



Epping Forest & Commons Committee (Supplementary - for information items)

Date: MONDAY, 9 MAY 2022
Time: 11.00 am
Venue: COMMITTEE ROOM - 2ND FLOOR WEST WING, GUILDHALL /
MICROSOFT TEAMS

AGENDA

6. MINUTES

- b) * To note the minutes of the Epping Forest Consultative Committee meeting on 9 February 2022 (Pages 3 - 14)

11. * EPPING FOREST CAR PARK CHARGING - PHASE 3

Report of the Environment Director.

For Information
(Pages 15 - 24)

12. * EPPING FOREST - SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE FOR DECEMBER 2021 TO MARCH 2022 (SEF 13/22)

Report of the Superintendent of Epping Forest.

For Information
(Pages 25 - 40)

13. *NATURAL ENVIRONMENT EPPING FOREST FORWARD AGENDA PLAN 2022

Report of the Environment Director.

For Information
(Pages 41 - 44)

16. * ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S UPDATE FOR THE COMMONS INCLUDING ANNUAL REPORT OF PSPO INCIDENTS.

Report of the Executive Director of Environment.

For Information
(Pages 45 - 54)

Epping Forest Consultative Committee
Wednesday 9 February 2022, 7.00pm
Held via *Microsoft Teams*

Present

Members:

Graeme Doshi-Smith (Chairman)
Benjamin Murphy (Deputy Chairman)
Verderer Michael Chapman DL
Verderer Paul Morris and Representative for Epping Forest Forum
Verderer Nicholas Munday
Judith Adams, Epping Forest Heritage Trust
Francis Baker, Lee Valley Youth Cycling Club
Peter Burden, Highams Park Planning Group (inc Snedders)
Susan Creevy, Loughton Residents Association
Matthew Frith, London Wildlife Trust
Tim Harris, WREN Group
Andy Irvine, Bushwood Area Residents Association
Gill James, Friends of Wanstead Parklands
Valerie Jones, West Essex Ramblers
George Lund, Epping Forest Transport Action Group
Carol Pummell, Epping Forest Riders Association
Robert Smith, Butterfly Conservation Cambridgeshire and Essex Branch
Steven Williamson, Royal Epping Forest Golf Club
Tim Wright, Orion Harriers

Officers:

Paul Thomson, Superintendent of Epping Forest
Jacqueline Eggleston, Head of Visitor Services
Geoff Sinclair, Head of Operations
Richard Holt, Town Clerk's Department

Apologies:

Verderer HH William Kennedy
Elizabeth Burn, Theydon Bois & District Rural Preservation Society
Louise Davies, Natural England
Bruce Mackie, Lee Valley Youth Cycling Club
Gordon Turpin, Highams Park Planning Group (inc Snedders)

1. Apologies

Apologies received as above.

2. Governance Review & Future Management of Consultative Committee

The Superintendent reported that the City of London Corporation (CoLC) is undergoing an extensive Governance Review and following recommendations made by Lord Lisvane, CoLC is moving towards these new arrangements. The Epping Forest Consultative Committee (EF-CC), which used to be administered by Town Clerks will now move to local management by

the Epping Forest Team. Further changes from the Governance Review are also planned and are awaiting sign off.

The Chairman added that elections are taking place in March and this will be his last meeting as Chairman of the EF&CC and EF-CC.

3. Last meeting minutes – 20 October 2022

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed subject to the following amendments:

- Tim Harris change from Orion Harriers to Wren Group.
- Nick Owen, Forest Forum was present at the last meeting but not listed as an attendee.

4. Matters Arising from the last meeting minutes – 20 October 2022

The following was raised:

Insurance Reimbursement update

An update from Peter Burden was requested regarding the reimbursement of insurance for volunteers.

The Superintendent apologised for the delay and explained that following a review of grant giving in the CoLC, it was no longer possible to reimburse volunteers as previously. The Superintendent added that as volunteers provide a valuable resource, the Superintendent had been looking at alternative ways to be able to reimburse reasonable out of pocket costs for volunteering in the Forest. The Superintendent has now been able to confirm that if volunteer organisations submit invoices for any out-of-pocket costs for volunteering in Epping Forest, to send in for consideration.

Public Transport

Peter Burden referred to the minutes which stated Epping Forest was well served by public transport, which is not true of High Beach. In addition, the car park opening and closing times limit those working during office hours to weekend use only as the car parks are closed too early in the day.

The Head of Visitor Services responded that all these matters have been addressed within three public reports and an FAQ on Car Parking in Epping Forest. High Beach is over capacity and cannot cope either with parking, infrastructure or the environmental damage. There are a further 6,000 acres of accessible Forest land for Forest Users to visit and an Epping Forest Destination Strategy coming to Committee later this year will be reviewing how visitors can be managed and encouraged to visit alternative locations, not just High Beach. The Visitor Centre was moved to Chingford ten years ago for the very same reason.

The Chairman added that it is important to stress that public transport was not for CoLC to provide, however, CoLC did seek to influence local authorities to improve services where possible.

The Deputy Chairman added that the Local Authority Forest Transport Strategy is out of date and public transport is missing for some key areas. The local Authorities know where

CoLC is seeking improvements. CoLC are in early discussions on a new Forest Transport Strategy.

Cattle

Paul Burden asked if it were possible to have cattle grazing at Higham's Park.

The Head of Operations replied, that following the successful trials at Wanstead Park, other locations including Highams Park are now being considered and added that strong community support was essential.

Red Routes

George Lund raised that there had been a long discussion on red routes through the Forest at the last meeting, yet the minutes appear to be much condensed.

Whilst George understood that each Member is encouraged to feed back directly to Essex County Council Highways on their own views on the red route, George felt that the purpose of this Committee meeting was to advise Epping Forest on what should be included within Epping Forest's response to the red route and the minutes did not capture these main outcomes.

The Chairman responded that the minutes are limited due to the format the Town Clerk's department uses. However, now that the Epping Forest Charity is taking on clerking of the minutes, the minutes will be recorded differently. The Chairman also added that as the decision-making body for the Red Route is Essex County Council and it was therefore best that a number of views were given to ECC.

Verderer Morris added that the Epping Forest Charity (EFC) were the authority that requested the Red Route in the first place and that is why the local community were giving their views to EFC. In addition, Verderer Morris added that the purpose of the Consultative Committee was to feed the views of the local community into the Epping Forest and Commons Committee.

5. Epping Forest and Commons Committee meeting minutes

The minutes from the last EF&CC meeting were noted.

6. Superintendent's Update for August & September/October & November

The Superintendent's updates were noted the following key points highlighted:

- Arable reversion works at Patmore's Field, Mott Street.
- Seeking damages from Thames Water
- 54 more cows born
- Consultancy underway on carbon recovery options for all open spaces
- A startling rise in fly tipping.
- New high risk DEFRA mapping for bird flu in the south of the Forest.

The following comments were noted:

Tim Harris

- Patmore's Field – Was the funding from a separate pot outside of EF main budgets?
Patmore's Field is a 5 year project of £3.6M grant funded from City's Resource Allocation Sub Committee (RASC) to realise the City's Climate Action Strategy.
- Skylarks – following on from last year's breeding success will the fence be re-established. WREN would like to support the CoLC again with public communication.
The Skylark fencing only a temporary structure and was not designed for the long term and was kept up longer than planned to give the skylarks protection for longer. The fencing will be replaced where needed.

Verderer Morris

- The fencing at Wanstead Park is a bad condition.
- Flytipping - The less people in the Forest the more crime will go up.

George Lund

- Very grateful for the new cycle racks but most have been installed on grass, which get very muddy in high use / weather conditions. Can consideration be given to put gravel down underneath the rack?
A further 63 cycle racks due to be delivered by end March for other parts of the London areas of the Forest. Some areas are more robust, but the ground condition will be assessed during that process.

7. Epping Forest Staffing Arrangements

The Superintendent gave an update that Epping Forest as part of the Open Spaces Department is now merging with the largest Department in the City of London to become the Environment Department. Colleagues from the City of London Cemetery and Crematorium and Tower Bridge are moving to other areas of the business. Epping Forest now sits in a new group called 'Natural Environment'.

Epping Forest and North London Open Spaces will undergo a major restructure 'phase 2' in June, with a staff consultation through the summer and implementation in the autumn.

8. Epping Forest Car Park Charging Review

A report was brought to January EF&CC for information and is to give a review on the car park charging in Epping Forest since it began.

9. Epping Forest Car Park Charging - Phase 3

A report on the Car Park Charging Phase 3 has been brought to this Committee to outline the options for implementing the third and final phase of the car park charging for comment.

The following was noted:

Valerie Jones

- The West Essex Ramblers group has older members who do not use smart phones and the use of RingGo is excluding those users. Could the payment arrangements be revisited and increase the use of cash machines?
Smartphones are the easiest method for payment; however, payments can be made by telephone. Cash is a limiting factor and there are many issues involved with cash machines. The car parking infrastructure will be improved gradually as car parking charging is embedded. Cash meters are not an option and are vulnerable to vandalism.
- When do you need feedback from stakeholders for the annual review?
An annual review will take place EF&CC November 2022.
- Proposals for phase 3 refers to the six-hour limit to be removed for five car parks and only four listed. *The Wood Yard was listed but was removed at the last moment when identified it was being used by visitors for St Margaret's Hospital parking.*
- The six-hour limit fixes the commuter problem so could consideration be given to remove the six-hour limit for all carparks where commuter parking is not an issue?
The principal behind the six-hour is a wider issue and not just due to displacement parking from commuters but also from residents where Local Authorities had implemented Controlled Parking Zones and local hospital visitors. The Head of Visitor Services has revisited every Forest Car park to see where feasible to remove the six-hour rule and has identified 4 car parks.

Judy Adams

- No-one objected on the main principles of car parking charging.
- The six-hour limit loses the opportunity for families to spend the whole day in the Forest and could consideration be given to remove the six-hour limit for all carparks where commuter parking is not an issue? *The six-hour rule is also being used to encourage good turnover in the most popular car parks, such as Connaught Water and allow as more visitors as possible. For those visitors who wish to spend all day in the Forest, there are options to start their visit elsewhere.*
- Visitors on low incomes, on social credit but with cars are no longer able to visit the Forest anymore. *A number of anecdotes from Forest users who are no longer visiting have been reported, but this has now shown with the visitor numbers and surveys show parking is increasing.*
- Many would find the extension of debit card machines very useful.
- Concerned that with the loss of red route will have a big impact on roadside verges.

Verderer Morris

- There are a number of groups that would like to visit the Forest for over the six-hour limit.
- The red route is no longer enforced and allows for additional parking.
- High Beach is a key focal point and car parking charging is changing the area.
- Verderer Morris keen for CoLC to engage with Local Councillors to improve public transport.
Following the departure of the Head of Conservation, the Head of Visitor Services is working closely with Local Authorities, particular through the Transport Strategy which is being revisited to update.
- The income has exceeded expectations.

The Chairman added that the income received from car park charging has helped to recoup the expense for running Epping Forest.

- Verderer Morris asked the Head of Visitor Services if Committee could be kept updated with any progress.

Sue Creevy

- Many people cannot walk a long way and do not have a blue badge.
- Has the red route gone? *The Chairman confirmed that NEPP are no longer enforcing the red route and it was up Essex Highways if the red route is enforced again.*
- There are many areas of Epping Forest not covered by public transport.

George Lund

- Concerned about the displacement effect of cars parking on verges, as car park charging is rolled out to the remaining car parks. Could yellow lines be considered?
- Could more cycle parking in the North of the Forest be considered?
In consultation with cyclists and cycle user groups, CoLC aims to place cycle racks near popular cycle routes rather than car pa.
- A personal dislike of RingGo and its default for paid-for reminders.

