

EPPING FOREST & COMMONS COMMITTEE
Monday, 18 November 2019

Minutes of the meeting of the Epping Forest & Commons Committee held at
Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 18 November 2019
at 11.30 am

Present

Members:

Graeme Doshi-Smith (Chairman)
Deputy Philip Woodhouse (Deputy Chairman)
Peter Bennett
Caroline Haines
Gregory Lawrence
Jeremy Simons
Alderman Robert Hughes-Penney
Verderer Michael Chapman DL
Verderer Dr. Joanna Thomas
Verderer Nicholas Munday

Officers:

Richard Holt	- Town Clerk's Department
Carl Locsin	- Town Clerk's Department
Alison Elam	- Group Accountant, Chamberlain's Department
Mark Bailey	- Department of the Built Environment
Colin Buttery	- Director of Open Spaces
Paul Thomson	- Superintendent, Epping Forest
Andy Barnard	- Superintendent, The Commons
Jacqueline Eggleston	- Head of Visitor Services, Epping Forest
Jeremy Dagley	- Head of Conservation, Epping Forest
Geoff Sinclair	- Head of Operations, Epping Forest
Juliane Heinecke	- Epping Forest
Jo Hurst	- Business Manager, Epping Forest
Laura Lawson	- Projects Officer, Open Spaces Department
Hadyn Robson	- Support Services Manager, The Commons

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Sylvia Moys, Alderman Robert Howard and Verderer Melissa Murphy.

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

Alderman Robert Hughes-Penney declared that he was a council taxpayer in the South Bucks District.

3. **MINUTES**

The Committee considered the public minutes and non-public summary of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee held on 9 September 2019.

RESOLVED- That the public minutes of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee meeting on 9 September 2019 were approved as an accurate record.

Matters arising

Proposed Music event

The Director of Open Spaces informed the Committee that the proposed music event organisers MAMA had withdrawn their interest in the event and accordingly a report on the updated situation would be produced for Member's consideration.

4. **EPPING FOREST AND COMMONS COMMITTEE 2020 DATES**

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk which detailed the various dates of Committee and Group meetings related to the Epping Forest and Commons Committee to be held in 2020. The Town Clerk informed the Committee that in addition to the meetings listed in the report there was a Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common Consultation Group meeting on the 14th of January and that, due to a clash with the City of London Corporation's Planning & Transportation Committee, the Epping Forest and Commons Committee currently due to be held on the 17th of November 2020 will now be held on the 16th.

Replying to a question from the Deputy Chairman the Town Clerk confirmed that the updated list of 2020 dates would be circulated to Members with the draft minutes of the meeting.

The Director of Open Spaces informed the Committee that the Draft Register of Commoners was deposited and ready for inspection at the Guildhall and The Warren.

RESOLVED-That the report be noted.

5. **THE CITY OF LONDON CORPORATION'S DRAFT SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STRATEGY FOR 2020-25**

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk on the City of London Corporation's Draft Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for 2020-25 (the Strategy).

Members discussed need for further funding of the provision of sports facilities in open spaces managed by the City of London Corporation particularly those facilities which did not meet health and safety requirements. Further to this it was noted that inadequately safe sporting facilities used by children and young people was a clear safeguarding risk which should be added to the

Department's Risk Register and that the offering of safe sporting facilities be added to the Strategy. The Town Clerk confirmed that the suggested wording could be added to the Strategy and noted that the allocation of resources was a Member decision which would be reflected in the Strategy. The Deputy Chairman recommended that the income received from sporting facilities through fees be added to contrast against the cost of maintenance.

A Member raised concern at the list of sporting assets in the Strategy which they felt was misleading and at times inaccurate. The Town Clerk replied that they would meet with colleagues in the Open Spaces Department to clarify the list of assets.

Members commented on the governance of the Strategy stating that there should be one body holding the responsibility for its governance and that the open spaces related Committees should be involved with this process. A Member observed that the responsibility for the Strategy would ultimately rest with the Policy and Resources Committee. The Town Clerk explained that the continued governance of the Strategy would be a Member decision which, once made, will be added to the final version.

