



Epping Forest & Commons Committee

Date: MONDAY, 8 MARCH 2021
Time: 11.00 am
Venue: VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETING (ACCESSIBLE REMOTELY)

Members: Graeme Doshi-Smith (Chairman)
Benjamin Murphy (Deputy Chairman)
Deputy Philip Woodhouse
Peter Bennett
Caroline Haines
Alderman Robert Howard
Alderman Robert Hughes-Penney
Gregory Lawrence
Sylvia Moys
Jeremy Simons
Oliver Sells QC (Ex-Officio Member)

For consideration of Business Relating to Epping Forest Only

Verderer Michael Chapman DL
Verderer Paul Morris
Verderer Nicholas Munday
Verderer H.H William Kennedy

Enquiries: Richard Holt
Richard.Holt@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Accessing the virtual public meeting

Members of the public can observe the virtual public meeting at the below link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=08eMEajG9gg&feature=youtu.be>

This meeting will be a virtual meeting and therefore will not take place in a physical location following regulations made under Section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020. A recording of the public meeting will be available via the above link following the end of the public meeting for up to one municipal year. Please note: Online meeting recordings do not constitute the formal minutes of the meeting; minutes are written and are available on the City of London Corporation's website. Recordings may be edited, at the discretion of the proper officer, to remove any inappropriate material.

John Barradell
Town Clerk and Chief Executive

AGENDA

Part 1 - Public Agenda

1. APOLOGIES

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

3. MINUTES

To agree the minutes of the previous meeting of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee held on the 18th of January 2021.

For Decision
(Pages 1 - 8)

4. EPPING FOREST AND COMMONS COMMITTEE 2021 DATES

Report of the Town Clerk.

For Information
(Pages 9 - 10)

5. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Report of the Town Clerk.

For Decision
(Pages 11 - 14)

Epping Forest

6. DRAFT MINUTES EPPING FOREST CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

To note the draft minutes of the Epping Forest Consultative Committee meeting held on the 10th of February 2021.

For Information
(Pages 15 - 20)

7. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

Report of the Director of Open Spaces.

For Information
(Pages 21 - 38)

8. REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR EPPING FOREST CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (SEF 06/21)

Report of the Director of Open Spaces.

For Decision
(Pages 39 - 48)

9. EPPING FOREST CAR PARKING - ADDITIONAL TARIFF OPTIONS AND CONSULTATION FEEDBACK (SEF 12/21)

Report of the Director of Open Spaces.

For Decision
(Pages 49 - 76)

10. EPPING FOREST CYCLING MANAGEMENT STRATEGY (SEF 25/20B)

Report of the Director of Open Spaces.

For Decision
(Pages 77 - 96)

11. CLIMATE ACTION STRATEGY - OPEN SPACES "CARBON REMOVALS" (SEF 10/21B)

Report of the Director of Open Spaces.

For Information
(Pages 97 - 106)

12. DEER MANAGEMENT STRATEGY (SEF 07/21B)

Report of the Director of Open Spaces.

For Decision
(Pages 107 - 158)

13. HIGH BEACH INDIVIDUAL SITE PLAN (SEF 08/21B)

Report of the Director of Open Spaces.

For Decision
(Pages 159 - 212)

14. WANSTEAD PARK: WETLAND IMPROVEMENT PROPOSALS (SEF 09/21B)

Report of the Director of Open Spaces.

For Decision
(Pages 213 - 218)

15. 2019 COUNTRYSIDE STEWARDSHIP GRANT APPLICATION - AMENDED AGREEMENT 2021 (SEF 13/21)

Report of the Director of Open Spaces.

For Decision
(Pages 219 - 226)

16. EPPING FOREST DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN: SAC MITIGATION PROGRESS (SEF 14/21)

Report of the Director of Open Spaces.

To follow.

17. LONDON BOROUGH OF WALTHAM FOREST LOCAL PLAN UPDATE (SEF 15/21)

Report of the Director of Open Spaces.

For Information
(Pages 227 - 246)

Burnham Beeches & The Commons

18. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

Report of the Director of Open Spaces.

For Information
(Pages 247 - 254)

19. LETTING OF THE KEEPERS COTTAGE, KENLEY

Report of the Director of Open Spaces.

For Decision
(Pages 255 - 262)

20. ASHTEAD COMMON, WEST WICKHAM AND SPRING PARK DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLANS AND PUBLIC CONSULTATION RESULTS

Report of the Director of Open Spaces.

For Decision
(Pages 263 - 454)

21. ASHTEAD COMMON TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

Joint report of the Chamberlain and Director of Open Spaces.

For Information
(Pages 455 - 490)

22. BURNHAM BEECHES AND STOKE COMMON TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

Joint report of the Chamberlain and Director of Open Spaces.

For Information
(Pages 491 - 526)

23. WEST WICKHAM COMMON AND SPRING PARK WOOD, COULSDON AND OTHER COMMONS TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

Joint report of the Chamberlain and Director of Open Spaces.

For Information
(Pages 527 - 564)

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

25. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

26. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

MOTION: That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

For Decision

Part 2 - Non-Public Agenda

27. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

To agree the non-public minutes of the previous meeting of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee held on the 18th of January 2021.

For Decision
(Pages 565 - 566)

28. CONNAUGHT CLUB, BARN HOPPITT, CHINGFORD LICENCE (SEF 16/21)

Report of the Director of Open Spaces.

For Decision
(Pages 567 - 582)

29. FARM TENANCY - COPPED HALL NORTH - FUTURE OPTIONS SEF 17/21

Report of the Director of Open Spaces.

For Decision
(Pages 583 - 590)

30. AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS ACT TENANCY WOODREDON SOUTH - FUTURE OPTIONS (SEF 18-21)

Report of the Director of Open Spaces.

For Decision
(Pages 591 - 602)

31. APPROVAL REQUEST - MARKET LETTING - FARTHING DOWNS OFFICE, DITCHES LANE, COULSDON CR5 1DA

Report of the Director of Open Spaces.

For Decision
(Pages 603 - 656)

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

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

EPPING FOREST & COMMONS COMMITTEE **Monday, 18 January 2021**

Minutes of the meeting of the Epping Forest & Commons Committee held remotely
on Monday, 18 January 2021 at 11.30 am

Present

Members:

Graeme Doshi-Smith (Chairman)
Benjamin Murphy (Deputy Chairman)
Deputy Philip Woodhouse
Peter Bennett
Caroline Haines
Alderman Robert Howard
Jeremy Simons
Verderer Michael Chapman DL
Verderer H.H William Kennedy
Verderer Paul Morris
Verderer Nicholas Munday

Officers:

Richard Holt	- Town Clerk's Department
Kerry Nicholls	- Town Clerk's Department
Kristina Drake	- Media Officer, Town Clerk's Department
Mark Jarvis	- Chamberlain Department
Edward Martin	- City Surveyor's Department
Colin Buttery	- Director of Open Spaces
Paul Thomson	- Superintendent of Epping Forest
Andy Barnard	- Superintendent of The Commons
Jacqueline Eggleston	- Head of Visitor Services, Epping Forest
Jeremy Dagley	- Head of Conservation, Epping Forest
Jo Hurst	- Business Manager, Epping Forest
Tristian Vetta	- Senior Forrest Keeper, Epping Forest

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Alderman Robert Hughes-Penny.

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

There were no declarations received.

3. MINUTES

The Committee considered the draft public minutes and non-public summary of the previous meeting of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee held on the 16th of November 2020. It was noted a declaration noted at the last meeting should be corrected.

The Chairman explained that the Deer Strategy mentioned in the minutes would be prepared for consideration by the Epping Forest Consultative Committee at its February meeting.

A Committee member noted that the previous meeting the Committee had lost quorum for non-Epping Forest related matters stating that this demonstrated the limitations on the Committee's constitution. In addition, it was questioned what work had been undertaken to avoid this happening in future. The Town Clerk responded by confirming that Commons and Epping Forest related business was ordered to be considered first at alternating Committee meetings in order that adequate time for considering these items was provided. Moreover, it was confirmed that the Committee had been given the opportunity to comment informally on Commons related business at the last meeting of the Committee before it was approved formally under urgency procedures.

Responding to query from a Committee member on paper copies of committee documents the Chairman and Town Clerk explained that the City of London Corporation was moving toward a paperless policy for committee documents, except for specific circumstances.

RESOLVED- That the public minutes of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee held on the 16th of November 2020, subject to the correction specified, be approved as an accurate record.

4. **DEPARTMENTAL AND SERVICE COMMITTEE BUDGET ESTIMATES 2021/22**

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director of Open Spaces and Chamberlain on the budget estimates for the Epping Forest and Commons Committee for 2021/22. The Chamberlain introduced the report and emphasised the saving proposals which had been actioned. The Director of Open Spaces highlighted the twelve percent savings required across the City of London Corporation and commented on the importance of starting the year with a balanced budget. The Chairman remarked that while the funding reduction was painful it was required and stated any works not completed in the Cyclical Works Programme in 2021 be planned for 2022.

Responding to a Committee member's query the Director of Open Spaces clarified that the Climate Action Strategy funding had been confirmed, with the majority of the open spaces allocated funds taking place at sites in Epping Forest and the Commons.

A Member highlighted the reduction in the budget for funding apprenticeships within the Open Spaces Department. The Director of Open Spaces explained that, despite the reduction in funding, the Department would still be bidding for central funding for apprentices. The Chairman suggested that the open spaces committee chairmen and deputy chairmen discuss this matter further and that a report be brought to the Committee for consideration.

The Chairman suggested that the Committee consider Item 8, the CWP Updated Bid Report, before reaching a decision on Item 4. The Committee agreed to consider the Item 8 before approving Item 4.

It was commented that it was important to know what risk there was of certain projects not being completed due to the reduced budget.

RESOLVED- That: -

- I. The Epping Forest proposed revenue budget for 2021/22 be approved for submission to the Finance Committee;
- II. The Commons proposed revenue budgets for 2021/22 be approved for submission to Finance Committee; and
- III. That the Epping Forest capital and supplementary revenue project budgets for 2021/22 be approved for submission to Finance Committee; and
- IV. That the Commons capital and supplementary revenue project budgets be approved for 2021/22 for submission to Finance Committee; and
- V. That the Chamberlain be authorised, in consultation with the Director of Open Spaces to revise these budgets to allow for any further implications arising from, Corporate Projects, the City's new Target Operating Model, and changes to the Cyclical Works Programme; and
- VI. That any minor amendments for 2020/21 and 2021/22 budgets arising during budget setting be delegated to the Chamberlain,

5. RESETTING OF DEPARTMENTAL BUDGETS 2020/21

The Committee noted a report of the Chamberlain on the Resetting of Departmental Budgets 2020/21. The Chamberlain highlighted that the overspend in the Epping Forest Budget had been reduced through effective mitigation by the Epping Forest Management Team. The Chairman commented that the value for money of the City of London Corporation managed open spaces had been demonstrated over the period effected by COVID and that the City of London Corporation were investing millions into their management. The Committee observed the huge increase of visitors to the Open Spaces and noted the vital contribution of staff at these sites.

Responding to a Committee member's comment the Chairman agreed that he and the Deputy Chairman were keen to look at more proactive communications on the matter of budgets in future. In addition, the Chairman agreed with a Member's suggestion that commitments be made to volunteers at the various open spaces as their contribution had been vital in the period effected by COVID.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

6. DEPARTMENTAL BUSINESS PLAN 2020/21 - SIX MONTH PERFORMANCE UPDATE: APRIL TO SEPT 2020

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the Departmental Business Plan 2020/21 Six month performance update: April to Sept 2020.

Responding to a query from the Deputy Chairman the Director of Open Spaces confirmed the Business plan had been produced without reference to the Target Operating Model and the Governance review as the outcome of these processes had yet to be realised.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

7. **OPEN SPACES DEPARTMENT BUSINESS PLAN FOR 2021/22**

The Committee noted a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the Open Spaces Department Business Plan for 2021/22.

A Committee member noted the increased number of visitors to the City of London Websites open spaces pages. The Chairman remarked that this demonstrated the ongoing requirement for a separate website for the City of London open spaces.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

8. **CWP 21/22 UPDATED BID REPORT**

The Committee received a report of the City Surveyor on the Cyclical Works Program (CWP) 21/22 Updated Bid Report. The report set out the details of projects which be undertaken in 2021/22 and details of the projects that will be delivered within that year which form part of the previous year's programmes. The City Surveyor explained that a new approach was scheduled for 2022/23.

Responding to the Chairman's query the City Surveyor explained that bids under ten thousand pounds would be automatically approved to allow these smaller historic bids to be approved efficiently.

The Chairman commented that a greater analysis of when the delayed works on the CWP would be actioned should be included. The Deputy Chairman added that details of whether the underlying issues had been resolved should be added also. The Committee discussed the need to include the delayed projects on the Risk Register going forward.

Responding to a question the City Surveyor confirmed that the figures for the works in the CWP were estimates not fixed with any underspend going into the CWP emergency budget.

RESOLVED- That the Committee noted the report.

9. **REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN BETWEEN MEETINGS**

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk on the action taken by the between meetings.

The Director of Open Spaces provided an update on the London Borough of Waltham Forest Submission Local Plan and summarised the concerns of the City of London Corporation regarding the mitigation strategies in the Plan. A member of the Committee commented that the City of London Corporation needed to move quickly and publicly on this issue. A Committee member

agreed stating that the view of the Epping Forest Verderer's was to support the concerns summarised by the Director of Open Spaces. The Committee discussed that it was important to ensure Officers have the required power to act on these policies.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

10. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces which provided a general update on issues across the nine sites within 'The Commons' division.

The Committee stated that it was deeply regrettable that there was deeply detrimental, and in certain instances irreversible, damage caused by the dramatically increased visitor numbers to the Commons sites. Responding to a query from the Deputy Chairman the Director of Open Spaces confirmed that measures to mitigate the effect of increased visitor numbers to the Commons sites would be considered. The Committee commented that the Government be informed, via all appropriate channels, of the effect the increased visitors were having on the Commons sites.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

11. **THE COMMONS - LICENCES, SPORTS, WAYLEAVES AND PRODUCE FEES AND CHARGES**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the Licences, sports, wayleaves and produce fees and charges for The Commons.

Responding to a Committee member's query the Director of Open Spaces confirmed that wider market pricing equivalents would be explored for future fees and charges benchmarking.

RESOLVED- That the proposed charges for 2021/22 be approved.

12. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces which provided a summary of the Epping Forest Division's activities across October to November 2020. The Director of Open Spaces noted the significant difficulties which the Epping Forest Management Team had experienced in the October to November period with the considerable financial concerns and the increased visitor numbers to the Forest. The Chairman noted these difficulties and thanked Officers for their work.

Responding to question from the Deputy Chairman the Director of Open Spaces noted that the message to staff was well received and that various methods for thanking staff would be explored.

To reply to a Committee member's query the Director of Open Spaces confirmed that the casual keeper positions would be filled and that a senior

keeper was in the process of being hired. In addition, the contribution of the volunteers was highlighted.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

13. EPPING FOREST CAR PARKING - TARIFF OPTIONS FOR INTRODUCED CHARGES (SEF 04/21)

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the Tariff Options for introduced charges for the Epping Forest Car Parking. The Chairman noted that further information on many of the details of the Epping Forest Car Parking would be provided after the public consultation had been completed.

The Committee debated the relative merits of Tariff Options B and C. It was suggested by a Member that, as the budget for managing the Forest was under pressure, Tariff Option C should be adopted as this provided the highest level of income. The Deputy Chairman explained that the Car Parking Charges are not only to increase income but also to manage visitor numbers. The Director of Open Spaces explained that after the approval of the Committee an extensive public consultation would begin in earnest. In addition, the Director of Open Spaces outlined the reasoning why Tariff Option B was recommended. The Chairman stated that he viewed Tariff Option B as the most appropriate as it allowed for suitable balance between securing valuable income but not making the costs of visiting the Forest prohibitive expensive. It was noted by a Committee member that the charges could be reviewed annually to allow for further consideration of the appropriate level of tariff. The Committee approved Tariff Option B with the condition that more detail be provided on differential charging options.

The Director of Open Spaces confirmed, in response to a query from a Member, that options for licensing professional dog walkers in the Forest were being explored.

RESOLVED- That the Committee approved Tariff Option B to be introduced with implementation of parking charges at Epping Forest.

14. EPPING FOREST CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP 2021-23 (SEF 02/21)

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the Epping Forest Consultative Committee Membership. The Chairman noted the difficulty in achieving appropriate representation on the Consultative Committee but stated that the report displayed a strong position regarding this matter.

RESOLVED- That the revision of the Consultative Committee Terms of Reference to allow greater clarity in the selection process be approved. This will require the current Consultative Committee to sit for one further meeting in its current form, before new appointments are made for the following three years.

15. **LICENCES, SPORTS, WAYLEAVES AND PRODUCE FEES AND CHARGES (SEF 03/21)**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the Licences, sports, wayleaves and produce fees and charges.

RESOLVED- That the proposed charges for 2021/22 as itemised in Appendix A and C, staff discounts and the continued subsidy for association football be approved.

16. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

There were no questions received in the public session.

17. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

No urgent business was considered in the public session.

18. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED: That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

19. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

The Committee considered the non-public minutes of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee meeting held on the 16th of November 2020.

RESOLVED- That the non-public minutes of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee on the 16th of November be approved as an accurate record.

20. **RED COTTAGE, WOODREDON FARM AND HERDSPERSON'S ACCOMMODATION AT EPPING FOREST SEF 05/21)**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the Red Cottage, Woodredon Farm and Herdsperson's Accommodation at Epping Forest.

RESOLVED- That the report be approved.

21. **NON-PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

The Committee considered one question in the non-public session.

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

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

The meeting ended at 2.05 pm

Chairman

Contact Officer: Richard Holt
Richard.Holt@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Agenda Item 4

Date	Committee/Meeting/Visit
	2021 Epping Forest and Commons Committee dates
18 January, 11.00am Late January	Epping Forest & Commons Committee Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common Consultation group
17 February, 7.00pm	Epping Forest Consultative Committee
8 March, 11.00am 30 March	Epping Forest & Commons Committee West Wickham, Spring Park and Coulsdon Commons Consultation Group
22 April, 11.00am	Epping Forest Joint Consultative Committee
8 May, 10.00am 10 May, 11.00am	Provisional Epping Forest & Commons Committee Epping Forest Saturday Visit Epping Forest & Commons Committee
16 June, 7.00pm	Epping Forest Consultative Committee
10 July, 10.00am 12 July, 11.00am	Provisional Epping Forest & Commons Committee Epping Forest Saturday Visit Epping Forest & Commons Committee
11 September, 10.00am 13 September, 11.00am	Provisional Epping Forest & Commons Committee Epping Forest Saturday Visit Epping Forest & Commons Committee
20 October, 7.00pm 21 October, 11.00am	Epping Forest Consultative Committee Epping Forest Joint Consultative Committee
15 November, 11.00am	Epping Forest & Commons Committee

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Committee(s)	Dated:
Epping Forest and Commons Committee	8th March 2021
Subject: Terms of Reference	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	3,8,10
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?	N/A
Report of: Town Clerk	For Decision
Report author: Richard Holt, Town Clerk's Department	

Summary

As part of the post-implementation review of the changes made to the City Corporation's governance arrangements in 2011, it was agreed that all Committees should review their terms of reference annually. This is to enable any proposed changes to be considered in time for the annual reappointment of Committees by the Court of Common Council.

The terms of reference of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee are attached at Appendix 1 to this report for Members' consideration.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- the terms of reference of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee, subject to any comments, be approved for submission to the Court of Common Council in April, and that any further changes required in the lead up to the Court's appointment of Committees be delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman; and
- Members consider whether any change is required to the frequency of the Committee's meetings.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Terms of Reference

Richard Holt

Committee and Member Services Officer

Town Clerk's Department

T: 020 7332 3008

E: Richard.Holt@cityoflondon.gov.uk

RUSSELL, Mayor	RESOLVED: That the Court of Common Council holden in the Guildhall of the City of London on Thursday 16 th July 2020, doth hereby appoint the following Committee until the first meeting of the Court in April, 2021.
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EPHING FOREST & COMMONS COMMITTEE

1. Constitution

A Non-Ward Committee consisting of,

- two Aldermen nominated by the Court of Aldermen
- 8 Members elected by the Court of Common Council at least one of whom shall have fewer than five years' service on the Court at the time of their appointment
- the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Open Spaces & City Gardens Committee (ex-officio)
- plus, for the consideration of business relating to Epping Forest only, four Verderers elected or appointed pursuant to the Epping Forest Act 1878.

2. Quorum

The quorum consists of any five Members.

For the purpose of non-Epping Forest related business the quorum must consist of five Committee Members who must be Members of the Court of Common Council.

3. Membership 2020/21

ALDERMEN

- 2 Robert Picton Seymour Howard
- 2 Robert Charles Hughes-Penney

COMMONERS

- 4 (4) Peter Gordon Bennett
- 4 (4) Caroline Wilma Haines
- 4 (4) Gregory Alfred Lawrence
- 7 (3) Sylvia Doreen Moys, M.B.E.
- 3 (3) Benjamin Daniel Murphy
- 6 (2) Philip Woodhouse, Deputy
- 5 (1) Graeme Martyn Doshi-Smith
- 5 (1) Jeremy Lewis Simons

together with the ex-officio Members referred to in paragraph 1 above, and:-

Verderers pursuant to the provisions of the Epping Forest Act, 1878:-

- Michael Chapman, D.L.
- H.H. William Kennedy
- Paul Morris
- Nicholas Munday

4. Terms of Reference

To be responsible, having regard to the overall policy laid down by the Open Spaces & City Gardens Committee, for:-

- (a) exercising of the powers and duties of the Court of Common Council as Conservators of Epping Forest (registered charity no. 232990) and the various additional lands which have been acquired to protect the Forest in accordance, where appropriate, with the Epping Forest Acts 1878 and 1880 (as amended) and all other relevant legislation.
- (b) the ownership and management of the following open spaces in accordance with the provisions of the Corporation of London Open Spaces Act 1878:-
Coulsdon and other Commons (registered charity no. 232989), the other Commons being Kenley Common, Farthing Downs and Riddlesdown
West Wickham Common and Spring Park (registered charity no. 232988)
Ashted Common (registered charity no. 1051510)
Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common (registered charity no. 232987)
- (c) appointing such Consultative Committees as are considered necessary for the better performance of its duties including:-
Ashted Common Consultative Committee
Burnham Beeches Consultation Group
Epping Forest Consultative Committee
West Wickham, Spring Park and Coulsdon Commons Consultative Committee
- (d) expressing views or making recommendations to the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee for that Committee's allocation of grants which relate to Epping Forest and Commons.

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EPHING FOREST CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 10 February 2021

Minutes of the meeting of the Epping Forest Consultative Committee held remotely at 7.00 pm

Present

Members:

Graeme Doshi-Smith (Chairman)	Deborah Morris, Epping Forest Forum
Benjamin Murphy (Deputy Chairman)	Carol Pummell, Epping Forest Riders Association
Caroline Haines	Tim Wright, Orion Harriers
Judith Adams, Epping Forest Heritage Trust	Steve Williamson, Royal Epping Forest Golf Club,
Martin Boyle, Theydon Bois & District Rural Preservation Society	Sylvia Watson, Bedford House Community Association
Pippa Bryce, Open Spaces Society (Mark Squire substitute)	Verderer Michael Chapman DL
Susan Creevy, Loughton Residents Association	Verderer Nicholas Munday
Matthew Frith, London Wildlife Trust	Verderer H.H William Kennedy
Tim Harris, Wren Wildlife & Conservation Group	Verderer Paul Morris
Andy Irvine, Bushwood Area Residents Association	

Officers:

Richard Holt	- Town Clerk's Department
Antoinette Duhaney	- Town Clerk's Department
Colin Buttery	- Director of Open Spaces
Paul Thomson	- Superintendent of Epping Forest
Jeremy Dagley	- Head of Conservation, Epping Forest
Jacqueline Eggleston	- Head of Visitor Services, Epping Forest
Geoff Sinclair	- Head of Operations, Epping Forest
Martin Newnham	- Head Forrest Keeper, Epping Forest
Julianne Heinecke	- Epping Forest Team

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Jill Carter, Robert Levene, Mark Squire and Gordon Turpin.

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

There were no declarations.

3. **MINUTES**

The Committee considered the minutes of the previous meeting of the Epping Forest Consultative Committee held on the 21st to October 2020.

A member noted a correction on the spelling of his name.

RESOLVED- That the minutes of Epping Forest Consultative Committee meeting held on the 21st of October 2020, subject to the correction specified, be approved as an accurate record.

4. **EPPING FOREST - SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE FOR OCTOBER TO NOVEMBER 2020 (SEF 01/21)**

The Committee received a report of the Superintendent which summarised the Epping Forest Division's activities across October to November 2020.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

5. **REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR EPPING FOREST CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (SEF 06/21)**

The Committee discussed a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the Revised Terms of Reference for the Epping Forest Consultative Committee. The Director of Open Spaces introduced the report and clarified the aims for the revised Terms of Reference. The Chairman noted that a balanced approach would be undertaken to reach the best position, but commented that a perfect member composition would be difficult to achieve.

A member suggested that, in future, separate agenda item documents be issued in advance of the main agenda to the Committee, where possible, to allow time for members to share with the groups they represent. In addition, it was suggested that reports be put to the vote by a show of hands and the majority response recorded in the minutes and that committee members be allowed to suggest items of business for discussion. The Chairman responded to this by explaining that the Epping Forest Consultative Committee was a non-decision making body and, therefore, did not vote on the endorsement of items noting that it was evident from the minutes of the meeting the opinion of the members present. Further to this it was noted that specific comments or informal votes against reports would be recorded only on request from the member in question.

Responding to a query from a Committee member the Director of Open Spaces explained that it was not clear the exact format that the equality statement would take in the future however it was important that equality considerations are factored into applications for Epping Forest Consultative Committee membership.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

6. **DEER MANAGEMENT STRATEGY (SEF 07/21)**

The Committee noted a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the Deer Management Strategy. The Director of Open Spaces introduced the report and highlighted the requirement to affect an overall reduction in the numbers of deer in Epping Forest due to the damage the animals were having on the Forest. In addition, it was noted that the report was due to be considered by the Epping Forest and Commons Committee in March. The Committee commented on the apparent need to manage deer numbers within Epping Forest and thanked Officers for the report.

Responding to a query from the Director of Open Spaces explained the discrepancy between the numbers of deer within the boundary of City of London Corporation land in Epping Forest and the wider locality. In addition, a species by species breakdown and associated effects was provided.

The Committee discussed the need for a succinct public facing document to explain the proposed action on deer population management. Further to this a Committee member offered to work with City of London Corporation staff to publicly fund electronic signage to help with communication.

The Director of Open Spaces, responding to a query from a Committee member, confirmed that options for Officers using body worn cameras would be explored. The Chairman confirmed that the shooting of deer would be undertaken in a safe and controlled manner. A Committee member thanked Officers for agreeing not to sub-contract this action noting the increased cost associated.

Responding to a Chairman's invitation to comment on the future of the Deer Sanctuary members of the Committee noted that the site offered a valuable for income which was vital at this time.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

7. **HIGH BEACH INDIVIDUAL SITE PLAN (SEF 08/21)**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the High Beach Individual Site Plan.

The Committee discussed options for engagement with the local community in the High Beach area. It was noted that the parish councils, church and primary school should be included in the consultation process. The Director of Open Spaces confirmed that a more structured approach for engaging with the local community would be explored.

It was noted that resolving access issues were key to the success of the High Beach Individual site plan. The Director of Open Spaces informed the Committee that a report for consideration by the Epping Forest and Commons Committee on the High Beach Individual Site Plan would address the issues of access and, in addition, how best to preserve biodiversity.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

8. **WANSTEAD PARK: WETLAND IMPROVEMENT PROPOSALS**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the Wanstead Park Wetland Improvement Proposals. It was commented by a number of Members that the report represented a positive approach for the area, but it was noted that water levels would remain the central concern.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

9. **CLIMATE ACTION STRATEGY - OPEN SPACES "CARBON REMOVALS"**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the Department's contribution to the delivery of the City of London Corporation's Climate Action Strategy (CAS). The Director of Open Spaces introduced the report and highlighted that the aim of the CAS was for the City of London Corporation to achieve carbon neutrality by 2027. It was added the CAS was an exciting opportunity and a flagship project for the City of London Corporation in which Epping Forest was projected to play a key role.

The Committee noted that it was important that Epping Forest's role in the City of London Corporation CAS would not affect the stated aims of the Epping Forest Charity. The Director of Open Spaces clarified that the biodiversity maintenance was key to achieving the carbon offset aims of the CAS.

In response to a query from a Committee member the Director of Open Spaces informed the Committee of the scientific reasoning behind the policy and how the City of London Corporation mechanics effect the CAS. In addition, it was confirmed that the maintenance of biodiversity, as well as the other stated aims of the Epping Forest Charity, would be supported by the CAS noting the important of monitoring and audit to this process.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

10. **QUESTIONS**

The Committee received the following questions. A member of the Committee provided a statement from the Loughton Residents Association:

Referring to Page 17 paragraph 42 of the Superintendent's Report. The Loughton Residents Association does not agree that Natural England approved the Mitigation Strategy for immediate use. Natural England have said that "for air quality mitigation to be fully compliant with relevant case law, the strategy must include specific policy wording that explicitly links the unlocking of development with the Local Plan to the actual delivery of the planned mitigation". The published strategy does not meet this test.

The Director of Open Spaces responded by confirming that the policy wording would be included the relevant local plan documentation and would still need to be confirmed to require the required breaks and mitigation in any development. It was added that a SAC oversight group would be established to confirm the recipient of the mitigation funds received in regard to future development.

Responding to a question from a Committee member the Director of Open Spaces explained the current position regarding the introduction of Car Park charging noting that the consultation period would last until the 15th of February and that a further report which would detail all the required information for the Epping Forest and Commons Committee to consider would be produced for the March meeting. In addition, it was confirmed that volunteers would be contacted directly regarding special solutions for car park charging and that specific arrangements for horse carts parking could be discussed further.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no urgent business received.

21:00

Chairman

Contact Officer: Richard Holt
Richard.Holt@cityoflondon.gov.uk

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Committee(s)	Dated:
Epping Forest and Commons	08032021
Subject: Epping Forest - Superintendent's Update for December 2020 to January 2021 (SEF 11/21)	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?	N
Report of: Director of Open Spaces	For Information
Report author: Paul Thomson – Epping Forest	

Summary

This purpose of this report is to summarise the Epping Forest Division's activities across December 2020 to January 2021.

While all work continued to be dominated by COVID-19 restrictions through the changes between Tiers 2, 3 and then 4 in December, and the return to a third National lockdown beginning in January. Of particular note during December/January was two further months of above average rainfall following a very wet Autumn; a substantial overhaul of the Ground Source Heat Pump System at the Harrow Road Sports Pavilion; the first successful lets of the Baldwins Hill Lodge holiday let; further negotiations with the Rural Payments Agency on a potential Countryside Stewardship grant award; a presentation by Epping Forest staff to on cow collar conservation grazing as part of the Knepp Rewilding project and positive progress on SAC Mitigation by the SAC Oversight Group.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Staff and Volunteers

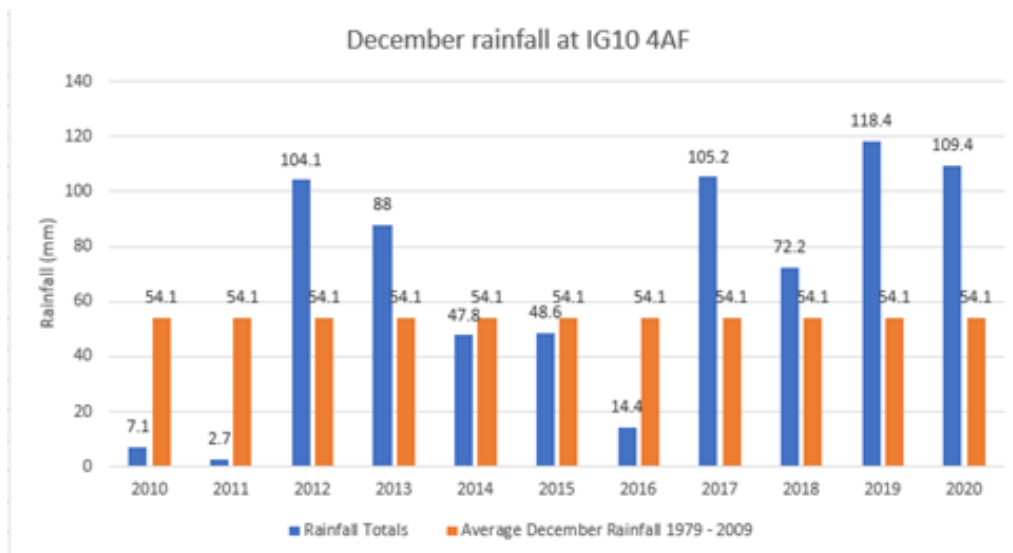
1. A Community Engagement Officer – Lakes and Ponds, funded through the Capital Programme, will be working over the next ten months leading on public engagement around works to the dams at Wanstead Park, Birch Hall and Baldwins ponds.

Budgets

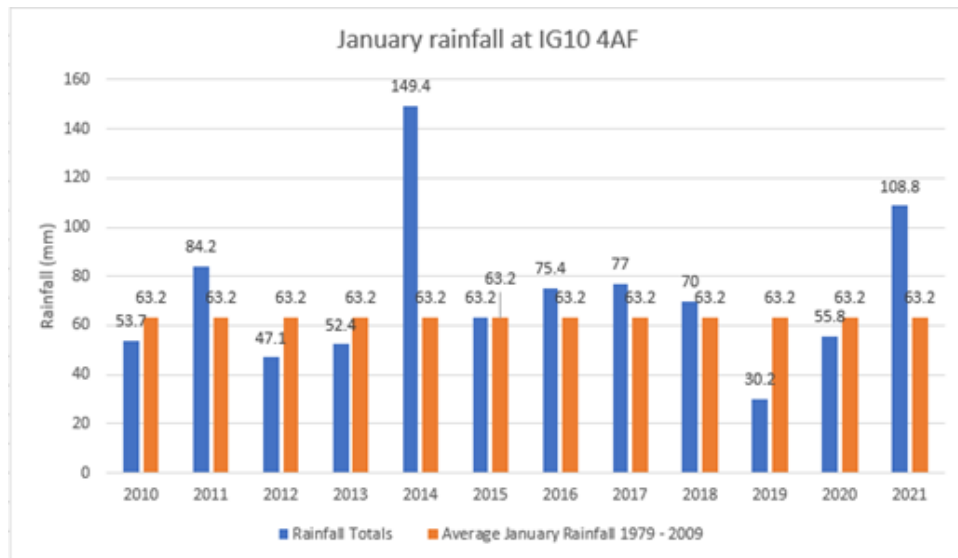
2. At end of January, 83% of financial year, Epping Forest Local risk budgets stand at 84% spend, although with some large sums to account for in the closing stages of 2020-21, including grant income to be finally agreed with the Rural Payments Agency, recharges and expenditure to achieve savings in the next financial year. Overall, the predicted overspend due to COVID-19 has reduced significantly through vacancy management and postponed expenditure and is now anticipated to be in the region of £150,000.

Weather

3. December 2020 was much wetter than the average for this time of year (54.1mm) with a total of 109.4mm, nearly double the average. There was a total of 23 days of rain with the wettest day being the 3rd with 23.8mm of rainfall.



4. January 2021 rainfall had a total of 108.8mm which was above the average for this time of year (63.2mm). There was a total of 24 days of rain with the 13th being the wettest day, seeing 25.2mm of rainfall.

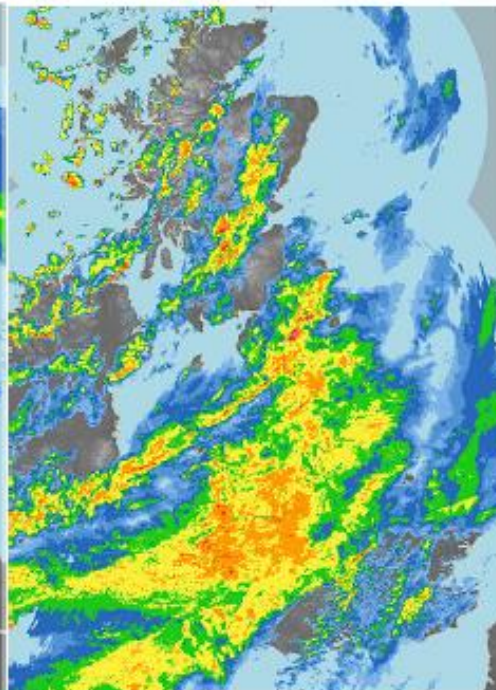


5. Storms Bella – 26-27 December brought persistent heavy rain across and strong winds overnight 26 to 27 December. This was one of the most powerful storms of the year, and the heavy rain falling on already saturated ground caused many areas to flood, following the earlier flooding of Ornamental Water by the River Roding on 21 December.

1200 UTC 26 December 2020

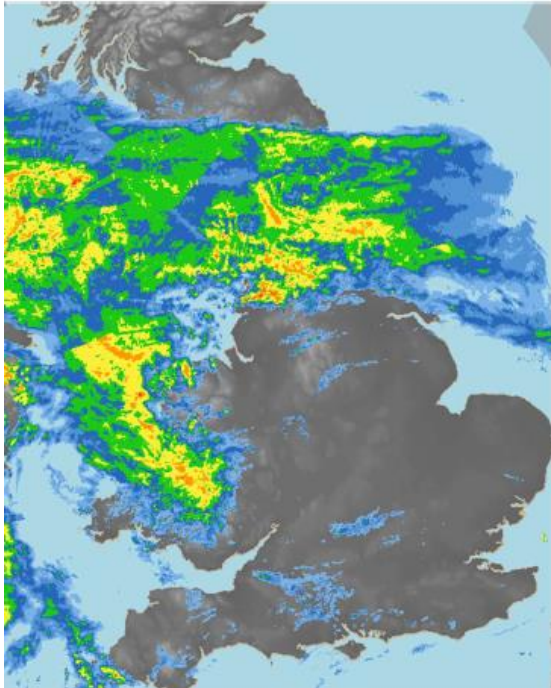


0000 UTC 27 December 2020

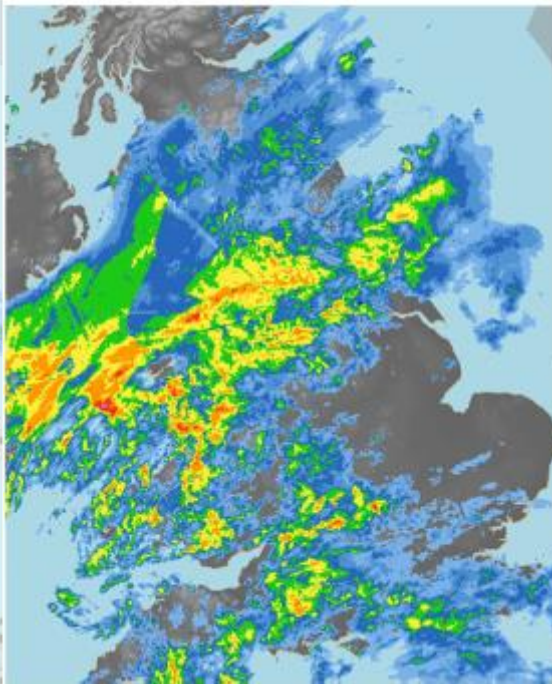


6. Storm Christoph 18 to 20 January 2021 brought some exceptionally wet weather, strong winds and snow.

1200UTC 19 January 2021



1200UTC 20 January 2021



Sustainability

7. The City Surveyor Department has successfully completed an £89,000 investment in the installation of a new Ground Source Heat Pump and ground array at the Harrow Road Sports Pavilion. The new system complies with the Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS), a Government sponsored quality assurance scheme, it is designed to meet 100% of the peak heating load.
8. Opportunities for environmental improvements to empty lodges are being investigated, some require considerable investment to achieve legal minimum Environmental Performance Classification prior to letting.

Epping Forest Projects

Golf Welfare

9. The construction and fit out of staff welfare facilities at Jubilee Retreat, servicing Chingford Golf Course, is close to completion, with handover originally due for 12 February, being delayed due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Lodge letting

10. Although Baldwins Hill is closed to holidaymakers, some restriction-exempt bookings have been possible during this period, with excellent feedback received. Rangers Road has works planned to develop into the Charity's second holiday

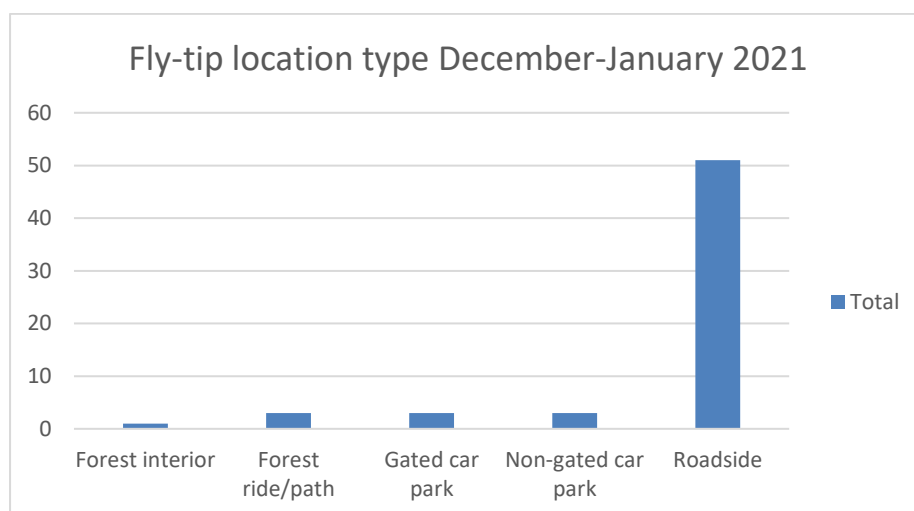
let, but with significant internal restructure required.

11. Works are underway at flats 1&2 Jubilee Retreat ready for domestic Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST) lets early in the next financial year, with works scoped for other assets to follow shortly.

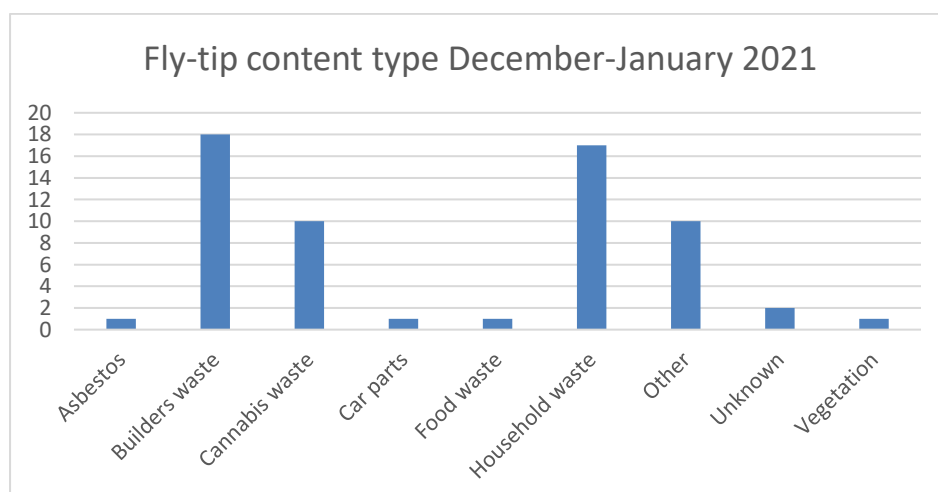
Forest Services

Fly-tipping

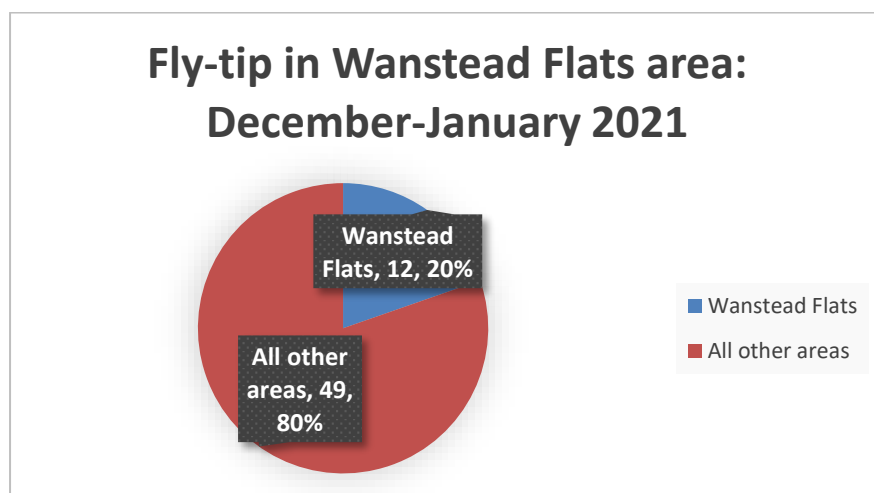
12. There were a total of 61 fly-tips recorded over the period of December 2020 – January 2021, this represents a 6% decrease over the same period in 2019-2020.



13. Roadside locations represented 84% of the tip locations over the period.



14. Builders waste represented the largest category of items tipped over the period at 18 (29%), while household waste represented 17 tips (27%).



15. There were 12 fly-tips in the Wanstead Flats area over the period which represents 20% of all tips. Five of these tips were on Forest Land adjacent to Highway Land on Capel Road.

Enforcement Activity

16. No EPA prosecutions were heard in the period under report. 3 Conditional Cautions were issued.

Date	Defendant Name	Offence Accepted 33:Deposit 34:Duty of Care	Court Name	Costs Recovered
08.12.2020	Not for disclosure	Conditional Caution Damage to Forest	N/A	£300
13.01.2021	Not for disclosure	Conditional Caution Sec:34	N/A	£200
23.01.2021	Not for disclosure	Conditional Caution Sec: 33	N/A	£500
Total Costs Awarded to Epping Forest (Including Compensation)		£1000		
Total		£1000		

Licences

17. A total of 21 licences for events were issued during the months being reported, which yielded an income of £7,254.50 plus VAT which reflects the impact of COVID-19 restrictions. 30 licences were issued during the same period in 2019/20 yielding an income of £17,700.03.

