

Committee(s)	Dated:
Epping Forest and Commons Committee	11 March 2019
Subject: Catering Options Appraisal Report	Public
Report of: The Superintendent of The Commons	For Decision
Report author: Hadyn Robson	
<p>Summary</p> <p>In response to several recent enquiries in respect of placing catering concessions on Ashtead Common, Farthing Downs and Riddlesdown Common, the division commissioned an independent catering options appraisal report as to feasibility. This report summarises those findings.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Recommendation</p> <p>Members are asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Note the contents of the independent report (Appendix 1) II. Approve further exploration of the potential identified at Riddlesdown Common with further reporting to this Committee, as appropriate. III. Agree that no further work should be undertaken to pursue the provision of catering concessions for Ashtead Common and Farthing Downs as explained on page 9, paragraph 6.0 of Appendix 1. 	

Main Report

Background.

1. Historically (1890's- 1970's) there have been catering concessions operating on Farthing Downs and Riddlesdown Common with varying degrees of success. Catering in private buildings adjacent to and serving Ashtead Common ceased prior to the outbreak of the second world war.

Current Position.

2. There are currently no catering concessions on any of the sites appraised. Various ad hoc expressions of interest have occurred in recent years, particularly for Ashtead Common and Farthing Downs, which have led to numerous failed enterprises.
3. As part of the Division's efficiency targets and income generation plan, the Superintendent instructed Boyd-Thorpe Associates to assess the viability of catering provision at the three sites and gauge the potential business opportunities that may exist.
4. Boyd-Thorpe Associates have completed the work and report at Appendix 1.

Options.

5. The independent report has identified potential to explore the development of a catering concession on Riddlesdown Common utilising the vacant countryside office. The costs of any building conversion will need to be scoped in conjunction with the City Surveyor. Project feasibility will be dependent on cost.
6. The independent report rejected any catering business opportunities at Farthing Downs and Ashted Common.

Proposals.

7. Working with the City Surveyor further, and Boyd Thorpe associates, explore the viability of a catering concession on Riddlesdown Common by way of a short visitor survey, assessment of costs to convert the small office building, further financial modelling and market testing to identify interest from suitable operators. A further, more detailed report will be brought to this Committee once the likely implications have evolved.
8. Cease any further investigation on the provision of catering opportunities at Ashted Common and Farthing Downs, as recommended on page 9, paragraph 6.0 of Appendix 1. enabling a clear position statement to deal with speculative approaches.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

9. The proposals in this report support the Corporate Plan 2018-23 as follows:

Contribute to a flourishing society

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

Support a thriving economy

- Businesses are trusted and socially and environmentally responsible.

Shape outstanding environments

- We inspire enterprise, excellence, creativity and collaboration
- Our spaces are secure, resilient and well maintained.

The proposals in this report also support the Open Spaces Department Business Plan:

A. Open spaces and historic sites are thriving and accessible.

1. Our open spaces, heritage and cultural assets are protected, conserved and enhanced
2. London has clean air and mitigates flood risk and climate change
3. Our spaces are accessible, inclusive and safe
4. Our habitats are flourishing, biodiverse and resilient to change

B. Spaces enrich people's lives.

5. People enjoy good health and wellbeing
6. Nature, heritage and place are valued and understood
7. People feel welcome and included
8. People discover, learn and develop

C. Business practices are responsible and sustainable.

9. Our practices are financially, socially and environmentally sustainable
10. London's natural capital and heritage assets are enhanced through our leadership, influence, investment, collaboration and innovation
11. Our staff and volunteers are motivated, empowered, engaged and supported
12. Everyone has the relevant skills to reach their full potential

Ashted Common (1951510), Coulsdon Commons (232989) are registered charities. Officers have been asked to remind Members that decisions they take in relation to the relevant charity must be taken in the best interests of the charity.

Implications

Financial

The £2,145.00 cost to carry out this catering feasibility work was found from local risk budget.

10. There is limited risk, at this stage, as sufficient funding is currently available to progress further investigation.
11. Funding for the short visitor survey, assessment of costs to convert the small office building, further financial modelling and market testing to identify interest from suitable operators will be met from the local risk budget.

Conclusion

12. Should members approve further exploration of the Riddlesdown Common opportunity the matter would progress as set out in Paragraph 7, in partnership with the City Surveyor and Boyd Thorpe Associates.
13. On completion and should a business case remain, the Superintendent would provide this Committee with a costed options and recommendations report.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – City Commons – Catering Options Appraisal Report, January 2019. Boyd-Thorpe Associates.

Hadyn Robson

Business Manager

T: 01372 279083

E: hadyn.robson@cityoflondon.gov.uk