The Head of Visitor Services thanked Members for all the comments raised, they have been incorporated in the text above and a number of the comments mentioned are addressed within the FAQ's on the website and asked Committee Members to direct Members to the site.

ACTION:

- ***The Head of Visitor Services to share a map of cycle rack locations for cycling in Epping Forest for EFTAG input.***
- ***The Head of Visitor Services to continue to keep EF-CC updated on progress.***

10. Application To Natural England For Recognition As A National Nature Reserve

Natural England (NE) has suggested CoLC apply for National Nature Reserve Status for Epping Forest. A report has been brought to this Committee to seek approval to continue discussion and fact finding prior to making any application.

The following comments were noted:

Chairman confirmed that he agreed this would be good to explore further and consider if there are any implications.

Verderer Morris raised his concern that, whilst CoLC should consider everything which could benefit Epping Forest, it could be too much work to undertake at this time. Verderer Morris added that if NE approached CoLC to make an application, that NE be invited to a future EF-CC to explain the process and benefit.

Verderer Munday added that, whilst there may be benefits, the status comes with requirements on governance, funding, maintenance etc. and it was important to know how

those requirements would affect the CoLC operations and structures and it would need to be considered by EF&CC in the round.

Sue Creevy wanted to know the pros and cons but understood that this could not yet be known. Volunteers often burn the vegetation cut down before clearing and would this no longer be possible.

Tim Harris had similar concerns to those of Verderers Morris and Munday. Tim was initially excited but then felt it raised a number of questions.

- Who would be managing and monitoring the land? Cuts to funding in NE have brought in many complaints about other NNR sites. Though, those run by RSPB and National Trust seem to be doing better.
- Would it give Epping Forest greater protection to EF? Tim felt some parts of EF, not covered by SSSI and SAC, would benefit from this designation. What land would be included and how would those discussions take place?
- A full understanding of the conservation and public amenity impacts would be required.

Gill James main concern was the financial responsibility of CoLC. The latest budget shows a significant reduction over several years. Other comparable size NNRs get more budget.

- Where will the management sit?
- Will CoLC take better responsibility for everything else like investment, buildings etc?
- What would the local authority be expected to do?

Chairman reiterated applying for this status was about designation and CoLC will continue to retain all management of Epping Forest.

Mat Frith added that LWT supported this application and will await further information. There are other sites who have taken this designation recently in similar circumstances and it would be good to hear their experiences – the model is working well. Any additional responsibility or benefit must be clarified. This was first proposed in the 1940's and would be great to see it through! Mat Frith suggests inviting Royal Parks or London Borough of Hillingdon to a future EF-CC to share their experiences.

Judy Adams found the discussion fascinating. On the whole the EFHT are very supportive. More investigation would be very welcome. EF is very special place and when EFHT talk to the public about the SAC and SSSI, these designations are often lost on them. However, the EF being a National Nature Reserve would be better understood and appreciated far more easily and ought to be taken into account.

Verderer Chapman raised his concern that the report to consider the NNR status was brought to the EF-CC first prior to being considered by the EF&CC and felt it should have been the other way round.

The Chairman did not agree with Verderer Chapman and reminded Verderer Chapman that the correct process was for reports to be brought to the EF-CC for consultation in first instance and the views of the EF-CC were then included in an updated report to be brought

to EF&CC for full consideration and decision. The Chairman added that the Superintendent had mentioned at the beginning of this item that this report was to seek approval to continue discussions and fact finding prior to making any application and understood from this Committee that the overall consensus was to do so. Once more information has been collated, a report will be brought back to this Committee for further consultation.

Verderer Morris sought clarification if this was now an agreement to go ahead with the proposal or to invite NE to come to CoLC with a proposal? Verderer Morris felt that there will need to be some management structure changes, with all the organisations involved. The Superintendent was grateful for the lively discussion and questions and confirmed the following:

- The NNR status was to be seen as additional and complimentary designation, but must indeed be balanced with EF's many other obligations.
- NE already monitor EF's performance against SSSI and SAC and this would not require as much monitoring.
- NNR status would also have the potential to involve other areas outside of EF existing designations.
- There is no intention to be in thrall to NE. NE are very impressed with EF's work here and what EF has achieved to date and NE wish to celebrate and be part of that.
- The financial report last time around was not particularly helpful as a large part of the CWP budget had not yet been approved. EF has achieved its 12% local efficiencies through income.
- EF is talking to other areas that have been through this process and these organisations have been very supportive.
- Normally new initiatives are brought to this Consultative Committee first – that is the usual and correct business route. Any final proposal will of course come back here and to EF&CC.
- It is a cooperative process and may also help to attract more funding for discrete projects.

Carol Pummel raised the concerns of the public Carol had met in the Forest that the public believed this status will change the Forest. Most had concerns that having this status was just about getting money and not about the management of the Forest or putting the Forest first. The public felt that this would increase the bureaucracy and also horse riders feedback that NE have not got a good reputation in particular in getting authorisation to repair tracks.

Chairman confirmed there if the status meant that there would be any changes to the Forest, then the Chairman would not be supportive and stressed again that any implications of the status would need to be considered. The Chairman added that the budget is going down for EF and money does need to be made to maintain EF.

Gill James mentioned that all other NNRs Gill had visited had been enclosed. Would this be something that would need to happen?

Chairman confirmed that there will be no wish to change the Act but a note of this will be made to for consideration.

Verderer Morris asked if there are any other comparative model to compare against? There will be a lot of hesitation for this idea because NE have always been seen to delay or put a stop to things.

The Superintendent understood all the concerns and stressed the intention was to keep EF the way it is. Funding was necessary, but that was not the driver here. The Natural England consent process can be slow sometimes but for very good reasons. Consideration will also be made to consider the World Heritage Status.

11. Platinum Jubilee Celebrations 1952-2022 Queen's Green Canopy - Proposed Tree Planting Projects

As part of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations, Epping Forest has been nominated as part of the 70-strong Queen's Green Canopy (QGC) initiative, with successful woodland nominations being announced by the QGC Board in February 2022. Building on anticipated approval, this report outlines how CoLC could facilitate a wide range of QGC tree-planting activities across the Square Mile and wider Open Spaces across Greater London, engaging the Lord Mayor, school groups and wider communities.

It is proposed that the City Corporation take an active role in the QGC activities over the course of the next 14 months and align activities in numerous locations around supporting the QGC campaign. Supporting a range of tree-planting activities at Epping Forest for between 159-2,300 trees at 31 locations, is forecast to cost an estimated £40,000 between January 2022 and March 2023 which will require additional fund-raising activity.

This report has been brought to this Committee for comment on possible projects at Epping Forest to be taken forward to the EF&CC for consideration.

The following was raised:

Verderer Morris stressed this was a once in a lifetime event, which should be embraced and added if it was possible to pollard to revive some old trees rather than plant more trees?

Tim Harris said thought not against planting trees, these two options mentioned for Wanstead Flats both raise issues and it was important to take the species, type etc and the biodiversity, which can be fragile on semi-acid grassland, into consideration.

Verderer Chapman raised concern that as an executor organising a tree planting at Hatfield Forest, where the cost of a planting is £300 per tree that includes ongoing maintenance. It is important that the ongoing maintenance must be considered.

The maintenance costs are factored in as well as a percentage cost for replacement for failures.

Rob Smith raised his concern about any tree-planting on grassland particularly if the grassland is acid in character. If classified as a UKBAP lowland acid grassland Priority Habitat, then any loss would be unacceptable in planning terms. Of particular concern is the proposal to plant a copse of 50 to 2,300 trees on Wanstead Flats (Compartment 38) which is not part of the SSSI. Also Coopersale Common (Compartment 56) which is part of the

SSSI. There appears to be little grassland in this area and if anything, compartment 56 and the adjacent Compartment 3 should be opened up.

George Lund felt this was a great opportunity for community involvement. George added that the Scouts would be delighted to be involved and appealed that the opportunity to involve the community is advertised widely.

There will most definitely be community planting. Community engagement costs are also factored into the cost for the plantings.

Susan Creevy raised her concern that planting bigger trees was more costly and would require more maintenance and suggested planting smaller trees.

The Head of Operations thanked everyone and will take into consideration all feedback.

12. Natural Environment Forward Plan

In order to help guide members expectations regarding the content of each Committee Agenda and to facilitate improved engagement with the Committee Report process, the Chairman had requested that an Epping Forest Agenda Plan covering the next six meetings of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee is published as part of each Committee Agenda.

A similar plan will be provided to the Epping Forest Consultative Committee with the intention of providing the potential for the Consultative Committee by agreement to request a report to each Committee on a subject not addressed through the forward Agenda Plan.

Verderer Morris responded that this was very necessary and long overdue and added that the dates of meetings were advertised well in advance of each Committee meeting to enable members to engage with its members.

George Lund appreciated the opportunity an advance agenda brings to be able to give written feedback on agenda items and to be able to do this would need the reports much earlier. George was very interested in the Sustainable Visitor Strategy and requested to see a copy as soon as was possible.

Chairman added that there was a need to caveat that the agenda plan will always be subject to change and there were limits to what can be known or written in advance.

13. Future Meeting Dates

The dates of the 2022 meetings are as follows:

- 15 June 2022, 7pm
- 19 October 2022, 7pm

14. Questions

Budget

Gill James noticed from previous notes the decline in budget and can see that Epping Forest is underfunded and has a growing backlog. Gill had not seen anything that adequately deals with this decreasing revenue and asked what could be done by the EF-CC to help.

The Chairman replied that it was not possible for CoLC to provide more budget and finding funding from other sources was the only option. Engaging with all Members was essential. In the last year £440,000 was spent on waste alone! This is almost completely avoidable and could be invested in the Forest instead.

The Deputy Chairman added that there had been a decline in funding, however, there have been a number of significant successful bids made such the Climate Action Strategy at Patmore's Field mentioned earlier. The Chairman and Deputy Chairman frequently talk to Court of Common Council about the importance of Epping Forest. There is definitely a desire to look again at a strategy for Natural Environment.

The Deputy Chairman continued that the annual budgets and the annual review were presented at this meeting and are publicly available. There will also be a risk dashboard, starting in May, to come to this Committee which will help explain the budget more easily, what needs to be prioritised and how to justify bids for additional funding. The Deputy Chairman asked for Members to bear with CoLC and wait until the new Committee is established and the issues can be revisited and a way forward agreed.

ParkLife

Tim Harris asked for an update on proposals for all-weather pitches?

There has been no further update since this was raised at EF-CC. The Head of Visitor Services will be approaching the London Borough of Redbridge soon for planning advice. There is no point moving toward consultation until it is known if the project is viable.

Horseriding Accident

Verderer Morris referred to the recent terrible horse accident where two horses were killed. There are a number of local groups working together with the police and there is an opportunity for much improved signage. Verderer Morris sought the support from Members to help keep up the on this.

15. Any Other Business

Thank You

Verderer Morris wished to thank the Chairman, Deputy Chairman and Richard Holt for all the hard work and wished the Chairman and Deputy Chairman the best of luck in the elections.

Valerie Jones mentioned plans to be away for the next meeting and who to now arrange this cover with.

The Superintendent confirmed this would now be Juliane Heinecke.

The Chairman added that substitutions were fine as long as these did not happen too often. Attendance and representation was key to maintain a line of communication.

Verderer Chapman hoped the next meeting could be face to face.

Susan Creevy wished to thank the CoLC for the responses to the local plan, which the Loughton Resident's Association completely agreed with.

