



Epping Forest & Commons Committee

Date: MONDAY, 5 NOVEMBER 2012
Time: 11.00 am
Venue: COMMITTEE ROOM - 2ND FLOOR WEST WING, GUILDHALL

Members: Alderman Gordon Haines (Chairman)
Barbara Newman (Deputy Chairman)
George Abrahams
Deputy John Barker
Deputy Stella Currie
Alderman John Garbutt
Deputy Stanley Ginsburg
Gregory Lawrence
Deputy Catherine McGuinness
Virginia Rounding
Alderman Robert Hall (Ex-Officio Member)
Dr Peter Hardwick (Ex-Officio Member)

For consideration of Business Relating to Epping Forest Only

Verderer Peter Adams
Verderer Michael Chapman
Verderer Richard Morris
Verderer Dr. Joanna Thomas

Enquiries: Edward Foale
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Lunch will be served in the Guildhall Club at 1pm

John Barradell
Town Clerk and Chief Executive

AGENDA

Part 1 - Public Agenda

1. **APOLOGIES**
2. **DECLARATIONS BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA**
3. **MINUTES**
To agree the public minutes and summary of the meeting held on 10 September 2012 (copy attached).

For Decision
(Pages 1 - 12)
4. **REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGETS - 2012/13 AND 2013/14**
Joint report of the Chamberlain and the Director of Open Spaces (copy attached).

For Decision
(Pages 13 - 22)
5. **GREEN FLAG AND LONDON IN BLOOM AWARDS**
Report of the Director of Open Spaces (copy attached).

For Decision
(Pages 23 - 28)

City Commons

6. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**
The Superintendent of the City Commons to be heard.

For Information

Epping Forest

7. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**
The Superintendent of Epping Forest to be heard.

For Information
8. **EPPING FOREST MANAGEMENT STEERING GROUP MINUTES**
To receive the minutes of the Epping Forest Management Steering Group meeting held on 27 September 2012 (copy attached).

For Information
(Pages 29 - 32)
9. **FORMAL RESPONSES TO TWO LOCAL PLANS**
Report of the Superintendent of Epping Forest (copy attached).

For Decision
(Pages 33 - 68)

10. **OPTIONS APPRAISAL - JUBILEE POND, RELINING AND ENHANCEMENT**
Report of the City Surveyor (copy attached).
For Decision
(Pages 69 - 84)
11. **EPPING FOREST GRAZING MONITORING AUDIT**
Report of the Superintendent of Epping Forest (copy attached).
For Decision
(Pages 85 - 116)
12. **EPPING FOREST - BRANCHING OUT PROJECT (HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND) -
PROGRESS UPDATE REPORT - NUMBER 8**
Report of the Superintendent of Epping Forest (copy attached).
For Decision
(Pages 117 - 130)
13. **CONSULTATION BY THE LONDON BOROUGH OF ENFIELD ON THE
PROPOSED NORTH EAST ENFIELD AREA ACTION PLAN**
Report of the Superintendent of Epping Forest (copy attached).
For Decision
(Pages 131 - 138)
14. **ENFORCEMENT OF EPPING FOREST BYELAWS: 1 MARCH 2012 TO 31
AUGUST 2012**
Report of the Superintendent of Epping Forest (copy attached).
For Information
(Pages 139 - 146)
15. **EPPING FOREST HABITAT & TREE SAFETY WORK PROGRAMME 2011-12
OUT-TURN**
Report of the Superintendent of Epping Forest (copy attached).
For Information
(Pages 147 - 154)

Burnham Beeches & Stoke Common

16. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**
The Superintendent of Burnham Beeches & Stoke Common to be heard.
For Information
17. **OUTCOME OF PHASE 1 OF THE INVISIBLE FENCING/VIRTUAL GRID TRIALS
AT BURNHAM BEECHES**
Report of the Superintendent of Burnham Beeches & Stoke Common (copy
attached).
For Information
(Pages 155 - 172)

18. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**
19. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

Part 2 - Non-Public Agenda

20. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

MOTION: That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

21. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

To agree the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2012 (copy attached).

For Decision
(Pages 173 - 174)

22. DECISION TAKEN UNDER URGENCY PROCEDURES

Report of the Town Clerk (copy attached).

For Information
(Pages 175 - 176)

23. LEASE RENEWALS - CARL'S TEA HUT, HIGH BEACH & HOLLOW POND BOATHOUSE, LEYTON FLATS

Report of the Superintendent of Epping Forest (copy attached).

For Decision
(Pages 177 - 180)

24. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

25. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED

Agenda Item 3

EPPING FOREST & COMMONS COMMITTEE **Monday, 10 September 2012**

Minutes of the meeting of the Epping Forest & Commons Committee held at Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 10 September 2012 at 3.30 pm

Present

Members:

Alderman Gordon Haines (Chairman)
Barbara Newman (Deputy Chairman)
George Abrahams
Alderman John Garbutt
Virginia Rounding
Alderman Robert Hall (Ex-Officio Member)
Verderer Peter Adams
Verderer Michael Chapman
Verderer Richard Morris
Verderer Dr. Joanna Thomas

Officers:

Edward Foale	- Committee & Member Services Officer, Town Clerk's Department
Esther Sumner	- Policy Officer, Town Clerk's Department
Alison Elam	- Group Accountant, Chamberlain's Department
Sue Ireland	- Director of Open Spaces
Paul Thomson	- Superintendent, Epping Forest
Andy Barnard	- Superintendent, Burnham Beeches & Stoke Common
Bob Warnock	- Superintendent, City Commons
Jeremy Dagley	- Conservation Manager, Epping Forest

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Deputy John Barker, Deputy Stella Currie, Deputy Stanley Ginsburg, Deputy Catherine McGuinness and Dr. Peter Hardwick.

2. DECLARATIONS BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

Verderer Richard Morris declared a personal interest in respect of the Epping Forest Centenary Trust for which he volunteered (this was a standing declaration).

The Chairman advised that he had received a letter from the Ranger, the Duke of Gloucester, which stated that the Duke had enjoyed opening the Epping Forest Visitor Centre, the *View*, at the Epping Forest Ladies' Day held on 12 July 2012 and thanked the Chairman for his invitation.

3. **MINUTES**

The public minutes and summary of the meeting held on 9 July 2012 were approved, subject to two minor amendments.

MATTERS ARISING

Minutes (item 3)

Members noted that a letter refuting earlier inaccurate statements made regarding the dam improvements at Highams Park had been sent to the local newspaper, however it was not published.

Review of the Governance Arrangements Implemented in 2011

In response to a Member's query, the Town Clerk advised that the Committee's comments would be considered by the Governance Review Working Party, due to next meet in late September 2012, which would make recommendations to the Policy & Resources Committee. The Policy & Resources Committee would then present a report on Committee governance to the Court of Common Council for decision. This process would take several months, but the Town Clerk assured Members that they would report any significant developments to the Committee.

AMENDMENT OF AGENDA ORDER

The Chairman advised that as the Committee was currently quorate only for Epping Forest business, these agenda items would be considered ahead of Burnham Beeches & Stoke Common business, thus amending the agenda order.

In response to a Member's query, the Town Clerk advised that the Committee's quorum was any five Members. By inference, only those Members present with voting rights could contribute towards a quorum. Currently all four Verderers were present, however there were only three voting City Members present. The Committee's terms of reference stated that the Verderers were present for the consideration of business relating to Epping Forest only. Consequently the Committee was currently quorate for Epping Forest business, but not business relating to Burnham Beeches & Stoke Common or the City Commons. It was anticipated that additional Committee Members would arrive shortly and allow for a quorate discussion of business relating to Burnham Beeches & Stoke Common and the City Commons.

Epping Forest

4. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

The Superintendent of Epping Forest provided a verbal update regarding the following:

- Starters and Leavers Recruitment to the posts of Forest Keeper (South); Conservation Arborist; Mechanic and Litter Truck Operative had recently been completed. A Conservation Arborist had also left the organisation on medical grounds.

- Wet Weather The Forest had experienced very wet weather over the previous two months, with 131.5mm of rain, 246.7% of average rainfall, in July, and 48mm or 85% of average rainfall in August.
- 'The View' Official Opening & Ladies Day An official launch and opening had been held for the Epping Forest Visitor Centre, known as "The View" on 12 July 2012.
- 'The View' Exhibition The team was continuing to add objects and poster displays.
- Olympic and Paralympic Games Transport arrangements had worked well. Car Parks had coped with additional pressures and the various campsites in close proximity to the Forest had not caused problems.
- Muster, Briefing and Deployment Centre, Wanstead Flats The Centre had operated successfully with a canteen catering for 800 Officers at one sitting, three 150 person briefing tents and stables for 40 horses.
- Outdoor Theatre at Wanstead Park Ticket sales were linked to weather. 56 tickets were sold for Henry V; 121 tickets were sold for HMS Pinafore and 'The Twits' was sold out with 480 tickets sold and an additional £150 taken for unofficial seating.
- Period Games To celebrate the Olympics, the Visitor Services Team held three popular-themed game events in August with 300 attendees attending the Tudor Games; 94 attending the Regency Games and 260 attending the Victorian Games.
- Flytipping 73 Fly tips were recorded over the past 2 months compared to 156 for the same period last year. Overall fly tips were down 20.9% with 537 rather than 679 tips.
- Joint Operation with London and Essex Fire Brigades – 15 July 2012 F35 Woodford White Watch led a valuable joint exercise with two brigades and Forest Keepers from South and Central teams.
- Highams Park Lake Further public meetings were held, together with continued liaison with Walthamstow Scouts. A Friends of Highams Park group was to be formed in cooperation with London Borough of Waltham Forest's Open Spaces Team.
- Football Bookings The Chairman of the Wanstead Flats Playing Fields Committee – John Walker-Arnott – had resigned. Verderer Adams had been selected as the interim Chair. Season booking currently stood at 65% occupancy for Saturdays and 79% for Sundays.
- Ragwort Control Policy and Survey 2012 A Ragwort Policy had been developed, including a protocol and action plan with maps of the different treatment priority zones. The 2012 survey was currently being undertaken in the high priority zones with follow-up action where necessary.
- Meeting with English Heritage and English Nature on Scheduled Ancient Monuments Conservation Management Plans for Ambresbury Banks and Loughton Camp were subject to differing requirements by two Government Agencies. Helpful discussions had taken place to agree a shared strategy with the City of London.
- Knolly's Nursery Application, Pick Hill, Waltham Abbey The City of London had objected to a proposal for 115 dwellings in the Metropolitan Green Belt close to Forest Land.

- Consultation and Core Plan and Local Strategy Staff at Epping Forest were working on documents for the Epping Forest District Local Plan and London Borough of Waltham Forest Core Strategy. Epping Forest-focused policies had been included in the Core Strategy for the first time.
- Department for Transport Aviation Strategy The City had been asked to respond to a consultation on the various options available for the expansion of London aviation capacity. Consultation would close on 31 October 2012.
- Branching Out Outreach Events Four introductory events had been held, which included the Kingswood Estate, Epping which backed onto Buffer Land at Coopersale Common.
- Meet the Cattle and Meet the Arborists Events Epping staff staged further events to familiarise the community with the Conservation work at Epping Forest.
- Waymarked Trails Two further guided walk trails had been installed, with the Hornbeam Trail at Hollow Pond/Waterworks roundabout and the Beech Trail, which included Loughton Camp.
- Volunteer Hours 551 volunteer hours were recorded for July and August 2012.
- Project 824 In partnership with Epping Forest Centenary Trust, 60 Scouts had worked on a Boardwalk construction at Connaught Water; coppicing and clearance work at Woodchip Ride; wood-pasture restoration at Bury Wood and clearance work at Bulrush Pond.

In response to a Member's query regarding the City of London Apprenticeship Scheme, the Superintendent undertook to examine apprenticeship opportunities at Epping Forest. The Director also advised that the City scheme had been used in the past but many of these apprentices sought more City-based experience and were not keen to travel to the Epping Forest divisional offices.

In response to a Member's query, the Superintendent advised that the siting of Surface to Air Missiles close to Epping Forest had been permitted by neighbouring landowners.

In response to a Member's query about the Ragwort Policy and the costs of its control, the Conservation Manager advised that a range of control measures were taken including the use of selective herbicides in the highest priority zones. The approximate cost of this work this year had been around £6,000. However, at some sites Ragwort was also controlled or cut as part of ongoing mowing work at no additional cost and some Ragwort was hand-pulled.

In response to a question from the Chairman on the skills needed to respond to the detail of the Aviation Strategy, the Superintendent advised that it might be prudent to commission specialist consultants to provide advice on aviation policy in the future, however this would not be necessary for the current document.

RECEIVED

5. **EPPING FOREST TRUSTEE'S ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2012**

The Committee received a report of the Chamberlain containing the Trustee's Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2012 for Epping Forest, presented in the format required by the Charity Commission.

A Member, also a Verderer, believed that the Verderers should have been included within the report as a Trustee of Epping Forest. The Chamberlain undertook to clarify this query.

In response to a Member's query on risk, the Director advised that the Epping Forest staff were employed by the City of London and not the Charitable Trust. Consequently, a reduction in staff was not a risk to the Trust.

In response to a Member's query, the Chamberlain and the Director undertook to investigate whether a reserves policy for the Trust should exist.

RECEIVED

6. **CONSULTATION BY EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL ON THE INTRODUCTION OF THREE DOG CONTROL ORDERS ON PUBLIC OPEN SPACE, CURRENTLY INCLUDING EPPING FOREST LAND**

Members considered a report of the Superintendent of Epping Forest that informed the Committee of proposals by Epping Forest District Council to introduce three of the five Dog Control Orders on public open spaces, including Epping Forest Land, for the control of dog fouling; the placing of dogs on leads when directed and regulation on the maximum numbers of dogs each person could have in their control.

In response to a Member's query, the Superintendent advised that a lead length would be difficult to enforce.

Members requested that the proposed exception for woodland to be clarified in relation to Epping Forest.

A Member also advised that it would be best if efforts could be made to ensure that all local authorities had the same policy across the Forest in order to avoid a situation in which an action could be acceptable in one authority and an offence in another.

RESOLVED: that the Superintendent of Epping Forest be authorised to respond to the Epping Forest District Council's consultation on Dog Control Orders expressing the City's support for their introduction on Forest Land to:

- i) support a Dog Control Order to control dog fouling over the whole of the Epping Forest district, including City of London Epping Forest land, making it an offence to fail to pick up dog faeces deposited on any public land.
- ii) support a Dog Control Order that allows an authorised officer to request that a dog be put on a leash on any public land in Epping Forest District,

including City of London Epping Forest land, but decline to recommend a leash length.

- iii) support Epping Forest District Council's proposed dog control orders, including City of London Epping Forest land, that restricts the number of dogs a person can have in their control on any public land to four.

7. GRANT OF LICENCE TO LONDON BOROUGH OF NEWHAM FOR A PUBLIC FIREWORKS DISPLAY

Members considered a report of the Superintendent of Epping Forest seeking approval for the grant of a licence for a fee of £5,000 to the London Borough of Newham to stage a public Fireworks Display on Sunday 4 November 2012 at the Wanstead Flats Events Area adjacent to Centre Road.

In response to a question by the Chairman regarding the fixed nature of the fee for the last 6 years, the Superintendent agreed to review the licence value in conjunction with the City Surveyor for any future requests.

RESOLVED: That Members,

- i) approve the grant of a licence to the London Borough of Newham for a fee of £5,000 plus a refundable deposit of £5,000 to enable it to stage a public fireworks event on Wanstead Flats on the 4 November 2012.
- ii) delegate authority to the Town Clerk in accordance with standing order 41(b), in consultation with the Superintendent of Epping Forest, the City Surveyor and the Comptroller & City Solicitor, to determine appropriate terms and the completion of any necessary documentation.
- iii) consent to the making of fires (for the purposes of lighting fireworks as part of the Firework Display) pursuant to Byelaw 3.6 of the Epping Forest Byelaws 1980.
- iv) consent to the use of vehicles required in connection with the Firework Display pursuant to Byelaw 3.11 of the Epping Forest Byelaws 1980.

8. EPPING FOREST WOODLAND PLANTING APPEAL

Members considered a report of the Superintendent of Epping Forest that sought approval for the establishment of a woodland habitat on up to 2.063 hectares (5.1 acres) within the latest 12.035 hectares (29.74 acres) of land acquisition at Horseshoe Hill, Upshire.

RESOLVED: that, subject to the election of the Senior Alderman below the Chair as Lord Mayor in November 2012 and the establishment of the forthcoming Lord Mayor's Appeal,

- i) an area of up to 2.063 hectares (5.1 acres) of grassland within the recent Warlies Park acquisition be dedicated to a habitat creation scheme through woodland planting;
- ii) contributions to the cost of tree planting; access paths, deer fencing and maintenance be met through the Lord Mayor's Appeal combined with additional funding from an application for grant funding from the England Woodland Grant Scheme – Woodland Creation Grant;

- iii) in order to encourage woodland resilience and climate change adaptation, some 10% of the woodland species planted would be selected from the Forestry Commission recommended climate change species lists;
- iv) the new woodland planting/Forest extension be known as 'Gifford's Wood,' subject to the outcome of the election of the next Lord Mayor and the success of the appeal.

9. ENGLISH WOODLAND GRANT SCHEME APPLICATION FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF DEER AND WOODLANDS IN THE EPPING FOREST BUFFER LAND ESTATE

Members received a report of the Superintendent of Epping Forest that informed the Committee of the need to improve the condition of Buffer Land woodlands and to bring local deer populations, which continued to damage the woodlands, under effective control.

RESOLVED: that, subject to securing funding,

- i) the twenty-year Draft Woodland Planning Grant Management Plan for the Buffer Land Woodlands to manage sustainably the Buffer Land woodland as part of the wider Buffer Land estate be adopted subject to the successful application for grant aid.
- ii) the five-year Draft Deer Management Plan, which proposed to maintain deer populations in balance with the Buffer Land woodlands and the wider countryside be adopted subject to the successful application for grant aid.
- iii) The Committee approve the submission of an application for grant support to the Forestry Commission English Woodland Grant Scheme – A Woodland Improvement Grant - to fund the cost of undertaking deer and woodland management improvements on up to 75 woodlands within the Buffer Lands between 2012-17.

10. THE CURRENT PURPOSE AND MANAGEMENT OF THE EPPING FOREST DEER SANCTUARY, THEYDON BOIS

Members received a report of the Superintendent of Epping Forest that informed the Committee of the history and the current management of the Epping Forest deer sanctuary, an enclosed area of Buffer Land situated to the south west of Theydon Bois, which was purchased at a cost of £5,500 (£101,420 at 2011 prices) especially for this purpose.

Members noted that a further report on the future management of the Epping Forest deer sanctuary would be submitted to the Committee for consideration when the results of historical research had been received and the outcome of the English Woodland Grant Scheme application was known.

A member asked the Committee to also recognise in any future report the importance of the historic parkland landscape at Theydon Bois.

RECEIVED

Business Relating to all Three Estates

11. RISK MANAGEMENT – LOCAL RISK REGISTERS

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces relative to Local Risk Registers. The report provided Members with an opportunity to examine the main local risks for the Open Space charitable trusts that reported to the Committee.

The Director advised that this was the first of a cycle of Local Risk Register reports to be presented to the Committee. In response to a Member's query, the Director agreed to provide more information on the scoring mechanism employed, the wider risk register and the identification of common risks between the three Divisions.

In response to a Member's query, the Director undertook to clarify the division of risk responsibility.

RECEIVED

Burnham Beeches & Stoke Common

12. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

The Superintendent of Burnham Beeches & Stoke Common provided a verbal update regarding the following:

- Tree Maintenance A 30 metre high Mobile Elevated Working Platform and TimberWolf Chipper had been borrowed from Epping Forest in order to carry out work on young pollards and veteran trees.
- Safety Tree safety surveys, experimental pollard restoration work and fence repairs had been undertaken across both sites.
- Visit The annual site visit for the Burnham Beeches Consultative Committee had taken place. An invisible fence demonstration was undertaken at Pumpkin Hill.
- Invisible Fencing The trial had been undertaken on Pumpkin Hill, which included the use of virtual cattle grids on the public road. The wires for the grids had been laid with the assistance of a stump-grinder borrowed from Epping Forest. A press release had been issued which advised that animals would be introduced to the area on 19 September 2012. If the trial proved successful, it was hoped that fencing would be expanded to cover 95% of the site by 2014.
- Local Core Strategy The Superintendent had recently met with the Head of Planning and Development Control of South Buckinghamshire District Council to build on their Core Strategy to protect the Burnham Beeches Special Area of Conservation via the forthcoming Development Management Development Plan Document.
- Volunteers 400 hours had been accrued recently. Activities undertaken included bracken bashing, pollard clearance and boardwalk repairs.
- Events A bike ride, heath walk and a half marathon had all recently taken place.

RECEIVED

13. **BURNHAM BEECHES AND STOKE COMMON TRUSTEE'S ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2012**

The Committee received a report of the Chamberlain containing the Trustee's Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2012 for Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common, presented in the format required by the Charity Commission.

RECEIVED

EXTENSION OF THE MEETING

At this point, the time limit for Committee meetings as set out in Standing Order No 40 had been reached, but there being more than a two-thirds majority of the Committee present who voted in favour of an extension, the Committee agreed to continue the meeting.

14. **USE OF SECONDARY AUTHORITY POWERS TO INTRODUCE DOG CONTROL ORDERS AT BURNHAM BEECHES**

The Committee considered a report of the Superintendent of Burnham Beeches & Stoke Common. The report informed members of the proposal to consult on the introduction of Dog Control Orders at Burnham Beeches National Nature Reserve using the recently acquired powers provided under Secondary Authority status.

A Member believed that use of the word "owner" when restricting the number of dogs an individual could walk was confusing as people frequently walked dogs that did not belong to them.

RESOLVED: That Members approve the proposal to consult on the introduction of Dog Control Orders at Burnham Beeches according to the proposals set out in the report and associated timetable located in the report Appendix.

City Commons

15. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

The Superintendent of City Commons provided a verbal update regarding the following:

- Staffing Two temporary Rangers had recently been hired and a Ranger had been seconded to the Coulsdon & Kenely Team from the Ashted Team. The Rangers had recently provided seven work experience placements.
- Volunteering Accrued hours on Ashted Common were currently 12% lower than as at September 2011. Ashted Common volunteers had suspended activities over August as a large number of them were involved with the Olympics. Volunteer hours on the other Commons were higher than as at September 2011. A volunteer survey was currently being undertaken. Volunteers had recently visited Box Hill and Kingley Vale.

- Winter Work Programme The Programme had commenced on 1 September 2012, which included the restoration of chalk grassland. The tree shear and chipping contract was currently in progress across all four of the Coulsdon Commons. Veteran tree management at Ashtead Common had been retendered and work was scheduled to commence in November 2012. Scrub Management had also been retendered.
- Livestock Last years calves had recently been weaned. There were eighteen pregnant cows, which were expected to calve in January/February 2013. Staff had recently received refresher training on veterinary medicine. The Superintendent was currently investigating the possibility of entering a service level agreement with a local farmer to manage four of the Ashtead cattle over winter.
- Awards In addition to the Green Flag Awards, Ashtead Common and Kenley Common had both received Green Heritage Awards.
- Heritage The Ashtead Common Roman Villa dig had been completed, 2012 saw the penultimate year of excavations. A heritage weekend had recently been held, with over 200 people in attendance.
- Audits & Inspections A Sustainability Audit Verification visit, unannounced Rural Payments Authority spot audit and a grassland management audit had all recently taken place.

In response to a Member's query, the Superintendent advised that he was unaware as to whether he would have an opportunity to view the audit reports before they was published.

RECEIVED

16. CITY COMMONS TRUSTEE'S ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2012

The Committee received a report of the Chamberlain containing the Trustee's Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2012 for the City Commons, presented in the format required by the Charity Commission.

RECEIVED

17. ASHTEAD COMMON CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Members received the draft minutes of the Ashtead Common Consultative Committee meeting held on 2 July 2012.

18. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

A Member advised that they had recently observed the Superintendent of Epping Forest make a presentation to the Epping Forest District Council Planning Committee from home via a webcast. They believed that the City should make efforts to offer a similar service at its meetings.

19. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

There was no urgent business.

20. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED: That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act as follows:-

<u>Item No.</u>	<u>Paragraphs in Schedule 12A</u>
21	1 & 3
22	3
23-24	-

21. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

The non-public minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2012 were approved.

22. **WAYLEAVE CESSATION - 2 ROSE COTTAGES, HONEY LANE, WALTHAM ABBEY**

Members considered a report of the Superintendent of Epping Forest.

23. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

There were no questions.

24. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**

There was no urgent business.

The meeting ended at 5.57 pm

Chairman

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Agenda Item 4

Committee(s):	Date(s):	Item no.
Epping Forest and Commons Committee	5 November 2012	
Subject: REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGETS – 2012/13 AND 2013/14		
Report of: The Chamberlain The Director of Open Spaces		Public For Decision

Summary

This report updates the Committee on its latest approved revenue budget for 2012/13 and seeks approval for a provisional revenue budget for 2013/14, for subsequent submission to the Finance Committee. The budgets have been prepared within the resources allocated to the Director and the table below summarises the position.

Summary of Table 1	Latest Approved Budget	Original Budget	Movement
	2012/13 £000	2013/14 £000	£000
Expenditure	8,361	8,095	(266)
Income	(2,528)	(2,537)	(9)
Support Services and Capital Charges	1,430	1,524	94
Total Net Expenditure	7,263	7,082	(181)

Overall the provisional Original budget for 2013/14 totals £7.082M, a decrease of £181,000 compared with the latest approved budget for 2012/13. Main reasons for this decrease which also allow for a £60,000 carry forward are :-.

- A decrease of £266,000 in Expenditure, the majority of which relate to a reduction in transfer to reserves (£170,000), a reduction in Supplies & Services (£158,000), and an increase in employee costs (£66,000).
- An increase of £94,000 in Capital and Support Services Charges mainly relating to higher depreciation charges.

Recommendations

The Committee is requested to:

- Review the provisional 2013/14 revenue budget to ensure that it reflects the Committee's objectives and, if so, approve the budget for submission to the Finance Committee;
- Review and approve the draft Capital Budget;
- Authorise the Chamberlain, in consultation with the Director of Open Spaces, to revise these budgets to allow for any further implications arising from Corporate Projects, departmental reorganisations and other reviews, changes to the Additional Works Programme, and implications arising from Carbon Trading Allowances.

Main Report

Introduction

1. The City of London Corporation owns and manages almost 11,000 acres of historic and natural Open Spaces for public recreation and enjoyment. This includes Epping Forest, City Commons and Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common which are registered charities and are funded from City's Cash. They are run at no cost to the communities that they serve, as they are funded principally by the City, together with donations, sponsorship, grants and trading income.
2. This report sets out the proposed revenue budget and capital budgets for 2013/14. The Revenue Budget management arrangements are to:
 - Provide a clear distinction between local risk, central risk, and recharge budgets.
 - Place responsibility for budgetary control on departmental Chief Officers.
 - Apply a cash limit policy to Chief Officers' budgets.
3. The budget has been analysed by the service expenditure and compared with the latest approved budget for the current year.

4. The report also compares the current year's budget with the forecast outturn.

Business Planning Priorities

5. The key Projects for each Open Space for the next three years were included in the Open Spaces Department Business Plan for 2012-2015 which was approved in April 2012. These include :-
- Regeneration of Ancient Pollards and Heathland Regeneration (Burnham Beeches & Stoke Common)
 - Visitor Surveys, Consultation and Communication Strategy, and Biodiversity Conservation Plans (City Commons).
 - Development of the Epping Forest Management Plan and Further phases of the 'Branching Out' project (Epping Forest)

Proposed Revenue Budget for 2013/14

6. The proposed Revenue Budget for 2013/14 is shown in Table 1 below analysed between:
- Local Risk Budgets – these are budgets deemed to be largely within the Chief Officer's control.
 - Central Risk Budgets – these are budgets comprising specific items where a Chief Officer manages the underlying service, but where the eventual financial outturn can be strongly influenced by external factors outside of his/her control or are budgets of a corporate nature (e.g. interest on balances and rent incomes from investment properties).
 - Support Services and Capital Charges – these cover budgets for services provided by one activity to another. The control of these costs is exercised at the point where the expenditure or income first arises as local or central risk. Further analysis can be found in Appendix 2.
7. The provisional 2013/14 budgets, under the control of the Director of Open Spaces being presented to your Committee, have been prepared in accordance with guidelines agreed by the Policy & Resources and Finance Committees. These include continuing the implementation of the required budget reductions across both local and central risks, as well as the proper control of transfers of non-staffing budgets to staffing budgets. The 2% efficiency savings to be achieved by 2014/15 comprise 1% saving in 2013/14 and a further 1% saving in 2014/15. An allowance towards any potential pay and price increases of 1% for 2013/14 has been included, with 2% to be included for 2014/15. The budget has been prepared within the resources allocated to the Director.

TABLE 1 EPPING FOREST & COMMONS COMMITTEE SUMMARY – ALL FUNDS						
Analysis of Service Expenditure	Local or Central Risk	Actual 2011-12 £'000	Latest Approved Budget 2012-13 £'000	Original Budget 2013-14 £'000	Movement 2012-13 to 2013-14 £'000	Paragraph Reference
EXPENDITURE						
Employees	L	3,992	4,124	4,190	66	10
Redundancy costs	C	16	0	0	0	
Premises Related Expenses	L	936	979	1,002	23	
R & M (City Surveyor's Local Risk)	L	953	1,670	1,612	(58)	13
Transport Related Expenses	L	357	289	319	30	
Supplies & Services	L	1,123	990	830	(160)	14
Third Party Payments	L	41	39	42	3	
Transfer to Reserves	L	407	270	100	(170)	12
Transfer to Reserves (To fund Capital Expenditure)	C	2,198	0	0	0	
Total Expenditure		10,023	8,361	8,095	(266)	
INCOME						
Government Grants	L	(688)	(482)	(483)	(1)	
Other Grants, Reimbursements and Contributions	L	(228)	(579)	(481)	98	15
Other Grants, Reimbursements and Contributions	C	(2,384)	(366)	(366)	0	
Customer, Client Receipts	L	(934)	(911)	(919)	(8)	
Investment Income	L	(1)	0	0	0	
Investment Income	C	(31)	(18)	(18)	0	
Transfer from Reserves	L	(311)	(29)	0	29	
Transfer from Reserve	C	(298)	(143)	(270)	(127)	16
Total Income		(4,875)	(2,528)	(2,537)	(9)	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE/ (INCOME) BEFORE SUPPORT SERVICES AND CAPITAL CHARGES		5,148	5,833	5,558	(275)	
SUPPORT SERVICES AND CAPITAL CHARGES						
Central Support and Capital Charges		1,212	1241	1,347	106	11
Recharges within Fund		177	180	164	(16)	
Recharges Across Funds		3	9	13	4	
Total Support Services and Capital Charges		1,392	1,430	1,524	94	
TOTAL NET EXPENDITURE/(INCOME)		6,540	7,263	7,082	(181)	

8. Income and favourable variances are presented in brackets. An analysis of this Revenue Expenditure by Service Managed is provided in Appendix 1. Only significant variances (generally those greater than £50,000) have been commented on in the following paragraphs.
9. Overall there is a reduction of £181,000 in the overall budget between the 2012/13 latest approved budget and the 2013/14 original budget. This movement is explained by the variances explained in the following paragraphs.
10. Local Risk Employee costs have increased by £66,000 mainly due to an additional post at Epping on a 2 year fixed term contract.
11. The £106,000 increase within Central Support relates mainly to Capital Charges (Depreciation on HLF 'Branching Out' Capital Schemes at Epping) partially offset by a reduction in support services and the Recharge from the Open Spaces Directorate.
12. A decrease of £170,000 in transfers to reserves. This represents the £170,000 that was received from the police for using Wanstead Flats as a muster station during the Olympics/Paralympics. The contribution has been transferred to reserves until it is required as funding for the Jubilee Pond relining project, subject to approval.
13. Following the implementation of the MITIE & APEX contracts in July 2012, budgets have been re-aligned to reflect the tendered cost of the new contracts. The LAB estimates and 2013/14 Original budgets, therefore reflect these changes. The decrease of £58,000 in the Repairs & Maintenance budget for the City Surveyor's Local Risk is a reduction of £95,000 in Planned & Reactive Works, partially off-set by an increase of £37,000 in the Additional Works Programme due to changes in the composition and phasing of the work. Furthermore, budgets have provisionally been included for the 2013/14 additional works programme based on the bids considered by your Committee in May 2012 and the Corporate Asset Sub Committee in June 2012. However, a decision on the funding of the programme is not due to be made by the Resource Allocation Sub Committee until December. It may therefore be necessary to adjust the budgets to reflect the Resource Allocation Sub Committee's decision. See Table 2 below.

