**Seb Coe:**

I made London 2012.

**Narrator:**

When the dust settled on the London 2012 closing ceremonies, the development of Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park ramped up. And now 10 years on, there's big changes planned for the park and the local communities that live there. This is My London Legacy. And in this episode, we'll look ahead to what's in store for 2023 and beyond.

**Michelle May, Director of Socio-Economic Regeneration, LLDC:**

There's loads of opportunity. I think we've only just begun.

**Lyn Garner, CEO, LLDC:**

We've decided that it's time for the planning powers to go back to the boroughs.

**James Kaguima, Legacy Youth Board member:**

I'm very passionate about social entrepreneurship and also advocating for people who are underrepresented.

**Michelle May:**

Inclusive economy, it's about how you make these opportunities more accessible and fairer. There's huge change over the next few years.

**Narrator:**

Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park is a place like no other. Every time you visit, something's changed. Beyond the world class sporting venues and attractions, it's a place where locals and tourists alike can visit and enjoy. But as Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park prepares to enter its teens, big plans are now in place once again. Coming up, we'll hear about the thousands more homes to be built and the opportunity still ahead for local young people on the park, and how education and skills is driving inclusive growth in the area. But first, chief executive of the London Legacy Development Corporation, Ling Garner.

Lyn Garner:

What an amazing year. We really wanted to mark 10 years after the games. And actually, we've made a tremendous impact, particularly over the summer. So, there were a huge number of events going on. We managed to get three of our really lovely partners to help us sponsor a festival live site where we shared the Commonwealth Games. We had that fabulous, great get together, the biggest we've ever hosted, most successful. And we've also hosted the first black pride on the park that went extremely well. Over 25,000 people came to that event alone. And we've managed to reach some of those disadvantaged children through our East Summer school, which we do every year.

2022 was pretty special as well, because it was the big post pandemic here. It's really the first year for a while we've all been able to get out and do stuff. And we clearly got people in partially for that reason. The sun were shining, they could get out. There weren't any restrictions on them. And it's the first year for a couple of years, isn't it, that we've been able to do that? So, yeah.

So with regard to events on the park, I guess the first thing I'd want to mention are the concerts that we're having at the stadium, 'cause it's going to be a splendid year. And they're sort of new acts for us. They're quite aimed at young people and more of a diverse audience. So, we've tended to do the rock stars, the Red Hot Chili Peppers, the Rolling Stones and so on, and they're fantastic acts. But what's really great about this year going forward is we've managed to secure two wonderful acts, Burna Boy and the Weeknd.

But I guess the big star as well is we've got Major League baseball back. So, we've got Chicago Cubs and the Cardinals. They last came in 2019. It was really successful, complete sellout, and made around 40 million pounds for the London economy. So hotels, restaurants, the whole place was buzzing over the weekend. So, we're really hopeful that we'll have something similar. And we've also got UK Athletics coming back. So unfortunately, they didn't have an event in 2022 just because of the way the Athletics calendar was working with the Commonwealth Games. So, we are really positive about welcoming them back, and they're going to do a huge community event as well towards the end of July. So, that's stadium.

We are continuing with ABBA. Everybody knows that. We've got ABBA here, ABBA Voyage. It's a wonderful experience. And if you haven't seen it, you are really missing out. It's as if they're standing there from the 1970s in front of you, really astounded. And they have extended their ticket sales now to next November. And then, we'll have our usual events on the park. So, we'll be running in East Summer school as well, but in partnership with our East Bank partners who've been really critical in that space.

Speaker 6:

So, that's the events. How will the park change over the next year, and the years after that as well? We've seen so much change in the last 10, but over the next few.