Gill James was very sorry to see Jeremy Dagley go and that there was not opportunity to thank him and to please pass on our thanks and best wishes.

Committee(s): Epping Forest Consultative – for consultation Epping Forest and Commons - for decision	Dated: 09/02/2022 09/05/2022
Subject: Epping Forest Car Park Charging – Phase 3 (SEF 09/22b)	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	2, 11, 12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	£
What is the source of Funding?	
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	Y/N
Report of: Juliemma McLoughlin, Executive Director, Environment	For Information
Report author: Jacqueline Eggleston, Epping Forest	

Summary

Epping Forest's car parks serve Forest visitors and may also support a range of community, non-commercial and business facilities which operate to serve Forest visitors or encourage Forest use.

In March 2021, your committee agreed to implement charging for car parking in Epping Forest. Phase 1 was implemented in May 2021 and Phase 2 in November 2021.

This paper outlines the options for implementing the third (final) phase of car park charging drawing on the experience of operating the first 9 months of Phase 1 & 2 car park charging scheme. Phase 3 is scheduled for implementation from May 2022.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note comments made by the Consultative Committee
- Approve the recommended options for future car park arrangements

Main Report

Background

1. In October 2020, your committee provided feedback on a series of proposals for the introduction of car park charging in Epping Forest.
2. The car park charging scheme was implemented to meet four objectives (*summarised*):

- a. *Reduce overuse by residents / commuters to ensure availability for Forest users*
 - b. *Reduce overuse in honeypot locations where capacity is exceeded*
 - c. *Encourage sustainable travel and discourage car use in the Forest*
 - d. *Generate income to be reinvested into Forest management*
3. A public consultation was conducted during January/February 2021 to consider various charging arrangements.
 4. The Epping Forest and Commons Committee approved car park charging to be implemented across the Forest from March 2021. This has been achieved through a three-phase approach;
 - a. Phase 1 commenced on 10 May 2021 with charging introduced across an initial 16 car parks.
 - b. Phase 2 saw a further 20 of the remaining Epping Forest car parks have charging introduced as of the 8 November 2021. A list of car park locations and charging status can be read at Appendix 1.
 - c. Phase 3 is scheduled for May 2022.
 5. External contract partners have been commissioned to undertake the operational administration and to enforce the scheme. The latter was appointed via a tender process and the former as a variation to the established City-wide contract though the City Procurement Team, in line with the City's procurement policy. The contracts are both due for renewal in spring 2022.

Operations

6. There have been several acts of vandalism and theft that have been undertaken in relation to signage and payment machines since the implementation of the scheme. The costs of this criminal activity will be recovered through the City Corporation's self-insurance scheme.
7. The ability to hold buffer stock and the reorder of replacements for damaged machines has been delayed due to a worldwide shortage of component parts.
8. In the case where a machine or signage has been damaged rendering it unusable and replacements cannot be sourced immediately, officers have left the affected car park open for public parking without charge. The working premise is that the charity does not wish to penalise or inconvenience other users as a result of criminal activity. However, in some cases, temporary closure of the car park may be necessary.
9. Replacement signage is now held in stock for swift replacement, should this be required.
10. The British Parking Association (BPA) is an independent body which represents, promotes and influences best practice in the parking sector throughout the UK and Europe. The BPA set up the Approved Operator Scheme (AOS) specifically to represent those involved in managing and enforcing parking on private, unregulated land. The appointed external enforcement partner is an Approved Operator and follows the BPS's Code of Practice. Any breaches of the code are

managed in line with the operator's complaint procedure and the BPA's scheme of sanctions.

Current Position

11. The third, and final, phase is due to be implemented by May 2022.

12. The report you received at your meeting in January 2022 outlined several challenges with the car park charging roll out. Since January, the following challenges (*italics*) have been resolved or removed from the project's problem resolution list;

- a. *Public opinion has been vocal in opposition to having charges applied* – the need to reduce car park overuse, encourage sustainable transport and generate income to re-invest in the Forest are vital objectives for a sustainable future for the Forest. This message has been communicated through the committee reporting process, in the press, through correspondence, social media and in greater detail through 'FAQ' answers provided on our website. There has also been vocal support for the scheme which many members of the public have recognised as a necessity.
- b. *The season ticket price point (£150) is seen as a barrier for many people* – The higher than predicted uptake on the season ticket, in both Phases 1 & 2 would indicate that the season ticket price benchmarking exercise was robust and whilst the charge of £150 was a barrier or perceived as a barrier by some it was also deemed as a good value option for a significant number of people. In addition to convenience of not paying on each visit, frequent visitors need only to visit for minimal time twice per week to realise a saving with a season ticket.
- c. *Visitors paying to park have a greater feeling of entitlement to park for the full daylight hours* – The gating of certain car parks commenced in 2016 to combat the growing cost of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and fly-tipping to the Charity. Consequently, opening and closing of the car parks became a routine task for the Forest Keepers. However, staff absence and other emergencies can mean car parks open or close earlier or later than dawn/dusk which does not meet reasonable visitor expectations. Recent soft market testing indicates that it may now be possible to appoint an external company to undertake this role when earlier assessments indicated otherwise. A tender exercise is underway to potentially outsource this role, which may be an option if it presents best value. This would free up keeper resources which could then be redeployed to address more customer focused activities on the Forest. Consideration is also being given to the conversion of further car park entrances, subject to planning consent, to offer dual gating arrangements allowing car parks to be closed to new visitors after a certain time but allowing egress by remaining visitors after closure.

13. The challenges which remain are;

- a. **Maintenance standards** (*Visitor expectation when charged for parking is that car parks are maintained in a higher quality state of repair*) – the income generated from car parking recovers the cost of implementing

charging in 2021/22 and the current reactive maintenance. Surplus funds re-invested in Forest management could facilitate future car park improvements. Besides the five macadamed visitor hubs at Bury Road, Barn Hoppitt, Connaught Water, High Beach and Jubilee Pond it is envisaged that the majority of Forest car park surfaces will continue to have unbound surfacing in keeping with the Forest surroundings.

- b. **Transitory Support Schemes** (*The termination of temporary special arrangements*) – these special arrangements were made to aid transition with several organisations that provide facilities and/or services for Forest visitors, whose operations benefit from reliance on Forest car parks. A small number of these organisations are citing that their parking charges may impact on their business when applied.
- c. **Commuter restrictions may not be appropriate away from rail stations** (*The maximum stay of 6 hours has been cited as too short for a whole day visit to the Forest*) - Longer stays could be facilitated at car parks where the principle of the maximum stay is not undermined.
- d. **Impact of Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs)** - The emergency traffic regulation orders in the High Beach area impacted on the implementation of the car park charging scheme. For example, the gating order at Pillow Mounds became particularly problematic as the closing times altered in September/October to much earlier than dusk.

14. While the car park charging scheme has thus far achieved its goals, in advance of Phase 3 implementation, officers seek your committee's opinion on;
- a. The future charging status for all remaining 13 car parks, some of which may require bespoke management solutions to address other issues present at that location.
 - b. Long-term special arrangements which may apply for non-commercial organisations, that provide facilities and/or services for Forest visitors, with wayleave, licence or other historic agreements for which car park charges will impact.
 - c. The facilitating of stays of over 6 hours for all-day visits in limited locations, where it does not undermine the initial aims of the scheme.

Proposals

Future charging status of remaining car parks

15. Six of the remaining car parks are within the SAC, or on its boundary, so public parking must be controlled to avoid displacement parking, in line with the recommendations of the Habitats Regulation Assessment. These are Theydon Green, Gilbert's Slade, Bell Common Cricket Ground, Theydon Bois Golf Club, Woodford Golf Club and High Beach Church (pull in).
16. Bell Common Cricket Ground is reached via a gated, service access track. To use this site for public car parking, substantial investment would be required to secure the Forest, including the cricket wicket & pitch, from the threat of vehicular damage. To meet the requirements of the HRA this car park should be maintained as temporary use only and managed through the licensing process.

17. Gilbert's Slade is controlled by a single barrier and is only used for licenced activities. It is rarely used for parking and is too small to be viable for parking charges. To meet the requirements of the HRA this will be kept closed apart from separately licenced uses.
18. Five locations are not bounded by the HRA recommendations as they sit outside the SAC. These same locations do not suffer from overuse by residents/commuters, are not located at 'honey-pot' sites which suffer from overcrowding. These are Epping Long Green, St John's Pond, Pick Hill (Upshire), Crown Hill (Upshire), and Fernhall Lane.
19. These five locations (paragraph 18), meet just one of the four car parking scheme objectives - income generation. However, implementing charges at these smaller, outer-laying car parks will not be viable due to their size and cost of enforcement.
20. These five locations could remain as 'free' visitor parking, particularly as this encourages parking in less visited, less ecologically sensitive areas of the Forest or buffer land.
21. Fishers Green Lane also falls outside the SAC. Access to the wider Forest at the location is poor, with most visitors parking at this location to gain access to Lee Valley Park land. There is sufficient parking supplied by Lee Valley Park Authority at this location and this location is currently closed to prevent fly tipping.
22. Aldersbrook Road is neither in the SAC nor a public use car park. It is accessed via a secure entry system, passing through the operational staff yard, and is used only by those paying to hire pitches on weekend or event match days. Ground staff and caretakers manage this access and use.
23. Considering paragraphs 14-20 above, the following car park management is proposed for Phase 3:

Theydon Green	Public parking – apply charge
Gilbert's Slade	No public parking - barrier access only for licenced use
Bell Common Cricket Ground	No Public Parking – match day use only
Theydon Bois Golf Club	Public parking – apply charge with an arrangement with the tenant for golfers use
Woodford Golf Club	Public parking – apply charge with an arrangement with the tenant for golfers use
High Beach Church (pull in)	No Public Parking - Restricted use signed for disabled & service/ access only
Fishers Green Lane	No Public Parking - closed
Epping Long Green	Public parking – no charge
St John's Pond	Public parking – no charge
Pick Hill (Upshire)	Public parking – no charge
Crown Hill (Upshire)	Public parking – no charge
Fernhall Lane	Public parking – no charge
Aldersbrook Road	No Public Parking – event or match day use with pitch hirer/s.

Long term special arrangements

24. During Phase 1 & 2, temporary special arrangements were made with those organisations, providing facilities and/or services for Forest visitors, who rely on Forest car parks for their operations to assist with the transition to charged public parking.
25. These special arrangements will be terminated at the end of May 2022.
26. Tenants will be invited to include the impact of car parking on their operations when tenancy agreements are renewed. All these tenancies are due for renewal no later than July 2022.
27. Five of the locations affect non-commercial sports clubs. These require bespoke solutions to address historic use and long-standing access arrangements. These are Powell's Forest (Buckhurst Hill Cricket Ground), Bell Common Cricket Ground, Warren Pond Car Park, Woodford Golf Course & Theydon Bois Golf Course.
28. The use of Powell's Forest and Bell Common Cricket Ground can be addressed by licencing the car park for use by the cricket clubs on match days. There are other not-for-profit sports organisations that agree similar licence arrangements for event car parking periodically.
29. Warren Pond Car Park, Woodford Golf Course & Theydon Bois Golf Course are used on a more consistent basis by members of their organisations, so an 'event day' licence arrangement is not suitable.
30. For these organisations, one of two solutions is available long-term depending on the existing arrangement for car park use & maintenance, either:
- a. a reduced-price season ticket pass, for their full members, which is restricted to the use of the associated car park/s only, or
 - b. a kiosk within the organisation where members can input their registration number and this 'free to members' benefit reflected within the organisation's lease arrangement.
31. The existing arrangement of reusable parking passes currently in place with catering tenants is not sustainable in the long-term due to the administration resource burden required to manage it. These were offered on a temporary basis for 12 months only.