TABLE 2 - CITY SURVEYOR LOCAL RISK	Latest Approved Budget 2012/13 £'000	Original Budget 2013/14 £'000
Repairs and Maintenance		
Additional Works Programme		
Burnham Beeches	58	73
Epping Forest	993	992
City Commons	276	299
	1327	1364
Planned & Reactive Works (Breakdown & Servicing)		
Burnham Beeches	55	32
Epping Forest	239	188
City Commons	49	28
	343	248
Total City Surveyor	1,670	1,612

14. The £160,000 reduction in Supplies and Services mainly occur at Epping, this reduction is to re-align the budgets.
15. A reduction of £98,000 in Other Grants & Contribution Income is mainly due to the £170,000 received by the Police for use of the Muster Station in 2012/13 which was a one-off contribution.
16. The £127,000 increase in transfer from Reserves is income transferred from the Capital Reserve Account to cover the increase in depreciation charges for HLF 'Branching Out' Projects at Epping .
17. Analysis of the movement in manpower and related staff costs are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3 - Manpower statement	Latest Approved Budget 2012/13		Original Budget 2013/14	
	Manpower Full-time equivalent	Estimated cost £000	Manpower Full-time equivalent	Estimated cost £000
Epping	85.41	2,873	86.41	2,926
Burnham Beeches/Stoke Common	13.07	479	12.67	477
City Commons	22.91	772	22.91	787
TOTAL EPPING FOREST & COMMONS	121.39	4,124	121.99	4,190

18. The breakdown representing the £97,000 overall reduction in Epping (Appendix 1) are as follows:-
- A £23,000 overall reduction in Local Risk, mainly due to the fall-out of the 'carry forward'.
 - A £127,000 additional income in Central Risk (Transfer from Reserves)
 - An increase of £102,000 in Recharges (Mainly Capital Charges)
 - A decrease of £49,000 Repairs & Maintenance (City Surveyor local risk)
19. The £50,000 reduction in Burnham Beeches (see Appendix 1) is mainly due to the fall-out of the £26,000 carry forward and a £11,000 reduction from the 10% savings exercise.

Potential Further Budget Developments

20. The provisional nature of the 2013/14 revenue budget recognises that further revisions may be required, including in relation to:
- budget reductions to capture savings arising from the on-going PP2P reviews;
 - budget adjustments relating to the implementation of the City of London Procurement Service; and
 - decisions on funding of the Additional Work Programme by the Resource Allocation Sub Committee.

Revenue Budget 2012/13

21. The forecast outturn for the current year is in line with the latest approved budget of £7.263M.

Draft Capital Budget

22. No new bids were submitted recently by the Committee to the Policy and Resources Committee for resources to evaluate new capital or supplementary revenue projects.

23. The Committee's draft capital and supplementary revenue project budgets are summarised in the Tables below. Estimated expenditure is analysed as follows:

- Committed – Projects which are contractually committed.
- Uncommitted – Projects which have been the subject of an evaluation report but are not yet contractually committed.
- Pre-evaluation costs – The costs of evaluating all other schemes approved to proceed to that stage.

	Exp. Pre 01/04/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	Later Years	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<u>Evaluated schemes</u>								
- Committed								
Epping Forest Land - Warlies Park		270						270
Highams Park Lake		100	1,420	345				1,865
Branching Out	3,096	1,300	208					4,604
								0
Total	3,096	1,670	1,628	345	0	0	0	6,739

24. The latest updated information on the capital project budgets is being submitted in a progress monitoring report to the Finance Committee on 11 December 2012. Summaries of these budgets will subsequently be used to determine overall financing, with the full capital and supplementary revenue project budgets being presented to the Court of Common Council for approval in March 2013.

Contact Officer: Mark Jarvis (1221) or Alison Elam (1081)

APPENDIX 1

Analysis by Service Managed	Actual 2011-12 £'000	Latest Approved Budget 2012-13 £'000	Original Budget 2013-14 £'000	Movement 2012-13 to 2013-14 £'000	Paragraph(s) Reference
<u>CITY CASH</u>					
Epping Forest	4,155	4,623	4,526	(97)	18
CBT	0	0	0	0	
HLF	13	3	3	0	
Chingford Golf Course	(40)	(60)	(64)	(4)	
Wanstead Flats	150	190	175	(15)	
Woodredon & Warlies	0	0	0	0	
Burnham Beeches	679	733	683	(50)	19
Stoke Common	1	22	22	0	
City Commons	1,582	1,752	1,737	(15)	
TOTAL	6,540	7,263	7,082	(181)	

APPENDIX 2

Support Services & Capital Charges from/to Epping Forest & Commons Committee	Actual 2011-12 £'000	Latest Approved Budget 2012-13 £'000	Original Budget 2013-14 £'000	Movement 2012-13 to 2013-14 £'000	Paragraph Reference
Support Services & Capital Charges					
Central Recharges-					
City Surveyor's Employee Recharge	275	305	305	0	
Insurance	136	148	154	6	
I.S.Recharges - Chamberlain	85	81	77	(4)	
Capital Charges	119	161	288	127	11
Support Services-					
Chamberlain	182	157	147	(10)	
Comptroller and City Solicitor	121	105	101	(4)	
Town Clerk	173	155	147	(8)	
City Surveyor	93	98	98	0	
Other Services*	28	31	30	(1)	
Total Support Services & Capital Charges	1,212	1,241	1,347	106	
Recharges Within Fund					
Directorate Recharges	233	236	220	(16)	
Corporate and Democratic Core	(56)	(56)	(56)	0	
Total Recharges Within Fund	177	180	164	(16)	
Recharges Across Funds					
Woodredon & Warlies	3	9	13	4	
Total Recharges Across Funds	3	9	13	4	
Total Support Services & Capital Charges	1,392	1,430	1,524	94	

* Various services including central heating, corporate printing, occupational health, union costs, environmental and sustainability section.

Committees :	Dates :
Open Spaces, City Gardens and West Ham Park Committee	8 October 2012
Epping Forest and Commons Committee	5 November 2012
Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee	26 November 2012
Subject:	Public
Green Flag and London in Bloom Awards	
Report of:	For Decision
Director of Open Spaces	

Summary

This report informs the Committee of the City Corporation's overall success in the Green Flag Awards this year, provides feedback on the judging process and compares performance with the national results. The report also describes the success achieved by the City Gardens and West Ham Park in the annual London in Bloom Awards.

This year the City's Open Spaces, including the City of London Cemetery and Crematorium, retained 15 Green Flag Awards and nine of the sites were also judged to be of a high enough standard to be awarded Green Heritage Site accreditation, including Kenley Common for the first time.

The City Gardens and West Ham Park were also very successful in winning four London in Bloom categories, including four Gold Awards.

Recommendations

I recommend that

- (i) the great success achieved by the City Corporation's Open Spaces in the Green Flag and London in Bloom Awards is noted and is reported to the Court of Common Council meeting on 25 October 2012.
- (ii) the staff and volunteers at all the Open Spaces are congratulated on their hard work throughout the year to ensure their sites won these prestigious Awards.

Main Report

Background

1. The Green Flag Award is the national standard for parks and green spaces in England and Wales and is designed to recognise and reward the best green spaces in the country. It is also seen as a way of encouraging others to achieve the same high environmental standards, creating a benchmark of excellence in recreational green areas. The scheme was launched in England and Wales in 1996, as a means of recognising and rewarding the best green spaces in the country and the first Awards were presented in 1997.
2. This independent Award aims to set standards for management and to promote the value of parks and green spaces as social places as well as places for walking, play, informal sports and for contact with the natural world. Although the Award was originally set up for public parks, it was recognised that a wider range of green spaces needed to be included if the quality of public green spaces across the United Kingdom was to be improved.
3. Since 2009 the Green Flag Award scheme has been managed by a consortium comprising Keep Britain Tidy, The Conservation Volunteers and GreenSpace which is known collectively as the Green Flag Plus Partnership and manages the scheme on behalf of the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG). A Green Flag Advisory Board advises the DCLG on the development of the scheme and brings together the principal stakeholders to discuss its future direction and monitor performance.
4. In the current economic climate with many people looking to enjoy the outdoors, the provision of high quality, free open spaces is of particular importance. The Green Flag scheme is committed to create cleaner, safer and greener communities for all and is one of the key mechanisms for measuring high standards. One of the most significant aspects of the Award is that only green spaces that are free to enter and open to the public are eligible to win. Each park or green space is judged against eight key criteria:
 - A Welcoming Place
 - Healthy, Safe and Secure
 - Clean and Well Maintained
 - Sustainability

- Conservation and Heritage
 - Community Involvement
 - Marketing
 - Management
5. Green Heritage Site accreditation, which is sponsored by English Heritage, is awarded in recognition of achieving the required standard in the management and interpretation of a site with local or national historic importance. The sites are judged on the treatment of their historic features and the standard of conservation.
 6. Parks and green spaces inevitably offer a variety of facilities and are managed and developed in response to a wide range of opportunities and constraints. Judging criteria is therefore sufficiently flexible to allow for these, as well as recognising and encouraging innovation.
 7. While the standards for the Green Flag Award are high, each application is considered on its own merits. It is recognised that every green space has its own unique character and this is reflected in the assessment process. Judging is conducted on a points system based on a desk assessment and an on site evaluation, when required.

2012/13 Green Flag Awards

8. The consortium judged the scheme this year based on a number of factors, taking into account that the scheme's growth is outstripping judging capacity, and reflecting the intelligence being picked up from the industry and discussions at the Green Flag Advisory Board. As a result this year judges only visited all new entries, those with lower scores last year and sites where anomalies had been identified previously. This meant that the City's sites were generally not visited this year because of the high standards previously recorded. However mystery shopping takes place during the year to ensure performance standards are maintained.
9. As part of the further development of the scheme in the last year, the Open Spaces Department has also participated in a Green Flag pilot that seeks to award, through self assessment, a Group Award for organisations that have a high number of Green Flag sites. As part of this pilot, a peer review assessment of the City's Open Spaces was carried out in December 2011 when officers from other authorities met the management team and visited two sites (City Commons and Bunhill Fields). Their overall impression from the assessment was that 'the City's Open Spaces are

extremely well managed by a very strong and capable staff team, working alongside enthusiastic and committed volunteers’.

10. The Green Flag Award scheme has now been in operation for sixteen years and has attracted more entries each year. This year 1,424 green spaces received a Green Flag Award across the country, compared to 1,290 site winners the previous year. The City can be proud that this included all 14 of its Open Spaces that entered plus the City of London Cemetery and Crematorium. In the sixteen years since the Green Flag Award was first presented, Highgate Wood and Queen’s Park remain two of only a few sites in the country that have received the Award every year.
11. Epping Forest, Ashted Common, Burnham Beeches, Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, West Ham Park , Bunhill Fields and the Cemetery and Crematorium also maintained their Green Heritage Site status and Kenley Common received this recognition for the first time. This year 51 sites were judged nationally to be of a high enough standard to distinguish them as sites of historical significance and the City again had more Green Heritage Sites than any other authority in this category.
12. As has been the case in recent years, no formal Awards ceremony was held this year although all Award winners were encouraged to publicise their achievements and each site organised its own local celebration to thank their volunteers and acknowledge their commitment and the pride they took in their sites.
13. The growing importance of the Green Flag Award for local authorities across the country, in terms of seeking to gain additional resources for their sites, has resulted in many Metropolitan Councils submitting more of their sites for the Award, particularly in North West England. However the City Corporation still remains one of the authorities across the country with the highest number of Green Flags, in recognition of the high standards of our Open Spaces.

London in Bloom Awards

14. City Gardens and West Ham Park achieved further success when the annual London in Bloom Awards were presented at Pembroke Lodge in Richmond Park on 18 September 2012, when parks and open spaces across London were recognised for their contribution to local and regional recreation and horticulture. The City Corporation’s Open Spaces had a very successful day and won the following Awards :

Borough - Town Category : (based on overall performance for horticulture and maintenance, cleansing and sustainability and community engagement) : Gold Award for the City of London

Park of the Year: Gold and Category Winner for West Ham Park

Small Park of the Year: Gold and Category Winner for Christchurch Greyfriars plus a Gold Award for Cleary Garden and two Silver Gilt Awards (for Portsoken Street Garden and St. Pancras Garden).

Small Cemetery Award (up to five acres): Silver Gilt and Category Winner for Bunhill Fields

15. In their overall report, the judges commented that ‘one thing that stands out apart from the excellent displays in the City is that the whole of the Gardens team from the top to the bottom is dedicated and show a real enthusiasm for their work and a pride and understanding for the job, it was a pleasure to see.’

Other Awards

16. The City Gardens have also participated in the London Garden Squares Awards and the results will be announced on 10 October.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

17. The achievement of winning these Awards supports most of the themes in the City Together Strategy, including ‘supporting our communities’, ‘protecting, promoting and enhancing our environment’, and a City which is ‘vibrant and culturally rich’ and ‘is safer and stronger’. Maintaining a Green Flag Award for each Open Space supports the strategic aim in the departmental Business Plan ‘to provide safe, secure and accessible Open Spaces and services for the benefit of London and the nation’.

Conclusion

18. This has been another highly successful year for the City Corporation in the Green Flag and London in Bloom Awards and the high standards set within its Open Spaces have again been acknowledged nationally. The City also has the highest number of Green Heritage Sites in the country. The achievement of these Awards is a great tribute to the dedication and the hard work of all the staff in the Open Spaces Department, including the City of London Cemetery and Crematorium, and the large teams of local volunteers who help to maintain the high quality of our Open Spaces

throughout the year. Future management plans across the Open Spaces will continue to be influenced by the criteria used in the Green Flag Awards scheme.

19. The Green Flag Award Scheme is the impetus for an ever-increasing improvement in the quality of our parks and green spaces. It continues to provide an independent assessment of each site against prescribed criteria, although the future management arrangements for the Scheme need to be confirmed in the coming year. As the benchmark against which the quality of public parks and green spaces is measured, it is important that the standards are maintained and that recommendations to improve service delivery are carefully considered and where possible implemented.
20. The Open Spaces Department's success in winning a number of national and London Awards is being reported to the Court of Common Council meeting on 25 October 2012.

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EPHING FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN STEERING GROUP

Thursday, 27 September 2012

Minutes of the meeting of the Epping Forest Management Plan Steering Group held at Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Thursday, 27 September 2012 at 2.00pm

Present

Members:

Barbara Newman (Deputy Chairman)	Verderer Richard Morris
Deputy Catherine McGuinness	Verderer Dr. Joanna Thomas
Verderer Peter Adams	Paul Thomson, Superintendent of Epping Forest
Verderer Michael Chapman	

Deputy Catherine McGuinness participated via teleconference.

Officers:

Edward Foale	- Committee & Member Services Officer, Town Clerk's Department
Esther Sumner	- Town Clerk's Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Alderman Gordon Haines, Deputy Stella Currie and Gordon Whyatt.

2. RESPONSES TO TWO LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATIONS

Members considered a report of the Superintendent of Epping Forest, which provided a complete response to the London Borough of Waltham Forest's (LBWF) Development Management Policies consultation for discussion and a draft response to an early stage Local Plan issues and Options consultation by Epping Forest District Council (EFDC).

Relative to the Draft response to Epping Forest District Council (appendix 2 of the report), Members made the following comments:

Draft Letter – substitute “Conservators” for “we” and mention that the City of London Corporation as the Conservators of Epping Forest.

Section 2 – Vision and Aims

- In response to a Member's query, the Superintendent confirmed that “green infrastructure” referred to the linkage between, and chaining of, open spaces.
- A Member expressed concern that the lowest projection for all areas was the equivalent of 20,000, compared with 10,000 mentioned in the report.

Section 3 – Green Belt and natural and built heritage

- The Superintendent confirmed that where the response advised that Epping Forest Land covered 5% of the District, this did not include the buffer land.
- The Deputy Chairman expressed concern with regard to the quality of the maps used in the local plan consultation document. Members agreed to request higher quality maps. The Superintendent undertook to investigate the possibility of allowing the District to use the City's maps, although he believed that a fully accurate map of the Forest and buffer areas did not exist.

Questions 5e and g

- Members agreed that the response should make reference to brown belt as well as green belt.

Question 8 – biodiversity options

- A grammatical error was amended as follows: “the other bullet points *emphasis* on investigate, encourage and monitor...”

Section 4 Options for Growth

- Members agreed the following amendment to the response: “The countryside beyond the Forest boundaries evolved over many centuries with the Forest and represents a landscape of great historic and cultural value, with linking Green Lanes, ancient and veteran trees, ancient woodlands, networks of paths and byways and other important features *set in a wider-developed countryside.*”

The Group discussed the way forward for the consultation and decided that the matter should be progressed at both officer and Member level. The Group agreed that the letter should be signed by the Chairman, rather than the Superintendent. Members also agreed that discussions should take place with the Remembrancer to see what support he could offer. Members noted that EFDC occasionally had meetings with MPs from local constituencies, and the City could submit a briefing note for consideration at this meeting.

Members believed that the report contained insufficient analysis of transport matters in the area. A Member queried whether extending the Central Line between Epping and Ongar would mean that during rush hour the trains would have more commuters than current capacity allowed. The Superintendent undertook to obtain Central Line figures from Transport for London in order to progress this query.

A Member queried why Northweald did not appear in the consultation as it was a well-connected area of considerable size. Another Member advised that there may be heritage factors affecting this matter.

Diagram 4.19 – Theydon Bois Options for Growth

- The Group decided not to comment on option THB-A, and to object to THB-B and THB-C.

Diagram 4.21 – Waltham Abbey

- Members did not consider the objection to WAL-B to be appropriate.
- Members believed a stronger objection should be made to WAL-C
- Members believed WAL-G was unwise as the plan was south of the M25.

Members received and endorsed the Superintendent's response to the London Borough of Waltham Forest relative to its Development Management Policies Consultation (appendix 1 to the report).

3. **QUESTIONS**

There were no questions.

4. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

The meeting closed at 3.34pm

Chairman

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Agenda Item 9

Committee(s):	Date(s):	Item no.
Epping Forest & Commons	5th November 2012	
Subject: Formal responses to two Local Plans		Public
Report of: Superintendent of Epping Forest SEF 36/12		For decision
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Summary</u></p> <p>This report presents completed formal responses to London Borough of Waltham Forest's (LBWF's) Development Management Policies and a Local Plan <i>Issues and Options</i> consultation by Epping Forest District Council (EFDC), which is at an earlier stage in its forward planning process.</p> <p>Due to the timescales, the response to LBWF was completed online by officers and a covering letter sent to the Head of Planning Policy from the Superintendent. The development management policies of LBWF are considered broadly protective of the Forest and the response, which was reviewed at a Management Plan Steering Group meeting on 27th September, in general welcomes LBWF's approach (Appendix 1). It is proposed that officers undertake further engagement with LBWF in its final formulation and implementation of the Development Management Policies.</p> <p>The consultation on housing and economic growth policies by EFDC, entitled <i>Community Choices: Issues & Options</i>, puts forward proposals to develop significant areas of currently protected Green Belt immediately around the Forest. As such it is of considerable concern. The robust and critical response to the EFDC consultation followed considerations made at the Committee's Management Plan Steering Group. Due to the restrictive timescales, approval of the final response was sought under urgency procedures and the Chairman responded on behalf of the Conservators to EFDC's Director of Planning and Economic Development (Appendix 2).</p> <p>Recommendations</p> <p>It is recommended that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • you approve both responses sent to the two local authorities; • you approve further engagement by officers with both local authorities on the basis of these responses so that the Local Plan policies can be modified and developed; • I report back to you on any changes to Local Plan policies as a result of the discussions with the two authorities. 		

Main Report

Background

1. This report presents two formal responses to two separate Local Plan consultations carried out by the London Borough of Waltham Forest (LBWF) and Epping Forest District Council (EFDC).
2. The aim of the report is to provide an opportunity for the detailed responses to be considered further to guide follow-up discussions with the two local authorities.

Current Position

3. The two councils are at very different stages of their Local Plan cycles. LBWF adopted its Core Strategy document in March 2012 following the finding by a planning inspector that it was 'sound' and so could be formally adopted. The document had incorporated the majority of the comments made by Epping Forest officers in a response compiled online in February 2011.
4. In contrast EFDC is only at an early consultation stage examining issues and options for their Plan following months of data collection. Despite this difference the timescale has been fore-shortened for EFDC by the Government's decision that existing Local Plans will cease to have effect from April 2013. EFDC's response now is to produce a draft Plan by May 2013 for examination in public and adoption a year later in 2014.
5. The EFDC Plan, therefore, is at a critical stage and if a Plan is not adopted it will leave the District, and the Forest, exposed to development proposals without the framework of Local Plan policies to inform decisions by councillors or planning inspectors.

Proposals

6. The response to LBWF has been completed online to a tight deadline and is present here in Appendix 1 as a covering letter and detailed response document. The response has been completed and sent to LBWF and the consultation period is closed. However, it is likely that there will be further discussions on detail. Therefore, this report seeks approval on the response to allow a framework for further engagement with LBWF to ensure implementation of the proposed additions and amendments.
7. The LBWF Development Management Policies (DMPs) are looking to translate the strategic policies of the adopted LBWF Core Strategy into more detailed policies and actions, which will now inform planning decisions and allocations of development across the Borough.

8. Broadly the Core Strategy objectives are protective of Epping Forest and the DMPs in general strengthen these commitments. The comments that have been made in our response seek to ensure that there is clarity in the translation of Core Strategy into the more detailed DMPs and that the overarching duties of the local authority towards Epping Forest are fully incorporated into the policies.
9. The LBWF policies are welcomed as being strongly supportive of the Forest and its SAC status. They set out a pro-active stance by the Council towards protecting the Forest from air pollution and development whilst seeking to provide a multifunctional green infrastructure to link other green –spaces to the Forest with corridors for access and wildlife. This is broadly very positive and the Council in its Core Strategy seems to have accepted most of our comments, which provides room for optimism about its likely response to this latest consultation exercise.
10. The EFDC’s consultation document is largely centred on how to accommodate development in the Green Belt. Having successfully protected most of the Green Belt in Epping Forest District for the last 20 years this consultation represents a significant departure from the Council’s previous approach and seems, at this stage, to represent a considerable threat to the Forest.
11. The document only pays cursory attention to environmental issues and provides only 3 or 4 limited references to the Forest. It does not give the legislative context for the Forest’s status and protection or the Council’s role as a Competent Authority.
12. Furthermore, there is great emphasis on development and options for growth with few counterbalancing options or proposed policy. There are considerable and worrying gaps in this document and it presents some stark choices. The analysis of the housing requirements seems to be inadequate for the proposals put forward. As a result the response made by the Chairman on behalf of the Conservators under urgency procedures is detailed and critical. It attempts to fill the considerable gaps and to tackle head on some of the challenges to the protection of the Forest, the Buffer Lands and the surrounding landscape.

Strategic Implications

City Together

13. The responses made to both local authority documents are made in the context of the *City Together* vision of a *World Class City* and, specifically “A World Class City which protects, promotes and enhances our environment”.

Open Spaces Department Business Plan

14. The content of the responses to the two documents (see Appendices 1 and 2) follow directly from the Open Spaces Department’s Strategic Aim of: “providing high quality accessible Open Spaces and services in accordance with nationally recognised standards for the benefit of London and the Nation”.

Epping Forest Management Plan

15. Responding to the Local Plan documents and seeking to influence the forward development plans of the two authorities is critical to the Epping Forest Management Plan Vision for the 21st Century, in particular:

- “Epping Forest’s position as a unique and ancient landscape for people and wildlife will be strengthened;
- “The Forest will retain its natural aspect with the diversity of wildlife habitats enhanced and the features of international importance, including its veteran pollards, protected;
- “Epping Forest will be highly valued as part of a larger and fully accessible protected landscape area”.

Conclusions

16. The response to the EFDC consultation needed to be robust and critical as the housing estimates were of considerable concern and the proposed developments in the protected Green Belt, which were based on these estimates, would affect significant areas of land immediately adjacent to the Forest and its Buffer Lands. Approval is sought by this report to maintain the robust response to the EFDC Local Plan and to seek changes in the proposals to benefit the Forest and reduce adverse impacts where possible. The LBWF Development Management Policies (DMPs), on the other hand, were considered broadly protective of the Forest and the response made to the consultation was aimed at strengthening the links between Core Strategy and the greater detail of the DMPs for the benefit of the Forest. The proposed adoption of a specific policy to protect Epping Forest (DM42) has been welcomed in the response letter.

Background Papers:

The Epping Forest Management Plan 2004 – 2010

London Borough of Waltham Forest Core Strategy March 2012

London Borough of Waltham Forest Development Management Policies Consultation August 2012

Epping Forest District Council - Planning Our Future: Community Choices – Issues and Options for the Local Plan Consultation Document July 2012.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Completed covering letter and detailed response to London Borough of Waltham Forest

Appendix 2: Completed covering letter from the Chairman and detailed response to Epping Forest District Council

Contacts:

Dr Jeremy Dagley, Conservation Manager

jeremy.dagley@cityoflondon.gov.uk

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APPENDIX 1
Completed Response
to
London Borough of Waltham Forest
Development Management Policies
Consultation

Open Spaces Department
Sue Ireland BSc, MSc, MIPGS
Director of Open Spaces

Mr Gordon Glenday
Head of Planning Policy and Regeneration
Sycamore House
Waltham Forest Town Hall
Forest Road
London E17 4JF

Telephone 020 8532 5305
Fax 020 8508 2176
Email sue.rigley
@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Our ref LBWF/DMP

Date 17 September 2012

Dear Gordon,

**LONDON BOROUGH of WALTHAM FOREST
DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES CONSULTATION
RESPONSE of the CONSERVATORS of EPPING FOREST**

The Conservators of Epping Forest wholeheartedly welcome and support the Core Strategy (CS) Objectives and Policies upon which the Development Management Policies (DMPs) are founded. The Conservators also support the general approach taken to drawing out the DMPs from the CS and the justifications for the range and scope of the DMPs. In particular, the Conservators welcome the inclusion of Policy DM42 specifically recognising the strategic importance, contribution and significance of Epping Forest in the Borough.

In the **Appendix** to this letter we set out our detailed comments on the DMPs and the accompanying *Justification* texts. These detailed comments have already been submitted online through the LBWF Planning Portal and are brought together here to provide a comprehensive overview of the Conservators' submission.

We look forward to your Council's response to our submission and to further refinement of the DMPs, which we hope will provide the basis for a fruitful working partnership aimed at protecting and enhancing Epping Forest.

Yours sincerely

Paul Thomson
Superintendent of Epping Forest

Appendix –Response to LBWF's Development Management Policies Consultation

DM13 - Issues

Correction to Green Box

The Strategic Objective should be no. 5 not 6.

Para 14.4

In the Conservators' view the protection of the Green Belt is of key importance, particularly given the limited number of green and open spaces in the Borough and the imperative to protect and buffer Epping Forest SAC. We welcome Policy DM13A which seems unequivocal but we are concerned that para 14.4 somewhat undermines this where it states:

"Although most development will not normally be acceptable in the Green Belt and MOL, there may be exceptions where the development is necessary."

The paragraph then goes on to define the exceptions which relate to ancillary facilities such as changing rooms and storage. However, the Government's NPPF is clear that ancillary facilities as exceptions should not be allowed unless there are very special circumstances. We are concerned that open space is at such a premium in the Borough and may be important in protecting the Forest's "natural aspect" that para 14.4 should not be interpreted as allowing buildings into open space which would intrude upon or adversely affect the boundaries or character of the Forest and might contribute to increased disturbance.

Policy DM14 comments

DM14H

The Conservators warmly welcome the support of the Council as the Competent Authority in seeking to reduce the impacts of air pollution on Epping Forest in relation to development proposals.

Para 15.1 Issues

The Conservators of Epping Forest have developed a Forest Transport Strategy (FTS), which is currently being implemented within the Essex County Council area of the Forest. The Conservators have been seeking the adoption of this FTS by the Council and have been discussing options such as enhanced crossing points, speed limit reductions and gateways/zoning with Council officers since 2008 with some progress on schemes in Forest areas such as along Rangers Road in Chingford. We would now wish to further refine existing proposals and develop new proposals with Council officers with the aim of the adoption of a Borough Forest Transport Strategy by the Council.

Para 15.1 Proposed changes

We would request the addition of a new 3rd sentence to be inserted between the current 2nd and 3rd sentences as follows:

"In seeking to protect and enhance the green corridor of Epping Forest (see Policies DM36 and DM42) the Council will seek agreement with the Conservators of Epping Forest on a Forest Transport Plan that will aim to enhance the visitor experience and access into the Forest whilst reducing the impact of air pollution, traffic and roads on the internationally-important Forest environment."

In addition to adding this sentence to para 15.1 we would request that consideration be given by the Council to adding a Policy DM14I specific to the protection of Epping Forest to the blue Policy box below para 15.2.

Para 15.23 Issues

Para 15.23 provides a welcome statement of the problems in conserving Epping Forest and reducing the impacts of air pollution on this internationally-important site. We would request an additional sentence to reflect the current situation.

Para 15.23 proposed changes

We would propose the insertion of the following sentences as new 2nd and 3rd sentences of the para 15.23:

"Recent scientific research carried out by Imperial College London and the Conservators of Epping Forest, found that nitrogen deposition across all areas of Epping Forest within the Borough exceeds the Critical Load for the Forest habitats. Therefore, any further significant increase would not be sustainable for the favourable condition of the Forest and reducing the levels of air pollution should be the long-term aim in the Borough."

Policy DM25 Environmental Protection - comments

DM25 Issues

The Policy wording as currently set out does not make clear the need for the protection of the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC) from air pollution. This should be included here, as it has been in other policies in the DMP, because of the Council's duty as a Competent Authority to ensure Appropriate Assessment of any developments considered likely to have an adverse impact on the integrity of the Forest. Given that the nitrogen deposition Critical Loads and the Critical Levels of air-borne nitrogen oxides are exceeded in the Forest any additional air pollution is likely to have an adverse impact on the integrity of the Forest vegetation and soils.

DM25 – changes proposed

In DM25C we would suggest the insertion of a new 2nd sentence to read:

"Any new development that may generate pollution that would adversely impact on Epping Forest SAC or add 0.1kgN/ha/year to the Critical Load of nitrogen deposition on the Forest would be subject to an Appropriate Assessment by the Council as the Competent Authority under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010."

Policy DM25 para – 26.8 Issues

This paragraph, in our opinion, needs further explanation of the context for the protection of Epping Forest from air pollution.

Policy DM25 para – 26.8 proposed changes

We consider that the penultimate sentence should be expanded to read:

"In particular, any negative impact on Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC) will need to be minimised in accordance with the protection to its integrity under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. An Appropriate Assessment may need to be carried out by the Council as the Competent Authority to determine if air pollution would adversely affect the Forest and if so what measures would need to be taken to prevent this adverse impact including refusal of planning consent."

Policy DM36 –Biodiversity - comments

DM36 Issues

The Conservators of Epping Forest welcome Strategic Objective 5 and the accompanying Core Strategy Policy 5 (CS5), which they consider comprehensive, robust and clear. However the Development Management Policy DM36 does not seem to fully incorporate the key aims of CS5 and does not seem to make clear links back to CS5 or to national policy. For example, in DM36A only SINCs are cited in relation to development. In DM36B & 36F mitigation is not included and the legislative framework within which planning decisions affecting biodiversity are made is not set out.

DM36 – Proposed changes

DM36A needs to make clear the whole range of site designations within the borough and specifically needs to emphasise the importance and legal protections for the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The policy should make clear the steps involved in the consideration of development proposals that may adversely affect the SAC and SSSI areas. As stated clearly in the CS5 London Borough of Waltham Forest is the Competent Authority under Part 1 Regulation 7 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (the Habitats Regulations 2010). As such LBWF is required, subject to certain exceptions, to revoke, restrict or refuse planning permissions that would adversely affect the integrity of Epping Forest SAC. To enable decisions to be made LBWF as competent authority may seek guidance of other authorities such as Natural

England and may require an Appropriate Assessment to be carried out. The protection of the SSSI is also stronger than that covering SINCs and this needs to be stated as it must affect how LBWF examines development proposals that might affect Epping Forest. Although LBWF's role as a Competent Authority is clear in the Core Strategy, in the DMP it is not referred to in either the Policy DM36 or the subsequent Justification section.

In terms of enhancement of biodiversity Section 40 of the Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006 places a duty on public authorities to have regard to conserving biodiversity. This legislative pillar should be referred to in DM36A in our opinion to make it clear the key importance attached to ensuring that the cumulative affect of developments should not further reduce or compromise wildlife that is at risk. As the draft DMP states in para 37.2 the borough "contains one of the highest percentages of priority species and habitats in London" and these are priority precisely because they are rare, limited or vulnerable to threats from development or land management changes. The *Justification* for DM36 expresses this well in paras 37.5 and 37.6 but this does not seem to have been incorporated effectively into the wording of the Policy DM36.

