

<b>Committee(s)</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
Management Plan Steering Group Epping Forest and Commons	08 04 2016 09 05 2016
<b>Subject:</b> Epping Forest: The Next Ten Years Consultation Report (SEF 20/16)	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Superintendent of Epping Forest	<b>For Decision</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Laura Lawson, Open Spaces – Epping Forest	

### Summary

A new Management Plan is needed to guide the future management of Epping Forest. A large consultation exercise 'Epping Forest – The Next 10 Years' was undertaken between June and October, 2015, to seek the views of Epping Forest stakeholders and members of the public on numerous management issues.

This report presents to your Committee a summary document outlining the consultation response data and a sample of the comments received for each management issue in line with the Statement of Community Involvement adopted by your Committee on 5 March 2012. Your Officers have drafted broad statements to respond to the numerous comments received for each management issue. This report seeks your Committee's agreement with the statements and permission to publish the summary document on the City of London web pages.

On approval of this report, your Officers will progress to drafting the Epping Forest Management Plan 2017-2027 for further consideration by your Committee's Management Plan Steering Group across 2016.

### Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report
- Approve the Officers response statements contained in the Draft Summary Report 'Epping Forest - The Next 10 Years' Consultation 2015' (Appendix 1) for website publication.

### Main Report

#### Background

1. Our publicly accessible Open Spaces need robust management plans. These plans are essential for us to manage, maintain, develop and improve our green space in the most appropriate way.
2. Following expiry of the previous 2004-2010 plan, a new Management Plan is required for Epping Forest. The Conservators of Epping Forest sought to engage

with stakeholders and the public during the early stages of developing the new plan to help guide priority areas for action in the new plan.

3. Previous plans have attracted some criticism for presenting what was perceived as inflexibility around the Conservators statutory delegations. At this early stage it was felt to be consistent and transparent to share the full range of delegations the Conservators face through the consultation document.
4. The Management Plan Consultation Phase 1 document (now re-named 'Epping Forest – The Next 10 Years') was approved by your Committee in May 2015 and follows a process outlined in the Statement of Community Involvement approved by your Committee on 5 March 2012.
5. The 'Epping Forest - The next 10 years' consultation document was drafted, based on the duties of the Conservators as outlined in the Epping Forest Acts and subsequent legislation. It contained 58 management issues within six themes. These issues were explained in detail including current management methods and some future management proposals suggested to encourage comment during the public consultation in summer 2015.
6. A public consultation ran online from the 25 June 2015 – 20 October 2015. This consultation was promoted to local people using face-to-face visitor engagement, a social media campaign and a staff /volunteers presence at a series of local events to raise awareness among the wider community.

### **Current Position**

7. Over 1600 individuals were invited to participate online via email. This invitation creates a unique user profile, based on the email address of the individual. The system recognises these as 'pending' members. The individual must then decide if they would like to complete their registration and populate their profile. Once complete the member is 'registered'. 1062 individuals are now fully registered members.
8. 432 individuals, making 1925 comments, responded online. 4 submissions were received in hard copy and we received 7 responses from stakeholder organisations including; Natural England, Historic England, the Friends of Epping Forest and neighbouring local authorities or councils.
9. The respondent profile reflected that of the Epping Forest Visitor Survey 2010-2014 for gender. More responses came from our white and older (45 or over) visitors when compared to the visitor survey observation data. Table 1 show the respondents profile against the EFVS data.

	2010-2014 EFVS observation data	Respondents who submitted profiling information (online)
Male	58.7%	57%
Female	41.3%	43%
Under 16	15.7%	0%
16-19	9%	0.5%
20-44	49.1%	42%
45-65	19.7%	44%
65 +	6.4%	13.5%
White	83.2%	94%
Mixed	1.9%	1.3%
Asian/Asian British	7.8%	2.6%
Black/ Black British	6.1%	0.2%
Chinese	0.6%	0.5%
Other	0.5%	1%
Disabled/limited by illness	0.5%	3.7%

10. Respondents were not required to respond to all 58 management issues presented. The majority of issues received between around eighty to one hundred responses. Keeping cycling on track (1.6A) returned the most responses (236). This may have been encouraged by some specific publicity around this management issue towards the tail end of the consultation.

11. The management issues which returned the most responses (over 150 each) were all in Theme 1: Public recreation and enjoyment. They were; Access for all (1.1), Interpreting the Forest (1.2), A safe place for visitors (1.3), Keeping trails in working order (1.5) and an exciting natural playground (1.11). Conversely, the issue of Sport & Physical activities (1.6) returned the least responses (<50).