A Member observed that the Strategy did not provide clarity on the issue of focus between the delivery of major sporting events and supporting existing sporting facilities. Further to this point the Deputy Chairman commented that he felt the revised strategy did not adequately capture all of the points raised in the Motion agreed by the Court of Common Council in September. The Town Clerk replied that the Strategy was designed to support individuals and communities to enjoy inclusive access to sport and physical activity opportunities and there continued to be a focus on major sporting events.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

6. **EPPING FOREST JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE DRAFT MINUTES**

The Committee received the draft public minutes and non-public summary of the Epping Forest Joint Consultative Committee meeting on the 8 October 2019.

RESOLVED- That the draft minutes be noted.

7. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces which summarised the Epping Forest Division's activities from August to September 2019. The Superintendent updated the Committee on matters including security, conservation and culture at Epping Forest. In addition, the Director of Open Spaces highlighted a report considered by the Planning and Transportation Committee regarding the City Airport Masterplan 2020-35 and the increased fly paths over Epping Forest.

The Superintendent sought the Committee's views on a proposal for the 'Rock Balancing' art installation to be relocated at Epping Forest. Replying to a Member's question the Director of Open Spaces explained that the rocks in the

art installation were bolted together. In addition, it was noted that the location chosen for the art installation would be key to the success of the project.

Further to a query from a Member of the Committee the Director of Open Spaces confirmed that signage would be added to warn visitors off climbing on the art installation but that no insurance liability would be held by the City of London Corporation. The Committee agreed that a further report on the art installation 'Rock Balancing' proposed relocation to Epping Forest be produced for consideration by the Epping Forest and Commons Committee.

RESOLVED- That: -

- I. The Committee agreed that a further report on the art installation 'Rock Balancing' proposed relocation to Epping Forest be produced for consideration by the Epping Forest and Commons Committee; and
- II. That the update be noted.

8. BALDWIN AND BIRCH HALL PARK PONDS

The Committee considered a report of the Director of the Built Environment on Baldwins and Birch Hall Park Ponds.

Replying to a query from a Member of the Committee the Director of the Built Environment confirmed that the recommendations in the report presented the most cost-effective option for the long-term maintenance of the Ponds. In addition, it was confirmed that as a result of the mechanisms present at Baldwins lowering the water level would not be practicable.

In response to a Member's question the Director of the Built Environment explained that the Project's procurement strategy would include risks associated with issues such as site access being built into the works contracts.

A Member of the Committee highlighted a recent Committee visit to the site and noted that it would be useful for Members who are able to visit the site to witness the issues apparent.

RESOLVED- That: -

- I. Option 3 (to carry out repairs to the dams) be approved; and
- II. That the estimated total budget for the project of £1,335,000 (excluding risk provision) is approved, including £40,000 spent to date.
- III. That the following proposed funding arrangements be approved:
 1. funding of £300,000 from Epping Forest Capital Fund (for Baldwins Pond only) be approved by the Epping Forest and Commons Committee
 2. the balance of the future funding requirement (excluding risk) of up to £995,000 to be funded from City's Cash Reserves, subject to the approval of Resource Allocation Sub-Committee (and other relevant committees)
 3. funding for the costed risk provision of up to £380,000 to be allocated from City's Cash reserves subject to the approval of Resource Allocation Sub-Committee (and other relevant committees) under separate report;

9. **'LONDON'S GREAT FOREST' - A STRATEGY AND MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR EPPING FOREST 2019-29 SEF 37/19B**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the 'London's Great Forest' A Strategy and Management Plan for Epping Forest 2019-29. The report provided a Strategy and Management Plan document which presented a summary of the key management objectives for the Forest over the next 10 years.

RESOLVED- That: -

- I. The comments from the Consultative Committee on the Strategy and Management Plan for Epping Forest 2019-29 be noted; and
- II. That the content of the Strategy and Management Plan for Epping Forest 2019-29 be approved.

10. **WANSTEAD PARK: CONCEPTUAL OPTIONS PLAN SEF 38/19B**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the Wanstead Park Conceptual Options Plan. The report outlined the key details of the future management of Wanstead Park and, at appendix 1, the final draft Conceptual Options Plan. A Member of the Committee commended Officers for their work on the project and noted the need to manage the expectations of key stakeholders.

