

Committee(s)	Dated:
Epping Forest Consultative Epping Forest and Commons	10 10 2018 19 11 2018
Subject: London Borough of Culture May Day Event on Chingford Plain (SEF 39/18)	Public
Report of: Colin Buttery – Director of Open Spaces & Heritage	For Decision
Report author: Jacqueline Eggleston - Epping Forest	

Summary

The first ever London Borough of Culture has been awarded to London Borough of Waltham Forest for 2019. The borough would like to host a large-scale event on Epping Forest at Chingford Plain, which falls within Waltham Forest.

Recommendation(s)

Consultative Committee Members are asked to support:

- Agreement for the London Borough of Waltham Forest use of Chingford Plain for a May Day event for the inaugural year of the London Borough of Culture, on Monday 6th May 2019.
- Instruction to the Comptroller and City Solicitor to undertake any necessary documentation.

Main Report

Background

1. The Mayor of London Sadiq Kahn has invited applications from London Boroughs to become the first-ever London Borough of Culture (LBOC). The successful bid was made by Waltham Forest who will present a year of cultural activity in 2019.
2. The London Borough of Waltham Forest (LBWF) bid celebrated the wealth of artistic and cultural activity in the borough and highlighted the influence of the green spaces within the borough on creativity.
3. Deputy Catherine McGuinness, Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee wrote to Sadiq Kahn to offer a partnership with the City of London Corporation to the Year of Culture confirming an in-principle commitment to put assets and services to best use in support of the programme and that officers would work to deliver the best and most beneficial outcome to achieve LBOC's objectives.

4. City of London Epping Forest are supporting LBOC, working with the creative director on appropriate locations for cultural activity within the Forest and contributing to the programming as a member of the London Borough of Culture, Culture Board.

Current Position

5. Epping Forest will be a major theme within the cultural programme currently being developed. A year-long strand of artistic programming will centre on the theme of the 'People's Forest' using the theme of collective action and protest, the history of the saving of the Forest and man-made influence on the landscape of the Forest as artistic inspiration.
6. To launch this thematic strand the LBOC team are planning a processional event leading from several locations across the London Borough of Waltham Forest and culminating in a mass gathering on Chingford Plain.
7. The 'mass gathering' will be the collecting together of the various processions and will include people walking, on bicycle, in wheelchair or pram, as well as those arriving by train in recognition of the felicity seekers that would gather on Chingford Plain after the arrival of the train to Chingford.
8. The event will be a celebratory moment and will be less than an hour in duration but has the potential to draw in a mass crowd estimated as 10,000.
9. Hosting this event will provide high profile publicity and attention on Epping Forest. It will be likely to have television and media coverage showing the event which will highlight the landscape of the Forest and promote the location in a positive way to London.
10. Hosting the event will demonstrate how the City of London's assets contribute to making the City a world class location in line with the strategic objectives within the City of London's Corporate Strategy 2018-22 including Objective 7 'Better promote our world class culture and heritage offer and use our wealth of open spaces to widen appeal to a more diverse audience, enabling communities in the City and beyond'.
11. Hosting the event also demonstrates a clear partnership with LBOC in line with the Chairman of Policy and Resources stated commitment.

Options

12. Your Committee can consider two options for support:
 - 12.1 Option 1 – To support the London Borough of Waltham Forest hosting the May Day event for the London Borough of Culture 2019 in Epping Forest subject to satisfactorily meeting all licensing requirements. This will provide positive publicity for the Forest, bring new audiences to the Forest and offers partnership and support to LBWF and the Mayor of London. **This is recommended**
 - 12.2 Option 2 – Not to support the London Borough of Waltham Forest hosting the May day event for the London Borough of Culture 2019 in Epping Forest. This will be contrary to the commitment offered by the

City of London to support LBOC. The event would not be held in Epping Forest and we would not be able to attract new audiences through the event and gain positive publicity. **This is not recommended**

Proposals

Event

13. The opening event is proposed to take place on Chingford Plain on Monday 6th May (Bank Holiday) from 5pm- 9pm
14. The event will be a mass gathering of crowds who will have made their way there from various locations following dedicated processional routes.
15. The 'gathering' is not anticipated to last longer than one hour although it is expected that many may stay longer to picnic or otherwise enjoy the Forest
16. The 'gathering' will be the concluding part of the May Day event with a series of processional gathering taking place from Waltham Forest and moving to Chingford.