Unexplained Deaths

18. There have been 2 unexplained deaths over the reporting period.

- Hollow Ponds 19/1/21
- Wanstead Flats 7/2/21

Rough Sleepers

19. There were 3 rough sleeper camps located during the reporting period which have been managed in line with No Second Night Out (NSNO) guidance.

- 5/12/20 Woodredon Hill refused Street Link and left site.
- 8/12/20 Wanstead Flats vacant camp cleared 15/12/20
- 9/12/20 Wanstead Flats vacant camp to be removed.

Unauthorised Occupations

20. There has been 1 traveller incursion over this reporting period, which was removed within 4 hours of trespass.

- Bury Road car Park 19/1/21 16 caravans and 70 plus persons.

21. There have not been any Spontaneous Social Gatherings or Unlicensed Music Events on Forest Land.

Dog Incidents

22. There have been 2 recorded dog related incidents during this reporting period.

- 21/12/20 Grimston's Oak Rottweiler not under control
- 21/12/20 Catacomb's Corner 2 dogs not under control

23. In addition to these figures, there have been 9 reports of missing dogs across the Forest over this reporting period. The organisation Dogs Lost, reports that COVID-19 has increased the demand for companion dogs which in turn is fuelling the theft of dogs off leads from Open Spaces.

Deer Vehicle Collisions

24. Epping Forest staff dealt with a total of 2 deer vehicle collisions (DVC) during this reporting period.

- 13/1/21 Coppice Row – Fallow Buck
- 19/1/21 Goldings Hill – Fallow Buck

NEPP/Red Route Figures

25. There have been 36 penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) manually during the reporting period. These figures do not include PCNs issued from camera car footage. The total number of PCN's issued on the red route to date now totals 1070.

Volunteer Figures

26. There has been a total of 775.6 volunteer hours completed over this reporting period by 17 volunteer wardens.

Heritage; Landscape and Nature Conservation

Climate Action Strategy

27. Work has continued to develop the plan for the Open Spaces Department's work on the Climate Action Strategy, the Department's project is called *Carbon Removals*, describing how the project will increase the ability of sites to absorb carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the atmosphere. Further details are given in a report to your Committee at this meeting, entitled *Climate Action Strategy – Open Spaces "Carbon Removals"* (SEF/10/21b). This report will also be presented to Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee in April 2021. The current work effort is focussing on:

- i. recruiting to the new roles,
- ii. preparing to commission feasibility studies, surveys and research,
- iii. planning for ground works to begin in autumn 2021.

Biodiversity

28. The main issue of note for this period was the high rainfall along with continued very high visitor pressure. This has led to further compaction and erosion damage to paths and trail edges and a loss of vegetation across many areas of grassland and some damage around the roots of ancient trees. The impacts of this are yet to be assessed and direct reparations and other solutions will need to be considered. Sample survey and recording work has been underway since June 2020 and further study is planned for the first quarter of 2021 and will be reported to your Committee later in the year.

29. The cold winter weather of January brought some notable bird movement and unusual winter migrants to the Forest. A large influx of **Russian White-fronted Geese** into eastern England from the continent saw 2 birds arrive and remain for several weeks at Wanstead Flats. In addition, both **Red Kites** and **Ravens** made appearances over the Forest and with the former seen as regularly in the south of the Forest as well as the more rural northern parishes.

30. The legally protected **Firecrest** was seen in additional sites to its known breeding areas and birds were seen both north and south of the A406 North Circular road in the Forest at Woodford and at Gilbert's Slade respectively. The mild winters of recent years have helped numbers of this rare bird increase, although the period of snow and below zero temperatures in January and February may yet have an adverse impact for this year's breeding numbers.

Agri-environment Schemes

31. The Director of Open Spaces and the Environmental Stewardship Officer met with the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) in early January to discuss further refinements to the pending Countryside Stewardship agreement. The Environmental Stewardship Officer is now working with the RPA and Natural England to revise and finalise prescriptions and update the timetable following the late changes to the agreement offer made by the RPA. A report giving more details of progress is presented to your Committee at this meeting (see report SEF 13/21).

Grazing

32. Following June's *BBC Countryfile* profile of the invisible fencing work at Epping Forest, the innovative project, now including the use of the new *NoFence®* GPS cow collars, continued to attract attention and requests for more information from other conservation professionals. As a result, the Grazing & Landscapes Project Officer gave an online presentation on "Collar containment grazing in high population and high traffic areas" to over 100 representatives from the conservation management sector in December.
33. This was part of a *Zoom* workshop series organised and hosted by Knepp Rewilding Estate officers following their visit to Epping Forest in the autumn. The Head of Conservation also took questions at the workshop and further meetings are planned with conservation organisations and graziers around the UK. These meetings will be aimed at ensuring that the system is fully understood and that the dialogue with government agencies and Defra officials continues, as operating procedures are refined, and the system becomes more widely used.
34. On the Forest itself, five cows were grazed successfully across Chingford Plain and Fairmead areas until the end of December. This was part of a trial on the feasibility of winter grazing with GPS collars. The GPS collars allow greater security for this work and the return of winter grazing would be an important step in providing the continuity of habitat for a range of species dependent on grazing. A report on this and future refinements to the grazing project will be brought to your Committee for information and consideration in due course.

Heritage

35. A licence was granted for a local group to carry out some ground-penetrating radar work in summer 2021 at Manor Park, Wanstead Flats (Compartment 38) in the search of further Roman infrastructure related to the settlement at Wanstead.

Forest Protection and planning matters

Town & Country Planning

36. The major progress in this period has been the meeting of the **SAC Oversight Group** on 21 January to decide on potential governance arrangements, the extent of in-perpetuity funding for the SAC protection and the detailed proposals approved by your Committee in November for more comprehensive Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Measures (SAMMS). These SAMMS proposals were presented to the meeting by the Head of Conservation. Natural England officers also provided guidance on governance and in-perpetuity issues. As a result, two sub-groups for the Oversight Group have been established. The first is to finalise the governance arrangements and the second sub-group will decide on in-perpetuity funding levels for the SAMMS and other mitigation measures. Importantly, Natural England is assisting the coordination of both these sub-groups and the Greater London Authority (GLA) will also be present to provide a strategic overview for the London Boroughs.

37. **Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) Local Plan:** With the Air Pollution Mitigation Strategy (APMS) now agreed with Natural England, the remaining focus in January was on the Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy (G&BI Strategy) and the policies underlying and securing all the SAC Mitigation packages. A meeting was held with Natural England and EFDC officers on 21 January at which modified SANGS proposals were put forward as part of the G&BI Strategy. Subsequently, on 29 January, the crucial updated draft policy wording was provided for Policies DM2 (Epping Forest) and DM22 (Air Pollution). Responses will be made to both new proposals as reported in the accompanying report to this Committee on the EFDC Local Plan.
38. **London Borough of Waltham Forest (LBWF)** A detailed response to the LBWF Local Plan Regulation 19 and Regulation 18 Site Allocations proposals consultation was made on 14 December by the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman under delegated authority (see attached to this report - **Appendix 1**). This has since been followed up by LBWF officers and their consultants in January as reported in the accompanying report to this Committee on the LBWF Local Plan.

Town & Country Planning – Development Control

39. Comments were submitted to Planners for this reporting period as follows:

- Good Intent Pub – infill property in former club car park (500 m from SAC)
- 2 The Uplands Loughton – infill of two properties in garden (250m from SAC)
- 9-11 High Beech Road, Loughton – alteration from offices to flats (300m from SAC, increased recreational impact).
- 75-77 Queens Rd, Buckhurst Hill – 15 apartments at former shops/restaurant (200m from SAC, increased recreational impact).

40. *Next* PLC development was refused in December 2020 at EFDC Planning Committee. However, it has now been referred to Full Council with the date for decision still undecided. In the interim, Epping Forest officers have challenged the compliance of the *Next* plc project-level Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). This HRA had not taken account of the proposed introduction of a right-hand turn ban into Forest Side/Clay Pit Hill which might impact the SAC and also effect Forest visitors. As a result of Epping Forest officers challenge, the HRA was updated and its findings presented at a meeting on 26 January. The proposed response to this presentation and subsequent clarifications forms part of the accompanying report on the EFDC Local Plan at this Committee meeting.

Land Registration, Access Audit & Wayleaves

41. An historic wayleave debt of £1,500 has been successfully addressed and £2,551 of debts have been written off, where billed residents have moved or were found to be deceased.
42. The continuing Access Audit has also revealed further commercial wayleaves which require review of payments and management of the access.

Operations

Habitat Works

43. Wood pasture Management: Around 120 new pollards created over the last 10 years were reworked with their second repollarding on Ditches ride, Grimston's Oak ride and Almshouse Plain.

Insurance works

44. In a joint project with Theydon Bois Parish Council and the St Mary the Virgin Church, the wrought iron fence was freed of encroaching vegetation to allow its repair and restoration by the Church. At the same time, wider vegetation management was undertaken to improve views to the Church from the green. The work is still ongoing.

Risk Management Works

45. Tree Safety – At the end of January, 166 trees were still to be worked from the 2020 tree safety assessments and 21 from the 2019 assessment. This is further through the list than first anticipated due to the staff absences with COVID-19 and the need to focus on COVID-19 tasks. The annual contractor-led tree safety assessment has begun and is on schedule for completion in March 2021.
46. Fire Safety: As part of the Fire Management Plan (FMP) required actions, old growth gorse was cleared from the Central Line boundary at Leyton flats. Old gorse is especially flammable and clearing this was one of the last outstanding improvement actions in the FMP. The cut material is still to be chipped and is pending improved ground conditions.

Access Works

47. Damage assessments of the path network are being undertaken. This involves a red, amber, green assessment of the path and verge condition and follows the best practice established by the National Trust at Hatfield Forest. The predominantly clay soils, wet conditions and the very high public access on many routes has led to widespread damage and muddy condition much in excess of normal winter wear and tear.
48. Following a hiatus due to COVID-19 work has now started to develop the informal log play area at Wanstead Park. Outline ideas have been developed and potential logs identified from across the Forest based on naturally fallen branches and trees and logs arising from tree safety works. Development of this will be undertaken through the spring and it is hoped to have a simple natural play facility ready for the summer. The play area is being developed in partnership with local parents in the development of this facility.
49. In response to local community requests and discussion with the Head of Visitor Services an enhanced maintenance regime has been started along Harrow Road in the vicinity of the changing rooms. The aim is to restore the open character beneath the London plain avenue to deter anti-social behaviour and to open views onto Wanstead Flats for residents living opposite. Annual verge cutting will maintain this open character.

Visitor Services Events

50. Due to the Tier 4 and Lockdown restrictions, no events took place. Planned events were cancelled or postponed and customers offered refunds or alternative dates as appropriate.

Learning and Education (Learning Team)

51. The learning team continued to offer their outdoor-only COVID-safe school programme during December 2020. A highlight was the festive wreath making sessions for schools, alongside a log fire in the beautiful setting of Barn Hoppitt. The sessions were designed to promote wellbeing and connection with the Forest.

52. As part of the Green Talent Programme, the team ran regular weekly sessions for students from White Trees School – a specialist school for young people who experience behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The young people have benefitted from a varied programme designed to build confidence and transferable skills. The group spent time in the Forest, learnt new skills such as orienteering and wood carving, and contributed through activities such as litter picking.

53. With schools closed in January, members of the learning team have been entered, part-time into the Government's furlough scheme in order to reduce losses for the City Corporation. The team are ready to return to work full time as soon as it is feasible to run a full programme and are continuing to innovate and engage learners where possible.

54. The team have shared a bank of nature-focused learning activities with over 800 London schools via our school newsletters, and in February the resources were shared with teachers across the UK via the Learning Outside the Classroom website and the UK School Trips newsletter, which has a search reach of over 400,000 educators. Teachers will be able to share these with children at home as well as those at school. The activities were created during lockdown one, and include videos teaching children how to do a bug hunt and create eco art, or worksheets demonstrating how to make a bird feeder or sun catcher. The team is in contact with food banks and community centres to continue to share the activity sheets which have been designed to engage children and families who may have limited access to resources or outdoor space. The activity sheets will be printed to include families who may not have access to a computer or a printer.

55. The team also linked with the CoL Education Strategy Unit to provide content for the launch of a new digital platform called 'Find Fusion'. Find Fusion will enable people to find events/courses/experiences that are relevant to learners (focused on school pupils) and will connect offers around themes such as learner type, age group, curriculum area and fusion skills. The Learning Team have shared activity sheets and videos which support learning through engagement with nature.

56. The Green Talent programme had been planning to continue its successful programme of activities for young people from White Trees school; this is currently postponed but will be relaunched as soon as it is safe to do so. In the meantime, Green Talent is delivering a series of virtual sessions to students at a pupil referral unit based around careers in the outdoors and is working with the Refugee Council on a virtual engagement session to introduce young refugees to Epping Forest.

Chingford Golf Course (LR)

57. Due to Tier 4 and Lockdown restrictions the Chingford Golf Course has remained closed. The golf front of house team has been re-deployed into maintenance and other roles. The green keeper team have continued to use this time of no play to work on actions pending from the work plan which progress slowest during play. Due to the very wet conditions it is hoped that this rest, after the heavy play of late 2020 will allow the greens and tees to recover in time for the resumption of play in 2021.

Wanstead Flats

58. Due to Tier and Lockdown restrictions, football at Wanstead has been suspended on non-elite sport. Clubs will be reimbursed for matches not played, as a season extension is not currently feasible.

59. The grounds team have been working on pitch restoration during this time as well as increased litter picking / clearing due to an increase in weekday recreational use of the Flats.

60. Parkrun is still not in operation due to COVID-19.

Visitor Numbers

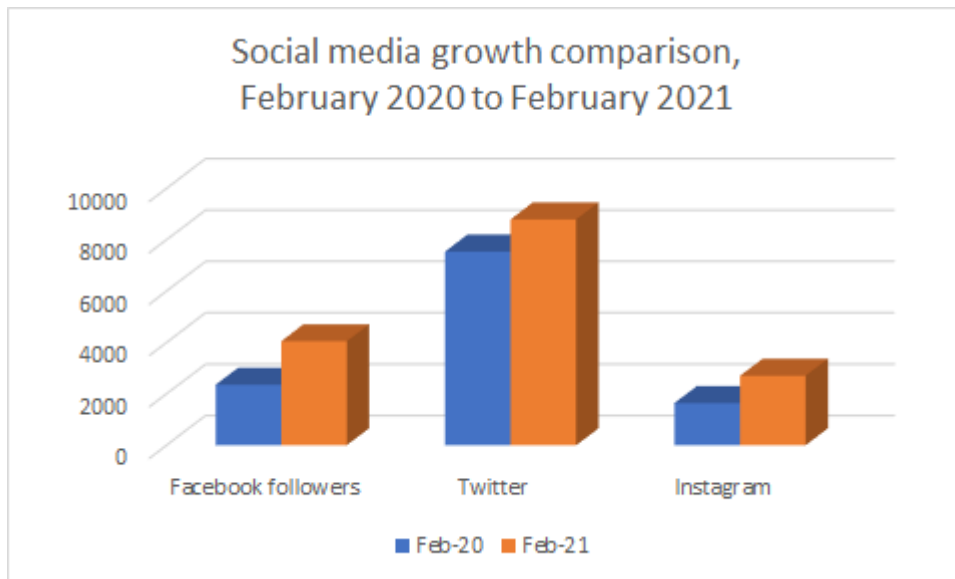
61. Due to Tier and Lockdown restrictions, the Visitor Centres have been closed during December and January. The View operated a 'Click and Collect' service, however due to limited take up post-Christmas the front of house team was placed on furlough and the retail offer suspended. The toilet facilities have remained open (Mon- Fri) due to redeployed cleaning staff from other sites in the Square Mile.

Communication and Information

62. As of 17 February 2021, our social media following is:

- Twitter followers: 8,794, an increase of 17%
- Facebook likes: 3,653, an increase of N/A as not recorded last year
- Facebook followers: 4049, an increase of 72%
- Instagram followers: 2,704, an increase of 65%

63. Please find below comparison spreadsheet for social media followings:



64. The top tweet for December 2020 – with 8,881 impressions:

Delighted to see this special coral tooth
fungi in [#EppingForest](#).

It has rarely been recorded here in the last
15 years. This particular fungi is generally
found on beech trees. Our wonderful range
of fungi is one of the reasons much of the
woodland is designated as SSSI/SAC.

pic.twitter.com/PLw5SMtOh1



6 12 84

65. The top tweet for January 2021 – with 6,550 impressions:

The continued wet weather means that **#EppingForest** is incredibly wet and muddy and there are large areas of localised flooding. It's best to avoid the Forest this weekend or stick to the main paths and come suitably attired!

pic.twitter.com/Gl4t1qdZ4z



8 13 59

66. The top Facebook post for December 2020 – with a reach of 4,332:



Epping Forest City of London

Published by Yvette Woodhouse | 31 December 2020

Happy New Year, from all at #EppingForest.

The Forest is likely to be very busy over the long weekend. If you can, please cycle or walk to the Forest and visit the area local to you.

Visit www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/eppingforest for ideas and suggestions of areas to visit closest to you.... See more



67. The top Facebook post for January 2021 – with a reach of 38,961:



68. The top Instagram post for December 2020 was a Merry Christmas post – with 136 likes:



69. The top Instagram post for January 2021 was a snow day post – with 170 likes:



70. Monthly updates continue via Mailchimp are in place of the quarterly, printed Forest Focus publications, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This is continuing to be well received and allowing us the opportunity to report on very current updates in Epping Forest throughout the constantly changing pandemic and the impact it is having on visiting the Forest.

71. The Epping Forest Management Strategy has now been produced and is on the Epping Forest website, with printed copies in production for distribution imminently.



Major incidents

COVID-19 National Health Emergency

72. From Thursday, 5 November there was a 4-week second National Lockdown, which was replaced with Tier 2 'High Alert' level restrictions for London and Essex on 2 December. London and SW Essex entered Tier 3 'Very High Alert' level restrictions on 16 December, quickly followed by Tier 4 'Stay at Home Alert' levels on 19 December. A third National Lockdown was in place from 5 January 2021.

Paul Thomson

Superintendent of Epping Forest

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Committee(s): Epping Forest Consultative – For Discussion Epping Forest and Commons – For Decision	Dated: 10 02 2021 08 03 2021
Subject: Revised Terms of Reference for Epping Forest Consultative Committee (SEF 06/21)	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	4, 10, 11, 12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	£0
What is the source of Funding?	
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	n/a
Report of: Director of Open Spaces	For Decision
Report author: Jo Hurst, Business Manager Epping Forest	

Summary

The Epping Forest Consultative Committee was founded in January 2018, and since then has met three times a year to discuss matters of Epping Forest management and policy.

According to the agreed Terms of Reference, membership of this Consultative Committee is reconsidered every three years. The process was initiated in October 2020, and 38 applications were received for an available sixteen places. The large number of applications has highlighted some necessary clarifications in the Terms of Reference to allow a fair and equitable decision on appointments.

Recommendation(s)

Epping Forest and Commons Committee Members are asked to:

- Agree the updated Terms of Reference
- Request that applying organisations resubmit their details according to these new terms, for consideration of forward membership at May Committee.

Main Report

Background

1. The Epping Forest Consultative Committee met for the first time in January 2018, following an application process in Autumn 2017 involving membership organisations interested in the use and management of Epping Forest, with sixteen places available according to the agreed Terms of Reference.
2. In 2017 nineteen applications were received, three of which did not meet selection criteria, the remaining sixteen were therefore appointed. In June 2018 one further member, Royal Epping Forest Golf Club, was co-opted as it was felt that Golf and formal sports in general were underrepresented.
3. Under the Terms of Reference (Appendix 2) membership is established for three years, after which the application and appointment process is begun anew. Invitations for Expressions of Interest in the next three years of the Consultative Committee were launched in October 2020.
4. By December 2020, 38 applications were received for consideration for sixteen available places at meetings in 2021-23, but this highlighted inconsistency in figures provided, most notably in the definition of the organisation's membership and types of organisation to be considered.

Current Position

5. In January 2021 it was agreed that definitions should be clarified through revised Terms of Reference and figures then resubmitted from applicants under those terms ready for appointment in May 2021. The February meeting of the Consultative Committee will therefore be with existing membership.
6. Revised Terms of Reference for the Epping Forest and Commons Committee are included at Appendix 1.

Options for Epping Forest and Commons Committee

7. **Option 1** – Adopt the updated Terms of Reference for the Epping Forest Consultative Committee and instruct officers to clarify data provided by applicants under these terms ready for membership decision in May 2021. **This option is recommended.**

Proposals

8. Changes to the updated terms include a fuller definition of 'member', numbers of which are a key factor in prioritising applicants for the Consultative Committee. Paragraph 27 of the revised terms gives this definition.

9. Paragraph 22 gives examples of alternative governance documentation that may be acceptable as an alternative to a Constitution, as many organisations may use different terms.
10. Paragraph 23 requires organisations to have an Equality Statement or Policy which was not a specification of the previous terms.
11. Paragraphs 19-21 are an expansion of the types of organisation the Epping Forest & Commons Committee seeks to appoint to the Consultative Committee, and also explains exclusions more fully.
12. Paragraph 31 encourages attendees to communicate and cooperate with other groups of similar interest in order to have the broadest and best representation of stakeholder views.
13. Paragraph 33 gives the Epping Forest and Commons Committee Chairman the authority to exclude members or organisations contravening the terms.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

14. Strategic implications – The continued attendance at the Epping Forest Consultative Committee supports the Corporate Plan items 4, 10, 11 and 12.
15. The Epping Forest Consultative Committee discussed the new terms at its meeting on 10 February, with positive feedback received overall.
16. Financial and resource implications – The resources required for room hire (post pandemic), light refreshments, the publication of agendas; reports and minutes are provided by the Town Clerk's Department.
17. Legal implications – The Epping Forest Consultative Committee is a consultative group, rather than a formal statutory committee, and its constitution is not subject to specific legislative provisions. The Epping Forest and Commons Committee is therefore able to vary its Terms of Reference and membership, as necessary.
18. Prior to exercising certain powers under the City of London Corporation (Open Spaces) Act 2018 the Corporation as Conservators must consult such persons or bodies as it thinks appropriate and the arrangements as set out in this report would generally satisfy that requirement.
19. Since the Consultative Committee was first established, it has been confirmed that later iterations of the Members' Code of Conduct do not apply to the membership of consultative groups, so the Terms of Reference have also been updated on this basis.
20. Risk implications – This is a revision of an existing Consultative Committee structure and is therefore 'business as usual' and considered low risk. Implementation of the City of London Governance Review may require a further

review of the status of this Committee.

21. Equalities implications – Equalities statements and policies have been incorporated into these revised terms.
22. Climate implications – The UK Government has binding targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and hence global warming by 2050, with the Consultative Committee acting as a key factor in the engagement and protection of the Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) at Epping Forest which is directly affected by climate warming.
23. Security implications – None
24. 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.

Conclusion

25. An excellent level of applications has been received to take part in the next three years of the Epping Forest Consultative Committee, which is testimony to its success in its first three years.
26. Oversubscription, particularly in some themes of interest, has required clarification of some organisation particulars in order to make appointments for the next three years. Revised Terms of Reference are included here for consideration.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Epping Forest Consultative Committee - Terms of Reference – Full Revised 2021

Background Papers

Epping Forest Consultative Committee Membership 2021-23 (SEF 02/21) Epping Forest & Commons Committee 18 01 2021

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Epping
Forest

Registered Charity

Epping Forest Consultative Committee – Terms of Reference

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Purpose of Committee

1. The Epping Forest Consultative Committee considers and discusses areas of current concern or debate at Epping Forest. It receives public reports prior to their consideration by Epping Forest and Commons Committee and provides advice or opinion on those matters.
2. Minutes of meetings and outcomes of the Consultative Committee's discussions are considered by the Epping Forest and Commons Committee in a public report to inform decision making. Likewise, most recent minutes of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee are to be reviewed by the Consultative Committee.
3. The EF Consultative Committee is not a formal decision-making body, but views will be noted in formal reports to the Epping Forest and Commons Committee.
4. Consultative Committee meetings are to be scheduled several weeks prior to alternate Epping Forest and Commons Committee meetings to consider papers and matters arising, with sufficient time scheduled for revisions to papers to be made for Epping Forest Committee, and minutes to be included in documentation.

Conduct, attendance and other principles

5. The City of London Members' Code of Conduct and associated documents should be taken as a guide to the principles of behaviour and conduct expected of Members of this Committee.
6. Should an attendee fail to attend 2 or more out of four consecutive meetings, their place may be forfeited. The Epping Forest and Commons Committee may choose to reallocate this space to an alternative interested organisation.
7. Although not a decision-making Committee, deliberations should be sufficiently well attended for advice to the Epping Forest and Commons Committee to be considered representative. For those reasons, minimum attendance of four representatives of locally interested organisations is required.
8. Consultative Committee Members are representatives of their organisation, affiliates and theme of interest, but conduct guidelines, and other legal and administrative requirements apply to individuals. Every effort will be made to accommodate attendance by nominated proxy in unavoidable circumstances, but such substitutions may not always be

possible and must not be considered routine.

Scheduling, location and public access

9. Meetings are scheduled at Loughton (as far as is possible), as the geographic centre of Epping Forest. Alternative venues may be considered by agreement, including wholly or partially 'virtually hosted' meetings using suitable internet communications technology.
10. Meetings are on a weekday evening, avoiding school and public holidays.
11. There will be a minimum of three meetings a year.
12. Should a change of frequency or location, including peripatetic meetings be preferred by this forum, that request must be made to the Epping Forest and Commons Committee.
13. Meetings will be held in public (numbers subject to venue capacity). Public questions are at the discretion of the Chairman.

Allocation of positions

14. The EF Consultative Committee has representation from Chairman, Deputy Chairman, Verderers and other members of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee where interested.
15. Meetings are Chaired by the Chairman of Epping Forest and Commons Committee or Deputy Chairman or other nominated official in their absence.
16. The Superintendent of Epping Forest and other City of London officers will attend as required.
17. The meetings are administered by a representative of City of London Town Clerks Department.
18. Attendants are nominated members of groups that hold a specified interest in Epping Forest, and that have a comparably large membership, and/or a broad geographically spread membership from across the Forest and with knowledge or interest in the themes of heritage; recreation/sport; conservation; general/informal use or voluntary and friends' groups.
19. Tenants, business partners or other organisations with commercial interest in Epping Forest (or wider City of London Open Spaces) are not invited to

attend as other routes exist for such input. Local authorities of all tiers also have access to direct liaison forums and are not invited to attend.

20. In the interests of impartiality and equality, political parties are not invited to attend.
21. Organisations with or sympathetic to extremist policies or views including supporting, assisting, planning or carrying out criminal activity motivated by a political or ideological viewpoint are prohibited
22. Groups nominating a representative must be formal, constituted organisations. This may include rule books, articles of association, standing orders or other formal agreement to which members sign-up to and adhere. This must include their own definitions of formal membership and their subscription terms, meetings and voting rights.
23. Groups must also ensure that their constitution (or equivalent) includes or makes reference to that groups Equality Statement or policy, which must be provided to the City of London on request.
24. Invitations to express interest and to nominate representatives are advertised through press release, social media, email and direct correspondence by City of London. Applications require details of how the nominating organisation meets the above criteria.
25. A balance of themes of interest is ideally met as follows:

Nature Conservation <i>Conservation groups in Forest, or with wider remit</i>	3
Friends/Voluntary <i>Formal working groups e.g. litter pickers groups, 'Friends of' etc.</i>	3
Heritage <i>Historical societies, rural preservation etc.</i>	2
Informal users <i>Schools, Youth groups, families associations, local forums and interest bodies</i>	2
Recreation <i>Recreational user groups – e.g. walkers, riders, cyclists</i>	3
Sports <i>Formal organised sports on Forest e.g. Golf, Football, cricket running etc.</i>	3
	16

26. Should more expressions of interest be received than can logistically be accommodated, selection will be made by members of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee by the following (not in order of importance):

- Size of membership

- Geographical area of interest (i.e. area of Forest covered)
 - Theme of interest
 - Record of attendance (once established)
27. Where membership numbers are declared by an applying organisation or group, these must be active members – i.e. those who have actively subscribed or joined providing full name and contact details; agree to a constitution or similar as aforementioned, including invitation to attend and vote at annual general meetings; and requirement to renew periodically (typically annually), most usually with an associated fee. Members must be counted as individuals subject to such terms, and not households or groups. 'Membership', for the purposes of this definition does not include customers paying for goods or services or 'passive' subscriptions or sign ups to mailing lists either electronic or hard copy, or followers or group members to social media broadcasts, chats and communications.
28. Epping Forest and Commons Committee may appoint further members or co-opt representatives (for example subject matter experts) to attend where it deems appropriate.
29. The Consultative Committee serves as established for three years (starting in 2018), after which the invitation and nomination process outlined above is repeated.

Requirements and responsibilities

30. Nominated representatives must meet criteria similar to those set out by the Electoral Commission for eligibility for local government election:
- At least 18 years old
 - Not employed by the City of London, or another organisation holding a commercial interest in Epping Forest or other CoL open spaces.
 - Have not been sentenced to a term of imprisonment of three months or more (including suspended sentences), without the option of a fine, during the five years before nominations close.
 - Not disqualified under the terms of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (which covers corrupt or illegal electoral practices and offences relating to donations).

31. Representatives must commit to representing the views of their organisation and members. Organisations that have applied but could not be accommodated will be advised to communicate with members representing their theme of interest either formally (e.g. affiliation) or informally and such communication is encouraged.
32. Representatives must share agenda and documentation internally within their organisation (subject to confidentiality) as well as minutes and outcomes of discussions.
33. Any representative or organisation found to contravene any of the terms herein may be excluded from the Consultative Committee permanently and without notice by order of the Chairman of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee.

Committee(s) Epping Forest and Commons – For decision	Dated 8 March 2021
Subject: Epping Forest Car Parking – Additional tariff options and consultation feedback (SEF 12/21)	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	4,11,12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	Y
If so, how much?	£110,000
What is the source of Funding?	Local Risk
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	Y
Report of: Director of Open Spaces	For Decision
Report author: Jacqueline Eggleston, Head of Visitor Services	

Summary

Your Committee has agreed to introduce charging for car parking within Epping Forest commencing with 14 of the 50 car parks, based on a standard tariff.

The general public have now been consulted on further options for charging along with the opportunity to feedback opinion, make suggestions and raise any additional concerns regarding the introduction of charging for car parking.

The consultation feedback from 2,600 responses made between 27 January to 15 February are presented in this report, together with further recommendations for the tariff and the implementation of charging to reflect the consultation feedback.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the feedback from the public consultation exercise
- Decide additional options for modelling car park charging at Epping Forest:
 - a. Hourly fees varying by location
 - b. Hourly fees varying by day.
 - c. A regular user 'season ticket scheme and pricing.

Main Report

Background

1. The introduction of parking charges at Epping Forest was approved at your Committee on 16 November 2020. Further detail on the fees for the standard tariff and other terms of parking were agreed at your Committee on 11 January 2021.
2. It was agreed that public consultation would commence once the basic parameters of charging had been agreed and consultation therefore was launched following the January Committee decisions.
3. A 'Frequently Asked Questions' (FAQ) information page was added to the City of London website. The content of this is attached as Appendix A.
4. The online consultation ran from 27 January to 15 February. The content of this questionnaire is attached as Appendix B. There were a total of 2,600 responses to the questionnaire.

Proposals

Tariff Models

5. The consultation proposed additional charging options that would help to meet the overarching aims of implementing car park charging. The public were invited to say how far they agreed with each proposal.
6. The public were invited to read the FAQ on the website and additional explanations were added to each question to align the purpose of the proposal with the objective it aimed to achieve.
7. The first question was to gauge a general response to the decision to implement charging. Around one third were in support of the proposals and the rest disagreed with the decision.
8. Further questions consulted on proposals to add a premium charge to some car parks based on peak times and/or premium location and an option to purchase an annual supporter scheme which includes parking.
9. The final question was to seek any other comments by consultees.

Hourly fees varying by day

10. Across all Forest car parks there is a greater demand at weekends and bank holidays than weekdays. In order to manage capacity a premium tariff could be charged during these peaks of demand, at weekends and bank holidays.
11. This model would apply a 25% increase to the chosen base tariff at weekends and public holidays.

12. This charging model would be in effect the opposite of most other local schemes, which have reduced charges at weekends and on public holidays.
13. This may have the consequence that Forest users opt to use neighbouring facilities which have reduced weekend rates. This would alleviate pressure on Forest car parks nearer to town centres but would also reduce income to the charity (Aim 1).
14. There may also be displacement of cars on to neighbouring roads in the centre and south of the Forest where, in some cases, resident parking schemes do not apply at weekends. However, in most cases, the car parks offer better direct access to the Forest and opportunities for on road parking are limited.
15. It should be noted also that, in the south of the Forest it has been the introduction of Residents Parking Zones around underground and overground stations that has already displaced commuter parking to the Forest. There are further yellow line schemes and Resident Parking Zones already implemented or being planned in residential areas adjacent to the north of the Forest that will increase pressure on Forest car parks.
16. The car parks in High Beach, like car parks in the north of the Forest that may be added after this first phase of charging, would not be undercut by cheaper local parking or on road parking which is more limited. This model would therefore achieve the combined benefits of dissuading some visitors away from the more heavily congested honeypot sites, which in the centre and north are also near to some of the most ecologically sensitive areas (Aim 3).

17. The majority of respondents disagreed with this proposal (75 %)

Premium tariff car parks

18. A standard tariff will apply to all car parks regardless of day of week or location.
19. However, if charging were to be varied by location it would help to steer visitors away from one location to another in order to better manage capacity and reduce environmental impact (Aim 3).
20. The premium tariff would be calculated based on the base charging tariff plus 25%.
21. Higher charges could be implemented at:

High Beach:

- Pillow Mounds
- Generals Ride

Chingford Hub:

- Connaught Water
- Barn Hoppitt (and seasonal overflow)
- Connaught Tennis Club

22. This would create a premium charge for these honey pot sites that are most regularly over- capacity. Warren Pond Car Park (Connaught Tennis Club) would need to be added to this equation or it would quickly become congested with displaced vehicles. The lower charges at the Bury Road car parks would attract more vehicles to where there is greater capacity and where the Forest is better able to sustain greater visitor numbers.

Leyton Flats:

- Hollow Ponds
 - Boathouse
23. These are also honeypot sites that are regularly over-capacity. Higher charges here would dissuade some car use and would tackle both commuter use and the displacement from hospital car parks by hospital visitors and NHS staff and contractors (where charges already apply) (Aim 2).
24. This option allows for those parts of the Forest most under pressure for vehicle parking to contribute most to its care and preservation. It may also act to spread this pressure across the Forest's facilities and infrastructure by dispersing a percentage of visitors away from these enhanced rate locations.
25. The additional maintenance for to areas of high traffic could be offset by this increased levy.

26. The majority of respondents disagreed with this proposal (74 %)

Regular User Scheme

27. Previous visitor surveys show that over half of Forest visitors attend more than once a week (58%). An alternative scheme for daily car park charging to present a saving and convenience to the regular visitor could be introduced.
28. This will help to maintain support for the Forest from its most regular visitors and prevent alienating a potentially core supporter community.
29. Most surrounding public car parks (not resident parking schemes) offer a 'season ticket' or some variation of this. These season tickets vary in cost from around £515- £1700 per annum.
30. A season ticket could be marketed in a similar way to other heritage organisations, offering free parking and for example, a quarterly magazine.
31. It is important that a season ticket is operational upon roll out of parking charges. Therefore additional resources would need to be spent on marketing materials and CRM software.
32. The scheme would need to be priced closer to local car park season ticket schemes to be viable, rather than to comparable heritage membership schemes. The Epping Forest scheme would not benefit from the economy of scale which for example, allows the National Trust to offer membership at £71 (individual membership) and £126 (family consisting of 2 adults).

33. A pricing structure could be based on average regular use; a visitor parking in the Forest twice a week over a year for up to 1 hour per visit would pay £156. A scheme that included an annual parking permit for £150 would be a more cost-effective solution for the majority of visitors.
34. To prevent this becoming a cheap option for commuters, a maximum stay of 6 hours would apply to all including those participating in a 'season or supporter' scheme, to prevent abuse of this provision.
35. A maximum dwell time will increase the availability of parking capacity for those wishing to enjoy the Forest and is a method commonly adopted to prevent commuter parking, for example in supermarkets.
36. The majority of respondents said they were unlikely to buy an annual permit, although 14% said they *would* be very likely (5%) or somewhat likely (9%) to use it. This would equate to an income of between £20,700 and £36,750, although it should be noted that there is a consequent reduction in the daily income at car parks where regular users pay annually.

Additional Feedback

37. The consultation then allowed for an open response to the information presented in the questionnaire and several themes emerged in the responses.
38. From the 2,600 responses, 1,782 (86.5%) completed the 'any other comments' section.
39. 2,714 comments were made in total with respondents making several points in their response. The figures which follow are presented as a percentage of the overall number of comments.

Supporter scheme

- 85% thought £150 was too expensive and many suggested fees from £50 to £75. 383 people said they *would* buy a ticket at £150. This would therefore raise £57,450 from the scheme. If by comparison, the season ticket was £75, £28,725 would be raised (half as much).
40. Both these income figures can be compared with an annual projected income of £149,370 from an equivalent number of visitors staying for the average number of visits (three times a week up to two hours). This would equate to 12 visits per week at £2.50 = £30 pounds a month or £360 pounds per year.
 41. However, a lower price season ticket may encourage more visitors to buy into the scheme (although this will reduce regular income).

Need for use for over 6 hours.

There was some concern from users who held events such as long-distance walks. This did not seem to be a concern for individuals. Any organised event or activity on the Forest should be licenced and therefore extended parking times could be arranged through the licencing scheme.

Organised events/ affected businesses

42. Section 8(2) of the City of London (Various Powers) Act 1977 is very clear that car parks are only for Forest use and therefore businesses and charities that have come to rely on them for their own purposes are not strictly a concern for the Epping Forest charity. However individual conversations are taking place with those directly affected.
43. There was a strong lobby for discounts or free use from several businesses and organisations regularly using the Forest or relying on car parks in the Forest for their activities. Some of these were organisations that should be, but don't currently, apply for a licence for their activity. If a licence was applied for, special arrangements can be made for parking (but there would still be a charge). Separate arrangements are being made with business tenants of Epping Forest charity.

Local resident discount

44. Many comments thought there should be a discount for local residents or free parking. The majority were from Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) but there were also comments from residents of the London Boroughs of Waltham Forest and Redbridge. A good proportion of these respondents believed that they were already paying council tax for the Forest or assumed that EFDC runs the Forest - despite all of this being clearly explained in the introduction to the questionnaire. Previous surveys have shown that 95% of Forest visitors live within 2km of the edge of the Forest, therefore a discount would negate the concept of charging which would then not be viable.

Too expensive / opposed

45. 23% of comments expressed opposition to charging citing either as too expensive or stated a strong belief that access should remain free of charge. Comments centred on the value to mental health, need for exercise and that it was the Conservators duty to provide this for free. Although not factually correct, several comments were made in the mistaken belief that Queen Victoria had declared that the Forest should be free forever. This commonly held view is a simple misrepresentation of the Queen's statement at the official opening of the Forest.

Unfair on poor/ families / those with mobility limitations

46. 10% of comments suggested charging would be unfair on low income or young families and those with mobility issues/ elderly but that did not have a blue badge. Most of these comments were made in the third person about 'others' although there was genuine concern from a number of older visitors who felt the charge was not affordable and would prevent them accessing the Forest. A means tested discount for parking is not a viable operation for this scheme and the discount option is being made available through the supporter scheme. In addition, blue badge holders can park for free, there are free bus passes for pensioners and residents of London boroughs receive free passes for all public transport. It is made clear in the FAQ just how much of the Forest can be accessed by public transport.

Cycle parking/ public transport

47. There was a plea for more cycle parking and this will need to be addressed as soon as sufficient revenue is raised from the scheme. There were also calls for a bus service to be provided to access the Forest, in particular High Beach, which was highlighted as an area that needs fewer visitors (Aim 3). Previous attempts to service High Beach by bus has evidenced that such a service was not financially viable without a public subsidy. Furthermore, the closure of car parks did not affect numbers of visitors during lockdown periods thus alternative methods of access can be assumed to be sufficient.

COVID-19

48. 5% of comments centred on the COVID-19 pandemic and that introducing car parking charges, when other facilities are closed and there is even greater need for accessing open spaces, is poor/cynical timing or an attempt to capitalise on the situation. Members will be aware how long charging for car parks has been in discussion and the previous reports dating back a number of years. The pandemic has exacerbated the City of London's need to make savings as well as necessitating additional spending to cope with the additional visitors displaced by the lack of other available recreational services. The 12% savings target that the Epping Forest charity will need to make in 2021/22 means that implementing the charging this financial year is essential if core services are to be maintained (Aim 1).

Displacement parking

49. 8% of comments expressed concerned that charging would result in displacement parking, especially in local residential areas. Regular meetings are held with neighbouring local authorities in advance of decision making and meetings have also been held local authority highway officers to make them aware of the proposed charging. It is then the responsibility of the relevant highway authority to make local arrangements.

Operational concerns

50. 3% of respondents were concerned about the operational viability of the scheme, particularly perceived lack of phone reception for making payment. This is being tested and alternative charging facilities will be made available where required. It was a concern that paying in advance would be problematic when, for example, a walk takes longer than planned. The payment scheme being progressed does allow for additional time to be added by phone.
51. Further suggestions around options for payment were made and many thought that up to 2 hours should be free. Without cameras this is an unenforceable arrangement and the advice has been that free periods are subject to abuse. However, lack of cameras does mean that there is a grace period when entering the car park to make arrangements for paying, dropping off and collecting etc. as enforcement will be through periodic visits.

Value for money

52. 1% of comments raised that charging must result in improvements to the Forest, particularly more bins, less litter and better paths. Income from car park charging will be invested in the management of the Forest. Members are reminded that charges have been introduced to provide a standstill budget on a service that has been benchmarked at the lower end of the national Open Spaces funding spectrum. No individual investment in services could be undertaken without the overperformance of charging against current projections.

Alternative income

53. There were several comments suggesting that alternative means of raising income should be tried. Some of the suggestions (selling logs for example) are already in place and make a minimal return. Members will be aware that there is a working party looking at the wide range of income generating possibilities officers are already working on and that those considered most appropriate being prioritised.

Blue badge parking

54. The questionnaire also ascertained that 3% were blue badge holders and that many of these sometimes had difficulty finding a disabled parking space especially in High Beach. It is proposed therefore that dedicated blue badge parking will be set aside at the visitor centre car park in High Beach and that disabled bays are kept under review in other car parks with usage informing when there should be an increase or decrease in bays.

Options

55. Five options for additions to the basic tariff are presented for your Committee's consideration:

a. Premium location tariffs - Agree to charge a premium in specific car parks that reflects the additional costs to the Forest for maintaining these sites and to redistribute parking to less sensitive areas. This would be in addition to the tariff scheme agreed above. The consultation shows that there is strong opposition to this suggestion. Implementation of this would be a further complication to the roll out of new charges and will confuse messaging. It may be better to consider this again at a later date.

This option is not recommended.

b. Increased peak period charging - This places a premium on weekend parking at all car parks. Car parks are busier at weekends but placing an additional charge only at these times may seem exploitative and is unlikely to affect the ratio of visitors from weekday to weekend. It may however alleviate overcrowding and parking chaos and would increase income to the charity. The consultation shows that there is strong opposition to this suggestion. Implementation of this would be a further complication to the roll out of new charges and may confuse messaging. It may be better to consider this again at a later date.

This option is not recommended.

c. Membership / regular user scheme - Over half of visitors to Epping visit more than once a week. An annual payment for a discounted set price will benefit regular users financially and will be more convenient. Whilst there may be a reduction in overall income for the Forest compared to daily charges there will be more certainty of income which will better enable planning and such a scheme could generate a valuable membership relationship with visitors. 14% of respondents to the consultation felt that they might use such a scheme.

This option is recommended.

d. The proposed cost of this season ticket is £150 which is benchmarked between town centre car park charges and heritage venues, recognising the urban location of many of the car parks and availability of public transport compared to many heritage sites.

This option is recommended.

e. The charge could be reduced to £75 to align more closely with other heritage organisation membership schemes and be a more affordable option for visitors but this would reduce overall income.

This option is not recommended.

Strategic Implications

56. 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. Improving car park facilities and accessibility promotes opportunities to value and enjoy the outdoors for recreation, learning and healthy living; and developing a long-term management strategy will help protect the integrity of the environment.

Financial Implications

57. A season ticket option has the potential to reduce overall income in comparison with daily ticket income from the same number of visits. However, without a season ticket option usage may also decrease. A season ticket also creates the benefit of the option of a supporter membership scheme.

Resource Implications

58. The estimated forecast budget for the scheme indicates that an in year pay back for the initial outlay is possible, depending on how the initial investment is managed.

Legal Implications

59. 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.

Equalities Implications

60. An initial screening exercise of the equality impact of this decision has been undertaken by the City Corporation. At this stage, it is considered that there are no negative impacts on the protected equality groups. Blue badge users will receive free parking for a capped number of hours. 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

Charity Implications

61. 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.

Climate Implications

62. The implementation of car park charging can play a role in promoting 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.

Conclusion

63. Charging for car parks has been agreed as a necessity in Epping Forest to manage capacity, deter non Forest users that present a direct cost to the charity and to raise revenue to maintain the car parks which otherwise require resourcing from the charity's finances that could otherwise be spent on protecting of the Forest for public recreation and enjoyment, as well as its internationally significant natural heritage.
64. This report recommends that a supporter scheme be established that will help ensure affordability and convenience to regular users who would incur charges on multiple occasions. The report also presents the key findings from a public consultation on the charges along with changes that can be made as a result of this feedback along with clarification as to why some of the suggestions in the feedback are not able to be delivered.
65. Charging will encourage more sustainable visits to the Forest, dissuading car use as far as possible but ensuring that where users visit by car the costs to the charity of providing parking are offset by the users of parking facilities rather than through funds that would otherwise be expended on the conservation and protection of the Forest for public recreation and enjoyment.