#### Comments received by theme;

Theme 1	1.6.a Cycling (145)	145*
	1.5 Paths and trails (76)	76
	1.11 Natural play (75)	75
	1.1 Access for all (72)	72
	1.3 Visitor safety (67)	67
Theme 2	2.4 Grasslands & Heathlands (41)	41
	2.5 Amenity Mowing (34)	34
	2.3 Commoners' grazing right (32)	32
Theme 3	3.8 Car Parks and Parking (38)	38
	3.7 Epping Forest Transport Strategy (35)	35
	3.1 Planning (27)	27
Theme 4	4.3 Litter (37)	37
	4.4 Fly-tipping (29)	29
	4.5 Licensing (29)	29
Theme 5	5.3 Scheduled ancient monuments (21)	21
	5.2 Historic parks and gardens (20)	20
Theme 6	6.3 Deer Vehicle Collisions (26)	26

\*Please note that 40 cycling comments were received after a story was published in a cycling magazine online (Road.cc).

12. Planning & Protection (3.1) and Fly-tipping (4.4) were rated 'very important or important to the future of the Forest' by 100% of respondents to those issues.
13. The Summary Consultation Report (Appendix 1) documents the response data and outlines a sample of all responses received. In response to all the comments made under each management issue, your Officers have drafted a broad response statement. This report seeks endorsement by your Committee for these response statements.

## Options

14. Option 1: Approve the Officers response statements for each management issue contained within Appendix 1 and approve progression to the next stage, drafting of the Epping Forest Management Plan 2017-2027. This option is **recommended**.
15. Option 2: Do not approve the Officers statements for each management issue and seek re-drafting. This option would delay the development of a new Management Plan for the Forest further and is therefore **not recommended**.

## Proposals

16. The development of the new management plan is dependent on your Committee approval that the principles outlined by Officers is in line with the Conservators desires for the future management of Epping Forest.
17. Subject to your Committee's approval, publish the officer response statements and the summary report on the City of London, Epping Forest web pages.
18. The proposed Management Plan will include 31 Strategy Documents which will set out the City of London's approach to key subject areas. Strategy documents are already in place for 18 subjects areas (See Appendix 1), with revision of the Forest Transport and Car Parking Strategies planned in 2016. The remaining 13 subject areas are under development, with the first, the Events Strategy being considered by the Open Spaces Committee in June 2016.
19. Reflecting lessons learned from the work with the Management Plan Steering Group and the Public Consultation feedback it is proposed that further work and consultation is undertaken on a theme-by-theme basis working with the intention of making a final presentation to your Committee in summer 2017.

## **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

20. **Corporate Plan 2013-17:** The Epping Forest Next 10 Years Management Plan Draft Consultation 2015 meets the objective of the Corporate Plan to provide valued services to London and the nation.
21. **Open Spaces Business Plan 2015-18:** The Epping Forest Next 10 Years Management Plan Draft Consultation 2015 meets the Departmental objectives of: 'protect and conserve the ecology, biodiversity and heritage of our sites' and 'improve the health and wellbeing of community through access to green space and recreation'. It also delivers our values of: Quality, inclusion, environment and promotion.
22. **Statement of Community Involvement:** The City of London has committed to consulting on the forthcoming Management Plan throughout the production of the plan, including in the early stages of preparation, in Epping Forest's Statement of Community Involvement.

## **Implications**

23. **Financial** In addition to Officer time, the Inovem Inclusionware™ Consultation software costs £6,200/year, together with a security licence of £490 for any three year period.
24. **Legal** – The existing six management Plan themes reflect the guiding duties of the Epping Forest Acts 1878 and 1880. Detailed legal advice will be provided around the policies that will be promoted in the forthcoming Management Plan.

## **Conclusion**

25. The development of the new Epping Forest Management Plan represents a major step forward in the progressive management of the Forest. Your Committee's approval of the broad principles for future management will enable the City to respond to the issues raised in the summer 2015 public consultation and maintain progress with the development of the final Plan.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Epping Forest Management Plan 2018-2028 – Strategic Themes and proposed Strategy Documents
- Appendix 2 – Epping Forest The Next 10 Years Management Plan Draft Consultation 2015 – circulated via email and available upon request.

## **Background Papers**

March 2013, 'Epping Forest Management Plan (Phase 1 Consultation)' – Epping Forest Management Plan Steering Group

'SEF 30/13: Epping Forest Management Plan (Phase 1 Consultation)' – Epping Forest and Commons Committee

July 2013, 'Epping Forest Management Plan Phase 1 Consultation' – Epping Forest Management Plan Steering Group

March 2012, 'Statement of Community Involvement – Update' – Epping Forest and Commons Committee

'SEF 22/11: Epping Forest Statement of Community Involvement' – Epping Forest and Commons Committee

'SEF 28/09: Epping Forest Management Plan 2011 – 2021. Consultation and Publication Timetable' – Epping Forest and Commons Committee

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