Lyn Garner:

So first of all, East Bank opens on Stratford Waterfront. So this year, the first part of East Bank opened with University College London, but that was the building behind the Aquatic Center. That brings the first tranche of students into the park. They're all now moving into their accommodation, about 500 students on the park. Next year, importantly, Stratford Waterfront also starts to open. So, this is the site that's nearest to the water, just opposite the London stadium. We've got University of the Arts, London, London College of Fashion opening. They will bring 6,000 students from 2023. And the UCL building will bring a couple of thousand more. So, we'll be getting close to 10,000 students on this park by the end of next year, which is a huge difference in terms of people coming and going. It will really start to change the dynamic on the park. Sadler's Wells will be opening towards the end of 2023 as well. So, we'll have a wonderful contemporary dance theater on the park next year.

What else will be happening? Well, we'll be carrying on with our housing development program. So phase two of Eastwick and Sweetwater will start on site. That's starting on site just in front of Here East. So, there'll be spades in the ground pretty soon, actually in the next few weeks. And when we look a bit further into the future, the park will start to change. Because these housing developments over the next 10 years will generate a total of 17,000 residents in the park alone. So, this huge change over the next few years, as the housing development starts to come forward. To give you a sense of that, we've still got about 4,000 homes to build.

Speaker 6:

I mean, you mentioned about the number of residents. You mentioned how many students would be living here as well, so they'll be residents as well. Do you think at some point the park will become more of a home for people rather than just an event location?

Lyn Garner:

So, it doesn't take long for the resident dynamic to have a real feel about it in the park. And so, we need to be ready for that dynamic change. So yeah, I think it will change, yeah. And of course, the park is going to be people's backyard and the place is bound to be influenced in how it runs by people who live on this park, because they'll demand it. They'll be local residents, and we'll have to respond accordingly.

Speaker 6:

What about the London Legacy Development Corporation? How will your organization change and develop?

Lyn Garner:

Yeah, well, we are changing. We are a mayoral development corporation. And naturally, those organizations are set up to do a job of work. We think we've done the first bit of that work in the first 10 years. We've given planning permissions to huge developments and big schemes. And so accordingly, in conversation with the mayor of London, we've decided that it's time for the planning powers to go back to the boroughs. And so, that will be the first milestone, and that will happen on the 1st of December, 2024. So just two years from now, we'll be formally handing those planning powers back. It takes legislative change. So, we're talking to the government about that. And there are plans well in trained for that to happen.

That means that the geography of the residual organization that's left behind will become much smaller, and will consist largely just of the park lands that we own and control. So, the new organization will be focused on looking after the venues and park keeping it really high quality, driving inward investment, because we'll still be determined to be working strategically for better jobs and skills in this area, so economic development really. And then thirdly, we'll have a little team left over who are going to finish those housing developments off. And they're going to make sure over the next 10 years that those homes are built out of the standards we all expect the party to deliver.

Michelle May:

My name's Michelle May. I am the LLDCs director for inclusive Growth Education and Skills within our Regeneration Department. My role specifically in the role of my team is to try and get as many benefits for local residents as possible from our development, and that is primarily around getting people into good jobs, and education, and skills opportunities. And so, there's a lot happening on the park that presents a lot of those opportunities, particularly East Bank come in and opening soon. Already, the opportunities that exist at Here East, and various other opportunities across the park and beyond. So, we are working at the moment with a range of partners to look at how we get as many of our local residents into those jobs as possible.

We want to see that the development here is inclusive. If you're a forward-thinking business that wants to grow, East London is the place to attract the sort of diverse talent that helps you to grow as a business. And so, inclusive economy is sort of key to that really. It's about how you make these opportunities more accessible and fairer, and how you work with employers as well as individuals to think about how they attract, retain, and promote that diverse talent once they have it. So yeah, it's just about a fair way of doing things, but less of a traditional CSR charitable endeavor. We're not doing people a favor here. This is about a reciprocal relationship, something that's really good for the local people who get those jobs, but really game changing for the employers that benefit from that talent.

Speaker 6:

So, how do you work with the local partners to make that positive change?