Appendices

Appendix A - Car park charging FAQs

Appendix B - Car park charging consultation questions and results

Background Papers

- URS Car Park Study Feb 2014
- Epping Forest Car Parking – Introduction of Parking Charges (28/20b)
16/11/2020
- Epping Forest Car Park Tariffs 11/01/2021

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CAR PARK CHARGING FAQ'S

WHY ARE YOU INTRODUCING CHARGES FOR PARKING IN THE FOREST?

The introduction of car park charges has the following four aims:

- To generate enough income to offset the significant cost of continued car park provision so that the charity's limited resources can be spent on protecting the Forest and improving the visitor experience.

Epping Forest is a registered charity. Managing a busy Forest with 4.2 million visits each year, alongside internationally important nature and heritage conservation assets is a demanding exercise which costs £4.5 Million to run each year, without the support of local taxation. Most of the charity's funding comes from the City of London Corporation's philanthropic resources but the charity also generates income and seeks alternative sources of funding.

- To reduce the impact of non-Forest users on Forest car parks to free space for genuine Forest users.

The number of cars trying to access our car parks regularly exceeds the capacity available especially at peak periods. This is an issue where Forest car parks are located near other facilities with 'pay to park' arrangements such as train stations, healthcare provision or even local high street shops. The internally recognised statutory protections that cover many parts of the Forest prevent the expansion of car parks.

- To better protect the Forest's ecologically sensitive areas by influencing where visitors visit.

Around 45,000 vehicles pass through the Wake Arms roundabout in the heart of the Forest each weekday. Tens of thousands of vehicles travel up and down the other roads through the Forest every day. Exhaust pollutants are up to three times higher than the limits set to protect plant health. Car use, particularly in the interior of the Forest, should therefore be discouraged where possible, to better protect this ancient woodland for future generations to enjoy.

- To encourage more sustainable access to the Forest, for example travel by public transport or bicycle, to reduce the impact of harmful vehicle emissions.

There are 270,000 homes within a short walking distance of the Forest and we are confident that visitors have excellent alternative means of accessing the Forest other than by car. At least 14 train/underground stations and 16 different bus services offer access points within a 12-minute walk. This was tested in March 2020, during the first period of 'lockdown' when for a large part of the time the car parks were closed. The Forest was possibly at its busiest ever with an estimated 1.3 million visits over a 6-week period. Cycling is welcomed across most of the Forest and newly refurbished car parks include cycle parking points. The Charity would like to install

more of these in other Forest car parks, which could be funded using revenue raised from car park charges.

ARE ALL FOREST CAR PARKS INCLUDED?

In this first phase of charging, there are 14 car parks proposed. However, over future years charges may be applied to more Forest car parks.

- Wanstead Flats: Centre Road, Alexandra Lake & Jubilee Pond.

This will tackle vehicle displacement from resident parking zones and commuter use.

- Leyton Flats: Hollow Ponds, Boathouse & Eagle Pond.

This will tackle commuter use and the displacement from hospital car parks by hospital visitors and NHS staff and contractors (where charges apply).

- Chingford Hub: Bury Road, The Caddie House (Chingford Golf Course), Connaught Water, Barn Hoppitt (including seasonal overflow) and Connaught Tennis Club.

This will tackle commuter use at Bury Road and Chingford Golf Course car parks and prevent consequent displacement to Barn Hoppitt, Tennis Club and Connaught Water.

- High Beach: Pillow Mounds, Generals Ride & High Beach Visitor Centre.

This will tackle the over capacity use of this area.

HOW HAVE YOU DECIDED ON THE CHARGES?

We have undertaken a benchmarking exercise and calculated the cost of provision to provide a range of suggested tariffs that will be presented to the Epping Forest and Commons Committee (EF&CC) for decision in January 2021. There are three options for the basic tariff ranging from below town centre charging points to a 'heritage attraction' higher tariff.

From January we will be consulting and engaging with stakeholders, tenants and the public on variations to the tariffs which consider location, peak times and regular visitors. We will use the feedback to consider ways to address particular concerns. The results will feed into the report presented to EF&CC in March. If you would like to take part in this consultation, it will be made available on our website in January and we will promote its launch on social media and by emailing correspondents.

COULD A VOLUNTARY CHARGE BE LEVIED INSTEAD?

This has been tried at many other green spaces, including our sister site Burnham Beeches. Donations there were very low and as a result voluntary charges were replaced by a formal charging system.

I VISIT THE FOREST TWICE A DAY TO WALK MY DOG, CAN I BUY A PERMIT FOR ANNUAL PARKING?

A significant number of visitors make multiple daily visits to Forest car parks. One of the proposals we are consulting on is to operate a supporter scheme which includes an annual parking permit. This provision would be subject to a 'cap' on the length of stay to prevent it becoming an attractive option for non-Forest users, such as commuters.

I HAVE A BLUE BADGE. DO I HAVE TO PAY TO PARK?

Parking will remain free for Blue Badge concessions. Marked bays for blue badge holders have been audited and provides enough provision on peak days. However, on implementation of the scheme this will be monitored, and additional marked bays can be laid out if there is increased demand. Blue badge holders can also park in regular bays, suitable for their needs, if no marked bays are available.

I RIDE A MOTORCYCLE. DO I HAVE TO PAY TO PARK?

Proposals are currently that parking motorcycles will remain free of charge.

HOW WILL I PAY FOR MY PARKING?

Due to the isolated location and nature of the car parks, payment by cash at conventional machines will be highly susceptible to theft. Cashless payment systems have been adopted by many local authorities and car park operators with success. Proposals outline two types of payment options:

- Pay by Phone – Telephone call or via web application.
- Pay & Display Machine – Card payment only.

WILL VEHICLES BE TOWED?

There is currently no intention to tow vehicles as a parking enforcement measure. Parking penalties will be managed through penalty charges.

WHAT WILL THE PENALTY CHARGES BE?

Penalty charges are part of the benchmarking exercise to be decided at Committee.

WHAT WILL THE INCOME BE SPENT ON?

Many heritage green spaces such as the National Trust, English Heritage and Royal Parks charge visitors or for car parking to generate income to fund and reinvest in the sites. Adding a charge for parking will help the City to challenge perceptions that management of the Forest is 'free' and that there is no cost to its preservation or management, including the upkeep of 50 car parks. All the income provided by car park charges, less the costs of maintaining the scheme, will be reinvested in the Forest.

WILL THERE BE A REVIEW PROCESS?

There will be a review of the Car Parking Charging Scheme after 12 months of operation. The tariff and penalty charges, as with all other fees and charges across the Forest, will be reviewed annually in January each year, from 2022.

WILL RESIDENTS BE AFFECTED BY DISPLACEMENT PARKING?

The car parks proposed for charging in phase one are either not adjacent to residential housing or Residents Parking Zones (RPZ's) are already in place. In the south of the Forest it has been the introduction of RPZ's around underground and overground stations that has displaced commuter parking to the Forest.

We will continue to liaise with local authorities on car park charges implementation and improved sustainable transport options.

HOW WILL THE CAR PARKING SCHEME BE MANAGED?

The practical operation of the car parks will be subject to a tender exercise and finalised over the coming months.

ISN'T THE FOREST IS SUPPOSED TO BE FREE?

Some observers believe Queen Victoria gave a 'gift' of Epping Forest to the public and the Forest is often referred to as 'the People's Forest'. The reality is that Queen Victoria's dedication to the public at the official opening in 1882, was simply recognising the City's purchase of the Forest.

Epping Forest had been privately owned for the 300 years prior to the Epping Forest Acts of 1871, 1878 & 1880 but remained subject to the requirements of Royal Forest

Law between 1217 and 1878. The sale of Forest Law rights to raise funds for the Crown from the 1850s fuelled damaging encroachments of the Royal Forest of Epping and facilitated the felling of much of neighbouring Hainault Forest. The City Corporation supported a landmark case in 1874 which halted enclosures, before purchasing much of the Forest prior to 1878, settling the boundaries of the Forest in 1882.

Others believe that the introduction of charges is contrary to the undertakings given in the narrative to the Epping Forest Act 1878 that the City of London Corporation was willing to meet the costs of managing Epping Forest.

Managing Epping Forest for public access, heritage, land and nature conservation is an expensive undertaking. In addition to meeting the initial £30 Million purchase costs, the City Corporation has funded the costs of managing Epping Forest for the benefit of London and the nation from its own philanthropic resources since 1878 without support from national or local taxation. Nevertheless, while the Forest has always been free for public access on foot or by public transport, since its earliest days the City Corporation has levied charges, from licencing beer stalls, donkey rides and photographers to charging for football matches and entry to The Wanstead Park Grotto.

Some 142 years on, acting as a charitable trust, Epping Forest operates in a much changed environment, whether it be the growth of the suburbs and the populations surrounding the Forest, new legislative requirements around heritage, nature conservation and public safety, the cost of managing the Forest has grown significantly.

Despite improved income from a range of estate charges to tenants, wayleave holders and activity providers, additional income is now required to maintain a safe, conserved and accessible Forest.

The principle of public access on foot and by bus or train remains true to this day, however, the Trust needs to continue raise income from a range of charges, which are entirely invested in the management of the Forest.

The Epping Forest Acts 1878 & 1880 pre-date the invention of the motor car in 1886. Recognising the need to manage the post-1950s growth of car ownership, and subsequent car parking pressure at Epping Forest, the City of London (Various Powers) Act 1977 granted additional powers to Epping Forest to provide car parks and to charge for car parking.

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EPHING FOREST CAR PARK CONSULTATION

INTRODUCTION

Epping Forest is a charitable trust (charity number 232990), which is funded by the City of London appointed as the Conservators of Epping Forest under the Epping Forest Acts 1878 and 1880. Managing a busy Forest with 4.2 million visits each year, alongside internationally important nature and heritage conservation assets is a demanding exercise which costs £4.5 million to manage each year, without the support of local taxation. Most of the charity's funding comes from the City of London Corporation's philanthropic endowment fund and with the charity also generating income and seeking alternative sources of funding.

The Epping Forest and Commons Committee have taken the decision to introduce car parking charges from Spring 2021.

The charges for a standard tariff have been agreed as:

- £1.50p up to 1 hour
- £2.50p up to 2 hours
- £4.00p 2 – 4 hours
- £6 Full Day (up to 6 hours)

These will be introduced in 16 car parks in the first phase. These are:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| • Centre Road | • Hollow Ponds |
| • Alexandra Lake | • Boathouse |
| • Jubilee Pond | • Eagle Pond |
| • Bury Road | • Pillow Mounds |
| • Chingford Golf Course Car Park | • Generals Ride |
| • Connaught Water | • Rushey Plain inc. turnaround |
| • Barn Hoppitt (& seasonal overflow) | • Wellington Hill (when re-opened) |
| • Connaught Tennis Club | • Flagstaff Hill (when re-opened) |

For location maps please see FAQ's on our web page:

<https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/green-spaces/epping-forest/whats-new-in-epping-forest/car-park-charging>

CONSULTATION QUESTIONNAIRE

The introduction of car park charges has the following four aims:

A. To generate income to offset part of the significant cost of continued car park provision so that the charity's limited resources can be spent on protecting the Forest and improving the visitor experience.

Many heritage green spaces such as the National Trust, English Heritage and Royal Parks charge visitors, on entry or for car parking, to generate income to fund and reinvest in the sites. Adding a small charge for parking will help the Epping Forest Charity to preserve and manage the Forest, including the upkeep of 50 car parks.

B. To reduce the impact of non-Forest users on Forest car parks to free space for genuine Forest users

The number of cars trying to access our car parks regularly exceeds the capacity available especially at peak periods. This is an issue where Forest car parks are located near other facilities with 'pay to park' arrangements such as train stations, healthcare provision or even local high street shops. This leaves those genuinely visiting the Forest at a disadvantage and in effect means the Epping Forest Charity is subsidising commuters, shoppers and other business workers & visitors.

C. To better protect the Forest's ecologically sensitive areas by influencing where visitors visit.

Around 45,000 vehicles pass through the Wake Arms roundabout in the heart of the Forest each weekday. Tens of thousands of vehicles travel up and down the other roads through the Forest every day. Exhaust pollutants are up to three times higher than the limits set to protect plant health. Car use, particularly in the interior of the Forest should therefore be discouraged where possible, to better protect this ancient woodland for future generations to enjoy. Whilst car parking charges won't influence those driving through the Forest they can dissuade visitors to the Forest from driving through the Forest to access car parks in the interior such as at High Beach.

D. To encourage more sustainable access to the Forest, for example travel by public transport or bicycle, to reduce the impact of harmful vehicle emissions.

There are 270,000 homes within a short walking distance of the Forest and we are confident that visitors have excellent alternative means of accessing the Forest other than by car. There are 14 train/underground stations within a 12-minute walking distance of Epping Forest and 16 different bus services within a maximum eight-minute walk to the Forest.

Car-free access was tested in March, during the first period of 'lockdown' in 2020, when for a large part of the time the car parks were closed. The Forest was possibly at its busiest ever with an estimated 1.3 million visits over a 6-week period. Cycling is welcomed across most of the Forest and newly refurbished car parks include cycle parking points. The Charity would like to install more of these in other Forest car parks which could be funded using revenue raised from car park charges.

1. After reading the reasons for Epping Forest Charity introducing car park charging, how far do you agree or disagree with charging?

- Agree Completely
- Somewhat agree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree completely

Heavily used car parks cost the Epping Forest Charity more to maintain. Several, more popular car parks in the Forest suffer from overcrowding and irresponsible parking, particularly at busy times like weekends and bank holidays.

Weekend parking activity increases by 50% and weekday parking activity increases by 30% in the summer months and on average for most of the car parks. Furthermore, visitors often drive through the heart of the Forest to visit the most popular locations contributing to pollution levels within the Forest.

One solution could be to add an additional 'peak times' tariff. This recognises Epping Forest as a desirable location for a 'day out', similar to a visit to a country park, cinema or even a shopping trip.

Another solution could be to add an additional 'premium central location' tariff at the most popular car parks, situated in sensitive areas in the heart of the Forest, such as Connaught Water, High Beach and Barn Hoppitt to encourage visitors to park in the free or standard charge, larger capacity car parks on the periphery of the Forest or choose alternative ways to access the Forest.

An additional 25% fee for 'peak time' and 'premium location' tariffs has been proposed. This could raise additional income and be re-invested in the Forest to accelerate planned improvements.

- 2. Do you agree that an additional 'peak time tariff' be added to the standard charge with the aim of preventing overcrowding and irresponsible parking at the busiest times, like weekends and bank holidays?**
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - No strong opinion
- 3. Do you agree that an additional 'premium location tariff' be added at the most popular car parks in sensitive areas, to encourage use of peripheral car parks to reduce pollution levels and alternative access methods?**
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - No strong opinion

We know that many people enjoy regular use of Epping Forest, with over 50% of users visiting daily or weekly. Regular visitors may prefer to join a supporter scheme which includes parking as part of an annual membership fee. This would offer a discounted rate and would be a convenient way to pay annually. The proposed annual pass would cost £150. This represents a saving for anyone visiting the Forest more than once a week for up to 1 hour at a time and a significant saving for anyone staying longer than an hour more than once a week.

- 4. How likely would you be to join a Forest supporter scheme, at an annual cost of £150, if it included an annual parking permit?**
 - Very likely
 - Somewhat likely
 - Somewhat unlikely
 - Very unlikely
- 5. Do you have any further comments*, concerns you feel we may have overlooked or alternative ideas to address the issues outlined in the consultation?**

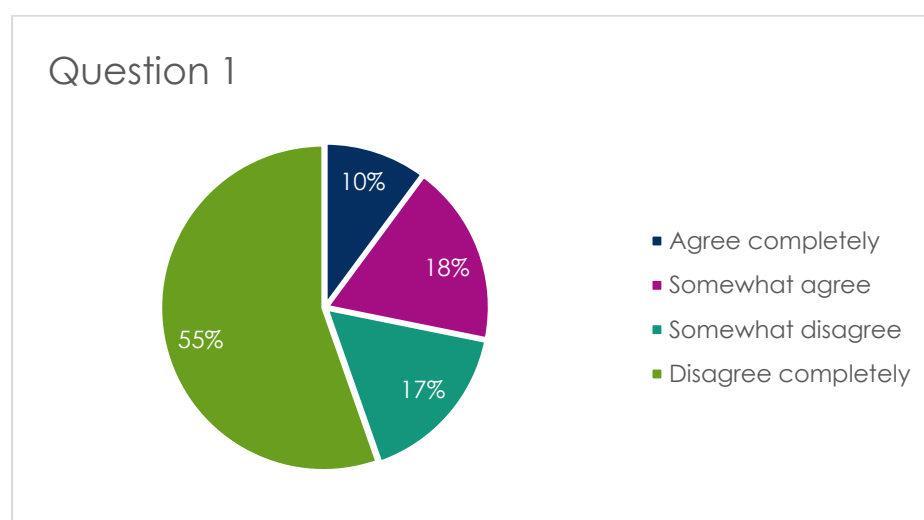
**Please note, we will use additional comments for reporting purposes but we are unable to provide a response to individual comments.*

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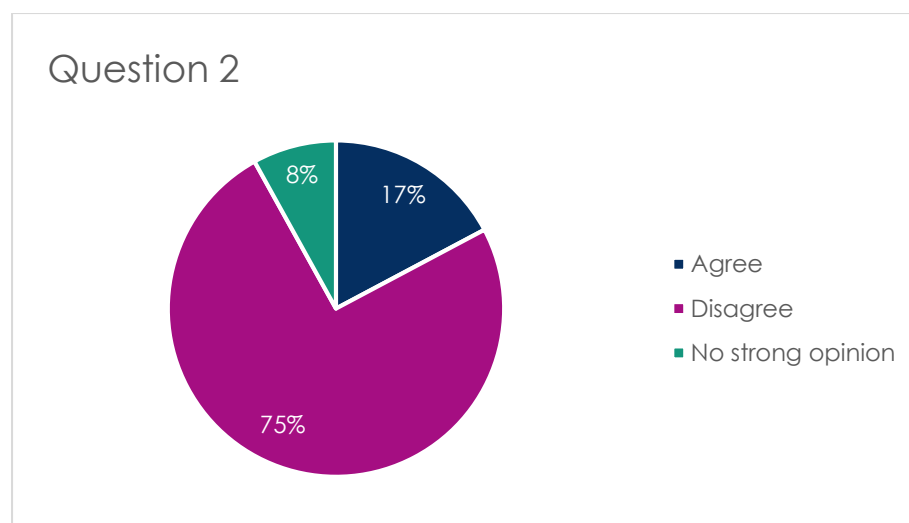
Epping Forest Car Park Consultation

2600 responses were received during the consultation period from 27 January – 15 February 2021.

Q1: After reading the reasons for Epping Forest Charity introducing car park charging, how far do you agree or disagree with charging?

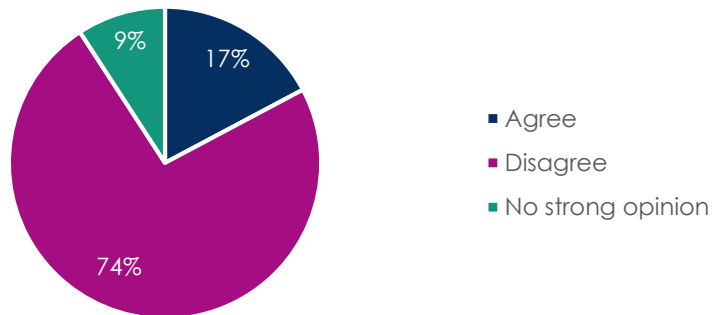


Q2: Do you agree that an additional 'peak time tariff' be added to the standard charge with the aim of preventing overcrowding and irresponsible parking at the busiest times, like weekends and bank holidays?



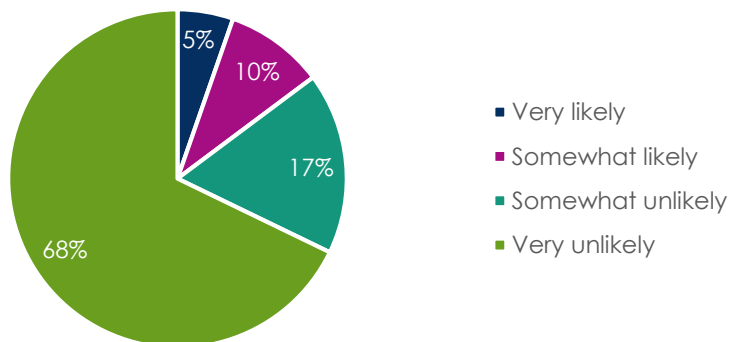
Q3: Do you agree that an additional 'premium location tariff' be added at the most popular car parks in sensitive areas, to encourage use of peripheral car parks to reduce pollution levels and alternative access methods?

Question 3



Q4: How likely would you be to join a Forest supporter scheme, at an annual cost of £150, if it included an annual parking permit?

Question 4

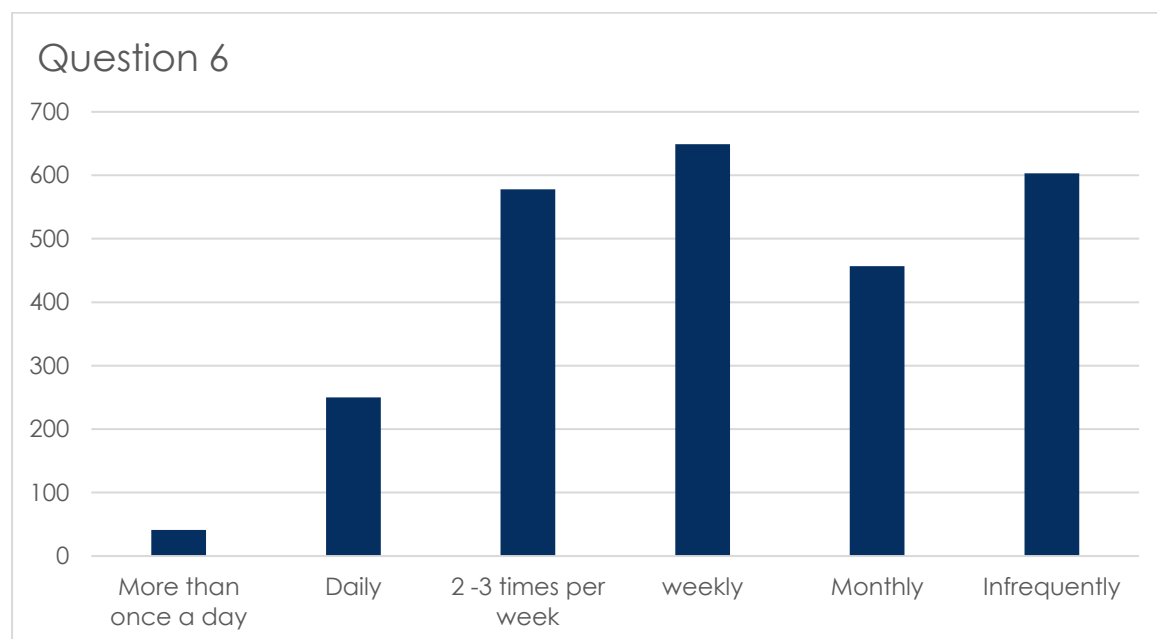


Q5: Do you have any further comments, concerns you feel we may have overlooked or alternative ideas to address the issues outlined in the consultation?

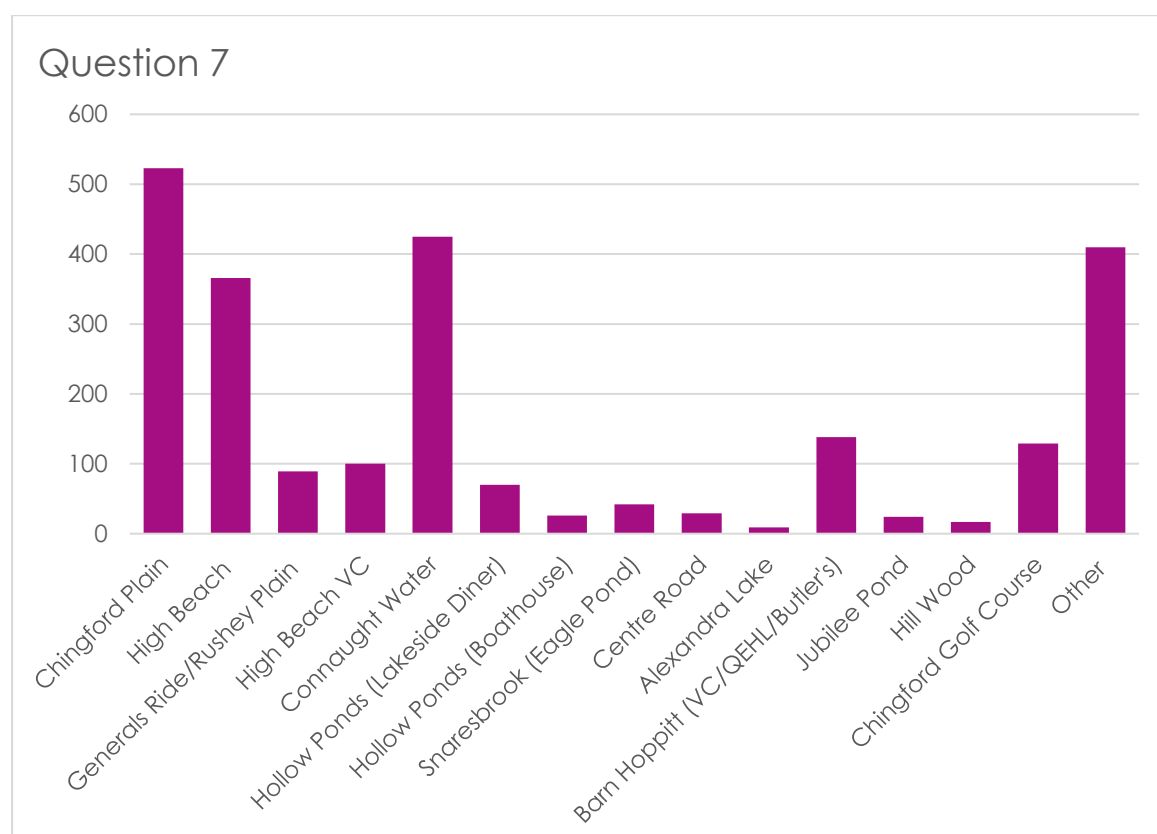
1782 responses were received

Those responses totalled 2714 comments; for example, one respondent may have said that charges were too expensive and that they were very concerned about displacement parking. This was counted as 2 comments. Comments were categorised and reported as a percentage of the total comments received. Responding to individual comments is not possible.

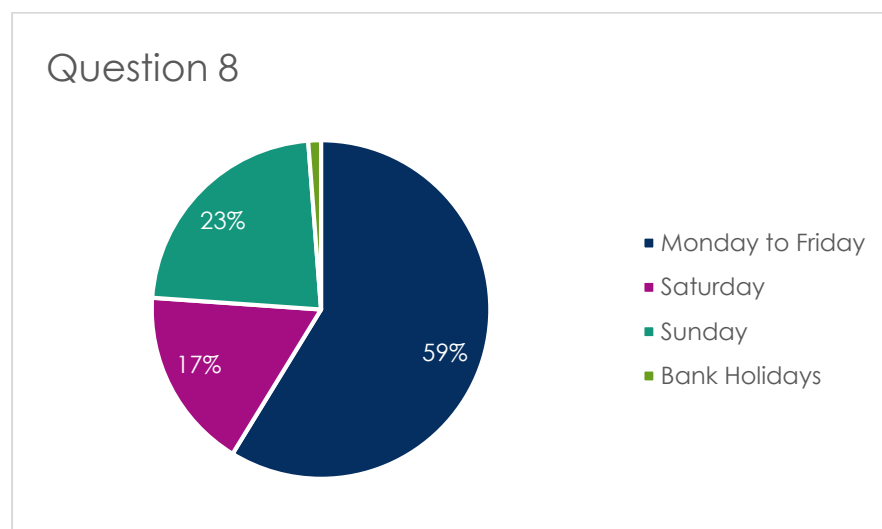
Q6: How often do you use a Forest car park?



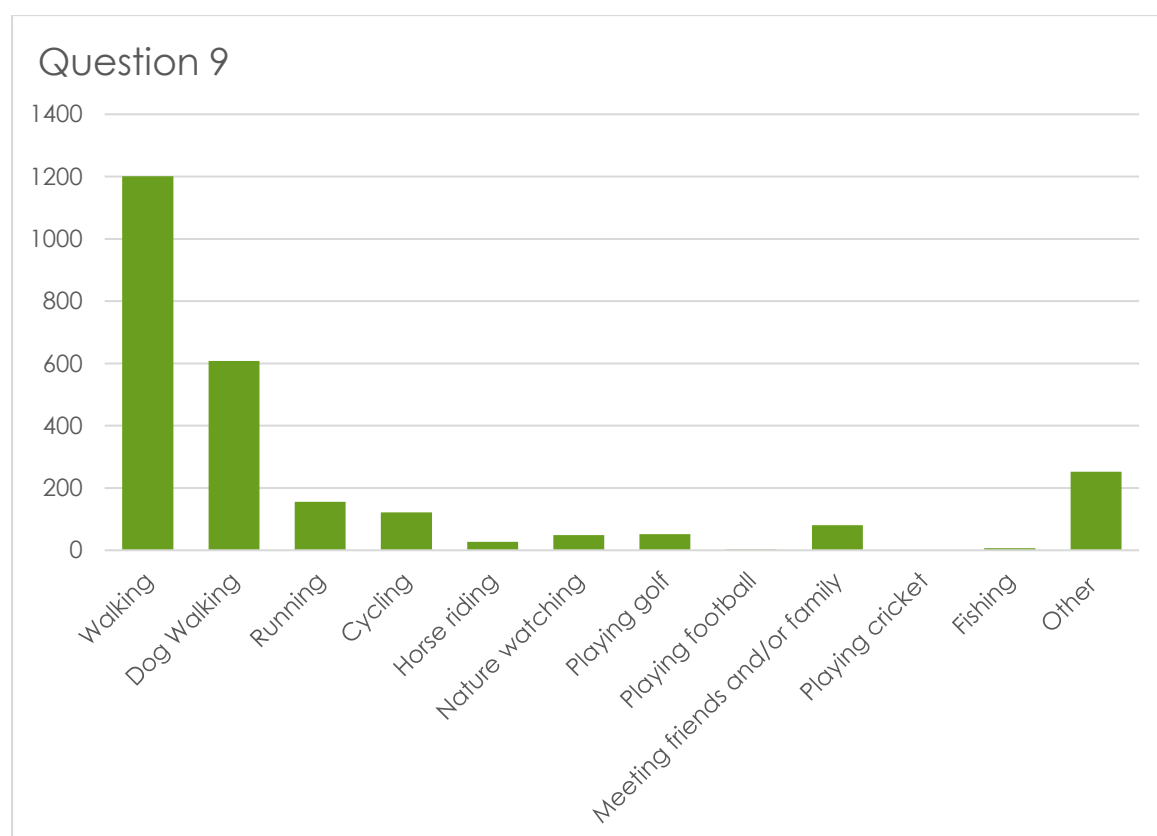
Q7: When visiting the Forest by car, which car park are you most likely to use?



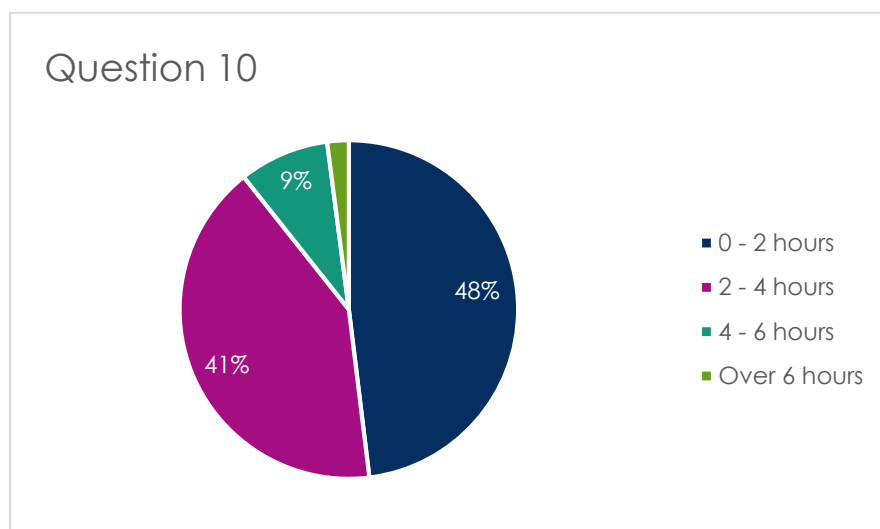
Q8: When do you mainly visit the Forest?



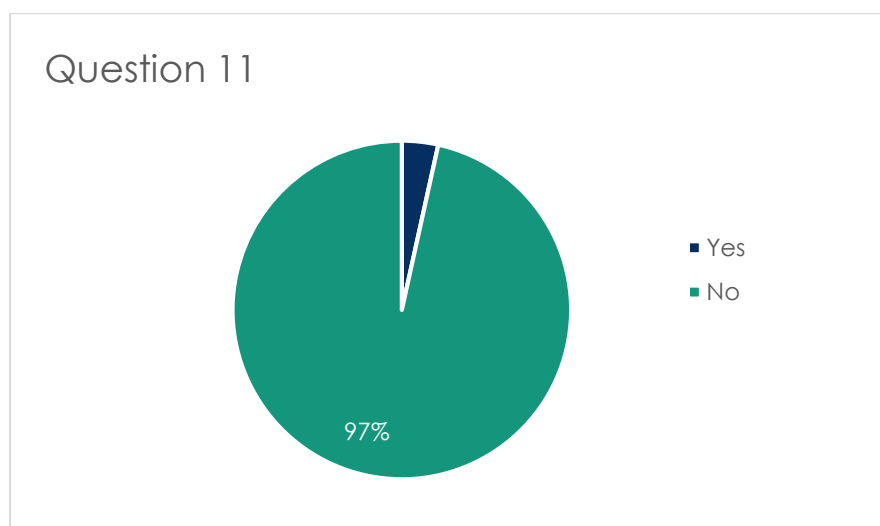
Q9: When you visit the Forest, which activity do you mostly undertake?



Q10: When you visit the Forest, how long do you spend there?



Q11: Are you a Blue Badge holder?



Q12: If Yes, do you ever have problems finding a parking space and if so, where?

55% of blue badge holders had trouble finding a parking space when visiting Epping Forest. This was across all Forest locations, but High Beach and Connaught Water were cited as particularly problematic. Blue badge holders have found the problem exacerbated during lockdown and that marked bays are often subject to abuse by non-blue badge holders.

Q13: Please enter your email address below if you would like to receive more information from Epping Forest Charity. Your details will only be used for Epping Forest communication.

1145 responses were received to this question.

Less than half (44%) the respondents were interesting in receiving more information from Epping Forest Charity.

Committee(s): Epping Forest Consultative - For consultation Epping Forest and Commons - For decision	Dated: 23102020 08032021
Subject: Epping Forest Cycling Management Strategy (SEF 25/20b)	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1, 2, 3, 4 & 11
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
Report of: Director of Open Spaces	For Decision
Report author: Laura Lawson, Projects and Policy Officer, Epping Forest	

Summary

This report presents to your Committee a proposed Cycling Management Strategy for Epping Forest outlining existing provision, management challenges currently presented by cycling activity in Epping Forest, and proposes a range of actions to address these.

Specifically, immediate actions include increasing engagement with the different cycling communities, allowing greater permissive cycling in Wanstead Park and identifying need for temporary cycling 'exclusion areas' to allow for damaged habitat recovery.

The draft Epping Forest Cycling Strategy was subject to stakeholder consultation in, late 2020, and this proposed strategy includes several amendments as suggested by consultees. A detailed consultation report was compiled and shared with stakeholders.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Approve, subject to the incorporation of any changes sought by this Committee the, Epping Forest Cycling Management Strategy attached as Appendix 1.

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Main Report

Background

1. The Forest is a popular place to enjoy cycling in the natural environment and to explore further than visitors might be able to do on foot. In the detailed Visitor

Survey (2014) it was estimated that as many as 10% of visitors to Epping Forest do so to cycle. In context, that is over 400,000 visits per annum.

2. Existing byelaws cite bicycles and tricycles in section 3(10) of the Epping Forest Byelaws & Additional Byelaws (1980/1986); 'Driving, moving, or using a bicycle, tricycle or vehicle upon the Forest to the danger, injury, annoyance or inconvenience of the public' is prohibited. The byelaw does not represent an outright ban on bicycles but instead outlines boundaries regarding forms of exhibited behaviour.
3. There are several areas of the Forest where cycling is not permitted, either by byelaw (Wanstead Park), to preserve designated sites or by previous decision by your Committee.
4. Responsible cycling is welcomed in Epping Forest and a Code of Conduct outlines the behaviours expected and those which are not permitted, such as racing, of any form.
5. There have been numerous reports to your Committee, dating from the mid-1990s detailing specific cycling related issues. This is in part due to the ebb and flow of cycling popularity influenced by external drivers, such as the rise in popularity of both Multi-Terrain Bike (MTB) (1996) and BMX (2008), following their inclusion in the Olympic Games.

Current Position

6. Since the Coronavirus pandemic, the Forest has seen a large increase in visitors. Recent snapshot visitor surveys put the increase of visitors at 350%.
7. These visitors enjoy many different pastimes and cycling, in its various disciplines, is proving increasingly popular, growing from 10% in 2014, it and now accounts for 12-18% (2020) of Forest visits.
8. This growth may account for an increase in the incidents of user conflict between cyclists and other Forest users, such as dog walkers and horse riders, and some negative impact on some sensitive areas of the Forest.
9. To address this initially, the Cycling Code of Conduct has recently been revised and re-circulated via signage, social media and the City of London website. The Code promotes shared use and courteous behaviour which most visitors abide by.
10. Forest Keepers have found evidence of physical alterations (construction of jumps and berms) installed to increase the riding challenge. These are constructed by individuals or small groups, belonging to a sub-set of cyclists, known as mountain bike (MTB) or Bicycle Motocross (BMX) riders.
11. These constructions are not permitted, and the Operations Team have been removing them when found. This has caused a small amount of negative publicity, particularly on interest groups on social media, which dissipated quickly.
12. Officers recognise that more work is needed to fully understand and engage with cyclists using the Forest and the Epping Forest Cycling Strategy (Appendix 1) outlines the opportunities Epping Forest presents for recreational cyclists

whilst providing additional measures to manage the balance between visitors and protection of the Forest.

13. An initial draft Epping Forest Cycling Strategy was subject to stakeholder consultation in October 2020. A detailed report outlining amendments and inclusions suggested during consultation has been distributed to these stakeholders and this, the revised Strategy, presented to your Committee.

Options

14. Option 1 – Adopt the Epping Forest Cycling Strategy. Adopting the Strategy will assist officers in their duty to protect the Forest and improve the visitor experience. **This option is recommended.**
15. Option 2 – Do not adopt the Epping Forest Cycling Strategy. Dismissing the Strategy will not address the continued growth in the number of visitors choosing to cycle in Epping Forest and the consequential impact on the Forest and its other visitors. **This option is not recommended.**

Proposals

16. The Epping Forest Cycling Strategy proposes additional measures be taken to help manage the impacts of cycling in Epping Forest; to better ensure the safety and enjoyment of all visitors and to mitigate damage, or potential damage, to the Forest environment which increased cycling may bring.
17. The strategy will be reviewed cyclically (initially after 12 months) to ensure that the content is relevant and responsive to the demands of the current time.
18. Specifically, the strategy proposes several actions that will address the challenges presented by cycling in Epping Forest:
 - a. Promoting responsible conduct and the ‘shared use’ nature of Forest paths and trails
 - b. Creation of ‘exclusion zones’ where cycling will be prevented for a set period to allow for habitat restoration
 - c. Additional clarity that there will be no allowance of man-made MTB or BMX structures
 - d. Proactive engagement with cyclists capturing the various cycling variations, such as MTB, BMX or gravel riding
 - e. Promotion of a circular cycling route
 - f. Engagement with partners to enable where feasible, commuting by bicycle
 - g. A review of cycling in Wanstead Park with an aim to increase permissive use

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications

19. The strategy supports the Corporate Plan (2018-23) outcomes – Contributes to a flourishing society (1 & 2) and Shape outstanding environments (11 & 12)

20. The strategy supports the Open Spaces Department Business Plan 2020/21 – outcomes 1, 3, 5, 7, 8 & 11.
21. Recreational cycling meets with the Epping Forest Strategy, ‘London’s Great Forest’ (2020 – 2030) strategic objectives 1 & 3 - ‘A welcoming destination for all’ & ‘An inspiring space for peoples’ health, recreation and enjoyment’

Financial & resource implications

22. Initial actions proposed in the Strategy can be met within existing local risk budgets and staffing.
23. Potential future works, such as installation of additional secure cycling parking at car parks, will be subject to securing additional external funding as outlined in the Strategy.

Legal implications

24. The City is required to keep Epping Forest for the recreation and enjoyment of the public and to preserve the natural aspect of the Forest as far as possible (S.7 Epping Forest Act 1878).

Risk implications

25. Directing cyclists to routes will involve carrying out a risk assessment and carrying out periodic inspections in order to manage potential exceptional hazards such as fallen trees or significant erosion. However, information provided to users will make clear that the routes are permissive for cycling, not specifically for, and are part of a natural environment and as such will involve uneven surfaces whose condition will be subject to weather impacts and natural obstacles.

Equalities implications

26. An initial Test of Relevance (Appendix 3) screening exercise of the equality impact of this decision has been undertaken by Epping Forest.
27. Consideration has also been given to consultation feedback expressing concern that the lack of tarmac paths for cyclists disproportionately affects cyclists with protected characteristics which make it more difficult for them to negotiate routes. It is acknowledged that uneven surfaces and other obstacles are an integral part of the natural environment which could make cycling on the routes more difficult or impossible for people with disabilities who might otherwise wish to use them. The provision of made-up paths for cyclists is not proposed due to the requirement to preserve the natural aspect of the Forest. However, any adverse impact is mitigated by the provision of maintained, less rough routes for walkers and wheelchair users. The separation of cyclists away from other visitors is also considered to improve conditions for those other visitors with protected characteristics which limit their mobility or vision. The proposals are therefore considered justified. Other than in respect of the consultation response there are not considered to be any negative impacts on any protected equality groups.

Climate implications

28. By improving the cycling offer and working with partners to better link the Forest with local communities, active travel will be a more appealing choice. Shifts to

active transport and non-vehicular access to the Forest, should have a positive impact on carbon emissions and air quality.

Security implications

29. None.

Charity implications

30. Epping Forest is a registered charity (No. 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.

Epping Forest Consultative Committee

31. The Consultative Committee considered the initial draft Epping Forest Cycling Strategy at their meeting of the 21 October 2020 and the following was noted;
- a. further consideration be given to members suggested cycle routes
 - b. further consideration be given to the bicycle parking
 - c. consideration be given to safety concerns particularly the relationship between cyclists and horse riders sharing the Forest paths
 - d. Members asked that the timeline be extended for Epping Forest and Commons Committee decision, from November 2020 to March 2021.
32. Points a to c above have been addressed in the revised Strategy document with further partnership work to be progressed, for the suggested Wanstead Park route.

Conclusion

33. Epping Forest is an increasingly popular location for cycling. As the activity and nature of cycling grows, additional measures will be necessary to help to manage visitor enjoyment whilst protecting the Forest.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Epping Forest Epping Forest Cycling Strategy

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Epping
Forest

Registered Charity

Cycling Management Strategy 2021-2023

March 2021

City of London Corporation, Epping Forest

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Introduction

1. Cycling is a growing, popular, recreational pastime, and it has previously been estimated that around 10% of people who visit the Forest, do so to cycle. In context, that is over 400,000 visits per annum.
2. Since the Covid-19 pandemic there has been up to 350% increase in visits to the Forest and cyclists now represents up to 18% of visitors.
3. Recreational cycling meets with the Epping Forest Strategy, 'London's Great Forest' (2020 – 2030)ⁱ strategic objective 3 '*An inspiring space for peoples' health, recreation and enjoyment*' and the City of London Corporate Plan 2018-23 aim: *Contribute to a flourishing society - People enjoy good health and wellbeing*.
4. Cycling is welcomed on Epping Forest. However, the activity does raise several management issues, and these are predicted to increase, just as they have during the Covid-19 pandemic, as future local housing developments will see an increase in visitor demand.

What we have now

Paths and terrain

5. Paths in the Forest are mostly multi-user, and none are designated or promoted specifically for cycling.
6. The terrain used for cycling varies in Epping Forest. There are 36kmⁱⁱ of surfaced shared-use paths which provide a firm 'gravel', surface that cyclists may use. These may not be suitable for road bikes with tarmac specific tyres but suit most other bicycle types, including non-standard cycles, and all levels of cyclists, including young children, for enjoyable off-road leisure cycling.
7. There are also informal unsurfaced paths, totalling over 170kmⁱⁱⁱ, through rough woodland and grassland. These can become very muddy and difficult to cycle, particularly in the winter, but remain popular with riders who enjoy the escape of gravel riding, cyclocross (CX) or multi-terrain bike (MTB) year-round.

Signage and maps

8. Whilst there are many surfaced and unsurfaced paths in the Forest that cyclists use, they are not promoted for cyclists and there are no specific cycling routes. Signage aimed at cyclists is limited to areas where cycling is not permitted, such as at ecologically, historically and geologically sensitive sites.
9. There are nine waymarked routes which cover a combination of surfaced and unsurfaced paths. These are in the most part aimed at visitors on foot and routes may not be suitable for all types of bike/ability of rider. Similarly, the few other signposted routes are easy access trails where cycling is not permitted.

Cycling for access or travel

10. Cycling as a transport method for Londoners is supported by the City of London Corporation. This healthy, sustainable travel solution benefits the Forest by reducing the impact of air and noise pollution in and around the Forest.