Facilitating of stays of over 6 hours for all-day visits

32. We know that most visitors use the Forest regularly for visits of less than 2 hours. However, several user groups have expressed the desire to visit for longer than the current 6 hour maximum permitted by the car park charging scheme.
33. Allowing 'free' public parking in 5 car parks outlined in paragraph 18 goes some way to address this but further car parks could have the 6-hour maximum removed where the principle is not undermined.

34. Four car parks, located in the north or middle areas of the Forest have been identified as suitable options. These are Powell's Forest, Mount Pleasant, Wake Valley and Lodge Road. These car parks are generally underused and do not suffer displacement or 'non-Forest use' parking.
35. The fee to park for over 6 hours in these locations would be the same as the current maximum charge for up to 6 hours.

Options

36. The following options are presented for your committee's consideration:

Future charging status of remaining car parks

Option 1

37. Apply car parking charges to all remaining 13 car parks in phase 3 of the car park charging scheme. **This option is not recommended.**

Option 2

38. Apply car park charging in the car parks as outlined in paragraph 21 proposal. This proposal manages use of the car parks located in the SAC in line with the HRA and meets the objectives of the car parking charging scheme.
This option is recommended.

Long term special arrangements

Option1

39. Permit the negotiation of long-term special arrangements for the non-commercial organisations and their members based on historic agreements and use. This facilitates a sustainable option for ongoing use of the car parking facilities.
This option is recommended.

Option 2

40. Terminate all special arrangements as of May 2022 for non-commercial organisations. This will present operational issues for these organisations.
This option is not recommended.

Facilitating stays of over 6 hours for all-day visits

Option1

41. Remove the maximum 6 hours stay from the car parks suggested where the principle of the maximum duration (commuter use and turnover) is not undermined.
This option is recommended.

Option 2

42. Continue to enforce a maximum stay in all public car parks where charges apply.
This option is not recommended.

Key Data

43. Parking statistics
- Average Parking Volume Per Month (to March, not including pay-at-meter)

- i. Phase one sites –10,886 parking sessions per month.
 - ii. Phase two sites – 2,280 parking sessions per month.
- b. Average PCNs Per Month (May '21 -March '22)
 - i. 260.8 tickets (upheld)
 - ii. This represent 1.9% of users, where the total number of users is taken to be the number of parking sessions booked.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

- 44. Epping Forest Consultative Committee: The Consultative Committee considered this report and welcomed the inclusion of car parks where the 6 hour stay could be exceeded. Concern was raised about access to High Beach, operation of meters and access for low income families – all of these have been addressed in previous reports to your committee. There was a desire to see some of the issues addressed in a new Forest Transport Strategy.
- 45. Strategic implications - Car Park charging supports the Open Spaces Departmental Business Plan objective to provide safe, secure, and accessible Open Spaces and services for the benefit of London. It also supports several of the Epping Forest Management Strategy 2020-2030 priority objectives and outcomes.
- 46. Financial implications - The car park charging scheme has generated enough income to cover the installation costs of both phase 1 and phase 2 along with a surplus. In future years when the installation/ maintenance costs are more minimal this surplus is predicted to be considerably higher.
- 47. Resource implications - The operation and enforcement have been successfully outsourced to contractors for an initial period. Ongoing in-house resource commitments are limited to contract management and customer service.
- 48. Legal implications - Section 8(2) of the City of London (Various Powers) Act 1977 gives the Conservators the power to provide parking spaces on Forest Land in order to improve opportunities for the enjoyment of the Forest by the public. There is also a power to make reasonable charges for the use of parking spaces under section 8(4) of the 1977 Act.
- 49. Risk implications - There is an increased risk of vandalism to the new infrastructure, particularly in more remote car parks (phase 2 & 3) with a resulting cost of repair and replacement.
- 50. Equalities implications – An initial screening exercise of the equality impact of implementing car parking was undertaken by the City Corporation. It is considered that there are no negative impacts on the protected equality groups. Blue badge users receive free parking with more disabled only bays available. Epping Forest is well served by public transport and is accessible by foot from many urban centres, charging is not therefore considered as unduly detrimental to those on lower income.

51. Charity implications - Epping Forest is a registered charity (number 232990). Charity Law obliges Members to ensure that the decisions they take in relation to the Charity must be taken in the best interests of the Charity.
52. Climate implications - The implementation of the car park charging may play a role in promoting a modal shift to other forms of transport reducing reliance on cars to access the Forest, which in turn should have a positive impact on carbon emissions and air quality.
53. Security implications – The charging scheme allows greater monitoring of the Forest car parks which facilitates greater vigilance against any criminal activity.

Conclusion

54. Charging for car parks was agreed as a necessity in Epping Forest to manage capacity, deter non-Forest users such as commuters, encourage more sustainable visits to the Forest and raise revenue that can be reinvested into protecting the Forest for public recreation and enjoyment, as well as its internationally significant natural heritage.

Appendices - None

Background Papers

- Feb 2014, URS Car Park Study
- October 2020, EFCC, Epping Forest Car Parking –Introduction of Parking Charges (SEF 28/20)
- November 2020, EF&CC, Epping Forest Car Parking – Introduction of Parking Charges (28/20b)
- January 2021, EF&CC, Epping Forest Car Parking – Tariff Options for introduced charges (SEF 04/21)
- March 2021, EF&CC, Epping Forest Car Parking – Additional tariff options and consultation feedback (SEF 12/21)
- May 2021, Habitats Regulations Assessment relating to the implementation of car park charging at Epping Forest
- January 2022, EF&CC, Epping Forest Car Park Charging Review (SEF 08/22)

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Committee(s)	Dated:
Epping Forest and Commons	09/05/2022
Subject: Epping Forest - Superintendent's Update for December 2021 to March 2022 (SEF 13/22)	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	2, 5, 11 & 12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	City's Cash Local Risk
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	Y
Report of: Juliemma McLoughlin, Executive Director Environment Department	For Information
Report author: Paul Thomson – Superintendent of Epping Forest	

Summary

This purpose of this report is to summarise the Epping Forest Division's activities across December 2021 to March 2022, with the longer reporting period reflecting the cancellation of the March Committee.

Of particular note was the impact of Storm Eunice on the Forest, the success of car parking charge income predictions, a successful hosted workshop for the DEFRA Animal Welfare Committee on fenceless grazing technology, representations in favour of the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation at the London Borough of Waltham Forest Local Plan Examination in Public, the successful installation of 73 grant-supported cycle racks worth £9,000 to encourage sustainable visiting, a £40,000 grants towards establishing a sustainable urban drainage scheme at Wanstead Park and the continued financial success of Chingford Golf Course which achieved the number one position in Essex for online booking.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report

Main Report

Staff & volunteers

1. Staff continue to cover a range of vacancies associated with the Target Operating Model (TOM) recruitment restrictions with eleven vacant posts and a further six posts fortunately covered by casual staff drawn from Epping Forest volunteers. The Head of Conservation left for a new role outside the organisation on 31 January and the Safety and Assets Officer transferred to a new role of Building Surveyor on the 4 March with the City Surveyors Project Team.

Budget

2. At the end of the 21-22 financial year, early indications are of an approximate 0.1% overspend (£3,200 against a net budget of £2,459,000) but this is still subject to year-end processes and audit.
3. A dashboard is being drawn up which will show in more detail key financial information such as income against projects and financial risks.

Weather

4. Following a very wet October, and dry November, the Forest has remained exceptionally wet through the winter with average rainfall in December and further heavy rainfall in February, alongside a dry January and March.
5. The highest December rainfall in 2021 was recorded on the 24th with 22 mm of rain. There were 11 days recorded of no rainfall. The total rainfall recorded in the month was 70.2 mm. This total is above what was recorded during the period of 1979-2009, in which the average total rainfall in December was 54.11 mm. Since 2010, the year 2021 was the 7th wettest year.
6. The highest January rainfall days was 6.2 mm, recorded on the 5th and 8th of the month. There was a total of 12 days of rainfall in the month and the average daily rainfall was 0.74 mm. The total rainfall of 0.74 mm is the lowest recorded from 2010 and significantly below of the period 1979 – 2009 in which the average was 63.24 mm.
7. The highest rainfall day in February was seen on the 15th with 11.4 mm. In total there was 16 recorded days of rainfall. Since 2010, this year saw the 4th wettest month and the total was above the average of 1979-2009. The total rainfall this year was 63 mm.
8. The highest rainfall day In March was recorded on the 2nd with 2.8 mm. There was a total of 11 days of rainfall throughout the month. The daily average rainfall was 14 mm which is lower than the 1979-2009 average of 40.45 mm. Since

2010, the year of 2022 has recorded the second lowest totals, with only 2011 having less.

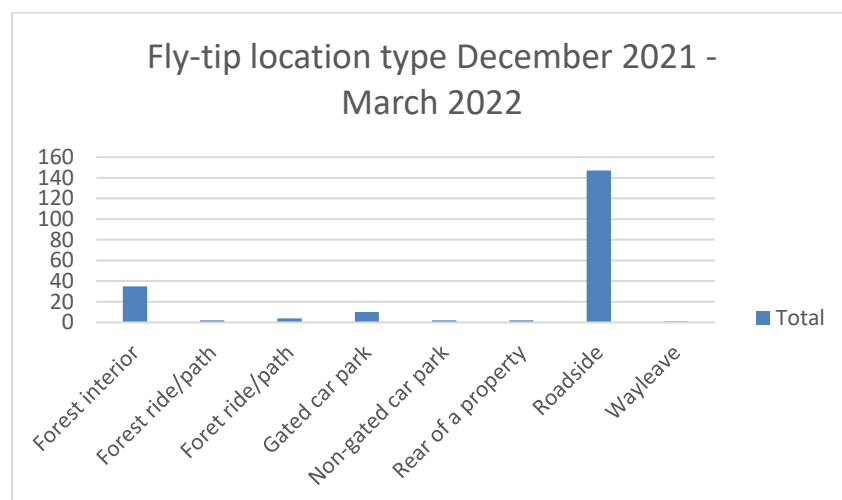
Winter Storms

9. While the Forest experienced strong winds associated with Storm Bara (7-8 December) and Storms Malik and Corrie (29-31 January) there was minimal impact on the Forest. February, however, was dominated by the arrival of Storms Dudley, Eunice and Franklin across 19-21 February. Following the issue of a rare Red 'Danger to Life' Alert on 18 February for Storm Eunice, car parks across the Forest were closed in line with the Charity's Severe Weather Policy. Staff were out in force during the Storm, working alongside the Police and Highway Authorities, focussing on keeping the roads open and safe. Arborists cleared 30 large trees across roads, including some challenging technical fells, whilst Forest Keepers dealt with numerous smaller trees. While the hazardous trees assessments had minimised the risk of tree failure, this was still the worst storm Epping Forest had experienced in the past ten years, with subsequent tree falls over the following two weeks.