This gap between the *Justification* text and that within the Policy DM36 is also apparent in DM36B and DM36F where mitigation measures need to be emphasised, as they are in DM36G. We would suggest that in DM36B the sentence is added:

"...where retention, restoration or enhancement measures are not considered possible mitigation and compensation measures should be clearly set out with supporting evidence for their effectiveness and relevance in relation to supporting the specific biodiversity value of the borough and its key international sites".

For DM36F it should emphasise more clearly, in our view, that if protection and enhancement are compromised, particularly in relation to green corridors linking to Epping Forest, that replacements are sought. There is much evidence for the importance of green corridors and a network of green islands in supporting biodiversity and also mitigating the impacts of climate change and pollution. Scientific research work on birds has shown that species richness in urban areas is strongly affected by tree numbers and distribution and there have been similar findings for bats and other protected species. Research has also shown clearly how trees ameliorate the impacts of air pollution on people living in cities. Establishing corridors and links with suitable native trees would improve the environment for local people significantly and help to "buffer" and support Epping Forest's biodiversity.

DM36 - Para 37.5 – comments and proposed changes

The Conservators of Epping Forest support the approach of this paragraph but consider that more emphasis needs to be placed on the legislative requirements for protecting biodiversity.

A suggested change to the text could be:

"Waltham ForestWhen assessing planning applications LBWF must discharge its duties as a Competent Authority in assessing potential development impacts in relation to Epping Forest SAC and will also have regard to its duty under the NERC Act 2006 to conserve biodiversity across the borough and, in particular, where such conservation is likely to enhance the biodiversity of Epping Forest SAC/SSSI."

Policy DM42 – Epping Forest **DM42 Issues**

The Conservators of Epping Forest wholeheartedly welcome the inclusion of this specific Epping Forest policy in the DMPs. However, in line with our comments on the Biodiversity Policy DM36 there are some modifications and additions that we consider essential.

Firstly, in the Strategic Objective box it is wrongly assigned as 6 rather than 5, which it now is. Further in paragraph 43.1 it needs to state clearly the full legal protection that the Forest enjoys as the DMP text currently only states that Epping Forest is a Site of Nature Conservation Importance in the borough - which is an inadequate summary of the site's significance, which elsewhere in the Core Strategy is accurately conveyed.

Secondly, in para 43.1 the sentence does not express the City of London's legal title correctly.

In paragraph 43.1 it needs to state clearly that although LBWF does not control Epping Forest, in relation to development proposals LBWF is the Competent Authority under the Habitat Regulations 2010 and needs to work closely with both the Conservators and Natural England in order to ensure the protection of the Forest from development.

In the Policy box the title Policy DM42 needs to be inserted.

Policy DM42A does not accurately reflect the Council's role in the protection of Epping Forest

In Policy DM42C the size of Epping Forest needs to be stated which provide a clear justification for the inclusion of a specific Epping Forest Policy in the Local Plan.

The Epping Forest long term management objectives stated are those of the 1998 Epping Forest Management Plan. These have been updated into 8

Objectives under the current management plan that was approved by the Conservators in 2004 and we would ask that these current 8 Objectives are substituted in the Policy DM42 - and these are given in the box below.

DM42 Proposed changes

Strategic Objective 5 needs to be inserted in the green box.

In paragraph 43.1 substitute "City of London Corporation as the Conservators" for Corporation as this is the correct legal title of the Conservators' parent body.

In 43.1 the opening sentence should read:

"Epping Forest as a Special Area of Conservation, Site of Special Scientific Interest and Site of Nature Conservation Importance is not controlled....."

Following this corrected sentence we request that a further sentence be inserted that reads:

"The Council is however the Competent Authority in relation to Epping Forest SAC under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and will discharge its duties by ensuring that it undertakes Appropriate Assessments of development proposals where necessary and works with other competent authorities and the owner to ensure the protection of the integrity of the SAC."

For DM42A it should state: "The Council, as is its duty as Competent Authority, will resist development that would compromise or adversely affect the integrity of Epping Forest SAC and will work closely with the Conservators of Epping Forest and other competent authorities to promote the conservation and enhancement of the features of interest and, more broadly, provide support to ensure that the green corridor for people and wildlife provided by Epping Forest's SAC/SSSI/SINC areas is integrated with and connected to other areas of nature conservation in the borough to ensure improved sustainability of protected species populations and habitats across the whole area."

In DM42B this should be re-phrased in the light of the fact that Epping Forest is an open space with entirely open public access protected by Act of Parliament. We suggest:

"The Council will seek to ensure that any Improved facilities incorporate design features that reduce the impacts of disturbance, reduce the potential for damage to and raise awareness amongst the visitors of the nature conservation interests of the Forest to the maximum extent possible and in proportion to the likely impact of the facilities."

In DM42C we would recommend that it is changed to read:

"In the light of the significance of Epping Forest as the largest area of open space in the borough (36% of all the borough's open space area), the

Council supports the Epping Forest Conservators in their efforts to increase the range and quality of the leisure and amenity provision for visitors, including local residents, in line with the latter's duties to provide for "recreation and enjoyment" of the Forest and subject to their compliance with the other policies of the Council within this plan."

In addition we would request that the following Epping Forest Management Plan Objectives are substituted in DM42C with the following current 8 Epping Forest Objectives:

"Resources: To ensure the best use of resources and the effective engagement of staff and others in the protection and conservation of the Forest as a unique open space;

Protection: To safeguard the physical and biological integrity of Epping Forest as a unique public open space and internationally-important site together with its protective Buffer Lands;

Access: To provide for the sustainable use of the Forest for the recreation, enjoyment and education of all;

Heritage: To preserve and interpret the varied heritage of the Forest for the education and interest of all;

Trees: To conserve the Forest's ancient pasture woodland and neighbouring wooded areas in a favourable condition;

Open Land: To enhance the mosaic of open habitats through extensive grazing, mowing and cutting, so as to encourage a varied sward together with a diversity of native flowering shrubs;

Wetlands: To maintain and enhance the network of ponds and bogs, streams, ditches and their banks for wildlife and amenity;

Monitoring: To maintain and enhance the diversity of wildlife in the Forest and its Buffer Lands by monitoring and responding to change and by regular auditing of the impacts of our management work."

DM42 – para 43.2 – Issues

In line with our comments above on Policy DM42, paragraph 43.2 needs to set out clearly the legislative context in which the Council is acting. This paragraph also ought to re-emphasise the significance of the green corridor to the borough.

DM42 – para 43.2 – proposed changes

Para 43.2 should include reference to the Habitat Regulations 2010 and to the status of the Council as Competent Authority for the SAC.

In Para 43.2 a second sentence could be inserted after the current opening sentence to state that :

"Epping Forest covers 11% of the whole borough area and provides a continuous coherent open space for the whole of the borough's eastern edge from south to north. It represents 36% of the borough's public open space and its protection is of immense importance to the protection and enhancement of the value and character of all the smaller open spaces nearby."

DM42 – para 43.6 Issues

Para 43.6 is not accurate and should be re-phrased.

DM42 – para 43.6 – proposed changes

We would suggest the following re-phrasing of para 43.6:

"Parts of the Forest in the north of the Borough are larger and surrounded by a lower density of residential properties and as a result are less intensively used. However, they are all accessible by public transport, by both bus and train, and in Chingford, within a short walk of the railway and bus stations and a local bus stop, at the northerly most point of the Borough, a new visitor, interpretation and education centre with cafe opened in July 2012 providing enhanced facilities for visitors and providing a gateway into the Forest and the Borough's open spaces."

We would also request that a map of Epping Forest, its facilities and the public transport links is provided in your final DMP. The Conservators can supply a map based on OS mapping which the Council could use under its Copyright Licence from the OS.

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APPENDIX 2
Response
to
Epping Forest District Council
Community Choices
Issues & Options for the Local Plan
Consultation

Chairman Epping Forest and Commons Committee

Alderman Gordon Haines

John de Wilton Preston
Director of Planning and Economic Development
Epping Forest District Council
Civic Offices
High Street
Epping
Essex CM16 4BZ

Date 15 October 2012

Dear Sir

EPHING FOREST DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN PUBLIC CONSULTATION on ISSUES & OPTIONS: OPTIONS for GROWTH RESPONSE of the CONSERVATORS of EPPING FOREST

The Conservators of Epping Forest are charged with the duties and responsibilities for conserving and protecting Epping Forest under the Epping Forest Act 1878. The Conservators are constituted as the Mayor & Commonalty of the City of London, owners of the Forest, whose full authority as the Conservators under the Act is vested in the Epping Forest & Commons Committee of which I am the Chairman.

We welcome the opportunity to comment on the Council's *Issues & Options* consultation document. The Conservators regard this document as crucial to the long-term protection of Epping Forest, its designated SAC/SSSI areas and its surrounding built and natural landscapes, with which it is still intimately linked. Epping Forest Land covers 5% of the District and, therefore, should be one of the fundamental building blocks around which the Local Plan is structured.

Epping Forest is a major public recreation and tourism destination for London and Essex. The Forest's 9.2 square miles receives some 4.3 million visits each year and makes a major contribution to the provision of public open space in Epping Forest District. Much of the Forest's appeal is associated with its natural character protected under its dedicated Parliamentary protection – the Epping Forest Acts of 1878 and 1880.

The Forest is also an internationally important IUCN Category IV Protected Area, consisting of significant areas of land protected by Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) status under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as

amended under the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) designation under European Union Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural habitats and wild fauna and flora, which is now transposed into UK law as the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.

This is the context which shapes our response to the Options for Growth and we reiterate our support for the protection of the Green Belt that your Council has ensured over the last 20 years. We consider that the Green Belt is vital for the protection of the Forest and its links to the surrounding countryside. The Green Belt has been vital for reducing the pressures on the Forest and any future Local plan must address itself to enhancing its natural beauty and biodiversity.

In our response attached to this letter we emphasise the importance of the Council's role as Competent Authority in assessing the impacts of development on the SAC. In addition to this reactive role we also request that the Council considers its proactive role in protecting the Forest and its surrounding historic treed landscape. We suggest that the Council develops robust green infrastructure and networks of open space for wildlife and access and ecosystem services

We hope that our detailed response (attached) will be the beginning of a dialogue with the Council over the period of the development of the Local Plan so that we can act in partnership to secure the protection and enhancement of the Forest as a unique landscape.

Yours sincerely

Mr Gordon Haines
Chairman, Epping Forest & Commons Committee

**Detailed response of the Conservators of Epping Forest
to the EFDC Community Choices - Issues & Options Consultation Sept 2012**

Section 2

Question 2 – Vision and aims

We believe that the Vision and aims need to be developed to be bolder and more clearly interlinked. In particular, we consider that the first aim should include development of policies that secure the strongest possible protection for Epping Forest and its associated Buffer Land, together with its 1882 Arbitration Award responsibilities.

There should also be reference to the development of a robust, extensive interlinked green infrastructure that would provide protection for the Forest and other key sites and provide benefits for both people and wildlife. For defining green infrastructure the Conservators support the Natural England/CPRE definition in Green Belts – a greener future - *‘A network of green spaces which provide life support functions including food, fibre, air to breathe, places for nature and places for recreation. The Green Infrastructure approach seeks to use regulatory or planning policy mechanisms to safeguard natural areas. Multi-functional green infrastructure refers to different functions or activities taking place on the same piece of land and at the same time. For example, a flood plain providing a repository for flood waters, grazing land, a nature reserve and a place for recreation’*.

At the moment the aims seem to sit rather separately from each other and it is not clear how potential conflicts would be tackled. We do, however, support the order of the aims listed and welcome the apparent prominence given to the protection of the Green Belt and the natural and built heritage.

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Section 3.

Green Belt and natural and built heritage

General comment on Section 3 of Document

Before addressing the specific questions asked under Section 3 there is a need to examine the context provided by Section 3, in which those questions have been raised.

Epping Forest Land, under the Epping Forest Act 1878, covers 5% of the District – as much area as covered by the built environment of Loughton, Chigwell, Buckhurst Hill and Waltham Abbey combined. With its Buffer Lands the protected areas cover over 7% of the District. Epping Forest is also a nature conservation area of international importance (Special Area of

Conservation) and of huge strategic significance for the District as a place of recreation and tourism with over 4.3 million visits a year.

Each of the towns and villages receive a separate section of description of their key features (paras 2.23 – 2.58 inclusive). However, Epping Forest, despite its status and significance to the District, receives only passing mention in paragraphs 2.21, 2.26, 2.35 and 3.3 with little explanatory context. In the following Diagram 3.1 the Forest is not even referenced in the accompanying key. The identification of the issues, therefore, is in our view incomplete and the context within which they are framed is inadequate, failing to make clear how the strategic area of the Forest might shape policy.

We believe these are critical omissions by the Council in the current consultation and we request that they are covered in the forthcoming Local Plan. Policy should be shaped by the strategic significance of the Forest and the protection of Epping Forest is a fundamental issue for the Council. It is one that needs to be addressed directly and clearly by ensuring the Forest is a key strategic area in the Local Plan. Given the growing development pressures it is essential, in our view, that policy in relation to the Forest should be strengthened.

The Council's duties as the Competent Authority for Epping Forest, in relation to development control, under Part 1 Regulation 7 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (the Habitats Regulations 2010) need to be set out. There should be a separate section on Epping Forest providing context for and explanation of the way in which its future will be secured and its biodiversity enhanced.

Proposed future Policy for Epping Forest's natural heritage

The current Plan Policy HC5 for Epping Forest should be updated with a strengthened and broader wording to reflect the enhanced duties of the Council and the increased threats to the integrity of the Forest. We would suggest that a new specific Policy for Epping Forest could be worded along these lines:

"The Council is one of the Competent Authorities in relation to Epping Forest SAC under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and will discharge its duties by ensuring that it undertakes Appropriate Assessments of development proposals where necessary to ensure the protection of the integrity of the SAC. More specifically, the Council, as is its duty as Competent Authority, will resist development that would compromise or adversely affect the integrity of Epping Forest SAC and will work closely with the Conservators of Epping Forest and other competent authorities to promote the conservation and enhancement of the features of interest. More broadly, the Council will provide support to ensure that the green corridor for people and wildlife provided by Epping Forest is integrated with and connected to a network of other areas of nature conservation in the District. Such support, as well as sustaining the Forest, will aim to provide the full

benefits to local people of open and accessible countryside whilst ensuring improved sustainability of protected species populations and habitats across the whole area."

This informs our responses to the specific questions posed in Section 3.

Questions 3 – 8 – Green Belt and natural heritage

Question 3 - Issues– our answer to this is that we do **not** consider that all the relevant issues have been addressed. An explanation as to why is given below.

In relation to biodiversity and wildlife sites the 6th bullet point beginning “*The NPPF...*” (page 16) is, in our opinion, entirely wrong. Having quoted the NPPF the conclusion is drawn that: “In reality, this means that local wildlife sites cannot receive much protection under the planning system”. Firstly, in order to plan for biodiversity at a landscape scale (NPPF para 117), there need to be biodiversity “source” sites to allow the spread of species across a landscape, and it will need “stepping stones” and “local ecological networks”. Local wildlife sites are essential elements of ecological networks often supporting species that are locally rare and would otherwise die out in the District. These sites are also key to supporting widespread species that are in severe decline, such as many farmland and woodland birds whose populations have fallen drastically over the last 40 years.

A good example of such a site is Fernhills, a 12ha site purchased in 1997 by the Conservators, situated to the east of the Sewardstone Road (A112) on Lippitt’s Hill and now incorporated into the Forest. This site is not part of the SSSI designation having been purchased after the re-notification in 1990. It has, however, long been a local wildlife site and today supports the Forest’s, and indeed the District’s, largest population of Adder’s tongue (a fern), a species with few remaining sites in eastern England. The site combined with adjacent Buffer land and the nearby privately-owned land is an essential hunting area for Barn Owls (a Schedule 1 species) and is a key area for Cuckoos (a species that has declined by 80% since the 1970s) to breed in because of the extensive mixed scrub habitat.

If such Local Wildlife Sites and groups of sites are not protected then this would be quite clearly going against one of the 12 ‘core principles’ embodied in the NPPF that, inter alia, states that planning should: “contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment....”. This policy guidance, of course, stems directly from legislation in the form of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 Section 40. This states that each public authority has a duty to conserve biodiversity. In Section 40(3) it is further clarified that this includes “restoring and enhancing a population”. The NPPF picks up this theme in para 117 by stating that planning policies should “promote the preservation, restoration and re-

creation of priority habitats, ecological networks..." and, crucially, the "recovery of priority species populations, linked to national and **local** targets.." (our emphasis in bold). This gives local wildlife sites considerable protection as part of ecological networks.

The Council's statement in the current document is tantamount to the abandonment of protection for these sites and to the reversal of its duty under the NERC Act 2006. The Conservators of Epping Forest cannot protect the Forest as an "island" in a sea of degraded landscape. Many of the recent recoveries of Forest fauna have been driven by expansions of wildlife across the existing ecological network, including Badgers, birds like Buzzards and Barn Owls, Ringlet and Purple Emperor butterflies.

Question 4 – Options – our answer to this is that we do **not** consider that all the relevant issues have been addressed. We consider that there are problems apparent in the way in which the issues are set out in the document. In fact we consider that the *Issues & Options* document is misleading in that it fails to mention the fundamental aim of Green Belts outlined in paragraph 133 (page 35) of the NPPF '*the fundamental aim of the Green belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green belts are their openness and their permanence*'.

Epping Forest stands in the vanguard of the Green Belt movement having been one of the key inspirations for the Metropolitan Green Belt as advanced by the Greater London Regional Planning Committee in 1935.

The Conservators are therefore particularly keen to maintain Green Belt that protects the context and setting of Epping Forest as a place where the modern concept was first inspired.

The protection of the Green belt has enjoyed strong cross-party consensus for the past 65 years, including reassurances during the recent Party conference season from the Secretary of State. Since 1959, the Conservators, for our part, have sought to further protect Green Belt land by acquisition as part of our 'Buffer Land' policy to protect the context and setting of Epping Forest. In 1974 the Greater London Council also supported this approach by purchasing and dedicating country estates adjoining the Forest under The Green Belt (London and Home Counties) Act 1938. The Conservators now own and administer the former GLC acquisitions. Many of these early acquisitions have now become 'strategic gaps' in the Local Plan proposals

Question 5b and Question 6 – the concept of the Green Arc

In response to question 5b we would like to see the concept of Strategic Green Belt corridors added to the concept of Strategic Gaps of Diagram 3.1 in recognition of the need to sustain an ecological network and to support and protect the Forest and its environs. For example we propose that the

western flanks of the Forest alongside the Sewardstone Road be recognised as a key area for biodiversity and a key area for the protection of the Forest.

The Conservators strongly urge the Council to adopt the concept of the Green Arc and to actively seek to support links between Lea Valley and Epping Forest and other sites (see also Question 8 below).

Questions 5e and g

Development of urban green-space is likely to be a retrograde step and so 5g is preferred to 5e. Urban green-space plays a critical role in people's quality of life. The Woodland Trust, amongst others, has compiled considerable scientific evidence to demonstrate this in its 2011 report on the State of the UK's forests, woods and trees.

Question 8 – biodiversity options

These are not adequately addressed in our opinion and as such should already be clear from comments above. The 4 bullet points of options are currently weak and suggest that the Council would take an indirect and/or minimalist approach. The first bullet point concentrates on mitigation and compensation rather than protection and enhancement of biodiversity which the NERC Act 2006 makes clear is the duty of a local authority. In the face of declining biodiversity this does not seem sufficient and with the need to protect irreplaceable features in the wider countryside, like the District's significant population of ancient and veteran Oaks, a stronger policy on biodiversity we believe is required.

The other bullet points' emphases on "investigate", "encourage" and "monitor" suggest very limited and indirect engagement with biodiversity in the forthcoming Plan. Given the NERC Act 2006 duty, and the importance of the Forest to the District's quality of life and overall character, a more proactive and direct approach is suggested. In the Conservators' view the protection of the Green Belt is of key importance with the imperative to protect and buffer Epping Forest SAC.

We consider that the Council's approach is important in directly enhancing the wildlife links between the Lea Valley and Epping Forest and, indeed, towards other sites like Hainault Forest. The Conservators consider that the Council should play a critical role in promoting green infrastructure (see definition given above on page 1 of this response) and enhancing such links around the Forest.

Question 11

Option 11a preferred

As with so much else in Section 3 of the consultation document we would favour the approach of managing areas and landscapes as a whole. This requires conservation character assessments to be made to avoid the reduction of places into component parts and the weakening of protections

from inappropriate development. It also allows the built heritage and the natural heritage, particularly the treed landscape, to be integrated. This is vital around the Forest boundaries where the conservation areas play an important role in maintaining the links and connections between Forest and the wider countryside (e.g. Copped Hall, Bell Common CAs).

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Section 4 Options for Growth

Protection of the Green Belt around the Forest

At this point the Conservators would wish to re-state their support for the full protection of the Green Belt and their opposition to its fragmentation and its development, especially around the Forest.

The countryside beyond the Forest boundaries evolved over many centuries with the Forest and represents a landscape of great historic and cultural value. This landscape includes linking Green Lanes, ancient and veteran trees, ancient woodlands including the purlieu woods beyond the Forest's Purlieu Bank, which itself still survives both within and beyond current Forest Land boundaries, networks of old paths and byways and other important features. This boundary of protective Green Belt, with its actively farmed land, is also of great importance for supporting and protecting the Forest's 'natural aspect' (for which the Conservators are responsible under the Epping Forest Act 1878), its tranquillity, its air quality (see our responses to Section 7 below) and its biodiversity.

As the Secretary of State for the Environment stated in 1986 in his decision to transfer the Warlies Estate to the Conservators:

"The Secretary of State considers that the historical links of these 1938 Act holdings (the Estate) with Epping Forest.....and the important ecological connections between them make it desirable that the management of these areas of land should be harmonised, so that each can be managed and maintained in accordance with the requirements of their particular Acts, for the greater benefit of both."

The Council actively campaigned for and fully supported this decision and the Conservators' ownership of this land. These opinions of the SoS still hold today for the wider area of Green Belt around the Forest and, in fact, are even more relevant due to losses elsewhere and the building of the M25. The Green Belt is important beyond the Buffer Land areas as the landscape protection and ecological connections cannot be confined to such parcels of land. A good example is provided by the Cobbins Brook valley which is an extremely important, relatively unspoilt floodplain landscape covered by multiple ownerships.

The need for Strategic Green Infrastructure

The Buffer Lands managed by the Conservators should be regarded as Strategic Green Belt gaps or Strategic Green Infrastructure in their entirety (i.e. adoption of a Green Arc policy – see comments below), rather than only some being selected (e.g. North Farm as selected in Diagrams 3.1 and 4.9). Strategic Green Belt ‘corridors’ and wildlife networks are required to retain a diverse, functional and accessible countryside with which the Forest needs to be linked. The Conservators would ask that the Council, in developing its policies, adopts the Epping Forest Management Plan Vision and, in particular, 2 of its 5 key points:

- *“Epping Forest’s position as a unique and ancient landscape for people and wildlife will be strengthened”;*
- *“Epping Forest will be highly valued as part of a larger and fully accessible protected landscape area”.*

The Green Arc and the “duty to co-operate” to protect Epping Forest

In order to make this vision a reality and in order to adequately protect the internationally important Special Area of Conservation at Epping Forest, which is a bigger issue than the District alone can tackle, we consider that the Council must adopt proactive, protective policies involving other authorities. Such an approach would be in line with paragraphs 113, 114, 117 and 157 of the NPPF and the requirements of Section 110 of The Localism Act 2011. This would include continuing its involvement and support for the Green Arc and embedding this approach in its protection of Green Belt land around the Forest.

The *Green Arc* Partnership was launched in 2003 to strengthen and link green spaces around the Forest, across the District and between local authorities. It is a particularly good example of co-operation aimed at protecting and linking an ecological and access network at a landscape scale. Both Epping Forest District Council and Essex County Council have been supportive and engaged with the partnership. The development of the Local Plan, in our view, provides a significant opportunity to consolidate the Green Arc vision and co-operative approach as policy and we believe this is a key role for the Council.

It is in the context of, and without prejudice to, the Conservators’ objection to the development of Green Belt land around the Forest that the following comments are now made with regard to the proposals for growth set out in Section 4 of the consultation document.

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Comments on the Section 4 Diagrams

Before commenting on the specific proposals around existing centres of development we must point out that the maps that have been used are inaccurate and, as with Diagram 3.1, do not highlight the importance of the Forest. The Forest areas shown in dark green on the maps seem to have been extracted from rudimentary maps of the more densely wooded areas of the Forest and do not represent the boundaries of the Forest. For example, in Diagram 4.12 Bell Common and Sheppard's Meadows are not represented at all. It is clear also that other wildlife sites, including Buffer Lands, are not indicated on the maps – including on Diagram 4.12 again in which Swaines Green is not shown on the western edge of Epping despite being an important part of the Buffer Land of Epping Forest adjacent to the Forest's ancient Green Lane network. Such inaccuracies and omissions fail to provide the full context for the proposed growth areas and, thereby, any potential for strengthening the green infrastructure and protecting ecological networks seems to be completely overlooked.

Diagram 4.1 (page 43) Harlow Options for Growth and Question 16

As well as opposing the development of Green belt around the Forest the Conservators remain concerned about the potential for proposed development at Harlow which may have an adverse impact on the Forest. In particular, the generation of increased traffic heading into London through Forest roads seems a high probability without any concomitant adjustment of the road infrastructure.

Question 18 – comment on HAR-C

The Conservators are opposed to HAR-C in particular and believe that the strategic constraints listed in the accompanying **Table 4.10** should prevent this land from being developed. It would breach a key landscape ridge which would make the development prominent over a very large area of the District, including across the unspoilt Cobbins Brook valley and Warlies Estate. It would also be adjacent to Epping Long Green, which is Forest Land and which we regard as an important part of the District's strategic green infrastructure that should be strengthened by the protecting of additional neighbouring land on its flanks.

4.11 Transport Network Focus

The general approach to the location of any new development seems to involve large expansions of development immediately around the north of Epping Forest because of the concentration away from rural areas. The consultation document neither takes sufficient account of the extra traffic generation due to the additional housing provision nor the inadequate transport networks into which such provision would be placed. There is no clarity about the major movement corridors and this must be a key consideration around these developments (see also carbon reduction comments below).

Such development, when taken together, may require an Appropriate Assessment to be carried out by the Council as a Competent Authority under the Habitat Regulations 2010. The Council would need to seek advice from and work with other Competent Authorities such as Natural England to consider the impacts of traffic growth on the Forest. In the discussion on page 54 this Competent Authority role is not mentioned and this seems to be an omission.

A key concern of the Conservators is that the proposed new developments will lead to a great increase of traffic through Forest roads. This would not be sustainable, in our view, as the Forest is already polluted beyond its capacity to absorb pollutants without further detrimental changes to its vegetation (Critical Load and Critical Levels of nitrogen pollutants are discussed under Section 7 below). Noise and disturbance are also key issues for maintaining the special nature of the Forest for wildlife and people. We consider that any growth proposals must be accompanied by a more detailed examination of transport options, road network capacity and traffic projections.

Diagrams 4.2 to 4.8 Spatial Options for Growth and Question 19

All of the options shown on the maps give considerable cause for concern, particularly as there seems to be no predictable pattern for future jobs growth, traffic growth patterns or additional infrastructure (e.g. roads) development. The inadequacy of the assessment of housing prevents a meaningful assessment in our view.

On the face of it Spatial Option 5 seems the least damaging of the options for Epping Forest, and the *Green Arc* area around it, but this is highly dependent on the improvement and development of a transport network that reaches out into the District. Without such improvement, traffic will increase towards Central Line destinations immediately around the boundaries of Epping Forest. The Forest is a constraint on the development of a car parking infrastructure.

There needs to be considerable focus on improving the transport network capacity, particularly for modal change in transport at transport hubs in the District. There is likely to be continuing and growing pressure for additional infrastructure beyond the boundaries indicated in the Settlement analyses shown in the remainder of Section 4.

Once the door is open on Green Belt development it seems unlikely to be closed in our view. This makes it all the more important to develop a robust strategic green infrastructure like the *Green Arc* with positive access and biodiversity features. A settlement analysis is not sufficient.

Spatial Options – Settlement analysis

Diagram 4.12 (page 95) Epping Options for Growth; Questions 35 and 36

In addition to our already stated objections to Green Belt development around the Forest the Conservators are particularly concerned about the proposals for growth in areas EPP-B, EPP-D, EPP-E, and EPP-F which lie close or adjacent to Forest Land and would be likely to lead to the deterioration of habitats through increased pressure and disturbance on the sites. The size of the infrastructure of EPP-D would result in a substantial shift in the “centre of gravity” of Epping Town and change its character whilst intruding against the ancient Green Lane and historic landscape of the area.

Diagram 4.17 (page 135)– North Weald airfield Options for Growth; Questions 51 to 57

Without the re-opening and development of the Central Line, links to the A414 or changes to the M11 any development here would have direct impacts on traffic growth in the Forest.

Diagram 4.19 (page 143)– Theydon Bois Options for Growth

The Diagram does not show the full extent of Forest Land or its Buffer Land. It also does not show the proposed 2nd Strategic Green Belt gap to the north of Theydon Bois and around the M25. THB-B would be of great concern to the Conservators as it is directly adjacent to Forest Land and would continue the erosion of the landscape around the Forest and intrude into its ‘natural aspect’. THB-C would represent a clear breach of the current village boundary envelope and would seem to open up the possibilities of a future much larger expansion of the village to the great detriment of the Forest’s landscape and “natural aspect”.

All the THB options are likely to generate considerable traffic through the Forest to Junction 26 of the M25 or into London, despite the Central Line station at Theydon Bois. This would increase pollution to the Forest habitats around the Wake Arms, including the features protected under the SAC designation.

Diagram 4.20 (page 147) Thornwood Common Options for Growth

As with North Weald development this development is likely to have a significant impact through the Lower Forest to the south. The Forest here has already lost some land to a flood alleviation scheme and further development in THO-B and THO-A seems likely to increase pressure for enhancements of the flood capacity and more potential damage to Forest Land around Thornwood Common.

The development of Randall’s Yard at THO-2 could remove a pollution and encroachment issue that has been a long-running concern for the Forest and has damaged its natural aspect and tranquility. However, residential development would have to be aimed at considerable enhancement of the

boundary with the Forest to prevent further degradation of an historic landscape boundary

Diagram 4.21 (page 153) – Waltham Abbey Options for Growth

We re-state our objection to the development of the Green Belt and these growth Options are of great concern to the Conservators because of their proximity to the important Buffer Lands and historic Forest Green Lanes. The Conservators strongly oppose development in WAL-C. WAL-C should in our view form part of a Strategic green belt Gap as it would be hard up against our Forest and Buffer Land boundaries and development here will further degrade the historic landscape of the Green Lanes and erode the green infrastructure around the Forest.

The requirement for infrastructure development on a large scale is ill-defined at present and is likely to raise further issues including the development of considerable traffic growth through the Forest on small roads of limited capacity. It is likely to significantly damage the rural character of Upshire and the surrounding Buffer Lands and increase disturbance to wildlife in the area.

WAL-D and WAL-E are also of major concern. They are along the Cobbins Brook valley which is a very important landscape and wildlife corridor that should in our view be protected as part of a Green Arc and provide flood storage capacity and other ecosystem services to Waltham Abbey town as a whole. If WAL-E were to be developed the flood alleviation scheme that has already intruded into the Cobbins Brook landscape might require further upgrading to the detriment of the natural beauty of the valley and at considerable extra cost.

The potential development proposed for WAL-G would extend any development land south of the M25 and breaching this boundary, besides building up considerable additional pressure along roads bounding and through the Forest, would seem to remove any restraining “envelope” around Waltham Abbey. It would be likely to encourage future attempts for “ribbon” development further south beyond the A121 and along the A112.

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Section 7 Transport Access and Movement

Question 90 – Issues

Epping Forest Transport Strategy

The existence of the Forest Transport Strategy adopted by Essex County Council and the Conservators in 2008 should be acknowledged as an important issue that should shape the Council's approach to transport issues in and around the Forest.

Air pollution issues

The text in **para 7.2** does not make clear the need for the protection of the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC) from air pollution. This should be included here because of the Council's duty as a Competent Authority to ensure Appropriate Assessment of any developments considered likely to have an adverse impact on the integrity of the Forest. Given that the nitrogen deposition Critical Loads and the Critical Levels of air-borne nitrogen oxides are exceeded across the Forest any additional air pollution is likely to have an adverse impact on the integrity of the Forest vegetation and soils.

Question 91 Options

Epping Forest Transport Strategy

The Options should include the formal recognition by the Council of the Forest Transport Strategy and we would further request that the Council considers adopting the Strategy insofar as it is able to implement or assist in the implementation or effectiveness of measures taken by Essex County Council and the Conservators, including:

- the development of "gateways" to the Forest;
- the reduction of the impact of traffic on the Forest;

and

- the encouragement and support for sustainable transport options such as the Epping Forest shuttle bus service that was started in 2011 and it is hoped will be continued from 2013.