11. To encourage visitors to travel to/from the Forest by bicycle, cycle parking facilities were installed in the car parks upgraded as part of the Branching Out Project. Cycle parking is available at The View Visitor Centre (Barn Hoppitt), Jubilee Pond, Chingford Hub (by Go Further Cycling), High Beach Hub and Connaught Water. These sites are highly popular with visitors and the cycle parking facilities make them accessible by bicycle for those who choose sustainable transport methods.
12. Since 2010, the City of London Corporation has worked with local authority partners and Transport for London (TfL) to facilitate a number of cycle routes;

Date	Route name & connections	Distance (km)	Delivery Partner
2010	Quietway 6 (Barkingside to Wanstead Flats to Stratford)	6km	Redbridge & TfL
2011	Epping Forest Greenway (Snaresbrook to Stratford)	7km	Olympic Delivery Authority, TfL and LA's
2011	Centre Road Crossing Point (for the Redbridge Greenway)	N/A	Redbridge & TfL
2011	Wanstead Park Cycle Path	1.5km	Redbridge
2012	Roding Valley Way (Roding Valley Station to Beckton)	15km	Redbridge
2013	Wanstead Park Permissive Cycle Path	0.5km	Redbridge
2017	Quietway 6 (Aldersbrook Road to Aldgate)	5.5km	Newham & TfL

Table 1

Cycle Hire

13. In 2017, the Conservators supported Go Further Cycling to provide cycle hire in the Forest just a short walk from Chingford train station. Chingford station is serviced by a direct, overland train from London Liverpool Street Station which takes around 25 minutes. Bicycles can be taken on the Central line between Leyton and Epping/Newbury Park^{iv} at off peak times (peak times are weekdays 07:00 – 09:30 or 16:00 – 19:00).
14. Go Further Cycling houses a small retail area for bicycle parts/spares and carry out servicing and repairs.
15. Brompton Bike Hire is available at Leytonstone Station (Dock 3141), located on the island spur between Church Lane and Kirkdale Road.

Other Facilities

16. Car Parks - There are numerous car parks, across the Forest, where adequate parking is provided for those wishing to travel to the Forest before starting their bicycle ride. This is often a choice for those engaging in more technical MTB due to the heavier bikes

being unsuitable for road riding but also those with younger family members who are capable of cycling in a traffic free environment but cannot negotiate the busy access roads such as the A104, A121 or A1069.

17. Refreshments –Butler's Retreat and the Holly Tree Café provide indoor seated experiences for those seeking a social refreshment stop and the Forest Tea Huts, along with other local venues, give riders plenty of options to enjoy hot/cold drinks and snacks before, during or after their rides.
18. Toilets – Public toilets are available at the Visitor Centres at High Beach, Chingford and Wanstead Park and on Forest Land at Woodford Green (provided by London Borough of Redbridge).
19. There are organisations which offer led cycle rides, coaching and group rides on the Forest. These offer skill improvements for newer riders and encourage greater confidence in riders of all ages. See Appendix 2 for contact details.

Cycling Restrictions

20. Cycling is currently **not permitted** in the following areas;

- i) Wanstead Park - It is contrary to Wanstead Park Byelaws and Regulations (1903) & additional byelaws 1950 to cycle in the park.

However, in line with the byelaws, there are two permissive access routes which have been set apart by the Conservators for the purpose of cycling, thus permitting access between the Aldersbrook Estate and Wanstead and vice versa, as indicated by signage to that effect exhibited in the Park.
- ii) The easy access paths found at High Beach, Connaught Water, Knighton Wood and Jubilee Pond – this is for the safety and comfort of visitors with access needs^v.
- iii) Loughton Camp and Amesbury Banks – cycling could cause damage to these two Iron Age earthworks, both Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM) which are of national importance.
- iv) Loughton Brook – listed as a Local Geological Site (LoGS) and the brook meanders have important geology that could be damaged by cycling.
- v) Buffer Lands – free range cycling is not permitted on this, mainly farmed, land. However, there are bridleways and byways which can be used in line with the Countryside Code.
- vi) Pole Hill – this small area was excluded from cycling in 2006 following excessive damage caused by the purposeful building of jumps and berms.

21. Additional restrictions exist for certain types of bicycle

- i) De-restricted e-bikes or speed pedalecs are **not permitted**.^{vi}

22. Other activities which are **not permitted** are;

- i) Racing of any kind - including digital KOM/QOM 'chasing'
- ii) Building jumps, berms, trails or any other physical alteration of the Forest's fabric intended for cycling use.^{vii}

Both activities breach the Epping Forest byelaws.

23. The Conservators actively promote the **Epping Forest Cycling Code of Conduct** to ensure the safety, and comfort, of all our visitors and the protection of the Forest.^{viii}

Vision

24. Epping Forest is ‘a welcoming green space for recreational cyclists of all ages to explore and enjoy responsibly’.

Objectives

25. To manage cycling responsibly, ensure that those who choose to explore the Forest by bicycle do so without negatively impacting on the Forest or other visitors.
26. To improve engagement with the cycling community to educate and gain knowledge of the challenges and issues when cycling in Epping Forest.
27. To work positively with partners to encourage better strategic links to access the Forest to encouraging active travel and greener transport options.

Challenges

28. There are several significant challenges that are faced managing cycling in Epping Forest;
- a) **User conflict** - Cyclists can be perceived as intimidating to other visitors using shared use paths, particularly if they pass without warning or at speed. However, complaints about cyclists are occasional so it appears that most cyclists ride considerately and yield to walkers and horse riders as required by the Epping Forest Cycling Code of Conduct and the Countryside Code. Complaints between user groups sharing the paths and open space increased during the Covid-19 pandemic. This was in line with the increased visitor numbers attracted to the Forest during that time.
 - b) **Damage** – Some areas attractive to more adventurous cyclists have been damaged through repeated and intensive use. The more sensitive ground areas in the Forest are affected by compaction, erosion or plant destruction and some riders have also added man-made jump/ramp structures, damaging the ecology. At the time of publication, this is particularly apparent at the Claypit Hill area. The protection of the Forest takes priority over this type of activity which therefore cannot be permitted.^{ix}
 - c) **Carrying capacity** – During the Covid-19 pandemic, visitor numbers increased by around 350%, with survey data showing many more cyclists in certain areas. There is also an increased demand for housing in the area^x. Local Plans for the London Boroughs neighbouring the Forest (Waltham Forest, Redbridge and Newham) project some 78,000 new homes and there are also proposals for over 11,400 homes in Epping Forest District Council by 2035. That is nearly 90,000 new neighbours for the Forest. It is certain that this will result in a lasting increase in the number of visitors,

including those who cycle. This increase in visitor numbers will require management to ensure the Forest can cope with demand as highlighted during the pandemic.

- d) **Engagement** - Other recreational activity groups, such as runners or horse riders are represented on the Epping Forest Consultative Committee (EFCC). Cyclists are not directly represented although there are currently several members of EFCC who are keen cyclists and do represent these visitors in a secondary capacity. The Conservators have not yet found an effective method to engage with the cycling community. We believe that this is in part due to the individual nature of the activity but also that those who cycle in Epping Forest tend to be content with the provision and therefore do not feel the need to engage currently.
- e) **Route Finding** - Cyclists tend to navigate the Forest through word of mouth and recommendation. The Epping Forest map in downloadable format is not sufficiently detailed for navigation around the Forest. A more detailed, Collins, map of Epping Forest is available to purchase but in the main cyclists are using electronically available apps such as Strava or GPS. This does mean that in some cases routes are being actively promoted which may or may not, be suitable for cycling.
- f) **Active travel** - The Forest does not offer many routes suitable for active travel by road bicycle and cyclists in the main use their local tarmac roads in preference to off road in the Forest. The Forest suffers from the effects of pollution due to high traffic levels and has a role to play in enabling a modal shift away from car use. However, a significant increase in commuters travelling off-road by bike, through the Forest, could exacerbate current, or raise new, issues.
- g) **Wanstead Park** – The regulation of cycling in Wanstead Park is incongruous with the rest of Epping Forest as a large section of it is governed by a separate set of bylaws. There is a permitted cycle route through from Northumberland Avenue linking with Warren Road, but cycling is otherwise not permitted within the Park. This is a confusing message with cyclists often cycling on routes other than the permitted route along with other members of the public under the impression that cycling is not permitted at all, creating conflict.

Actions

29. In order to address these challenges, the Epping Forest Charity aims to:

- a) **Reduce user conflict** – most visitors are respectful of each other and courteous of each other but there can be incidences where visitor behaviour is perceived as disrespectful, offensive or to cause a nuisance.
 - i) **Targeted pro-active management of visitors** – As part of our Communications Strategy, we will look at how we can better target messages to Forest visitors, promoting the 'shared-use' status of all paths.
 - ii) The **Code of Conduct for Cyclists** has recently been updated and publicised throughout the Forest and on the Charity's social media channels. This document highlights path use hierarchy ensuring cyclists understand they are required to give way to both pedestrians and those on horseback.
- b) **Reduce Damage** – Remedial action is required to counteract the overuse and erosion caused to certain sensitive areas. The City Corporation propose careful monitoring of several areas of concern (outlined in table 2). In the future, riding may

be cyclically excluded, for short periods of time (initially 3 years), to allow recovery of the sensitive ground and tree root compaction.

- i) **Cycling exclusions** –the areas outlined in Table 2 are of concern to the conservation of the Forest. These are showing signs of damage or erosion specifically from cycling. These areas may be subject to cycling exclusions in the future, subject to evidence of need. Exclusion areas will not include shared, surfaced trails.
- ii) Any future exclusions will be subject to decision, by Committee, should the need be evidenced, for the protection of the Forest's sensitive ecology. Remedial action required for recovery will be monitored regularly and the areas reopened when recovery has been achieved.
- iii) The areas of concern identified will be shared with local cycling organisations/ groups. Their support, by reducing use in these areas could avoid the future exclusions being necessary.

Area	Concern
Claypit Hill The Pillow Mounds	Concentrated use causing severe erosion/damage Recognised as having regional archaeological importance, this is the second most important set of mounds in Essex ^{xi} which could be susceptible to damage.
Long Running, Sunshine Plain, Furze Ground (heathland habitats)	Detrimental to the ground flora structure and heathland flora, disturbance of reptiles
Court Hill (Compartment 11) & Deershelter Plain (Compartment 12)	Beech Special area of conservation (SAC) rare moss damage
Big View, Woodbury Hollow, Trueloves and Fernhills	Those with sensitive ground flora, ground nesting species and geologically important sites

Table 2

- c) **MTB** - Forest protection, specifically the duty to 'preserve the natural aspect', is prioritised against installing man-made features for more challenging off-road riding. It is therefore not proposed to relax the restriction on building jumps and other features in the Forest or to set aside areas in the Forest to allow this activity. There are two man-made cycle specific sites in the region which offer trails to satisfy those who require more specific, MTB trail riding. Redbridge Cycle Centre offers a 2.5km long blue trail and the Lee Valley Velopark offers 8km of trails with varying levels of difficulty, from blue to black. Both sites are less than 10 miles from Epping Forest.
- d) **Carrying capacity** – This will be addressed through a Sustainable Visitor Strategy which will target measures such as improved signage and facilities to encourage visitor use of more sustainable areas of the Forest. This will help encourage cycling

activity on routes that can sustain the activity whilst remaining equally attractive to users undertaking other activities.

- e) **Engagement** – Proactive engagement with formal and informal cycling groups as well as individual cyclists will take place with a view to encouraging cycling representation on to the Epping Forest Consultative Committee at its next membership review.
- f) **Route Finding** – we will, when resources are available, promote a circular route within the Forest, connecting to cycle paths beyond the Forest. This will help to encourage cyclists away from informally promoted routes by third parties on to existing shared use, surfaced paths suitable for enjoyable recreational cycling. Stakeholder suggested routes will be considered for wayfinding improvements.
- g) **Active travel** - Whilst there is no intention of providing tarmac routes and lighting in the Forest which would be contrary to the protection of the natural aspect and designated conservation site, we will work positively with partners to enable where possible, better strategic links with Forest land and wider cycle networks to encourage greener transport options. Subject to resources, additional cycle parking could be installed at linked access locations, facilitating sustainable travel to visit the Forest.
- h) **Wanstead Park** - We will undertake a review of the current restrictions in the Park with an aim to allow permissive cycling throughout Wanstead Park on surfaced paths, particularly the circular route supported by the local stakeholder group. Park users will be consulted as part of the process to ensure local feedback on any proposals.

Implementation

The action plan below shows year 1 actions that are within budget. Longer term actions, such as path improvements, dedicated cycle ways and other infrastructure will be outside of normal budget parameters and will need additional resource through fundraising and income generation.

Action	Deadline	Responsible Officer
Continue active promotion of Cycling Code of Conduct	March 2021	Head of Visitor Services
Engage with cycling users and groups to gather information to better understand the cycling community.	June 2021	Head of Visitor Services
Review of permissive cycling in Wanstead Park	July 2021	Head of Visitor Services
Define and map areas of concern and monitor for increasing signs of damage or erosion	Dec 2021	Head of Conservation

Produce accurate GPS information of shared use paths for visitor use, engaging with mapping volunteers for assistance	Within 24 months	Head of Visitor Services
Liaise with stakeholders, neighbouring local authorities, local transport action groups and London Cycling Campaign to encourage better cycling infrastructure to connect Forest access points to local town centres or other points of interest.	Ongoing	Head of Visitor Services
Discuss any proposed car park improvement projects with cycling stakeholders	Funding/future works dependant	

Appendix 1

Epping Forest Cycling Code of Conduct

- Use the shared use trails considerately to ensure the safety and enjoyment of other visitors.
- Let people know you are there by calling out, especially when approaching from behind. Pedestrians and horse riders have priority and you must pass slowly and wide.
- Approach corners and descents with caution; dogs, wildlife and cattle may cross your path unexpectedly.
- Racing of bicycles (including digital KOM/QOM 'chasing') is prohibited in Epping Forest.
- Building or digging jumps or berms and tree cutting is prohibited.
- Leave no trace. Use the existing routes and avoid skidding to prevent erosion. Take your litter home.
- Leave gates as you find them, to prevent cattle straying.
- Respect 'No cycling' restrictions that exist to protect ancient monuments, easy access paths and delicate habitats.

Appendix 2

List of organisations/groups licenced to offer cycling activity on the Forest.

Organisation	Activity	Information/contact
Go Further Cycling	<i>Cycle hire, cycle servicing, cycle sales, guided cycle rides and training</i>	https://gofurthercycling.co.uk/
<i>Epping Forest District Council (Cycling for Health)</i>	<i>Group Rides</i>	Contact Karen Murray kmurray@eppingforestdc.gov.uk
<i>Epping Forest MTB</i>	<i>Individual and small group coaching, led rides and cycle training</i>	jarvis@eppingforestmtb.co.uk

References

- ⁱ Epping Forest Strategy, 'London's Great Forest' (2020 – 2030) *(Insert Link when live)*
- ⁱⁱ Paths Policy 2020
- ⁱⁱⁱ *ibid*
- ^{iv} <http://content.tfl.gov.uk/bicycles-on-public-transport.pdf>
- ^v Disabled visitors using bicycles as a mobility aid are exempt.
- ^{vi} Epping Forest Byelaws & Additional Byelaws (1980/1986); 3(10) *Driving, moving, or using a bicycle, tricycle or vehicle upon the Forest to the danger, injury, annoyance or inconvenience of the public*'.
- ^{vii} Epping Forest Byelaws & Additional Byelaws (1980/1986); 3(45) *Making any improper or offensive use of the Forest or doing anything tending to the injury or disfigurement thereof or to the defeat of the general purposes of the Epping Forest Act 1878 or of these byelaws & Site of Scientific Interest (Epping Forest) Potentially Damaging Operations* [OLD1001814] point 21.
- ^{viii} <https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/green-spaces/epping-forest/activities-in-epping-forest/cycling-in-epping-forest> (also appendix 1)
- ^{ix} Epping Forest Act 1878 principle duty *(insert link when live)*
- ^x New homes proposed within local plans - 27,000 Waltham Forest Local Plan (2020-2035), 12,000 Redbridge Local Plan (2015-2030) & 39,000 Newham Local Plan (2017-2033)
- ^{xi} Pillow Mounds at High Beach - Epping Forest Monument (July 2010), Essex County Council Historic Environment Branch

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Committee(s): Epping Forest Consultative Committee – For Information	Dated: 10022021
Epping Forest & Commons Committee – For Information	08032021
Open Spaces and City Gardens – For Information	27042021
Subject: Climate Action Strategy – Open Spaces “Carbon Removals” (SEF 10/21b)	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	11
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	To be outlined in the Gateway report
What is the source of Funding?	Climate Action Strategy
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	Y
Report of: Colin Buttery, Director of Open Spaces	For Information
Report author: Sally Gadsdon, Epping Forest, Open Spaces	

Summary

This report provides an introduction to the Open Spaces Department’s *Carbon Removals* project within the City of London Corporation’s Climate Action Strategy (CAS). One of the main goals of the CAS is to reduce the Corporation’s direct carbon emissions to net zero by 2027. Currently the Open Spaces are estimated to offset existing emissions by around 44%. Within the CAS, the Open Spaces *Carbon Removals* project will increase carbon sequestration and storage. This project will be conducted alongside Corporation carbon reduction and resilience projects to reduce the organisation’s net carbon emissions.

Carbon Removals operations will increase the storage of carbon in soils and plant material through the reversion of arable land to areas of open grassland or wood-pasture, tree establishment on some existing species-poor grasslands and management of woodland. This project will not only contribute to addressing the Global Climate Emergency, but also the global biodiversity crisis. There are, therefore, clear benefits to the individual open spaces charities. Epping Forest and its Buffer Lands offer the key initial opportunities. Starting in 2021, land management activities have been chosen to enable the maximum possible annual carbon sequestration target to be reached by 2027. Studies to identify further carbon sequestration opportunities beyond 2021 will be commissioned also. The funding for all the *Carbon Removals* work will come from additional funding from the City Corporation identified for CAS implementation, with further external grant income being sought to encourage supplementary work. Funding will be drawn down from CAS via the Gateway Project management process and further reports will be presented to your Committee.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- note the report;
- note the comments made by the Epping Forest Consultative Committee at its meeting on 10 February 2021.

Main Report

Background

1. The City of London Corporation (City Corporation) has adopted a radical Climate Action Strategy (CAS) as its contribution to addressing the Global Climate Emergency. The CAS sets out how the Corporation is committed to reducing its contribution to the factors that cause climate change, as well as adapting to the impact of a changing climate and the extreme weather events, such as storms and flooding, that are likely to increase in frequency and severity. The CAS sets out the steps towards achieving net zero, building climate resilience and championing sustainable growth.
2. The Court of Common Council adopted the Climate Action Strategy on 8 October 2020. This marked the start of a new and transformative programme of action. It adopted three interlinked primary objectives for the City Corporation and the Square Mile: to support the achievement of net-zero emissions, to build resilience, and to champion sustainable growth. In so doing, it committed the City Corporation to mitigating the impact of climate change by achieving net-zero emissions for the City Corporation and the Square Mile. It also committed to climate resilience through taking preventative steps to protect the City and its assets from the physical risks from climate change. Fifteen costed project delivery areas were presented with the Strategy that has since been consolidated into ten project plans. The relevant plan for this Committee is the Carbon Removals Plan, which delivers upon the goal of the achievement of net-zero emissions.
3. The current CAS covers the period 2020-2027. It recognises the City's contribution to climate change factors through the apportionment of emissions to one of three categories: its direct emissions from its own activities or those controlled by the organisation ("scope 1 emissions"); indirect energy emissions related to the consumption of energy that are not controlled by the organisation ("scope 2 emissions"); and other emissions which are a consequence of the organisation's activities which occur at sources the Corporation does not own or control ("scope 3 emissions").
4. The CAS sets out to achieve net zero on the scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2027. The Departments of the Built Environment, City Surveyor's, Chamberlain's and Open Spaces are beginning to undertake projects that will achieve net zero on the 36 kilotonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents (kt CO₂e) (greenhouse gases that cause global warming) from the City's scope 1 and 2 emissions.

5. Vegetated habitats absorb and sequester carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and sequester this within plant matter and, most importantly, the soil. This is one mechanism to lock up carbon emissions. In 2020, a study by the University of Surrey, commissioned by the City Corporation Climate Action Team, estimated the quantity of the existing annual sequestration capacity of all the Open Spaces sites (4,250 ha) at 16kt CO₂e.
6. This total of 16kt CO₂e represents an estimated 44% offsetting of the City's scope 1 and 2 emissions, highlighting the importance of the Open Spaces, and their continuing conservation management, to the Corporation and to London in the face of the Climate Emergency.
7. Alongside the declared Climate Emergency, there is a biodiversity crisis unfolding across the world, where species are being lost or populations reduced at an accelerating and wholly unsustainable rate. Locally and internationally, the Corporation's Open Spaces sites are vital refuges for species and habitats under threat in temperate Europe. In addition to their intrinsic value, healthy populations of species and healthy habitats provide ecosystem services such as clean water, crop pollination, soil protection, amelioration of air pollution, buffering against climate heating and more besides.
8. Through land management activities, biodiversity can be enhanced at the same time as the carbon sequestration rate can be increased. This will enhance the value of the work being undertaken across the City Corporation to achieve net zero on its scope 1 and 2 emissions. This report outlines the projects that the Open Spaces Department (and any successor) would undertake between 2021 and 2027 to achieve an increase in carbon sequestration.

Current Position

9. The report by the University of Surrey, commissioned by the City Corporation in 2020, identified land management activities that would increase carbon sequestration and improve biodiversity. It is thought sequestration could increase by around potentially 6-10kt CO₂e annually. The use of this report, combined with further analysis, has revealed that the greatest sequestration possibilities would be in converting arable land to areas of meadows and trees alongside allowing tree establishment on some grasslands where it is appropriate and can enhance the biodiversity. Other activities such as management of woodland and trees and grazing of grassland might be able to sequester additional carbon. The key reference for these calculations has been Natural England's report, *Carbon Storage by Habitat* (NERR043) by Alonso et al. (Natural England 2012). Additional and more recent studies have been used to provide further reference points for details of project proposals.
10. These findings have been considered in relation to the opportunities available across the Open Spaces to implement these activities. Given the nature of the various Open Spaces sites, only the Epping Forest Buffer Lands currently offer opportunities for the conversion of arable land and tree planting which includes the estates of Copped Hall, Woodredon and Warlies, Birch Hall Park, Monkham, Netherhouse and North Farm. Epping Forest may also be appropriate for

additional woodland and tree management, conservation grazing of grasslands and heaths and maintaining healthy soils.

11. The carbon sequestration potential values given in Alonso *et al.* 2012 demonstrate that arable reversion (the conversion of land in agricultural cropping to permanent grassland) will yield significant increases in carbon sequestration. It also shows that woodland management results in an increase in carbon sequestration. The report is limited in the number of different types of land management activities considered. To identify further land management activities studies will need to be undertaken to understand opportunities for additional carbon sequestration.
12. Land management has been identified for implementation starting in 2021 based on the information above. Studies to understand further beneficial work will need to be commissioned to allow land management activities to be scheduled for 2023-2027. Therefore, land management will be done in phases. The approval to undertake Carbon Removals work will be done through the Gateway process, reports of which will be presented to your Committees.

Options

13. The Gateway report will report on the options for approval.

Proposals

14. The Gateway report will present the proposals that the *Carbon Removals* project be undertaken in a phased approach. This will allow carbon sequestration land management activities to be started as soon as possible to enable the maximum possible annual sequestration target to be reached by 2027. Further phases, in parallel, will encompass the commissioning of studies to identify further opportunities and the delivery of these opportunities.
15. The first phase is being proposed to involve carbon sequestration on the Epping Forest Buffer Lands. These sites provide the greatest potential for relatively rapid carbon assimilation rates in the early years of the project. The CAS funding would ensure that available arable land would be converted to grassland cover and that the costs of the management of this land, to protect and increase the carbon stored in its soils, could be ensured. Having made this immediate change of land use, officers would then seek to lever in external grant income, such as Stewardship, to enable additional work for biodiversity and heritage conservation. Such grant income would amplify the annual income on the land to match or exceed any previous or potential agriculture-based income.
16. Whilst the current opportunities have been identified at Epping Forest and its Buffer Lands, there are likely to be other land management activities that would be undertaken across the Open Spaces between 2021 and 2027. These additional activities will be important in enabling a further increase towards the desired carbon sequestration target.

Key Data

17. The Open Spaces Department is estimated to already offset approximately 16kt CO₂e of the City Corporation's emissions (~44%).
18. The City Corporation's Climate Action Strategy aims to reach net zero by cancelling out or offsetting its scope 1 and 2 emissions, amounting to a total of 36kt CO₂e annually.
19. It is thought additional land management activities undertaken by Open Spaces could realise a potential additional 6-10kt CO₂e of sequestration annually, if the measures outlined above are implemented. The increase in sequestration capacity is dependent on final site evaluation, species and planting densities. Carbon sequestration will be measured through the *Carbon Removals* project.
20. An additional key metric is likely to be measure changes in biodiversity, this method for doing this needs to be defined, and this is likely to be done in be the studies that will be commissioned.
21. Performance will be tracked by through the Key Performance Indicators, including carbon sequestration capacity, which will be defined and tracked to judge its overall delivery success. Each KPI will be tracked at a quarterly basis and will be reported as part of the formal Climate Action Strategy progress reporting in the Annual Report and via reports to this Committee.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

22. The Carbon Action Strategy is complementary to London-wide and national efforts to reduced emissions and improve resilience of our communities and urban spaces in the face of the Climate Emergency. This includes the draft London Plan, the Greater London Authority's London City Resilience Strategy 2020, the UK Committee on Climate Change Climate Risk Assessment 2017 and National Adaptation Programme, as well as the landscape of policies set out by government.
23. The *Carbon Removals* project within the Climate Action Strategy will meet Outcome 11 of the Corporate Plan: "*We will have clean air, land and water and a thriving and sustainable natural environment*". The Climate Action Strategy builds upon existing City Corporation strategies and policies including: The Responsible Business Strategy 2018-2023, the Climate Mitigation Strategy, the Carbon Descent Plan, the Responsible Investment Policy, the City Procurement Strategy 2020-2024, the Local Plan 2015, the draft City Plan 2036, the Transport Strategy 20218-2043, the Air Quality Strategy 2015-2020, the Transition to a Zero Emission Fleet Policy, the Renewable Electric Policy & Sourcing Strategy.
24. By aiming for net zero, the City Corporation will be contributing to the UK government's Nationally Determined Contribution, which commits the UK to reducing economy-wide greenhouse gas emissions by at least 68% by 2030. This legal commitment has been made by the UK Government under the UK Climate Change Act 2008 (revised 2019), which has enshrined in law both a

target of net-zero emissions by 2050 and requirements for measures for climate adaptation.

25. As described above, some of the Buffer Lands have been identified as essential for enabling the *Carbon Removals* project to meet its aims and to contribute to the required proportion of the Climate Action Strategy's net zero target.
26. Some of these areas of Buffer Land are business critical to CAS operational requirements and, therefore, would not be subject to a Section 56 declaration of the Standing Orders of the Court of Common Council relating to property assets surplus to departmental requirements.
27. Furthermore, in addition to enabling a response to the Climate Emergency, the original purpose of the Buffer Lands as a refuge for wildlife can now be enhanced significantly. The *Carbon Removals* project will provide opportunities and funding to ensure meaningful Biodiversity Net Gain through the expansion of protected wood-pasture and parkland, a UK priority habitat, adjacent to the internationally important Epping Forest.

Financial implications

28. The financial requirement is detailed in the relevant Gateway reports. These reports will request release of funds that have been set aside by the Policy and Resources Committee to fund delivery of the Climate Action Strategy (the dashboard at the beginning of this report indicates no extra revenue and/or capital spending is required).
29. Whilst sufficient funding is available through the Climate Action Strategy (around £1.93 million), there are a number of external funding opportunities which may be available to contribute to the cost of delivering the works long-term. These will be explored, and appropriate funding applied for, to both reduce the amount requested from the Climate Action Strategy for any one project while allowing additional carbon sequestration or storage work to be undertaken.

Resource implications

30. Staff resource is required to manage and deliver this project. This will encompass corporate reporting requirements, undertaking tendering, commissioning studies and contractors, and overseeing works. The initial project management is being undertaken by the Conservation and Trees Manager at North London Open Spaces and then Environmental Stewardship Officer at Epping Forest. The initial delivery of works will be undertaken by the Grazing and Landscapes Project Officer and Biodiversity Officer at Epping Forest.
31. Long-term delivery will be resourced through the recruitment of four new roles that will be funded by the Climate Action Strategy (£1.35 million). Over the long term the roles mentioned above will continue to input to the project and facilitate works where required.

Legal implications

32. Any works being undertaken on protected sites will require a Site of Special Scientific Interest consent from Natural England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
33. Certain qualifying work may require an assessment under the Environmental Impact Assessment as required under Environmental Impact Assessment (Forestry) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999, as amended.

Risk implications

34. The land management works currently identified to return the most significant carbon sequestration increase would be required to be undertaken on arable land on the Epping Forest Buffer Lands which is currently tenanted. The termination of these tenancies need to be negotiated with tenant before the land can be made available.

Equalities implications

35. A Test of Relevance was undertaken on the options put forward for the whole Climate Action Strategy and presented to Resource Allocation Sub Committee in June 2020. No detrimental impacts on the protected groups defined in the Equality Act 2010 were identified. The *Carbon Removals* project would provide additional open spaces for general public use.

Climate implications

36. The *Carbon Removals* project is part of the City Corporation's Climate Action Strategy which demonstrates the Corporation's commitment to reducing its contribution to factors that cause climate change and adapting to the impact of a changing climatic conditions, including extreme weather events.

Security implications

37. None.

Charity Implications

38. 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. In the long term works may also be undertaken on land within the other charities: Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common (number 232987), Ashted Common (1051510), Hampstead Heath (803392), West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood (232988), Coulsdon and Other Commons (232989).
39. In carrying out its charity trustee duties in respect of its various open spaces charities, the City as trustee must have regard only to whether proposals and their effects are in the best interests of each of the charities (not to whether they benefit any wider City interests, for example by helping achieve net zero carbon emission targets for the wider City). In respect of the proposals in this report, there are clear benefits to the charitable purposes of the various open spaces charities for the reasons set out in this report including, protection of habitats and amelioration of adverse environmental impacts on the open spaces. The strategic aims of the wider City are explained in this report for context. However, pursuit of

the proposals is considered fully justified on the sole basis of the benefits to the open spaces charities.

Epping Forest Consultative Committee

40. The Consultative Committee considered SEF 10/21 and the following points were noted, with verbal responses given at the time:

- It is important to maintain a distinct charity identity whilst providing this ecosystem “service” for the City Corporation. (It can be noted that paragraph 39, above, is pertinent in this regard, although this was not cited in the response given at the time).
- Communication to the local community will be key to ensuring an understanding of why this work is being done and to avoid any confusion with local authority air pollution mitigation projects related to the Special Area of Conservation (SAC).
- This is a key opportunity to educate the public in the practical ways of protecting the environment, helping the City Corporation offset its carbon budget, and promoting the work that is being done. Carbon sequestration needs to be done in the best way to protect the environment.
- Would other local authorities be counting the Forest in their carbon offsetting calculations? (The verbal response given at the meeting is that other local authorities would not be able to offset their carbon footprint by using the Forest in their calculations).
- The impact of tree maintenance work in the Forest should be considered.
- A recognition that agricultural habitats may also have value for specialist farmland wildlife and there is a need to try to ensure retention of these species. (Skylarks and Yellowhammers - both UK red-listed bird species - were highlighted in the response, that acknowledged the need for assessing conservation priorities).

Conclusion

41. The City Corporation has committed to reducing its contribution to the factors that cause climate change and adapting to the impacts through its adoption of its Climate Action Strategy. Its aim is to achieve net zero on its scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2027.

42. The Open Spaces owned by the City Corporation already contribute an estimated 44% offset of these emissions. The open spaces charities are preparing to undertake new land management activities to increase further their capacity to sequester carbon. The Open Spaces Dept activities would be achieved through the *Carbon Removals* project that sits within the Carbon Action Strategy Programme.

43. In the early stages of the *Carbon Removals* project, works will be focussed at Epping Forest and its Buffer Lands, involving the reversion of arable land to natural habitats, including grassland, and promoting ecological processes as a way of enhancing carbon storage. Studies are required to identify further opportunities to increase carbon sequestration. These will inform the next phase

of works to deliver this increased sequestration capacity. Sites across the Open Spaces will be considered. The funding that has been committed to deliver the Carbon Action Strategy will be requested and approved through the City Corporation's Gateway process.

Appendices

- None

Background Papers

- Climate Action Strategy, Report to Open Spaces Chairs, 9 September 2020

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Committee(s) Epping Forest Consultative – For consultation Epping Forest and Commons – For decision	Dated 10 02 2021 08 03 2021
Subject: Deer Management Strategy (SEF 07/21b)	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1, 5, 11, 12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	N
What is the source of Funding?	Local Risk
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	Y
Report of: Director of Open Spaces	For Decision
Report author: Martin Newnham, Head Forest Keeper	

Summary

Following a public tender process, environmental consultants The Deer Initiative Ltd, in partnership with Dama International, Peter Green Consulting and Langbein Consulting, was awarded a contract by City of London Corporation to comprehensively review the current 1996 Deer Management Strategy for Epping Forest and it's adjoining Buffer Land.

The review recommends future management options for both the wild deer and the enclosed parkland population within the Birch Hall Park Sanctuary and proposes a framework for a 20-year management strategy that incorporates health and welfare considerations, conservation objectives, economic impacts, deer vehicle collision mitigation and public safety.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- i. Approve option 1 of the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The Epping Forest Acts 1878 and 1880 specifically charge the City Corporation as the Conservators of Epping Forest with a series of statutory obligations including a responsibility to manage deer 'to be preserved as objects of ornament in the Forest'.

2. Many of the initial recommendations that were made in the 1996 deer management strategy as to the extent of the three proposed deer management areas and these objectives continue to remain valid.
3. The bulk of the Fallow Deer Range i.e. the area approximately bounded by the Lee Valley to the west, the conurbations of Roydon and Harlow to the North, the M11 to the east and the conurbations of Loughton and Chingford to the South. See the red boundary outlined in Map 1.



Map 1, reproduced from Langbein 2009

4. Within the above area, there are three zones:
 - i. South of the M25, Epping Forest plus, where possible, land outside of Forest ownership.
 - ii. North of the M25, The Epping Forest Buffer lands.
 - iii. North of the M25, where possible, any area within the adjacent deer range, not included in the Epping Forest "Buffer lands" ownership
5. Deer culling on City of London Corporation land adjacent to Epping Forest began around 1996/7 with the first formal culls recorded from 2001 to 2016 by the Cobbins Brook Deer Management Group (CBDMG). CBDMG are a group comprising of local landowners and some Epping Forest staff operating in a private capacity to an agreed management regime set by the Deer Management Strategy (1996).
6. In 2016, the management of deer was subject to a public tender exercise approved by your Committee and subsequently awarded to the Capreolus Club. This contract was terminated in 2017.
7. It was decided that further options regarding the future management of the local deer populations should be comprehensively considered externally before a new contract might be awarded. The opportunity to undertake the Deer Review was tendered.

8. In the meantime, it was agreed by your Committee that the management of deer on City Corporation land would be undertaken directly by its own staff.

The increase in wild deer and their presence in the forest

9. The wild deer populations of south Essex and Epping Forest are thriving with high fertility rates reflecting the absence of apex predators, apart from humans and the presence through abundant food sources particularly winter arable crops. . It is generally agreed that wild deer numbers may have doubled in England between 1999 and 2017 and this breeding success is apparent in Essex.
10. Deer consume approximately 3% of their body weight in dry matter daily, which may equate to more than 6kg grass or 3.5kg fresh leaves for a fallow deer every day. When deer numbers are high, such consumption can have very serious impacts upon the countryside habitat generally and particularly for plant species that deer favour.
11. The large numbers of deer in and around the urban areas of the south and southeast are also contributing to over half the annual toll of road traffic accidents involving deer in the UK, in which some 74,000 deer are injured or killed, and a number of humans are killed or injured each year.

Current Position

12. The Deer Review was commissioned with a detailed specification outlining all possible avenues of deer management to be considered. The report starts from 'no intervention' standpoint, then carefully considers alternative control options such as re-wilding, contraception and translocation through to detailed options for deer management and makes conclusions as to the suitability of each.
13. The review recognises that a range of respected conservation management organisations have concluded that the management of the deer population by culling is essential to both protect the environment from the effects of trampling, browsing and grazing, on protected Forest habitats and agricultural crops. Heavy browsing and grazing can inhibit essential woodland regeneration and can destroy food and habitats essential to invertebrates, woodland birds, small mammals and other protected species. Over-population of deer will also result in deer welfare issues as food sources will become scarcer reducing overall the condition and health of the herd.
14. The options for the management of the deer in and around Epping Forest without culling are considered in the review but all have been discounted as being neither practical nor viable. The review highlights that there are currently limited practicable or cost-effective options to manage wild deer in the absence of natural predators other than the use of legal, lethal control methods. There is significant peer-reviewed evidence that other non-lethal methods of protection or population control including, capture

and relocation; diversionary feeding; fencing and contraception are not only ineffective but may possibly lead to negative animal-welfare outcomes and the further detriment to habitats and public safety.

15. In addition to humane dispatch of road casualties and other injured deer when required, the management of wild deer within Epping Forest and its Buffer Lands has already included some level of culling since 1996. The level and distribution of deer culls undertaken since that time have helped to reduce the rate of population increase to below what it would have been otherwise. However, such culling has been restricted in its coverage to the exclusion of significant sections of the main Forest and been insufficiently consistent year-on-year to achieve relatively stable and sustainable fallow and muntjac populations and reduced levels of detrimental impacts.
16. While a 10-year Deer Management Plan, which is part of the 20-year management framework, has been created as part of this review, the strategy will need to be adaptive, subject to a regular audit process and be revised as circumstances dictate.
17. Having recognised that non-lethal approaches are not practical, the review recommends a number of courses of action; these all relate to the option to cull the deer.

Proposals

Deer Species

18. Fallow deer (*Dama dama*) are regarded as the key Epping species, because of their historic association with the establishment of the Royal Forest in the 12th Century and subsequent protection after disafforestation under the Epping Forest Act 1878. Most of the discussion and recommendations in the review relate to fallow deer which must be regarded as a permanent and desirable feature of the area. Reeves Muntjac deer (*Muntiacus reevesi*) have been increasing in number over recent years and as that trend continues their presence is becoming more significant. For example, in more heavily visited areas of the Forest, especially its southern compartments south of Chingford and Loughton, and in the oak-hornbeam wood-pasture areas their browsing has more of an impact than that of Fallow. Where practicably possible Muntjac, or any other novel or invasive, non-native deer species that become established, should be minimised in number.

Deer management

19. A viable minimum population of Fallow deer will need active management and the strategy gives specific objectives for this.
20. Those who are engaged as the deer management practitioners need to be selected carefully to ensure that they have the correct aptitude as well as adequate skills and knowledge to build and maintain public confidence when undertaking their role. The benefits of using directly supervised operatives (employed staff) to undertake this sensitive work

have been highlighted as being both more effective and likely to be acceptable to the wider public than other models. Close control of staff minimises business and reputational risk significantly and makes it easier to add value to the role through additional responsibilities of deer populations counts and monitoring and public education. Using dedicated staff to deal with deer vehicle collisions (DVCs) and other deer welfare incidents allows for a rapid and efficient response, reducing burdens on other public services and increasing the ability to record vital population data from deer involved in DVCs..

21. It is therefore proposed that the active deer management is undertaken by an in-house team of staff, alongside additional data collection and exclosure plot management. This approach will have an additional resource implication and will require at least two full time equivalents (FTEs) during the deer management season with occasional additional help. Deer-related issues will need to be addressed all year, requiring one duty member of staff available daily.
22. Deer management on the Epping Forest Charity land, Buffer Land and adjoining privately farmed estate cannot be undertaken in isolation as deer are present in high densities in the surrounding landscape. Actions taken by the Epping Forest Charity must consider the local migration of deer across its boundaries. The review recommends that where opportunities exist, the Epping Forest Charity should cooperatively engage with neighbours and consider where collaboration might benefit deer management efforts, or how future agri-environmental and woodland support mechanisms may influence the motivations of landowners to manage deer in the future.

Deer Vehicle Collisions

23. To maximise the welfare of deer and to minimise the economic consequences and risk to life associated with DVCs, it is recommended that :
 - Measures are adopted for dealing with injured deer at the roadside that include a formal Police/local authority endorsed scheme incorporating compulsory training and assessment for participants.
 - Ways of consistently recording DVCs to contribute to monitoring should be further developed.
 - Areas under speed restrictions should be expanded and additional permanent or seasonal signage should be considered.
24. The City Corporation will need to advocate to, and work with, local highway authority partners and voluntary groups to achieve these aims and continue to mitigate DVCs.

Animal Welfare

25. A review of current understanding and best practice regarding the welfare of wild deer has been produced to inform current and future management.

Birch Hall Deer Sanctuary

26. The careful scrutiny of European DNA evidence has demonstrated that the level of genetic uniqueness that drove the 1959 decisions to create a Sanctuary are not justified. , The review recommends that wider options to retain deer within the Birch Hall Park Deer Sanctuary are considered in terms of Park's value as an asset to inform, educate and to positively influence public opinion while addressing issues regarding the current financial liabilities. Further work is being commissioned to look a future options which will be placed before your Committee.
27. The sanctuary will continue to be managed according to best practice and deer welfare principles pending a more detailed review of its viability.

Monitoring and reporting

28. A public-facing mechanism for providing information and allowing feedback should be developed to demonstrate the Epping Forest Charity has a clear and consistent evidence-based approach and to encourage acceptance of the need for the control of the deer population. This will be achieved through accurate and effective monitoring, the collation of data and transparent public reporting to meet the requirements outlined in the review.
29. Progress towards objectives must be monitored, recorded, reported, and reviewed at least annually in an effective and consistent way using as many data sources as is realistic e.g. impact/activity assessment, habitat assessment, exclosure plots, crop impacts, cull and count records, DVC records and anecdotal/incident records.

Options

Option one

30. To adopt the recommendations of the report for implementation including the management by Epping Forest Charity staff of all deer. This will allow for close control of deer management by the Epping Forest Charity, ensuring that management is well evidenced and undertaken professionally, sensitively and humanely. There is a direct cost to the Epping Forest charity to deliver this option, but the work is considered core to the aims of the charity. **This option is recommended.**

Option two

31. To adopt the recommendations of the report for implementation but deliver these through external means by contractors and volunteers. This may present potential savings on cost but will take longer to implement and runs the risk that management and monitoring is not so closely controlled. **This option is not recommended.**

Option three

32. Not adopt any of the recommendations of the recommendations of the report. Deer numbers would continue to grow in the absence of any natural predator resulting in a negative impact on the biodiversity of the

Forest, loss of crops and potential animal welfare issues. **This option is not recommended.**

Key Data

33. Based on current data it is estimated that in the region of 600-800 wild deer roam in the deer management areas of Epping Forest, Buffer Lands and surrounding farm and woodland.
34. It is proposed that this number is reduced to a scientifically determined stocking density of 6-8 individual deer per square kilometre. This stocking density will substantially reduce impacts on internationally protected Forest habitats and agricultural crops, while reducing the incidence of DVCs. Annual survey works based on transect counts; thermal imagery counts; aerial photography and winter vegetation impact monitoring will help create a sustainable wild herd numbering 150 individuals over a realistic time period.
35. As part of a ten-year plan, based on annual deer population counts, the current high and damaging population levels would be reduced progressively to a sustainable level. The Deer Management Strategy and report recommend an optimum number of deer per hectare per 100 hectares within ten years for a healthy wild deer population. We will monitor and assess the impact of the reduction in numbers balanced against environmental impacts, using census work and grazing impact assessments to set each seasons population reduction. This will be done annually.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications

36. This report supports the Open Spaces Business Plan objectives:
- Our open spaces, heritage and cultural assets are protected, conserved and enhanced
 - Our habitats are flourishing, biodiverse and resilient to change
 - Nature, heritage and place are valued and understood

Financial implications

37. The additional resources to manage the delivery of the plan including staff costs will be met from local risk. Additional funding for highways signage and other mitigations for deer vehicle collisions will be sought from partner organisations including ECC highways.

Resource implications

38. The delivery of the deer management strategy will require 2 FTE staff during the culling season as well as a duty team member throughout the year.
39. The staffing commitment will be met from the existing Forest Keeper team, but other duties will be reduced accordingly during the culling

season. It is hoped that the increased cost of population monitoring can be met through 'citizen science' voluntary monitoring.

Legal implications

40. The management of both wild and captive deer will be delivered through statute law and legislation for firearms and deer management.

Charity Implications

41. 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.

Risk implications

42. Reputational risk: Human-deer encounters are often valuable experiences and the public often feel a degree of "ownership" of wild deer. The large-scale population management of wild deer is set out in the 10-year framework which works to rigid professional standards with a strong commitment to publicly accessible deer population data. Management plans and publicity materials should make clear how the management of deer is integrated into wider objectives such as long-term habitat sustainability or protection of woodland birds and invertebrates.

Equalities implications

43. This report has no relevance to equality.

Climate implications

44. The delivery of the Deer Management Strategy will improve conditions and reduce environmental impacts on habitats within the Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Site of Special scientific Interest (SSSI).

Security implications

45. None

Epping Forest Consultative Committee Comments

46. The Consultative Committee raised the following:

- Epping Forest Forum have offered to fundraise for signage to help mitigate against the risk of DVCs.
- The feasibility of Body Worn Video will be explored for the forthcoming deer management season.
- The London Wildlife Trust complimented the approach set out in the Review and offered their support to run concurrent messaging, which was welcomed. The Head Keeper and Head of Visitor Services will work with LWT to run supportive messaging.
- A summary document for the public will be produced to make the public aware of the current position and challenges. (See Appendix 1).
- Discussions took place regarding the Birch Hall Park deer sanctuary and it was recognised a further detailed report was required and will be a separate committee paper for consideration by the Epping Forest and Commons Committee.

Conclusion

47. The acceptance of the recommendations and the measures outlined in the review will set the conditions for the sustainable management of deer at a landscape level for the next twenty years.
48. The successful delivery of the deer management strategy will also improve the future condition of the SSSI and SAC by reducing trampling and browsing pressure on woodland regeneration and woodland flora, restoring the vigour of woodland ecosystems encouraging the presence of broader invertebrate, songbird and small mammal populations that are currently negatively impacted by current deer population levels.
49. Delivering the framework through staff resources improves the coordination of monitoring research, maximises control and minimises the reputational risk. The recommendations in the report will ensure the safe, sustainable and effective management of deer, offering the best animal welfare processes as well as the safety of the public.