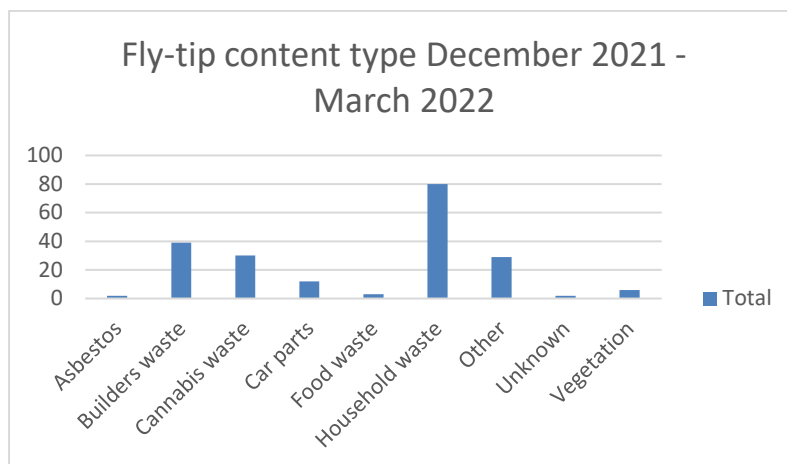
Forest Services

Fly-tipping

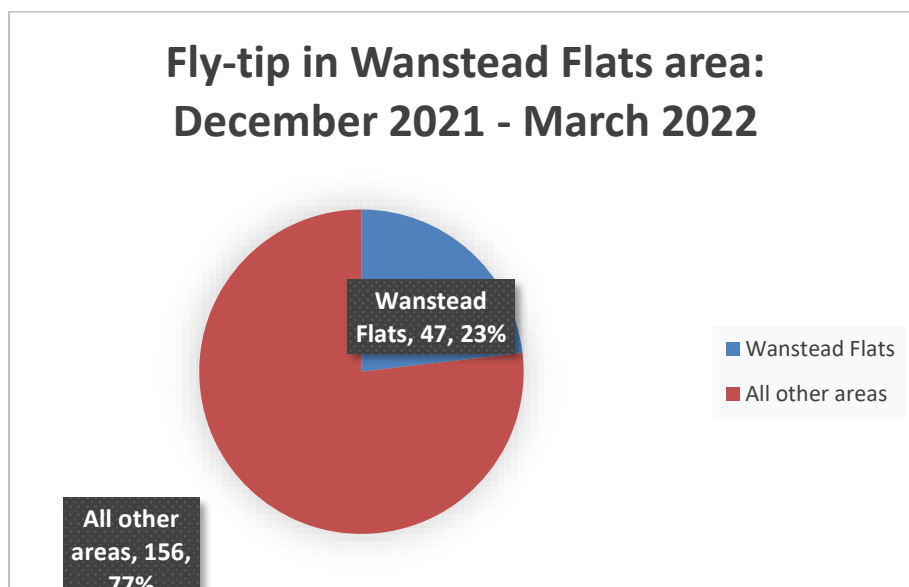
10. There was a total of 204 fly-tips recorded over the period of December 2021 – March 2022, this is a 31% increase over the same period in 2020. This may be due to the existing restrictions on household waste centres and other factors such as changes in household consumption, travel and leisure patterns.



11. Roadside locations represented 72% of the tip locations over the period.



12. Household waste represented the largest category of items tipped over the period at 80 (39%), while 'Other waste' (concrete, polystyrene, wires etc.) represented 29 tips (14%).



13. There were 47 fly-tips in the Wanstead Flats area over the period which represents 23% of all tips. 29 of these tips were on Forest Land adjacent to Highway Land on Capel Road.

Enforcement Activity

14. Five Prosecutions were undertaken during the period under report. A further five Reparative Cautions totalling £1,434 and one written warning were also issued.

Date	Defendant Name	Offence Accepted 33:Deposit 34:Duty of Care	Court Name	Costs Recovered
23/12/2021	SVENDSEN, Cheyenne	Byelaw 3 (36&39)	Chelmsford	Fine £200 Costs £200 V/S £34
25/01/2022	Alan Wilkinson	Sec 1 (1) Criminal Damage	Barkingside	Cost £800
03/03/2022	JURESCHI, Andrei Robert	EPA 33 1(a)	Chelmsford	Fine £576 costs £340 v/s £58
03/03/2022	NUNES. Tony	EPA 33 1(a)	Chelmsford	Fine £769 costs £340 v/s £77
22/03/2022	MENEZES DE CEITA, A	EPA 33 1(a)	Barkingside	6 months imprisonment suspended for 2 years. 220 hours unpaid work as directed by the Probation Service costs of £1813:00 Victim surcharge £128
Total Costs Awarded to Epping Forest (Including Compensation)			£3,493	

Licences

15. A total of 29 licences were issued during December 2021 and January 2022 and yielded £12,982.50 compared to 21 licences were issued during the same period in 2020/21 yielding an income of £7,254.50. During February and March 2022, 51 licences were issued generating £46,463.74 compared to 36 licences were issued during the same period in 2021 yielding an income of £38,618.

Unexplained Deaths

16. There have been three unexplained deaths reported over this period, with the Head Forest Keeper having lodged the Charity's interest with the coroner for attendance at Inquests in due course.

- 15/02/22 –Eagle Pond
- 14/03/22 –Wanstead Flats
- 30/03/22 –Knighton Woods

Rough Sleepers

17. There have been eight rough sleeper encampments located during the reporting period. All rough sleepers continue to be managed in partnership with Local Authorities through the No Second Night Out (NSNO) protocols.

- 02/12/21 – Deershelter Plain
- 23/12/21 – Loughton Camp
- 23/12/21 – Bush Road, E11
- 31/12/21 – Lower Forest
- 10/01/22 – Powells Forest, Buckhurst Hill
- 28/02/22 – Whipps Cross Road
- 15/03/22 – Aldersbrook Road, E12
- 21/03/22 – Aldersbrook Road, E12

18. In 2021, there were 46 reported cases of rough sleepers in comparison to 63 in 2020. Within this reporting period there have been eight reports of rough sleepers in comparison to 2021 where there were nine reported cases over the same period.

Unauthorised Occupations

19. There have been two reports of traveller incursions during this reporting period.

- 24/02/22 – B1393 junction with Woodside
- 15/03/22 – Capel Road

20. There have been no reported Unlicensed Music Events (UMEs) on Forest Land.

Dog Incidents

21. There has been one recorded dog-related incident during this reporting period:

- 02/02/22 – Blandford Crescent, E4. Report of an attack on a deer.

Deer Vehicle Collisions

22. Epping Forest staff dealt with a total of 15 deer vehicle collisions (DVC) during this reporting period:

- 30/12/21 – Bell Common by traffic lights
- 05/01/22 – Epping High Road
- 06/01/22 – West side of Epping New Road B1393
- 07/01/22 – Southbound A104 100m from Wake Valley car park
- 17/01/22 – Epping New Road B1393 north of Lodge Road

- 21/01/22 – Epping New Road approx. 100m north of Lodge Road
- 14/02/22 – Woodredon Hill
- 26/02/22 – Bell Common roadside
- 02/03/22 – Epping New Road B1393 by cricket club
- 02/03/22 – Chingford Golf Course, third hole
- 03/03/22 – Just off Robin Hood roundabout
- 23/03/22 – Epping Road B181 near Coopersale Road junction
- 29/03/22 – Roadside near Wake Valley car park
- 29/03/22 – Near Bell Common cricket ground entrance
- 30/03/22 – In the forest near Forest Side

23. A serious road traffic incident took place on 7 January on Woodgreen Road, between Upshire Road and Honey Lane (A121). A delivery van was in collision with two riders hacking towards Epping Forest on the public highway resulting in serious injury to both riders, together with fatal injuries to the horses which had to be put down. The Charity has made representations to the Highway Authority regarding speed restrictions and signage on Woodgreen Road.

Car Park Charging Scheme

24. Income from Phase I and II car parking charging schemes have continued to raise income for reinvestment in the Forest in line with projections.

	Hourly P&D Income** £	Permit Income £	Penalty Notices £
December	£26,119.48	£2,310.17	£1,899
January	£37,304.55	£3,753.77	£2,603.16
February	£23,172.97	£2,189.87	£1,637.64
March	£32,283.17	£1,684.20	£2,151.72

** Hourly P&D income includes income from the RingGo systems and car payment machines at High Beach (collected by Horizon).

Cumulative net income from the scheme currently stands at £379,812.84 as of 31 March 2022.

Heritage; Landscape and Nature Conservation

Climate Action Strategy

25. Natural Environment staff have worked in depth with Land Use Consultants on the feasibility study looking at the current and potential carbon sequestration land management opportunities offered by all Natural Environment Division sites. This work will be completed shortly.

26. Details on the potential Copped Hall Park sequestration, biodiversity and heritage restoration project continue to be developed including the production of an agronomy report assessing the condition of the land.

Agri-environment Schemes

27. In-house teams have worked on 435 veteran tree since the start of the grant in 2020 out of a projected total of 2,182, with 115 completed in January and February 2022 alone. The main habitat work will start with grass cutting in summer and volunteer groups continue to deliver contributing habitat work all year round with 20 tasks being undertaken by the Epping Forest Conservation Volunteers between December and March 2022.
28. The preparation for three further Countryside Stewardship applications for Wanstead Park, the second half of Epping Forest and the Buffer Lands are fully underway. To maximise grant income this work is being undertaken jointly between the Conservation, Operations and Visitors Services teams.

Grazing

29. Epping Forest hosted a workshop for the Animal Welfare Committee (AWC), which advises DEFRA on animal welfare matters, to help further the AWC's understanding of the practical use of collar containment technology. Epping Forest was chosen due to it being the first and longest running site using fenceless technology in the UK, and collectively across multiple Natural Environment Division sites. City of London officers have pioneered and disseminated practical knowledge of its use and implementation in conservation grazing management. Presentations and Q&A were given by staff from Epping Forest, Burnham Beeches and City Commons. The day included a site visit to see cattle winter grazing on the Forest and the handling and winter housing facilities at Great Gregories Yard.
30. An article published by the Observer and featured in the Guardian highlighted the benefits of technology in grazing management on the historic Landscape of Epping Forest.

Heritage

31. Dates for summer opening of The Temple, Wanstead Park, have been confirmed for May to September 2022. Free flow opening of Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge will recommence after COVID-19 constraints in April. Promotion of the Forest's two Iron Age hillforts will recommence via charged guided walks from April. See also sections on Wanstead Park below.

Forest Protection and planning matters

Town & Country Planning – Local Plans

32. **Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) Local Plan:** The Inspector's Report is now not likely to be available by the end of March as previously suggested. The Inspector is continuing to consider the responses to the main modification consultation, and her findings will be published in due course.
33. **London Borough of Waltham Forest (LBWF) Local Plan:** LBWF Local Plan Part 1: Examination in Public took place between the 15th and 23rd March. LBWF

at time of examination had still not completed documents covering Air Quality Mitigation Strategy and Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGS) for the lifetime of the plan. The Inspectors heard representations from the Epping Forest Charity and Natural England (NE), but sadly the Lee valley regional park were absent. The Inspectors have direct LWF Officer to continue their discussions with the Charity and NE regarding increasing the mitigation certainty in relation to the two outstanding strategies.

34. **London Borough of Enfield (LBE) Local Plan:** Consultation closed on 13 September 2021 at 11:59pm. The responses received are being analysed by the Local Planning Authority and used to inform the next stages of plan preparation.

Town & Country Planning – Development Control

35. In EFDC' area 7 objections were made, as follows:

- EPF210321 – Increase in parking provision at Sainsburys Depot Waltham Abbey
- EPF328221 – 38 Honey Lane, Waltham Abbey – 14 dwellings.
- EPF002822 – 140 High Street Epping – 20 dwellings.
- EPF005022 – 33-34 Fairlands Avenue, BHH – 2 dwellings (176m from SAC&SSSI)
- EPF296621 – 64-66 High Street, Epping – 2 dwellings (no amenity space)
- EPF033222 – Rosario, High Road, Thornwood – 62 dwellings (has created own amenity space but is in an area with minimal public green space).
- EPF/0236/22 - 76 Algers Road, Loughton – 6 dwellings – previously refused due to location of SAC.