Air pollution Options

The options under air quality and congestion are not sufficient in our view and the inadequacy of the housing assessment prevents a meaningful analysis in our view. We consider that an option should have been set out which would have led to a Policy compatible with the Council's duties under the Habitat Regs 2010 as follows:

"Any new development that may generate pollution that would adversely impact on Epping Forest SAC or add 0.1kgN/ha/year to the Critical Load of nitrogen deposition on the Forest would be subject to an Appropriate Assessment by the Council as the Competent Authority under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010."

In addition, the consequences of this policy for development proposals should be set out along these lines:

"Any negative impact on Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC) will need to be minimised in accordance with the protection to its integrity under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. An Appropriate Assessment may need to be carried out by the Council as the Competent Authority to determine if air pollution would adversely affect the Forest and, if so, what measures would need to be taken to prevent this adverse impact, including the refusal of planning consent."

Such a policy approach has been adopted by other Councils neighbouring the Forest and we believe that policies must include robust, meaningful thresholds to pollution.

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Section 8 Infrastructure and CIL

As emphasised already throughout our response, the provision of coherent, robust green infrastructure of high quality for access and wildlife is vital to the protection of the important wider Forest landscape as well as to the Forest itself. The second bullet point on page 187 should be expanded considerably to take on board the need to develop this green infrastructure and to identify linked sites within the *Green Arc* in particular.

For green infrastructure to be effective it must be strategically planned and coordinated with a strong master-planning element that will enable strategic connections to be achieved. In this regard the *Green Arc* represents a major opportunity to realise the early vision of the Green Belt movement and make valuable connections to the green infrastructure proposals made by neighbouring authorities.

Green space, and urban green space in particular, is hugely important for people's health and well-being and provides many ecosystem services including the removal of pollution. To make the most of CIL requires a green infrastructure strategy that other partners and stakeholders can sign up to.

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Section 9 Responding to Climate Change

Question 93

We do not consider that all relevant issues have been listed. In particular, biodiversity is not emphasised such as the need for a robust network of wildlife sites to allow species to respond to change (e.g. fluctuating butterfly populations). The importance of good green infrastructure development to provide ecosystem services, like flood control, also needs to be promoted and the Council should be identifying these ecosystem services and how they will be provided more clearly as part of its policies.

The impacts of air quality and traffic pollution are somewhat separate from Climate Change and should be covered in Section 7. However, the severe impacts of drought on the Forest vegetation and other key green spaces should be an issue for the Council and, in our view, this requires the options being considered more carefully.

Question 94

For Carbon reduction we would request (as in our comments on Section 7 above) that the Council considers the adoption of the Epping Forest Transport Strategy and looks to have a strategy to reduce vehicle emissions in both urban areas and across the Forest.

We consider that the Council must make a stronger link, when considering carbon reduction, between housing numbers, their locations and the associated transport network. To ensure this is the case the carbon reduction strategy needs to play a much more visible role in the document and become an interlinking thread throughout it.

An option that needs to be included is that of Tree Strategies and their continued development and their focussing on ameliorating climate change. There is much evidence, compiled by amongst others The Woodland Trust recently, that demonstrates conclusively the value of urban trees for ameliorating the impacts of air pollution and climate change and providing support for wildlife. We would request that these are added in as options for mitigating climate change, including specifically the planting and/or encouragement and maintenance of self-sown, open-grown, native trees to enhance corridors and links around the Forest's boundaries. Such a strategy would help to provide successors, eventually, to the thousands of ancient and veteran trees in the District, which help to define the character of the place.

Options should also include the consideration of options for biofuel and how the District will respond to any wood-fuel, short rotation coppice area developments as these may have an impact on landscapes including conservation areas.

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Section 7 Transport Access and Movement

Question 90 – Issues

Epping Forest Transport Strategy

The existence of the Forest Transport Strategy adopted by Essex County Council and the Conservators in 2008 should be acknowledged as an important issues that should shape the Council's approach to transport issues in and around the Forest.

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and

- the encouragement and support for sustainable transport options such as the Epping Forest shuttle bus service that was started in 2011 and it is hoped will be continued from 2013.

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As emphasised already throughout our response, the provision of coherent, robust green infrastructure of high quality for access and wildlife is vital to the protection of the important wider Forest landscape as well as to the Forest itself. The second bullet point on page 187 should be expanded considerably to take on board the need to develop this green infrastructure and to identify linked sites within the Green Arc in particular. Green space and urban green space in particular is hugely important for people's health and well-being and provides many ecosystem services including the removal of pollution. To make the most of CIL requires a green infrastructure strategy that other partners and stakeholders can sign up to.

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Options should also include the consideration of options for biofuel and how the District will respond to any wood-fuel, short rotation coppice area developments as these may have an impact on landscapes including conservation areas.

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Agenda Item 10

Committee(s):	Date(s):	Item no.
Epping Forest & Commons Projects Sub-Committee	5 November 2012 21 November 2012	CS 412/12
Subject: Options Appraisal - Jubilee Pond, Relining and Enhancement	Public	
Report of: The City Surveyor	For Decision	
<u>Summary</u>		
<p>Following a feasibility study and public consultation the original concrete lined “Model Yacht Pond” on Wanstead Flats was reinstated as a clay lined natural conservation pond and is now known as Jubilee Pond. The construction was completed in September 2002.</p> <p>Water loss at the pond was reported and several investigations have been undertaken to identify the reason and extent of the leakage in the clay liner.</p> <p>It has been identified that the installation of an impermeable liner is the best option to address the leakage. The City Surveyor has a budget of £200,000 in place under the 2010/11 additional works programme.</p> <p>A separate project to undertake landscaping at Jubilee Pond is scheduled for early 2013 through the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Branching Out project. This work includes a new accessible trail, pond dipping deck, signage and information, and planting of vegetation to encourage a wider variety of wildlife.</p> <p>The additional works programme would fund the new lining. However there is an expectation in the local community that I will arrange for surface water to be captured, to supplement the borehole water supply. These improvements would be in addition to the HLF funded works.</p> <p>The works should make the pond watertight, to ensure that the City can remain within the terms of its water abstraction licence. Although the abstraction will continue as it is required to address evaporation. Relining will demonstrate to the Environment Agency responsible use of the aquifer.</p> <p>The use of a liner rather than relining with clay will save a considerable amount of earthworks and importing materials. The impermeable liner will be either a geosynthetic clay layer covered with a compacted layer of as dug material. Or a plastic, or rubber ‘geomembrane’, which would be installed in the same way and protected with as dug ballast. A geo-grid in the ballast may be installed to prevent puncturing the membrane.</p> <p>The relining project and the Branching Out landscaping will create and improve a healthy wetland habitat, which will emphasise City’s environmental sustainability commitments. The projects will also improve access to and the appearance of an important amenity for the local community. Wanstead Flats, on the south western edge of which Jubilee Pond is located, receives approximately 400,000 visits per year, making it one of the busiest areas in Epping Forest.</p>		

The relining works at Jubilee Pond were delayed, in order to accommodate the Police operation at Wanstead Flats for the London 2012 Olympics. It was agreed that the £170,000 payment by the Police for use of Wanstead Flats should be used for the benefit of Wanstead Flats and the public consultation favoured the Jubilee Pond repairs

The works identified to address the leakage need to be undertaken prior to the landscaping works to be carried out through the HLF funding. The Metropolitan Police funding is opportune.

Description	£
Works Costs	360,000.00
Fees	5,000.00
Staff Costs	5,000.00
Total	370,000.00
Funding Strategy	
Additional Works Programme	200,000.00
Metropolitan Police	170,000.00
Total Funding Requirement	370,000.00

Recommendations

It is recommended that Epping Forest and Commons Committee and Projects Sub Committee:

- i. Approve in principle the relining of Jubilee Pond and undertake enhancements to improve the area, namely capturing surface water to supplement the borehole water supply.
- ii. Continue under the streamlined project procedure: Gateway 5 report, with the authority to start work delegated to the City Surveyor.

Next Steps

The procurement strategy suggested for this project is a Design and Build contract.

Once the procurement process is concluded and a suitable contractor selected, it is anticipated that the works will commence on site before the end of 2012.

Due to the work previously undertaken on this scheme, the amount of officer time required to conclude the tender process will be minimal.

Consultation with local stakeholders will continue; once the new lining design solution is available all relevant stakeholders will be consulted.

Overview

1. Evidence of Need

Following a feasibility study and public consultation, the original concrete lined "Model Yacht Pond" on Wanstead Flats was reinstated as a clay lined natural conservation pond and became known as Jubilee Pond. Construction was completed in September 2002.

Jubilee Pond is a 9,000m² pond on Wanstead Flats, the water supply is derived from a borehole.

- The original brief required a puddled clay liner due to the possibility of cattle grazing in the area.
- Annual permitted abstraction from borehole is 12,950m³.
- At design water level (14.09m) the volume of the pond is 8,400m³.
- Investigations into leakage reported to Committee March 2011 by the City Surveyor.
- Works identified to repair leakage involve the installation of an impermeable liner.
- Other landscaping works are to be undertaken around the pond as part of the HLF Branching Out project, after the relining has taken place.

Water loss at the pond was reported and several investigations have been undertaken, to identify the reason and extent of the leakage.

It has been identified that the installation of an impermeable liner is the best option to address the leakage. The City Surveyor has a budget of £200,000 in place under the 2010/11 additional works programme.

The Metropolitan Police set up a Muster, Briefing and Deployment Centre on Wanstead Flats for the Olympics. It has been agreed that its payment for use of Wanstead Flats of £170,000 is to be used for the benefit of Wanstead Flats. The public consultation favoured the Jubilee Pond repairs. This was approved by Epping Forest and Commons Committee on 9 January 2012.

Landscaping of Jubilee Pond is scheduled for early 2013 through the HLF Branching Out project. This work includes a new accessible trail, pond dipping deck, signage and information, and planting of vegetation to encourage a wider variety of wildlife.

The works identified to address the leakage need to be undertaken prior to the landscaping works being carried out through the HLF funding. The Metropolitan Police

	<p>funding is opportune.</p> <p>The works should help to ensure that the City remains within the terms of its water abstraction licence. Abstraction will continue to be required to address evaporation. Relining will demonstrate responsible use of the aquifer to the Environment Agency, particularly in the current drought conditions.</p> <p>If the lining works are not undertaken by the end of the 2012 financial year, it is likely they will adversely affect the HLF Branching Out landscaping programme.</p>
<p>2. Success Criteria</p>	<p>Maintain the water in the pond at a level which satisfies the original aspirations, without excessive abstraction from the aquifer.</p>
<p>3. Project Scope and Exclusions</p>	<p>The additional works programme would fund the new lining. However there is an expectation in the local community to undertake enhancements to improve the area. This is additional landscaping (on top of HLF works) and capturing surface water to supplement the borehole.</p> <p>The possibility of utilising surface water from the surrounding area for the pond will also be investigated during the tender process.</p> <p>The project will not include the design and implementation of measures to prevent cattle entering the pond. Should cattle be reintroduced to the area the pond shall be protected using methods utilised elsewhere in Epping Forest.</p>
<p>4. Link to Strategic Aims</p>	<p>SA3: To provide valued services to London and the nation.</p> <p>The development of Jubilee Pond matches the City Together vision of a “World Class City”, one theme of which seeks to protect, promote and enhance our environment with a specific objective of “conserving and enhancing biodiversity”.</p> <p>The project would be creating and improving a healthier wetland habitat, both of which are part of our environmental sustainability commitments.</p> <p>Adopting the outcome of the public consultation further demonstrates the City's commitment to consulting and engaging the community in the decision making processes.</p>

5. Within which category does the project fit	Additional Works Programme - Revenue
6. What is the priority of the project?	B. Advisable
7. Governance arrangements	<p>A Project Board is recommended for this scheme. Chaired either by the Director of Open Spaces or the Superintendent of Epping Forest.</p> <p>Members to include City Surveyor's, Open Spaces and representation for local community group (Lakehouse Lake Project).</p>
8. Resources Expended To Date	<p>Due to the work already undertaken on this scheme the amount of officer time required to reach outline option appraisal stage has been minimal and has been met from local risk budget.</p> <p>A Health and Safety consultant has been appointed to assist with the project. £1,320.00.</p> <p>Licence for lawful development application £1,700.00.</p>
9. Results of stakeholder consultation to date	<p>Open Spaces (Keepers, Ecologists, Volunteers, Branching Out) have been involved in the project by developing the Risk Register and reviewing tender documents.</p> <p>London Borough of Redbridge, have approved Licence for lawful development application.</p> <p>The Local Community Group, Lakehouse Lake Project, has assisted with the Risk Register and has been actively involved in the development of the project brief.</p>
10. Commentary on the options considered	<p>The installation of an impermeable liner is the best option to address the leakage. Therefore this is the only option which has been considered. It is recommended that a design and build contractor is appointed to ensure an appropriate solution is installed.</p> <p>Presently the pond is leaking a large amount of water provided through licensed extraction from underground aquifer, where continued extraction may not be guaranteed. Underground leaks could also pose other technical and ground condition concerns and should not be permitted to persist.</p> <p>A considerable amount of earthworks would be required to reline with clay.</p> <p>Therefore to reduce the total quantity of earthworks and the amount of imported material, a geosynthetic clay layer (GCL) could be used and then covered with a</p>

	<p>compacted layer of soil, possible the material “as dug” (removed from the pond).</p> <p>An alternative liner is a ‘geomembrane’ which is either a plastic, or rubber material. Again the liner would be installed in the same way as the GCL and protected with “as dug” material, possibly with a geo-grid in the soil to prevent anything puncturing the membrane.</p> <p>The advice of the specialist contractor will be sought during the tender process.</p>
11. Consequences if project not approved	<p>If the lining works are not commenced by the end of 2012, it is likely they will adversely affect the HLF Branching Out landscaping programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reputation, if the new liner is not installed it is likely that the pond will eventually disappear. • Risk to wildlife if the relining is not carried out and the pond disappears. • Environment Agency may not renew abstraction licence post 2016, and if the repairs are not undertaken the pond could dry out. There is no guarantee that a new licence will be issued, however, previous discussions have proved positive, although no official commitment will be given yet by the Environment Agency. • Loss of valued local amenity, which is also the focus of active community engagement.

Information Common to All Options

12. Key benefits	Maintain the water in the pond at a level which satisfies the original aspirations, without excessive abstraction from the aquifer.
13. Programme and key dates	<p>Obtain approvals (Gateway 3/4) November 2012</p> <p>Tender period complete November 2012</p> <p>Contract period December 2012 – March 2013</p> <p>Landscaping works February 2013 – March 2013</p>
14. Constraints and assumptions	It has been assumed that the project will be undertaken as a design and build contract. Appointment of a separate design consultant would add to the cost and would have implications on the programme.
15. Risk implications	Overall risk is low, as this is a technically straightforward project. Risks will need to be carefully

	<p>managed to mitigate their impact.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost variations prior to or during construction. • Overrun of pond relining would impact on schedule for landscaping, incur additional costs and impact on the relationship with the local community. • Possible damage to new lining if works are not coordinated properly. • Reputation, if local people are not involved in and informed of the process. • Reputation if the pond is left to dry out. • Environment Agency may not renew abstraction licence post 2016. Previous discussions have proved positive, although no official commitment will be given yet by the Environment Agency. • Licence might be withdrawn irrespective of the completion of the works. • Cattle grazing. • Risk to wildlife if the relining is not carried out and the pond disappears.
16. Stakeholders and consultees	<p>Open Spaces (Keepers, Ecologists, Volunteers, Branching Out)</p> <p>Environment Agency</p> <p>London Borough of Redbridge</p> <p>Natural England</p> <p>Local Community Groups (particularly Lakehouse Lake Project)</p> <p>Chris Blandford Associates (Landscape Architects)</p>
17. Legal implications	Maintain standards of public open space
18. HR implications	Epping Forest staff will continue to manage the area
19. Benchmarks or comparative data	Wanstead Flats, on the south western edge of which Jubilee Pond is located, receives approximately 400,000 visits per year, making it one of the busiest areas in Epping Forest.
20. Funding strategy	<p>Additional Works Programme 2010/11 (£200,000)</p> <p>Metropolitan Police (£170,000)</p>
21. Affordability	It anticipated that the cost of the removal of the existing liner and implementation of an impermeable liner will be circa £300,000. Further enhancements such as

	additional vegetation, land drainage and a pond dipping area are possible within the budget.
22. Procurement approach	Design and Build contract. - 3 companies to be approached.

Options Appraisal Matrix

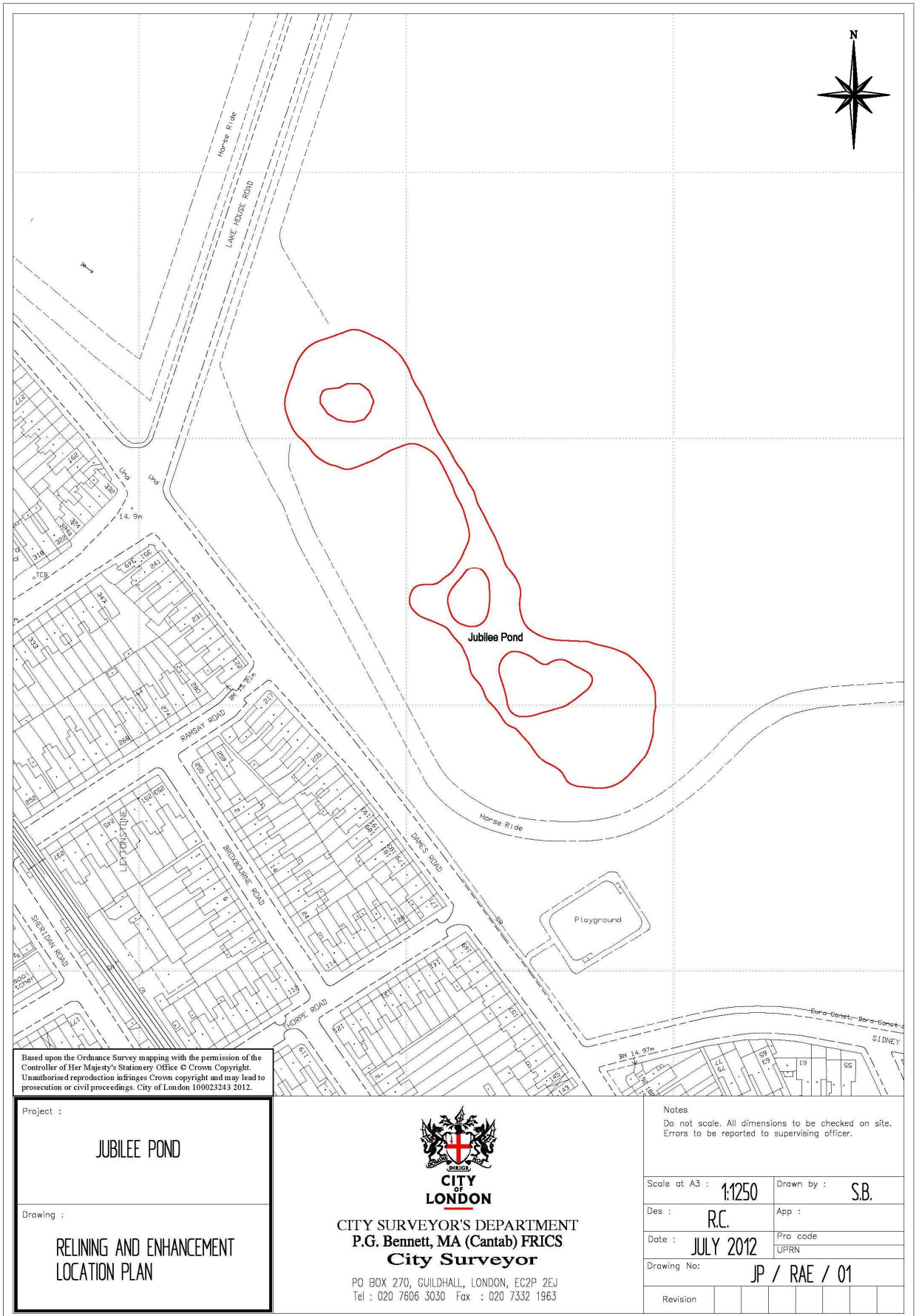
See separate document.

Appendices

Appendix 1	Location Plan
Appendix 2	Proposed Layout

Contact

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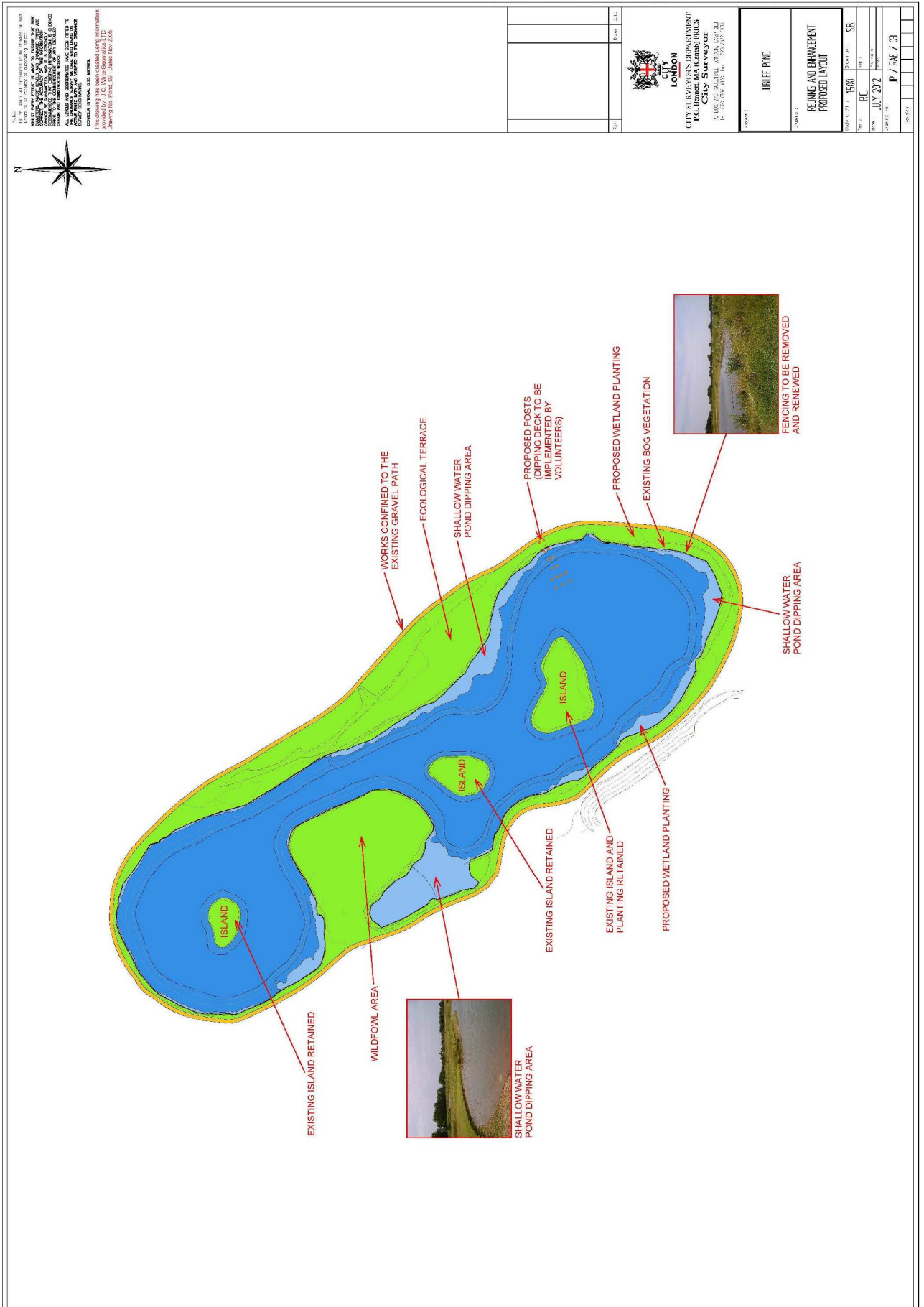
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Project :	JUBILEE POND
Drawing :	RELINING AND ENHANCEMENT LOCATION PLAN



CITY SURVEYOR'S DEPARTMENT
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City Surveyor
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Notes Do not scale. All dimensions to be checked on site. Errors to be reported to supervising officer.	
Scale at A3 : 1:1250	Drawn by : S.B.
Des : R.C.	App :
Date : JULY 2012	Pro code UPRN
Drawing No:	JP / RAE / 01
Revision	



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Options Appraisal Matrix

	<i>Option 1</i>
23. Brief description	<p>The use of an impermeable liner rather than relining with clay will save a considerable amount of earthworks and importing materials. The impermeable liner will be either a geosynthetic clay layer covered with a compacted layer of as dug material. Or a plastic, or rubber 'geomembrane', again the liner would be installed in the same way and protected with as dug ballast. A geo-grid in the ballast may be installed to prevent "punching through" to the membrane.</p> <p>The installation of an impermeable liner is the best option to address the leakage. Therefore this is the only option which has been considered.</p> <p>It is recommended that a design and build contractor is appointed to ensure an appropriate solution is installed and provide single point responsibility.</p> <p>Appointment of a separate design consultant would add cost and may have implications on the programme.</p>
24. Scope and Exclusions (where different to section 3)	N/A
25. Benefits and strategy for achievement (where different to section 10)	N/A
26. Programme (where different to section 11)	N/A
27. Constraints and assumptions (where different to section 12)	N/A
28. Risk implications (where different to section 13)	N/A
29. Stakeholders and consultees (where different to section 14)	N/A
30. Legal implications (where different to section 15)	N/A
31. HR implications (where different to section 16)	N/A
32. Benchmarks or comparative data (where different to section 17)	N/A

Financial Implications	Option 1
33. Total Estimated Cost (£)	£370,000.00
34. Anticipated source(s) of project funding (where different to section 18)	N/A
35. Anticipated phasing of capital expenditure	2012/13
36. Estimated capital value/return (£)	N/A
37. Fund/budget to be credited with capital return	N/A
38. Estimated ongoing revenue implications (£)	Continue payment (circa £500/year) for water abstraction, the current license runs until March 2016. Continued maintenance of pond, primarily through volunteers.
39. Source of ongoing revenue funding	Continue to source this through local risk
40. Fund/budget to be credited with income/savings	N/A
41. Anticipated life	Manufacturers suggest a 20 year lifespan for liners such as a geosynthetic clay layer or a plastic or rubber geomembrane. However this lifespan is dependent on the quality of the installation, maintenance and protection from punching through.
42. Investment Appraisal	Completing the project would create and improve this wetland habitat, which is part of the City of London's environmental commitment. It provides the opportunity to maintain the water in the pond at a level which satisfies the original aspirations, without excessive abstraction from the aquifer.
43. Affordability (where different to section 19)	N/A
44. Proposed procurement approach (where different to section 20)	N/A

45. <u>Recommendation</u>	
46. Reasons	<p>The installation of an impermeable liner is the only practical option to address the leakage and therefore the only option considered.</p> <p>It is recommended that a design and build contractor is appointed to ensure an appropriate solution is installed to the City's requirements and provide single point responsibility..</p>

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Committee(s):	Date(s):	Item no.
Epping Forest & Commons	5 November 2012	
Subject: EPPING FOREST GRAZING MONITORING AUDIT		Public
Report of: Superintendent of Epping Forest SEF 35/12		For Decision
<p><u>Summary</u></p> <p>This report provides the first assessment by the Independent Grazing Assessor, Dr Peter Dennis of Aberystwyth University, of the approach of the Epping Forest Grazing Strategy in terms of nature conservation benefits and on the effectiveness of the biodiversity monitoring currently being undertaken. The full Assessor's report is provided as a Appendix 2 of this report.</p> <p>In addition, the results from the monitoring of a rare Forest plant, Lousewort, are reported and show that following the re-establishment of extensive grazing the population of this plant has expanded significantly, making it the largest extant population of the species in Essex and one of only 3 known surviving populations in the county.</p> <p><u>Recommendations</u></p> <p>I recommend that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Independent Assessor is invited to visit the monitoring sites across the Forest in 2013 and consider extensions to monitoring areas across habitats; • the Assessor's 2nd report is provided to the Management Plan Steering Group for consideration prior to being submitted to Committee in November 2013 		

Main Report

Background

1. The Epping Forest Grazing Rationale and Strategy was approved by Committee in May 2006. Following reports on the implementation of the Grazing Strategy in January and November 2007 (Reports SEF 04/07 and 25/07). A Grazing Review Group was set up by the Superintendent to take an overview of biodiversity monitoring and the impact on recreation interests in the Forest.
2. The Grazing Review Group met under the Chairmanship of an independent assessor during 2008 and 2009 and these meetings were reported to Committee. However, following the resignation of this chairman and the start of the *Branching Out* Project in autumn 2009 it was considered more effective to review recreational impacts through a series of new Visitor

Forums that were to be set up. The ecological and biodiversity monitoring would be reviewed separately by a newly appointed Independent Grazing Assessor.

3. The appointment of an Independent Grazing Assessor was approved in July 2010 (EFCC Report SEF 21/10) to give an objective overview of the way in which the impacts of grazing are to be measured and monitored.
4. The role of the Independent Grazing Assessor was approved to cover the following areas: to analyse the current ecological monitoring of grazing at Epping Forest; to provide advice on additional or alternative monitoring that could be viably achieved; to provide additional knowledge from comparable sites and situations; to provide the Superintendent with an annual validation report on the ecological monitoring.

Current Position

5. The current Independent Grazing Assessor was chosen from the 4 names approved in the Committee report of July 2010 (SEF 21/10). **Dr Peter Dennis of Aberystwyth University** accepted the role in autumn 2010. He initially corresponded with and spoke to the Conservation Section staff about the Epping Forest Grazing Strategy and other relevant reports in 2010. He then met CoL officers on site in summer 2011 for a series of field visits to grazed and currently un-grazed sites across the Forest.
6. Following preliminary feedback from staff and the further exchange of information, Dr Dennis was asked to produce the first of a series of annual reports to the Superintendent in summer 2012. This evaluation document is attached as **Appendix 2** of this report.
7. Dr Dennis finds that the Epping Forest Grazing Strategy is appropriate in its approach and this is supported by the scientific evidence from a very broad range of studies, in a wide variety of habitats, across the UK and Europe. He further concludes that the baseline vegetation and other species monitoring is both suitable and effective. He supports the phased nature of the Strategy and proposes that a precautionary, adaptive management approach is taken using the results of monitoring to modify it, as required, to local conditions across the Forest.
8. Grazing monitoring continues to be undertaken annually by staff, consultants and volunteers across the range of sites and species outlined in Dr Dennis's report and as described in the July 2010 Committee report (and its detailed appendices (SEF 21/10)) referred to above. The monitoring is currently carried out across both grazed sites and un-grazed sites.
9. In addition to the Assessor's report, the main monitoring work conducted in 2012, for which results can be reported here, is the re-mapping of the

distribution of Lousewort, a rare plant at one of its only sites in the Essex/London region. The results are mapped and attached at **Appendix 1**.

10. Lousewort was re-found at Almshouse Plain in 1997, in an area now at the centre of the extensive grazing area. Between 1997 and 2001 its distribution remained confined and stable as small patches of plants mainly towards the centre of the Plain. This is shown by the red areas on the map at **Appendix 1**. Since the re-establishment of extensive grazing in 2002 in the Fairmead-Almshouse area, the map clearly demonstrates the rapid and substantial expansion of the species. It has also been found outside the area shown on the map at the western and southern ends of Almshouse Plain and at Fairmead several hundred metres away. Other species have also benefited from the dynamic impact of grazing including Devil's-bit Scabious, a special plant of Forest pastures and ride edges.

Options

11. Currently the vegetation monitoring has been focused on the open areas of grassland and heath. In future, the options for the monitoring of transects across the habitats and in the wooded areas will be explored (see Assessor's report, Section 5 in Appendix 2). These options will be assessed with the Independent Assessor in the light of the monitoring protocols and areas being adopted as part of the UK Long-term Monitoring Network in which Epping Forest (along with Burnham Beeches) is now participating.

Proposals

12. It is proposed that in 2013 Dr Dennis should re-visit the Forest to review the continuing monitoring of sites and to provide advice and direction as to any additional monitoring or changes required. He would take into account any additional monitoring being carried out for the UK Long-Term Monitoring Network and his advice would be sought on the integration of the grazing monitoring with this where appropriate. He would also examine any new areas of grazing or extensions to the grazing areas.
13. Dr Dennis would provide a report to the Superintendent by autumn 2013. This would provide feedback on his site visits and his suggestions for monitoring and management of grazing for biodiversity and conservation objectives.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Financial and risk implications

14. The costs of the Independent Grazing Assessor are met from the Epping Forest Division's local risk budget supported by a grant from the City Bridge Trust. Over the last 18 months consultancy and audit costs have been £5,720 (excl. VAT). Over the next year approximately 3-4 days are required, including site visits, with advice and an audit report the costs are expected to be up to £2,040 (excl. VAT). The resources for the monitoring work itself are provided from the current staff, specialist consultants as

required and supplemented by wildlife volunteers. Resources for monitoring are also provided through the 3-year grant from the City Bridge Trust which is hereby gratefully acknowledged.

