. The park is managed by the Greater London Authority via TfL Estates and Avison Young. It was designed by landscape architect Allain Provost (Groupe Signes) of Paris and architects Patel Taylor of London. Opened in November 2000 it was London's largest new riverside park for over 50 years. Remarkably, the park was created on a site that once housed petrochemical and acid works on the Thames riverbank. The contaminated soil was covered with a 6-foot layer of crushed concrete to protect the new soil laid on top. Since its opening the park has won design awards in the UK and USA.

One of the most eye-catching features of the park is the 'Green Dock', a 130 foot long sunken garden running diagonally through the park that is intended as a reminder of the site's dockland heritage. The park also boasts extensive lawns, children's play areas and a basketball court.



The Thames Barrier Park Café (TBPC) is in a stunning building in the centre of the park with views of the Thames. The café has been closed for several years due to Covid and essential capital works required to update the cafe. Prior to this, the cafe was not used to its full capacity and the offer was limited. The residential population around the park has grown over recent years with the completion of Millets Place with 236 new homes adjacent to the park, providing a new potential customer base.

2. The Opportunity

The Royal Docks Team (RDT), part of the Greater London Authority (GLA) is excited to invite Expressions of Interest (EOI) from established businesses to take on the management and running of TBPC for a 6.5-year term. See appendix 6 for Draft Heads of Terms.

The RDT is looking for a tenant with the passion and vision to transform the space into much-needed welcoming cafe providing a seven day a week food and beverage offer. The RDT are also interested to hear from café operators who are interested in working with community organisation/s to support and host events with the intention of creating a community hub and increasing footfall to the park

As a minimum the café should be:

1. An active and vibrant café, open seven days a week, with opening hours that reflect the use of the park by the community and with a good quality, well-staffed, reliable, and affordable food and beverage offer that falls in line with the Healthier Catering Commitment <https://healthiercateringcommitment.co.uk/>
2. An ability to offer a seasonal events programme which engages with the community. Programming of events has been identified through community consultation as a priority for local residents, including increasing the opening hours of the café into the evening
3. A partner running the café which has the right corporate and finance governance in place to give GLA the comfort of appropriate lease management and rental payment.

3. Location

Thames Barrier Park is located on North Woolwich Road, London, E16 2HP, adjacent to Pontoon Dock DLR station. There is good connectivity to the park, with access to DLR Pontoon Dock Station and it is also 20 minutes' walk from the Elizabeth Line at Custom House. The area is experiencing a huge amount of regeneration, with the site opposite the park currently being redeveloped for housing and public realm improvements to North Woolwich Road to increase greening and enhance the pedestrian experience. The park has residential blocks on three sides, and there are 4,443 apartments within the immediate vicinity of the park. Many of the residents have recently moved into the area, providing an excellent customer base.

TBP is the largest park in the Royal Docks and its popularity will continue to grow as surrounding development sites are completed.



4. The Café Space

The café is a single-story building located on the north edge of the park and with a gross internal floor area of 158.73 sq. m. The gross external area including a decked external area measures 145.46 sq m.

The café has recently undergone a complete renovation internally and externally with facilities throughout, including; toilets, kitchen (pizza oven, oven, grill, sinks, dishwasher,

work surfaces and storage areas), indoor and outdoor seating areas, lighting both internal and external, new decking with additional seating and planting.

We're looking to appoint an enthusiastic café operator to bring the space to life creating a thriving café for the community.

The park has also undergone extensive improvement works and there is now the ability to create a secure line around the café and park entrance to allow evening opening (subject to approval). Through consultation carried out in 2020, a key priority for residents was extended opening hours into the evening, while this isn't a requirement, we're interested to hear suggestions of evening use. There isn't currently an alcohol licence for the cafe, but we are also open to suggestions on this.

5. Rent

We invite proposals from applicants to lease the internal premises. As such, please complete the Offer Form provided and provide a business plan. We are suggesting a minimum of £15,000 per year.