Replying to a Member's concern regarding the future of the Grotto the Director of Open Spaces confirmed that a separate report on this would be produced by the City Surveyor's Department. In addition to this it was confirmed that alternative options would be explored regarding the car parking provisions at the site and that the Wanstead Park Project Board would be developing the project budget.

RESOLVED- That: -

- I. Comments made by the Consultative Committee on the final draft Wanstead Park Conceptual Options Plan be considered; and
- II. That the Plan for adoption to guide the future management of the Wanstead Park, Registered Park and Garden of Special Historic Interest be approved.

11. **WANSTEAD PARK ORIENTEERING COURSE SEF 39/19B**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the Wanstead Park Permanent Orienteering Course. The report outlined the request from the Chigwell and Epping Forest Orienteering Club's for permission to undertake a joint initiative with the City Corporation to establish a permanent orienteering course at Wanstead Park.

RESOLVED- That: -

- I. Comments made by the Consultative Committee on the Wanstead Park Orienteering Course be noted; and

- II. That option 2 to allow officers to work with the Chigwell and Epping Forest Orienteering Club to install a standard permanent orienteering course at Wanstead Park be approved.

12. EPPING FOREST LICENCE, PRODUCE AND SPORTS CHARGES SEF 40/19B

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces which provided an update to the Committee on the performance of charges levied for licensed activities, produce sales and formal sports in the last full financial year 2018/19.

RESOLVED- That: -

- I. Comments by the Consultative Committee on the proposed charges for 2020/21 on the continued subsidy for association football be noted; and
- II. That the proposed charges for 2020/21 and the continued subsidy for association football be approved.

13. CITY OF LONDON CORPORATION RESPONSE TO THE LONDON BOROUGH OF WALTHAM FOREST 'SHAPING THE BOROUGH DRAFT LOCAL PLAN 2020 - 2035 CONSULTATION DOCUMENT (SEF 43/19B)

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the London Borough of Waltham Forest Draft Local Plan for 2020 – 2035. The Director of Open Spaces informed the Committee that a response from the London Borough of Waltham Forest had been received since the report had been produced and as a result of this response a related meeting in early December of 2019 would be arranged.

The Chairman highlighted the continued work from the Open Spaces Department on various relevant local plans across the open spaces managed by the City of London Corporation.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

14. CITY OF LONDON CORPORATION RESPONSE TO THE BARTS HEALTH NHS TRUST PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE OF WHIPPS CROSS HOSPITAL (SEF 42/19)

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the Barts Health NHS Trust published public consultation relating to options for the future of the 44.13-acre Whipps Cross University Hospital site.

Further to a question from the Chairman the Town Clerk confirmed that the report should be listed for decision and that final approval of a response to the public consultation on the future of the Hospital would, if Members agreed, need to be delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman.

It was highlighted that the height of the new buildings at the site may present an issue for Epping Forest and suggested Officers consider this in the response. The Chairman responded by noting that there was clearly a balance to be

found between supporting the development of the new hospital and protecting the Forest.

RESOLVED- That: -

- I. The comments made by the Consultative Committee on the proposals made by the Barts Health NHS Trust be noted; and
- II. That the authority for the approval of a response to the public consultation on the future of the Hospital in line with comments for the Whipps Cross Strategic location be delegated to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman.

15. LEYTON FLATS INDIVIDUAL SITE PLAN SEF 41/19B

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces which outlined the Individual Site Plan (ISP) that has been prepared for Leyton Flats. The Director of Open Spaces informed the Committee that while some stakeholders had already been engaged a further public consultation would be taking place in the 2020.

Replying to a query from a Member regarding the dumping of waste bread, the Director of Open Spaces explained that scale was the primary concern regarding this activity.

RESOLVED- That the Leyton Flats Integrated Site Plan be approved for public consultation.

16. BRANCHING OUT PROJECT - SUMMARY REPORT SEF 45/19

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the Branching Out Project Summary Report.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

17. FURTHER ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THE EPPING FOREST SAC MITIGATION STRATEGY SEF 47/19

The Committee received a late report of the Director of Open Spaces which outlined the Epping Forest SAC Mitigation Strategy progress and governance.