Legal implications

15. There are no legal implications for the City.

Property Implications

16. There are no Property implications associated with this appointment or in the findings of this report.

HR Implications

17. There are no human resources implications associated with the appointment of Independent Grazing Assessor or in the findings of this report. Any monitoring volunteers are recruited and managed through the volunteer scheme as part of the approved *Branching Out* project.

Strategic Implications

City Together

18. The work, proposals and options outlined above meet the *City Together* vision of a *World Class City* and, specifically, 2 of its 5 themes: “A world class City that supports our communities” and “A World Class City which protects, promotes and enhances our environment”.

Open Spaces Department Business Plan

19. The proposals and options above follow from 3 of the Open Spaces Department’s Strategic Aims of: “providing high quality accessible Open Spaces and services in accordance with nationally recognised standards for the benefit of London and the Nation”; “involving communities in the management of our sites” and “adopting sustainable working practices, promoting the variety of life (biodiversity) and protecting the Open Spaces for the enjoyment of future generations”.

Epping Forest Management Plan

20. This report also matches the Epping Forest Vision for the 21st Century, in particular:

- “Epping Forest’s position as a unique and ancient landscape for people and wildlife will be strengthened;
- “The Forest will retain its natural aspect with the diversity of wildlife habitats enhanced and the features of international importance, including its veteran pollards, protected;
- “Epping Forest will be highly valued as part of a larger and fully accessible protected landscape area”.

Conclusion

21. The Assessor concludes that the Grazing Strategy's objectives are supported by a broad range of evidence from scientific studies across the UK and Europe, including the impacts of grazing on mosaics of habitats. The Assessor also confirms that the combination of current and proposed monitoring methods at Epping Forest is suitable and suggests future monitoring to be considered. The example of the monitoring of the rare plant species, Lousewort, examined by the Assessor during his visits in 2011, shows a significant positive impact of grazing on the sward in an area of wood-pasture and the 2012 results presented here show that these positive impacts are continuing.

Background Papers:

- *Epping Forest Grazing Strategy 2006 (updated for Branching Out Project in 2008)*
- *SEF 25/07 EF&C Committee report on: the 2nd Public Consultation on Grazing*
- *SEF 21/10 EF&C Committee report on: Ecological Monitoring Programme for Grazing*

Appendices

Appendix 1: Map of distribution of Lousewort near Almshouse Plain, Epping Forest (Compartment 22).

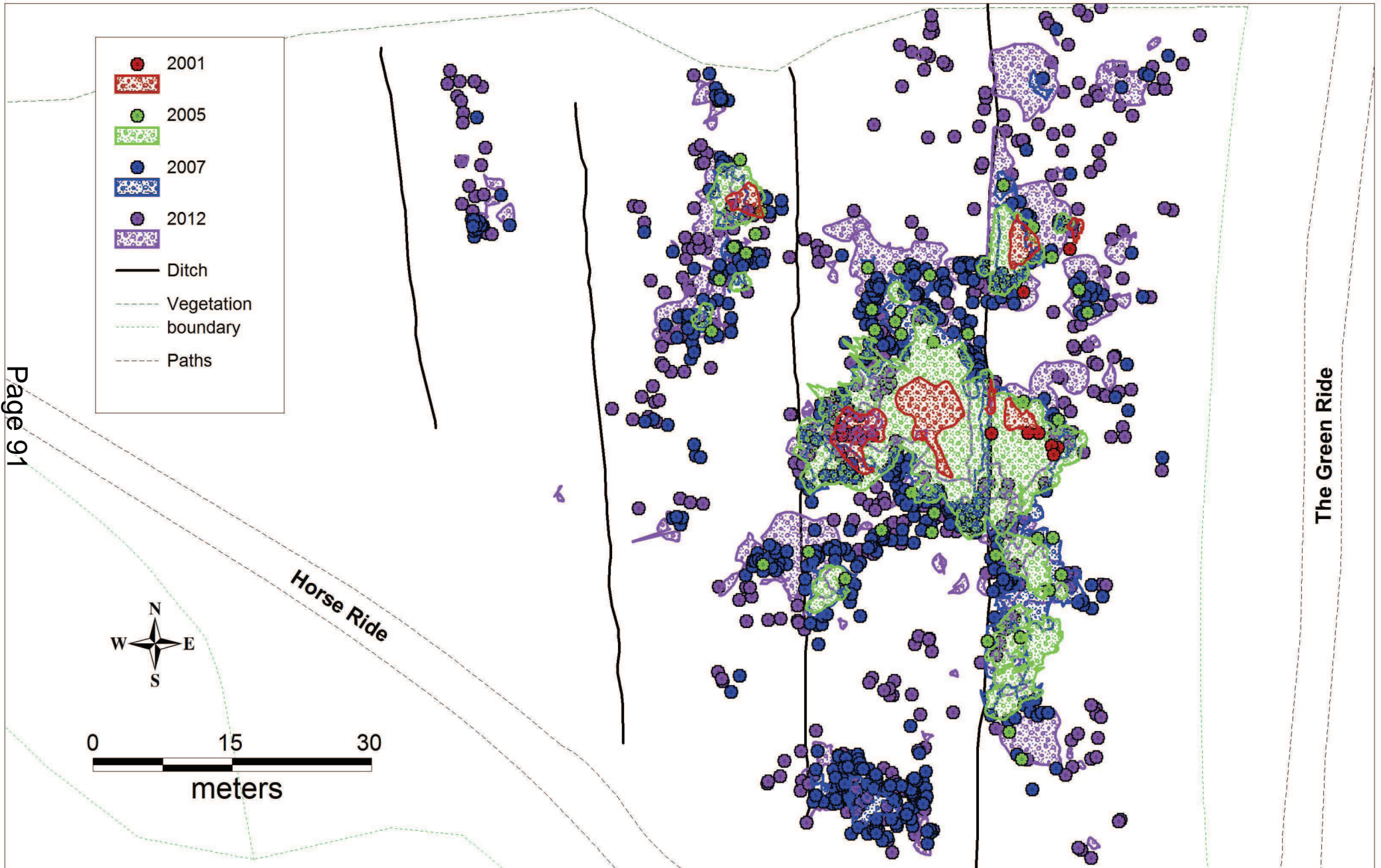
Appendix 2: Independent Grazing Assessor's Report 'Evaluation of the grazing management strategy proposed for Epping Forest' by Dr Peter Dennis, Aberystwyth University.

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Lousewort (*Pedicularis sylvaticus*) distribution near Almhouse Plain



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Evaluation of the grazing management strategy proposed for Epping Forest



Dr Peter Dennis



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Evaluation of the grazing management strategy proposed for Epping Forest

Summary

- Grazing herbivores generally enhance the habitat structure and species diversity of semi-natural habitats, given suitable stocking densities and periods of grazing.
- Cattle are less selective than other herbivores and this quality is ideal for the management of abundant, competitive but less nutritious plant species in semi-natural habitats which would otherwise exclude rarer plant species.
- The proposed, phased expansion of cattle grazing to achieve conservation and landscape objectives across Epping Forest is supported by the evidence presented in the scientific literature of grazing ecology.
- Appropriate stocking densities and periods of grazing must be maintained for the effective management of the distinct mosaic of habitats at Chingford-Honey Lane Plain, Fernhill and Trueloves, Long Running and Woodbury Hollow, Sheppards Meadows, Wanstead Flats and Wanstead Park.
- The Grazing Strategy acknowledges the need to continuously alter stocking densities in response to limits of vegetation change and variations in weather and vegetation growth by season and year. The proposal includes practical measures of a livestock herdsman, fencing (including a novel 'invisible' fence system) and sacrificial grazing areas to hold livestock in order to achieve appropriate grazing management for habitat and species conservation and landscape objectives.
- Baseline vegetation monitoring is already in place and the distribution and abundance of distinct plant species (e.g., Spiny rest-harrow, Pepper saxifrage, and Lousewort) can be evaluated, essential for decision making on adjustments to the indicative stocking rates and periods in the proposed put and take system of cattle grazing stated in the Grazing Strategy.
- The combination of fixed point photography, fixed quadrats for plant survey and field and GIS mapping of the distribution of plant species of conservation interest (e.g., Lousewort on Almhouse Plain) contributes to a suitable and effective monitoring programme, essential for any conservation management plan.
- Additional monitoring protocols for invertebrates (e.g., butterflies, ground beetles and ant colonies) and birds provide important additional information since changes in plant species often do not indicate the response of other taxa to grazing management.
- The combination of current and proposed monitoring methods is suitable for achieving the establishment of a Long Term Ecological Research site at Epping Forest under the UK Environmental Change Biodiversity Network.
- The scientific evidence related to grazing ecology supports the proposals set out in the Grazing Strategy and the phased nature of the plan over 20-30 years allows the modification of such general principles to local conditions, so that conservation objectives can be achieved through a precautionary, adaptive management approach.

1. Introduction

This report presents information to advise the Epping Forest and Commons Committee and Grand Committee on the suitability of the Epping Forest Grazing Rationale and Strategy, June 2006.

Epping Forest has an important multiple objective role including nature conservation, especially within nationally designated sites for nature conservation (Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation (SMIC), Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and EC Natura 2000 Special Area for Conservation (SAC)). The Forest comprises 2500 ha plus an additional 750 ha of buffer land. The Forest is composed of woodland with a stock of 50 000 veteran trees; 300 ha of ancient oak, hornbeam and beech woodland; extensive wood pasture (1400 ha) with ancient or restored pollards; 80 ha scrub; 46 ha heathland; and 125 ha of open grasslands (mainly lowland calcifuge grassland). Designations: Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation (SMIC), SSSI and SAC.

The purpose of this report is to present a review of the current knowledge base on the role of grazing in general and cattle grazing in particular as a management tool in habitat and species conservation. More specifically, to comment upon proposals set out in the Grazing Rationale and Strategy (June 2006) for a proposed expansion of cattle grazing where it is perceived to be an appropriate management 'tool' to meet general and specific nature conservation amongst other, broader objectives for Epping Forest and to scrutinise whether the design of the associated plant and invertebrate monitoring programme is appropriate to detect changes in abundance and distribution of populations so that progress towards the conservation objectives can be assessed at regular intervals.

a. Specific objectives

1. Review of the scientific evidence for the effectiveness of conservation grazing programmes.
2. Evaluate the current and proposed future expansion of grazing conservation management in Epping Forest.
3. Critically assess the established monitoring and survey methods as an effective means to gauge the effectiveness of the cattle grazing regimes at achieving nature conservation objectives for vegetation and invertebrates.
4. Proposed additional and nationally recognized monitoring methods and protocols were also evaluated where the intended objective was to develop a Long Term Ecological Research site at Epping Forest under the UK Environmental Change Biodiversity Network.

b. Fact finding visits and desk study

The current and proposed grazing management and general ecological monitoring across Epping Forest were evaluated during two visits in December 2010 and July 2011. During the second visit, there were two meetings with Forest management staff and wardens and a field tour of several key sites across Epping Forest, open grassland sites where the introduction of cattle grazing was proposed, and existing grazed sites and woodland and wetland sites where general ecological monitoring was already implemented. A desk-based outline review was carried out over later months to produce a summary of the scientific evidence currently available to substantiate the use of cattle grazing in conservation management of the types of habitat represented in Epping Forest. The established baseline monitoring was justified as a means to assess changes in rare or notable plants and invertebrates, especially within designated sites, and to inform progress towards nature conservation objectives, as an essential part of an adaptive management procedure (Alexander, 2008). A critical assessment was made of the alignment of the current monitoring programme with the need to detect favourable or detrimental effects on habitats and species of an expansion of cattle grazing across the Forest.

2. Review of scientific evidence supporting conservation grazing programmes

a. Role of grazing herbivores in ecosystems

Many global ecosystems have a long association with grazing by wild, and under more recent human influence, domesticated grazing animals (Vera, 2000). Temperate, Mediterranean, steppe and montane grasslands and savannas are all dependent on interactions with large herbivores (Gordon *et al.*, 2004; Owen-Smith, 2002). Grazing animals have an essential social, economic and environmental role in such ecosystems (Gordon *et al.*, 2004). Microbial, fungal, plant and animal diversity is strongly influenced by the effects of grazing herbivores on vegetation structure and composition, soil disturbance and nutrient cycling (Duffey *et al.*, 1974; Van Wieren, 1991; McNaughton, 1985) and this has profound effects by increasing the productivity of grazed ecosystems (McNaughton *et al.*, 1997) and the incidence of germination niches which facilitate recruitment of additional plant species (Crawley, 2009). The high stocking densities and extended periods of grazing of commercial grazing regimes for sheep, goat and cattle production was generally demonstrated to be detrimental to semi-natural habitats and rare or localised wild fungi (Griffith *et al.*, 2002), plant (Bullock *et al.*, 2001; Grime, 1973; Jones *et al.*, 2001) and animal species (Dennis, 2003; Evans *et al.*, 2006; Fuller & Gough, 1999; Gibson *et al.*, 1992; Morris, 1978). The initial response of nature conservation organisations to exclude grazing herbivores by fencing, destocking or culling was eventually counter-productive because competitive exclusion reduced plant diversity and associated animal populations that represented the original nature conservation concern (Bullock *et al.*, 2001; Crawley, 2009;

Grant & Maxwell, 1988; Luoto et al., 2003; Wallis De Vries *et al.*, 1998). Increasingly, the role of intermediate stocking densities of grazing animals has been recognised as critical for the maintenance of plant and animal diversity and to sustain viable populations of key species of nature conservation concern (Hulme *et al.*, 1999; Wallis De Vries *et al.*, 1998; Watkinson & Ormerod, 2001).

i. Grazing management to achieve general conservation objectives

The responses of different flora and fauna to grazing management is not always correlated and consistent (Kruess & Tschardt, 2002ab; Rambo & Faeth, 1999) and this is also demonstrated by the contrasting responses of various taxonomic groups of arthropods to particular grazing regimes (Dennis *et al.*, 1998; 2001; 2002; Morris, 1978; Morris, 1991). It is therefore essential to clearly define the nature conservation objectives for a target site (whether for the benefit of habitat condition and biodiversity in general, to achieve habitat restoration or maintenance, or to recover populations of particular plant or animal species) in order to design an appropriate grazing management regime. For general conservation purposes, the objective of the grazing management is often to achieve a mosaic composed of patches of coarse grassland and shorter lawn areas (Van Wieren, 1991) which tends to encourage greater plant species composition and a heterogeneous structural appearance to the vegetation that supports a larger variety of arthropods and predatory animals that depend on arthropods in the food web (Dennis *et al.*, 2008; Evans *et al.*, 2006).

ii. Approaches to conservation grazing

Management of many of the smaller designated sites is often based on a 'put and take' system with grazed livestock requiring regular rotation around conservation sites or holding pastures of sown, agricultural grasses (Whyte, 2010). Larger sites such as National Nature Reserves have introduced free-ranging flocks of sheep or herds of cattle or ponies (e.g., Back to Purple Scheme, Stiperstones; Shropshire Wildlife Trust, no date) but although grazing can be sustained for a longer period across these larger sites, some rotation is desirable during the period of vegetation growth and removal to holding pastures during winter. Over commons and lowland and upland heaths, extensive agricultural management remains the main option for conservation management of priority habitats and wildlife with incentives from agri-environment schemes (Higher Level Stewardship, Exmoor; Natural England, no date). A more radical solution in areas where farming is no longer economically viable is to reinstate semi-wilded grazing animals with minimal intervention (Hodder *et al.*, 2005). Naturalistic grazing would require derogation of animal husbandry, welfare, disease control and fallen stock legislation and possible compliance with Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition regulations. Stock management applicable to domesticated animals and continued intervention would be necessary to maintain such herds over winter and, in the absence of predators, to limit population sizes below the carrying capacity of the site to avoid degradation of habitat condition. The next section will

briefly explore the particular qualities of cattle compared with other grazing species when used for the role of conservation grazing.

b. Review of evidence supporting cattle as a suitable domestic herbivore in conservation grazing

The specific qualities of grazing by cattle compared with other domesticated herbivore species in conservation management is commonly supported by anecdotal reports (Dennis, 1998; Grazing Advice Partnership, no date; National Trust, 2011) rather than factual information substantiated by scientific experiments (Hodgson et al., 1991; Newton *et al.*, 2009). The significant costs of securing suitable experimental sites, constructing fences, resourcing continuous livestock care and husbandry and the long period required to observe ecological responses are understandable reasons for a relative lack of experimental evidence (Ecological Continuity Trust, no date) with notable examples to illustrate these challenges (Dennis *et al.*, 2008; Bullock & Marriott, 2000; Mitchell *et al.*, 2008). Sufficient experimental studies and structured surveys have been carried out on which to base conclusions about the role of cattle in conservation grazing. This does not extend to any convincing case for the use of any particular cattle breed over another (Wright *et al.*, 2006). A national survey of cattle grazing in 77 woodland sites across the UK recorded the use of 26 different breeds (Armstrong *et al.*, 2003). Use of traditional or local breeds is often desirable to earn the consent of local stakeholders for the introduction of large herbivores to sites where there has not been grazing in recent living memory. Whether certain cattle breeds are more or less selective in their foraging for vegetation types that are competitive and abundant so that overall diversity is increased remains contentious. The use of cattle at low stocking densities for managing vegetation for nature conservation rather than production has significantly increased in the last decade (Armstrong *et al.*, 2003; GAP News, 2008). In addition, the value of cattle grazing has been highlighted in extensive production systems in High Nature Farming areas, mainly due to the demise of such pastoral systems under increased economic duress (Andersen *et al.*, 2004; La Canada, 2005).

i. Scientific evidence supporting use of cattle in conservation grazing

The interactions of cattle with semi-natural habitats and the consequences for vegetation structure, plant species composition and animal wildlife has been investigated in a considerable number of studies, but this has not yet accumulated into a comprehensive knowledge base for this topic (Wright *et al.*, 2006). Scientific grazing experiments provide rigorous data to draw general conclusions about the interactions of cattle grazing with various plant and animal populations or species assemblages in various types of grassland and heathland (Wright *et al.*, 2006) and comprehensive questionnaire surveys of site managers across the UK have recently provided information whether conservation management objectives were achieved through grazing, including by cattle in addition to

other herbivores, of heaths (Newton *et al.*, 2009) and native woodlands (Armstrong *et al.*, 2003).

Some general observations can be drawn from these studies. In general, cattle grazed at appropriate stocking densities and for periods each year which were sensitive to the target semi-natural habitat, had effects that were at least neutral and most often positive for habitat quality and associated biodiversity (Armstrong *et al.*, 2003; Newton *et al.*, 2009; Wright *et al.*, 2006). Greatest contention about the suitability of cattle grazing in particular relates to the grazing of wetland habitats. The weight of individual bovines is considered unsuitable for the grazing of acid bogs, due to the damage that can be caused to the acrotelm or biologically active upper layer of *Sphagnum* peat (Wright *et al.*, 2006). Cattle grazing has inconsistent effects on the invertebrate fauna of reed beds and fens, with a higher proportion of rare compared with widespread and common species of ground beetles colonising restored fen which was cattle grazed (Martay *et al.*, 2012) whilst populations of rare molluscs (*Vertigo* spp.) associated with tall herb fens and reedbeds declined after cattle grazing, perhaps because snails are trampled or ingested, host plant numbers and leaf surface area are reduced or the more open fen vegetation is less humid (Ausden *et al.*, 2005).

ii. Bovine grazing behaviour and foraging ecology

Cattle grazing has positive effects for semi-natural grasslands and woodlands due to their specific grazing characteristics. Cattle tend to track the growth flushes of the available abundant vegetation (Gibson, 1997; Pratt *et al.*, 1986). The choice of vegetation patch can be explained by a random allocation of cattle foraging time as much as specific vegetation preferences, certainly amongst tall grass, short grass and tall herbs, with less foraging observed on the latter, an alternative explanation is that choice is related to the relative energy content of each vegetation type (Wallis de Vries & Dalebondt, 1994; Wallis de Vries & Schippers, 1994). Cattle are also less selective and tear vegetation which generally results in greater depletion of abundant, less nutritious vegetation than observed under grazing by other herbivore species (Grant *et al.* 1985; 1987; Putman *et al.*, 1987; Wright *et al.*, 2006). Dung avoidance behaviour by cattle creates islets or a hummock-hollow appearance to grasslands (Duffey *et al.*, 1974) which adds to the structural diversity and creates more microhabitats for arthropods (Helden *et al.*, 2010). Hoof weight and trampling at intermediate to low stocking densities adds to the effect of forage intake to produce greater structural diversity in vegetation, especially gaps in tussock grasslands of acid grassland and fen habitats into which non-graminoid plants can colonise (Wright *et al.*, 2006). In woodlands, shrub and field layer vegetation is opened up by cattle grazing to facilitate tree regeneration (Armstrong *et al.*, 2003). The dense, shaded character of much of the UK's native woodland is considered to be a major factor in the observed declines of woodland birds (Eaton *et al.*, 2011) and vernal plants (Plantlife, 2012). Timing of grazing is important to realise desirable changes in habitat structure (Dennis *et al.*, 1997) whilst avoiding direct disturbance to target wildlife species such as ground nesting birds (Evans *et al.*, 2006; Paine *et al.*, 1996). Small mammals tend to increase in population size only at

very low stocking densities or complete removal of grazers, which has positive consequences for the food web leading to avian predator (raptor) populations (Evans *et al.*, 2006; Redpath *et al.*, 2002; Torrea *et al.*, 2007). At higher stocking densities and sustained grazing periods, cattle can have adverse effects on soil physical properties, either culminating in compaction of soils of drier habitats or poaching of wet grassland, fen and wet heath (Pietola *et al.*, 2005; Stephenson & Veigel, 1987).

iii. Ecological consequences of animal healthcare

Serious consideration is required in the choice of active ingredient and administration of veterinary pharmaceuticals to livestock for the control of gastro-intestinal parasites (roundworms) and ectoparasites (ticks). In the context of conservation grazing, residual toxicity in dung of some active ingredients can significantly delay the colonisation of dung by scavengers or cause population declines of key species both for dung dispersal and breakdown and as the source of fly and beetle food for bats (Williams *et al.*, 2011) and rare birds such as Chough (McCracken & Foster, 1994). Cattle dung is particularly important for Lesser horseshoe bats in the winter months (Ransome & Priddis, 2004). Most concerns have been expressed over the avermectin group of anthelmintics (Strong, 1992; Strong & Wall, 1994; Wratten *et al.*, 1993), especially when administered through a slow release bolus ingested by the cattle compared with occasional hypodermic, injected doses (Gover & Strong, 1996).

c. Effectiveness of cattle grazing for achieving habitat and species conservation objectives

Site managers were generally satisfied that cattle were achieving the desired conservation results in woodlands although sometimes at a slower rate than anticipated (Armstrong *et al.*, 2003). Reviews have concluded mainly positive outcomes of cattle grazing when stocking densities are applied at appropriate levels for the kinds and extent of semi-natural habitat represented at a site (Table 2.c.1). Some important practical considerations have also been highlighted from these reviews. The target site must have a well maintained, stock proof boundary (fenced) otherwise there may be an incursion of vagrant grazers from adjacent land experiencing relatively higher stocking densities than the conservation grazing intensity of the target site. The population size of wild herbivores (wild deer and feral goats) must be understood and taken into account when calculating appropriate stocking rates of cattle. A distinction must be made between the grazing management regime required for the objective of habitat restoration and a suitable maintenance regime once the habitat restoration is successful. For instance, lower densities of cattle tend to contract into the more nutritious patches of vegetation for grazing, so that less nutritious vegetation may experience a low or no 'effective' stocking density with the consequence of rank grass, tussock grass, rush, bracken or scrub encroachment (Dennis *et al.*, 2005).

Table 2.c.1. Perceived or measured benefits and disadvantages of cattle grazing for habitat and species conservation management

Habitat	Heathland and grassland	Woodland
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less selective than other livestock⁴ • Create a more structurally diverse sward⁴ • Reduce the cover of tussock forming species⁴ • Create more gaps for plant regeneration⁴ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits general biodiversity by the reduction of tree and scrub regeneration, opening up the shrub layer and in the maintenance of open habitats¹ • Benefits for individual species and taxonomic groups¹ • Encouragement of tree regeneration¹ • Maintain open glades of natural woodland structure² • Enhanced plant species composition and structure in woodland riparian zone^{5,6}
Detrimental effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavy on wet soils and damaging for wetland habitats⁴ • Break stems and kill plants of <i>Calluna vulgaris</i> on heaths⁴ • Pollution from access to watercourses on open or common land⁴ • Diminished vertical structure of ericaceous shrubs, gorse cover and abundance of grass tussocks³ • Formation of numerous trackways³ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trampling sensitive plants¹ • Poaching soil¹ • Bank erosion¹ • Pollution of water courses¹ • Kill or damage tree seedlings² • Debark saplings and trees²

Derived from ¹Armstrong *et al.*, 2003; ²Hodder *et al.*, 2005; ³Newton *et al.*, 2009; ⁴Wright *et al.*, 1996; ⁵Humphrey & Patterson, 2000; ⁶Huber *et al.*, 1995.

i. Habitat effects

Experience from commercial grazing at high stocking densities on semi-natural habitats, which was encouraged by subsidy payments per grazing animal, 1970s-2000s, demonstrated the detrimental effects that can result from inappropriate management of grazing livestock. These effects were most evident in the loss of *Calluna vulgaris* dominated dwarf heaths, often replaced with white moor composed of *Nardus stricta* or *Molinia caerulea* acid grassland (Critchley *et al.*, 2008; Grant & Maxwell, 1988; Mitchell *et al.*, 2008). Overall, grazing, including by sheep, led to widespread habitat degradation of heath and semi-natural grasslands and recent experiences have also highlighted the significant challenge in reversing such changes. Simple reductions in stocking density are not sufficient for effective habitat restoration. In the example of *Molinia*-dominated white moor, a shift from sheep to cattle grazing in addition to an overall reduction in stocking density was necessary to restore plant densities of *Calluna vulgaris* (Common *et al.*, 1997; Critchley *et*

al., 2008; Grant *et al.*, 1985; 1996). Cattle grazed at 1 GLU (adult dairy cow equivalent grazing livestock unit) for two months each summer for consecutive years were sufficient to break up the cover of dead leaf matter and create gaps through trampling and poaching into which *Calluna* germinated and established (Mitchell *et al.*, 2008). This required associated *Calluna* seed distribution and mechanical rotavation was equally effective as the cattle grazing in achieving effective restoration of dwarf shrub (Mitchell *et al.*, 2008) and in other management experiments glyphosate herbicide was successfully used as the pre-treatment (Todd *et al.*, 2000) although this was a measure for heathland restoration under agricultural rather than conservation management. Once dry heath is restored or where cattle are introduced to existing heath as part of the management, the action of free-ranging cattle alone is unable to prevent birch and pine regeneration, so occasional manual intervention will be required if the target is open heath rather than clumps of scrub-woodland interspersed amongst open *Calluna* patches (Bokdam & Gleichman, 2000).

Cattle grazing can be very effective in maintaining the structural and botanical species diversity of lowland grasslands (Crofts & Jefferson, 1999) and in preventing or retarding scrub encroachment onto chalk grasslands (GAP, no date). For grasslands that are managed with a reduction of stocking density following years of intensive grazing, certain plant species such as soft rush, bracken, purple moor grass and gorse can become a problem by increasing in ground cover to dominate a site. Episodic, high stocking densities of grazers may be suitable to open up such vegetation and restore the structural diversity and botanical composition of the vegetation. This can be particularly effective in the control of gorse, bracken or *Molinia* control. Such mob stocking must be followed by a change to a low to moderate in grazing regime to avoid degradation of soil or vegetation (Popay & Field, 1996). This approach has also been demonstrated to be effective at initial clearance of rank ground vegetation in neglected native woodlands, albeit by sheep grazed for blocks of five days in experimental plots within oak and ash woodland (McEvoy & McAdam, 2008). This can be considered as an occasional option for clearance of problem vegetation alongside the longer term grazing strategy. In this example, little significant damage was recorded to the trees although later shoots were browsed during October grazing and growth rate was slowed in relation to February grazing. Most of the rank herbage height was removed within the first 24 h of livestock introduction, with half the biomass removed after the full period with effects sustained for 4-6 months. Goats can also be considered as a suitable species of grazer for mob stocking in the initial clearance of problem vegetation alongside a maintenance grazing regime achieved with cattle (Merchant, 1993). This was demonstrated as an effective means to reduce soft rush in moist grassland with goats consuming 75% to 90% of the seasons growth of rush, with a dramatic reduction in the cover and vigour of the rushes. These effects were achieved when other grazing animals maintained the grazing lawns of palatable grasses at 4-5 cm or less, which is not suitable for all conservation grazing sites. The effects of cattle grazing on various semi-natural habitats were concluded to be favourable or at least neutral in impact by the review of Wright *et al.* (2006) where detailed accounts can be found. The single exception recognized in that review was the detrimental effect of grazing blanket bog or lowland raised bog with cattle. Cattle grazing was considered effective at achieving nature conservation objectives for other wetland types, e.g., reed beds and fen meadow (Sutherland & Hill, 1995).

ii. Wildlife responses

In general, no single cattle grazing prescription will meet the requirements for all fungal, plant and animal taxa and it appears desirable to manage for a mosaic, assuming a suitable area is available of each vegetation type to accommodate a variety of structural and seral vegetation stages (Coleoptera, beetles: Dennis *et al.*, 1997; Woodcock *et al.*, 2010 ; Araneae, spiders: Cherrett 1964; Dennis *et al.*, 2001; Lepidoptera, moths and butterflies: Erhardt & Thomas, 1991 ; Littlewood, 2008; Poyry *et al.*, 2004 ; 2005 ; Homoptera, plant bugs: Dennis *et al.*, 1998; Hollier *et al.*, 2005 ; Waloff, 1980 ; birds: Fuller *et al.*, 2006; Sutherland & Hill, 1995; plants: Pykala, 2005; fungi: Griffith *et al.*, 2002). Invertebrate groups such as ground beetles have many species adapted to more or less disturbed or open habitats and that is why the response of these species as an assemblage can vary with management, larger species with larvae in the soil being most vulnerable to cattle grazing, whilst other species benefit from the opening up of the grassland into hummocks and hollows, or tussocks and inter-tussock lawns of calcifugous (Dennis *et al.*, 1997; Dennis, 2003) and calcicolous grasslands (Woodcock *et al.*, 2012).

3. Observations on Grazing Strategy and visits to selected sites across Epping Forest

The proposed, phased expansion of cattle grazing to achieve conservation and landscape objectives across Epping Forest is supported by the evidence presented in the scientific literature of grazing ecology. There is evidence to substantiate the arguments presented in the Grazing Strategy for cattle grazing wood pasture, lowland dry acid grassland, neutral grassland and wet and dry lowland heath. The particular sensitivities of heath to cattle grazing have been earlier reviewed. In summary, regular monitoring of the status of *Calluna* and light touch management are necessary. Physical damage from cattle treading can cause stem breakage and mortality to individual plants although heather is capable of rejuvenation through adventitious shoots in response to moderate grazing intensity (MacDonald *et al.*, 1995).

Appropriate stocking densities and periods of grazing must be maintained for the effective management of the distinct mosaic of habitats at Chingford-Honey Lane Plain, Fernhill and Trueloves, Long Running and Woodbury Hollow, Sheppards Meadows, Wanstead Flats and Wanstead Park. The stated stocking densities should be treated as indicative values and will need to be varied according to prevailing conditions. Indeed, the Grazing Strategy acknowledges the need to continuously alter stocking densities in response to limits of vegetation change and variations in weather and vegetation growth by season and year. There is general scientific evidence about the importance of these parameters in conservation grazing but such general information must be carefully interpreted for application on a particular site and the variability of vegetation types present. The Grazing Strategy sets out appropriate prescriptions for habitat and species conservation and

landscape objectives and the means to carefully control these in response to observed changes.

- Fencing and or cattle herding/ rotation
- Monitoring (discussed in detail in the next section in relation to habitat mosaic and target plant species)
- Possible need for change in grazing strategy once primary objectives for achieving 'favourable condition' for the mosaic of vegetation. Often need to alter grazing management once the objectives change from restoration to maintenance regime.

The report accommodates the need to vary stocking density and periods of grazing to accommodate differences in productivity, nutritional value and sensitivity of vegetation type and soils to grazing. The introduction of a virtual fencing system to manage the target grazing areas is an innovative approach (Butler *et al.*, 2006) not without risks inherent in applying a new technology (Anderson, 2007; Bishop-Hurley *et al.*, 2007). This could be a very cost-effective and effective means to control the extent and duration of grazing across compartments of the complex mosaic of habitats and future reports of progress with implementation of this system are awaited with interest.

