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| <b>Committee(s)</b>  | <b>Dated:</b>       |
| Epping Forest and Commons Committee                                  | 26 January 2016     |
| <b>Subject:</b><br>Museum accreditation for The View                 | <b>Public</b>       |
| <b>Report of:</b><br>Superintendent of Epping Forest <b>SEF04/16</b> | <b>For Decision</b> |

### Summary

Epping Forest has owned, preserved and displayed historic objects and documents relating to the Forest for over one hundred years. There are reputational, promotional, financial and legal benefits to be derived from management of these objects as a formal museum collection in line with an externally accredited framework, Museum Accreditation, administered by Arts Council England. The collection is formally named 'The View (Epping Forest Collection)'.

Further to your Committee's approvals of March 1993 and March 2016 to seek accreditation, the Committee as governing body of The View (Epping Forest Collection) is required by the museum accreditation framework to give formal approval to key policies and documents prior to accreditation submission. There is no direct cost for applying for accreditation.

The deadline for submission to Arts Council England is 26 May 2016. An Accreditation award covers three years after which the organisation is invited, but not obliged, to submit a return application.

### Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Approve the Statements, Plans and Policies in appendices 1-7

### Main Report

#### Background

1. Epping Forest has held and displayed historic objects since 1895. The collection's purpose is summarised in its Vision Statement: *The Epping Forest Collection illuminates the past and present of Epping Forest for all.*
2. The Epping Forest & Open Spaces Committee approved seeking museum registration, the forerunner to museum accreditation, on 24 March 1993 (SEF 13/93). The application for registration was paused during Stage s II and III of the Heritage Lottery Funded Branching Out project, as this involved the building of The View, opened 2012, and transfer of archival material to London Metropolitan Archive, completed 2014.
3. The View (Epping Forest Collection), is coterminous with The View as the primary visitor centre for Epping Forest. Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge and The Temple are defined as associated sites of The View displaying museum objects on a temporary basis. The Saw Mill Visitor Services store at The Warren provides museum storage .

4. The Epping Forest & Open Spaces Committee as Conservators of Epping Forest, and as the representatives of the trustees for Epping Forest charity constitute the governing body of The View (Epping Forest Collection). The governing body's responsibilities under accreditation include consideration of recommendations for museum object disposal, formal exiting from the collection and receipt and approval of an annual report on the activities of the museum.
5. Your Committee of 9 March 2015 received a report which outlined the benefits of seeking accreditation for The View (SEF 13/15). Arts Council England summarise the benefits of accreditation as an authoritative benchmark for assessing performance, raising awareness and understanding, and demonstrates that the museum has met a national standard which strengthens applications for public and private funding and gives investors confidence in the organisation.

### **Current Position**

6. In order to achieve accreditation, we are required to evidence the constitution of The View (Epping Forest Collection). Whilst the Epping Forest Act 1878 is evidence of an appropriate constitution and delegation of responsibilities to The Epping Forest and Commons Committee, this does not include the specific management of a museum within its responsibility to Epping Forest as a whole. We therefore seek the approval of a Governance Statement (Appendix 1) to clarify this purpose.
7. In order to achieve accreditation, Arts Council England specify that the core policies and documents attached as appendices to this report are essential to good practice and must be reviewed and approved by the governing body.
8. Wording in these policies, as indicated in italic text, is required by Arts Council England and must be approved without amendments in order to meet the requirements of full museum accreditation. In particular the statement of purpose and key aims in the Forward Plan is required to be approved by the governing body.
9. The application to extend 'working towards accreditation' status for The View (Epping Forest Collection) was granted by the Arts Council with a deadline of 26 May 2016. No further extension will be granted. Therefore if we fail to meet this date, we would be required to submit a new eligibility application which is at risk of not being granted without evidence of greater resourcing.
10. In the recent Management Plan Consultation 79% of respondents rated how the management of the museum collection, archival material and handling and reference collections is to the future of Epping Forest as important or very important,
11. The City of London has several options with regard to museum accreditation
  - i. **Option 1:** Do not approve the attached appendices and take no further action. This would not incur any additional costs for the City of London, but would result in losing the 'Working towards accreditation' status and a loss of funding opportunities. The current store of objects will be retained but this will not be a museum collection with the associated benefits. This option is therefore **not recommended**.
  - ii. **Option 2:** Approve some but not all appendices and delegate to the Chairman and Deputy Chairman in consultation to the Superintendent of Epping Forest any revisions recommended so that officers may make timely submission to Arts Council England to meet the requirements of the deadline given. This option is not **recommended** as it will delay the implementation of the policies to guide

management of the museum and may result in missing the final deadline for the submission.