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Epping Forest and Buffer Lands
Deer Management
Strategy Review Summary
23/03/20

Client – Epping Forest, City of London Corporation.

Prepared by the Deer Initiative - The Carriage House, Brinkinallt Business Centre, Chirk, LL14 5NS.

Executive Summary

“The City of London Corporation acts as the Conservators of Epping Forest under the Epping Forest Acts 1878 and 1880 as a charitable trust charged with the management and regulation of Epping Forest. The Epping Forest Acts specifically charges the Conservators with a series of statutory obligations including a responsibility to manage deer as a ‘natural ornament’ of the Forest.”

The management of deer on the Epping Forest estate by City of London Corporation (CoL) is a complex undertaking. The review considers these complexities and draws upon modern understanding of landscape-scale deer management issues, as well as past management recommendations and practices, to offer a strategy for the future. We consider that the management of wild deer and their impacts is an issue of growing importance which will need to be accepted as a long term commitment to protect the deer and the natural capital value of the landholding, keeping deer impacts and negative human-deer interactions to acceptable levels.

Deer management on the CoL estate cannot be undertaken in isolation as deer are present in high densities in the surrounding landscape. Actions taken by CoL must consider the ebb and flow of deer across its boundaries, where collaboration might benefit deer management efforts and how future agri-environmental and woodland support mechanisms may influence the motivations of landowners to manage deer in the future.

As this review highlights, there are currently limited practicable or cost-effective options to manage wild deer in the absence of natural predators other than the use of legal, lethal control methods. There is significant peer-reviewed evidence that other methods of protection or population control are not only ineffective but can actually lead to negative animal-welfare outcomes and further detriment to habitats and public safety.

Long term and large scale population management of wild deer requires a strong evidence base and a management framework which can be used to justify actions, withstand scrutiny, and set rigid professional standards by which to operate. Management will need to consider public sentiment and perceptions. Human-deer encounters are often valuable experiences and the public often feel a degree of “ownership” of wild deer. The degree to which the management of deer is integrated into wider objectives such as long-term habitat sustainability or protection of woodland birds and invertebrates should be made clear in any management plans and publicity material.

Those who are engaged as the deer management practitioners need to be selected carefully to ensure that they have the correct aptitude as well as adequate skills and knowledge to build and maintain public confidence when undertaking their role. The benefits of using directly supervised operatives (either employed staff or closely supervised contractors) to undertake this sensitive work have been highlighted as being more cost effective and more likely to be acceptable to the wider public than other models. Close control of staff minimises business and reputational risk significantly and makes it easier to add value to the role through additional responsibilities such as education. Using dedicated staff to deal with deer vehicle collisions and other deer welfare incidents allows for a rapid and efficient response and can reduce burdens on other public services.

Management needs to be well evidenced and undertaken professionally, sensitively and humanely and CoL needs to explain how this management helps it to meet its wider multiple objectives. Management of wild deer within Epping Forest and its Buffer Lands has, in addition to humane dispatch of road casualties and other injured deer when required, already included some level of culling by since 2001. The level and distribution of deer culls undertaken since that time have helped to reduce the rate of population increase to below what it would have been otherwise. However, such culling has been restricted in its coverage to the exclusion of significant sections of the main Forest and been insufficiently consistent year to year to

achieve relatively stable and sustainable fallow and muntjac populations and levels of detrimental impacts. While a new 20 year Management Strategy has been created as part of this review, the strategy should be adaptive, subject to a regular audit process and be revised as circumstances dictate.

The future of the Birch Hall deer sanctuary should be considered in terms of its value as an asset to inform, educate and to positively influence public opinion as well as in terms of its current cost and perceived liability.

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1. Project Brief

Following a public tender process, Deer Initiative Ltd was awarded the contract by City of London Corporation (CoL) to comprehensively review the current Deer Management Strategy for Epping Forest and adjoining agricultural estates of Copped Hall Park; Great Gregories; Warlies Park and Woodredon estates collectively known as the Epping Forest Buffer Land. The Review has revisited the findings of previous studies, specifically the review produced for CoL by Langbein in 1996 as well as collating current impact, activity and historic cull data in order to make recommendations for future management options including a framework for a 20 year management strategy. The review makes recommendations for future management of wild deer to include health and welfare considerations, conservation objectives, economic impacts and public safety deer vehicle collision mitigation and the enclosed population within the Birch Hall Sanctuary.

1.2 Project Outcomes

The project brief set out a number outcomes to be delivered including;

1. *Assess the impact of deer grazing and browsing on both Epping Forest and the Epping Forest Buffer Land indicating at what densities/stocking levels deer grazing and browsing might positively contribute to a conservation grazing programme, alongside the impact of rabbits and cattle.*
2. *Evaluate the purposes and viability of the Birch Hall Park Deer Sanctuary.*
3. *Produce a best practice assessment for reducing deer vehicle collisions on the local highway network.*
4. *Develop a 20-year Deer Management Strategy for Epping Forest and its Buffer Lands 2019 – 2029.*
5. *Propose a future monitoring programme for Epping Forest and Buffer Land deer populations;*
6. *Advise on the need for a Wild Animal Welfare Policy for Epping Forest.*

The review supported its findings and recommendations with information from a wide range of sources including previous reviews, surveys, data collected from local and national sources and research from numerous peer-reviewed papers.

This summary document captures the key outcomes and findings of the full review and in particular provides recommendations to support future management of deer on CoL land in the Epping Forest and Buffer Lands.

2. Proposed 20 year deer management strategy for Epping Forest and Buffer Lands.

2.1 Aims and Objectives

In order to bring clarity to the aims and objectives of any deer policy it is imperative to understand and clearly state what these are, both for the landscape in which the deer live, and for the deer themselves.

These aims and objectives for deer management are set in the broader context of ensuring that the qualifying features of the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC) are maintained or restored to favourable conservation status and the favourable condition of the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is also maintained or restored. For the SAC it is the favourable conservation status of the Beech forest habitat and the two types of heathland that are absolutely key to the measurement of the success of any deer management. For the SSSI, in addition to these specific habitats, the broader balance between grass, heath and wooded areas, the habitat mosaic, with its structural and species diversities must be sustained. However, other factors that influence the favourable conservation status and condition, such as air pollution and visitor pressure, must inevitably be taken into account in any assessment of success.

In summary, the management of the SAC and SSSI, as well as the wider Forest and Buffer Lands landscape, is focused on maintaining or increasing the width of the transitions between habitats (the ecotones), the length of these edges (e.g. scrub zone length) and increasing the structural complexity of each component habitat (e.g., dwarf shrubs and tussocky grass intermixed with short turf). This focus on enhancing structure, edge and transition is set within the management framework of protecting all ancient pollards and all existing distributions of scarce and protected species. Some more details of these habitat and species objectives are outlined in the main report above and are encapsulated in the first bullet point below.

The CoL wishes, as far as practicably possible, to:

1. Ensure that fallow deer remain in the Epping landscape in perpetuity whilst managing the wood-pasture habitat mosaic, of which they are part, to maintain or restore its structural and species diversity.
2. Assure and monitor the welfare of all species of deer
3. Minimise Deer Vehicle Collisions
4. Minimise impact by all species of deer to the CoL Estate with a view to long term sustainability (Including the SAC/SSSI designated areas, woodland and habitat succession, and biodiversity, food production, climate change)
5. Minimise impacts by deer on other species and human interests (Public safety, health and Public good) within the CoL deer range

Assuming these aims, the project team recommend:

2.2 Deer Species

Fallow deer are regarded as the key Epping species, because of their historic association with the establishment of the Royal Forest in the 12th Century and subsequent protection after disafforestation under the Epping Forest Act 1878. Most of the discussion and recommendations in this report relate to Fallow and they must be regarded as a permanent and desirable feature of the area. Muntjac deer have been increasing in number over recent years and as that trend continues

their presence is becoming more significant. For example, in more heavily visited areas of the Forest, especially its southern compartments south of Chingford and Loughton, and in the oak-hornbeam wood-pasture areas their browsing has more of an impact than that of Fallow. Where practicably possible Muntjac, or any other novel or invasive, non-native deer species that become established, should be minimised in number and need not necessarily be considered permanent.

2.3 Extent and Sub-division of Deer Management Area

Recommendations were made in the 1996 deer report as to the extent of the proposed deer management area and these are pertinent today, these are:

The bulk of the Fallow Deer Range i.e. the area approximately bounded by the Lee valley to the West, the conurbations of Roydon and Harlow to the North, the M11 to the East and the conurbations of Loughton and Chingford to the South. See red boundary, map 1 below.



Within the above area, three zones:

1. South of the M25, Epping Forest plus, where possible, land outside of Forest ownership.
2. North of the M25, The Epping Forest Buffer lands.
3. North of the M25, where possible, any area within the adjacent deer range, not included in the Epping Forest "Buffer lands" ownership

2.4 Deer management

1. Deer numbers must be actively managed across all three zones. Currently the only viable means of achieving this is by legal culling.
2. A viable minimum population of Fallow deer should be assured in both zones 1 and 2, consistent with overarching aims and objectives for Epping Forest and Buffer Lands.
3. With regard to the above:
 - We suggest that for zones 2 and 3 together, a notional fallow population of 6-8/ Km² (150-200) head (50 head on the Buffer lands) be sought initially¹. Muntjac should be kept to the

minimum number realistically possible. Over the course of time, cull levels should be dictated according to a dynamic review of available data and at least annually. Model 8 in Appendix D gives a general indication of the effort required to achieve this objective.

- cull targets for zone 1 should relate to avoiding the danger of any deer species reaching a density at which it will become difficult to control, given the practicalities of achieving a large-scale cull. To this end, maintain a notional maximum population of 3-5/Km² (50-80 head) Fallow within the woodlands, if possible². Muntjac should be kept to the minimum number realistically possible. Again, over the course of time cull levels should be dictated according to a dynamic review of available data and at least annually. Model 7 in Appendix D gives a general indication of the effort required to achieve this objective.
4. Deer should be managed by operatives directly managed by CoL. In terms of staff time, it is estimated that at least 2 Full Time equivalents (FTEs) would be required during the culling season with additional help on team culling events. 1 person should be available all year to deal with deer related issues.
 5. Landscape scale deer management of herding species such as Fallow is more likely to succeed if there is collaboration between neighbouring landowners. Where opportunities exist, CoL should engage with neighbours regarding deer management.

2.5 Monitoring and reporting (See Appendix C)

1. Progress towards objectives must be monitored, recorded, reported, and reviewed at least annually in an effective and consistent way (“evidence-based management”) using as many data sources as is realistic e.g. Impact/Activity assessment, Habitat assessment, Exclosure plots, Crop impacts, Cull and count records, DVC records, anecdotal/incident records.
2. Progress will be considered “sufficient” when the data as a whole indicate trends in the right direction. Cull targets will be considered as dynamic even within season and deer counts will not be relied on as the sole predictor of cull levels (“Adaptive management”).
3. A public facing mechanism for providing information and allowing feedback is developed to demonstrate the CoL evidence-based approach and to encourage acceptance.

2.6 Deer Vehicle Collisions (DVCs) (See Appendix E).

1. It is recommended that measures are adopted for dealing with injured deer at roadside that include a formal Police/local Authority endorsed scheme incorporating compulsory training and assessment for participants.
2. Further develop means of consistently recording DVCs to contribute to monitoring
3. Expand areas under speed restrictions; consider additional permanent or seasonal signage.
4. Continue to take advice on means of mitigating DVCs

2.7 Animal Welfare, (See Appendix F)

Animal welfare considerations were and outcome of the report and a review of current understanding and best practice regarding the welfare of wild deer has been produced to inform current and future management.

2.8 Birch Hall Deer Sanctuary (See Appendix G)

1. Despite the lack of evidence to demonstrate their genetic uniqueness, consider options to retain deer within the Birch Hall deer sanctuary for educational purposes and to develop messaging regarding the impact of deer on the environment.
2. Manage the sanctuary deer according to best practice and deer welfare principles.

References:

¹Barnett, 2012 (Deer Management Plan for CBDMG) (12 pages)

²Putman, R.J., Langbein, J., Green, P. and Watson, P. (2011) Identifying threshold densities for wild deer in the UK ab

Appendix A; Deer impact and activity.

As part of the review, deer impact and activity assessments were carried out on the 4th and 5th October following the protocol laid out in the Best Practice Guide “Deer Impact and Activity Assessment”, methodology *Ref;*

http://www.thedeerinitiative.co.uk/best_practice/associated_information.php This assessment is widely used for assessing the impact and activity of deer in woodland areas including supporting Countryside Stewardship, other grant aided schemes and work on designated sites.

The survey was designed in such a way as to provide as comprehensive and representative assessment of the Forest as possible. The survey areas were selected to encompass representative habitat types and within each compartment, Forest area or woodland, the actual route taken provided representative coverage. A summary of the Deer Impact and Activity survey results in addition to maps showing areas surveyed, levels of activity, impact and species present are attached at appendix B.

The optimum window for undertaking these surveys is the end of winter, enabling deer impacts on vegetation the woodland structure to be fully assessed at the point at which they show maximum seasonal impact and activity signs and prior to the end of winter dormancy. To meet the Project schedule this survey was undertaken at a time of year directly following spring and summer growth, when food availability (for deer and other browsing animals) was still relatively high and impact and activity signs were less obvious.

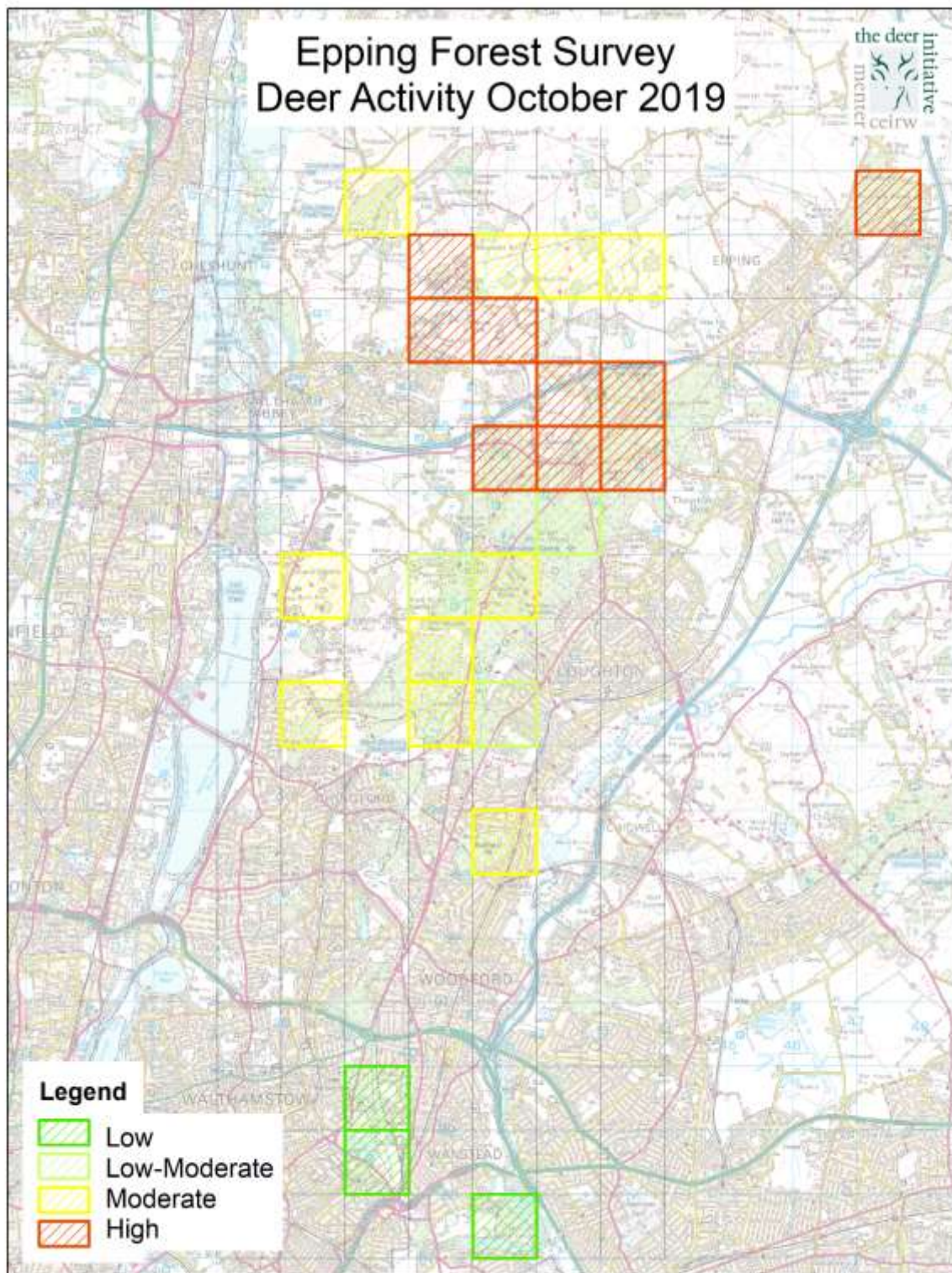
During this late autumn and winter period, food availability is declining therefore, it can be expected that impacts will continue to increase as the winter progresses and that . with higher levels of deer activity in search of food, signs are likely to increase.

Appendix B; Deer impact and Activity survey results Summary October 2019

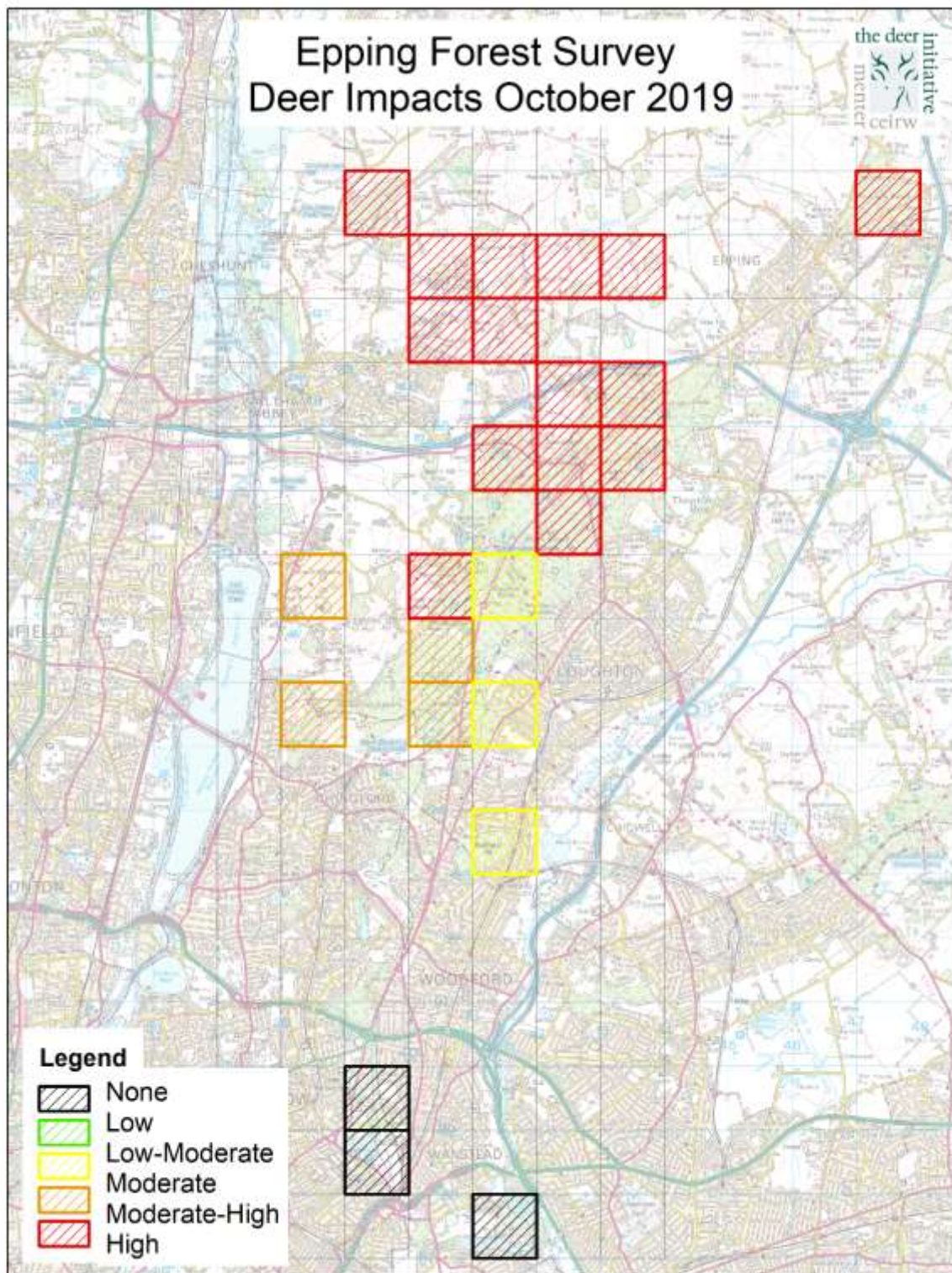
Appendix B.1; Impact and Activity Survey Results table;

Wood area name	Activity score	Impact score	Fallow present	Muntjac present	Numbers seen
Leyton Flats /Snaresbrook	Low	No impact	No	Yes	
Gilberts Slade	Low	No impact	No	Yes	
Wanstead	Low	No impact	No	Yes	
Loughton Camp	Low	Low	Yes	Yes	
Hill Wood (South of Café)	Low - Moderate	High	Yes	Yes	1 muntjac
Warren Hill	Low - moderate	Moderate	Yes	Yes	26 does, 6 bucks, 1 muntjac
Great Monk Wood	Low-moderate	High	Yes	Yes	1 fallow buck
Galleyhill Wood and Monkams	Moderate	High	Yes	Yes	12 fallow, 3 muntjac
Fernhall Wood	Moderate	High	Yes	Yes	6 fallow
Rookery Wood	Moderate	High	Yes	Yes	
Little Rookery Wood	Moderate	High	Yes	Yes	
Yardley Hill / Hawk Wood	Moderate	Moderate High	Yes	Yes	
Fern Hills	Moderate	Moderate / High	Yes	Yes	
Pear Tree Plain	Moderate	Moderate High	Yes	Yes	
Lord's Bushes and Knighton Wood	Moderate	Moderate	No	Yes	1 muntjac
Fitches Plantation	Moderate - high	High	Yes	Yes	5 fallow
Eighteen Acre	Moderate - high	High	Yes	Yes	1 muntjac
Spratts Hedgerow Wood	High	High	Yes	Yes	12 fallow
Oak Hill Copley Plain	High	High	Yes	Yes	5 does, 2 bucks
Pauls Nursery	High	High	Yes	Yes	6 does, 1 buck
Holly Lane Quarter	High	High	Yes	Yes	5 fallow
ST. Thomas's Quarter	High	High	Yes	Yes	26 does, 6 bucks
Breach Barn	High	High	Yes	Yes	40 fallow
The Lower Forest / Wintry Wood	High	High	Yes	Yes	5 does, 1 buck, 1 Muntjac
Deer seen on route to breach barn 2 fields north of Waltham Abbey (Abbey View Nursery)					12 fallow
					177 fallow
Anecdotal numbers present within the natural range of deer in this area					
Lee Valley Country Park					30- 40 fallow
Royal Gunpowder Mills					30 + fallow
Parndon Woods					20-30 fallow
Jacks Hatch					100 fallow
Lower Forest					100 fallow
Copped Hall (New Farm) area					100 fallow
Warren Plantation, Woodredon, Epping Thicks					100 fallow
					c. 400 fallow

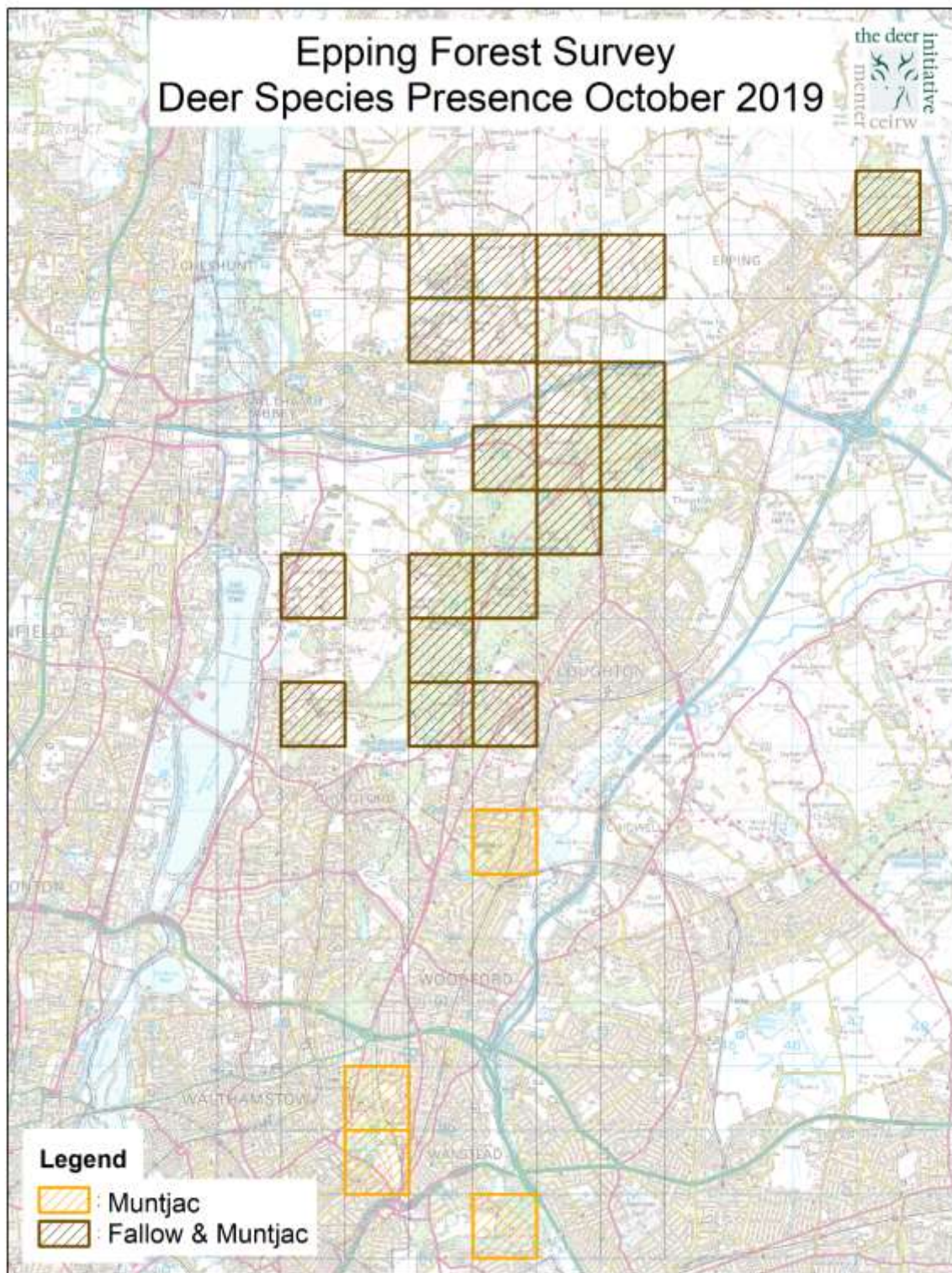
Appendix B.2; Activity Survey results



Appendix B.3; Impact Survey results



Appendix B.4; Species Presence Survey results



Appendix C; Population and Impact monitoring and subsequent data analysis.

Introduction and Scope

Deer management at Epping should be evidence-based.

The landscape management objectives across the Epping Forest and the Bufferlands are complex and varied. The effect that deer have (largely through browsing) throughout the estate, is likely to significantly compromise objectives. Thus, it is important that, concurrent with measuring progress towards objectives, the deer situation is also monitored to establish the effect of deer management.

Monitoring should be applied across these three zones:

1. South of the M25, Epping Forest, plus, where possible, land outside of Forest ownership.
2. North of the M25, The Epping Forest Bufferlands.
3. North of the M25, where possible, any area not included in the Epping Forest “Bufferlands” ownership

Counts

It is important to understand the purpose and limitations of counting deer, for example:

Most realistically applicable counting methods cannot yield highly accurate estimates of deer numbers. However, provided each animal counted was indeed a unique individual (i.e. no “double counting”), counts can indicate reliable minimum figures and, if realistic error margins are applied, can hint at possible actual totals.

Simple totals, provided there is consistency in methodology/deer environment /deer behaviour, can be useful as trend indicators over a sufficient period of time (min 5 years).

Simple totals alone are of no use when attempting to model populations forwards in time, or to set cull programmes. For this, some understanding of the population structure is required, e.g. sex and age class. Such details can sometimes be estimated from more detailed count techniques, from cull records, or from experience of herds in similar situations but there will always be a degree of uncertainty.

For these and other reasons it is strongly recommended that although counts are an essential tool, they should never be used on their own as the sole measure of the effects of deer management or as the sole source of information for cull planning.

Because providing count data is a long term undertaking, it is important to establish from the start a robust, consistent survey methodology and recording system. Successive counts should follow the same methodology to provide consistency in the data provided. If new methods of assessing populations are employed historic surveys should be maintained to provide an overlap, and consistency in surveying. New methods once proven to be effective can then be used, following this period of dual monitoring.

While every attempt must be made to provide robust count evidence, incidental (e.g. from deer impact surveys, or anecdotal evidence from reliable sources can be a useful addition, but always treated with caution. Within the Buffer lands and Forest complex there is considerable movement of groups of fallow deer, these movements may be from resting to feeding areas, or due to disturbance

by dog walkers, mountain bikes, fungi pickers and other general users of the Forest, counts must take these into consideration.

The project team recommend that:

All zones are included as comprehensively as possible in the collection of count data and that CoL staff coordinate and or carry out counts.

Count data should be generated from a combination of

1. Walk counts
2. Thermal imaging
3. Aerial survey

These can overlap but the application and area covered by each must be consistent over time

In addition, data should be gathered during deer impact and activity assessments and breakdowns of deer seen during stalking outings.

The interval of counts should be at least annual plus during every stalking outing

Records should where possible include tallies of totals, and a breakdown by sex and age class (fawns and adults). Records should be collated on a spreadsheet by a staff member assigned to the task

Analysis and Review must be carried out consistently and regularly by a team most likely to have a comprehensive view of the overall situation.

Impact and Activity surveys

There is a need to more closely monitor impacts and activity both on the Bufferlands and the Forest in respect of the biodiversity landscape management objectives. It is essential that habitat monitoring continues. This can be undertaken with equal validity both by deer impact and activity survey or by botanical surveys designed to measure habitat or plant assemblage “success” provided the latter also includes a measure of correlation with deer activity.

Arable impacts are a concern for many of the landowners in this area. This too will need to be monitored closely, with a more formal approach to recording actual impacts here.

Assessments of deer impacts should be made on the Forest, open heathland, arable and other land to give a broader understanding of overall impact and activity levels, where these impacts are occurring, and which assets are most vulnerable. This will help to establish how deer are utilising the wider landscape and how they are impacting upon it.

Where possible, survey routes should incorporate both exclosure plots¹ and fixed-point photography points². Data from both of which can be compared with the timing, extent and type of management in place. Both should take in a variety of habitat types throughout the Forest.

The project team recommend that:

All zones are included as comprehensively as possible in the collection of impact data and that trained personnel staff coordinate and or carry out surveys.

Impact and activity data should be generated from a combination of

4. Deer Initiative DIA methodology
5. Formal agronomist surveys
6. Fixed point photography (sample sites only)
7. Exclosure plots

The interval of surveys should usually be annual or biannual (usually March-April but potentially additional other times for special sites or for specific plants or plant assemblages). For instance, impact surveys during the early autumn can establish whether Spring regeneration remains viable, prior to browsing in the winter months before the next regular survey.

Records should be collated on a spreadsheet by a staff member assigned to the task

Analysis and Review must be carried out consistently and regularly by a team most likely to have a comprehensive view of the overall situation.

¹Ideally exclosure plots should be erected adjacent to an unfenced “control” area and the exclosure moved after every three growing seasons, leaving the previously fenced area newly exposed. This can yield valuable information, not only about the current effect of protection, but about the vulnerability of previously protected areas.

²Annual fixed-point photography can provide long term photographic evidence of habitat change.

Cull data

Each animal culled should be viewed as an important source of data, this is easily lost if a sampling routine is not established.

The project team recommend that for each animal culled a record is kept of a minimum of:

Date, location (digitally mappable e.g. via an app), species, sex, age (in years), standardised weight, female reproductive status, destination of carcass. Records should be collated on a spreadsheet by a staff member assigned to the task

Analysis and Review must be carried out consistently and regularly by a team most likely to have a comprehensive view of the overall situation.

DVC data

The project team recommend that for each animal culled a record is kept of:

Date, location (digitally mappable), species, sex, age (in years), destination of carcass. Records should be collated on a spreadsheet by a staff member assigned to the task

Incidents

A formal record of deer incidents relevant to CoL should be kept by a member of CoL staff in order to assist with enquiries and to feed into an annual Deer management plan review.

Deer Management Plan (DMP)

A robust method of collating available data, reviewing it, and then making forward management decisions is essential.

The project team recommend that the Deer Initiative DMP template is a good starting point.

Appendix D; Forward looking models based on best estimates of current population numbers and structure

As part of the 20 year strategy recommendations the following two models were produced to give indicative scenarios based on estimates of the current fallow deer situation drawn from available records and consultation. It must be emphasised that the starting figures and parameters are notional only and drawn from a wide range of possible realities. The models do illustrate however, general principles, an indication of potential culling effort, and a potential direction of travel.

It must be emphasised that , whatever the practical start point and whatever a model might appear to indicate for the future, in reality the concept of “Adaptive Management” must be employed i.e. using evidence to guide the culling programme towards achieving objectives, rather than adhering strictly to the model indicators.

For both models the parameters are:

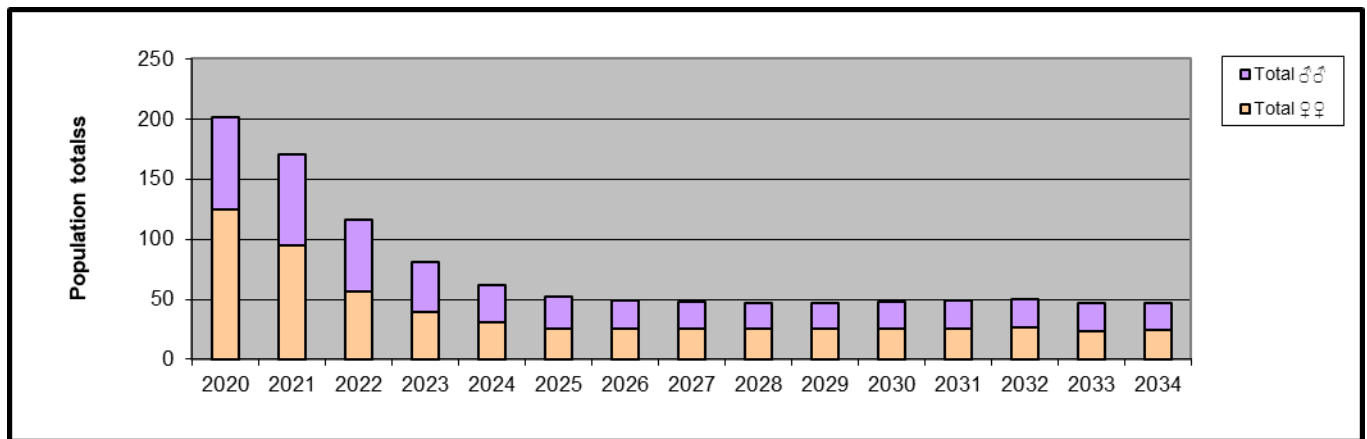
	Natural Mortality rate %	Fertility Rate %
Adult Females >2 years	2 (for each year class)	85
Yearling Females 1-2 yr.	2	30
Female Young <1 year	10	0
Adult Males >2 years	5 (for each year class)	
Yearling Males 1-2 yr.	10	
Male Young <1 year	10	
Max Age Males ratio, 1:4	12	Starting Adult Male: Female sex
Max Age Females 1:1.8	12	Equivalent to overall sex ratio of

The models show post fawning i.e. Autumn figures, a count taken in April (pre-fawning), would show a total approximately 22% less).

Note that the culls include DVCs i.e. the cull, as it proceeds, must take into account those known to have died in DVCs.

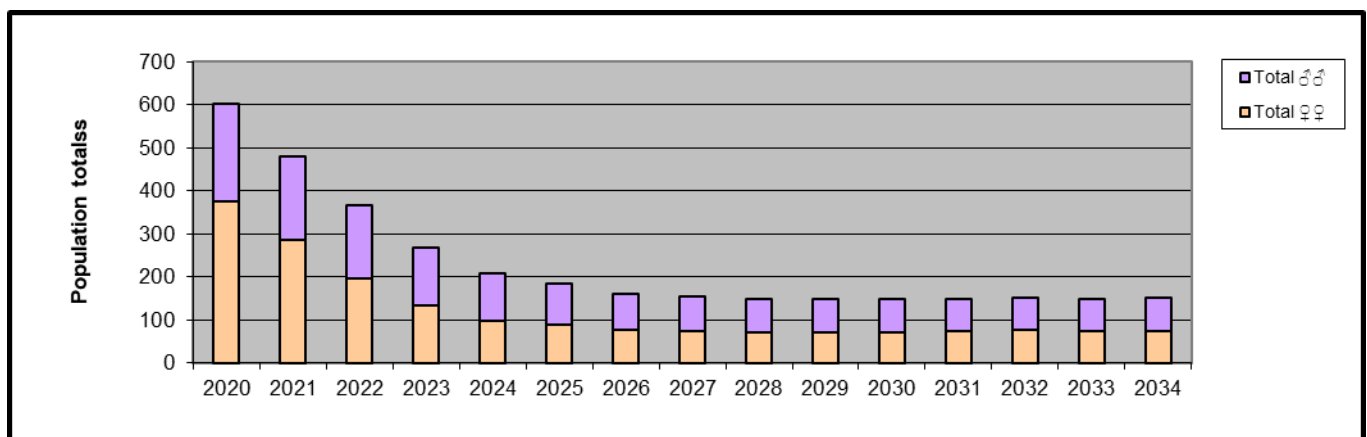
Although the initial and subsequent culls are achievable numerically, it must be recognised that conditions on the ground may mitigate against the actual achievement of the cull. This model takes no account of the obstacles to culling success that may be present due to weather, changes in deer behaviour, and so on.

Model 7. For Epping Forest woodlands South of the M25. A notional fallow population estimate of 200 on 1600ha (12/km²), with a target population of 50 (3/km²) (Extrapolated from historic CoL survey data).



This model illustrates a notional scenario whereby a population of 200 has been reduced to 50 and at the same time the overall male:female ratio has been changed from 1:1.6 to 1:1. Reducing the population at the rate indicated required an initial cull of around 56 (32 does) reducing to 12(4 does) by 2025. When stabilised at 50 head (2027), the cull total is approx. 10 provided at least half are does.

Model 8. For the Epping Forest Buffer lands and adjacent land North of the M25. A current fallow population estimate of 600 on 2400ha (24/km²), with a target population of 150 (6/km²).



This model illustrates a notional scenario whereby a population of 600 has been reduced to 150 and at the same time the overall male:female ratio has been changed from 1:1.7 to 1:1.

Reducing the population at the rate indicated required an initial cull of around 212 (130 does) reducing to 47 (24 does) by 2025. When stabilised at 150 head (2027), the cull total is approximately 30 provided at least half are does.

Note that the culls include DVCs i.e. the cull, as it proceeds, must take into account those known to have died in DVCs.

Although the initial and subsequent culls are achievable numerically, it must be recognised that conditions on the ground may mitigate against the actual achievement of the cull. This model takes no account of the obstacles to culling success that may be present due to weather, changes in deer behaviour, and so on.

Appendix E; Recommendations of DVC measures to be considered as part of the overall Epping Forest deer management strategy

On the basis of this review of the scale and distribution of past DVCs in and around Epping Forest and of the suitability of particular mitigation measures in the local context, the following measures are recommended as part of the overall deer management strategy.

8. Reduce deer populations and then aim to maintain them within agreed sustainable target levels set separately for fallow and muntjac, and for north and south of the M25.
9. Consult with the highway authority to provide vehicle-speed activated digital deer signage targeted at road sections leading through selected DVC hotspots.
10. Consult with highways authority and parish council on reducing speed limits for B1393 & B181 along The Lower Forest; and/or else consider an animal activated signage system.
11. Maintain verges to prevent them from becoming overgrown and impeding sight lines.
12. Regularly inspect motorway deer fence and liaise with HE to correct issues promptly.
13. Provide large-scale (billboard type) signage at key entrances to the Forest to re-enforce the reasons for speed limits on all Forest roads.
14. Improve recording of DVCs including species involved and map locations of incidents, to ensure effectiveness of all measures taken can be assessed objectively.
15. Review and consult with Essex Police on possible improvements to callout scheme for attendance by CoL staff and others to deal with injured deer at the roadside.

Several of the above measures, not least those at the roadside, will inevitably require consultation and close working with the local highway authority to progress. Limited extra discussion is provided below on each of the measures regarding e.g. types of signage and provisional or highest priority locations.

16. Reduce deer populations and then aim to maintain them within agreed sustainable targets levels set separately for fallow and muntjac, and for north and south of the M25.

The avoidance of any further increase and localised reduction of deer numbers, of both muntjac and fallow, are an important prerequisite for any other DVC measures proposed to be cost-effective. In other words, if deer numbers continue to increase, any positive effects of enhanced signage and other mitigation measures will quickly become diluted.

An issue to be wary of is that focussing control of deer numbers predominantly on fallow, without also adequate effort made at keeping muntjac numbers under control, risks that both the number of DVCs overall and other impacts from muntjac will continue to rise even once a decline in fallow impacts is achieved.

17. Consult with highways authority to provide vehicle-speed activated digital deer signage at selected DVC hotspots.

Speed vehicle-activated signage, such as shown in Image 2 (centre) below, as used on a number of roads in the Scottish Highlands, can help to enhance the warning to drivers when they are driving in excess of the advised limit. Such signage would be best positioned to either side of road sections with known DVC hotspots (see Figure 11.3). In the first instance we would suggest such signage be considered for use at a number of locations approaching and leaving the Wake Arms roundabout, and also for the B1393 and B181 roads past the Lower Forest. The precise locations for such hot-spot signage should be discussed further in detail with those CoL callout teams who have dealt with DVCs over the last five years, to help refine locations identified in the present hotspot maps (see above); i.e. as those maps have been produced using past data where locations have not always been recorded very precisely.



Image 1



Image 3

The type of dynamic sign shown in Image 2 (centre) is powered using a solar panel above, and thus does not necessarily require mains supply where this would be costly to provide. They also tend to have options to be active continuously or only at certain times of the day and year when risk is considered greatest, as well as facility for automated recording of times and frequency of activation to assist, e.g. with monitoring speed reduction achieved over time.

While fixed signs left in situ throughout the year would be recommended at a small number of the worst DVC hotspots, in addition temporary seasonal virtual message signs (Image 3 – right) could also help to re-enforce speed limits and alert drivers to times for heightened risk of deer crossing at a wider range of sites across the Forest. However, whilst a prominent peak of fallow DVCs tends to occur during October & November in most years, muntjac DVCs peak later into winter and a significant proportion are spread out throughout most other months. Ideally therefore, if dynamic signage is employed, this should **not** be focussed solely on the late autumn period.

18. Consult with highway authority & parish council on reducing speed limits for B1393 and B181 Lower Forest; and/or else consider speed or animal activated dynamic systems.

DVC hotspots on the east and west side of the Lower Forest along B181 and B1393 have been the most longstanding and still remain among the highest problem locations in the Epping Forest district. Two additional contributing factors here are that a) by contrast to most Forest roads south of the M25 where 40mph speed limits apply, most of B-road sections past / through the Lower Forest are currently either 50mph or 60mph, and b) no regular culling of deer is undertaken within the Lower Forest, making it to some extent a sanctuary area for deer when culls are on-going elsewhere. A reduction of the speed limit from 60mph to 40mph or lower on the majority of roads through Epping Forest resulted in 2011 after public consultation on the second Forest Transport Strategy developed, together with Essex County Council, by the CoL Conservators. Consideration should be given to whether similar measures may be possible to introduce to the above roads north of Epping Town. Either as an alternative to permanent dynamic signage (see II above), or in addition, reducing and then (re)-enforcing the speed limit to ideally 40mph there has high potential to reduce

the total number of deer hit along those roads as well as lowering the risk and severity of injuries sustained in DVCs.

Other alternatives such as fencing along the B1393 at Lower Forest (likely feasible on one side only) would be problematic at these locations without risk of creating new hotspots at end-runs. Irrespective of whether lowering of the speed limits can be agreed with Essex County Council and locally, vehicle activated signage as at (II) above should be considered in the first instance for at least the B1393 in both directions, as well as B181 if resources permit. Consideration could also be given to a more advance *animal-activated* system that triggers dynamic deer warning signs when deer pass through (laser or radar) sensors arranged parallel to the verge. However, further investigation and a localised feasibility assessment of appropriate animal-activated systems would be required if wishing to explore this latter (likely more costly) option.

19. Maintain verges to prevent them becoming overgrown and impeding sight lines.

The prevention of verges from becoming overgrown is also an essential part of minimising DVCs, by ensuring good forward visibility for drivers and animals approaching the roadside. For the most part verges along roads through the Forest are already subject to twice-yearly cutting back by the highway authority but only to a limited flail width. CoL augments this cutting regime where felt needed. The removal of woody scrub and not allowing other dense high vegetation to develop within 5 metres of the verge is of greatest priority and in particular near bends and other sections of road with impaired forward visibility for driver. Creation of wider verges of 10 metres or more in DVC hotspots to further improve sight lines for both drivers and wildlife may also be valuable to assist in a number of locations, but would require careful site specific survey to help ensure that any benefits gained from creation of better sight lines do not become off-set by attracting deer to graze increasingly on the verges. Re-sowing any areas where wider verges are to be created with special seed mixtures of mainly native grasses and herbs of relatively low nutritional value could help negate the latter issue.