6. Applicant Skills and Experience

Essential applicant skills / experience:

- Previous experience of managing cafes / restaurants
- Certificates demonstrating qualifications in food hygiene and food preparation
- Detailed business plan
- Two references

Desirable applicant skills / experience:

- Previous experience and skills in engaging a diverse range of local stakeholders
- Previous experience of working with a range of not-for-profit organisations or constituted community groups, individuals, and/or social enterprises to programme a variety of events in a community setting.
- The passion and vision to transform the café into a much needed and welcoming community hub

7. Aspirations

We are keen to hear from interested parties who can demonstrate a willingness to commit to the following standards, especially if the applicant can already provide evidence of working in similar ways. The café operator should:

- Create a unique resource at TBPC, providing an affordable, refreshed food and beverage offer. The café has a pizza oven, so we expect the use of this to be incorporated into the menu
- Work alongside community organisation/s supporting their programming to create a complementary programme of inspiring, interactive and fun events and activities aimed at the whole community
- Work with the RDT to identify and share new opportunities to help develop the café further
- Where possible, promote locally sourced food and beverage operators
- Support future applications to the Green Flag Award (completed by the Royal Docks Team and TfL Estates) to support the growth and development of the café community
- Engage the local residential population and businesses in the café, we expect this to be organic and grow as interest in the café space develops
- Increase the footfall to the park and café
- Present a long term commercially viable offer
- Inspire residents and visitors to become more actively involved in the park
- Consider the requirements of the local communities and demographic makeup for the food and beverage (F&B) offer, i.e., Halal, vegetarian, allergies etc
- Price F&B and events (where relevant) comparable with local competitors and affordable to the local community
- Explore the possibility of having an alcoholic drinks licence at the café
- Work with the RDT on developing a sophisticated multi-channel marketing strategy
- If not already, they should actively be seeking to be a London Living Wage employer (showing proof) and/or committing to becoming a London Living Wage employer within a year of starting the contract.
- Where possible to recruit staff locally, working with Our Newham Works and local community organisations
- Ensure supplier lines are local before looking further afield
- The Service Provider shall comply with any mayoral strategies that are applicable to the contract, including the Mayor's Food Strategy: 'Healthy and Sustainable Food for London' and any future strategies that may arise.

8. Operating Conditions

- *Opening Hours:* Monday to Sunday 8am to 5pm. We anticipate that the cafe will be open seven days a week. We are open to discussing exact opening times (the café closing times will need to align with the park closing times in the winter and therefore closing earlier than 5pm) and are interested to hear proposals for the café to open earlier than 8am and in line with the park opening times.
- *Waste Management:* The Operator will be responsible for covering waste disposal costs. Due regard must also be paid to obligations under the Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011 for maximising the reduction, reuse and recycling of waste, and for separate collections to be provided where practicable for paper, metal, glass and plastics.
- *Handling money:* The Operator will be responsible for supplying the necessary systems to enable cash flow to be managed appropriately in a way which is auditable. The Provider will be responsible for the safe and secure handling of any cash held by it on the premises and offer a free contactless payment system
- *Insurance / Liabilities:* The Operator will be responsible for their own insurance and liabilities, including

Public liability Insurance - £10m (minimum)

Employer's liability insurance - £5m (minimum)

Business insurance - £5m (minimum)

9. Marketing and Branding

- Any programmed activities can be included in the Royal Docks newsletter
- Any branding by the operator will need to be agreed, in advance with the RDT. The installation of signage will require the landlord's consent.

10. Key Dates

Key Milestones	Dates 2023
Publish Tender Opportunity	08/09
Site visits and Q&A session at the cafe	Dates to be confirmed, but from week beg 25 th September

Deadline for questions	6/10
Deadline for EOI	27/10
Presentation/interviews	Week beginning 13/11
Successful applicant notified and inception meeting	Late November/Early December
Contract drafted, agreed and signed	December/Early Jan 2024
Keys to the café for set up	December/Early Jan 2024
Café opening launch event	Spring 2024

11. Royal Docks Team

The Royal Docks Team is a multi-disciplinary team that brings together officers from across the Greater London Authority, the London Borough of Newham and the London Economic Action Partnership. Home to London’s only Enterprise Zone, the Royal Docks is one of the most significant regeneration projects in the UK. The team was established in 2017 to help deliver the cohesive transformation of the Royal Docks Enterprise Zone, where seven million sq ft of commercial space will see business rates reinvested for the benefit of the local community. Working in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders from local community groups to developers and local businesses, the team will deliver an ambitious £314 million investment programme.

13. APPENDICIES:

- Appendix 1. TBP Café Equipment list
- Appendix 2. TBP Café as Built Plan
- Appendix 3. TBP Café Red Line Boundary
- Appendix 4. TBP Internal Café Photos
- Appendix 5. TBP External Café Photos
- Appendix 6. Draft Heads of Terms
- Appendix 7. Rental Offer Form
- Appendix 8. Expression of Interest Form (Googleform link)

- Appendix 9. Café Scoring Criteria
- Appendix 10. Food Sourcing Standards