Michelle May:

When we're talking to employers, really, we start with trying to get a bit of an understanding about what their challenges and opportunities are. So, if you're talking to the construction sector, they might say, "Well, we really struggle to get young people to become apprentices. We've got an aging workforce. We have a number of skills gaps." So, once you're starting on what's a business need rather than a CSR agenda, you are onto a bit of a winner there. So, once you understand that sector a little bit and you start to explore, "Well, why are you finding it difficult to attract young people? Do people understand locally what the breadth of opportunities are in a sector like construction, which are huge and really exciting?" If you can start to get local partners, schools, parents, and young children at school, are we open to those opportunities? Then, that's sort of half the battle.

Then you start start to understand, "Well how do you recruit as employers? What are your sort of practices like here? Are you used to recruiting through people that you know, and networks?" And for a lot of people locally, they don't have those networks. They don't know someone who knows someone. Do you recruit to low paid, unpaid internships? That rules out a whole lot of people who can't and shouldn't have to work for free or for low pay. So, we try to identify some of those barriers, in traditional speak. We work with them to open that up. So we will, for example, pay bursaries that enable them to pay a London living wage internship for example, rather than saying, "Oh, it's the digital tech creative sector." Just what does that mean? What sorts of skills are people looking for? And then we'll work with school teachers, careers advisors, so that they understand what those opportunities are and can start to sell those to young people. Once they're in there, I mean, they thrive, and I think that's the thing. I think sometimes people are a bit nervous about doing things a little bit differently. But our feedback is always that once employers have started to recruit local talent, they love the people that they recruit, and they just want to do more.

Speaker 6:

You've also got your own legacy youth board, which I'm assuming would help.

Michelle May:

We have. Yeah, that really helps. So Leila Conway, my colleague, has led the work around our legacy youth board, and you've met them. They're absolutely brilliant, great ambassadors for all of the work that we do. So yeah, they go much further than being a group that we tell about our opportunities, and then they sort of spread the word. They do do that, and word of mouth is really important as you know. But we do a lot of work to test our plans and to co-design with those young people.

James Kaguima:

Hi, my name is James Kaguima and I'm a legacy youth board member at LLDC, and I'm also a multi award-winning founder of Skate Cabal, which is a platform that amplifies safe spaces, and culture, and stories for the Royal King community in East London. I've been on the youth board since July, 2021, and I've lived within walking distance of Olympic Park since 2011, just before the Olympics started. And I got to see how the area transformed and benefited the people that live locally. And as soon as I saw the opportunity to join the board, I made sure that I took it. Yeah, because I'm very passionate about community.

We have monthly youth board meetings with of our other youth board members, and we pretty much discuss various projects. We also sit on committee boards, such as the Planning and Decisions Committee Board, Investment Committee. And my favorite one is Park Panel. The reason being is through that panel, we get to hear various stuff from the community, whether it's problems that they want to be raised, or if there's exciting events, or programs and initiatives that they have. It's just a good forum for them to discuss. Then, I also get insight to feature developments that happen around the park and you're just always in the loop. And I feel that the community will benefit through being part of these type of forums.

I've always been involved in youth initiatives, since I was 16 in 2013. And I'm very passionate about social entrepreneurship, and also advocating for people who are underrepresented. And I feel that being part of this board will place me in a position to help amplify the voices of people that want their voices to be heard as well.

I feel that East Bank opening will help create a lot of jobs for the community and people locally to get jobs as well. I think that going to be main thing. It will be a good opportunity to have job creation. And also, there's going to be a university that's going to be opened, and also people in the creative sector who are trying to get into that sector as well a good opportunity for people in that space.

Also, say I'm very excited being part of the youth board. We launched our brand. We are now called Elevate, and we are looking to plan our next conference next year, March, and it's going to be called Future Me Future Youth. And it's basically a youth led conference that's co-designed by both the youth board and local young people to provide a forum for them to discuss actionable steps to tackle social, environmental, and other government issues on the park, and also discuss issues that matter to them as well, and make sure that their voices are heard. And we are making sure that we tackle key issues that are affecting them, yeah. Very important that young people are part of the process. They're going to be the future, so it's very important that we include them in discussions that are going to affect them later on. So, I think we should always make sure that they're always in these type of discussions.