20. Regularly inspect motorway deer fence and liaise with HE to correct issues promptly.

Maintenance of deer fencing along the M25 is generally the responsibility of Highways England. It was not possible to inspect the fence for the present review but inspections in the recent past have revealed gaps breachable by fallow, roe and muntjac in some sections. In view of the potential seriousness of deer, especially large deer like fallow, passing through, CoL staff should inspect the M25 fence line from the outside at least every two or three months, and report any deer-porous gaps to the HE's management agent for the M25 corridor.

21. Provide enhanced (billboard type) signage at key entrances to main Forest.

A form of large (billboard) type of signage, such as the example Image 1 from the New Forest, is suggested for use at main routes into Epping Forest, to inform drivers that they are about to enter into an area where large animals are prevalent. Providing better information in this manner on the reasons for the Forest-wide 40 mph maximum speed is likely to aid greater compliance with that limit. If this recommendation is progressed, it would seem appropriate to adapt the design to be as 'Epping Forest' specific as possible, with emblems to signify presence of fallow deer, as well as muntjac and cattle. Provisional locations suggested would be a) at B1393 Bell Common heading south b) A104 near Warren Wood heading north, c) A121 Honey Lane heading west, and d) A121 nr Theydon Bois heading east.

22. Improve recording & collation of all reported DVCs including actual map locations and species.

Recording of DVCs by CoL staff and EFDC has been somewhat inconsistent across years and has frequently lacked the detail necessary to identify localised hotspots with a sufficient degree of accuracy. Contemporary technology makes it very simple to record accurately incidents attended by CoL staff, using either a) a GPS enabled phone to take a photo of the animal that automatically located the location or b) the new British Deer Society phone app, which is freely available and can be used to report deer sighting by species including specifically DVCs, and will return a copy of submissions made by email. OS grid references are not easily understood or recorded by everyone, but simple phone apps such as 'What Three Words' can also provide any locations in situ to within 5 m accuracy provided a GPS signal is available. CoL should decide on a standardised system of complete recording of every DVC which comes to its attention. Logged data should include precise location, date / time / species / sex / person or authority who informed CoL and the outcome (i.e. found or not found; and whether passed on to EFDC for collection). All those involved in DVC callouts should be trained and made to use the system, including office staff, field staff and volunteers. The purpose of more consistent and more detailed logging of DVCs is recommended not merely to assess DVC locations more precisely, but required also to enable objective assessments of the effectiveness (including cost-effectiveness) of such mitigation measures as are taken, and furthermore as valuable indicators of changes in the proportion and distribution of muntjac and fallow deer across the Forest.

23. Review and consult with Essex Police on possible improvements to callout scheme for attendance by CoL staff and others to deal with injured deer at the roadside.

Dealing with deer-vehicle collision road casualties: Dead deer are the responsibility of the local highway authority or else Highways England in case of trunk roads and motorways. Live injured deer, however, may require to be dealt with by specialists to first attend to animal welfare issues, which in most cases means euthanising the injured animal in a safe and humane manner, an approach supported by most vets and the RSPCA. Historically, throughout the UK, injured deer at roadside have been dealt with largely by volunteers (with deer culling experience) with a varying degree of support from Police Forces, Local Authorities and other NGOs. Organisations such as the RSPCA will also attend but have limited resources and often need to refer requests onward to the Police or local vets. In the case of Epping Forest, CoL staff have over the decades been directly involved and have attended to a high proportion of deer injured on roads leading through Epping Forest and the surrounding area. The same is true also of many other community forests, such as e.g. Ashdown Forest in East Sussex, where their rangers alone for many years have needed to deal with over two hundred DVCs a year.

With the increasingly widespread occurrence of DVCs, in some Counties (usually concurrent with Police Force areas) various "formalised" schemes have evolved whereby vetted volunteers (vetted by the Police) are called via a Police Force control room to deal with injured deer, where possible, with a Police presence. Volunteers are expected to operate only in possession of a Police incident number that should act as authorisation to use a firearm at roadside if required. More recently, a number of Forces (Hampshire, Thames Valley, Sussex) and Local Authorities (East Sussex) have required compulsory training and assessment as well as Police vetting to ensure a thorough understanding of roadside risk assessment issues. Organisations in situations similar to Epping Forest have adopted and now work as part of such wider schemes (e.g. the Ashdown Forest rangers). Outside of formal schemes, voluntary training is available from organisations such as the British Deer Society. It is recommended that CoL reviews and consults on their own measures for dealing with injured deer at roadside working with Police and local Authority and ideally includes compulsory training and assessment for all those involved.

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Appendix F; Safeguarding the welfare of wild deer

The welfare of free-living wildlife has attracted increasing attention from conservationists, veterinarians, animal behaviourists, philosophers and more recently legislators since it was first proposed in the peer-reviewed literature as an issue more than twenty-five years ago by Kirkwood Sainsbury and Bennett (1994).

The ubiquitous effect of human activity upon wild animals is set out by Czech (2013), who argues that the drive for economic growth, with concomitant habitat destruction, urbanisation, agricultural intensification, mining, logging and other extractive sectors leaves few parts of the globe free of an impact upon wild animal welfare. Recently the Netherlands and the Scottish Parliaments have enshrined into law a public duty of care for the welfare of wild animals, although these jurisdictions currently stand alone with such law in the developed world (WANE 2011, Putman 2008, Ohl and Putman 2013). In fact, the Animal Welfare Act (2006) and the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act (2006) specifically exclude wild animals from the obligations to exercise a duty of welfare care, unless the individual animal is “under the control of man” and specifically “not living in a wild state”. Within these statutes, the consideration of animal welfare is framed almost exclusively in terms of the individual animal, not populations or socio-familial groups. The same is true of the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act (1996) and the English and Welsh Deer Act (1991).

None the less, increasing public awareness of animal welfare issues has drawn some attention to the welfare of animals perceived to be vulnerable or generally popular, including wild deer. This is especially the case where the deer live on land in public ownership or land available for public recreation, such as Epping Forest, the Royal Parks of London and the deer parks of the National Trust.

Current concepts of the welfare of wild animals have moved away from definitions of welfare constructed around absence of negative impacts (freedom from pain, freedom from hunger and thirst etc.) that have been applied to pets and domesticated animals for more than 50 years towards definitions that reflect the promotion of positive states of welfare (Ekesbo 2011, Appleby Weary and Sandoe 2014, Sandoe and Jensen 2012, Ohl and van der Staay 2012). This approach emphasises that welfare should be considered as a continuum, not a ‘good or bad’, or ‘positive or negative’ state. These current concepts of welfare refer to the ability of the animal or group of animals to adapt to challenges that might potentially be harmful and therefore define poor or negative welfare in terms of the inability of the animal to alter its state and adapt to such challenges. Conversely positive welfare describes the state in which an animal has the freedom to react and adapt adequately to the prevailing circumstances or challenges. These more current ideas about animal welfare emphasise that welfare cannot properly be assessed at a single point in time, since the welfare of the animal or group of animals is a reflection of how it or they react, respond and adapt to challenge. Wild animals must therefore, by definition, be given the time to demonstrate whether they can adapt or whether they have the freedom to make the necessary adaptation to mitigate the challenge.

For wild deer, examples of deer moving into a more positive state of welfare would be evidence that when they are cold or subject to inclement weather, they can both seek and find adequate shelter; that when they are hungry, they can both seek and find sufficient nutritious food. They would move into more negative states of welfare when they were unable to find shelter or sufficient food. By these principles, it is clear that the deer themselves may contribute to a decline in their welfare: if over-abundant deer populations consume most of the available forage and strip the woodland of its ground cover and understory, there will be less shelter and less available food. The Scottish WANE

Act (2011) addresses this point specifically, making landowners responsible for deer management so that over-abundance of deer does not impact adversely upon deer welfare.

Although no such legal constraints apply to the City of London Corporation in respect of Epping Forest and the buffer lands, CoL staff will be able to answer enquiries about the welfare of the deer on the estate if they are familiar with these concepts.

Objective assessments of wild deer welfare must rely upon observation and, where available, examination of deer culled in routine deer management. If culling is practiced, an element of welfare will be the humaneness of the lethal rifle shot.

Green (2016) provided to the Scottish Government nine objective indicators that may usefully be employed by landowners and deer managers to assess the welfare of free-living wild deer. They apply equally to lowland deer in England. These are:

24. The bodily condition of yearling animals based upon a visual pelvic condition score scale of 1-5, where 1 is emaciated with severely sunken pelvic soft tissues and 5 is obese. If many or most of the yearlings score low (pelvic BCS 2 or below), herd and individual welfare is likely to be more negative. Yearlings in pelvic BCS above 2, especially in winter, indicate positive welfare. (Yearlings provide the most consistent cohort of animals that may be compared between groups of deer and between seasons).
25. The appearance of normal mobility and freedom from any debility, or the presence of obvious disease or injury that disables the deer over time and limits movement and feeding.
26. The mortality rate of the deer. Death in the rut from fighting and limited death of fawns and kids in their first winter are normal in UK fallow deer and muntjac deer and does not necessarily indicate negative welfare in the group. The sudden death of unexpected numbers of deer of varying ages is an indicator of declining welfare in the group. (This includes unacceptable deaths from deer-vehicle collisions).
27. The behavior and activity of the deer when undisturbed. Unusually depressed or sluggish behaviour (unusual for the deer under observation) suggests declining welfare.
28. The toleration of close approach or handling. Wild deer in a positive welfare state are cautious of human presence and flee attempts to approach or handle them. Deer that permit close inspection or even handling are likely to be in a severely negative state of welfare.
29. The social interaction of the deer when undisturbed. Deer in a healthy, positive welfare state are usually settled, relaxed and may show evidence of playfulness, sparring, grooming or inquisitive behaviours. Increased agitation, bullying, squabbling or increased milling around in groups of deer that are usually settled is an indicator that welfare is declining.
30. Foraging behaviour and appetite: Manic or grossly abnormal appetite or food choice indicates declining welfare.
31. The assessment of carcass condition of yearlings based upon the presence or absence of both renal and cardiac coronary groove fat deposits. Absence of any fat at these sites is an indicator of more negative welfare, especially in combination with very poor bodily

condition. Fat around the kidneys and in the coronary groove indicates that the welfare state of the deer at the time of death was not unacceptably negative.

32. The bullet placement in carcasses in the larder. Carcasses with multiple bullet wounds, especially to the limbs and abdomen, should be unusual. There should be evidence of single, fatal wounds in most of the carcasses, indicating that death was humane and swift and that welfare was not unacceptably compromised. The presence of several carcasses with multiple wounds is highly suggestive that welfare of the deer before death was unreasonably reduced and that this was a pattern of effect across the group.

When observing live deer, these indicators are best used as dynamic indicators, assessed over several days. For postmortem indicators, patterns of findings over the cull period are most useful. Similar parameters may be applied to free-living deer in parks, which are likely to be more visible for dynamic assessments of living deer and for which the artificial provision of supplementary winter feeding is usually essential (Green 2017).

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Appendix G; The current status, purpose and future of the Birch Hall deer sanctuary

The history of the sanctuary

The enclosed deer sanctuary at Theydon Bois, Epping dates from the late 1950s and early 1960s. According to Langbein (2011) at that time there was concern that the survival of the distinctive black fallow deer of Epping Forest might be at risk (cf. 3 below). Increasing vehicular traffic and human disturbance within the Forest were considered to be a threat to the deer. This is confirmed by Whitehead (1964) who reports that in some years, deer numbers in the whole Forest were below 100 in the early and mid-1950s and that, as he was writing in 1963/4, up to thirty deer were being killed on the roads annually. He also states that *'in some years also, there are heavy casualties in the spring due to scouring and on occasions some twenty to thirty fawns have been killed by poaching dogs moving through the Forest in June. It will be realised therefore, that should there be a combination of all these evils occurring in one year, the herd might well be decimated beyond recall'*.

Whatever the reasons for the establishment of the sanctuary, an area of open wood pasture and meadow in the Birch Hall area of Theydon Bois was enclosed with deer fencing and provided with deer leaps to capture local deer with the sanctuary. The original manor house of Birch Hall lay between Birch Hall Farm and the present mansion of Birch Hall (Theydon Hall). The estate was purchased in 1901 by Gerald Buxton and subsequently inherited by the Verderer Lt Col Edward North Buxton, the author of the standard reference book about the Forest (Buxton 1885).

Records and evidence from the current CoL staff suggest that deer numbers before culling have been maintained at between 100 and 200 for the past 30 years. Langbein (2011) records that he has made deer management recommendations in respect of the sanctuary in 1996, 2004, 2007 and 2011. A veterinary assessment and audit of the deer in the sanctuary was provided by Green (2010), which revealed suspicion of a sub-clinical copper deficiency, but no other concerns about health or welfare.

The current status and management of the sanctuary

The sanctuary extends to some 44 ha of undulating land, gently sloping from 90m to 60m above sea level in a northwest/southeast direction. Approximately 30 ha of the sanctuary is open permanent pasture interspersed with mature deciduous trees, mostly oaks arranged along the line of a drain and earlier hedgerow; the remaining 14 ha is mature deciduous woodland with some understory and a shallow lake of just under one hectare. There is the remnant of an old deer catching corral on the northern boundary, a legacy of live sales from the sanctuary in the 1980s. The northeastern and



eastern boundaries adjoin the gardens of local residences; the southeastern boundary adjoins the remnants of Gaunts Wood and Red Oak Wood from which the deer are excluded.

The Birch Hall deer sanctuary (from Epping Forest. The Official Map 2019)

The deer are relatively undisturbed, since there are no public rights of way through the sanctuary. In recent years, day-to-day management of the deer has been undertaken by CoL staff, who have inspected the deer for evidence of injury, provided the supplementary food in season and culled the deer to maintain numbers at agreed levels. A pre-rut cull of males has been undertaken in the past, in common with best practice for deer park management, but this cull has not occurred in 2019. Guided walks and group visits to the sanctuary have been undertaken by CoL staff in the past, but these have ceased. Cast antlers from the sanctuary are sold for a modest profit.

The sanctuary was visited on October 1st 2019. Present at the site visit were CoL staff, Consultant Dr Jochen Langbein and Consultant Dr Peter Green MRCVS.

The deer were more flighty than had been the case when Jochen Langbein and Peter Green last inspected them (in 2011 and 2010 respectively). The CoL staff stated that there were between 160 and 170 deer in the herd; it was impossible to confirm this. Subsequent scrutiny of photographs suggests that there may have been slightly more than this, but an accurate count was not possible. At the time of the visit, carrots were being provided; supplementary forage and deer-specific concentrates (Monarch Deer Nuts) would be provided later in the winter.

Inspection of the deer through binoculars indicated that they were in good condition, with pelvic body condition scores throughout the herd of 3 (out of 5) or above. There were several small late fawns, a testimony to late conceptions. All the deer were of the melanistic variety.



The fallow deer herd at the Birch Hall deer sanctuary on October 1st 2019 (photograph © J Langbein)

There was significant browsing of the nettles and creeping thistle in the sanctuary, which is an unusual feature of early autumn deer parks and indicates a degree of late summer forage deficiency. The central meadow area had only recently been mowed and CoL staffs conceded that pasture management had been delayed this season. The recent mowing should have been in time for an autumn flush of aftermath. The acorn and mast crop were considered to be no better than average.

Culling would begin when the rut had subsided and when the female season opened on November 1st.

Apart from the slight concern about summer forage and pasture management and the disappointment that the deer appeared more timid and flighty than in the past, the visit on October 1st gave no reason for the consultants to be concerned for the welfare of the deer. The CoL staff were clearly knowledgeable about park deer management and were enthusiastic about the deer and the sanctuary.

The character and value of the deer in the sanctuary

There has been a considerable focus upon the importance of the sanctuary in maintaining the bloodlines of the 'black' (melanistic) fallow deer that are believed to be characteristic of Epping Forest and to be traceable back to at least the early 17th century when James I is said to have brought black fallow deer of Danish origin to both Epping and Windsor (Buxton 1885, Chapman & Chapman 1975). The source of this information is not clear, since both Buxton, in later editions, and Chapman refer to Fisher (1887). Careful reading of both Fisher and Cox (1905) does not support this as an established fact.

Fisher actually states that “*the word ‘fallow’ refers to the usual reddish-brown colour of the species, but the Essex deer are of an almost uniform dark-brown tint. These were introduced into the Forest, it is said, by James I; but Mr Harting produces evidence of the existence of this variety in Windsor Forest in 1465*” (Fisher 1887 p 196). Whitehead (1964) also questions the folklore about the black fallow of Epping, again quoting Harting in his *Essays on Sport and Natural History 1883*, who evidently shows that there were dark coloured fallow deer at Windsor as early as 1465 and quoting Leyland’s Itinerary of 1533, which refers to dark fallow deer in England.

The origin of all the received wisdom about James I and the black fallow deer appears to be Thomas Bewick who published his children’s book *History of Quadrupeds* in 1790, in which he remarks that James I brought black fallow deer to Scotland and then to England because he had ‘*observed their hardiness in bearing the cold*’ (quoted by Shirley 1867).

Irrespective of the origin of the melanistic fallow deer that came to predominate in the Epping Forest area in the 18th and 19th centuries, there is universal agreement that fallow deer were present in the Forest, together with red deer, long before the time of James I and at least as early as the 12th century (Fisher 1887, Cox 1905, Whitehead 1964). Red deer became scarce in the early 19th century, after the abandonment of stag hunting with hounds, and the few remaining red deer were netted and taken to Windsor in 1820. Roe deer were introduced to Epping Forest by Buxton in 1883 but lasted only until the outbreak of the First World War (Buxton 1887, Whitehead 1964).

Contemporary genomics indicates that there is less genetic diversity amongst modern northern European fallow deer than between other wild deer species. This is almost certainly because translocations of fallow deer in small numbers have been responsible for their spread throughout Europe and succeeding genetic bottlenecks have eliminated most deleterious alleles and narrowed the genetic footprint. Work in the 1980s and 1990s based upon protein electrophoresis suggested that there was virtually no polymorphism in disparate populations of fallow deer, which gave rise to the thesis that there was no value in safeguarding given populations of fallow deer or particular deer parks herds because they were all fundamentally identical.

Such a perspective has been undermined in more recent years with the advent of much more advanced genomics. This shows that populations of fallow deer, isolated for sufficient numbers of generations, exhibit predictable genetic drift and become somewhat distinct. Examples of such investigations have been undertaken in Hungary, Germany and Australia (Kuszas et al 2018, Ludwig et al 2012, Webley et al 2007). In effect, these studies show that isolated fallow deer populations can begin to assume characteristics equivalent to ‘breeds’ within domesticated livestock.

The deer of Epping Forest have themselves been restricted in the past to severe genetic bottlenecks, with as few as 10 deer remaining in the Forest before multiplying again (Chapman & Chapman 1975). It is likely therefore that the deer are characteristic of the region and will vary in certain phenotypic expressions from, say, the fallow deer of the New Forest or of Shropshire. But this is far

from suggesting that they are unique or 'valuable' in terms of the genetic material they carry or that they represent bloodlines lost elsewhere.

In 2011, Arts and Humanities Research Council funded a project titled '*Dama International: fallow deer (Dama dama dama) and European society 4000 BC - AD 1600*', a multi-disciplinary project that aimed to trace the movement of European fallow deer (*Dama dama*) by people through time and space. One arm of this project involved generating new DNA sequence data to produce baseline information to determine the genetic structure and diversity of this species across its contemporary range (see Baker et al., 2017). In this context, 10 samples were sent to the project's geneticist (Dr Karis Baker, Durham University, Biological sciences) from Epping Forest.

Three of the samples received from Epping Forest were processed alongside 200 other samples retrieved from a diversity of European and worldwide populations along a 683 base stretch of the maternally inherited mtDNA control region (a base is defined as a DNA nucleotide A, C, G or T).

Thirty-six unique DNA sequences (known as haplotypes) were identified across the 203 fallow deer samples examined by Dr Baker. The sharing of mitochondrial haplotypes can provide information about possible shared ancestry down the maternal line. All 3 samples examined from Epping Forest, belonged to the same haplotype, indicating shared inheritance, which is not unexpected in deer herds. The haplotype found at Epping was also shared with 4 other fallow deer individuals from 3 of the other sampled locations: one individual from Stetchworth in Cambridgeshire, one individual from Whipsnade Zoo and two individuals from Schleswig-Holstein, Plön in Germany. This haplotype shows a relatively low frequency (7/203; 0.034) across total sampled populations.

The result from the Epping deer should be interpreted with care since the sample size (n=3) is extremely low and the result is being interpreted only from a very small portion of mitochondrial DNA. An increased sample size from Epping could unveil further useful information (e.g. unique or other shared haplotypes). However, the result shows that the three Epping fallow deer sampled were all of the same maternal line and that this maternal line is also present elsewhere in the UK and on the Continent. It appears to be a relatively uncommon maternal line, but is not unique to Epping. The connection with Whipsnade is unsurprising since melanistic deer were taken from Epping to the zoo in the 1960s when concerns were raised that the Epping strain of fallow deer might be at risk of extinction.

('We are grateful to Dr Karis Baker, University of Durham, for providing details of her research into the genomics of the fallow deer at Epping'.)

The melanistic phenotype is considered by some park managers to be rather dominant in herds that have a mix of colours and the emphasis upon fallow deer of Epping Forest appears to have been at its most enthusiastic the turn of the 20th century. This was a time when the majority stud books and breed societies were formed with great enthusiasm in domesticated livestock and pet circles. Breed standards were set according to fashion and to the perceived 'original types. Animals not conforming to these standards were culled or neutered. Buxton (1887) is extremely disparaging about fallow deer of other colours, describing the menil fallow of the New Forest as '*washy spotted mongrels*' (quoted by Whitehead 1964). It seems likely therefore, that fallow deer of other colours were culled when they appeared and the preponderance of the dark lines arose because of a combination of selection and breeding dominance, as much as from ancient or unique origins.

Buxton also makes much of the diminutive size of the wild Epping Forest fallow deer, comparing them with larger park deer that, he says, have more favoured grazing. In fact, he is mistaken in this viewpoint, since park deer are almost invariably smaller in frame and lighter in weight than free-living fallow deer in the open landscape of the UK.

In summary, there is little or no evidence that the dark fallow deer of the Birch Hall deer sanctuary are especially valuable or unique in terms of their genetics. They are, however, representative of the predominant type of fallow deer present in Epping Forest for at least 200 years, even if this preponderance may have been the result of anthropogenic influences.

There is currently no risk to the survival of fallow deer in the Epping Forest and south Essex areas, indeed, keeping populations under control is proving to be challenging. The sanctuary therefore has no purpose in terms of maintaining or salvaging a population

The possible purposes and benefits of the sanctuary

The deer sanctuary currently falls outside most of the recognised purposes for enclosed deer herds in the UK.

It is not a deer farm, since there are no facilities for handling deer, youngstock is not weaned for fattening and the main purpose of the deer herd is not the production of venison.

It is not a heritage deer park with a long history of emparkment from either royal or monastic origins, since it was created some sixty years ago on the site of a former private residence. It might be argued that it represents the last vestige of the former royal hunting forest of Waltham, but other royal chases that have evolved into deer parks (Richmond, Bushy, Hampton Court, Windsor etc.) have extensive and abundant public usage.

It is not a public amenity deer park, since there is no public access and the deer herd is maintained in seclusion from most of the residents of Epping Forest and the surrounding area. With the exception of the CoL staff who enter the enclosure, only the adjoining property owners have regular sight of the deer through the fence from their gardens.

It is not a landscape amenity designed to enhance the attraction of the parkland surrounding a great house, in the style of the National Trust deer parks, or private parks such as Longleat, Woburn, Houghton or Powderham.

It is not a zoological collection, conserving an endangered species or offering public exhibition.

At best, it currently constitutes a private deer herd maintained by and for almost the exclusive benefit of the City of London Corporation. It is difficult to justify the maintenance of the enclosed herd on this basis. Fallow deer are not endangered in the immediate area. The original purpose of the sanctuary, to safeguard and preserve some deer when extinction from the Forest was anticipated, has proven to be unnecessary.

This is not to say that the deer sanctuary could not fulfil a valuable purpose in the future; the deparkment of the fallow deer herd would be a major undertaking, not least in terms of public acceptance given the media coverage of the deer culling on the wider estate in the autumn of 2016.

There is no doubt that the deer herd in the sanctuary could be used more for educational purposes: although deer are abundant and form an important part of the local ecosystem, they are usually only glimpsed by local residents. School children and adults would benefit enormously from greater access to the deer herd, in conjunction with organised and professional educational input. Such models for public educational value work well in many peri-urban deer parks, both private and public. The Epping Forest Act of 1878 was framed for *“the preservation and management of the uninclosed (sic) parts thereof as an Open Space for the recreation and enjoyment of the public”* and it might be argued that public education about the deer of the Forest is an essential role of the Epping Forest Committee constituted under the Act.

As this review is also considering deer management on the wider Epping Forest estate and the buffer lands, on which deer culling by rifle is the only realistic population control tool, the preservation and promotion of the deer in the sanctuary might usefully mitigate any public outcry about the killing of deer. The City of London Corporation could profitably use the sanctuary as an example of how deer are supported and preserved by their staff, whilst acknowledging that in other areas of the Forest deer need to be culled. Such a public promotion of the sanctuary would only be valuable if there were a genuine increase in public access and education in and around the sanctuary.

Should the Corporation decide that the deer sanctuary is no longer necessary and fulfils no useful purpose, very careful consideration must be given to the way in which the deparkment of the sanctuary area is undertaken. At a time when the Corporation and Committee are seeking to justify deer culling on the landscape holdings, the culling of the enclosed deer in the sanctuary would do nothing to settle public disquiet about the need for such measures. Rational and logical discussion about the adverse impacts of free-living wild deer on the Forest habitat, on deer vehicle collisions, on adjoining commercial farmland and upon the deer themselves would be undermined if the deer in the sanctuary were to be culled at the same time as landscape scale deer management was being justified. Informed and intelligent objectors to deer culling would quickly appreciate that the reasons for culling wild deer do not apply in the same way to the deer in the sanctuary.

If the deer are removed by either netting or other capture techniques, stress and casualty rates are likely to be high and any destination for a large number of deer would require approval by Defra and Natural England.

It seems obvious that until one of the principal findings of this review (that deer culling is essential) is accepted by the public and is proving to be uncontroversial, or minimally controversial, in the media, it would be foolish on the part of the Epping Forest Committee to do away with the deer sanctuary. If the sanctuary is to remain, at least in the foreseeable future, it also seems obvious that it should be used more, and more publicly, for promotion of the Epping Forest deer.

Regular visits by groups, regular human activities in the sanctuary and regular supplementary feeding will soon habituate the deer to close human presence and attention. Indeed, this has been demonstrated in the past and can easily be achieved in the future. If the sanctuary is to be retained, the deer management plans and regime proposed by Langbein 2011 still applies and should be implemented. Regular veterinary input and written welfare endorsement has also proved useful in the face of enquiries to other public deer parks including the Royal Parks.

Conclusion

The deer sanctuary at Birch Hall is not necessary for the purpose for which it was originally created: the preservation of the Epping Forest deer. The fallow deer in the sanctuary are not especially valuable or unique. In its current form and usage, the sanctuary serves little purpose, but it has great potential as a public amenity and educational facility. Removing the deer at a time when deer management on the wider City of London estate is under public scrutiny would be damaging to efforts to justify and explain why active deer management by culling is essential.

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Appendix H; Glossary

Adaptive management; A structured, iterative process of robust decision making in the face of uncertainty, with an aim to reducing uncertainty over time via system monitoring.

Alleles; Each of two or more alternative forms of a gene that arise by mutation and are found at the same place on a chromosome.

Dichromatic vision; the state of having two types of functioning colour receptors, called cone cells, in the eyes which may improve an animal's ability to distinguish colours in low light.

Ecotone; An ecotone is a transition area between two biomes. It is where two communities meet and integrate. It may be narrow or wide, and it may be local (the zone between a field and forest) or regional (the transition between forest and grassland ecosystems).

Empark; To enclose the land with a wall, hedge or fence and to establish a captive herd of deer within,

Genetic drift; Variation in the relative frequency of different genotypes in a small population, owing to the chance disappearance of particular genes as individuals die or do not reproduce.

Genomics; the branch of molecular biology concerned with the structure, function, evolution, and mapping of genomes.

Haplotype; A haplotype is a group of genes within an organism that was inherited together from a single parent. The word "haplotype" is derived from the word "haploid," which describes cells with only one set of chromosomes, and from the word "genotype," which refers to the genetic makeup of an organism.

Mast; The highly variable annual production of fruit by a population of trees and/or shrubs. These intermittent pulses of food production drive ecosystem-level functions and forest dynamics.

Mitochondrial DNA; The small circular chromosome found inside mitochondria. These organelles found in cells have often been called the powerhouse of the cell. The mitochondria, and thus mitochondrial DNA, are passed almost exclusively from mother to offspring through the egg cell.

Natural capital; The world's stocks of natural assets which include geology, soil, air, water and all living things. It is from this natural capital that humans derive a wide range of services, often called ecosystem services, which make human life possible.

Phenotype; The term "phenotype" refers to the observable physical properties of an organism; these include the organism's appearance, development, and behaviour. An organism's phenotype is determined by its genotype, which is the set of genes the organism carries, as well as by environmental influences upon these genes.

Pollard; A pruning system involving the removal of the upper branches of a tree, which promotes the growth of a dense head of foliage and branches. Traditionally, people pollarded trees for one of two reasons: for fodder to feed livestock or for wood.

Polymorphism; In biology and zoology, polymorphism is the occurrence of two or more clearly different morphs or forms, also referred to as alternative phenotypes, in the population of a species.

Rut/Rutting; The mating season of certain mammals, which includes ruminants such as deer, , The rut is characterized in males by an increase in testosterone, exaggerated sexual dimorphisms and increased aggression and interest in females. The males of the species may mark themselves with mud, undergo physiological changes or perform characteristic displays in order to make themselves more visually appealing to the females. Males also use olfaction to entice females to mate using secretions from glands and soaking in their own urine.

Scouring (of animals/livestock); Suffer from diarrhoea.

Understory; The underlying layer of vegetation in a forest or wooded area, especially the trees and shrubs growing between the forest canopy and the forest floor. Plants in the understory comprise an assortment of seedlings and saplings of canopy trees together with specialist understory shrubs and herbs.

Ungulate; A members of a diverse group of primarily large mammals with hooves. These include odd-toed ungulates such as horses and rhinoceroses, and even-toed ungulates such as cattle, pigs, giraffes, camels, deer and hippopotamuses, , and, as well as sub-ungulates such as elephants. Most terrestrial ungulates use the tips of their toes, usually hoofed, to sustain their whole body weight while moving.

Wood-pasture; An area of grazing land with trees. Traditionally, the trees are cut periodically for fuel and/or for additional fodder for the livestock. Under this form of management, the trees are cut and maintained as pollards, so that the new growth develops above the reach of the browsing animals.

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Committee(s)	Dated:
Epping Forest Consultative – For consultation	10 02 2021
Epping Forest and Commons – For decision	08 03 2021
Subject: High Beach Individual Site Plan (SEF 08/21b)	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1, 2, 11, 12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
Report of: Colin Buttery, Director of Open Spaces	For decision
Report author: Geoff Sinclair, Head of Operations, Epping Forest	

Summary

A Strategy and Management Plan for Epping Forest for the period of 2020-30 is being developed alongside a 2020-23 Business Plan. Given the relative size of the Forest and the marked variety of the landscapes and habitats, there is a need to describe the discrete management of key areas.

This report outlines the Individual Site Plan (ISP) that has been prepared for the High Beach area. The legal and statutory context and significant management considerations described in the ISP have been outlined, along with the management strategy proposed for the area.

Recommendation(s)

Epping Forest and Commons Committee Members are asked to:

- i. Approve option 1 of the report.

Main Report

Background

1. On the 18 November 2019, your Committee approved the Epping Forest Management Strategy for the period of 2020-29. As part of the strategy, existing operational activity in main geographical locations and for key activities is being reviewed.
2. The review process comprises a reappraisal of the Epping Forest Charitable Trust's property management issues alongside other significant management considerations, to provide an overview of current practice and an outline of longer-term aspirations.
3. This report outlines the Individual Site Plan (ISP) for the High Beach area that has been prepared as part of the review.

Current Position

4. High Beach is an extensive area of ancient wood pasture occupying a high ridge between the valleys of the Lea and Roding and forms the traditional heart of the northern half of Epping Forest. The High Beach area has an especially high conservation value for the internationally important habitats and species present, and the abundance of ancient beech pollards in the locality; these are reflected in the area being part of the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC), a statutory designation of international conservation importance.
5. High Beach has a long history as the 'Epping Forest' destination. As a result, this distinctive brand attracts a large number of visitors of all types, especially at weekends and on Bank Holidays. The area is, however, relatively remote from the public transport network and the parking availability is frequently insufficient to cope with the demand, with substantial local traffic problems at peak times.
6. In addition to significant and continuing unplanned 'windfall' planning consents within, and adjacent to, the village envelope, substantial housing growth is planned in the surrounding districts under a number of Local Plans, with consequent predicted additional visitor pressure to already popular areas such as High Beach. As part of the development of these Local Plans, a SAC Mitigation Strategy is being developed, by Epping Forest District Council and the London Boroughs of Waltham Forest, Redbridge and Newham to mitigate the anticipated effects of new housing developments on Epping Forest.
7. The High Beach ISP seeks to define the management and mitigation that will be required to address future threats to the special nature of High Beach and presents a strategic work program to ensure a sustainable future for the conservation and heritage interest of High Beach, along with its immense recreational value.

Proposals

8. The ISP first outlines the legal and statutory context at High Beach, followed by the significant management considerations impacting on the area, before

presenting a management strategy and outline management program. A more detailed operational work activity plan is presented in the appendices, along with an indicative management map and additional background information.

Management Strategy

9. In addition to the need to discharge its obligations with respect to the legal and statutory context, the ISP identifies a 10-year management strategy for High Beach, summarised as follows:
 - a. To implement a programme of conservation measures that will contribute towards improving the conservation status of the Epping Forest SAC and the favourable condition of the SSSI compartments around High Beach.
 - b. To ensure that COL offers a visitor experience to High Beach in a sustainable and welcoming way.
 - c. To finance an Infrastructure Improvement Programme for High Beach, partly derived from income generated locally.
 - d. To encourage local community involvement in the management and enhancement of the Forest at High Beach.
 - e. To seek the mitigation of the impact of additional visits from new developments within Epping Forest SAC's Zone of Influence.

Management Considerations

10. There are a wide range of management considerations given in the report and these have been summarised below:
 - a. Ecological: The High Beach area is of outstanding conservation value with the pollarded wood pasture landscape thought to date back to at least Anglo-Saxon times (410 – 1066 AD). Pollard management went into decline in the 19th Century and despite more recent conservation measures, the condition of the population of ancient Beech trees is a concern. The area also supports key habitats including:
 - i. Acid Grassland and wet and dry Heathland: UK Biodiversity Action Plan habitats, habitats for which the Forest is partly notified under the SSSI and the heathlands are SAC habitats. As such, they are a top priority for wildlife conservation nationally.
 - ii. Bogs: There are several bogs through the area supporting notable wetland species. All the bogs have declined through encroachment by trees and visitor pressure on this sensitive habitat with notable species losses such as the last colony in Essex of Marsh St John's Wort.
 - iii. Spring lines and streams: There are several spring lines around High Beach that feed into the River Lea or the Roding catchment. These streams provide valuable habitat for plant and aquatic invertebrate species of conservation interest but typically over-shaded and trees have invaded their margins.
 - iv. Open Water: Permanent and seasonal ponds are to be found throughout the area with some of high ecological interest,

especially for dragonfly species and amphibian species, including Common Toad and Great Crested Newts. Scrub and tree encroachment and invasive non-native species, including the very aggressive New Zealand Pygmy are concerns.

- b. Heritage and landscape: The High Beach area has a rich heritage with a number of features of historical interest, dating from the Mesolithic period through to modern times, as well as exposed geology of local interest. The historical features combine to create a distinctive High Beach 'brand', such that visitors to High Beach come from much further afield compared to other locations within Epping Forest. The presence of Queen's Green and the 'Kings Oak' have provided a focus for large numbers of visitors since Victorian times, especially in the summer months, and on bank holidays. Conversely, high visitor numbers at High Beach are an increasing concern, with negative impacts on heritage features.
- c. Access: The area is relative remote from public transport and it is thought that higher than the average of 77% of visitors arriving by car is the situation at High Beach. There is still a significant issue with constrained car parking capacity associated with statutory conservation designations, especially on weekends and bank holidays. A temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) was introduced on 22 May 2020 on the roads around High Beach to address long-standing on-road parking issues by Essex County Council. As part of the overarching Sustainable Visitor Strategy, the connectivity for non-car users between existing public transport connections and High Beach will be assessed, alongside the increase in cut-through driving and the extensive overriding on narrow rural roads and associated verges.
- d. Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB): High Beach is substantially impacted by anti-social behaviour problems.
 - i. Noise: Local residents are subjected to considerable late evening and early morning disruption from ASB at High Beach and Hangman's Hill, through traffic offences; large public congregations; loud broadcast music and exhibition firework ignitions
 - ii. Fly-tipping: In the period 6 June 2019 – 5 June 2020, almost 21% of fly-tips in Epping Forest occurred in the High Beach area (the figure was 16.5% for the previous year).
 - iii. Littering: A large amount of litter is collected from Queen's Green and the Pillow Mounds, especially at the end of busy summer days and following unlicensed spontaneous social events.
 - iv. Drug use: Drug-taking of all classes of drugs is frequent around High Beach, in particular Nitrous Oxide (NOx, laughing gas) cannisters, marijuana and alcohol.
 - v. Public sex environment: Pillow Mounds car park and the Rushey Plain Turnaround are noted public sex environments (PSE). The impacts of the PSE are managed by COL and the Essex Police Service (EPS) to NPCC (formerly ACPO) guidance.

- e. Local Plans: The Local Plans for both Epping Forest District Council (EDFC) and the adjacent Local Authorities are being revised and all are planning a significant increase in housing and employment space. High Beach is very well-known location, with growing negative impacts on the features of conservation interest of the Epping Forest SAC. The developments arising out of the new Local Plans are likely to add further negative impacts to the High Beach area.

Property Management Context

- 11. The main property management issues, additional to the normal actions such as tree safety management which are undertaken through the Forest, and for which action will be required at High Beach have been identified as:
 - a. Fire Risk: High Beach has a history of regular unauthorised barbecues and fires by the public.
 - b. Statutory Designations: The whole area lies within the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Three of the five compartments were assessed by Natural England (NE) as 'unfavourable – recovering', one compartment as 'unfavourable-no change' and one as 'Favourable'. The area also lies within Epping Forest District Council's 'Green Belt and District Open Land'.
 - c. Invasive / Alien Species: There is a heavy infestation of New Zealand Pigmyweed (*Crassula helmsii*) in Speakman's Pond. Oak Processionary Moth (*Thaumetopoea processionea*) is increasingly prevalent on the many open grown oaks across the site and poses a risk to human health. Other INNS of concern in the area include Himalayan Balsam, Rhododendron and Japanese Knotweed.
 - d. Utilities: Thames Water have an underground reservoir adjacent to the Pillow Mounds, not on Epping Forest land. There has been a regular history of prolonged leaks from this facility running in to Speakmans Pond, which was fixed in autumn 2019.
 - e. Properties: There are several significant City Corporation properties in High Beach:
 - i. the High Beach Visitor Centre which is managed by volunteers from the Epping Forest Heritage Trust,
 - ii. the Field Centre (1970) leased to the Field Studies Council
 - iii. the Kings Oak Hotel (1887), owned by City Corporation Investments and leased and operated as a gastro pub and entertainment venue.
 - iv. Public Toilets managed by the Charitable Trust in partnership with Epping Forest District Council
 - v. two heritage structures – The Garden House and thatched horse trough.
 - vi. three staff lodges located in the village.

The Charitable Trust also licences the operation of two tea huts in High Beach at Hill Wood (1928) and the Pillow Mounds.

Outline Management Program

12. The ISP presents a 5-year outline management program which is then further detailed in Appendix 1 of the report (see the Operations Plan spreadsheet). This will be reviewed and updated yearly to monitor the progress of the management program and ensure that it continues to deliver the outcomes set out in the 10 year management strategy.
13. As well as works to be undertaken using existing resources, potential enhancement projects requiring additional support are also identified.

Options

14. Your Committee are asked to consider two options:
15. **Option 1:** It is proposed that High Beach ISP be adopted as the operational plan for the High Beach area.
16. The plan translates the Epping Forest Management strategy into practical management options for the High Beach area and forms part of the developing business plan for the Epping Forest. **This option is recommended.**
17. **Option 2:** Do not approve the High Beach ISP.
18. This would result in the continuation of the largely reactive management process and reduce our ability to address significant property and management considerations impacting on the High Beach area. **This option is not recommended**

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Epping Forest Consultative Committee Comments

There was debate around the need to involve the Parish Councils and High Beach Church more in the Charitable Trust's strategic planning in the High Beach area. The presence of good community liaison mechanisms, such as the Parish newsletter, were highlighted. The relative remoteness of High Beach and the poor public transport network was also raised as an important factor needing consideration. The need to conserve the presence of Great Crested Newts in several ponds was also highlighted, alongside the need for a greater focus on developing a strategic path network through the area.

Strategic implications

19. City of London Corporate Plan 2018 - 2023: the restoration and maintenance of the internationally and nationally important habitats of Epping Forest directly underscore the *third pillar* of the Corporate Plan, which is to "*shape outstanding environments*". The development of ISPs and PDNs form part of the operational planning to achieve this aim of the Corporate Plan.

20. Open Spaces Department Business Plan 2020-21: The proposals in the ISP contribute towards meeting the following outcomes of the plan: 1,3,4,5,7,8,9 and 11.
21. Mitigating the impact on the Epping Forest SAC of increased development arising from Local Authority Plans is currently under review. As one of the busiest and most environmentally sensitive locations in Epping Forest the outcome of this review has important implications for the High Beach area

Financial implications

22. The outline management program has been framed to fit within existing levels of local risk spend at High Beach.
23. Several projects have been identified which will only be progressed if additional financial and practical support can be obtained.

Legal implications

24. Subject to the provisions of the Epping Forest Acts 1878 & 1880 the Conservators are under a duty at all times to keep Epping Forest uninclosed and unbuilt on as an open space for the recreation and enjoyment of the public. They are also under a duty at all times as far as possible to preserve the natural aspect of the Forest.
25. The High Beach ISP provides the information and guidance to help the COL to meet its requirements under the above Acts.

Charity Implications

26. 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.

Risk implications

27. None

Equalities implications

28. No negative equality impacts were identified for this proposal.

Climate implications

29. None.

Security implications

30. None.

Conclusion

31. An Individual Site Plan (ISP) has been prepared for High Beach. This identifies the legal and statutory context and other significant management considerations that should be considered when approaching the management of this area, and which have drawn on the consultation and support of local stakeholders to develop.

32. A management strategy for the next 10 years is presented along with an outline management program and detailed work proposals. These proposals highlight works that can be achieved through existing Local Risk resources, but also where additional support will be required.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – High Beach Individual Site Plan
- Appendix 2 – Figures:
 - Figure 1a: Locations of named features in the High Beach area
 - Figure 1b: Locations of named features in the centre of High Beach
 - Figure 2: High Beach Summary Management Proposals

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HIGH BEACH



Individual Site Plan

<i>Date</i>	<i>January 2021</i>
<i>Version Number</i>	<i>v4.2 (Consultations for Committee process)</i>
<i>Review Date</i>	
<i>Author</i>	<i>Fiona Martin/Geoff Sinclair</i>
<i>Land Area</i>	<i>225 ha</i>
<i>Compartment Numbers</i>	<i>9, 10, 14, 17(part), 18</i>
<i>Designations</i>	<i>Epping Forest Land (1878 Act) Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Metropolitan Green Belt</i>

High Beach

INDIVIDUAL SITE PLAN

1. SUMMARY

High Beach is an extensive area of ancient wood pasture occupying a high ridge between the valleys of the Lea and Roding and forms the traditional heart of the northern half of Epping Forest. The High Beach area has an especially high conservation value for the internationally important habitats and species present, and the abundance of ancient beech pollards in the locality; these are reflected in the area being part of the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC), a statutory designation of international conservation importance.

High Beach has a long history as the 'Epping Forest' destination. As a result, this distinctive brand attracts a large number of visitors of all types, especially at weekends and on Bank Holidays. The area is, however, relatively remote from the public transport network and the parking availability is frequently insufficient to cope with the demand, with substantial local traffic problems at peak times.

Substantial housing growth is planned in the surrounding districts under a number of Local Plans, with consequent predicted additional visitor pressure. As part of the development of these Local Plans, a SAC Mitigation Strategy is being developed, which will have significant influence on the High Beach area. The SAC Mitigation Strategy is being developed by Epping Forest District Council and the London Boroughs of Waltham Forest, Redbridge and Newham to mitigate the anticipated effects of new housing developments on Epping Forest. This Individual Site Plan lists current management considerations and site-specific issues that the wider mitigation strategy will need to address, but the ISP will also evolve alongside this and other Forest-wide strategies.

Looking ahead, there is a need to protect the nature and heritage conservation features of the High Beach area, whilst also improving the experience of visitors to this part of Epping Forest. The ISP presents a site-specific framework for decision-making and a work programme that is aimed at ensuring a sustainable future for the nature conservation, heritage and amenity interests of the High Beach area.

2. INTRODUCTION

Individual Site Plans (ISPs) aim to review and collate the City Corporation's property management considerations at specific locations, to give an overview of current practice and outline longer term plans. An important part of the process is to work with key local stakeholders to ensure that we capture the management issues impacting each site. Site selection is based around areas of Epping Forest that have a high number of competing issues and/or high visitor numbers.

The ISPs reflect the current level of activity at each site; however, an important part of each ISP is the identification of any potential improvement and enhancement projects that require additional resources, including support from external operational stakeholders, for example in the form of grant funding or volunteer person-hours. The information gathered in each report will be used by the City Corporation to prioritise work and spending on each site as part of the development of the 'London's Great Forest' 2020-30 Management Strategy.