Operations

17. An agreement between the City of London Corporation and LBWF will cover all aspects of the event.
18. Local businesses will be encouraged to stay open before and after the main event times in order to provide a food and drink offer, whilst also increasing the economic impact of the Event.
19. All infrastructure necessary for the event will be hired in by LBWF (such as toilets and generators).A crowd dynamic assessment will be undertaken and measures implemented including hard cordons (barrier and fencing), soft cordons (security personnel) to ensure the Event can facilitate the estimated numbers, whilst also having contingency plans that can be actioned if higher numbers were to attend.
20. Parking will be provided at the Bury Road car park and overflow hard standing area for staff and catering only. The event is the culmination of walking or cycling routes and car access will not be available.
21. The meeting room and kitchen at the View will be made available to the event organisers as a control room
22. The Queen Elizabeth Hunting Lodge has been offered as a hospitality suite for dignitaries and sponsors.

Health and Safety

23. The event will require licensing by the local authority which is LBWF. It will be rigorously examined at their Safety Advisory Group at which officers from Epping Forest attend as well as the Borough Commander, London

Ambulance Service, and key officers from council departments such as Highways and Public Protection.

24. The team at LBOC are experienced event staff and are accustomed to planning and delivering large scale public events safely.
25. Appropriate numbers of trained stewards and security guards will be used and will have a demonstrated track record in high profile public event security.
26. As with all licensed events held on Epping Forest the relevant insurances, risk assessments and certification will be required.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

27. The event will contribute to the Corporate Plan 2018 – 2023 aim to:

- Contribute to a flourishing society.

28. It will help achieve the Corporate Plan outcomes:

Contribute to a flourishing society.

1. People are safe and feel safe
2. People enjoy good health and wellbeing
4. Communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need

29. It will also deliver the Open Spaces Departmental Business Plan top line objectives:

- A. Open spaces and historic sites are thriving and accessible.
- B. Spaces enrich people's lives.
- C. Business practices are responsible and sustainable.

Financial

30. Funding of the event and preparations will be entirely the responsibility of LBWF.

31. Support offered by EF in kind through licensed use of land, use of QEHL and the View as an event base and hospitality suite and officer time for planning and operational support is valued at over £15,000

Environmental

32. The area of Chingford Plain to be occupied by the event would be demarcated to be outside the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and the Special Area of Conservation (SAC) boundaries which encompass much of the area. The boundary would also be drawn to avoid damage to sensitive features such as meadow ant ant-hills.

33. However, the whole of the grasslands and scrub mosaic on the Plain is included within the London Site of Metropolitan Importance to Nature Conservation (MO12) and, therefore, an impact assessment would be carried out to minimise the damage to nature conservation interests and ensure remediation works after the event in line with the habitat protection policies of the Local Plan, the Epping Forest Management Plan and the over-arching responsibilities of the Epping Forest Act (Section 7 (3)).
34. The impact assessment would look at issues including damage to the clay soils and avoidance of compaction, demarcations of access points to ensure no access across SSSI and SAC areas, fencing out of exclusion areas including grassland with ant-hills and thorn scrub.
35. In addition, although the immediate event area would not be situated within the SSSI and SAC it would be adjacent and, therefore, Natural England (NE) would be notified of the impact assessment and the measures being taken to ensure that the SSSI/SAC habitats would be protected. Any concerns from NE would be addressed through this dialogue and action taken accordingly.

Legal

36. Under section 7 of the City of London Corporation (Open Spaces) Act 2018, the City Corporation, including in its capacity as the Conservators of Epping Forest, may, for the purposes of an event, temporarily use or permit others to use land forming part of the open Space for the purposes of the event, provide equipment, facilities or services for the event, and may restrict access to an area of land temporarily so far as necessary in connection with the event.

Section 7(3) provides that the power must be exercised having regard to a policy. The Open Spaces Department and Epping Forest Events Policies were the subject of consultation with the Epping Forest Consultative Committee on its inaugural meeting of 24 January 2018 and were approved by the Epping Forest and Commons Committee on 14 May 2018.

Reputational

Property

37. Suitable licence terms should be agreed with LBWF and put in place prior to the inaugural event to control the use of Forest Land and address issues such as indemnity, damage and reinstatement and other matters to safeguard the City Corporation with suitable authority to do so delegated to the City Surveyor in consultation with the Superintendent of Epping Forest and the Comptroller and City Solicitor.

Conclusion

38. The opportunity to host the May day event for the 2019 London Borough of Culture, presents an opportunity to showcase Epping Forest to a wide-ranging audience across London, while also demonstrating a clear example of the City Corporation's partnership and commitment with LBWF to ensure that the cultural significance of Epping Forest, and Open Spaces more generally, are fully reflected in the year of cultural celebration.

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