

EPPING FOREST & COMMONS COMMITTEE
Monday, 10 September 2018

Minutes of the meeting of the Epping Forest & Commons Committee held at
Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 10 September 2018
at 11.30 am

Present

Members:

Deputy Philip Woodhouse (Chairman)
Peter Bennett
Gregory Lawrence
Sylvia Moys
Jeremy Simons
Verderer Michael Chapman DL
Verderer Dr. Joanna Thomas
Verderer Melissa Murphy

Officers:

Natasha Dogra
Colin Buttery
Paul Thomson
Andy Barnard
Gerry Kiefer
Jo Hurst
Jacqueline Eggleston
Alison Elam
Andrew Buckingham

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Alderman Gifford, Alderman Jones and Caroline Haines.

2. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were none.

3. MINUTES

Resolved – that the minutes were agreed as an accurate record, apart from an amendment on Item 12 page 7 where it was determined that approval was subject to the requested rewording. Officers undertook to recirculate the revised Policy wording.

4. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

The Committee received an update from the Superintendent. Of particular note was the extremely hot weather and lack of rainfall which has affected the Forest leading to falling lake and pond levels and the forest fire reaching a damaging burn of approximately 60 acres at Wanstead Flats; further rises in fly tipping and continued associated enforcement action and a significant rise in Oak

Processionary Moth nests identified through survey work.

A Member enquired about the addition of speed restrictions at Lower Forest to deal with the large number of Deer Vehicle Collisions. The Superintendent confirmed that while this was a matter for the Highways authority following the success of the previous Forest transport Strategy, which increased speed restriction on 22 miles of roads, the next FTS will seek to widen speed restrictions around Epping. The Superintendent also undertook to provide a Committee of a summary report in January of agreed actions with the Emergency Services following the major fire incident at Wanstead Flats.

A Member requested a review of the pumping of potable water from the aquifer to supply the Wanstead cascade. The Superintendent indicated that pumping is licensed for a limited period to 2022 when the matter will be reconsidered. Officers assured Members seeking assurances that given the number of proposals being considered for highway dedication of Epping Town Green at Lindsey Street that the matter would be returned to Committee for approval.

Assurances were sought by a Members on the response to the infrequent escapes of cattle over the grazing system. The Superintendent confirmed that all barrierless fencing areas are reinforced by roadside fencing and cattle grids alongside the major A Roads. A Member also queried the publication of cautions made by the Superintendent and it was agreed that guidance would be sought from the City Solicitor.

Members sought clarification on representation regarding Rough Sleepers on the City Corporation Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Sub-Committee and Officer Working Group. CC Murphy was a Member of the Sub Committee. The Superintendent confirmed that the Head Keeper was represented on the Officer Working Group for the Square Mile and worked closely with the Forest four Local Authorities.

A Member sought assurances that the additional costs and budget shortfalls were being properly addressed. The Superintendent confirmed that lease rent reviews and some serendipity around license payments would manage this year's shortfall, the following year would be more challenging. The Chairman added that he was also pursuing central funding for costs around the fires; Oak Processionary Moth and fly-tipping.

Resolved – that the update be received.

5. **EPPING FOREST AND THE COMMONS RISK MANAGEMENT REPORT**

The Committee received the risk management report and noted that This report provides the Epping Forest and Commons Committee with an update on the management of risks undertaken by the Open Spaces Department and the Epping Forest and the Commons Divisions. Risk is reviewed regularly by the Department's Senior Leadership Team as part of the ongoing management of the operations of the Department. It is also reviewed regularly by the Management teams at Epping Forest and The Commons.

There are fourteen risks managed by the Superintendent of Epping Forest. Seven of these risks are currently reported red and seven are reported amber. There are nine risks managed by the Superintendent of The Commons. Two of these risks are currently reported red, four amber and three green.

A number of members raised concerns regarding the number of risks and the relative amount of information regarding their management. The Director encouraged members to focus on the Red Risks and welcomed the opportunity to provide more information on any particular concerns that Members may have. The Asset Management framework was discussed as an important tool in managing the liabilities associated with building maintenance.

Resolved – that the risk report be agreed.

6. **APPLICATION FOR MAJOR EVENT ON WANSTEAD FLATS: CONSIDERATION OF PRE-APPLICATION OPTIONS**

The Committee considered the application for the major event in Wanstead Flats. Members noted that the major event organisers MAMA & Company are proposing a series of large-scale music concerts to take place on Wanstead Flats during the summer of 2019. The proposals are in accordance with the recently approved Open Spaces Events Policy Parts 1 and 2 and the City of London (Open Spaces) Act 2018.

Members are asked to give consideration to the proposals and provide guidance as to the number of events that might be accommodated, with reference to the policy position provided in the Open Spaces Events Policy.

