

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Epping Forest and Commons Committee	19 th November 2018
Subject: Burnham Beeches management plan. Consultation process and timetable.	Public
Report of: Superintendent of The Commons	For Decision
<p style="text-align: center;">Summary</p> <p>This Committee approved the current version of the Burnham Beeches ten-year management plan in 2010. At that time, the Superintendent consulted a wide audience to guide the development of the plan.</p> <p>A new 10 year management plan is now required for Burnham Beeches commencing 1st April 2020, to continue the City Corporation's work on the site until 2030. Once again, this will require extensive consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, which must be undertaken prior to a final draft management plan being submitted to your Committee in January 2020 for approval.</p> <p>Members are asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Approve the necessary actions outlined in the provisional timetable for the Management Plan and public consultation process. Table 1. 	

Main Report

Background

1. Your Committee approved the current version of the Burnham Beeches 10- year management plan in 2010. Community engagement and discourse with conservation experts was key to the successful development of that plan.
2. A brief list of achievements during the period of the last plan include:
 - i. The introduction of invisible fencing to the site and the development of techniques to make the most of its potential.
 - ii. The successful introduction of Dog Control Orders and latterly, Public Space Protection Orders, to greatly reduce antisocial dog behaviours.
 - iii. The careful management and monitoring of the site's cohort of veteran trees and associated species.
 - iv. The continuing development of heathland areas and other rare habitats and species.
 - v. Engagement of local communities and visitors to improve understanding of the site and its special status.

Current Position

Management Plan.

3. The management plan for Burnham Beeches brings together all the necessary knowledge and management activities to ensure that its status as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), National Nature Reserve (NNR) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is maintained according to the City's twin legal responsibilities towards recreation and biodiversity. For the last two decades each iteration of the plan has been developed in a consultative manner. Once in final form, it is assessed and approved by this Committee before being passed on to Natural England (NE) for ratification.
4. The provision of a management plan approved by NE is the best method of ensuring that the City meets its legal obligations towards the enhancement of biodiversity and to attract grant aid via NE's Countryside Stewardship Scheme.
5. The current management plan expires on 31st March 2020. Therefore, it is necessary to draft a replacement plan to cover the period 2020-2030.

Public Consultation.

6. It is good practice to consult a variety of audiences on the contents of any new Management Plan. At Burnham Beeches audiences have traditionally included local communities and site users, neighbouring Local Authorities, Natural England and conservation specialists.

Committee Consultation.

7. The Assistant Town Clerk has recently advised against the creation of more working parties and would advise members were consulted via or at full Committee meetings instead; this is due to the volume of committees already created and the strain on resource.
8. Based on advice given in 7 above a consultation timetable has been produced. Your Committee approved a similar timetable for the recent production of the Stoke Common management plan.

Proposals

9. To ensure appropriate governance, Members must be satisfied that they have suitable oversight of the development of the management plan. Table 1 below outlines the proposed consultation process for all audiences.

Table 1.

Nov 2018	Agree Governance and Timetable. Epping Forest and Commons Committee
Jan 2019	Burnham Beeches Consultation Group – introduction to the need and process - for information.
Jan – March 2019	Produce 1 st draft new Management Plan
Mar – May 2019	Consult conservation specialists

May 2019	Update for BBCG regarding management plan
June/July 2019	BBCG site visit to assess draft plan issues
Summer 2019	Committee visit to Burnham Beeches to review the draft plan. A detailed 'issues report' to be produced prior to the site visit to highlight topics for Member's
Oct 2019	Public Consultation on draft Management Plan
Autumn/Winter 2019	Assess consultation feedback and amend/ finalise management plan.
December 2019	Assess Equality issues arising from the draft plan
January 2020	Presentation of final draft plan to BBCG
January 2020	EFCC 'decision report' on management plan
Feb/March 2020	Submission of approved plan to Natural England for ratification
1 April 2020	Start date of ratified Management Plan
Key	Consultation Phases
	Development Phases

10. The developing management plan will be presented to this Committee for comment and amendment according to Table 1.
11. A final version of the management plan will be submitted to this Committee in January 2020 for approval and to Natural England shortly thereafter for ratification.
12. The design and format of the new Management plan will closely follow that of the recent Stoke Common management plan.

Implications

13. A management plan that is at odds with its audience will struggle to achieve the unified support necessary to achieve its central aims and legal obligations. This in turn may lead to difficulties in delivering the plan and subsequent reputational harm.
14. Based on previous experience, the actions outlined in Table 1 are considered essential for the successful development and delivery of the next management plan for Burnham Beeches.
15. As Burnham Beeches is a SSSI the City is obliged 'to have regard for biodiversity conservation'. Natural England aims to achieve a target ensuring that 95% of SSSI's are in 'favourable' or 'improving' condition'. Burnham Beeches is currently in favourable condition and a Management Plan approved by Natural England is the most effective way to ensure that the site continues to help them meet their target.
16. The cost of producing the management plan will be met from the Burnham Beeches local risk budgets. Costs are likely to include consultation events,

additional mapping/surveys and the publication of the final document(s). They are not expected to exceed £10,000.

17. Having been consulted on the production of this report the Human Resources Department has concluded that there are no likely adverse implications.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

18. The proposals in this report support the Corporate Business Plan as follows:

Contribute to a Flourishing Society

- People enjoy good health and wellbeing
- Communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need

Shape outstanding environments

- Our Spaces are secure, resilient and well maintained.
- We have clean air, land and water and a thriving and sustainable environment

19. And the Open Spaces Business Plan outcomes:

- **Open Spaces and Historic Sites are thriving and accessible**
- **Spaces enrich people's lives**
- **Business practices are responsible and sustainable**

Conclusion

21. A new management plan and associated public consultation is required to ensure the continuing management, external funding and community support for the City's management of Burnham Beeches.

22. Table 1 provides the template for the production of that plan.

Appendices - None

Background Papers:

Burnham Beeches Management Plan – 2010

Author

Andy Barnard

Superintendent of The Commons – Open Spaces Department

T: 020 7332 6676

E: andy.barnard@cityoflondon.gov.uk