NEXT Plc, Dowding Way – Appeal to Planning Inspectorate. Conservators have submitted further comment but will not be standing as Rule 6 Party.

Land Registration, Access Audit & Wayleaves

36. No further Land Registrations were made during the period.

Operations

Wanstead Park

37. Stone masons from London Stone Conservation commenced works on the restoration of the landing stage on the lake side of The Grotto at Wanstead Park. The Grade II Georgian Folly was added to the Heritage at Risk Register in in 2021. The works are being undertaken as part of a partnership with the Heritage of London Trust (HOLT) who have contributed £10,000 alongside a further £14,000 secured from the City Corporation's Central Funds Grant scheme. His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester as both Royal Patron of HOLT and Ranger of Epping Forest visited to see the Grotto works in progress on 6th April 2022.

38. The City Surveyor has organised improved storage facility for the rescued stonework from the deteriorating façade of the Grotto. An onsite store was constructed for the majority of the stonework with a more secure store established in a building nearby for the more 'distinctive' stones, typically older

'recycled' stonework with carved features. A new acquisition added to the store was the torso of the statue of Andromeda that was found while the stonemasons worked on the landing stage. The bottom half of the Andromeda statue is already on display in the Temple.

River Roding Habitat enhancement works

39. The London waterways charity Thames 21 ran habitat creation sessions during March with volunteers along the River Roding that runs alongside the eastern boundary with Wanstead Park. It involved the Epping Forest Arborist teams felling approximately 10 trees which would have otherwise been removed, instead they were levered into the river, and then secured in place by Thames 21 staff and volunteers over 6 sessions. The felled trees will provide greater flow diversity in the river and provide areas where young fish can shelter.

Queens Green Canopy

40. To mark Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum (70-year) Jubilee a Field Maple tree was planted on the meadow at Gifford Wood on 19 March. The tree was kindly supplied by a private sponsor of the Queens Greens Canopy (QGC) Mr Andrew Wigmore. The planting was undertaken in association with Royal Commonwealth Society with who the Charity will planting a Commonwealth Grove later this year as part of the City Corporation's support for the QGC celebrations.

Wanstead Flats

41. Grassland team and Contractors completed the clearance of overmature broom across parts of Wanstead Flats that had been damaged by the fire of 2018. The broom being highly flammable was an increasing fire risk and its clearance was part of the decarbonisation component of the wildfire management program on the Flats.
42. The fenced skylark protection area was repaired and reinstated for a second year following its success in 2021. The short life span of the plastic netting means that it is likely that it will need replacing if we are to continue with the fencing of protection areas. Local volunteers from the WREN group have helped considerably in repairing the fence and undertaking information sessions about the skylarks

Insurance works

43. Following notification of householder claims in Woodford, tree root barriers have been installed along the boundary of three adjacent residences identified as having tree related subsidence. The installation of these have helped safeguard a significant old oak tree and reduced the risk of further subsidence claims from the properties concerned. The root barrier installation should last indefinitely and is intended to reduce the City Corporation's liability for future subsidence damage claims.

Risk Management Works

44. Tree Safety: There is still a significant backlog in completing notified tree safety works due to continuing staffing recruitment constraints. In March, contractors were appointed to help progress higher priority works alongside the busier roads and to undertake dead elm clearance along the Crooked Mile (B194), which was a difficult task requiring traffic management along a particularly fast narrow road.

The necessity of increasing the focus on reducing the backlog will reduce the time available for wider project work by the arborist team.

Access Works

45. During the 'quiet' winter period when grass growth is restricted by low temperatures, the EF grassland team have visited all the main entrances to the Forest and have undertaken woody vegetation management to open these up and improve sightlines. The team have also cut back woody vegetation along the Knighton Wood all ability trail to restore the route to more open accessible conditions.
46. Work has started on the installation of the new waymarked trail based on Golding Hill Pond. The trail has been sponsored by Hasslers in Loughton and is scheduled for completion at the end of April. The initial works involved opening the new route and installing waymarking signage.

Visitor Services

Learning and Education

Field Studies Council

Month	Visitor Numbers - primary and secondary schools - community groups and activities - adult learning
Jan 2022	395
Feb 2022	855
Mar 2022	1,535

47. The Field Studies Council High Beach centre continues to deliver successful primary and secondary school geography and science trips, community activities for families and youth groups and a natural history programme for adults. Following a reduction in numbers in 2020/2021 due to COVID-19, 2022 bookings are now looking more positive, though are yet to reach pre-pandemic levels.

Chingford Golf Course

48. Total income generated from green fees and shop related sales amounted to £42,919.00 for December, January, February & March compared to £16,518.00 in 2021, an increase of £26,401. This was largely due to closure in January, February and majority of March last year where play was restricted during the third National Lockdown.
49. Online bookings, on the course's dedicated website, increased this financial year compared to the previous year by £15,010. The golf course is now rated number one for online bookings on GolfNow within Essex - out of 53 courses. In the first quarter of 2022, Chingford Golf Course was seven times higher than the average across the county for online bookings.
50. Ground staff have been carrying out regular cutting requirements when the weather allowed to tee, fairways, rough, aprons and greens in order to keep the

course set up for play. A new drain alongside the 12th tee was installed helping to prevent the turf from flooding in wetter months. Two tees were rebuilt on hole 12 & 18 along with adding new irrigation to help produce better quality playing surfaces for visitors. The greens were treated 3 times with turf hardener to help prevent any winter disease. Tree pruning work was carried out on every hole to help staff when operating machinery when out cutting along with pace of play for visitors. New tee information signs were added on every hole along with new directional signage out on the course to help direct new visitors around.

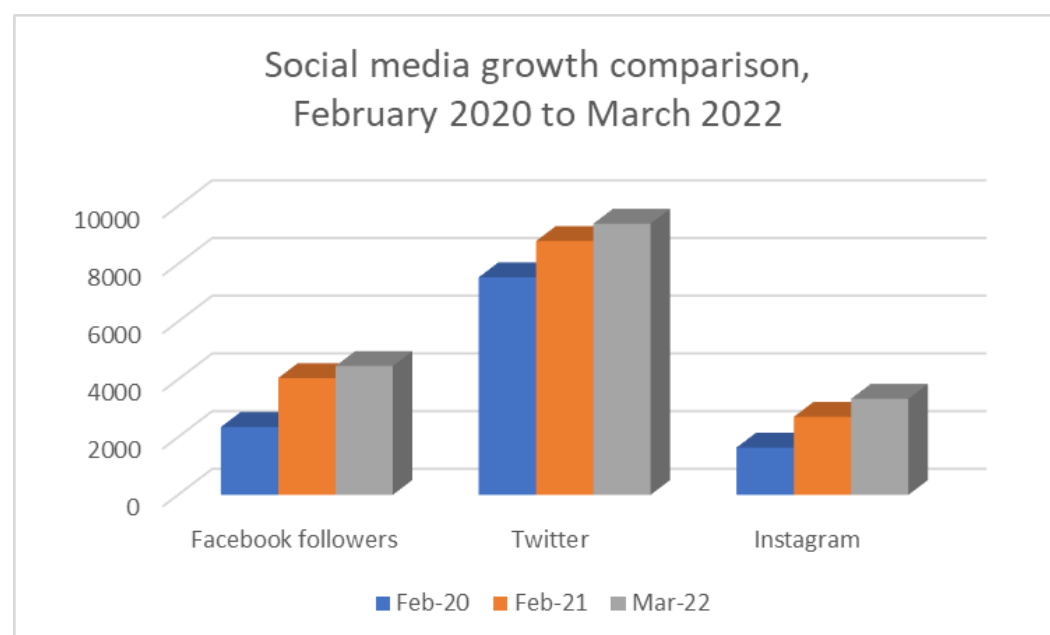
51. The pond in front of the 10th tee was cleared of reeds which were blocking visibility for golfers when playing the hole. The bridge between the 10th and 17th holes which allows machinery to get across was fully repaired removing the old rotten sleepers and replacing with new ones. All tee renovations were completed in March to help kick start growth before the start of the season. A further 9 sprinklers were replaced with newer efficient ones, which help deliver water to wider areas than before. Two new pedestrian hand mowers were purchased to allow staff to continue to cut greens throughout the winter months when ride on mowers cannot get out due to ground conditions. A set of Dyna-cores were purchased which will help staff carry out green renovations for future without causing too much disruption. Lastly, a greens roller was purchased to help increase the quality of the putting surfaces.

Communications

52. As of 7 April 2022, Epping Forest social media following is:

- Twitter followers: 9,396 (an increase of 7%)
- Facebook likes: 3,975 (an increase of 9%)
- Facebook followers: 4,463 (an increase of 10%)
- Instagram followers: 3,329 (an increase of 23%)

53. The chart shows a comparison of our social media followers at the same point in 2020 and 2021:



54. Top posts on social media for December 2021

- Twitter (4,332 engagements) Merry Christmas message.
- Facebook: (2,904 reach) request for charity donations, unfortunately receiving a backlash re. car park charges.
- Instagram: (160 likes) an image of the ancient oak at Warren Pond with a message re. numbers of veteran trees in Epping Forest.

55. Top posts on social media for January 2022:

- Twitter (8,569 impressions): a call to action for help investigating shocking cooking oil container fly tip.
- Facebook: (Reach of 7,205) a call to action for help investigating shocking cooking oil container fly tip.
- Instagram: (187 likes) pollarding work at Bury Wood.

56. Top posts on social media for February 2022:

- Twitter (5,653 impressions): information on Storm Eunice clean-up operation.
- Facebook (4,227 impressions): warning message re. Storm Eunice
- Instagram (189 likes): image of Hawk Wood & message re. beauty of Forest despite bleak weather.

57. Top posts on social media for March 2022:

- Twitter (3,572 impressions): clarification message on relating to walking dogs in Epping Forest.
- Facebook (4,523 impressions): information on works at the Grotto in Wanstead Park
- Instagram (266 likes – a new record high for Instagram likes): photograph of thick beech tree trunk on the new Golden Trail in Loughton.

58. Forest Focus continues to be distributed digitally each month, with positive feedback received and website updates included a review of the 'Where to go' page.

59. Three new interpretation and orientation signs for Wanstead Park was completed and the signs were installed.

Wanstead Flats

60. A total of 456 matches were played across the flats between December to March. The first half of the football season was stopped a week early before the Christmas break due to staff being on sick leave, a week extension to the second half of the season has been added. Ground staff repainted Capel Road pavilion in November to cover up further graffiti damage. General pitch repairs and line marking along with chain harrowing was carried to the pitches ready for play. Weekly deep cleaning of the pavilions was carried out ready for weekend visitors.

61. Two new lithium battery powered line makers arrived in March helping the team carry out weekly line marking tasks with the extended battery time span and the installation of the defibrillator and cabinet was completed at Aldersbrook Road. Unfortunately, Capel Road pavilion suffered a break in via the back emergency fire door and stole all scrap metal down to wiring.

62. Parkrun attracted 3244 runners in December, January, February & March with an average of 11 volunteers helping each week.

Horse Riding

63. Total income from horse riding licences for December, January, February and March amounted to £428.11 compared to £489.03 the previous year.

Visitor Numbers

64. Visitor numbers for the period are shown in the Table below:

Visitor Numbers	QEHL 2021/2022	2020/2021	View 2021/2022	2020/2021	Temple 2021/2022	2020/2021	High Beach 2021/2022	2020/2021	Total 2021/2022	Total 2020/2021
December	28	0	1448	434	0	0	264	n/a	17502	434
January	51	0	1459	0	0	0	711	0	2221	0
February	50	0	976	0	0	0	375	0	1401	0
March	56	0	1671	0	0	0	N/A	0	1727	0

65. Visitor Figures remain low compared to pre-2020 figures. Reduced numbers in February 2022, may be the result of poor weather across the month. This is also reflected in car park figures, with a drop of over 5,000 transactions in February compared to January, indicating a seasonal decrease in visitation rather than a specific decline in visitor centre visitation.