The review revealed that certain characteristics of cattle compared with other herbivore grazing are ideally suited to the objectives of attaining a unique vegetation mosaic in the Forest. Retention of tussock grass areas will require careful management since cattle will generally reduce the density and extent of such features after prolonged grazing. The increase in structural diversity of different kinds of vegetation and gap creation into which less common plant seeds can fall or germinate and establish, are highly favoured traits of cattle grazing.

Weather conditions are increasingly variable and the most recent climate models including atmospheric pollutants as well as Greenhouse gases suggest only that weather extremes are more likely in the next decades, hence a reactive mode of management is required especially in those habitats which are fen in character. This should also include grassland habitats which are periodically wet, should soil moisture increase after intensive precipitation.

The role of sacrificial grazing areas, perhaps adjacent amenity or intensified grassland is recognised as a vital part of grazing management of high nature value sites. A put and take system is clearly described in the Grazing Strategy as the main way to manage the vegetation effectively in order to achieve favourable condition throughout the Forest.

A further note is that management of domesticated herbivores cannot be addressed in isolation from the effects of wild, free-ranging herbivores and it essential to use the best available information on local deer populations to appreciate where downward estimates of stocking densities or durations of grazing access are necessary from values calculated and recorded in the Grazing Strategy.

The final remark must draw attention to the importance of welfare and nutrition of the cattle since these livestock may require breaks from the grazing in some of the less

productive vegetation types since this may not sustain the nutritional requirements of cattle if driven solely by the nature conservation motive for grazing. The role of the herds person is essential for balancing the conservation sensitivities of the vegetation with the health and welfare of the livestock at times when the condition of animals is not likely to be sustained by the poor forage quality of the semi-natural habitats.

The phased nature of the Grazing Strategy is a sensible, gradual and precautionary approach which, combined with the monitoring, provides ample opportunity to review and adjust management to achieve objectives. With these cattle management measures in place, there is a realistic opportunity to achieve and maintain the stated objectives of the Grazing Strategy over the next 5-20 years:

- Restore and maintain the favourable condition of key forest habitats using good forest management.
- Conserve the Forest as a special mosaic landscape distinct from surroundings.
- Maintain cultural tradition and protect common rights of pasturage.

The report is justified in recognizing the validity and particular benefits of choosing a cattle grazing strategy beyond maintaining a local cultural tradition.

4. Evaluation of existing monitoring programme and methods

a. Sites proposed for phasing in of grazing management

Baseline vegetation monitoring is already in place and the distribution and abundance of distinct plant species (e.g., Spiny rest-harrow, Pepper saxifrage, and Lousewort) can be evaluated, essential for decision making on adjustments to the indicative stocking rates and periods in the proposed put and take system of cattle grazing stated in the Grazing Strategy.

The combination of fixed point photography, fixed quadrats for plant survey and field and GIS mapping of the distribution of plant species of conservation interest (e.g., Lousewort on Almhouse Plain) contributes to a suitable and effective monitoring programme, essential for any conservation management plan.

i. Whitehall Plain

No grazing has been applied to this site since the 1990s. Annual hay cuts have been used for interim vegetation management. The established monitoring with three grazing enclosure plots paired with future grazed plots is appropriate for assessing the general changes in vegetation structure and botanical composition. The two species plots also provide the capability to assess changes in some of the conservation sensitive plant species after the reinstatement of grazing management.

Modification of management at one preparatory site is necessary where mowing was ceased to protect the Spiny rest harrow population. This has resulted in bramble and tree

regeneration which has compromised the future use of this replicate plot for pre- and post-grazing monitoring. Options available:

1. clear woody material and resume mowing to achieve comparable replicate of mown vs grazed split plot at onset of cattle grazing.
2. Leave scrub but create four plots giving grazed vs mown open grass and grazed vs hand clearance/ mown scrub plots.
3. Displace plots to adjacent open grassland area perhaps with some overlap of existing quadrat locations. This gives the opportunity for at least a further pre-grazed set of botanical data to check against initial run of data prior to commencement of grazing. There are two advantages in this option. The conflict of interest between monitoring and species conservation in former plots with *Ononis spinosa* L. (Spiny restharrow) is removed and vegetation can be appropriately managed to maintain or enhance this small population. The influence of path encroachment onto the monitoring plots can also be tackled in this relocation of monitoring plots.

ii. Deershelter plain

Lies outside of the main grazing area. Area of 5 ha electric fenced with test of 'invisible' fenceline. A 'put and take' grazing management system was already in operation. The scrape of topsoil has successfully restored dry heath habitat with sedges, purple moor grass and other acid heath plants evident in the field layer. The random grid sampling approach proposed by Wilde (2006) using photographs and direct measurements of vegetation seems appropriate for monitoring the vegetation response to the top soil removal and follow up grazing management.

iii. Almshouse Plain

A complex site with several important species of open habitats threatened by development of rank vegetation and expansion of bramble and thorn. Particular species of interest include *Pedicularis sylvatica* L.; Lousewort in an open area with evidence of bramble encroachment. *Achillea ptarmica* L., Sneezewort and *Genista anglica* L., Petty whin were also present on the open grassland. Considerable effort has to been applied to map and monitor changes in the distribution and abundance of these species.

Site also included a wetter *Carpinus betulus* L., hornbeam pollarded site with *Molinia caerulea*; purple moor grass dominating the field layer. An adjacent site of pollarded hornbeam was associated with field layer of *Holcus lanatus*, Yorkshire fog and sedges. Much work has been undertaken to restore the pollarded hornbeam across the site but the field layer vegetation will require careful additional management with a good prospect of benefits from cattle grazing.

iv. Chingford Plain

This is an existing Long horn cattle grazed site and appeared during the site visit to be a general favourable state with a patchwork of shrub, tussock grass of *Deschampsia flexuosa*,

wavy hair grass, with grazing lawns composed of more nutritious *Agrostis-Festuca* grasses apparent throughout the site, indicative of a low to moderate stocking density.

b. Sites monitored for broader conservation management objectives

The combination of current and proposed monitoring methods is suitable for achieving the establishment of a Long Term Ecological Research site at Epping Forest under the UK Environmental Change Biodiversity Network.

Observations and comments about various sites are given in the order of visits.

i. Yardley Plain and Yate's Meadow

This is an outlier isolated from the main part of the Forest by an extensive golf course. Scrub clearance has been undertaken to restore a species rich meadow with plant species such as *Silvaum silaus* (L.), Pepper saxifrage present.

Hay making current management approach but the ambition is to graze the aftermath with cattle in the near future. This should indeed restore the botanical interest that was probably developed from historic management for hay meadow or dairy pasture. Require evidence of a benefit of the alternative management approach for both botanical and invertebrate diversity.

The mowing has also been necessarily selective in extent due to the difficult micro-topography of the site and the presence of colonies of the yellow meadow ant mounds. This can generate foci for bramble and regeneration of scrub and trees which has become a significant problem in several management blocks across the site. This provides a compelling case for cattle grazing, especially given the mix of bramble and tall herbs that require control and the maintenance of facilitation of grazing by rabbits that provides useful bare soil and short sward patches for Bird's foot trefoil establishment.

Pimpinella saxifraga (Burnet-saxifrage) is currently absent from the site but re-establishment of a population is a realistic conservation target. This winter-green, perennial species flowers May to September hence mowing can be detrimental to such a population. Cattle grazing with moderate stocking densities may be more appropriate than mowing, not least because seed can survive consumption by cattle and this can aid dispersal to new sites. Later summer grazing may best benefit other flowering species at the site and the exact timing and rotation of grazing to favour Bird's foot trefoil and Pepper saxifrage should be reviewed based on scientific evidence and Best Practice at other sites.

Additional monitoring protocols for invertebrates (e.g., butterflies, ground beetles and ant colonies) and birds applied to this and other sites provides important additional information since changes in plant species often do not indicate the response of other taxa to grazing management.

ii. **Sunshine Plain to Rushey Plain**

Ancient *Fagus sylvatica*, beech coppice stools and pollards. Much litter and wood mulch and partially vegetated with bracken abundant in transition following thinning, crown reduction and pollarding (less so to allow trees to adapt to initial crown reduction). Currently limited forage available for the successful introduction of cattle into this woodland site.

5. Future monitoring

The current emphasis of monitoring is on the open herbaceous and meadow areas. Cattle are known to reduce shrub and woodland cover by physically opening up the shrub layer as they graze and browse and by reducing later rates of shrub and tree regeneration (Table 2.c.1). It is therefore desirable to monitor such changes in these closed or partially open habitats in order to inform management of the appropriate timing and stocking densities of cattle. Emphasis should be placed on assessment of the botanical species composition along transects in the transition zones between open herbaceous and closed wooded habitats, for example from Rushey Plain to Sunshine Plain in the north of the extensive grazing area. Further visits are proposed in 2013 to decide upon the precise location of these transects and to discuss and develop further appropriate monitoring methods. During the visits, supplementary monitoring to assess changes in other taxonomic groups will be considered and the overall breadth of monitoring methods reviewed in relation to the aspiration to achieve the range of monitoring protocols consistent with the UK Environmental Change Biodiversity Network (ECN, no date).

6. Closing comment

The scientific evidence related to grazing ecology supports the proposals set out in the Grazing Strategy and the phased nature of the plan over 20-30 years allows the modification of such general principles to local conditions, so that conservation objectives can be achieved through a precautionary, adaptive management approach. Recent scientific experiments and reviews support the role of cattle grazing in pasture woodland sites and the introduction of cattle to several of the parcels in Epping Forest would be effective at achieving greater structural diversity and species composition in the field layer. Parcels such as Sunshine Plain probably require some period of vegetation recovery into the mulch generated from the recent crown reduction and pollard work before grazing should be introduced.

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Agenda Item 12

Committee(s):	Date(s):	Item no.
Epping Forest and Commons Finance	5 November 2012 6 November 2012	
Subject: Epping Forest – Branching Out project (Heritage Lottery Fund) – Progress Update report – Number 8	Public	
Report of: Superintendent of Epping Forest SEF 31/12	For Decision	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Summary</u></p> <p>This report provides an updated budget and progress report on the City’s £6.83 million Branching Out project, which began in August 2009 with a grant of £4.76 million from Heritage Lottery Fund.</p> <p>The Branching Out project is making good progress and The View redevelopment, together with its new exhibition, were opened to the public by HRH Duke of Gloucester in July 2012. Alongside Butler’s Retreat café, which opened in February 2012, and Queen Elizabeth’s Hunting Lodge, the area is proving a popular gateway to Epping Forest.</p> <p>Landscaping works at Chingford, Connaught Water and High Beach have been completed, as has the Discovering Epping Forest schools programme. Volunteering and community targets are being exceeded. Conservation works to keystone trees are temporarily on hold to allow the beech trees to recover from stress caused by drought in previous years.</p> <p>Project spend totalling £4,383,432 for Stage 3 only (or £4,506,713 including sunk costs) to the end of June 2012 represents an HLF grant value of £3,259,825 (74%). Thus approximately 70% of the budget has been spent at three fifths of the way through the project.</p> <p>The updated budget, with small revision since the last report, remains within the total budget allocation for the project. There is no change to the City of London financial contribution.</p> <p>Recommendations</p> <p>I RECOMMEND that the budget variances, which do not affect the overall budget total (as detailed in Table 2 and the appendices) be approved, with movements from contingency subject to approval from Heritage Lottery Fund..</p>		

Main Report

Background

1. Branching Out is a series of projects in Epping Forest, designed to improve access to and interpretation of the historic landscape. The total budget for the project is £6.83 million over five years, supported by a grant of £4.76 million from Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).
2. The four main strands of the Branching Out project are:

- 2.1. **Car Parks and Access** - Creation of four visitor hubs and 20 gateways to the Forest. Accessible and way-marked trails and car park resurfacing at High Beach, Connaught Water, Chingford and Jubilee Pond.
 - 2.2. **Coach House** - Redevelopment to provide an Interpretation Centre with improved education and learning facilities as well as a shop. This project includes an education programme, Discovering Epping Forest, community liaison, volunteers and cataloguing and conservation of the Epping Forest archives.
 - 2.3. **Butler's Retreat** - Refurbishment to provide an improved restaurant facility
 - 2.4. **Grazing and Trees** –implementing a long term grazing strategy to enhance wood pasture landscapes. Managing ancient trees with the help of apprentices and new equipment.
3. The Epping Forest and Commons Committee received, and approved, the seventh Branching Out project update report at its meeting of 14 May 2012.

Current Position

4. **Coach House construction** - Practical completion was achieved by Bolt and Heeks on 11 May 2012, although defects and snags are still being addressed. A six week extension of time was agreed in September, substantially less than the contractor's claim of 21 weeks.
5. **Interpretation** – Cod Steaks installed the exhibition from May - July. Editing of content by City of London (CoL) staff and verifiers took longer than originally programmed, which has led to some extra fees and an additional installation visit.
6. **Launch** - The building now known as The View was officially launched on Ladies Day on 12 July 2012 by the Duke of Gloucester. It is popular with visitors.
7. **Car Parks, Access and Landscape** The works are complete apart from Jubilee Pond, which commences early 2013, relaying of the resin bonded surface at The View and some minor snags. Post-completion, additional drainage systems have been installed at High Beach and Connaught Water due to flooding, resulting in a claim of £22,984 from the contingency budget. following is a general progress report on landscaping works:
 - 7.1. Chingford Hub – Chingford Hub. Barn Hoppitt and Bury Road Works were completed for the opening of The View in July 2012. But the finish of the resin bonded material is unacceptable and will be re-laid in spring 2013 at the contractor's cost.
 - 7.2. High Beach car park and Manor Road – we are applying to formally reallocate land between highways and Epping Forest.
 - 7.3. Connaught Water – the car park, access trail and new shared use trail are complete. Construction of the boardwalk and aquatic planting was undertaken by volunteers during the summer, including the annual Scout project. We are receiving positive feedback following initial concerns from the public about materials and flooding. Volunteers have constructed two disabled angling platforms and the boardwalk as well as planting around the lake.
 - 7.4. Gateways, signage and developing Forest standard for all furniture will be contracted out to the exhibition design company and/or the landscape architects, rather than employing specialist staff as originally planned.

- 7.5. Jubilee Pond relining works are scheduled to take place prior to landscaping, and is being managed by the City Surveyors with funding from the Additional Works Programme and the compensation payment for the police muster station on Wanstead Flats during the Olympics and Paralympics. Subject to the relining project tender returns, this may also cover resurfacing of the Jubilee Pond car park. The relining works are being put out to tender in October for completion by the end of March 2013. A Certificate of Lawful Development has been received from the London Borough of Redbridge. A risk workshop with the local Lakehouse Lake group has taken place, and we presented plans to the public at their fun day on 9 September 2012. Landscaping including the new access path will commence January in 2013 as part of the Branching Out project with funding from HLF.
- 7.6. Waymarked trails - six have been installed with temporary signage (awaiting Forest Standard) and interpretation. One trail in the north of the Forest is outstanding and will be installed by March 2013.
8. **Community engagement** The annual targets have already been exceeded, with six forest introduction events for young people and six for Black and Minority Ethnic groups with three additional events. Forest keepers, visitor services staff, the volunteer development officer and volunteers have led several of these events. Wanstead Nature Club, a junior arm to the Wren Conservation Group based at the Harrow Road Changing Rooms, held its first session in March and are being supported by the Community Liaison Officer and Forest Keepers. Four events with the Challenge took place this year and two of last year's Challengers still volunteer regularly on the Forest. A Train the Trainer Bushcraft course in March was attended by staff and Learning Providers so that they can deliver Bushcraft Events on the Forest. Paid bush craft events are included in the 2012 and 2013 diaries.
9. **Learning** – The third and final year of Discovering Epping Forest (DEF) is now complete apart from the last Champions workshop. A draft evaluation report on the whole project has been circulated by the Field Studies Council and previous evaluation reports are available on the intranet at <http://www.discoveringeppingforest.org.uk/report.htm>. A video providing an overview of the project was shown at the Champions Workshop in June. Each learning provider and the participating schools will receive a copy with further copies available for promotional purposes. The DEF web resources are due to be published by CoL in February 2013. The learning providers have liaised over a brief for a learning consultant funded from the Local Risk budget, which is being put out to tender in October 2012, and will provide key input into the legacy. DEF was shortlisted under the 'Educational Initiative' category for this year's Museums and Heritage Awards, although it did not receive an award due to stiff competition.
10. **Trees** – We are working on oak trees rather than beech this year, as survey has shown that beech leaf size was very small as a result of a dry April in 2011. The effect of this on keystone tree conservation targets has been discussed with the HLF monitor. The regrowth of beech trees after crown reduction has been measured; trees cut in 2005/06 have responded extremely well, with growth twice or three times as much as those which have not been touched. Summer and winter cutting are indistinguishable and both are successful, supporting our management approach to keystone trees.
11. **Apprenticeships** – The third year of the apprentice arborist scheme is coming to an end with a leavers/starters party in October. This year's apprentice evaluation reports all included ratings of outstanding and good. Our existing apprentices are all pursuing a career in arborism and have been offered jobs.

- 12. Grazing** – CoL has recently purchased 12 cows, some of which are with calf and may form the basis of a breeding herd pending a business plan and committee approval. The grazier has experience of working with volunteers before and his intention is to recruit a small number initially and gradually expand, also providing LANTRA training. Version two of the cattle collar is being developed and CoL is meeting with the manufacturers, Lacme in spring as part of the ongoing trial. The buried wire (invisible fence) is performing well and has been tested beneath a road as a virtual grid.
- 13. Forest Transport Strategy** – Essex County Council (ECC) will install cattle grids and CoL contractors the fencing by the end of March 2013. A Certificate of Lawful development is being sought. Any money saved by installing fewer grids will be spent elsewhere on the Forest Transport Strategy in Essex, such as road crossings and virtual/invisible grids as part of the Branching Out project. Fairmead Road will be closed south of the car park. Traffic flow will be monitored to enable Essex County Council's decision over full closure to be reviewed. A meeting about Rangers Road was held with the London Borough of Waltham Forest in September to discuss options and funding for traffic calming and a crossing beside The View and Butler's Retreat.
- 14. Invisible fencing and grids** – ECC are likely to tender the metal grids and invisible grids work in the same package, as part of the Branching Out works. CoL and ECC are also negotiating the installation of invisible grids in 2013 with the London boroughs.
- 15. Rangers Road crossing** and traffic calming are being discussed with the London Borough of Waltham Forest and HLF with a view to providing a safer way for the increased number visitors to cross this busy road to the Gateway facilities.
- 16. Volunteers** – The volunteer recruitment target for 2011 was to fill 27 roles, which has been exceeded by 20 volunteers. We have undertaken an equality survey of Epping Forest volunteers and our volunteers are now participating in an Open Spaces wide quality/satisfaction survey. In parallel to this, staff are reviewing the service we provide, from areas for improvement to examples of best practice.
- 17. Archives** - The Branching Out archiving project is now complete and has exceeded its targets. The online catalogue contains 4793 entries and is fully searchable on the London Metropolitan Archives website http://search.lma.gov.uk/opac_lma/index.htm. The archive materials provide a resource for research, staff training, interpretation and heritage promotion. LMA accessioning of further items will be considered annually. Some of the LMA rejects are displayed at Epping Forest as part of the museum collection, being kept for reference or becoming part of the handling collection. The 12 volunteers who catalogued the superintendents' letters were vital to the LMA project and Epping Forest will engage further volunteers (one already in place) to work on the museum collection in 2013. The Archive Events over the last three years with costumed interpreters have proved a success and staff and volunteers are being trained to deliver them in future years.
- 18. Evaluation** – The observation and questionnaire surveys for 2012 have been completed by volunteers. Statistics were not collected during the Olympic and Paralympic period to avoid them being skewed. The report for the 2011 and 2010 Visitor Surveys can be viewed at www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/eppingforestvisitorsurvey The results have been compared with those from 2010, giving a more accurate picture of visits to the Forest (4.7 million). At a survey volunteer workshop, the results from the 2011 survey were digested and action points suggested for the sites surveyed. Some of these actions have taken place

and others are scheduled. 'You said – we did' posters will be displayed at the sites surveyed and put on the web in October 2012.

Plans for 2013

19. The following tasks are scheduled to take place during the financial year 2012/2013:

- Complete Jubilee Pond access trail, landscaping and car park.
- Continue community engagement with expansion of bush craft and John Muir Award. Increase number of volunteers, focussing on visitor services at the new visitor centre and cattle grazing.
- Legacy for Discovering Epping Forest together with the three learning partners, Epping Forest Field Centre, Epping Forest Centenary Trust, Suntrap Field Centre with aid of Learning consultant to advise on the learning legacy.
- Deliver Year 4 of the apprentice arborist scheme.
- Continue conservation works to keystone trees, informed by progress to date.
- Forest Transport Strategy –install cattle grids and timber fencing by March 2013. Any remaining budget, due to savings from reduced number of grids, will be used for other aspects of the Forest Transport Strategy such as road crossings and a signage review.
- Continue to test invisible fencing. Agree policy for herd expansion, which will be the subject of a Committee report in February 2013. Advertise cattle monitoring volunteer roles.
- Continue visitor survey. Visitor Surveys between 2012 and 2014 will mean that all areas selected within the Forest will have been targeted, so that we can start assessing the impact of Branching Out projects from 2015.
- Agree a standard design for gateway structures and signage, with a Forest standard to inform design of furniture. Install the remaining three waymarked trails.

Financial and Risk Implications

20. **Funding** from HLF is **74.37%** of total spend at Stage 3 (excluding the Stage 1 sunk costs of £123,280). The remaining 25.63% of the total Stage 3 budget of £6,395,314 will be met by grants from our partners and the Local Risk budget. This includes a grant of £270,658 from the Tubney Trust and £300,000 towards the Forest Transport Strategy from Essex County Council. Development costs of £311,000 were spent and claimed at Stage 2. See **Table 1** below.

21. Table 1: Funding Sources

Funding Sources Table	£	Claims to Oct 2012	Status
Heritage Lottery Fund Stage 3	4,756,000	3,259,825	Claimed quarterly in arrears
Heritage Lottery Fund Development Grant	231,500	231,500	Claimed
Essex County Council (cattle grids & FTS)	300,000	134,382	Evidence to be provided quarterly
City Contribution All Stages*	1,251,436	996,923	See breakdown below
London Borough of Waltham Forest	20,000	20,000	Expended on highways works
Tubney Trust	270,658	270,658	Fully paid in 2012
Total	6,829,594	4,913,288	
*analysis of City Contribution	£	Claims to Oct 2012	Status
Stg 1 bid prep (sunk cost)	123,280	123,280	Expended
City Contribution Development Stage 2	79,500	79,500	Expended
Local Risk	765,436	604,915	Allocated annually
Sub-Total Local Risk	968,216	807,695	
Payments in-kind (volunteers, etc)	283,220	189,228	Claimed with evidence
Total	1,251,436	996,923	

22. Table 2: Cumulative Spend Stage 3 included in HLF claims to end October 2012.

Project	Capital spend (£)	Revenue spend (£)	Total (£)
1. Coach House	1,628,617	459,214	2,087,831
2. Butler's Retreat	614,462	0	614,462
3. Car Parks and Access	1,012,472	92,993	1,105,465
4. Grazing and Trees	189,874	399,099	588,973
Volunteer Hours (£ equivalent as match)	0	109,982	109,982
Total Spend Stage 3	3,445,425	1,061,288	4,506,713

30. **Spend** to the end of June 2012 for Stage 3 only totals £4,383,432 (or £4,506,713 including sunk costs, and £4,817,712 including Stage 2 development costs of £311,000). This was submitted as an HLF claim in October 2012 (**Table 2** above), representing an HLF grant value of £3,259,825 (74.37%). Thus approximately 70% of the budget has been spent at three fifths of the way through the project. It is anticipated that the full project budget of £6,518,592 (or £6.8 million including development costs) for Stage 3 will be spent.

31. **Table 3: Variances** between capital and revenue budgets arising from comparing the budget approved by your committee in May 2012 with budget revisions in October 2012 (Appendix 1), where negative figures represent a budget increase. The revised budget reflects contingency items submitted to HLF for approval.

Project	Capital costs (£ variance)	Revenue costs (£ variance)	Total (variance £)
1. Coach House	-7,287	-6,010	-13,297
2. Butler's Retreat	5554	0	5,554
3. Car Parks and Access	-4114	-12,930	-17,044
4. Grazing and Trees	10,000	12,479	22,479
Volunteer Costs	0		0
Contingency		2,308	2,308
Development Cost	0	0	0
Total	4,153	-4,153	0

32. The variances in Table 3 above are not significant amendments to the budget, but bring the budget reported to your May Committee meeting in line with the HLF claim of October 2012. The saving of £10,000 in Grazing and Trees, relates to the contractor's quote for fencing to accompany cattle grids being less than estimated. The balancing figure of £12,479 is partly explained by the reinstatement of the match protective clothing funding from Husqvarna being transferred back to the expenses budget in response to HLF concerns. Further detail on the budget variations is tabled in Appendix 2.
33. There is £110,989 remaining in the Contingency Budget, which is 8% of the remaining capital budget of £1,333,474. Please note that contingency budgets are standard for Heritage Lottery funded projects.

Corporate Property Implications

34. Epping Forest is a major land holding, whose conservation is charged in perpetuity to the City together with its infrastructure and buildings, requiring a high level of financial and resource commitment.
35. Redevelopment of the coach house interpretation centre as The View visitor centre, together with Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge and Butler's Retreat, forms the Gateway complex. Completion of the planned improvements to two of Epping Forest's significant, heritage property assets complement asset management aspirations.
36. The Jubilee Pond relining project is going through the Project Gateway process via the City Surveyor. Completion of this project is required prior to landscaping works as part of the Branching Out project.

Strategic Implications

37. Volunteering and community involvement are included in the **Open Spaces Business Plan 2012-2015**, one of the strategic aims of which is to "Celebrate a sense of place by involving local communities in the care and management of our sites". Objectives include encouraging use of the Open Spaces by underrepresented groups and

developing volunteering opportunities at all sites. The City of London Corporation as Conservators of Epping Forest hold the land in trust for the recreation and enjoyment of the public. The proposals **address “The City Together Strategy: The Heart of a World Class City” 2008-2014.**

Legal Implications

38. On 18 August 2012 the trade and assets of the main contractor, Tilhill Forestry Limited (Tilhill) were sold to Ground Control Limited (GCL), a commercial landscaping company based in Essex. Following consultation with representatives of the Chamberlain’s and the Comptroller and City Solicitor’s departments, a Request for Urgent Decision under Standing Order 41(a) for the novation of the contract to GCL was approved on 9 October 2012. The novation provides for a straight transfer of all Tilhill’s rights and responsibilities under the existing contract to GCL. Tilhill have provided a good service to date and the contract is 80% complete. The Comptroller & City Solicitor’s department has been instructed to prepare a novation agreement suitable for this purpose, the terms of which have been approved in principle by both Tilhill and GCL and engrossments issued for execution. GCL will undertake the remaining Branching Out landscaping works at Jubilee Pond and cover any remediation work during the defects liability period for the completed sites.

Human Resource Implications

39. The Community Liaison Officer took maternity leave from October and maternity cover has been selected from seven applicants, including a volunteer.
40. Three new apprentice arborists have been appointed. We advertised the posts for three weeks and there were 40 applicants, of whom we selected eight for interview, although only seven attended over the 2 days.

Conclusion

41. Development works at the Chingford Hub and all landscaping apart from Jubilee Pond are complete. The Discovering Epping Forest schools programme has completed its third and final year; a final evaluation report has been received and we are working on the legacy by engaging a consultant. Targets for community liaison and volunteering have been exceeded for this year. The programme of conservation work to the keystone trees has been amended due to extreme weather conditions affecting the health of beech trees, of which HLF are aware.
42. This report includes an updated budget, which is very similar to the last report, with minor variations to match the most recent HLF claim. The projected overall total cost remains the same. Spend is on track, with approximately 70% of the budget having been spent at three fifths of the way through the project, representing HLF grant claims totalling £3,259,825 to date.

Appendix 1 Capital and Expenditure Budgets

Appendix 2 Budget variations submitted to HLF since last progress report

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Appendix 1 Capital and Expenditure Summary Budgets

Table a) Capital/Expenditure approved May 2012

Project	Capital costs Phases F-L (£)	Revenue costs (£)	Other costs (£)	Total All Years (£)
1. Coach House	1,754,287	593,687	0	2,347,974
2. Butler's Retreat	644,592	0	0	644,592
3. Car Parks and Access	2,078,864	170,593	0	2,249,457
4. Grazing and Trees	305,309	704,812	0	1,010,121
Volunteer Hours	0	0	153,150	153,150
Contingency	0	0	113,298	113,298
TOTAL	4,783,052	1,469,092	266,448	6,518,592
Development Cost	0	0	311,000	311,000
Total including Development Cost	4,783,052	1,469,092	577,448	6,829,592

Table b) Capital/Expenditure updated October 2012

Project	Capital costs Phases F-L (£)	Revenue costs (£)	Other costs (£)	Total All Years (£)
1. Coach House	1,761,574	599,698	0	2,361,272
2. Butler's Retreat	639,038	0	0	639,038
3. Car Parks and Access	2,082,978	183,523	0	2,266,501
4. Grazing and Trees	295,309	692,333	0	987,642
Volunteer Hours	0	0	153,150	153,150
Contingency	0	0	110,989	110,989
TOTAL	4,778,899	1,475,554	264,139	6,518,592
Development Cost	0	0	311,000	311,000
Total including Development Costs	4,778,899	1,475,554	575,139	6,829,592

Appendix 2 Budget variations since last progress report

Item	Budget Apr 12 for May cttee	Budget Oct 12 for HLF (+ ddn 7)	Variance (£)	Reason for significant variation	Budget line transferred from/to
COACH HOUSE					
Construction	1,324,480	1,316,362	8,118		To museum collection below
Museum collection display	170,408	173,736	-3,328		from construction
Equipment	13,127	13,127	0		
Materials	7,997	7,997	0		
HLF Bid preparation Stage 1	55,517	55,517	0		
Professional fees	182,758	194,835	-12,077		From contingency, Butler's Retreat prof fees & construction
Capital Costs	1,754,287	1,761,574	-7,287		
Staff: Community Liaison	171,828	179,421	-7,593		From contingency
Staff – Archivist	31,207	37,573	-6,366		From education
Conservation work	11,032	11,032	0		
Recruitment (+int expenses)	4,427	4,427	0		
Measuring Project Success	20,000	20,000	0		
Education Programme	308,236	297,560	10,676		to CLO salary & volunteer equipment
Materials, Equipment, Travel for CLO & PM	7,517	5,904	1,613		to car parks PM & CLO costs
Volunteer equipment + travel + events	34,441	38,781	-4,340		Education
Events – catering, launches	5,000	5,000	0		
staff costs	0	0	0		
Development Costs	0	0	0		
Revenue Costs	593,687	599,698	-6,010		
Coach House	2,347,974	2,361,272	-13,297		

Item	Budget Apr 12 for May cttee	Budget Oct 12 for HLF (+ ddn 7)	Variance (£)	Reason for significant variation	Budget line transferred from/to
BUTLER'S RETREAT					
Refurbishment	547,183	546,000	1,183		To coach house interp
HLF Bid preparation Stage 1	19,403	19,403	0		
Professional fees	78,006	73,635	4,371		To coach house prof fees
Capital Costs	644,592	639,038	5,554		
Measuring Project Success	0	0	0		
staff costs	0	0	0		
Dev't Costs (D-E, Stage 2)	0	0	0		
Revenue Costs	0	0	0		
Butler's Retreat	644,592	639,038	5,554		
CAR PARKS & ACCESS					
Barn Hoppit Car Park	194,892	107,836	87,056	prelims/provisional sums included in appropriate project	to landscape projects below
Coach House Forecourt	137,296	90,425	46,871	prelims/provisional sums included in appropriate project	from Barn Hoppit (prelims)
Connaught Water Easy Access Trail	151,258	174,126	-22,868	prelims/provisional sums included in appropriate project	from Barn Hoppit (prelims)
Connaught Water Car Park	85,165	109,969	-24,804	drainage works +13,508 and prelims/provisional sums included in appropriate project	from contingency and Barn Hoppit (prelims)
Pillow Mounds Car Park	211,632	236,371	-24,739	prelims/provisional sums included in appropriate project	from Barn Hoppit (prelims), contingency £15,643 & grazing fencing (£10k)
Jubilee Pond Access Trail	124,794	174,675	-49,881	prelims/provisional sums included in appropriate project	from Barn Hoppit (prelims)
Bury Road Car Park	132,746	146,933	-14,187	prelims/provisional sums included in appropriate project	from Barn Hoppit (prelims)
Sub total	1,037,783	1,040,335	-2,552		

Item	Budget Apr 12 for May cttee	Budget Oct 12 for HLF (+ ddn 7)	Variance (£)	Reason for significant variation	Budget line transferred from/to
Cattle grids (forest grazing)	625,367	625,367	0		
New interpretation panels and signs for trails	53,000	53,000	0		
Small Plant and tools	10,000	10,000	0		
Materials for Gateways	203,176	203,176	0		
HLF Bid preparation Stage 1	44,633	44,633	0		
Prof fees landscaping	104,906	106,468	-1,562		contingency
Capital Costs	2,078,865	2,082,979	-4,114		
Project Manager	151,834	152,229	-395		From grazing & trees
Recruitment	3,000	3,000	0		
Measuring Project Success	638	638	0		
Office set up - PM & CLO	1,946	1,292	654		
Materials, Equipment, Travel for CLO & PM	5,175	18,364	-13,189		Part of grazing & trees match
ADAS safety audit	8,000	8,000	0		
Revenue Costs	170,593	183,523	-12,930		
Car Parks and Access	2,249,457	2,266,501	-17,044		
GRAZING & TREES					
Fencing (forest grazing)	116,000	106,000	10,000		to landscaping works
Equipment	21,300	21,300	0		
Vehicles	164,282	164,282	0		
HLF Bid preparation Stage 1	3,727	3,727	0		
Capital Costs	305,309	295,309	10,000		

Item	Budget Apr 12 for May cttee	Budget Oct 12 for HLF (+ ddn 7)	Variance (£)	Reason for significant variation	Budget line transferred from/to
Project Manager - 50%	149,822	149,427	395		To car parks & access
Arborist team leader	159,954	159,954	0		
Apprenticeship placements	238,062	235,733	2,329		to contingency
Recruitment	6,000	6,000	0		
Training	36,514	41,759	-5,245		contingency
Equipment for Apprentices	15,000	0	15,000	Transferred back for HLF purposes	To car parks: travel and expenses
Accommodation (lodges for arb team leader and CLO)	99,460	99,460	0		
Revenue Costs	704,812	692,333	12,479		
Grazing and Trees	1,010,121	987,642	22,479		
Volunteer Hours	153,150	153,150	0		
Contingency	113,297	110,989	2,308		To items above
Develpmt Cost (phases D-E)	311,000	311,000	0		
Non project specific	577,447	575,139	2,308		
ALL PROJECTS	6,829,591*	6,829,592*	0		
<i>All projects minus devpt costs</i>	<i>6,518,591</i>	<i>6,518,592</i>	<i>0</i>		
HLF Bid preparation Stage 1	123,280.00	123,280.00	0		
HLF Approved cost (less sunk less devt costs)	6,395,311	6,395,312	0		
HLF payment 74.36695%	4,755,998	4,755,998	0		

* The slight variations in totals are due to rounding up and down of pence

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Committee(s):	Date(s):	Item no.
Epping Forest and Commons	5 November 2012	
Subject: Consultation by the London Borough of Enfield on the proposed North East Enfield Area Action Plan	Public	
Report of: Superintendent of Epping Forest SEF 33/12	For Decision	

Summary

This report informs your Committee of a public consultation by the London Borough of Enfield which includes plans to resurrect proposals for a Northern Gateway Access Road (NGAR) as the Northern Gateway Access Package (NGAP) as part of a regeneration scheme through an Area Action Plan for North East Enfield. NGAP would link the A1025 Mollison Avenue in Enfield with the A121 Southern Waltham Abbey bypass in Epping Forest District relieving congestion at the M25 junction 25 by diverting traffic towards M25 junction 26, potentially dramatically increasing traffic flows in Epping Forest.