Following Members questions, officers indicated that the report was reactive to an external and unsolicited approach by a major event organizer. Members were supportive of further discussions with the organizers regarding one or two pilot events ideally in September. Members were assured that any consultation by the organizer with communities would seek to address issues regarding noise, litter and damage to the site.

Resolved – that the application be received, and Members approved one of the three options proposed and further development, so that an event application can be worked up in more detail and brought back to the Committee in November for final decision.

7. **UPDATE ON THE INTERIM MITIGATION STRATEGY FOR EPPING FOREST SPECIAL AREA OF CONSERVATION**

The Committee received a report on the interim mitigation strategy and noted that the progress made since Committee granted approval in May 2018 for costed mitigation proposals to be submitted, under delegated authority, to Epping Forest District Council, for inclusion in an interim Mitigation Strategy. Such a Strategy is required to protect Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC) from the adverse impacts of residential, highways and other developments proposed in forthcoming local plans by the local authorities surrounding the Forest. Each local authority, whose local plan might have a significant adverse impact on the Forest is deemed a competent authority, and

so even authorities currently outside the Memorandum of Understanding for Epping Forest SAC are required to contribute to the Mitigation Strategy in a proportionate manner.

This interim strategy covers only mitigation of the likely impacts from recreational pressures. Other issues such as urbanisation and air pollution remain to be considered for avoidance/mitigation as part of a full Strategy still to be negotiated.

The current timetable for the interim Mitigation Strategy is for it to be tabled at a meeting of the Duty-to-Co-operate Member Board on 10th September prior to it being agreed by each local authority under its governance requirements this autumn. The interim Mitigation Strategy, including a proposed tariff structure, would be brought to this Committee as soon as allowed by this timetable.

Resolved – that the report be received.

8. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

The Committee received an update from the Superintendent and noted that the Kenley Revival Project was progressing well; the mortar faults to the blast pens continue to be investigated by the architects, 'Avanti'. Brick and mortar samples testing has been conducted by the Building Research Establishment (BRE). Current circumstances have suggested it was an extreme sulphate attack in combination with the materials, soil and rain. The Superintendent and Project Team have met with the City Corporation's Commercial Contracts team to review the City's position. A

meeting with Avanti, PAYE, Historic England and Officers, including the Commercial Contracts team is scheduled for 6th September. This meeting will determine the programme of rectification works and responsibilities for associated costs.

The 'Learning Roadshow' engaged over 350 schoolchildren in workshops. The roadshow was held in local libraries and all schools which took part had not previously engaged with the Kenley Revival Project.

A 'priorities pot' application for the role of a Legacy Project Officer to achieve post-project legacy aims had been awarded and will be for 21 months beginning in January 2019. 'Community Archaeology' was held 16 – 25th July with 30 volunteers taking part and 30 Open Spaces staff joining in from across the Department. The dig will also be included in a future episode of the BBC4 production 'Digging for Britain'. The finds are currently being rationalised in discussion with Museum of London who have selected three pieces to go into their collections.

A planning application for onsite interpretation signage has been granted. Planners indicated that the signs need to be reduced further due to visual clutter and the MoD plans for the fence which was reached through compromise with the planners. The timetable for the works has been revised with the 'small and large wings' expected to be installed by mid-November

along with the production of the travelling exhibition. The 'table top signs' will be designed, manufactured and installed a few weeks later.

Remembrance season is planned for November consisting of; school assemblies, handling workshops, pop-up museums, theatre performance, showcase at other museums. The Superintendent will represent the City at the annual Remembrance Day service at Kenley Tribute.

The project has successfully achieved all its volunteer contributions for the project including the financial contribution with over 1,100 contributions delivering 317 days of volunteering. Over 14,500 people have been engaged in physical activities on and offsite.

The Kenley Revival Project Manager is moving to a new post with the National Trust from mid-September. Negotiations are to ensue with HLF to resolve how best to fill the post given that only 9 months remain of the contract.

Resolved – that the update be received.

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

There were no questions.

10. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

There was no urgent business.

11. **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.

12. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

Resolved – that the minutes be agreed as an accurate record.

13. **LEARNING PROGRAMME LONG TERM FUNDING**

The Committee considered a report regarding the learning programme long term funding and note the information provided within the report.

Resolved – that the report be noted.

14. **BURNHAM BEECHES CAFÉ - FORFEITURE, PAYMENT OF ARREARS, BUSINESS REVIEW AND OUTLINE TENDER PROCESS**

The Committee considered a report regarding the payment of arrears relating to the Burnham Beeches Cafes.

Resolved – that the report be noted.

15. NON-PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

There were no questions.

16. 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 1:15pm

Chairman

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