66. The View hosted two exhibitions by local artists during this period, *The Birds and Bees* by Anna Alcock and *A walk in the woods* By Alison Chaplin.

Projects

Wanstead Park Ponds

67. The outcome from the Ornamental Water and River Roding interaction study was that the dam structures would remain safe unless there was a rare and prolonged dry period event of 18 months or more which could cause the clay in the dams to crack.

68. The next stage of work in the evaluation process is to tender a water balance assessment of the lake system, with a deadline for mid-April. This will seek to

establish the water demand required to maintain a range of levels within the lakes. The variety of levels will focus on the minimum needed to ensure the dam structures remain sufficiently wet for an over an 18-month dry period and seek to quantify and prioritise the water balance interventions to maintain this level.

69. The Mayor of London has awarded Epping Forest £40,000 *Green Resilient Spaces* development funding to look at the feasibility of a Sustainable Urban Drainage Scheme (SUDS) at Wanstead Park. This is taking forward the Wanstead Wetland proposal to enhance habitat but also use more sustainable sources of water to improve water levels in the lakes.

Birch Hall Park Pond

70. The works to the pond have been tendered out, and returned tenders scored. A winning contractor has been selected. Approval to award the contract is now being sought.

Wanstead Flats Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs)

71. The Wanstead Flats AGP's project, designed to eliminate the current football subsidy, has been re-started after a lengthy hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, through the Football Foundation's Parklife project.
72. Ahead of public consultation, the Project Board met in March 2022 to discuss the steps required to bring back cost certainty given the elapsed time and escalating costs of construction projects.
73. Officers are seeking to appoint an architect and quantity surveyor to refresh the project costs and assist with pre-planning advice discussions with London Borough of Redbridge.

Cycle Stand Installation

74. TfL awarded a grant worth £9,000 for the installation of cycle stands in the LB Waltham Forest and LB Redbridge areas of Epping Forest. The London Cycling Campaign and other cycle groups were consulted on the locations of the stands. In total 73 individual stands have been installed across the Forest at 32 locations. A map of the locations will be available on the City of London website. The racks are part of works to encourage more sustainable visiting and as well as being installed at typical destination such as tea huts they are also installed at locations to provide secure locking facilities for people wishing to cycle to different part of the Forest.

Major Incident

75. There were no major incidents during the period of reporting.

Paul Thomson

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Committee(s): Epping Forest Consultative Epping Forest and Commons	Dated: 09/02/2022 09/05/2022
Subject: Natural Environment Epping Forest Forward Agenda Plan 2022 (SEF 12/22b)	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	n/a
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	£
What is the source of Funding?	
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	Y/N
Report of: Juliemma McLoughlin, Executive Director, Environment	For Information
Report author: Paul Thomson, Epping Forest	

Summary

In order to help guide members expectations regarding the content of each Committee Agenda and to facilitate improved engagement with the Committee Report process, the Chairman has requested that an Epping Forest Agenda Plan covering the next six meetings of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee is published as part of each Committee Agenda.

A similar plan will be provided to the Epping Forest Consultative Committee with the intention of providing the potential for the Consultative Committee by agreement to request a report to each Committee on a subject not addressed through the forward Agenda Plan.

Recommendation(s)

Consultative Committee Members are asked to

- note the report
- consider proposals for Committee Reports of interest to the Consultative Committee in addition to those outlined on the Agenda Plan

Background

1. The business of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee is currently managed through an internal Agenda Planning process which coordinates the production of Committee Reports by Epping Forest Officers alongside reports provided by Chamberlains, City Surveyors and Town Clerks Departments.

2. The Strategy and Management Plan for Epping Forest 2020-2030 approved by your Committee on 18 November 2019 also includes a timetable for the production of additional Policy and Strategy documents for Committee consideration proposed over the next three years.

Current Position

3. Given the size and complexity of Epping Forest, the administration of Forest business often governs the majority of the agenda and limits time for the discussion of matters associated with The Commons. Members have also raised concerns about the volume of business, size of reports and attachments and the regular need to exceed the two hours normally allotted for Committee business.
4. The Agenda Plan is designed to help regulate the overall number of Committee Reports considered by each bimonthly Committee and to provide the opportunity for members of both the Service and Consultative Committees to make reasonable requests for additional reports to address matters of policy, risk, and funding.

Options

5. The provision of an Agenda Plan is seen as a helpful guide to future Committee business which will endeavour to regulate the overall flow of Committee Reports to enable business to be properly discussed and enacted within the two-hour time period allotted to the Committee. **This option is recommended.**

Proposals

6. That a Committee Agenda Plan for the forthcoming next six Committees is provided as part of each Committee Agenda with the intention of managing the Committee's overall workload to facilitate reasonable debate and decision making within the two hours' time allotted for Committee business.
7. The Agenda plan should also allow Service Committee and Consultative Committee Members to request subject to Officer capacity a reasonable level of additional reports to address matters of general interest and concern.

Corporate and Strategic Implications

8. Financial – no implications
9. Legal – Standing Orders provide the Committee Chairman with the opportunity to request Officers to bring forward reports on matters of concern.

Conclusion

10. The publication of a regularly updated Epping Forest forward Agenda Plan as part of each Committee Agenda should help to manage future business ensuring that the consideration of items is conducted within the two hours allotted to the

Committee, while regulating the overall volume of business presented for consideration. The process should also allow, subject to officer capacity, requests for additional reports to address matters of general interest and concern.

Appendix

Committee Agenda Plan – March 2022 – January 2023

Paul Thomson

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APPENDIX 1 - Updated 29.04.22	
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT - EPPING FOREST FORWARD AGENDA PLAN March 2022 - January 2023	
March EF&CC	
NO MARCH COMMITTEE	
May EF&CC	
Epping Forest - Superintendent's Update for December 2021 to March 2022	DMT
Epping Forest Work Programme 2022/2023	GS
Rent Reviews	TV
Epping Forest Car Park Charging Phase 3	JE
Platinum Jubilee Celebrations 1952-2022 Queen's Green Canopy – Proposed Tree Planting Project	GS
Natural Environment Epping Forest Forward Agenda Plan 2022	PAT
Application to Natural England for recognition as a National Nature Reserve.	PAT
Cyclical Works Programme Bid (was Provisional Additional Works Programme)	City Surveyor
June EF-CC	
Assistant Director Update	DMT
Copped Hall Proposals	SG
CSS Application Preview - BL/WP/EF	SG
July EF&CC	
Assistant Director Update	DMT
Copped Hall Proposals	SG
CSS Application Preview - BL/WP/EF	SG
Annual Review of Access Restrictions	PAT
Gateway 2 Path Repair Project	GS
Deer Management on Buffer Lands	MN
Open Spaces Departmental Business Plan - YEAR END PERFORMANCE REPORT	NED
Capel Road - Leasing	TV
Loughton Golf Course - Leasing	TV
Historic Encroachment	TV
Revenue Outturn	Chamberlain/NED
EF and the Commons Risk Management	NED
September EF&CC	
Assistant Director Update	DMT
Parklife	JE/LL
Open Spaces Risk Register	NED
EF Trustee's Annual Report and Financial Statements	Chamberlain
October EF-CC	
Superintendent's Update	DMT
Buffer Lands PDN	
Forest Furniture PDN	GS
Sustainable Visitor Strategy	JE
Litter and Waste Management Strategy	MN
Epping Forest Annual Review	JE
Tree Safety PDN	GS
Wayleaves Policy	PAT
November EF&CC	
Assistant Director Update	DMT
Wayleaves Policy	PAT
Charity Accounts (Burnham Beeches & Stoke Common, City Commons, Epping Forest)	Chamberlain
Revised Estimates	Chamberlain
January EF&CC	
Assistant Director Update	DMT
Natural Department Business Plan - Six month Performance Update: April to September 22/23	Chamberlain/NED
Epping Forest and Commons Committee 2023 Dates	TC's
Natural Department Business Plan 2022/23	NED
Licences, Sports, Wayleaves and Produce Fees and Charges	JE

Committee(s)	Dated: 9 May 2022
Committee name – Epping Forest & Commons Committee	
Subject: Assistant Director's update for The Commons including annual report of PSPO incidents.	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly? Contribute to a flourishing society Shape outstanding environments	1,2,3,4 10,11,12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	NO
If so, how much?	£ N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	Y/N N/A
Report of Juliemma McLoughlin, Executive Director Environment	For Information
Report author: Andy Barnard, Assistant Director, The Commons, Environment Department	

Summary

This report provides a general update on issues across the nine sites within 'The Commons' division that may be of interest to members and is supplementary to the monthly email updates.

Recommendations

Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

Main Report

Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common

1. In the early part of the reporting period the volunteer groups continued with scrub clearance targeting the north common (Stoke Common) and around Sir Henry Peeks Drive and the Stag car park (Burnham Beeches). They have also cleared scrub and small trees from the southern edge of Middle Pond and continued with wood pasture restoration. More recently work has shifted to the summer work programme of site maintenance – including path repair works, installation of earth bunds to protect areas from vehicles and creation of a wildlife garden at the information point and café.

2. The Eco-volunteer Group has been carrying out fieldwork to evaluate the impact of deer and livestock browsing on the woody plants in the Beeches. While doing this they are also recording the amount of trampling pressure by visitors in the plots.
3. The annual reptile survey has started at Stoke Common. Co-ordinated by staff this relies on substantial volunteer hours to check all the sheets regularly during the survey period of April – May.
4. The ponies have finished grazing the west area of Stoke Common and are now grazing off site at their winter quarters at Teikyo School. The farrier has trimmed their feet and they have had their annual flu injections. The cattle from the Beeches are still in their winter quarters. Fence inspections have started, ready for the livestock to return to the Beeches later in the spring.
5. The big winter project this year was the veteran tree work. Burnham Beeches staff were assisted by contractors and the Hampstead Heath tree team. In total they did ground clearance of around 18 trees, high clearance around 19 and 59 were cut. Cutting and high clearance involves a mixture of techniques, climbing, use of an access platform or cutting with a pole saw from the ground.
6. In addition to the above, two areas of wood pasture restoration were completed by staff. 75 young pollard trees were cut on rotation for the 2nd or 3rd time and volunteers and contractors carried out fencing repair work ahead of the grazing season along with testing of invisible fences.
7. Extensive work has been carried out on the tree safety programme following inspections, ensuring that trees along highways and areas where visitors congregate are safe. The aftermath of storm Eunice also required additional work. While a sizeable number of trees were brought down by the storm, none of the veteran pollards were affected.
8. The replacement of the outflow to Middle Pond has been completed by engineering contractors. The leak in the dam has been mended by removing old pipework within the dam wall and the failing concrete at the outflow replaced by clay and special interlocking bricks. The pipe carrying water through the dam to the new outflow was also replaced. This work was funded as an additional project by the City Surveyor costing approximately £130,000.
9. The apprentice has been attending college and has also started preparing for a major overhaul of site boardwalks this summer by ordering materials and planning works. He is also carrying out a systematic survey of the reptiles in Burnham Beeches.