Each ISP will aim to follow the same structure, outlined below:

- **Background** – a brief description of the extent of the site covered by the ISP;
- **Property Management Context** – a list of property management constraints such as legal and statutory obligations directly relevant to the management activity or location;
- **Management Considerations** – a list of identified management considerations for the site, with respect to ecology, conservation, community, heritage, landscape, protection and any other identified management issues;
- **Management Strategy** – a summary of the key overall objectives for managing the site, as identified by the audit;
- **Outline Management Programme** – a summary of the management actions identified for the site as a result of the audit and consultation process, with anticipated timelines for completion;
- **Potential Enhancement Projects Requiring External Support** – a list of projects that would enhance the quality of one or more aspects of the site, for which additional support would be required;
- **External Operational Stakeholders** – a list of external stakeholders who have an operational input to the site, who have been consulted as part of the compilation of the Individual Site Plan;
- **Bibliography** – a list of existing reports (if available) that have formed part of the audit for the ISP; and
- **Appendices** – including a detailed activity plan.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Introduction

High Beach is an extensive area of ancient wood pasture occupying a high ridge between the valleys of the Lea and Roding and forms the traditional heart of Epping Forest. Epping Forest is one of the earliest publicly-accessible landscapes in England, predating the UK's National Parks by nearly 80 years. It is managed in perpetuity by the City of London Corporation, as The Conservators of Epping Forest, guided by the responsibilities and powers provided by the Epping Forest Acts 1878 and 1880 and subsequent amending legislation, including most recently the Open Spaces Act 2018. The High Beach area has an especially high conservation value for the internationally important habitats and species present, and the abundance of ancient beech pollards in the locality.

The five Forest compartments surrounding High Beach lie within the Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and are also covered by other designations, including Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The SAC status and the SAC conservation objectives (Natural England, 2018 & Jan 2019a), as well as the SSSI condition, will be central to considerations of future management options.

High Beach also has a long history as the 'Epping Forest' destination and this distinctive brand attracts a large number of visitors, especially at weekends and on Bank Holidays. There is a long tradition of people meeting on Queen's Green, whilst young couples come to the Pillow Mounds to admire the view and spend time together. Visitors of all ages enjoy the view from the Pillow Mounds and the opportunity to walk amongst the ancient trees (Adams, J., pers. comm.). The history of

High Beach, combined with the brown tourist signs directing visitors to the location as 'Epping Forest Centre', availability of car parking, public toilets, an easy access path, a Visitor Centre, two tea huts and a large gastropub with entertainment venue attached ('Kings Oak'), all ensure that the High Beach area is one of the more popular areas for visitors in Epping Forest.

Based on local knowledge from the Epping Forest Heritage Trust volunteers who run the Visitor Centre (Adams, J, pers. comm.), it would seem that High Beach attracts a diversity of visitors, including a proportion of new visitors who come off the M25 from Essex, north & west London and some from Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire. Some visitors from distant locations used to live in the area and have come back to visit - these visitors make use of the Visitor Centre to ask questions about what has changed since they moved away, other visitors from afar come with local residents who are showing off their local Forest area, whilst others are just exploring - including first time visitors. Most are coming for a day/half day out, looking for walks and cycle paths, and making use of the catering facilities, Visitor Centre and public toilets (Adams, J, pers. comm.). Snapshot surveys suggest that the Visitor Centre at High Beach has a high proportion of first time visitors. Equally, there is a local community of people who make a point of visiting the same tea hut at around the same time each day or week, often during 'off-peak' times. These include regular walkers and runners, those walking their dogs, cyclists, and others looking for a cup of tea in a beautiful location, with the chance of bumping into someone they recognise.

The area is however relatively remote from the public transport network (up to 55 mins walk from Loughton Tube Station via Baldwins Hill and the Forest's shared use paths) and the parking availability is frequently insufficient to cope with the demand, with substantial local traffic congestion at peak times. A recent visitor survey across the whole of Epping Forest found that 77% of visitors arrived by car (Liley et al (Footprint Ecology), 2018); this percentage is likely to be even higher at High Beach, given the lack of public transport to the area.

Looking ahead, there is a need to plan to protect the nature and heritage conservation features of the High Beach area whilst also improving the experience of visitors to this part of Epping Forest.

3.2 High Beach Forest Management Compartments

High Beach comprises five Forest management compartments (9, 10, 14, 17 and 18) covering a total area of approximately 225 hectares (9% of Epping Forest), all situated within Epping Forest District. Figure 1a illustrates the locations of the High Beech compartments, car parks and other features of interest, whilst Figure 1b shows the features of interest in the centre of High Beach in more detail. From the High Beach area, Epping Forest extends north into St Thomas' Quarters (management compartment 6), east into Great Monk Wood (compartment 11) and Loughton Camp (compartment 19) across the Epping New Road (A104) and south into Hill Wood (compartment 21). The Woodredon Farm Buffer Land (owned and managed by COL, but not part of Epping Forest under the 1878 Parliamentary Act) is also just to the north of the High Beach area, and there is further farmland to the west of High Beach.

The south eastern edge of the town of Waltham Abbey (population 21,149 in the 2011 census) is around 800m from the north western tip of the High Beach area at Honey Lane. To the east, the western edge of the town of Loughton (population 31,106 in the 2011 census) is just under 2km away through Forest land. Loughton Underground Station is 2.8km away from the centre of the High Beach area.

There are approximately 13 km of COL managed paths within the High Beach area as detailed in the Path Management Policy Development Note (COL, 2020a).

3.3 Pillow Mounds and Queen's Green

The centre of the High Beach area is known as the Pillow Mounds (compartment 14), a site of regional archaeological interest, being the remains of post medieval rabbit warrens, whose use continued into the 19th century (Essex County Council Historic Environment Branch, 2010). This area is also the location of a popular viewpoint across the Lea Valley and into Hertfordshire, which has, however, increasingly become obscured in the last 50 years by secondary tree growth over heathland and the expanding crowns of mature trees.

The compartment is a mosaic of slopes, streams, woodland and clearings with botanically important acid grassland and heather; as well as a large number of immense and ancient Beech pollards of unparalleled international conservation importance, which support an important range of mycorrhizal fungi and saproxylic invertebrates.

On level ground at the apex of the Pillow Mounds slope is an area of short-mown grassland, bounded by a series of low wooden posts, known as Queen's Green. There are two trees on Queen's Green - 'Victoria's Oak' (an American Red Oak), which is a replacement for a tree planted by Queen Victoria in 1882, and an English Oak planted by His Royal Highness The Duke of Sussex, in 2017. Just opposite on the northeast corner of the access road to the Visitor Centre is a Cyprus Oak.

3.4 Paul's Nursery

Just east of Paul's Nursery Road, in compartment 18, 14 hectares within Epping Forest were set up as a plant nursery in 1860 by the famous horticulturalists, the Paul family, on the site of an old gravel working. The nursery rose to prominence from 1867 under the ownership of George Laing Paul, but was recognised as an illegal enclosure under the Epping Forest Act 1878 and returned to the Forest in 1921 upon George Laing Paul's death. George Laing Paul had a passion for exotic plants, particularly *rhododendrons* and *azaleas*, which can still be seen in the area today, along with a number of other species which survive from the time of Paul's Nursery, such as Holm Oak, Japanese Maple and Copper Beech. The ubiquitous and very popular double pink Hawthorn variety known as 'Paul's Scarlet' is associated with the nursery. The Garden House also survives; this very grand potting shed is currently unoccupied.

The Epping Forest Visitor Centre, owned by COL and within Epping Forest land, but operated by Epping Forest Heritage Trust, is also located within the Paul's Nursery compartment, on land behind the 'King's Oak'. The Visitor Centre is part of a complex of buildings on Forest Land, the remainder of which are leased to the Field Studies Council for the Epping Forest Field Centre. Both the Epping Forest Visitor Centre and the Field Centre buildings sit within a raised circular bank comprising the remains of the first ever motorcycle speedway track in the UK. The High Beach area is a focal point for motorcycle enthusiasts who regularly meet up at The Original Tea Hut, a short distance to the south of the speedway location.

The area comprises mature Beech forest with open glades and regeneration of Beech, Birch and Oak where the ancient Beech trees have fallen, especially to the south of Paul's Nursery. The area close to Nursery Road was once open heath on sandy soils, but over the last 50 years, it has become colonised with secondary Birch woodland.

3.5 Fernhills to High Beach Church

Southwest of Queen's Green and the centre of High Beach is an area known as 'Fernhills to High Beach Church' (Compartment 17). This management compartment is in fact two distinct areas – one around High Beach southwest of Queen's Green, and another centred on Fernhills and Trueloves, two later additions to Epping Forest. The part of the management compartment around High Beach, with which this ISP is concerned, comprises four broadly triangular areas of

Forest criss-crossed by the minor roads of the High Beach village. High Beach Church forms an enclosure within this area; the wooded areas around the Church consist mainly of secondary woodland that has colonised former open heathland. To the west of the Church is High Beach Green and area of acid grassland which is increasingly being enclosed by expanding woodland.

3.6 Wake Valley

To the northeast of Queen's Green is an area known as Wake Valley (Compartment 10), a mosaic of beech wood-pasture and heathland with a number of spring lines, streams, ponds, and the Wake Valley Bog Complex). Wake Road, which links High Beach with Woodridden Hill and the Wake Arms roundabout, cuts across compartment 10. In comparison to the other compartments comprising the High Beach area, this part of the Forest receives relatively few visitors. As a result of its relative quietness, Wake Valley is an important location for a number of scarce plant and animal species of conservation importance, as well as being a favoured spot for seeing the deer that roam the Forest and graze the heathlands and acid grasslands.

3.7 Honey Lane Quarters

Honey Lane Quarters (Compartment 9) lies on the northern edge of the area that most visitors associate with High Beach. A broadly triangular area bounded by Claypit Hill, Woodridden Hill and the Verderers Ride, Honey Lane Quarters is a steeply-sloping northwest-facing compartment. It comprises mainly wood pasture, grassland of conservation importance for scarce plant species (Big View), a grassy plain (Honey Lane Plain), and Honey Lane car park at the base of the hill in the northwest corner. A COL official natural path (see Glossary) heads east from the Honey Lane car park parallel to Woodridden Hill, providing visitors with access to St Thomas' Quarters and the buffer lands of the Woodredon Estate. The Honey Lane car park is the location of an historic thatch-roofed drinking trough and fountain. Rifle Butts Ride is of historical interest, as it was the location of a rifle range built in 1863 for the 22nd Essex Rifles, with the rifle butts located at intervals up the steep hill along what is now Rifle Butts Ride. The actual rifle butts still exist as earthworks along the ride. As well as being of botanical importance, Big View is a notable viewpoint, though it is much less well known than the view from Pillow Mounds due to its location.

4. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT CONTEXT

4.1 Statutory Designations

- **Special Area of Conservation (SAC):** All five High Beach compartments are encompassed by the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation. As such they form part of an internationally important site within a network of such sites across Europe and are specially protected under UK law by The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), often simplified to The Habitats Regulations or The Habs Regs. The qualifying features of Epping Forest SAC are wet heathland with Cross-leaved Heath, dry heath, Beech forests on acid soils and the presence of Stag Beetle. All four of these SAC qualifying features are present across this area, with Beech forest habitat and Stag Beetle throughout all the constituent compartments, and wet and dry heaths covering much of Compartment 10.
- **Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI):** All five High Beach compartments are within the designated *Epping Forest Site of Special Scientific Interest* (SSSI). The SSSI is regularly assessed for its 'favourable condition' to ensure that the wildlife habitats support the range of scarce species for which it was designated. Condition assessments are

undertaken on a unit (compartment) basis by Natural England, who assess unit condition against SSSI condition targets.

- The ecological condition of each compartment has been assessed by Natural England (NE), as follows:
 - Compartment 9 (Honey Lane Quarters, NE unit 109): assessed as ‘unfavourable – recovering’ in January 2010, based on an assessment of habitats and veteran trees, and invertebrate, bryophyte and fungi assemblages. However, notwithstanding the assessment, Natural England states that *‘there remains a very significant issue relating to air quality and the related deposition of acidity and of nitrogen, and the anticipated recovery of the compartment will not occur unless an extensive grazing regime is re-introduced as planned’*.
 - Compartment 10 (Wake Valley, NE unit 110): assessed as ‘unfavourable – recovering’ in January 2017, based on an assessment of the wood pasture, wetland features and heathland/acid grassland. The compartment is assessed as ‘recovering’ on the basis of the rolling programme of pollarding, crown reduction and halo work. Natural England further mentions that *‘targeted tree management around ponds may be beneficial to submerged vegetation, and targeted grazing and grassland management would benefit the heathland / grassland’*.
 - Compartment 14 (Pillow Mounds, NE unit 114): assessed as ‘unfavourable – recovering’ in March 2017. The condition of the Pillow Mounds acid grassland, excessive Holly in the wood pasture shrub layer, and sub-optimal bryophyte diversity close to high recreational areas and roads are all factors contributing to its current unfavourable condition. The compartment is assessed as ‘recovering’ on the basis of recent management activities, including bracken/bramble clearance on the Pillow Mounds, recreational management activities, and halo work and re-pollarding of veteran trees.
 - Compartment 17 (Fernhills to High Beech, NE unit 117): assessed as ‘unfavourable – no change’ in March 2017, based on the condition of the wood pasture canopy, and wetland features being unfavourable due to *Crassula helmsii* dominance.
 - Compartment 18 (Paul’s Nursery, NE unit 118): assessed as ‘favourable’ in January 2010, based on an assessment of habitats and veteran trees, and invertebrate, Odonata, bryophyte and fungi assemblages. However, notwithstanding the assessment, Natural England states that *‘there remains a very significant issue relating to air quality and the related deposition of acidity and of nitrogen. Many veteran trees within the unit display clear symptoms of stress, and some of the waterbodies are in a sub-optimal condition’*.
- Metropolitan Green Belt: The Epping Forest District Local Plan Submission Version (December 2017) states in Policy SP6 ‘Green Belt and District Open Land’ that “the openness of the Green Belt will be protected from inappropriate development in accordance with national planning policy. The same level of protection will be applied to areas of District Open Land.” The whole of Epping Forest within Epping Forest District is designated Metropolitan Green Belt.

4.2 Tree Safety

- Tree Safety: There are four different tree safety zones identified for each of the five compartments around High Beach:
 - Red + Zone Trees along main roads, around car parks, on Queen’s Green, along the easy access path at High Beach, around the Visitor Centre/Field Study Centre buildings and in the nearby heavily frequented woodland; all areas are surveyed annually by specialist external tree safety consultants.
 - Red Zone Trees alongside minor highways are surveyed every two years by specialist external tree safety consultants.

- Amber Zone Trees in areas highly frequented by the public and where trees abut properties, are surveyed every three years by specialist external tree safety consultants.
- Green Zone Trees alongside the official all-weather and natural path network (see Glossary) as identified on the Epping Forest visitor map are surveyed by City Corporation staff and volunteers on a five-year rotation.

4.3 Wildfire Risk

- Barbeques and fires, although against the byelaws, are still used by some visitors and pose a significant risk to the important heathland and veteran tree habitats of the SAC, as well as the wider environment and neighbouring properties and roads. Wildfire is more prevalent and more likely to become out of control in open grass and heathland habitats where the fuel-load (particular vegetation types and structures) is also high. The key habitat in the High Beach area requiring a wildfire risk assessment is heathland. The two locations encompassed by this ISP that are covered by both a site-specific risk assessment but also site-specific wildfire management plans and wildfire response plans (the latter required by Essex Fire & Rescue Service) are Sunshine Plains North and South.
- The Epping Forest Field Centre has a designated and licensed fire pit for its environmental education activities.

4.4 Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)

- Oak Processionary Moth (*Thaumetopoea processionea*): The larvae of the non-native Oak Processionary Moths are a risk to human health (GB non-native species secretariat, 2020) and they are present throughout Epping Forest. Future responses will involve removal of the nests, especially at lower levels, with some pesticide treatment in limited cases, such as in high visitor access areas, e.g. the Pillow Mounds.
- New Zealand Pigmyweed (*Crassula helmsii*): This invasive non-native species is present in Wake Valley Pond and Little Wake Pond West, and dominant in Speakman's Pond. *Crassula helmsii* is almost impossible to eradicate from a water body once established; it is currently managed by conservation volunteers.
- Other INNS are also present in the High Beach management compartments as follows:
 - Himalayan Balsam in compartments 9 and 14;
 - Turkey Oak in compartment 14;
 - Rhododendron in compartment 18;
 - Japanese Knotweed in compartment 18 (previously treated and not seen in 2020);
 - Muntjac deer across all compartments;
 - Least Duckweed in Wake Valley bomb crater pond and Wake Arms pits;
 - White Water Lily in Little Wake Pond (west);
 - Various non-native fish, and possibly terrapins, discharged into the ponds by visitors; and,
 - Sycamore across all compartments.
- An Invasive Species and Biosecurity Policy (COL, in prep) will review the high-risk species and prioritise monitoring and controlling INNS and other invasive species in Epping Forest. Biosecurity policy will be developed alongside the INNS policy, and biosecurity protocols developed for each species or location as required.

4.5 Infrastructure

- Information boards/signposts: There are a large number of COL signs in the High Beach area, of various ages, designs and functionality. Signage and interpretation are being reviewed across Epping Forest and a strategy

should be complete in 2021. The issues around signage are considered in more detail in the Access and Visitor Services sections of this ISP.

- **Forest Furniture:**
 - Oak bollards: Queens Green is distinctively enclosed with over 100 sawn oak bollards, spaced around 2.5 m apart.
 - Forest furniture: A number of wooden picnic benches and seats are provided by COL in the High Beach area; these are positioned close to the tea huts and Visitor Centre. There is one bench to the side of the Pillow Mounds, but further benches have not been installed on the Pillow Mounds and Queen's Green in order to preserve their natural aspect.
 - Rubbish bins: Following a review of bin provision to better tackle the significant litter problem on the Pillow Mounds area in 2015, the number of bins was increased. This has helped to speed litter collection as more waste is put in bins and not discarded on site or in bags alongside over-full bins, which are then ripped open by foxes. However, there remains a significant litter problem at High Beach, which is a combination of a number of inter-related issues that will be addressed as part of a future review of litter management.

4.6 Property / Boundaries / Wayleaves

- **High Beach Visitor Centre:** The Visitor Centre is located in a stand-alone building owned by COL, who remain responsible for the building's exterior and interior. Epping Forest Heritage Trust operate the Visitor Centre on behalf of COL, but COL provide stock and materials for the displays and shop, outlined in the Management Agreement between the two parties.
- **Forest lodges:** There are two COL Forest lodges off Paul's Nursery Road near to the 'Kings Oak', and a further lodge (Dairy Farm), off Church Road to the southwest of High Beach.
- **Garden House:** The closure of Paul's Nursery, and the return of the land to Epping Forest, transferred ownership of the Garden House to COL.
- **Field Centre buildings:** The main Field Centre teaching building (also known as the Qvist building) and the attached timber classroom are owned and maintained by COL. All three ancillary buildings (Harting Lodge and Buxton Lodge and Ravensmead Hostel) are also leased by COL to the Field Centre for staff accommodation.
- **'Kings Oak':** The 'Kings Oak' buildings and shingle car park are not within Forest land, though these are owned by COL and leased to tenants who operate a gastropub and entertainment venue.
- **Public toilets:** In the 1960s, Epping Forest District Council (EDFC) constructed a toilet block in the car park of the 'Kings Oak', on COL (but not Epping Forest) land. The ownership of the toilet block was transferred to COL in 2005; Epping Forest District Council and Waltham Abbey Town Council continue to provide a maintenance grant for the upkeep of these public toilets by COL. Changing legislation and developing user demands means there is a need to review the long-term toilet provision needs at High Beach.
- **Thatched shelter:** A thatched shelter with a horse drinking trough and fountain is located at the northwest corner of Honey Lane Quarters (Compartment 9). It is locally listed by Epping Forest District Council as being of architectural or historical merit, though it is currently out of operation.
- **Tea huts:** The tea hut structures are owned by the current tenants, who supply their own utilities from cannisters / generators / batteries. The Original Tea Hut has had access to the mains water since 2016.
- **Wayleaves:** There are 91 private property accesses across Forest Land in the High Beach area; the majority of these have extant wayleave agreements. An Access Audit (COL, in prep) is currently ongoing, which will audit all

third party access on Forest Land in the area and pursue wayleave agreements for those property accesses currently without an agreement.

4.7 Highway Verges

- Highway verges: All the verges around the High Beach area suffer from significant encroachment from parked cars, especially at weekends and bank holidays, when the number of visitors exceeds the number of official car parking spaces at High Beach.
- Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TRO): A TRO was introduced on 22 May 2020 on the roads around High Beach. Further details about the scheme can be found in a later section of this ISP (Access).
- Sightlines at car park entrances and road junctions are cut annually by COL in June/July.

4.8 Utilities

- Thames Water have an underground reservoir adjacent to the Pillow Mounds, not on Epping Forest land. There has been a regular history of prolonged leaks from this facility running in to Speakmans Pond, which was fixed in autumn 2019.

5. MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 Ecology and Nature Conservation

- Outstanding conservation value: Epping Forest is a unique landscape, distinct from the surrounding countryside as a result of over a thousand years of sustainable management by people and their domestic animals. *"In 1878, Epping Forest was a complex and balanced system, every acre the product of centuries of peculiar land uses, and a thing of distinction and beauty; with its combination of pollards and heather, there was probably nothing quite like it in the world"* – taken from Oliver Rackham's *The History of the Countryside* (1986). The resulting wood pasture habitat with ancient pollards is a landscape of immense conservation value due to its rarity. It is one of a few remaining large-scale examples of wood pasture in England and encompasses one of the largest populations of ancient trees in any site in Europe. This wood pasture also supports outstanding assemblages of invertebrates and amphibians, and an important breeding bird community. The High Beach area includes most of these high nature conservation value habitats, including ancient semi-natural woodland, scrub, acid grassland, heathland, marsh and open water.
- Climate change: This over-arching and increasingly serious problem needs to be factored into management decisions for the site and, particularly, the protection of its scarce habitats and species. The effects of climate change will increase the susceptibility of the trees and vegetation to diseases and extremes of weather.
- Favourable Condition of the SSSI compartments/units - Site Improvement Plan (SIP): Management work will need to try to address the two key problems for favourable condition identified by Natural England: air pollution and recreational pressure in the Site Improvement Plan (Natural England, 2016). To address the former, a close working relationship is required with other stakeholders, particularly Epping Forest District Council through the updating of its Local Plan and its highways and development proposals. Recreational pressure also needs to be considered and this ISP outlines possible management proposals that will help address the issues of visitor numbers and help to protect habitats such as the wood pasture with its ancient pollards and acid grassland/heather. Natural England also specifically mentioned *'the reintroduction of extensive grazing as planned is key to the anticipated recovery of unit 109 (Epping Forest Compartment 9, Honey Lane Quarters)'*; extensive grazing was

reintroduced to areas of Epping Forest in 2002, and grazing was expanded into new areas of the Forest as part of the 'Branching Out' project.

Wood pasture and ancient/keystone pollards

- High Beach includes a significant proportion of the ancient wood pasture in Epping Forest, with a profusion of ancient pollards. Pollard management went into decline in the 19th century and as a result trees grew beyond the optimal stage for reworking, with the condition of some trees subsequently declining.
- Between 2009-2019, COL Epping Forest undertook the Branching Out Project (funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund - NLHF), which included specialist crown reduction work on 1050 keystone Beech and Oak pollards within Epping Forest, 250 of which were in the High Beech area. The keystone trees were chosen as those in most need of specialist management, from 24,508 ancient trees that were mapped and recorded as part of the project. A proportion of these keystone Beech and Oak trees will be further crown reduced in the next cycle of works as part of a future Countryside Stewardship application.
- The area also holds a large number of hornbeam pollards, of which a proportion will receive work to stabilise their structures, with the aim of improving their condition and therefore longevity.
- Threats to longevity of keystone trees, hornbeam pollards and other trees include:
 - Historic lack of suitable management, which is being addressed through the Countryside Stewardship scheme;
 - Climate change, leading to increased instances of drought and storm events;
 - Atmospheric pollution and localised pollution from vehicles on the roads through High Beach, which is partially addressed through the Temporary Traffic Order in the High Beach area (see Access section);
 - Pests and diseases, to which trees stressed by climate change and pollution are more susceptible;
 - Visitor pressure, which has led to two situations that adversely impact ancient trees in the area:
 - Soil compaction arising from the trampling pressure of visitors, which reduces the ability of water to move through the soil so there is inadequate movement of oxygen to roots, and in dry periods, compacted soils can become so hard that root systems cannot grow through the soil, leading to poor root systems.
 - Tree safety requirements in response to the red hazard category of busy public access areas has resulted in recommendations for interventions that potentially undermine the conservation value of some ancient trees, e.g. through dead wood removal in the tree crown.
- In 2019, a fencing trial was implemented around one tree to test the effectiveness of this approach for protecting these trees in a cost and landscape effective way. Materials used were round posts with a green polypropylene rope running through a hole in the top and this low cost approach appears to be successful.

Acid grassland and heathland

- Acid grasslands are so-called because they are characterised by nutrient-poor (low nitrogen and phosphorus content) and acidic soils (those with a low pH – sandy/gravelly). They are closely associated with and often interleave with wet and dry heathlands where heather and other ericaceous plants are characteristic. The low nutrients and acidic conditions favour a wide diversity of specialist native plants that can thrive where the more common, faster-growing grasses cannot easily survive. Acid grassland and both wet and dry heathland are UK Biodiversity Action Plan habitats, habitats for which the Forest is partly notified under the SSSI and the heathlands

are SAC habitats. As such, they are a top priority for wildlife conservation nationally and in High Beach are represented by the following areas.

- Sunshine Plain (Wake Valley, compartment 10) is a regionally important wet heathland with Cross-leaved Heath, Creeping Willow, Cotton Grass, Sundew and Heather, with *Sphagnum*, Heath Rush, Carnation Sedge and Tormentil. Grass Snakes and Lizards are both common on Sunshine Plain. Sunshine Plain north and south have been grazed by Epping Forest's herd of English Longhorn cattle for the past five years with some intended rest years.
- Big View (Honey Lane Quarters, compartment 9) is a steep, northwest-facing clearing with a mosaic of acid grassland, heathland and spring-fed boggy patches. It is botanically important with species such as heath milkwort (the only site in Epping Forest for this plant) and is also an important site for Orthoptera (grasshoppers and crickets). There are recent records of Grass Snake in this area.
- Paul's Nursery (compartment 18) has patches of acid grassland and heathland, where there are recent records of lizards, Grass Snake and all three newt species.
- The quality of the acid grassland and heathland in the High Beach area is being adversely impacted by the following significant issues:
 - Decline in grazing: Natural England has made it clear in its condition assessments that grazing needs to be reinstated on a much more widespread basis in order for management compartments to be returned to 'favourable condition' (Natural England, 2010 and 2017). For example, Rushey Plain is a priority for inclusion in a future Countryside Stewardship agreement.
 - Bracken, scrub and tree encroachment: The remaining open areas of acid grassland and heathland around High Beach are being colonised by scrub, trees and Bracken, with specialist species sparsely represented, or absent. For example, in the past, Petty Whin and Harebell have been recorded from High Beech Green, but their status is now uncertain due to Oak and Sycamore colonisation.
 - Air pollution: Deposition of nitrogen pollutants from the air is causing a rise in soil fertility, allowing more competitive plant species to dominate the less competitive specialist acid grassland plant species.
 - Visitor impact: Increasing visitor pressure impacts grassland in various ways, for example:
 - High visitor pressure on the Pillow Mounds has led to a decline in the grass cover, leading to exposed soil areas which over time have become severely eroded (CDTS, 2009);
 - Wake Road bisects Sunshine Plain north and south, which affects the ability of COL to graze both halves of this open area as one unit;
 - Cattle have been regularly disturbed by mountain biking at Big View, which is a key area to graze but also a popular challenging route for bikers and a small number of mountain bikers fell trees / dig holes to create jumps, damaging the natural aspect of the Forest;
 - Dogs contribute to nutrient enrichment of infertile habitats through defecation and urination. These effects are generally concentrated around car parks, on paths and at site entrances, with observed symptoms of enrichment being the dominance of nutrient-loving species, resulting in the reduction of plant species diversity; and,
 - The excretion of veterinary medicines with dog faeces is detrimental to the invertebrate fauna of the Forest. Dogs infected with neospora (a parasite) can harm cattle grazing on Forest land if they ingest the contaminated faeces; similarly, the infected faeces can become incorporated into the haylage harvested from Forest grassland areas.

- A number of measures are being introduced to address increasing visitor pressure on Epping Forest – see Access and Visitor Services sections of this ISP for further details. As part of these new measures, a Code of Conduct for Dog Owners (COL, 2020b) has been published and disseminated on social media.

Bog habitat

- Adams (2017) surveyed the bog habitats of Epping Forest, including those in the High Beach area. Management recommendations for the bogs of the High Beach area are provided in Appendix 2. Woodland encroachment appears to have resulted in these important wetland habitats declining in recent years and even being lost. The key areas concerned are as follows.
 - Wake Valley Bog Complex:
 - Upper Wake Valley Bog: This bog was formerly the only site in Essex for Marsh Violet, but the plant was lost under a dense bed of Pendulous Sedge. Recent work by conservation volunteers has removed the sedge and the volunteers will continue to manage the bog; the bog does still support a good population of Marsh Fern.
 - Wake Valley Pond Margin Bog: The pond margin is dominated by a reed bed, with *Sphagnum inundatum* in the less dense reed areas, with a few small patches of *S. denticulatum* and *S. squarrosum*. The bog was once the last colony of Marsh St. John's-wort in Essex, but has now been lost, partly as a result of trampling by visitors and anglers to the pond margins. The issue of trampling needs to be addressed in future management of the bog.
 - Field Centre Bog Complex: A series of small boggy areas occur in several spring heads within Wake Valley, with scattered patches of *Sphagnum* species. The springs arise from old gravel extraction hollows. Water runs from these springs in the winter months into a ditch that eventually merges with Loughton Brook. However, the bog complex at the spring heads has gradually declined in recent years, due to drying out, shading by Bracken and Birch invasion. Recently, volunteers have undertaken work to remove trees and Bracken from the site.
 - Historic bogs:
 - Long Bog: This bog, parallel to Wellington Hill, was famous to Victorian naturalists for *Sphagnum* species, but these are no longer present. The former bog is now a stream, heavily shaded by Birch. In recent years, conservation volunteers have removed young trees to open the bog and created dams to increase water storage. Several large trees require removal by COL staff.
 - Rat's Lane Bog: A former bog known as 'Rat's Lane Bog' once supported three distinct *Sphagnum* colonies; however, the growth of numerous sapling Sycamore, Hornbeam, Beech and Cherry Laurel have partially dried the bog and blocked out the light, causing the bog to infill. The area is still humid and therefore supports a good population of epiphytes. Conservation volunteers have been working to remove young trees, but COL staff are needed to remove the larger trees, having due regard to those harbouring epiphytes of conservation interest.

Spring lines and streams

- There are a number of spring lines around High Beach that feed into small streams, which then feed into the River Lea catchment to the west of High Beach, or the Roding catchment to the east. These streams provide valuable habitat for plant and aquatic invertebrate species of conservation interest. For example, the Wake Valley streams that feed Wake Valley Pond have been known to have a rich flora; past records include Lady Fern, Broad Buckler

and Male Fern, along with Lesser Spearwort, Yellow Pimpernel and Great Horsetail. The streams are currently over-shaded and trees have invaded their margins.

Open Water

- Notwithstanding the presence of *Crassula helmsii* (an invasive non-native species) in Speakman's Pond, Wake Valley Pond and Little Wake Pond (west), some of water bodies in the High Beach area are of high ecological importance. In particular:
 - Wake Valley Pond: Wake Valley Pond is a key dragonfly site, surveyed most recently by OPAL in 2010-11) (OPAL, 2019), supporting a large population of Downy Emerald.
 - Little Wake Pond (west): This largely open pond, with relatively clear deep water and submerged deadwood was surveyed in 2019 as part of a Countryside Stewardship application (COL, in prep). Small pockets of emergent vegetation are present around the edges (Yellow Iris, Common Spike Rush, Soft Rush, Reed Sweet Grass). Aquatic vegetation is quite good and in places quite dense (Broad-leaved Pondweed, Hornwort, Floating Sweet-grass, Fringed Water Lily, Horned Pondweed and Bladderwort species). Non-native White Water Lily has been present for decades. The pond is very important for breeding Common Toad, other breeding amphibian species include Common Frog, Smooth Newt and Palmate Newt. The presence of Great Crested Newt (a protected species) was confirmed in 2018 via eDNA sampling methods, this is the first record of this species for this pond. The pond supports a healthy dragonfly population with at least ten species being present, including locally important species (Downy Emerald and Hairy Dragonfly). Crucian carp and Rudd have been recorded from this pond in the past. Due to its location, the pond has large amounts of leaf litter and there is significant encroachment of sallow scrub, particularly along its eastern and southern banks.
 - Oak Plain Pond and three Field Centre ponds: All four of these ponds are important for the presence of Great Crested Newt, a protected species. Within the grounds of the Field Centre, Lily Pond and the Bird Garden Pond are plastic lined, whilst Frog Pond is clay lined.
- Fish surveys of the main aquatic bodies in Epping Forest are undertaken regularly by COL staff.
 - Wake Valley Pond: This pond was last surveyed in November 2015, and found to contain Perch, Rudd, Roach and Common Carp. No Pike were caught, unlike surveys in previous years, which may indicate poaching (Pallet, 2015).
 - Wake Valley Bomb Crater: This deep-sided pond, created by a WWII bomb, had very few small fish when surveyed in 1996. Fishing is not permitted; the few fish in the pond are thought to have been stocked from the nearby Wake Valley Pond (Wheeler, 1996).
 - Shallow ephemeral ponds: Wake Arms Pits, Speakman's Pond and a number of other small ponds around High Beach are all small shallow waterbodies resulting from former gravel extraction within Epping Forest. These ponds are generally ephemeral, drying up in the summer months, and consequently have no long-term fish populations. As such, no fish surveys are undertaken on these ponds.
- An amphibian survey was undertaken on the ponds and lakes within Epping Forest in 2013 (Catherine Bickmore Associates, 2014) to assess their suitability for amphibians and make management recommendations. At the time, Little Wake Pond West was assessed as being of medium importance for amphibians and medium priority for management; however, as the presence of Great Crested Newt was confirmed in 2018, the pond is now considered to be of high importance for conservation and future management. Wake Valley Pond and Wake Bomb Crater Pond were assessed as being of medium importance for amphibians and low priority for

management. The four Wake Arms Pits were deemed to be of low importance for amphibians and low priority for management. Further details of the survey and specific management recommendations are in Appendix 3.

5.2 Heritage and Landscape

The High Beach area has a rich heritage with a number of features of historical interest, dating from the Mesolithic period through to modern times, as well as exposed geology of local interest.

- Geology of High Beach: GeoEssex has been documenting local geological sites in Essex as part of an Essex Local Geodiversity Action Plan (GeoEssex, 2013), and High Beach is listed as one of 50 best Local Geological Sites (LoGS) identified through this research (GeoEssex, 2020):
 - Stanmore Gravel: The high ground around the 'King's Oak High Beach' is capped with pebble gravel (Stanmore Gravel) which may have been deposited by an unknown river that flowed north from the Weald of Kent to join the ancestral Thames during the Quaternary Period; well-rounded pebbles from this gravel are revealed on the many footpaths hereabouts (GeoEssex, 2020).
 - Bagshot Sand: Beneath the gravel is Bagshot Sand dating from the Upper Eocene (38-33.9 million years ago), which is visible on the steeply sloping paths of the Pillow Mounds to the north-west.
- Mesolithic period (10,000 – 4,000 BC): There is settlement evidence from High Beach in the form of a large flint scatter and associated stake-holes, and pit-like features (Essex County Council, 2015).
- Saxon period (410 – 1066 AD): The wood pasture system of pollarded Oak and Beech is thought to have been established in the High Beach area in this period (Essex County Council, 2015). This system of pollard management persisted in the High Beach area until the Victorian period but lapsed until the restart of pollard management in the late 20th century. Many ancient lapsed Oak and Beech pollards remain in the High Beach area and are of huge historical, as well as conservation, importance.
- Pillow Mounds: The Pillow Mounds are of regional archaeological significance, being the remains of post medieval rabbit warrens, whose use continued into the 19th century (Essex County Council Historic Environment Branch, 2010). They are the next most important group of pillow mounds in the county of Essex after those in Hatfield Forest (Essex County Council Historic Environment Branch, 2010).
- Alfred, Lord Tennyson: Alfred, Lord Tennyson was the Poet Laureate during much of Queen Victoria's reign and a favourite of the Queen. He lived at Beech Hill House in High Beach village between 1837 to 1840; his remains are interred in Westminster Abbey.
- Victorian period: The Queen's Green is where Queen Victoria, during a ceremonial visit on Saturday May 6 1882, dedicated Epping Forest to "the use and enjoyment of my people for all time", planting an American Red Oak to commemorate the dedication (its replacement still stands in the same location). It was estimated by the Times that over half a million people came to High Beach to view the ceremony and, in Victorian times, High Beach was a favourite day out destination for people from the East End of London, who arrived in their thousands in charabancs and trains.
- Paul's Nursery: To the east of Nursery Road are the remains of Paul's Nursery (1860-1921), where exotic plants are still visible, along with the Garden House and the parts of the outline of the nursery grounds. A Conservation Statement (Place Services, in draft) charts the history of the famous nursery and concludes in its statement of significance that the site is of 'low-medium' significance (Places Services, in draft).
- 'Kings Oak': The 'Kings Oak' name is thought to have arisen from the time when King Henry VIII reputedly waited at High Beach for news of Anne Boleyn's execution. The Victorian building is currently a gastropub and entertainment venue and has hosted famous visitors – the Kray Twins stayed in a room upstairs (<https://www.i-lovessex.com/reviewsblog/2017/2/27/the-kings-oak-high-beach-epping-forest>). Justin Bieber popped in for

lunch in 2016, creating a social media frenzy which advertised the 'Kings Oak' (and therefore High Beach as a destination) far and wide (<https://kingsoakhotel.com/justin-bieber-dines-kings-oak/>). It has also hosted the filming of the TV series 'TOWIE'. The 'Kings Oak' has a very well-known and distinctive cultural and heritage value.

- **Motorcycle speedway:** The 'Kings Oak' was also the venue for the first ever official motorcycle speedway meeting in England, which was held on 19 February 1928 (<http://www.defunctspeedway.co.uk/High%20Beech.htm>). A raised circular bank still exists around the Field Centre buildings at the back of the 'Kings Oak'; this is all that remains of the athletics track where the motorcycle racing took place. Approximately 30,000 people came to view the first motorbike race, around ten times as many as had been catered for by the organisers, and speedway races continued to be hugely popular throughout the 1930s, though the track eventually closed in 1949. The 100 year anniversary of the first race will be in 2028, when large numbers of motorcycle racing enthusiasts may be expected to make a pilgrimage to the trackway in celebration of the anniversary.
- **Original Tea Hut:** The 'Original' Tea Hut is of local heritage value, as it has been owned and operated by the same family since its opening in 1930. The tea hut was opened to serve customers from the nearby motorcycle speedway, and is still much frequented by motorcyclists, along with other Forest visitors.
- **Fred J. Speakman:** Fred Speakman was one of Britain's best known naturalist-authors in the 1960s. He converted 'Roseville' in the village of High Beach into a nature study centre, which he operated between 1959-1979. The Borough of Walthamstow became a pioneer of childhood environmental education, sending primary school children who often lived in working class urban areas on fortnightly visits to be taught by Speakman at 'Roseville'. As demands for trips to the Forest increased, the new London Borough of Waltham Forest (LBWF) purchased the Suntrap Centre in 1967, sending all final year primary school children to make eight visits a year to the centre, which is located on the outskirts of High Beach village. The Suntrap Centre is currently (2020) undergoing a major refurbishment funded by the LBWF.
- **Epping Forest Field Centre:** The Epping Forest Field Centre was established in 1970 in COL buildings to commemorate the European Year of Conservation, and still provides valuable outdoor education at the same location.
- **Most recently,** on the 15th March 2017 His Royal Highness The Duke of Sussex planted an English Oak tree on Queen's Green to commemorate his visit to High Beach and surrounding parts of Epping Forest as the Queen's representative for The Queen's Commonwealth Canopy (QCC).
- The more well-known of the historical features outlined above combine to create the distinctive High Beach 'brand', such that visitors to High Beach come from much further afield compared to other locations within Epping Forest. The presence of Queen's Green and the 'Kings Oak' in particular have provided a focus for large numbers of visitors since Victorian times, with a very strong tradition of visiting High Beach at the weekends, especially in the summer months, and on bank holidays. There is a long tradition of people meeting on Queen's Green, whilst young couples come to the Pillow Mounds to admire the view and spend time together. Visitor numbers at High Beach are an increasing concern, with negative impacts on heritage features, including an international important population of ancient pollarded trees.

5.3 Access

Car parking

- 77% of visitors to Epping Forest arrive by car (Liley *et al* (Footprint Ecology), 2018), with this percentage likely to be even higher at High Beach, given the lack of public transport to the area.
- **Public car parks:** Eight public car parks are open for free use across the High Beach area, though at times, some are busier than others. All car parks should be vacated one hour after sunset; six of them are currently gated and

locked each night. Two car parks, Pillow Mounds and the Visitor Centre, have a tarmac surface, with a total of six disabled parking bays. A further car park is operated by the 'Kings Oak'.

- Field Centre car park: The Field Centre has a dedicated car park for the use of its customers, including coach parking.
- On-road parking: A temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) was introduced on 22 May 2020 on the roads around High Beach, to address long-standing on-road parking issues. The scheme is implemented by Essex County Council; it seeks to improve visitor safety and prevent the obstruction of local roads by inconsiderate parking. The effectiveness of the temporary TRO will be monitored closely by ECC for 18 months.
- Before the end of this period, and if there is a need to amend the scheme, a formal public consultation will take place, enabling members of the public to provide feedback on the proposals. The combined impact of the closure of Fairmead Road and the temporary TRO will be considered as part of this process.
- There is still a significant issue with insufficient car parking capacity, especially on weekends and bank holidays.
- Car parking charges: COL proposes to charge for the use of Epping Forest car parks, in order to maintain access for genuine Forest users, to manage competing demands and to generate sufficient income to offset the estimated cost of continued car park provision (COL, 2020c).

Public transport

- There is currently no direct public transport to the main visitor destination at the Pillow Mounds in High Beach. As part of the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF, now NLHF) Branching Out Project, a trial public bus service was funded by COL and Essex County Council, running on Sundays and bank holidays between 3 April and 30 October 2011. The circular bus route ran from Loughton underground station to Chingford station, via High Beach. Overall, the venture was evaluated as being a success, with around 30 passengers per day, of which 70% were concessions. The bus route was discontinued after the first summer due to lack of ongoing funding. The final evaluation report for the trial bus service can be found in COL (2011).
- As part of the overarching Sustainable Visitor Strategy (COL, in prep), the connectivity between existing public transport connections (local bus stops and train/underground stations) and popular locations within Epping Forest, such as High Beach, will be assessed. Management works, such as signposting and waymarking, will be identified, to improve these connections and facilitate visitor access on foot or by bike.
- Cycling Strategy and Code of Conduct: The COL Cycling Strategy (in prep.) sets out a strategy for cycling in Epping Forest that encourages responsible cycling, whilst safeguarding sensitive areas of the Forest. A new code of conduct (COL, 2020d) is being disseminated on social media to raise awareness of the new Cycling Strategy and the existence of 'no cycling' areas within Epping Forest.

5.4 Visitor Services

- Public toilets: A public toilet block, including a disabled access toilet, is located in the car park of the 'Kings Oak'; The facilities would benefit from updating with for example the addition of baby changing facilities and aligning the disabled toilet provision with current standards.
- Disabled access and temporary traffic order: The 'red lines' on Paul's Nursery Road currently prevent disabled users of the toilets from parking in front of the toilet block to access the facilities. Instead, these users are being charged for parking in the 'Kings Oak' car park. There is the potential to alter the 'red lines' to provide disabled parking in front of the toilet block and improving the access path to the toilets from the road. In the future, there

may be scope to improve the access path from the Visitor Centre (which has dedicated disabled spaces) to the toilet block as well.

- **Managed Paths:** COL provide approximately 13 km of managed paths across the High Beach area with an even wider network of desire paths. The managed path network comprises the following (see Glossary):
 - 5.8 km of official all-weather and natural paths;
 - 1.4 km of Public Rights of Way;
 - 1.7km of waymarked trails (easy access trail and part of the Beech trail); and,
 - 4.3 km of informal paths.
- The large number of desire and informal paths means that even with a good quality map, navigating the path network requires good local knowledge. This restricts the ability and/or confidence of new visitors to find their way to High Beach from wider afield on foot rather than by car, and also inhibits visitors at High Beach from exploring further.
- **Waymarked Trail:** The Beech Trail is around 2.5 miles/4km long, over various terrain, including steep inclines on unsurfaced paths and sections on surfaced rides, but taking walkers past some of Epping Forest's most spectacular ancient trees. Waymarking signage has been installed at the maximum spacing which some users might find insufficiently frequent and the trail crosses the very busy A104 (Epping New Road) twice, where the 40mph speed limit is regularly exceeded. Nonetheless, the trail is very popular with visitors (Adams, J, pers. comm.), who appreciate the variety it offers and the opportunity to explore Epping Forest, and view both its ancient trees and Loughton Camp, an Iron Age hillfort, through which the Beech Trail passes.
- **Easy Access Trail at High Beach:** This easy access trail is one of four provided by COL across Epping Forest; it is around 720m long, on broadly level ground, and is popular with visitors for the opportunity to get close to several ancient Beech pollards. Parts of the trail have surface damage that will need addressing to ensure the continued accessibility of the trail.
- **The Epping Forest Visitor Centre:** This is housed in a COL-owned building, but operated by the Epping Forest Heritage Trust since 5 April 2014 on behalf of COL. COL is currently responsible for the maintenance of the building and for providing supplies to the Visitor Centre, such as leaflets and stock for the shop. A fuller discussion of the Epping Forest Visitor Centre can be found in the next section of this ISP (Community).