- iii. **Option 3:** Approve the attached appendices. This course of action will allow a timely submission to Arts Council England, and immediate implementation of good practice in management of The View (Epping Forest Collection). This option is therefore **recommended**.

## Proposals

- 12. Following approval by this Committee, the appendices, as core documents for managing the collection, will be submitted to Arts Council England as part of our submission for museum accreditation in 2016.
- 13. Successfully achieving and continuing to retain museum accreditation will allow the museum to apply for funding open only to accredited museums as well as access to museum loan schemes
- 14. Staff have already successfully used the 'working towards' status to successfully gain museum retail training. Similar free or subsidised training for staff and volunteers will be available if museum accreditation is achieved.

## Corporate & Strategic Implications

- 15. **Open Spaces Department Business Plan 2014 – 2017:** Pursuing museum accreditation meets the Departmental Strategic Objective of "Improving our use of resources through increased income generation", as well as meeting one of the objectives associated with the Department Value of 'Quality': "We will participate in schemes which measure and benchmark our quality".

## Implications

- 16. **Financial:** All costs will be met within local risk budget.
- 17. There will be minor costs for museum specific stationery costs, collections care and limited additional hours for staff and casual employees to help supervise museum volunteers and work on museum documentation.
- 18. Improvements to the Visitor Services Store are required to improve storage conditions and security for retail stock, events equipment and museum objects to prevent water ingress, damage from vermin and control cement dust from the floor. This has already been identified as a necessary building improvement and will be met within existing budgets
- 19. Achieving accreditation would open possible funding streams, as and when these are offered: for example the Arts Council England Museum Resilience Fund or Small Grants Scheme and Museum of London Collections Grants
- 20. Additional acquisitions will be met within existing local risk budget or through donations but are not a requirement of Museum accreditation. Full Accreditation will also give confidence to donors who may be considering donating objects relating to Epping Forest for inclusion in the collection.
- 21. There is currently no charge from Arts Council England for participating in the accreditation scheme, including the available training.

22. **Property:** There are no substantive or long term property expenses or implications from operating The View and associated sites and the Saw Mill as museum premises over and above their visitor centre and services operation. Any additional costs will be met from the local risk budget.
23. **Legal:** The Governance Statement lays out the existing governance of The View (Epping Forest Collection) within the context of the structure, governance and management of Epping Forest as a whole for the clarification of the management of the collection and submission of an application to Arts Council England for museum accreditation.
24. The implementation of SPECTRUM, the museum industry standard for collections management, defining agreed procedures and data requirements for: object entry, acquisition, location and movement control; object exit; loans and loans in, will reduce risk of legal dispute over the ownership of museum objects accepted by The View (Epping Forest Collection).

## **Conclusion**

25. Approval of the appendices comprising Statements, Plans and Policies is required for Museum Accreditation. Submitting an application for full accreditation before May 2016 would help to secure the long-term future of the museum collection at Epping Forest and the benefits of funding opportunities, guidance and free training that the museum have enjoyed from the 'working towards Accreditation' status.

## **Appendices**

|            |                                     |
|------------|-------------------------------------|
| Appendix 1 | Governance Statement                |
| Appendix 2 | Forward Plan                        |
| Appendix 3 | Environmental Sustainability Policy |
| Appendix 4 | Collections Development Policy      |
| Appendix 5 | Documentation Policy and Plan       |
| Appendix 6 | Care and Conservation Policy        |
| Appendix 7 | Access Policy                       |

## **Background Papers**

SEF 13/15 Epping Forest & Commons Committee Report: Museum accreditation for The View

SEF 28/14 Epping Forest & Commons Committee Report: Epping Forest Historic Environment Policy

SEF 47/03 Epping Forest & Open Spaces Committee Report: Epping Forest Museum Status

SEF 13/93 Epping Forest & Open Spaces Committee Report: Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge: Proposed Registration with Museums & Galleries Commission

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