10. As part of the ongoing partnership with The Beacons of the Past Heritage Lottery Fund project a second public archaeological excavation of one of the woodland banks in the Beeches has started. The location this time is in the Egypt wood area and we hope to establish the age of the bank and its connection to Sevenways Plain Hillfort. The hillforts project has also commissioned some virtual reality interpretation and mini management plans for the hillfort and other historic features in the Beeches. Finally, a public open day and iron age event was held at the end of April to highlight the importance of the hillfort and interpret it and the lives of the people who lived there to visitors.
11. A PhD student from Reading University sieved buckets of gravel from the quarry in Burnham Beeches looking for signs of early man in the Thames valley. She was delighted to find worked neolithic flint.
12. A survey of the bog moss species in Burnham Beeches was carried out, partly as a training session for volunteers and staff. 12 species were recorded, and one, found last summer, was confirmed as present, the first record for over 40 years. The rarest species, *Sphagnum medium*, was found in several locations and is thriving.
13. The results from a survey of the true bugs on Stoke Common last year have been received. The entomologist recorded 283 species, the highest he has ever found in an equivalent two-day survey. Several scarce and threatened species were found including a rare weevil and the small chocolate tip moth. The most important habitats were found to be the 'draw down' zones of the ponds and areas of young birch scrub. Our management to encourage a mosaic of habitats seems to be ideal for most of the species recorded.
14. All the reports have been received from the biodiversity survey work carried out on neighbouring land as part of the landscape scale project. The final 'synthesis' report is being prepared by Plantlife.
15. Events have included a half term trail and an Easter trail, with easter egg prizes for completion. The latter was so popular fresh supplies of eggs had to be found after the first weekend! A 2hr afternoon drop-in session with one of the rangers talking about reptiles & amphibians was popular too, with 150 people attending and raising approximately £450 to support the annual work programme.
16. A meeting concerning the impact of potential recreation impacts from a big development in Slough was attended. Hosted by Natural England, Slough Borough Council agreed to upgrade one of the larger parks in the Borough to

Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) status, but we are still awaiting more details and plans.

PARTNERSHIPS

Kenley Revival update

17. The project has now finished and signed off by Lottery Heritage Fund. A Gateway 6 completion report is being prepared for consideration by this committee in July.

The West Wickham and Coulsdon Commons

18. The Sussex cows have been turned out of the barn at Merlewood and are now grazing the Woodplace Farm Fields on Farthing Downs. It was a successful year for calving with 17 new calves born between early January and April. After identifying a deficiency in their diet that caused abnormalities in calving last year, slow-release boluses were given to the cows which eliminated any problems this year.
19. Lambing has started with three sets of twins already born since 16 April. This is expected to last for a few weeks and rangers have been carrying out regular checks throughout the day and night. Once born, the ewes and lambs will be kept in secure paddocks until they can safely graze the Commons without risk of dog attacks.
20. A new Sussex bull has been purchased from the local Titsey Estate in Warlingham to continue the breeding programme and to ensure the right temperament and characteristics in the herd are retained. Since early April, the bull has been running with the cows in the Woodplace Farm fields on Farthing Downs.
21. After a 2-year hiatus due to Coronavirus restrictions on public events, we held our popular 'Meet the Calves' event in April at the Merlewood Estate Yard. This is usually the first chance for members of the public to see the newborn calves and provided us with a chance to share information about the benefits of conservation grazing. Over 150 people attended the 3-hour open house event. Continuing with tradition, we held a competition to name the bull, with Ferdinand being the most popular choice amongst staff.
22. New stock-proof fencing has been installed to extend the grazing compartment along Whyteleafe Bank at Kenley Common. Volunteers and rangers carried out extensive scrub removal in this area several years ago. This will now be grazed to improve the diversity of wildflowers and expand what is one of the best examples of chalk grassland habitat in the local area.

23. We have been trialling a project on Farthing Downs to help protect threatened skylarks. Skylark populations have rapidly declined in the past decade and there are now only a handful of sites with breeding populations in South London. Temporary electric fencing has been put in place along an area of the Farthing Downs ridge to prevent disturbance from dogs and other human activities during the nesting season between March and September. The project has helped to raise awareness about skylark and other ground nesting birds. Rangers and volunteers have been closely monitoring skylark activity around the area to identify if this is having an impact on nesting behaviour.
24. The small herd of heifers that have been grazing multiple sites throughout the winter have been continuing to use the NoFence collars. This has allowed us to target and refine grazing in the areas where it is most needed including sections of thicker vegetation on Farthing Downs and areas recently cleared on Bunker Bank, Kenley Common to help reduce scrub growth and remove excess nutrients.
25. Volunteers have been assisting rangers across the Coulsdon and West Wickham Commons including actions to remove encroaching scrub on Hilltop, Kenley Common for the benefit of chalk grassland wildflowers as well as hedge laying at Spring Park and Farthing Downs. Riddlesdown volunteers have been making use of material from winter coppicing to produce charcoal. Volunteers on Coulsdon Common have been continuing with hazel coppicing.
26. After Storm Eunice and multiple storms that followed in short succession during February and March, the rangers have been dealing with extensive damage to the stock of trees across the Commons. Contractors were brought in to remove or reduce dangerous trees following safety checks across high and medium risk areas. Despite the damage, there were far fewer trees brought down than might have been expected suggesting that the routine tree safety checks and subsequent work carried out is having a positive effect.
27. There are events planned throughout spring and summer focusing on ecology, heritage and livestock including popular bat, bird and wildflower walks. These events will be linked to a wider 'Festival of National Nature Reserves' held between May and October and led by Natural England to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the first designated reserve in the country.
28. The Commons Twitter profile has reached a milestone 2000 followers, the majority of which were gained during lockdown. There is a strong presence of regular posters sharing their photos of the Commons and local wildlife.
29. There has been a marked decrease in the number of incidents of anti-social behaviour requiring a response from the rangers and affecting local residents

and visitors. Similarly, the changes made to the car parks has reduced the number of cars being locked in overnight and emergency callouts for rangers working late shifts or on call.

30. The Jacob sheep have been grazing a small area close to Riddlesdown owned and managed by the London Wildlife Trust as part of a long-term ambition to reduce dense-growing dog wood and improve conditions for invertebrates in a chalk-grassland glade. A small ceremony marked the first time the site had been grazed in its 23-year history. As well as loaning the sheep for a brief time, rangers have been providing advice on stock-proof fencing, establishing a route to the isolated glade, and finding ways to connect habitats between the two landowners.
31. A new residential tenant has occupied 90 Kenley Lane and Farthing Downs Barn is now occupied as a business let. Income from both properties forms part of our annual income targets subsequent to the recent budget cuts.

Ashtead Common

32. Payment rates for Countryside Stewardship were adjusted in Ashtead Common's favour between the point of application and the start of the scheme. This means that the grant award is potentially worth up to £30,000 a year, rather than the £20,000 originally anticipated.
33. The winter work programme was completed successfully, including crown work on 31 ancient oaks, scrub management and tree safety tasks.
34. The Common recorded over 6,000 hours of volunteer involvement; a pre-covid level of voluntary contributions.
35. One member of the team has been off work since Christmas, and because Ashtead has a very small team, this has put pressure on the remaining members of staff. However, authority has been given to appoint another apprentice and the TOM Phase 1 process has created a new Assistant Ranger post. Both will be recruited as soon as possible.

Incidents

Burnham Beeches & Stoke Common

36. There were 17 incidents during the period. These included five fly tipping related incidents. Four of these were relatively small-scale household dumping, the fifth was the remains of a cannabis farm and material was collected by the police. The rest were a mix of vandalism (x3), dog and general site misuse related.

Ashtead Common

37. A runner fell in January and needed first aid and transport from site. Rangers assisted.
38. Two incidents occurred on April 21. Rangers were investigating a sewerage spill in the Howards Wood area of Ashtead Common when an incident occurred nearby at Lady Howards (railway) Crossing. A woman was hit by a train and sadly died at the scene. Rangers assisted access for the emergency services.

The West Wickham and Coulsdon Commons

39. There were 4 incidents during the period. These included an abandoned pony found on Coulsdon Common, a dog chasing sheep and a small bonfire found by the roadside on Farthing Downs
40. A van parked overnight had caused damage to the car park barrier at Farthing Downs. The damage was rectified by the owner of the vehicle thanks to the ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) system.

Filming, major events and other activities.

Burnham Beeches

41. A large Disney film has started setting up in Burnham Beeches ready for filming in a few weeks' time.

Annual report of activity in relation to Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPO) at Burnham Beeches.

42. The existing 5 PSPOs made in 2017 were extended, following all necessary public consultation and the decision of this Committee in September 2020, for a further 3 years in December 2020. The result of the consultation is summarised below.

Order 1 - 100% support to extend the PSPO for a further three years
Order 2 – 94% support to extend the PSPO for a further three years
Order 3 – 100% support to extend the PSPO for a further three years
Order 4 - 100% support to extend the PSPO for a further three years
Order 5 – 100% support to extend the PSPO for a further three years

43. Table 1 below shows annualised PSPO (and previous Dog Control Order) incidents dealt with at Burnham Beeches since 2015/16.

Table 1

Incidents detail	15/ 16	16/ 17	17/ 18	18/ 19	19/ 20	20/ 21	2021/ 22
Order 1 - Fouling	11	11	7	7	3	7	7
Order 2 - Dogs off lead in the on-lead area	453	329	285	264	213	524	286

Order 3 - Dogs not under effective control in the off-lead area	46	30	27	16	19	27	16
Order 4 - Dogs taken into the dog free area	4	16	15	1	7	1	9
Order 5 - More than 4 dogs/person	3	0	0	2	1	1	0
Total DCO/PSPO incidents	517	386	334	290	243	560	318
Number of incidents resulting in a formal report/investigation	8	15	15	16	14	16	8
Number of formal written warnings issued	2	8	9	10	10	7	3
Number of FPN issued	0	0	0	4	0	1	1
Number of prosecutions	0	0*	1*	0	1**	0	0

Incident occurred in 16/17 – prosecution through magistrate court 2017/18

** Incident occurred in 18/19 prosecution through magistrate court 2019/20

2019/20 visitor numbers estimate - approximately 488000 people visits/annum

2021/22 visitor numbers estimate – approximately 805,000 – 1,019000

44. Following the remarkably high visitor levels in 2020/21 – visitor numbers began to return to more normal levels from the end of April 2021 as covid restrictions were progressively eased, though remained higher than average at times
45. Until 2020/21 there had been a steady decrease in the total number of PSPO incidents dealt with, year on year. In 2021/22 that general pattern of positive decline has returned in many areas. The exceptions were the number of incidents of dogs being walked off lead in the on-lead area, and those taken into the small dog free area at the cafe –though in this latter case numbers are still small. Whilst the number of dogs off lead in the on-lead area was much lower than in 2020/21 it is still higher than 2019/20. This higher level of dogs off lead in the early part of the year was undoubtedly caused higher levels of new visitors not familiar with the National Nature Reserve.
46. The number of incidents requiring a more formal report/investigation in 2021/22 was at it joint lowest (8) and just one Fixed Penalty Notice was issued and paid.
47. The approved PSPO and preceding DCO enforcement protocols made it clear that when enforcing the Orders, the City will not take a zero-tolerance approach to DCO/PSPO breaches. This means that in many incidents the person concerned is asked to put the matter right, clean up after their dog, put it on lead, remove it from the dog free area, and if they comply no further action is taken beyond logging of the incident detail. As a result, most incidents dealt with require no more than visitors being given information and or guidance by the Ranger team. However, where a breach is by someone who is well aware of the rules, a repeat offender, or where the person is unable or unwilling to put the

matter right these will result in more formal investigation and action including final written warning and or FPN/ prosecution.

48. The figures this year, reflect that most breaches of the PSPO were not deliberate or repeat offences and were simply dealt with my explanation and information by the Ranger team.

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