Your Committee previously supported objections to NGAR in 1996 and the subsequent Public Inquiry ordered by the Secretary of State in 2001 where Epping Forest District Council; the Lea Valley Regional Park Authority; the City of London and local conservation groups successfully opposed a planning application for NGAR.

Recommendations

I recommend that

- i. your Committee pursues option (iii) and maintains their objections to the proposals for a Northern Gateway Access Package (NGAP) in order to protect Epping Forest from potential damage from increased traffic movements identified in the previous 2001 Public Inquiry.
- ii. cooperation is undertaken with other parties objecting to NGAP to reduce the costs of traffic modelling and pollution monitoring, with Epping Forest Local Risk contribution not exceeding £20,000 in direct costs.

Main Report

Background

1. The London Borough of Enfield made an application for planning permission in 1996 to construct 1 km of new road entitled the Northern Gateway Access Road (NGAR), to run parallel with the M25 between Mollison Avenue (A1055) in Enfield, bridging the River Lee at the Lee

Valley Regional Authority's Ramney Marsh Nature Reserve, and connecting with the then soon to be constructed Waltham Abbey southern bypass which is in the jurisdiction of Epping Forest District Council.

2. As the proposed NGAR scheme was a departure from the Borough's Development Plan, the application was referred to the Secretary of State who chose to call in the application and consider the matter through a Public Inquiry addressing the following concerns:
 - i. implications on the Green Belt;
 - ii. traffic generation;
 - iii. modal transport change impact;
 - iv. the appropriateness of the proposal to transport planning guidance (PPG 13);
 - v. whether the development of the associated Innova Park could be managed differently;
 - vi. harm to the Lee Valley.
3. At the opening of the Inquiry the Inspector sought further environmental evidence in respect of harm to Epping Forest.
4. The Public Inquiry was held between 18th September and 20th November 2001 and sat for a total of 14 days. Evidence in the form of case presentation was given to the Inquiry by the Statutory Bodies comprising the London Borough of Enfield (LBE); Epping Forest District Council (EFDC); the Lee Valley Regional Park (LVRP) and the Highways Agency. A case presentation was also made by the City of London by Land Agent John Holtom (now retired) and the now Conservation Manager Dr Jeremy Dagley. Representations were also made by the Friends of Epping Forest; the Council for the Preservation of Rural Essex and the Enfield Lock Conservation Group. Written submissions were made by Essex County Council; English Nature (now Natural England) and other groups and individuals.
5. The Secretary of State announced on 2nd August 2002 that he supported his Inspector's decision (APP/V4630/V/01/1075981) that planning permission for NGAR should be refused on the grounds that the proposal would cause serious harm to the Metropolitan Green Belt and local nature conservation interests. He also ruled that the remaining issues would be neither beneficial nor effective when weighed against the individual issues raised. The Secretary of State's published statement included reference to "*inappropriate development in the Green Belt and the likely harm caused*

to features of nature conservation interest of the Ramney Marsh; the River Lee Navigation and the Special Area of Conservation at Epping Forest”.

6. The Waltham Abbey A121 southern bypass has since been constructed, principally to serve the Sainsbury’s Waltham Point 700,000 sqft Distribution Centre.

Current Position

7. This report is necessary as LBE is preparing a North East Enfield Area Action Plan (NEEAAP) which includes proposals to resurrect the original 2001 NGAR proposal under a new acronym the Northern Gateway Access Package (NGAP). Your Committee’s guidance on a suitable response is sought.
8. The NEEAAP will provide a comprehensive planning policy framework to guide future development and investment in the area. The North East Enfield (NEE) area stretches from the M25 (junction 25) southwards to Ponders End and includes the communities of Enfield Lock, Enfield Highway, Ponders End, Turkey Street and Southbury.
9. The adopted Core Strategy for LBE highlights NEE as a strategic growth area and Ponders End as a regeneration priority area. The NEEAAP seeks to identify new development areas; enhance industrial estates; provide new housing and local community facilities. The issues of accessibility and connectivity are considered to be critical elements in the regeneration of the NEE area with key proposals to improve public transport and the access to the area by car, cycle and on foot.
10. An 80-page Interim Direction Document for the NEEAAP was published in August 2012. The NEEAAP is accompanied by a companion ‘Have Your Say’ 18 page Summary and Consultation Document, published in September 2012, which poses 17 questions for public consultation for 12 weeks between 16th August and 8th November.
11. The NEEAAP discusses a range of Highway Network, Transport and Movement Infrastructure proposals at pages 65 – 67 making the point that *“Access (for NEE) to the M25 is indirect, convoluted and congested”*. The eight point policy approach for the transport infrastructure network proposed in the NEEAAP states at *“1. The AAP must plan sufficiently for the forecast increase in vehicle trips to and from the development areas in NEE ... This will require implementation of traffic management measures .. leading to the strategic road network, such as the A10, M25 and the A406 North Circular Road”*.
12. A further more direct reference is made at *“3. Continued consideration will also be given to the potential benefits and merits of a Northern*

Gateway Access Package (NGAP) that involves providing a new link between the A1055 and the A121 to connection to junction 26 of the M25, mitigating the impact of the scheme in Ramney Marsh as much as possible ...". It is very clear from these statements that the original 2001 NGAR proposal has, 16 years later, been broadly resurrected under the Northern Gateway Access Package (NGAP) title.

13. Two of the questions in the NEEAAP consultation address the NGAR/NGAP proposal. Question 11 at page 14 enquires "*Do you support our approach to improving access and movement in the area?*" while question 12 at page 15 asks "*Do you support the need to explore options for the Northern Gateway Access Package?*"

Options

14. There are three courses of action available to your Committee:
 - i. Refrain from participating in the current and future public consultation associated with the NEEAAP. There are no immediate costs associated with non-participation. There is a real risk that the failure by the Conservators to object to the process will be read as tacit approval for NGAP. If the NEEAAP successfully proposed a NGAR/NGAP link to the A121, traffic and pollution levels across the Forest would undoubtedly rise and there would be a reputation risk for the Conservators regarding the wider protection of the Forest.
 - ii. Maintain the Conservators objection to the NGAR/NGAP scheme by responding to the NEEAAP proposals through public consultation phases, but relying on the directly affected stakeholders - EFDC and LVRP - to oppose the scheme at Public Inquiry. This option would conserve staff and local risk resource but may increase the risk of a successful NGAR/NGAP scheme while attracting potential criticism of the City of London in adopting an inconsistent approach to the scheme.
 - iii. Maintain the Conservators objection to the NGAR/NGAP scheme by responding to the NEEAAP proposals with a view to defending your Committee's objections throughout the process including a Public Inquiry. The continued opposition to NGAP will require considerable staff resources and will involve the commissioning of traffic studies and pollution monitoring to model the impact on Epping Forest. A successful objection to NGAP will reduce the potential for the growth of traffic movements and pollution levels within the Forest.

Proposals

15. The pursuit of Option (iii.) is recommended to your Committee. The Public Inquiry of 2001 considered evidence of detrimental impacts of the Forest environment in terms of increased traffic and pollution levels. The partnership between EFDC; LVRP and the City of London provided a valuable coalition arguing in favour of protecting the Metropolitan Green Belt and nature conservation interests at LVRP and Epping Forest, as well as contesting the ‘fairness’ of shifting North London traffic flows further eastwards.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

16. The protection of Epping Forest Land through a strategic approach to involvement with the planning system supports ‘The City Together Strategy: The Heart of a World Class City’ 2008-14 under the following theme:
 - A World Class City which protects, promotes and enhances our environment.
17. The protection of Epping Forest Land through engagement with development proposals further supports the Open Spaces Directorate Business Plan through:
 - Quality. Providing safe high quality accessible Open Spaces and services in accordance with nationally recognised standards for the benefit of London and the Nation.
 - Environment. Deliver sustainable working practices to promote the variety of life and protect the Open Spaces for the enjoyment of future generations.

Implications

Legal Implications

18. Should your committee consider it appropriate to pursue concerns about the proposed NGAR it would be prudent to do so at this NEEAAP policy making stage of the planning process, since once policy is adopted it becomes the key consideration in determining future planning applications, with the National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF”) advocating that planning decisions be “plan led”. The NPPF (which sets out the government’s planning policies) seeks to achieve sustainable development. It advises that “in preparing plans to meet development needs, the aim should be to minimise pollution and other adverse effects on the local and natural environment (paragraph 110).

Financial Implications

19. The decision to oppose NGAR/NGAP will involve considerable staff resources and may require the commissioning of independent traffic modelling studies outlining the impact of vehicles and pollution loading on Epping Forest. It is anticipated that should the Conservators be able to cooperate with other objecting organisations the costs of modelling could be contained below £20,000, to be met from existing local risk budgets. There may be further costs regarding representation at the Public Inquiry which cannot be ascertained at this stage.

Conclusion

20. NGAR/NGAP will translocate significant levels of traffic from North East Enfield to junction 26 of the M25 at Epping Forest with the onward risk of increased traffic and pollution levels in the Forest at times of motorway congestion and through the creation of a broader west/east traffic corridor. Objections to NGAR by the City of London played an important role in the evidence base developed at the Public Inquiry and continued objection to similar proposals for NGAP would be consistent with the Conservator's duty to protect Epping Forest and the position previously adopted in 1996.

Background Papers:

- *SEF 96/02 report to EF&OS Committee – The Northern Gateway Access Road*
- *Proposed Northern Gateway Access Road – Proof of Evidence of John Holtom*
- *Green Belts: a greener future*
- *Draft National Planning Policy Framework – Department for Communities and Local Government*
- *North East Enfield Area Action Plan – Enfield Council*

Appendices

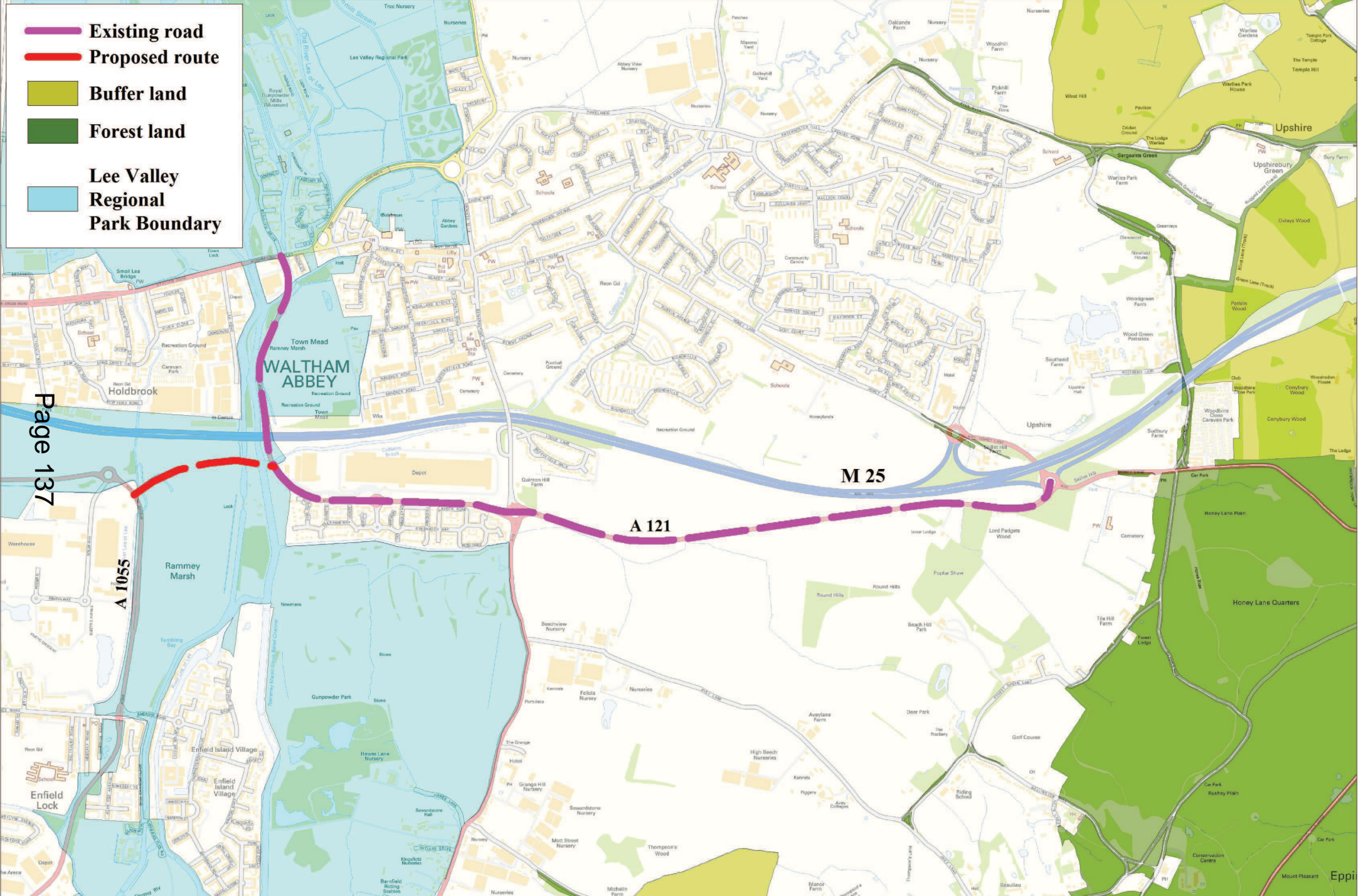
Appendix 1 - Map (to be produced)

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NORTHERN GATEWAY ACCESS ROAD - PROPOSED ROUTE

APPENDIX 1



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Committee(s):	Date(s):	Item no.
Epping Forest and Commons	5 November 2012	
Subject: Enforcement of Epping Forest Byelaws: 1 March 2012 to 31 August 2012		Public
Report of: Superintendent of Epping Forest SEF 32/12		For Information
<p><u>Summary</u></p> <p>This report informs your Committee of the byelaw enforcement activity undertaken by Epping Forest Keepers using constabulary powers within Epping Forest during the 6 month period between 1 March 2012 to 31 August 2012.</p> <p>The report shows a continuing decrease in the levels of Byelaw enforcement during the period of 2005 to 2012, as a part of a conscious programme of informal education rather than formal prosecution or warning. This is evidenced by the 3,045 “Advisory conversations” conducted by Forest Keepers.</p> <p>While advisory conversations exceed last year’s figure of 2,750 for the same period, Byelaw enforcement has decreased, though this reporting period does not cover the busy autumn fungi picking season which usually results in a high number of Byelaw offences being reported.</p> <p>Recommendations</p> <p>I recommend that the report be received.</p>		

Main Report

Background

1. Epping Forest Keepers possess constabulary powers under section 43 of the Epping Forest Act 1878, for both the Essex and Metropolitan Police Districts. Forest Keepers have the power to enforce both the Epping Forest Byelaws and selected areas of relevant national legislation.

2. This biannual report provides information on the number of prosecutions and warning letters that have been issued by the Superintendent of Epping Forest during the 6 months between March 2012 and August 2012.
3. Section 26 of the Police Reform Act 2002 entitled “Forces maintained otherwise than by police authorities” states that bodies of Constables, such as Forest Keepers, can enter into a voluntary agreement with the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) , with regard to a national standard on behaviour and independent complaints investigation. Contrary to previous reports on this matter, a decision was taken not to enter into a formal agreement with the IPCC and to continue to use City of London disciplinary procedures and to seek advice from the City of London Police for any cases for which it was deemed necessary or appropriate.

Current position

4. There have been 2 prosecutions for byelaw offences during the period under report; both prosecutions were for a breach of Byelaw 3(26a) horse riding regulations. One for not displaying a current licence tag and the other for not registering for a licence. Details of the Prosecutions are shown in Table 1.
5. There have been 4 warning letter sent for byelaw offences during the period under report. They were for “Driving a vehicle on the Forest more than 45 metres from a highway”.
6. The level of Byelaw enforcement over the period 2005/2012 is shown in Tables 2&3. The tables show a clear fall in both the number of prosecutions and warning letters. This decrease in part reflects the reduction in the number of Forest Keepers from 19 prior to the 2007 Resources Review to a level of 8, and finally 12 under the 2009 Mounted Officer Review. However, much of that steady downward trend is the result of a conscious effort which is being made to educate those people found to be breaking the Byelaws, rather than resorting to a more formal approach.
7. The sharp rise in prosecutions for 2010 was as a result of the withdrawal of the “fungi picking licence scheme”, a decision taken by your Committee in November 2008 and the abundance of fungi in the Forest during the autumn of 2010.
8. The focus on educating Forest users is also part of the strategy of the 12 Forest Keepers who form the new Area teams launched in October 2009. To reflect this change Forest Keepers now record the number of “Advisory conversations” with Forest users as one of the Epping Forest Key

Performance Indicators (KPI) they are responsible for; details are shown on Table 4. Advisory conversations rose 10.7% from 2,750 for March – August 2011 to 3,045 for the current reporting period.

9. A prosecution will always be sought, where evidence allows, for all environmental crime and for any offences against a member of staff. All other cases are investigated on their own merit using the recommendations of those involved and the impact on the Forest.

Financial and Risk Implications

10. At the meeting of 9 May 2011 your Committee approved a 50% increase in costs requested and the addition of a standard fly tipping disposal charge. Court costs are based on the average number of hours that Forest Keepers and administration staff spend on a case. The standard fly tipping disposal charge is calculated on the running costs, including staff costs, of the compactor lorry used to remove the waste plus the cost per tonne for disposal. The charges are shown in Table 5.
11. The cost of taking a case to the local Magistrates' Court is initially covered by the local risk budget of Epping Forest in the form of staff costs. These monies are then put to the Court as "case costs" and can be recovered at the Magistrates' discretion using section 18 of the Prosecution of Offences Act 1985. The latest level of costs put to the Court at this time are as shown in Table 5 and are subject to review on a regular basis. If additional Court appearances are required then the costs are adjusted as necessary. Also shown in Table 5 is the level of costs requested for the disposal of dumped waste as a result of a Byelaw offence.
12. These costs are not always awarded in full, and are often unpaid by the guilty parties. It is the responsibility of the Courts to recover these monies and pass them on to the City of London. Payments to the City of London currently broadly reflect the national average fine collection rate of 63%.
13. The Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 introduced from 1st April 2007 a "Victims surcharge" of £15.00, which is levied in addition to the fine and is aimed at helping improve services for victims of crime.

Legal implications

14. Prosecutions are brought for breaches of the Epping Forest Byelaws under the Epping Forest Act 1878 (as amended). Prosecutions are also brought under section 33 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and other relevant legislation where appropriate.

15. Costs are awarded at the discretion of the Courts.

Strategic Implications

16. The City Together Strategy is directly supported by the enforcement of Byelaws within the City of London Open Spaces. In particular this strategy matches the *City Together* theme of “a World Class City which – protects, promotes and enhances our environment:

- To promote and enhance safe access to the City Of London Open Spaces
- To improve people’s health, safety and welfare within the City Of London Open Spaces environment through proactive and reactive advice and enforcement activities.
- To protect and enhance the City of London Open Spaces environment and public realm
- To conserve and enhance biodiversity within the City of London Open Spaces
- To continue to ensure the City of London Open Spaces are a safe place in which to do business, work, visit and live.

Conclusion

17. The enforcement of the Epping Forest Byelaws promotes the protection and enhancement of the Forest and assists with the safety and education of those who choose to use it. Byelaw enforcement is one of many tools available to manage the Forest, but is only used where appropriate and necessary, and increasingly as a last resort.

Background Papers

***Department for Constitutional Affairs ‘Fines Collections’ HMSO HC1049
25.05.06***

Contact:

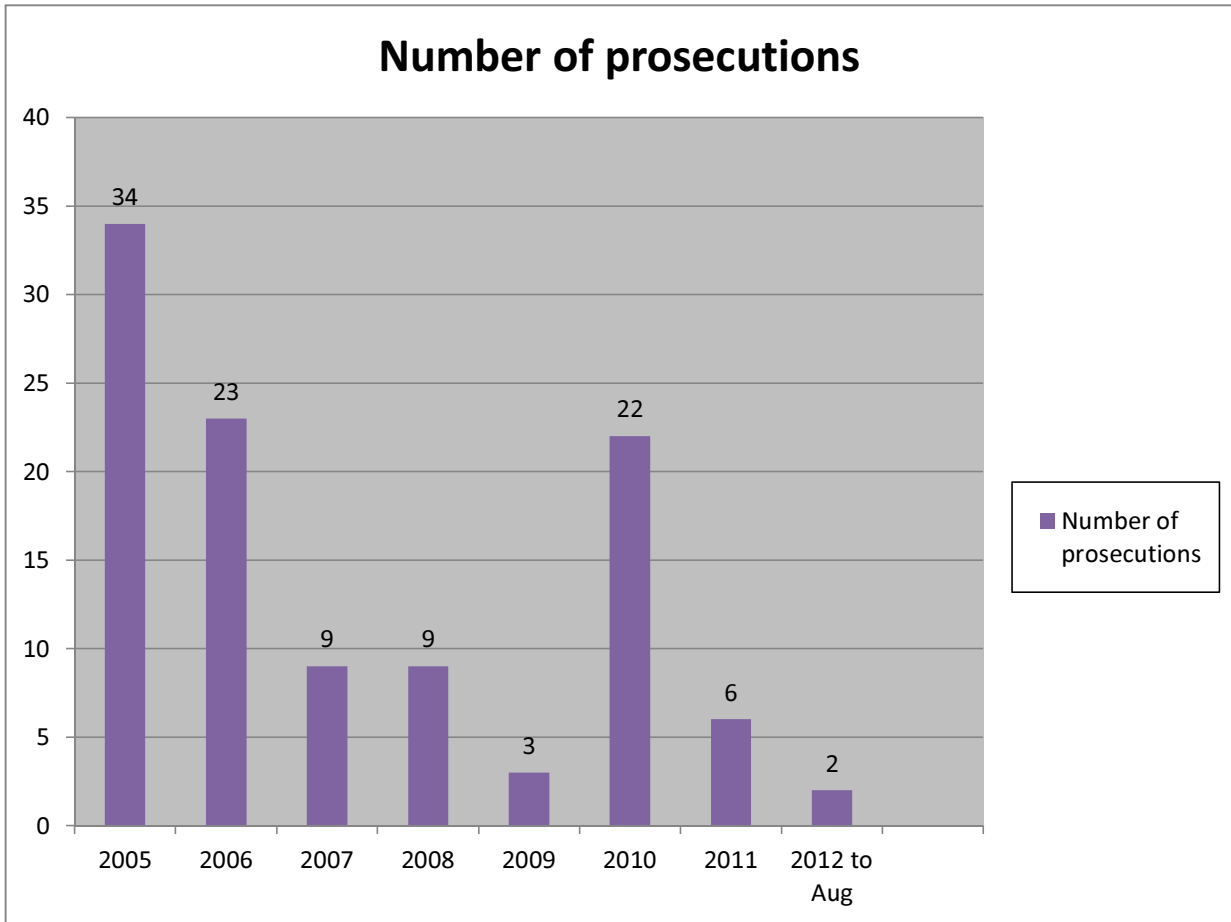
Keith French | keith.french@cityoflondon.gov.uk | 020 8532 5310

Table 1: Epping Forest Byelaw Prosecutions:

March 2012 to August 2012

Byelaw offence(s)	Court	Outcome
Riding on the Forest not registered for a horse riding licence	Chelmsford	Fine £50.00 Costs £240.00 Surcharge £15.00
Riding on the Forest not displaying a current horse riding licence	Chelmsford	Fine £25.00 Costs £240.00 Surcharge £15.00

Table 2: Epping Forest Byelaw Prosecutions:
Years 2005-2012



**Table 3: Epping Forest Byelaw Warning letters:
Years 2005-2012**

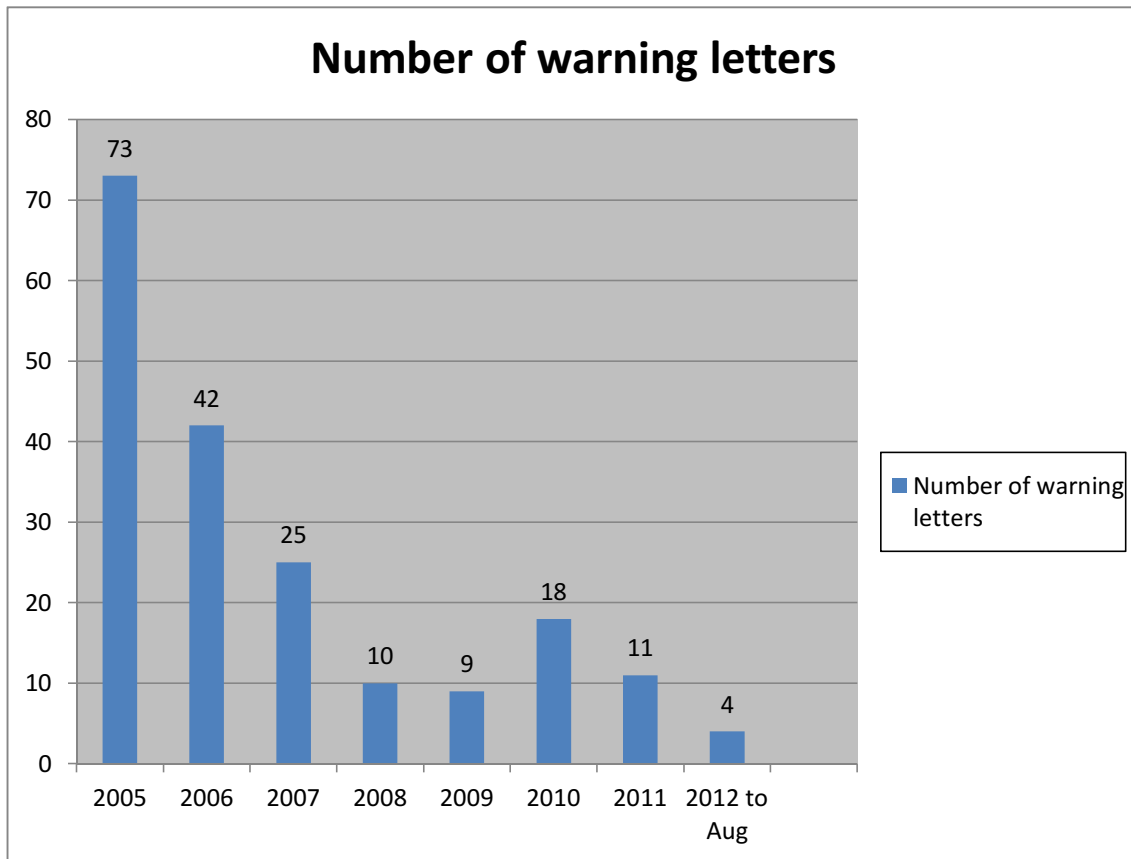


Table 4: Forest Keeper Advisory Conversations

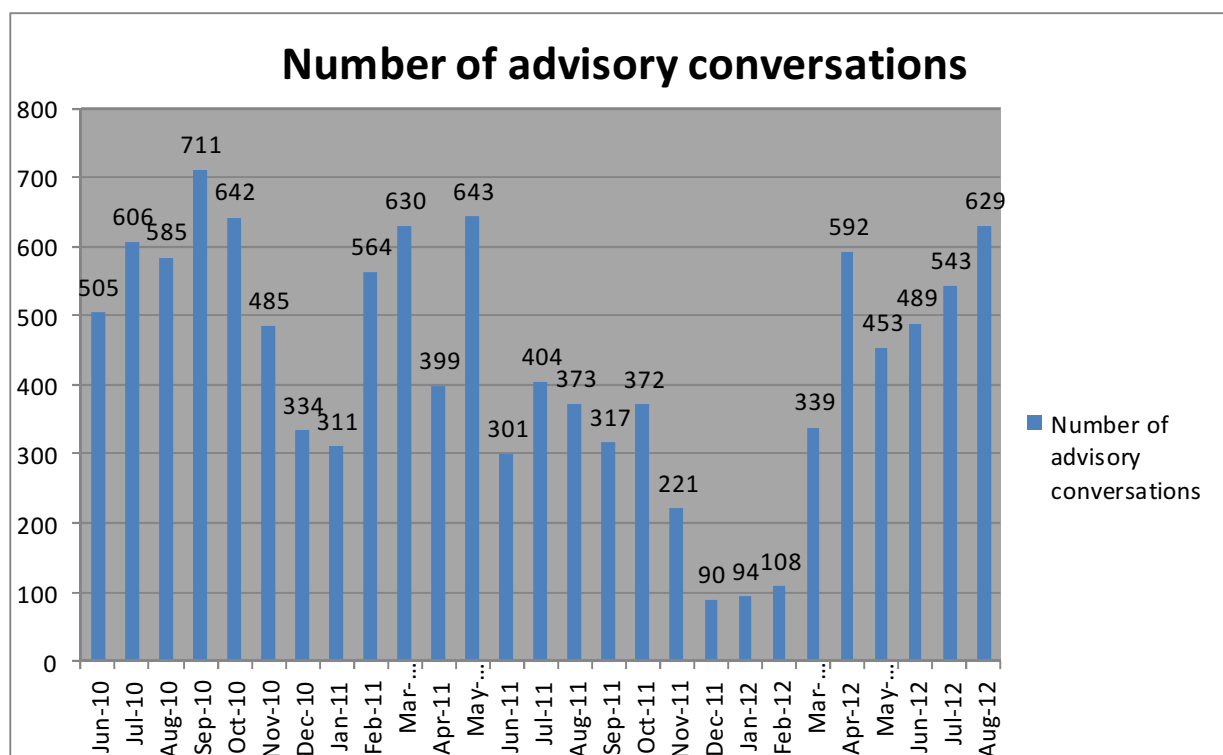


Table 5: Tariff of “Court Costs” requested at Magistrates Court

	2010/11	2011/12
Forest Keeper’s initial involvement, reports etc.	£40	£60
Office Administration	£40	£80
Forest Keeper’s Court appearance	£40	£80
Other costs, travel etc.	£40	£20
	£160	£240
Costs requested for disposal of dumped waste (minimum 1 tonne)	Nil	£128
+ each additional tonne	Nil	£97
Flytipping Reward Scheme	Up to £500	Up to £500

Committee(s):	Date(s):	Item no.
Epping Forest & Commons	5 November 2012	
Subject: EPPING FOREST HABITAT & TREE SAFETY WORK PROGRAMME 2011-12 Out-Turn		Public
Report of: Superintendent of Epping Forest SEF 37/12		For information

Summary

This report summarises the work completed as part of the habitat and tree safety management Annual Work programme for Epping Forest between April 2011 to March 2012 inclusive. Keystone Trees work reached an important milestone, with 53% of the selected Beech and Oak pollards completed exactly half-way through the important *Branching Out* project.