Replying to a question from a Member of the Committee on the possibility of a lack of engagement from the local authorities the Director of Open Spaces explained that Natural England would need to be the senior partner but that it was important to start the discussion.

A Member of the Committee suggested that information regarding the City of London Corporation's actions on the SAC Mitigation Strategy could be included on the Epping Forest website so that the public were informed accordingly. Further to this suggestion it was requested that a glossary of terms be added for ease of use for those not familiar with the terms.

RESOLVED- That: -

- I. That the text of the two letters at Appendices 1 and 2 of this report for circulation to the relevant Local Planning Authorities be approved; and

- II. That the convening and chairing of an inaugural SAC Mitigation Strategy Steering Group by your officers be approved, with any future administrative costs and meeting arrangements to be the subject of a future report for approval; and
- III. That the copying of the letter to EFDC at Appendix 2 to the Planning Inspector and Natural England be approved.

18. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces which provided an update on issues across the nine sites within 'The Commons' division. The Director of Open Spaces informed the Committee of a number of important subjects across 'The Commons' including continuing work with Heathrow on the Heathrow Biodiversity Offsetting project, the Burnham Beeches Management Plan and the Chilterns Hillforts Project.

Replying to a Member's query the Director of Open Spaces provided further information regarding the staffing concerns at West Wickham and Coulsdon Commons.

In response to a Member's request for further information on the ownership of the three copper alloy vessels illegally excavated from Ashted Common the Director of Open Spaces confirmed that the appropriate legal channels would be explored to recover ownership of the items. In addition, it was confirmed that the Commons division did not have a dedicated museum but that items of national historical importance from the Commons were stored at the British Museum, with lesser items stored locally. The Director of Open Spaces accepted that this position would benefit from review and the possibility of using local museums could be explored.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

19. SOUTH BUCKS DISTRICT COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN - EXAMINATION IN PUBLIC

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces regarding the South Bucks District Council Local Plan. The Director of Open Spaces explained that Officers working on local plans at different open spaces managed by the City of London Corporation shared best practice but as the approach taken by the various Boroughs was substantially different an inclusive policy could not be established. In addition, the Committee was informed that conversations had taken place regarding cost recovery for work completed on engagement with the Local Plans.

RESOLVED- That: -

- I. The proposals encompassed in Option A be agreed; and
- II. That Officers continue to work with SBDC to create a full and effective Mitigation Strategy; and
- III. That Officers report to the Epping Forest and Commons Committee with the outcomes of the Hearing Sessions and the Inspector's findings and main modifications.

20. THE COMMONS, LICENCES, SPORTS, FILMING AND MISCELLANEOUS CHARGES

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces which provided an update on charges for licensed activities, sports and miscellaneous charges in the last full financial year 2018/19. The report explained that in 2018/19 the licensed activity raised a total of £6,645.00, charges for sports across 2018/19 raised a total of £299.00 and that proposals are presented for a price increase of 2.6% in line with the Retail Price Index figure.

RESOLVED- That: -

- I. The proposed charges for 2020/21 as itemised in Appendix A be approved; and
- II. That the additional sentence be added to The Commons Events Policy Part 2, page 12 - '***Some charges will be subject to VAT***'.

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

There were no questions considered in the public session.

22. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

There was no other business considered in the public session.

23. 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.

24. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

The Committee considered the non-public minutes of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee on 9 September 2019.

RESOLVED-That the non-public minutes of the meeting of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee held on 9 September 2019 be agreed as an accurate record.

25. EPPING FOREST JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE DRAFT NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

The Committee received the draft non-public minutes of the Epping Forest Joint Consultative Committee held on 8 October 2019.

RESOLVED- That the draft minutes be noted

26. THE EPPING FOREST FIELD STUDIES CENTRE - HEADS OF TERMS SEP 46/16

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces regarding the Heads of Terms for the Epping Forest Field Studies Centre.

RESOLVED- That the report be agreed.

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

There were no questions considered in the non-public session.

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

There was no further business considered in the non-public session.

The meeting ended at 1.01 pm

Chairman

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