Michelle May:

I think we have a great relationship with the four growth boroughs, and we have worked really hard with them over the years to make sure that the work that we are doing on the park builds on all of the great work and the investment that they've made in the sort of employment and skills space. There's loads of opportunity. I think we've only just begun. With things like East Bank and even on construction, I think if we were to plot out our employment growth, I think we don't reach our peak until something like 2028. So, if you think now, "It's done," or that it's sort of exciting now, there's a lot more to come. And it's interesting, because you sort of think, "Well, it's cultural creative. It's digital tech." But there's still huge amounts to doing construction and building environments. We've got those two programs. We've got two flagship facilities on the Park Build East, which covers all of our construction, and built environment work, and the good growth hub, which is targeted more around cultural, creative, and digital sectors. And they've just sort of started and they're sort of building up capacity.

So what's important there is there's all of that growth still happening on the park to 2028 and probably beyond. But we are not just thinking about the park, we are working with the boroughs to think about what are the wider East London opportunities? East London's growth is our strip the rest of London. So, this is the place to be if you're talking about growth opportunities. And also, it's not just about matching people to the particular vacancies on the park, because the park will always ... There's significant job numbers, but they're not going to be the answer to the whole problem around this worklessness piece.

What we are trying to do here is to pilot a few things to think about how you can trial something here and how you might take that to scale. And that might be in the Royal docs, it might be in other bits of Hackney and beyond. So how do we test some stuff here, start to change practice, the way that sectors recruit, the things I talked about earlier, and how do you make that learning travel? So, it won't all be about if you come and get involved in one of our programs, your next step will be on a job on the park. It might be, and that's great. But we are thinking about, "What skills do you need and what networks do you need to access all of the opportunities across London?" And we want our local young people in East London to have the competitive advantage over others. So yeah, I mean, more to come here, but this is a world city, so let's grasp it all.

Lyn Garner:

I'm Lyn Garner. I am the chief executive at the London Legacy Development Corporation. If we go all the way back to the mission, the mission of the organization is at least in part to change the lives of East Londoners. We think that's about education, jobs, high-skilled jobs, and getting people the kind of opportunities that they should be afforded in some of these areas that can really be quite marginal in terms of the opportunities in London as a whole. And we've worked really hard in that space. Through all of our contractual arrangements, there are socioeconomic objectives embedded within them. So, people who take leases from us are absolutely required to deliver on local job outcomes. It's not as easy as us coming here, and sitting here, and running your business. So we've been quite purist about that through everything that we do and we'll be wanting to make sure that that's delivering. We'll be acting strategically, but we've got some really fabulous partners. University College of London, the other university campus, also world renowned University Arts of London. We've got Here East. We've got some corporate businesses here. And we'll be working with them and alongside them to make sure that that inclusive economy can be delivered through and into the boroughs and in partnership with the boroughs going forward.

Speaker 6:

Which brings us onto the final question. Where do you see Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in the next 10 years?

Lyn Garner:

The most important thing is that in this part of London, we continue to drive inward investment. So, people looking at what's happening in the park, appreciating the inclusive nature of the economy that we're driving, and wanting to be part of that. And we know when we look around at business these days that economic and social objectives are really important to them. So whether that's sustainability, zero carbon, we're totally signed up to that agenda. We've got some fantastic sustainability credentials. We think the business will want to come and invest here through some of our innovation networks and work that we're doing in Here East. We think people will come. I think first and foremost then, it's about inward investment. And then secondary, it's about making sure that we look after the place and maintain it at that wonderful level. Eventually, development will peter out and it will all be built. So those two things will be the primary objectives in the long term.

Speaker 2:

That's Lyn Garner, chief executive of the London Legacy Development Corporation on the big changes ahead for Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. The Olympic and Paralympic Games of London are long gone, but the park will be a place where local people, sports fans, and visitors alike will enjoy for years to come. This is My London legacy, a Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park podcast, celebrating 10 years on from London 2012. Download and follow for many more special stories or check out the website, QueenElizabethOlympicPark.co.uk.