Amongst the highlights of the wider habitat work was:

- the completion of the phased opening up of the Lords Bushes Oak pollards, as set out in the 2003 Integrated Site Plan;
- the completion of the second re-pollarding of the Hornbeams that had first been re-pollarded in 1948 in Bury Wood;
- the successful trial of an invisible fencing system for cattle, a ‘first’ for the UK.

The habitats work programme is supported by major grants from the Single Payment Scheme, Natural England, the Heritage Lottery Fund and The Tubney Charitable Trust with an income in this reporting year of £315,000. This represents over 60% funding for the Conservation operations teams’ habitat and tree-safety operations.

In addition, of the two main volunteers’ groups, the Epping Forest Conservation Volunteers and the Epping Forest Centenary Trust, carried out work on over 40 sites across the Forest, from Wanstead Flats in the south to the Lower Forest in the north.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- you receive this report.

Main Report

Background

1. This report reviews the conservation projects, habitat management and tree safety work achieved during the year 2011 – 12 by the Conservation Teams and volunteers.
2. The programme is drawn from the Epping Forest Management Plan approved in 2004. Background details of the projects can be found in the main Management Plan, updated with the additional projects in 2007 (the document page numbers are given below to allow reference to this. Further details can be found in the other planning documents and strategies listed below under '*Background Papers*'.

Current Position

3. This year the habitats work programme was again supported financially by Natural England through its Environmental Stewardship Scheme. The management of most of the grasslands in the Forest and on the Buffer Lands is covered by payments under the Entry Level Scheme (ELS). Other habitats work in the Forest, especially within the scrub and wooded areas, is supported by specific Higher Level Scheme (HLS) payments at higher rates of payment and this includes cattle grazing, wood-pasture restoration and scrub coppicing.
4. In addition, The Tubney Charitable Trust grant continues to provide significant financial support as do payments received under the Single Payment Scheme.
5. The *Keystone Trees* conservation work is supported with a 74% grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund as part of the *Branching Out* Project and this grant supports a Conservation Team Leader (arborist) and the 3 apprentice arborists.
6. The total of grants from these sources, including capital grant payments for individual projects during the year such as Bracken control, amounted to £315,000. This covered over 60% of the costs of the Conservation Teams salaries and on-costs during the year.
7. This year's work by volunteers was carried out at over 40 sites across the Forest by the Epping Forest Conservation Volunteers (EFCV), Epping Forest Centenary Trust (EFCT) and some projects using external contractors.

8. During this year, 3 apprentice arborists successfully completed their NVQ2 qualifications and the 7th, 8th and 9th new apprentices started in October 2011 in partnership with Capel Manor College.

MANAGEMENT PLAN OBJECTIVE – TREES

KEYSTONE TREES STRATEGY

(pp. 194-195 of Man Plan)

9. During this reporting year work on 243 *Keystone Trees* was completed across the Forest as part of the HLF-funded *Branching Out* Project. A sum total of 639 Keystone Trees, therefore, has been reached for the Project as a whole representing 53% of the target at the half-way point of the funding.
10. The main Keystone Tree areas worked on this year included High Beach, St Thomas's Quarters, Lords Bushes, Rushey Plain, Powell's Forest, Hill Wood, Fairmead on the Oaks there, Goldings and Staples Hills and alongside Ditches Ride.

WOOD-PASTURE RESTORATION

(pp. 191 – 195 of Man Plan)

11. **National Priority Habitat:** Wood-pasture is recognised as a priority habitat for conservation by the UK Government in its action plan to meet the aims of the Rio Convention on Biological Diversity to which it is a signatory. Epping Forest is one of the most important wood-pasture sites in the UK and represents at least 7% of the UK total of this priority habitat.
12. Hornbeam re-pollarding and wood-pasture restoration was carried out across the following areas: Walthamstow Forest, Lords Bushes, Rushey Plain, North Long Hills and Long Hills, Pole Hill, High Beach and Bury Wood. At this latter site, Bury Wood, a significant milestone was achieved as the last of the pollards that had been re-cut in the 1940s and 1950s were re-pollarded thus bringing them back into the pollarding cycle as envisaged originally in the 1998 Management Plan.

OTHER TREE & WOODLAND MANAGEMENT

Project: Rhododendron Management (p. 197)

13. Some of the *Rhododendron ponticum* (the invasive species cultivar) was removed by volunteers in Knighton Woods (Comp 31) as work continued to maintain the vegetation in this historic garden.

Project: Thinning of Secondary Woodland (p. 193 of Plan)

14. Scout Project 822 in August 2011 involved the thinning of secondary woodland at Hatch Forest to extend the glades at this site as well as the removal of Birch at High Beach Pillow Mounds.

Project: Tree Hazard Management Work (p. 199 of Man Plan)

15. Following the survey work carried out during the autumn of 2011, over 470 trees required some hazard removal work. Most work was carried out by the in-house arborist staff, although significant amounts of roadside work were also achieved by specialist contractors where additional traffic control was required.

MANAGEMENT PLAN OBJECTIVE – OPEN LAND

GRAZING

Project: Extensive Grazing (p. 212)

16. The grazing management was carried out using a similar rotation to that of previous years across Forest Plains and heaths. Buffer Lands at Copped Hall and Great Gregories were also grazed by the Conservation herd. The English Longhorn cattle were managed under an interim grazing contract by Wildlife & Countryside Services, with a new herdsman.
17. By the end of the year the long-term grazing contract had been competitively tendered and was awarded to Wildlife & Countryside Services.
18. In addition to the normal grazing work, the interim grazier, Mr Roger Beecroft and the herdsman Robert Faber, undertook extensive trials of the invisible fencing equipment with the cattle at 3 sites. The impacts of this new technology were there for guests to view at the July 2011 Ladies' Day and the results were also presented as part of the Public Inquiry on Cattle Grids held in November 2011. At the Inquiry the Inspector visited one of the invisible grid locations. The trials were successful at the sites and in the conditions tested, but further

development of the system is needed to fit the conditions at Epping more precisely.

19. Sheep-grazing was carried out at the Copped Hall Estate (Deer Park fields) during the winter months as in the previous 3 years.

MOWING & CUTTING

Project: Flail Collector cuts and mini-system cuts (p. 215)

20. The mowing programme is outlined in the Management Plan (see page 215), with some modifications. Amongst notable achievements was the opening up of Sheppard's Meadows (see above) to restore grassland and work at The Stubbles ensuring that acid grassland at the edges of this narrow site were kept open. The mowing rotation at Wanstead Flats, continued into a second year working carefully around dense ant-hill areas and adjusting work to respond to reports by the Wren Group on the main Skylark feeding and breeding areas.
21. Certain larger sites, where generally hay can be harvested (e.g. Yates's Meadow), were cut by an external contractor again this year to allow the Epping Forest Grasslands Team to concentrate its work on key sites in less accessible locations, with more difficult terrain, scarcer flora or more complex prescriptions and rotations.
22. Most of the grassland work is supported by the Entry Level Payments under Natural England's Stewardship Scheme across both the Forest and Buffer Lands grasslands.
23. At Great Gregories a hay-lage crop was taken from the fields, by a specialist contractor, to provide fodder for the over-wintering conservation cattle herd.

SCRUB MANAGEMENT & CONTROL

Project: Heathland Restoration & Maintenance (p. 219)

24. Restoration work on overgrown heaths continued at the main heaths of Deershelter Plain, Long Running, and Sunshine Plain, with the EFCT contributing significantly to extensive work at Long Running.

Project: Grasslands, Glades & Green Lanes Restoration (p.220)

25. Grassland restoration and maintenance work, through the clearance of scrub and secondary woodland, took place at sites including significant works at Epping Long Green, The Birkbeck and Sheppard's Meadows.

•

Project: Scrub Coppice Rotation (Project Nightingale) (p. 222)

26. This Project continued at Chingford Plain and with a new parcel of coppicing at Lincoln's Lane. Breeding of a pair of Nightingales was confirmed at a Project site where they have been seen over the past 10 years alongside Gas Ride near The Warren.
27. Cranesbill Glade was opened up further and produced a show of Bluebells in Spring 2011.

MANAGEMENT PLAN OBJECTIVE – WETLANDS

Project: Alien Plants Management (p.244)

28. A survey of over 142 ponds across the Forest and Buffer Lands was carried out by the in-house ecology team mapping the presence of the invasive and non-native **New Zealand Stonecrop** which is causing problems with native plants and animals in ponds in the UK. The survey revealed that 19 ponds (13%) contained this invasive plant. Following this survey control methods can now be considered and costed and the scale of the problem for the Forest can be monitored closely.

Pond & Bog Vegetation Clearance (p. 238)

29. At Wake Valley Bog colonising trees were removed from this important site to keep it open and maintain its special, rare vegetation.

Pond Bankside restoration (p. 238)

30. At Hollow Ponds both reed-bed planting and willow coppicing were carried out to improve the banksides and reduce erosion.

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Financial Implications

31. The work was funded from Epping Forest and Buffer Lands local risk budgets. In this reporting year contributions to the budget from grant-aid from the Single Payment Scheme (administered by the Rural Payments Agency), The Heritage Lottery Fund, The Tubney Charitable Trust and Natural England amounted to £315,000. This covered over 60% of the Conservation operations teams salaries and related employment costs.
32. The tree safety survey by a consultant and the consequent selected tree hazard removal work involving contractors at the roadside cost a combined total of £34,500.

Legal Implications

33. The habitats work programme was carried out under the Conservators' powers provided by the Epping Forest Act 1878. Within the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) the programmed work was consented to by Natural England under Section 28 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the Countryside & Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000).

Strategic Implications

City Together

34. The work achieved above meets the *City Together* vision of a *World Class City* and, specifically, 2 of its 5 themes: "A world class City that supports our communities" and "A World Class City which protects, promotes and enhances our environment".

Open Spaces Department Business Plan

35. The habitats work programme, with the high level of involvement of volunteers and local members of the community, follows from 3 of the Open Spaces Department's Strategic Aims of: "providing high quality accessible Open Spaces and services in accordance with nationally recognised standards for the benefit of London and the Nation"; "involving communities in the management of our sites" and "adopting sustainable working practices, promoting the variety of life (biodiversity) and protecting the Open Spaces for the enjoyment of future generations".

Epping Forest Management Plan

36. The work described in this report also meets the Epping Forest Vision for the 21st Century, in particular:
- "Epping Forest's position as a unique and ancient landscape for people and wildlife will be strengthened;
 - "The Forest will retain its natural aspect with the diversity of wildlife habitats enhanced and the features of international importance, including its veteran pollards, protected;
 - "Epping Forest will be highly valued as part of a larger and fully accessible protected landscape area".

Consultees and formal SSSI consent for operations

37. Natural England officers were consulted about this work programme in relation to both the Stewardship Scheme and the *Favourable Condition* of the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) as required by the UK Government. Natural England gave its formal consent to this work

programme under Section 28E(3)(a) of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000).

Conclusions

38. The work completed in 2011 – 2012 is drawn from the Epping Forest Management Plan and subsequent strategies and site-specific plans (see below). The habitats work is supported by significant grants from Natural England, The Heritage Lottery Fund and The Tubney Charitable Trust. Significant milestones were achieved in re-establishing the pollarding cycle for the Hornbeams at Bury Wood and completing more than half of the *Keystone Tree* work exactly on time.
39. In addition to the work of the in-house teams of arborists and conservation workers, the work programme also involved many hours of volunteer time from the Epping Forest Conservation Volunteers (EFCV), Epping Forest Centenary Trust (EFCT), the Scout Association, The Wren Group and other local volunteering initiatives coordinated by the Volunteer Development Officer. Over 40 sites have been managed with the assistance of these voluntary groups across all habitats with a significant impact on pond management this year.

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Background Papers:

The Epping Forest Management Plan 2004 – 2010

The Barn Hoppitt Wood-pasture Restoration Plan 2006 – 2011

The Lords Bushes & Knighton Woods Integrated Site Plan 2004 – 2010

The Wanstead Flats Integrated Site Plan 2006 – 2011

Branching Out Stage Project Plan (Nov 2008) (Chapters 15 Keystone Trees Strategy and 16 Grazing Strategy)

Environmental Stewardship guidelines (Natural England)

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Committee(s):	Date(s):	Item no.
Epping Forest and Commons Committee	5 th November 2012	
Subject: Outcome of Phase 1 of the Invisible fencing/virtual grid trials at Burnham Beeches		Public
Report of: Superintendent of Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common		For Information
<p><u>Summary</u></p> <p>Approval for a phased and expanding trial of ‘Invisible Fencing’ and ‘Virtual Cattle Grids’ at Burnham Beeches during the Higher Level Stewardship period was given by this committee in May 2012.</p> <p>This report provides members with the results of the September - October 2012 trial and confirms that further trials will be pursued in 2013 at a cost of approximately £15,000.</p> <p>Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To receive this report. 		

Main Report

Background

1. In May 2012 your Committee approved a report from the Superintendent that set out a phased and expanding trial of invisible fencing and virtual cattle grids at Burnham Beeches National Nature Reserve (NNR).
2. Each phase of the trials has been designed to test the technical reliability of the invisible fencing equipment under a variety of conditions. The phasing also reflects an increased level of trust in the system as risks, such as traffic volume and boundary complexity, grow.
3. If the trials are successful around 95% of the site will be grazed by livestock by 2014 or shortly thereafter.

Current Position

4. The ‘Phase 1’ trial ran for three weeks i.e. from 12th September to 3rd October and enclosed approximately 15ha on the North West boundary of the Beeches.

5. The trial enclosure included a short length of public highway on Park Lane which is classified as a 'C' road. This required the use of virtual cattle grids for the first time at Burnham Beeches.
6. The cable loop that carries the radio signal was installed by the Rangers in the first week of September. An approved contractor was used to 'chase' the cabling into the highway and make good and to provide road markings. The signal generator and battery were located in a small underground chamber and protected from moisture.

Marketing and Consultation

7. A marketing programme was delivered to prepare visitors and motorists for the trial. A large plywood cow placed on the green roof of the Information Point. Two large plywood cows placed adjacent to the virtual grids on park lane. Extensive use of the 'Grazing it's Amazing' logo and table talkers at the Burnham Beeches Café. See Appendix 1 and 2.
8. Letters were sent informing neighbouring land owners of the trial that would shortly take place on their boundary. No comments were received. The Superintendent also gave presentations to the District Council's Environment Committee and the Burnham Local Area Forum who expressed their support.
9. Two British White Cows were released into the area by the Chairman Gordon Haines and Councillor Peter Hardy, Buckinghamshire County Council's Cabinet Member for Transportation and the Environment.

Monitoring and risk management

10. Every aspect of the trial was closely monitored to identify and reduce risks and to help to evolve future working practices. The monitoring programme included:
 - Regular checks of all equipment including loops, batteries, signal generators and livestock. These occurred at 00.00, 04.00, 08.00, 12.00, 16.00 and 20.00 each day for the trial period.
 - Ensuring the availability of spare equipment and tools to resolve any equipment failure or identify problems with the livestock.
11. The risk to livestock and others using the public highway was managed by:
 - Use of reflective leg bands on the cattle.
 - Use of additional highway signs warning of the presence of livestock.
 - Use of road markings to indicate the location of the 'virtual grids'.

- Use of gateway fencing to indicate the start and finish points of the trial area.

Outcomes -

12. Prior to the release of the cattle the radio signal generator was installed and connected to the battery. The equipment appeared to work well for the first few hours and was left on overnight. The early morning check of the equipment showed that the radio signal was not circulating around the cable.
13. Several tests were carried out on both the equipment and battery and it was concluded that the signal generator was faulty. This was replaced with a second device that worked faultlessly throughout the three week trial.
14. Cabling remained undisturbed by visitors and wildlife during the period.
15. The cattle quickly explored and learned the boundary of their new enclosure. The cattle were not disturbed by dogs despite this being an unusual area for dog walkers to come across livestock.
16. The experiment was a popular topic of conversation between staff and visitors with great interest shown in the technology and the general feedback being very positive.
17. No incidents were reported by road users or other visitors during the trial.
18. The trial attracted positive press coverage including local newspapers and a brief article in The Times (City Page).
19. Whilst there was an early technical problem with the signal generator it was identified at a very early stage i.e. before the animals were released and via the checking procedures developed specifically for the trial. As such the Phase 1 trial was a useful learning process and ultimately a success. I am now confident that a further expansion of the trials in 2013 is appropriate.
20. It remains important to continue to work closely with the manufacturer to seek improvements in reliability and design over the coming years. To date staff at Epping Forest and Burnham Beeches have influenced the design of a new livestock collar and tested the technology on a variety of terrains and conditions including the use of conduits under tarmac.

Financial and Risk Implications

21. It is estimated that the cost of designing and delivering the trials leading to 95% coverage of the site will be as follows:

• Phase 1 (2012)	- creation of a single enclosure.	£5,000
• Phase 2 (2013)	– creation of further enclosures.	£15,000
• Phase 3 (2014 on)	– expansion across the site.	£20,000
• Purchase of livestock	– possibly phased	£20,000
Total		<u>£60,000</u>

22. The costs outlined above will be refined as the project is developed but are expected to represent excellent value for money when compared to the cost of cattle grids and associated infrastructure.
23. The Superintendent will apply for 80% capital funding from Natural England’s Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) scheme to fund the cost of installing the invisible fencing and virtual grids. The remaining 20% will be provided from local risk budgets. Delivery remains possible without external funding if necessary.
24. A decision is now required as to how best to acquire, manage the livestock and over-winter the livestock. The Superintendent will evaluate the options and report his findings to this Committee in 2013.

Legal Implications

25. The installation of the Boviguard system required the Corporation to obtain a street works licence from the local highway authority under the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991. This was a largely administrative cost with some legal costs payable to the grantor of the licence. The licence for each highway location is required to enable the laying of cable apparatus in the public highway.
26. An agreement between the City of London and Buckinghamshire County Council has been entered into in respect of the road markings installed in connection with the “virtual grids” and following consultation with relevant Buckinghamshire County Council officers about the proposals..

Property Implications

27. The Superintendent remains responsible for ensuring that the implementation and use of the invisible fencing along with the subsequent animal grazing continues to be appropriate for the conservation of Burnham Beeches. In addition the operation of the trial should take place with minimal impact on any existing infrastructure or buildings located at the Beeches.

HR Implications

28. The expansion of the grazing herd (estimated as between 25 and 40 livestock units when 95% of the Beeches is grazed)) will alter the emphasis of this element of our work and require more staff time than presently available to ensure its effective management.
29. The Superintendent will liaise closely with the Human Resources Department to consider how best to accommodate this change in emphasis in staff responsibilities and provide a report to this committee in 2013.

Strategic Implications

30. The production of the management plan supports the 'Protect, promote and enhance the environment' and 'Support Communities' elements of the 'City Together Strategy'.
31. The plan to expand conservation grazing across Burnham Beeches is a key project within the Departmental Business plan.
32. The provision of conservation grazing across Burnham Beeches will assist the City to:

Economic

- Prepare for and adapt to the likely impacts of climate change.
- Support local workforces, SME's and community activities.

Environment

- Encourage best environmental practice in service delivery by the City Corporation, its stakeholders and contractors.
- Encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport.
- Improve or create habitats for wildlife.

Social

- Enhance and encourage preventative health services, activities and education.
- Consult, inform and engage the community in decision making.
- Reduce crime and fear of crime.

33. An Equality Impact Assessment has been produced for this project and has concluded 'no negative' impacts to the relevant groups.

Conclusion

34. The Phase 1 trial of invisible fencing has been a success with regard to the testing of equipment, use of virtual grids, health and safety of the animals / visitors and public reaction. The trial was also useful in establishing an adequate monitoring scheme for future trials. As such it appears appropriate to move to Phase 2 of the expansion. The Phase 2 area will be determined over the winter months and may be an extension of Phase 1.

35. Costs for project delivery remain as expected.
36. It remains important to work closely with the manufacturer to seek further improvements in reliability and design of the equipment.
37. The Superintendent must now consider the available options concerning the procurement and management of additional livestock including the implications this has in terms of staffing issues. These issues will be the subject of further reports to this committee in 2013.

Background Papers:

- Report to Epping Forest and Commons Committee – *A 5 year trial of 'Invisible Fencing' at Burnham Beeches. Expansion of the Conservation Grazing Scheme at Burnham Beeches.* May 2012

Contact:

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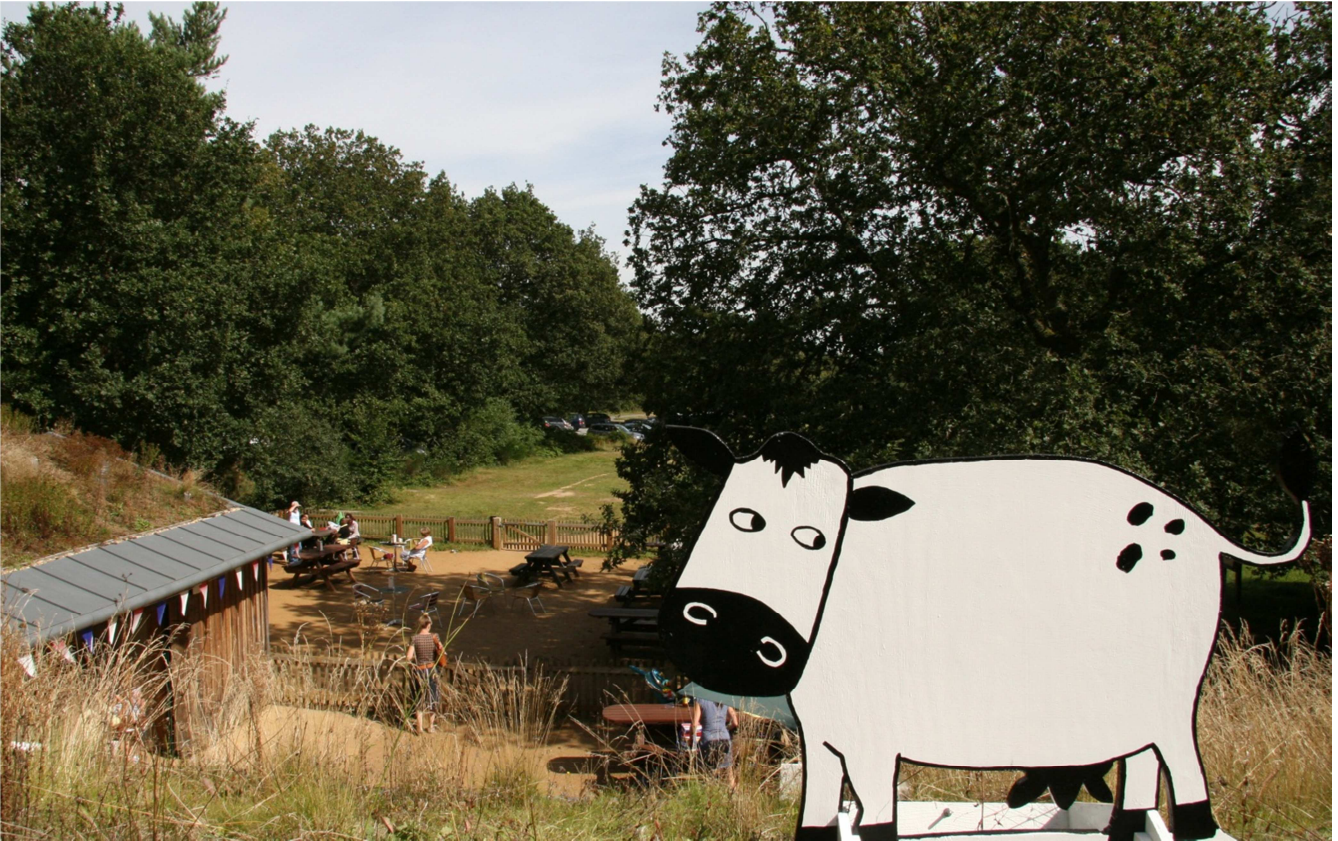
andy.barnard@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Appendix 1.



Above – cattle wearing their collars and bracelets

Below - Cut out cow sporting the 'Grazing its Amazing' logo next to a virtual cattle grid on Park Lane



Above – Cut out cow on the Beeches Café roof

Below – The Chairman of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee and Councillor Peter Hardy release the cows in to the trail area



Menu

DRINKS

Selection of fresh ground coffees:

Filter.....	£1.35
Latté or cappuccino.....	£1.75
Selection of teas.....	£1.00/£1.35
Pot of tea for 2.....	£2.50
Luxury hot chocolate.....	£1.75
yo (with marshmallows and cream).....	£2.25
variety of juices and cans in the chiller	

FOOD

Selection of freshly made sandwiches	£2.85
Toasted Panini's with side salad & crisps	£4.00
Jacket potato with various fillings. Comes with side salad & crisps.....	£4.00
The 'famous' Beeches bacon or sausage sandwich/bap.....	£2.85
Hot sausage rolls and pasties.....	£2.50/£2.85

CAKES AND ICE CREAM

Yummy variety of cakes.....	£1.60/£2.00
Dairy whippy cone	£1.50
'99' with a flake	£1.75
Large '99' with a flake	£2.50

Extensive selection of lollies in the freezer



Grazing, it's amazing!

We have already carried out two trials of the invisible 'fenceless fence' and during September will be carrying out another near the Moat.

If you want to know more about how we keep cows 'in' without a 'traditional fence' visit our website; all the moos and information you'll need is right there!



...find out more:

www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/burnhambeeches

Name the Cow Competition!



Our new cow has made it's home on top of the Info Point roof! The problem is we haven't got a name for her!

Can you think of a good name for our new cow? Our herd of British White cattle already has some cows with lovely names, like Fern, Heather, Verity, Greta and Spot. Think of a good name for our new cow and you might win a prize kindly donated by the Beeches Café!

Pick up a leaflet from the Information Point and fill in your details and new name suggestion. A winner will be picked and announced in the October What's New and at the Café and Information Point!

Good Luck!

...find out more:

www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/burnhambeeches

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Appendix 3 - EQIA Stage One: Initial Screening Assessment Form

This should be used once it has been decided that a specific strategy, policy or project requires an initial screening.

Name of strategy, project, policy: Expansion of Conservation Grazing across Burnham Beeches
Department: Open Spaces
Officer/s completing assessment: Andy Barnard

The strategy, policy or project		
1.	What is the main purpose of the policy?	To expand conservation grazing across Burnham Beeches SSSI
2.	Is the policy affected by external drivers for change?	By the need to ensure that Burnham beeches SSSI remains 'in favourable condition'. A government requirement monitored by Natural England
3.	List the main activities of the policy?	Expansion of current grazing scheme (approx. 30% of site is grazed) to approximately 95% of the site being grazed. This will be achieved by a new fencing technique i.e. 'invisible fencing' and 'virtual cattle grids'. The livestock will be grazed on site for 8 months each year and be 'offsite' during winter.
4.	Who implements the policy?	The Director of Open Spaces

5.	Who will be affected by the policy?	<p>1. The Beeches is visited by 585,000 people each year of every faith, race and sexual/physical orientation. A very small minority of visitors currently avoid the livestock (generally dog walkers who have concerns about the behaviour of their pets in the presence of livestock). However, the density of livestock provided by the new policy is extremely low which means that it will be uncommon for visitors to come across them. Further, the livestock will also quickly develop predictable grazing habits (i.e. they will tend to use the areas with the best grazing) so those wishing to avoid them should be able to do so.</p> <p>2. Immediate neighbours. These range from large private farms to a small number of individual house holders. The livestock will graze up to their boundary. Generally this is seen to be positive although some private boundary structures may need to be improved</p> <p>3. Car drivers and other road users. The livestock will cross the public highways that run through Burnham Beeches SSSI.</p>
6.	What outcome do you want to achieve, why and for whom?	<p>The ultimate outcome is that Burnham Beeches SSSI is maintained in favourable condition. This is best achieved by the use of livestock. Most visitors enjoy having access to the livestock and the 2009 visitor survey indicated that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 71% of visitors supported the expansion of grazing across the site (11% had no opinion). • 72% felt that the benefits of grazing outweighed any possible dis-benefits (16% had no opinion) <p>'The policy' will also reinstate the practice of wood-pasture management (carried out extensively across the site since medieval times) that established the historical, cultural and biological features that are so highly prized today.</p>

7.	Are any other organisations involved?	The main partner has been Transport for Buckinghamshire whose roads pass through the Beeches. We have also worked very closely with neighbouring landowners and individuals as well as District and Parish Councils; all are supportive of the policy.
8.	Are there any existing assessments or inspections?	Yes - several forms of feasibility study that examined various options.
9.	Who have you consulted on the policy?	<p>We have consulted very widely – main consultees include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 2009 visitor survey (900 visitors). • The Epping Forest and Commons Committee • The Burnham Beeches Consultation Group (BBCG - represents local users) • Natural England • The National Trust • The Woodland Trust • South Bucks District Council • Buckinghamshire County Council • Transport for Bucks • Farnham Royal parish Council • Burnham Parish Council

10.	Who are the main beneficiaries of the policy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Burnham Beeches SSSI and associated habitats and wildlife • The City of London – the policy will assure that the target of ‘favourable condition’ is maintained in a sustainable manner • Site visitors – will have access to livestock which will enhance the rural experience and facilitate access (via browsing o flower branches) throughout the site. • This is already used as an educational tool by local schools and colleges and these opportunities will increase. • Neighbours – house values tend to increase next to land that is used for conservation grazing
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The Impact:	Tick the boxes which apply for each ‘target group’					
Equality Target Group	Positive Impact		Neutral Impact	Negative Impact		Reason/Comment
	High	Low		High	Low	
Gender						
Women			X			The presence of livestock is not gender specific
Men			X			The presence of livestock is not gender specific
Transgender			X			The presence of livestock is not gender specific
Race						
Asian – Asian Bangladeshi; Asian British; Asian Indian; Asian Pakistani; Asian Other		X				Cattle are considered to be of high significance to some Asian groups

The Impact:	Tick the boxes which apply for each 'target group'					
Equality Target Group	Positive Impact		Neutral Impact	Negative Impact		Reason/Comment
	High	Low		High	Low	
Black – Black African; Black British; Black Caribbean; Black Other			X			None anticipated
Chinese			X			None anticipated
Irish			X			None anticipated
Mixed – Asian & White; Black & White; Mixed Other			X			None anticipated
White – White British; White European Union; White Other			X			None anticipated
Disabled people	X					The use of invisible fencing and virtual grids means that many existing fences and gateways can be removed thereby improving access for all, particularly disabled people
Lesbians, gay men and bisexuals			X			None anticipated
Older people			X			None anticipated
Younger people and children	X					Educational tool for local schools
Faith groups		X				Cattle are considered to be of high significance to some faiths

Further Action	
Does the policy have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups? If so, you will need to proceed to Stage 2	No
Is the negative impact assessed as being of high significance? If so, you will need to proceed to Stage 2	No
Is progression to Stage 2: Full Assessment required?	No

Signed (Completing Officer):

A. Barnard

Date: 19th October 2012

Signed (Departmental Equality Champion):

D. Whelton

Date: 22nd October 2012

Actions Arising from Initial Screening

Issue	Action Required	Lead Officer	Timescale	Resource Implications	Comments
Monitoring the impact of the policy in terms of equality issues	Ensure all comments received following the implementation of the policy are recorded and discussed/resolved through the EFCC and the BBCG	Andy Barnard	2013 onwards	Not significant and would be dealt with through existing channels e.g. Ranger Service, Response Desk, complaints procedure etc.	

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Agenda Item 21

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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Agenda Item 22

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of the Local Government Act 1972.

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Agenda Item 23

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