5.5 Community

Epping Forest Visitor Centre at High Beach

- The Visitor Centre at High Beach has been operated by the Epping Forest Heritage Trust since 5 April 2014 on behalf of COL, providing to date for 120,000 visitors. Currently operating under COVID-19 restrictions, the centre was previously open Thursdays to Sundays and Bank Holidays all year round, from 10am-4pm in the summer months (early April to end of October) and 10am-3pm in the winter months (November to end of March) and is staffed by volunteers. The visitor centre is tucked away behind the 'Kings Oak', with no obvious access from the main (Pillow Mounds) car park on the far side of Queens's Green and its lack of visibility has been identified as a difficulty (LUC, 2020).
- A recent National Lottery Heritage Fund Grant is funding an Epping Forest Heritage Trust project (2020/2021) to explore ways of operating the Visitor Centre and managing visitor provision at High Beach in the future. COL will partner with EFHT in the future of the Visitor Centre; topics under discussion will consider the pros and cons of the Visitor Centre at High Beach, the viability of its business model and whether the building should be repurposed,

with visitor information provided in another way. Alternative methods of providing visitor information could include 'pop up' information points and/or COL staff, EFHT staff and volunteers on Queen's Green.

Field Centre

- The Epping Forest Field Centre was established in 1970 in COL buildings to commemorate the European Year of Conservation. It offers a wide variety of outdoor education courses for schools and the wider community. Students access the Forest around High Beach for their studies, especially the areas either side of the A104 Epping New Road. However, the largely natural paths around the centre make access for less abled students difficult, and the open nature of the centre means the general public can access the land around the centre, which introduces safeguarding concerns. This is exacerbated by the lack of clearly signposted trails from Queen's Green towards High Beach Church and Paul's Nursery – instead, visitors follow the access road into the Field Centre grounds.

Catering facilities

- There are five catering facilities in and around High Beach.
 - 'Kings Oak': This Victorian-built icon of High Beach is both a gastropub, serving food, and an entertainment venue, catering for weddings and other special occasions.
 - 'Kings Oak' Tea Hut: Attached to the main gastropub and run by the 'Kings Oak' is a tea hut which serves light refreshments all day.
 - 'Oyster Shack and Seafood Bar': Located adjacent to the 'Kings Oak Tea Hut', this catering facility is open from 10am to 6pm Friday to Sunday.
 - Mandy's Tea Hut (synonyms: Acorn Tea Hut, Carl's Kiosk): This tea hut is located at the northern end of the Pillow Mounds car park; anecdotally, the tea hut seems to be a favourite of walkers and cyclists, as well as visitors to the High Beach Visitor Centre.
 - Original Tea Hut: This tea hut is located around 1 km to the south of High Beach and is a favourite of motorcyclists. The nearest toilet facilities are the public toilets in the car park of the 'Kings Oak'.

Other community activities

- Fishing: Fishing is allowed in Wake Valley Pond to those holding an Environment Agency rod licence, but not in any of the other ponds in the High Beach area. A T-shaped fishing platform is needed to reduce trampling of the pond margin bog by anglers.
- Orienteering: Chigwell and Epping Forest Orienteering Club operate orienteering races across Epping Forest, including in the High Beach area.
- High Beach Church: The Church of the Holy Innocents, which is the parish church for the village of High Beach, is located in an enclosure within the Forest, and comprises the church buildings and a small cemetery. There is no car park provided by the church, nor is there any public transport. COL have provided a small defined parking area for church officials and the temporary TRO scheme has been modified around the church to allow parking.

5.6 Anti-social behaviour

- High Beach is substantially impacted by anti-social behaviour problems.
 - Public sex environment: A public sex environment (PSE) is facilitated by the rural nature and relative isolation of High Beach, as well as the inability to close the Pillow Mounds car park and the Rushey Plain

Turnaround overnight. The impacts of the PSE are managed by COL and the Essex Police Service (EPS) to NPCC (formerly ACPO) guidance.

- Drug use: Drug-taking of all classes drugs is frequent around High Beach, in particular Nitrous Oxide (NO_x, laughing gas) cannisters, marijuana and alcohol.
- Fly-tipping: In the period 6 June 2019 – 5 June 2020, almost 21% of fly-tips in Epping Forest occurred in the High Beach area (the figure was 16.5% for the previous year). This is despite the High Beach compartments comprising approximately 8% of the total Forest area. This is likely to be in part because it is a well-known location in the Forest and because the rural nature of High Beach means that there are no streetlights, making it an attractive location to dump illegal waste.
- Accidental and deliberate fire setting: In the period 6 June 2019 – 5 June 2020, just over 7% of wildfires (down from almost 12% the previous year) recorded in Epping Forest occurred in the High Beach compartments, which is in proportion with the land area of these compartments (8%). Fire hazard reduction and management measures, including access and habitat management, are being enhanced as part of a Major Incidents and Emergencies Response Plan (COL, in prep.).
- Littering: A large amount of litter is collected from Queen's Green and the Pillow Mounds, especially at the end of busy summer days and following unlicensed spontaneous social events.
- Management to reduce anti-social behaviour: The COL will be working with stakeholders including the Police Services and Epping Forest District Council to develop an Anti-Social Behaviour Management Plan (COL, in prep.) for High Beach.

5.7 Local Plans

- Local Plans: The Local Plans for both Epping Forest District Council (EDFC) and the adjacent Local Authorities are being revised and all are planning a significant increase in housing and employment space (see Appendix 4 for detailed information).
- The northern half of Epping Forest SAC is wholly within Epping Forest District Council; as such, a strategic Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is required for EFDC's new Local Plan. In addition, other Local Plans will also involve review by strategic HRAs, including the forthcoming Local Plan of the London Borough of Waltham Forest (LBWF) that, as drafted, would increase significantly the number of houses within 3km of Epping Forest.
- EFDC Local Plan Submission Version Examination-in-Public: Following the conclusion of the examination-in-public, the Planning Inspector determined that "*I cannot conclude beyond reasonable scientific doubt (as the parties all agree that I must) that the Plan will not adversely affect the integrity of the SAC until steps have been taken towards resolving it*" (Phillips, 2019). Natural England (the statutory advisory body on matters relating to SACs and the Habitats Regulations), the Conservators of Epping Forest and EFDC, along with other relevant London Boroughs, are in the process of formulating and agreeing an SAC Mitigation Plan for the whole of Epping Forest SAC. The SAC Mitigation Plan will aim to either avoid or mitigate adverse impacts on the Forest that would be due to three identified factors: increased recreational pressure, more general urbanisation impacts and air pollution.
- SAC Mitigation Plan: There are three key aspects to the Epping Forest SAC Mitigation Plan that relate to recreational pressure on the Forest:
 - Zone of Influence (ZoI): The recreational Zone of Influence around the SAC is defined as the distance, as determined by standardised visitor survey(s), which encompasses up to $\frac{3}{4}$ of visitors (not including holiday-makers) that travel to visit Epping Forest SAC. EFDC has recently commissioned a second Visitor Survey

(Liley *et al*, Footprint Ecology, 2020) to update its HRA. However, the current accepted Zone of Influence from the 2017 Visitor Survey is 6.2km.

- Strategic (visitor) Access Management and Monitoring measures (SAMMs): Natural England and The Conservators are working with EFDC, Harlow District Council and the London local authorities to agree the management and monitoring measures necessary to avoid any negative impacts on the SAC arising out of the various Local Plans affecting the Zol area, in order to safeguard the integrity of the SAC. The funding of these measures is also currently under review, although some monies have already been collected from developers.
- Suitable Alternative Natural Green Spaces (SANGS): The provision of SANGS is a key aspect required to avoid negative impacts on the integrity of the Epping Forest SAC from increased recreational pressure resulting from new Local Plan developments. SANGS are, or contain significant amounts of, semi-natural habitats of a sufficient size and high quality that local residents, and those from further afield, will choose to visit them as an effective alternative to a visit to Epping Forest SAC. Such alternative provision should have the effect of alleviating the pressure of additional visits to the SAC from the increased residential population and the subsequent impact of these visits. Natural England and The Conservators are currently liaising with EFDC and other local authorities over the provision, location and quality of suitable alternative natural green spaces.
- Honeypot locations with Epping Forest: High Beach is already a very well-known location, with existing negative impacts on the features of conservation interest of the Epping Forest SAC, e.g. soil erosion (CDTS, 2009). The developments arising out of the new Local Plans are likely to add further negative impacts to the High Beach area, unless there are robust SAMMs to better manage the visitors who come to High Beach and high quality SANGS to provide realistic alternatives to a visit to High Beach. Long term monitoring of visitor impact is also crucial to avoid creeping, attritional damage to the integrity of the SAC in the future. The levels at which the SAC Mitigation Plan tariffs, or alternatives, are set are also critical, to ensure adequate funding for the SAMMs and in-perpetuity management of the SANGS.

6. HIGH BEACH MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

‘London’s Great Forest’, a strategy and management plan for Epping Forest 2020-2030 sets out five key strategic priorities for Epping Forest, these being:

1. A welcoming destination for all;
2. A beautiful Forest, sustaining internationally and nationally important wildlife habitats in an ancient wood-pasture mosaic;
3. An inspiring space for people’s health, recreation and enjoyment;
4. A range of special heritage landscapes which are protected and celebrated; and,
5. A resilient environment, where challenges are embraced, and opportunities explored.

Within the context of the overarching strategy and management plan for the whole of Epping Forest (above), this ISP identifies a series of local management strategy objectives for High Beach, to be implemented over the next 5-10 years (Table 1). These include detailed habitat and species conservation measures that have been agreed with Natural England and supported with grant-aid for four of the five Forest compartments as part of a new 10-year Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS) agreement (Jan 2020 – Dec 2029). Proposals to manage recreational pressure and air pollution impacts on the SAC will also form part of these High Beach objectives within a broader SAC Mitigation Strategy that is being developed in partnership with other competent authorities (e.g. EFDC) and Natural England.

The City of London Corporation will also discharge its obligations with respect to property management issues, as identified in this ISP.

Table 6.1: Management Strategy Objectives for High Beach

High Beach Management Strategy Objectives		Epping Forest Management Strategy Objectives
A	To implement a programme of conservation measures that will contribute towards improving the conservation status of the Epping Forest SAC and the favourable condition of the SSSI compartments around High Beach.	2, 5
B	To ensure that COL offers a visitor experience to High Beach in a sustainable and welcoming way.	1, 3, 4, 5
C	To finance an Infrastructure Improvement Programme for High Beach, partly derived from income generated locally	5
D	To encourage local community involvement in the management and enhancement of the Forest at High Beach.	1, 3, 4
E	To seek the mitigation of the impact of additional visits from new developments within Epping Forest SAC's Zone of Influence.	1, 2, 5

7. OUTLINE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME FOR HIGH BEACH

Objective	Action	Timing ¹ (ongoing/years/subject to funding)
City Corporation obligations, A, B	<i>Site safety and legal work</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to undertake COL statutory requirements with respect to site safety and legal work. This includes managing tree safety and Forest furniture according to relevant City Corporation Policies; and, Following completion of the Access Audit (COL, in prep), complete wayleave agreements with outstanding third parties to safeguard the Forest's boundaries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing
A, D, E	<i>Habitat Management</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree a funded programme of conservation measures for the High Beach area. Key targets for the programme are as follows: Protection of ancient trees, including through pollarding, crown reduction, fencing and soil condition amelioration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (dates to be agreed)

¹ Ongoing = task is ongoing on cyclical basis in current management of the site, 2019 = first year of new task, subject to funding = additional funding required for task / project to be progressed

Objective	Action	Timing ¹ (ongoing/years/subject to funding)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extension of the wood-pasture habitat, with the long-term vision of creating a working wood-pasture landscape across Epping Forest: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review the feasibility of widespread cattle grazing of wood-pasture around the acid grassland and heathland areas, including Rushey Plain; and, ○ No further loss of the acid grassland and heathland areas around High Beach, particularly through the restoration of the eroded areas of the Pillow Mounds (CDTS, 2009). • Continued restoration of the five bogs in the High Beach area to the extent that this is possible, given the topography and ground conditions (see Appendix 2). • Preparation of an aquatic habitat management strategy and plan for the streams and their sources, ponds (see Appendix 3) and ditches in the area. • Identify measures, with partners through the SAC Mitigation Strategy, to reduce air pollution from road traffic impacting the SAC. 	
City Corporation obligations, A, D	<p><i>Invasive species management</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and control invasive species to ensure we meet statutory and COL agreed policies and guidelines, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Oak Processionary Moth management, nest removal and awareness raising with visitors through signage and other communication methods; and, ○ Control of <i>Crassula helmsii</i> and other INNS in ponds, with a risk-based hierarchical approach to control. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (dates to be agreed)
B, C, D	<p><i>Visitor Services</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within the context of the forthcoming Sustainable Visitor Strategy (due 2021), prepare an Access Statement for High Beach. Key aspects of this statement to include: • Agreeing a SAC Mitigation Strategy with Epping Forest District Council, other Local Authorities and Natural England; • Works to improve visitor access: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improving connections between the eight public High Beach car parks and Queen's Green to encourage better usage of these; ○ Improving and waymarking foot and cycle access options for visitors to get to High Beach without a car, e.g. from bus stops in Loughton and more distant car parks such as Wake Valley; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (dates to be agreed)

Objective	Action	Timing ¹ (ongoing/years/subject to funding)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Providing new circular paths around High Beach of varying lengths, to lessen the pressure on sensitive ecology (see LUC, 2020); ○ Developing a further range of waymarked routes in the High Beach area (e.g. to Connaught Water, Buffer Land) to meet the diverse needs of Forest visitors and to link into the wider Forest; ○ Providing finger posts at key Forest path junctions in the High Beach area, to direct visitors towards points of interest, such as the Visitor Centre, 'Kings Oak' and church; and, ○ Promoting a circular cycle route that connects with cycle paths beyond Epping Forest, as per Epping Forest Cycling Strategy (COL, in prep). • Reviewing the potentially damaging impacts caused by mountain bikers on sensitive locations, such as the Pillow Mounds, and agreeing solutions to address these concerns as part of the Epping Forest Cycling Strategy (COL, in prep). • Reviewing the route of the waymarked Beech Trail - it currently passes through Loughton Camp (a no cycling zone) but is used by mountain bikers. • Promoting alternative locations to High Beach to visitors as part of the Sustainable Visitor Strategy (COL, in prep), for example by encouraging the provision of a refreshment kiosk at the Honey Lane car park by a third party (COL, 1986). • Reviewing the need for the current brown tourist signs. 	
City Corporation obligations, B, E	<p><i>Enforcement</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the Antisocial Behaviour Management Plan and Enforcement Strategy (COL, in prep) reflect the operational concerns at High Beach. • Continuing to undertake anti-social behaviour management in conjunction with local stakeholders and partners e.g. Police, NEPP and Local Authorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2021 • Ongoing
A, B, C, D, E	<p><i>Resourcing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an Investment Resourcing Plan for High Beach in conjunction with the emerging SAC Mitigation Strategy. To achieve the required site investment, key aspects of the Plan will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identifying investment needs; ○ Identifying potential on-site income generation; ○ 10-year external grant funding from Countryside Stewardship with further grant-funding opportunities explored; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (dates to be agreed)

Objective	Action	Timing ¹ (ongoing/years/subject to funding)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying income opportunities arising from the Epping Forest SAC Mitigation Strategy, resulting from the emerging Local Authority Local Plans; and, Identifying potential community support opportunities (see next section). 	
B, D, E	<p>Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a Community Engagement Plan for High Beach, in line with the Community Planning Toolkit (https://www.communityplanningtoolkit.org/). Key aspects of the Plan will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitating local community involvement in the management and future development of High Beach, in particular with litter picking and orienting visitors; Review the future sustainable use and management of the Epping Forest Visitor Centre with EFHT; and, Identifying community measures to reduce anti-social behaviour in and around High Beach. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (dates to be agreed)
B, D	<p>Heritage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare and implement proposals to repair and control the erosion of the Pillow Mounds; Review the feasibility of restoring the well-known view from the top of the Pillow Mounds area to its full extent, to help meet aspirations to provide a unique and memorable visitor experience at High Beach. Implement works as appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (dates to be agreed)

8. POTENTIAL ENHANCEMENT PROJECTS REQUIRING EXTERNAL ADDITIONAL SUPPORT & RESOURCES

Additional support needs to be sought from local businesses and community partners to take forward the following projects:

- Visitor access infrastructure: Unquantified at present is the long-term development of the visitor access infrastructure to meet changing community needs, linked to future substantial housing and other development in the area. Works arising from such developments does not form part of the current site expenditure and additional funding will need to be identified to progress any changes and also to develop plans and mitigation proposals.
- The construction of fishing platforms at Wake Valley Pond will require funding to acquire materials. There is the potential for this to be constructed by volunteers.
- Bog and pond management proposals are well suited to volunteer work with a few tasks only requiring specialist support such as from the arborist teams.
- Any road traffic air pollution control measures identified will require additional financial support.
- Some habitat management works will be dependent on obtaining Countryside Stewardship grant aid.

- Erosion control measure on the Pillow Mounds will require additional funding, with some actions being potential volunteer projects.
- Actions to improve litter management and to reduce anti-social behaviour will require significant practical volunteer/community support.
- Others??

9. EXTERNAL OPERATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS

To be completed

10. GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ACRONYMS

Term / Acronym	Definition
Acid grassland	Nutrient poor acidic soils and grassy-mossy vegetation, including sheep's sorrel, tormentil, heath bedstraw, wavy hair-grass and sheep's-fescue. Heathers, such as ling, bell heather and cross-leaved heather, may also be present, and the grassland may be a mosaic of herbs and shrubs.
ACPO	Association of Chief Policer Officers (replaced in 2015 by NPCC)
APA	Archaeological Priority Area
BGA	Blue-green algae
BSE	Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy
COL	City of London Corporation
Desire path	Visitor defined routes where the use as indicated on the user defined Strava App indicates a lower level of use. No active management
EA	Environment Agency
EF	Epping Forest
EFHT	Epping Forest Heritage Trust
Gravel workings	An area using for the extraction of gravel, often in a river valley where the water table is high, so that they may naturally fill with water to form ponds or lakes
High risk	In the context of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, the Environment Agency classifies water bodies as being 'high risk' if an uncontrolled release of water could result in loss of life.
HLF	Heritage Lottery Fund, now superseded by National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF)
ISP	Individual Site Plan
Large raised reservoir	In the context of the Reservoirs Act 1975, a water body is classified as a large raised reservoir if it impounds more than 25,000 cubic metres of water
LBR	London Borough of Redbridge
LBWF	London Borough of Waltham Forest
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bi and Transgender
LoGS	Local Geological Sites, as listed by GeoEssex: http://www.geoessex.org.uk/introduction_and_best_sites.html
MPS	Metropolitan Police Service
NE	Natural England

Term / Acronym	Definition
NEPP	Northeast Essex Parking Partnership
NLHF	National Lottery Heritage Fund
NPCC	National Police Chiefs' Council (replaced ACPO in 2015)
NSNO	'No Second Night Out' (Mayor London initiative)
OPM	Oak Processionary Moth
PRoW	Public Rights of Way - paths identified on the definitive map that the public have a legally protected right to pass and re-pass. Depending on the specific path's status people will be able to access on foot, cycle or horseback
PSE	Public Sex Environment
SAC	Special Area of Conservation (European designation)
SINC	Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (local designation)
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest (UK designation)
Waymarked trail	Nine waymarked circular paths established across Epping Forest and the Buffer Lands. Each trail follows official, informal and desire paths as well as Public Rights of Way (PRoW) with some on PRoW on land not managed by the City of London
Wood pasture	An area that has been management by a long-established tradition of grazing, allowing the survival of multiple generations of trees, characteristically with some veteran/ancient trees.
Official all-weather path	Paths identified on the Official Epping Forest map as all-weather paths promoted for use by horse riders, cyclists and pedestrians.
Official natural path	Paths identified on the Official Epping Forest map as natural paths promoted for use by horse riders, cyclists and pedestrians, usually seasonally closed.
Public Right of Way (PRoW)	Paths identified on the definitive map that the public have a legally protected right to pass and re-pass. Depending on the specific path's status, people will be able to access on foot, cycle or horseback.
Easy Access Trail	Four trails promoted as 'Easy Access' with a level, firm, non-slip surface and regular benches and passing places for wheelchairs. Located at High Beach, Connaught Water, Knighton Wood and Jubilee Pond. Cycling and horse riding are not allowed.
Informal path	These paths have been identified using the Strava App, which collects geolocational data from users who are often cyclists and runners. This shows where recreation is occurring. Further routes may be added to the informal path network if local information warrants the path's inclusion.
Waymarked Trail	Nine waymarked circular paths established across Epping Forest and the Buffer Lands. Each trail follows official, informal and desire paths as well as Public Rights of Way (PRoW), with some on PRoW on land not managed by the City of London.

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12. LIST OF APPENDICES

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5. Figures

13. APPENDIX 1: Detailed Activity Plan

Operational Activity	CMPT	Location	Month	Year	Area (Ha)	Cycle	Description	Zone	Team
AW - Gateway sign	Sign	High Beach: east end of car park	Jun	2021		1	Cut back all ground and arborial vegetation that would impede the visual impact of the sign.	N	M
AW - Gateway sign	Sign	High Beach: west end of car park	Jul	2021		1	Cut back all ground and arborial vegetation that would impede the visual impact of the sign.	N	M
AW - Pedestrian access infrastructure	10	High Beach: Wake Valley Pond		2025		0	Fishing management: Reduce bank side trampling through installing fishing platforms and access management	C	???
AW - Pedestrian access maintenance	10 & 14	High Beach: Benches	Sep	2021		1	Bench Maintenance: Condition monitoring inspection undertaken and maintenance as per Forest Standard (20 benches (Check))	C	M
AW - Pedestrian access maintenance	10 & 14	High Beach: Benches	Jun	2021		1	Bench Maintenance: Maintenance visit to ensure the benches meet the Forest Standard.	C	M
AW - Pedestrian access maintenance	10 & 18	High Beach: Easy access trail	May	2021		1	Path Management: Cut path verge and around Forest Furniture as required	C	M
AW - Pedestrian access maintenance	10 & 18	High Beach: Easy access trail	Jul	2021		1	Path Management: Cut path verge and around Forest Furniture as required	C	M
LAW – Tree management works	14	High Beach: Pillow Mounds view management		2022		0	Landscape view management: Following on from planning work to assess options (see below), undertake tree works to restore the extensive view from the Pillow Mounds to as close to its former extent as possible, commensurate with good arboricultural practice.	C	Arb
NWH - Grazing work	11 & 14	High Beach		2023		1	Grazing Work: Undertake extended grazing works as recommended in the review	C	GRZ
NWH - Maintenance work	14	High Beach: Long Bog				0	Bog Management: Tree and shrub clearance to reduce shading and drainage of the bog.	C	Arb/Vol
NWH - Maintenance work	14	High Beach: Rat's Lane Bog				0	Bog Management: Tree and shrub clearance to reduce shading and drainage of the bog. Note the conservation needs of the epiphytes on trees.	C	Arb/Vol
NWH - Water body management	10	High Beach: Little Wake Pond		2024		0	Waterbody Management: Initial works to improve habitat quality for amphibians through tree management to ensure suitable conditions for the pond edge vegetation in line with recommendation by Bickmore (2014).	C	Arb/Vol

Operational Activity	CMPT	Location	Month	Year	Area (Ha)	Cycle	Description	Zone	Team
OC - External Advisory	All	High Beach		2022		0	Planning - Community Engagement Plan: Develop a Community Engagement Plan for High Beach area, including review of the sustainable management of the visitor centre and community mechanisms to reduce anti-social behavior.	C	HOP/HVS
OC - External Advisory	All	High Beach:		2025		0	Planning - SAC Mitigation: With local partners identify measures and mechanisms to reduce air pollution from road traffic on the SAC	C	HOC
OC - Internal Advisory	10 & 14	High Beach		2022		0	Planning: Review the feasibility of widespread cattle grazing of wood-pasture around the acid grassland and heathland areas, including Rushey Plain.	C	GRZ
OC - Internal Advisory	NA	High Beach: Access Statement		2022		0	Planning: Prepare an Access Statement to improve the welcoming and positive feel at site entrances and reduce the visitor impact on sensitive habitats.	C	HVS/HOP
OC - Internal Advisory	14	High Beach: Pillow Mounds view management		2022		0	Planning: Assess options to restore the extensive view from the Pillow Mounds to as close to its former extent as possible. Plan and implement a public awareness campaign prior to start of works.	C	Arb
OC - Internal Advisory		High Beach: Pillow Mounds erosion management		2023		0	Planning: Review erosion control options for the area to allow the recovery of the acid grassland and the sustainable repair of rill/gulley erosion.	C	HOP
OC - Internal Advisory	All	High Beach: Resourcing Plan		2022		0	Planning: Prepare a Resourcing Plan for High Beach including, income opportunities arising from the Epping Forest Mitigation Strategy and potential community support opportunities	C	HOP/HVS
OC - Internal Advisory	17	High Beach: Speakmans Pond				0	Planning: Review management options for the <i>Crassula</i> infestation in the pond (Include linked issue to other ponds in the area)	C	HOC
OC - Internal Advisory	All	High Beach: Streams, ditches & ponds		2024		0	Planning: Prepare an aquatic habitat management strategy and plan for the streams and their sources, ponds and ditches in the area	C	HOC

High Beach

Operational Activity	CMPT	Location	Month	Year	Area (Ha)	Cycle	Description	Zone	Team
OC - Internal Advisory	NA	High Beach: Sustainable Access	Dec	2021		0	Planning: Pilot project. Improving and waymarking foot and cycle access options for visitors to get to High Beach without a car, e.g. from bus stops in Loughton and more distant car parks such as Wake Valley	C	HVS/HOP
OC - Internal Advisory		High Beach: The Beech Trail	Dec	2021		0	Planning: Review the route of the waymarked Beech Trail to find options to deter cycle users accessing and thereby damaging Loughton Camp Ancient Monument	C	HOP/HVS
OC - Internal Advisory	10	High Beach: Wake Valley Pond				0	Planning: Review the management of the pond margins and identify solution to the trampling problems and the possible regeneration of Marsh St Johns Wort	C	HOC/Con
SL - Grass cutting	10	High Beach: Queens Green	May	2021		1	Cut and leave the grass on Queens Green.	C	G
SL - Grass cutting	10	High Beach: Queens Green	Jul	2021		1	Cut and leave the grass on Queens Green.	C	G
SL - Grass cutting	10	High Beach: Queens Green	Sep	2021		1	Cut and leave the grass on Queens Green.	C	G
SL - Highway verge management	Road	High Beech: Claypit Hill	Sep	2023		3	Zone 1 & 2 maintenance and statutory crown lift. Approx. total cutting distance 2,030 m	N	Con
SL - Highway verge management	Road	High Beech: Manor Road	Sep	2023		3	Zone 1 & 2 maintenance and statutory crown lift Approx total cutting distance 1,030 m	c	Con
SL - Highway verge management	Road	High Beech: Pynest Green Lane	Sep	2023		3	Zone 1 & 2 maintenance and statutory crown lift Approx. total cutting distance 1,390 m	c	Con
SL - Highway verge management	Road	High Beech: Wellington Hill	Sep	2023		3	Zone 1 & 2 creation and statutory crown lift Approx. total cutting distance 1,122 m	c	Con
SL - Highway verge management	8	High Beach: Queens Green	May	2021		1	Bollard Management: Strim bollards around Queens Green	C	M
SL - Highway verge management	8	High Beach: Queens Green	Jul	2021		1	Bollard Management: Strim bollards around Queens Green	C	M
SL - Highway verge management	8	High Beach: Queens Green	Sep	2021		1	Bollard Management: Strim bollards around Queens Green	C	M
SL - Highway verge management	Road	High Beach: Robin Hood roundabout	Nov	2021		1	Zone 1 and 3 maintenance: Bomford cut zone 1/3 and strim banks Approx. total cutting distance 150 m.	N	Arb
SL - Highway verge management	Road	High Beech: Church Road, Crossroads and Avey Lane	Nov	2021		1	Zone 2 Maintenance cut as per highways vegetation management specification. NB Crossroads and its approach from the junction with Fairmead road to have stump regrowth and herbaceous vegetation cut	C	Con

Operational Activity	CMPT	Location	Month	Year	Area (Ha)	Cycle	Description	Zone	Team
							back to ensure exsiting open area is maintained. Approx. total cutting distance 3142m.		
SL - Highway verge management	Road	High Beech: Lippits Hill	Nov	2021		1	Zone 2 Maintenance cut as per highways vegetation management specification. Approx. total cutting distance 1167m.	C	Con
SL - Highway verge management	Road	High Beech: Mott Street	Nov/Dec	2021		1	Zone 2 Maintenance cut as per highways vegetation management specification. Some sections may not be possible to cut back a full metre and cutting should ensure vegetation is clear of the road. Approx. total cutting distance 1454 m.	C	Con
SL - Highway verge management	Road	High Beech: Pauls Nursery Road	Sep	2023		3	Zone 1 & 2 maintenance Approx. total cutting distance 1,374 m	N	Con
SL - Legal obligation work	18	High Beach: Toilets		2021		0	Access for disabled users: Identify and implement options to improve access to toilets for less able users.	C	FM
SL – Path condition monitoring	10 & 18	High Beach Easy access trail	Jun	2021		1	Path Management: Safety and condition monitoring in accordance with the Path Management Policy Development note requirements	C	K/Vol
SL - Sight lines	17	High beach: Church Road	Aug	2021		1	Cut back all site lines where required on car parks bridleway exits / road junctions etc. All woody vegetation as per zone 2 or 3 as needed. Zone 1 cleared were access is needed to zone 2 by Brushcutter. Or noted for later Bomford cutting.	C	M
SL - Sight lines	18	High Beach: Paul's Nursery Road	Sep	2021		1	Cut back all site lines where required on car parks bridleway exits / road junctions etc. All woody vegetation as per zone 2 or 3 as needed. Zone 1 cleared were access is needed to zone 2 by Brushcutter. Or noted for later Bomford cutting.	C	M
WMM - Wood pasture management	10 & 14	High Beach: Woodpasture		2021		1	Cut and collect: Cut and collect grass and herbage in restored woodpasture areas. Additional areas will be added as further areas are restored.	C	Arb
WMM - Ancient / veteran tree maintenance	All	High Beach: Ancient tree management		2021		1	Ancient tree management: Undertake pollarding and crown reduction works as specified in the Countryside Stewardship Scheme.	C	Arb/Con

High Beach

Operational Activity	CMPT	Location	Month	Year	Area (Ha)	Cycle	Description	Zone	Team
WMM - Ancient / veteran tree maintenance	10 & 14	High Beach: Ancient tree management		2022		5	Ancient tree management: Undertake root protection and access exclusion works on notable vulnerable trees.	C	Arb
WMM - Pest and disease management	All	High Beach		2020		1	Invasive non native species management: Monitoring and control of Oak Processionary Moth (OPM) in line with Forestry Commission guidance.	C	Con
WMM - Wood pasture restoration	10 & 14	High Beach: Woodpasture		2022		1	Woodpasture restoration: Initial works to extend the existing area of woodpasture as specified in the Countryside Stewardship Scheme.	C	Arb/Con

14. APPENDIX 2: Management recommendations for the bogs of the High Beach area

Ken Adams was commissioned on behalf of City of London Corporation to undertake a survey of the bog habitats of Epping Forest and provide an assessment of their ecological status, as well as management recommendations (Adams, 2017). The results of the surveys and ecological status assessments are within the main body of this ISP; the management recommendations are outlined in the table below and full details can be found in Adams (2017).

Table A: Summary of management recommendations for the bogs of the High Beach area

Bog Name		Management Recommendations (Adams, 2017)
Wake Valley Complex	Upper Wake Valley Bog	Several large patches of Bramble are invading the bog and need removing, along with a proportion of the Pendulous Sedge on a rotational mosaic of cuts, to prevent it taking over the whole bog. Additional damming of the stream with logs would help guarantee the water level.
	Wake Valley Pond Margin Bog	A series of fishing platforms around the pond edge are required to prevent further trampling and loss of <i>Sphagnum</i> species.
Field Centre Bog Complex		Bracken and Bramble removal is needed to halt the decline of the bog complex.
Long Bog (now lost)		<p>To restore this bog, around ten large Birch trees require removal, <i>Sphagnum</i> species should be reintroduced, and the area between the former bog and Wellington Hill de-scrubbed to restore the former heathland vegetation, which would reintroduce much-needed light to the bog and surrounding vegetation.</p> <p>The Pillow Mounds lower slope has a seepage draining into the Long Bog stream. Apart from harbouring the extremely rare Star Sedge, this area is rapidly being enveloped in hundreds of Aspen saplings. The source tree needs to be removed and the saplings removed or this area will be wooded by the end of 2021.</p>
Rat's Lane Bog (now lost)		Clearance of the sapling trees, Laurel and Bracken would let in the light and allow some marshy vegetation to develop. Several Birch, Hornbeam and Oak logs have fallen over the stream, but there is no water flow even in winter for them to impede. At the very bottom end some of the giant Sycamores present a hazard as they could fall onto adjoining properties. Two already have fallen, but luckily away from the party line. Clearance and stump grinding of the trees in this area would undoubtedly regenerate the Shield Fern and Giant Horsetail bog.

15. APPENDIX 3: Amphibian Survey Results and Management Recommendations for ponds in the High Beach area

Catherine Bickmore Associates was commissioned on behalf of City Corporation to undertake an amphibian survey of the ponds and lakes of Epping Forest (Catherine Bickmore Associates, 2014). The first objective of the study was to categorise the ponds in terms of importance for amphibians with particular reference to great crested newt. The second was to categorise the ponds according to management priority, with recommendations for management actions for amphibians.

Table B: Summary of results of pond survey for amphibians and management recommendations

Waterbody name	HIS (Habitat Suitability Index)	Invasive non-native species	Fish present (in 2013) (Y/N)	Other factors affecting suitability	Designation	Amphibians recorded	Importance for amphibians	Priority for management	Management recommendations (Catherine Bickmore Associates, 2014)
Little Wake Pond West	0.65	None recorded	N	None	Y (SSSI and SAC)	Great Crested Newt (confirmed by eDNA sampling in 2018), Common Toad, Smooth Newt, Common Frog	High	High	Reduce scrub/shade, encourage understorey terrestrial habitat and aquatic macrophyte growth
Wake Bomb Crater Pond	0.68	None recorded	Y	None	Y (SSSI and SAC)	Common Toad, Smooth Newt	Medium	Low	Deepen, reduce reed cover and shade, encourage understorey growth in terrestrial habitat
Wake Valley Pond	0.51	None recorded	Y	None	Y (SSSI and SAC)	Common Toad, Smooth Newt, Common Frog	Medium	Low	Reduce shade and improve terrestrial habitat
Wake Arms Pit 1	0.65	None recorded	N	Lack of egg laying vegetation. Deep leaf litter	Y (SSSI and SAC)	Smooth Newt, Palmate Newt, Common Frog	Low	Low	Reduce shade, encourage macrophytes (possibly through removing leaf litter)
Wake Arms Pit 4	0.68	None recorded	N	None	Y (SSSI and SAC)	Smooth Newt, Palmate Newt	Low	Low	Reduce shade from small trees, create refugia, encourage vegetation growth, possibly deepen
Wake Arms Pit 3	0.64	None recorded	N	None	Y (SSSI and SAC)	Smooth Newt	Low	Low	Reduce shading from small trees, encourage vegetation growth, possibly deepen
Wake Arms Pit 2	0.62	None recorded	N	Lack of egg laying vegetation. Deep leaf litter	Y (SSSI and SAC)	Smooth Newt	Low	Low	Cut scrub/small trees (make refugia), reduce shade, encourage aquatics/emergents

Note: The presence of Great Crested Newt in Wake Valley Pond was confirmed in 2018; the pond is now considered to be of high importance for conservation and future management.

16. APPENDIX 4: Local Plans – detailed information

- Habitats Regulations 2017 and Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC): all competent authorities (as defined by Regulation 7 of The Habs Regs) must undertake a formal assessment of the implications of any new plans or projects that are likely to have a significant effect on the designated interest features of protected European Sites (such as Epping Forest SAC) before deciding whether to undertake, permit or authorise such plans or projects (Regulation 63 of The Habs Regs). The first stage of the assessment involves formal screening for any Likely Significant Effects (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects). Where these effects cannot be excluded, assessing them in more detail through an *appropriate assessment* (AA) is required to ascertain that an adverse effect on the *integrity* of the site can be ruled out. Where such an adverse effect on the site cannot be ruled out, and no *alternative solutions* can be identified, then the project can only then proceed if there are *imperative reasons of over-riding public interest* and if the necessary *compensatory measures* can be secured.
- Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA): Epping Forest (EFDC), Harlow, Uttlesford and East Hertfordshire District Councils have cooperated in the production of the West Essex and East Hertfordshire SHMA (Opinion Research Services, 2017), to assess the overall housing need for their housing markets. For EFDC these housing needs must be met over the 22-year lifetime of the new EFDC Local Plan (2011 – 2033). The distribution of the housing need, identified by the SHMA, was agreed in a Memorandum of Understanding (March 2017) between the four district councils, Essex and Hertfordshire County Councils and Highways England. For Epping Forest District Council, the housing need was set at 11,400 net additional homes to be provided between 2011-2033 (EFDC Local Plan Report-on-Site-Selection (Local Plan Document EB802B) Dec 2017). This compares to a target of 2,400 dwellings for the previously adopted Local Plan (EDFC, 2008), a greater than four-fold increase in the number of new dwellings.
- Habitats Regulations Assessment: Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) commissioned a strategic Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Local Plan Submission Version (EFDC, 2017), published in January 2019 (the HRA) (AECOM, 2019). This HRA found that the Plan would be likely to have a significant adverse effect, without mitigation, upon the Epping Forest SAC in respect of both atmospheric pollution and disturbance from recreation/urbanisation. An Appropriate Assessment (AA) of its implications for the integrity of the SAC was therefore undertaken. For both pathways of impact, the AA concluded that with mitigation, the Plan would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the SAC either alone or in combination with other plans or projects (AECOM, 2019). However, this HRA is undergoing significant revisions for reasons set out below.
- EFDC Local Plan Submission Version Examination-in-Public: At the Planning Inspector's hearing to examine the Local Plan Submission Version, both Natural England and the Conservators of Epping Forest (The Conservators) strongly challenged the robustness of the HRA in terms of its methodology and conclusions. Given the uniqueness of the Forest and its high-risk status, the Planning Inspector stated in her closing remarks that '*she could not conclude beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the Local Plan will not adversely affect the integrity of the SAC until steps have been taken towards resolving it*' (Phillips, L, 2019).
- Further work: The Planning Inspector noted at the conclusion of the public hearing that '*achieving sufficient confidence in any necessary mitigation measures is clearly challenging*'. The Inspector stated '*that physical measures (road works) to which specific benefits could be attributed would themselves harm the SAC; and while schemes for road charging and completely car-free development might warrant future consideration, they could not realistically be implemented to support this Plan*'. Therefore, the Inspector stated that '*the Council must either be clearer about the benefits of the mitigation proposed in the HRA; provide robust habitat/location specific evidence to demonstrate that*

any effects of development would not be adverse; or avoid the effects by altering (or potentially reducing) the pattern of growth proposed in the Plan' (Phillips, L, 2019).

- Updates to the Local Plan process: EFDC has made public a letter sent to the Planning Inspector on 21 January 2020 (EFDC, 2020a), updating the Inspector regarding progress made on the additional work required to ensure compliance with the Habitats Regulations with respect to the integrity of the SAC. Currently, further research is being undertaken on transport and air quality modelling, as well as consolidating the EFDC Infrastructure Delivery Plan. The updated timetable has been acknowledged by the Planning Inspector (Phillips, L, 2020). EFDC also issued a position statement on Epping Forest SAC on 30 April 2020 (EFDC, 2020b), reiterating the need '*to ensure that mitigation measures are in place which can be relied upon to avoid effects to the SAC*'.
- Recreational Zone of Influence: With respect to disturbance from recreation/urbanisation, Natural England, the statutory body advising competent authorities, like EFDC, on Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), has issued interim advice relating to the emerging strategic approach for the Epping Forest SAC Mitigation Strategy (Natural England, 2019b). This advice defines the recreational Zone of Influence (Zol) around the boundary of Epping Forest SAC as 6.2km, being the distance up to which more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of visitors will travel to visit Epping Forest SAC - see also the Epping Forest Visitor Survey 2017 (Liley et al (Footprint Ecology), 2018).
- Open space provision: The northern half of the Epping Forest SAC is wholly within Epping Forest District and therefore will come under pressure to accommodate increased visitor numbers associated with new Local Plan developments within the Zol. The Planning Inspector requires 'Main Modifications' to the EFDC Local Plan Submission Version, which will need to address the issue of disturbance from recreation/urbanisation (as well as air quality, see above). One option being considered by the key stakeholders is the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGS) within Epping Forest District, so that adverse impacts can be avoided. The SANGs proposed will be in addition to any on-site mitigation measures agreed (see SAMMs above), and the extent of the on-site measures may be modified in the light of any effects of any future SANGs.
- Epping Forest SAC Mitigation Strategy: there is an interim Strategy which includes what are termed as Strategic (visitor) Access Management Measures (SAMMs). This interim Strategy was prepared by and approved by Epping Forest District Council in consultation with the wider SAC Oversight Group. However, a final SAC Mitigation Strategy incorporating other mitigation measures for the SAC is still required to be completed. The current proposed measures and costs for SAMMs are being refined by the City of London Conservators of Epping Forest with the help of specialist consultants, LUC, to be presented to the other competent authorities (including London Boroughs) and Natural England for future agreement. The funding for the final SAC Mitigation Strategy will need to take into account these more detailed proposals, a network of suitable alternative natural green spaces (SANGS) and air pollution mitigation measures.

17. APPENDIX 5: Figures

Figure 1 a: Locations of named features in the High Beach area

Figure 1 b: Locations of named features in the centre of High Beach

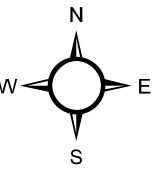
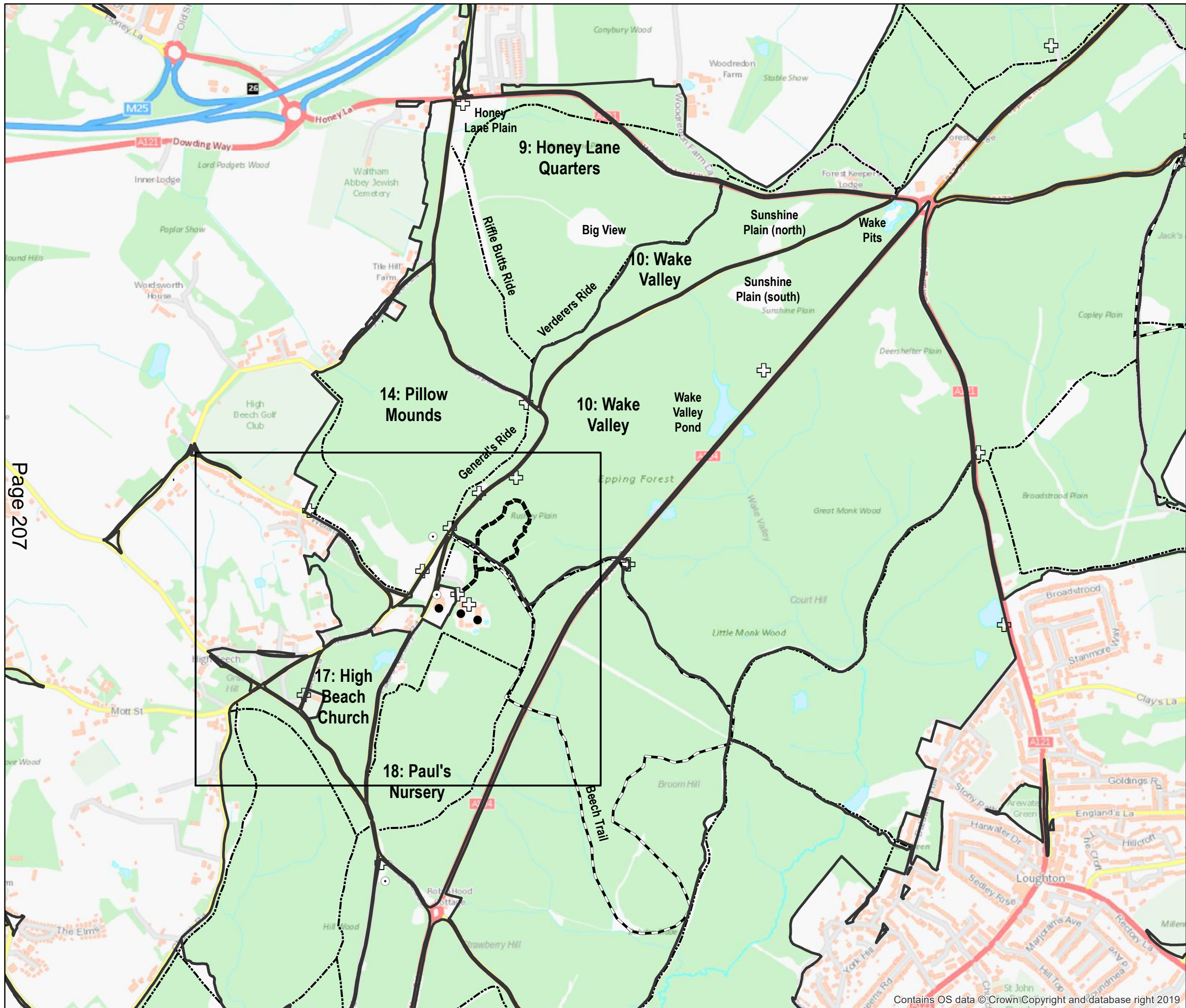


Figure 1a:
Locations of named
features in the
High Beach area

- Epping Forest boundary
- Shared Use Trail
- Easy Access Path
- Beech Trail (Waymarked)
- Car Park
- Significant Building
- Tea Hut
- Inset area shown in more detail in Figure 1b

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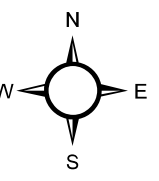
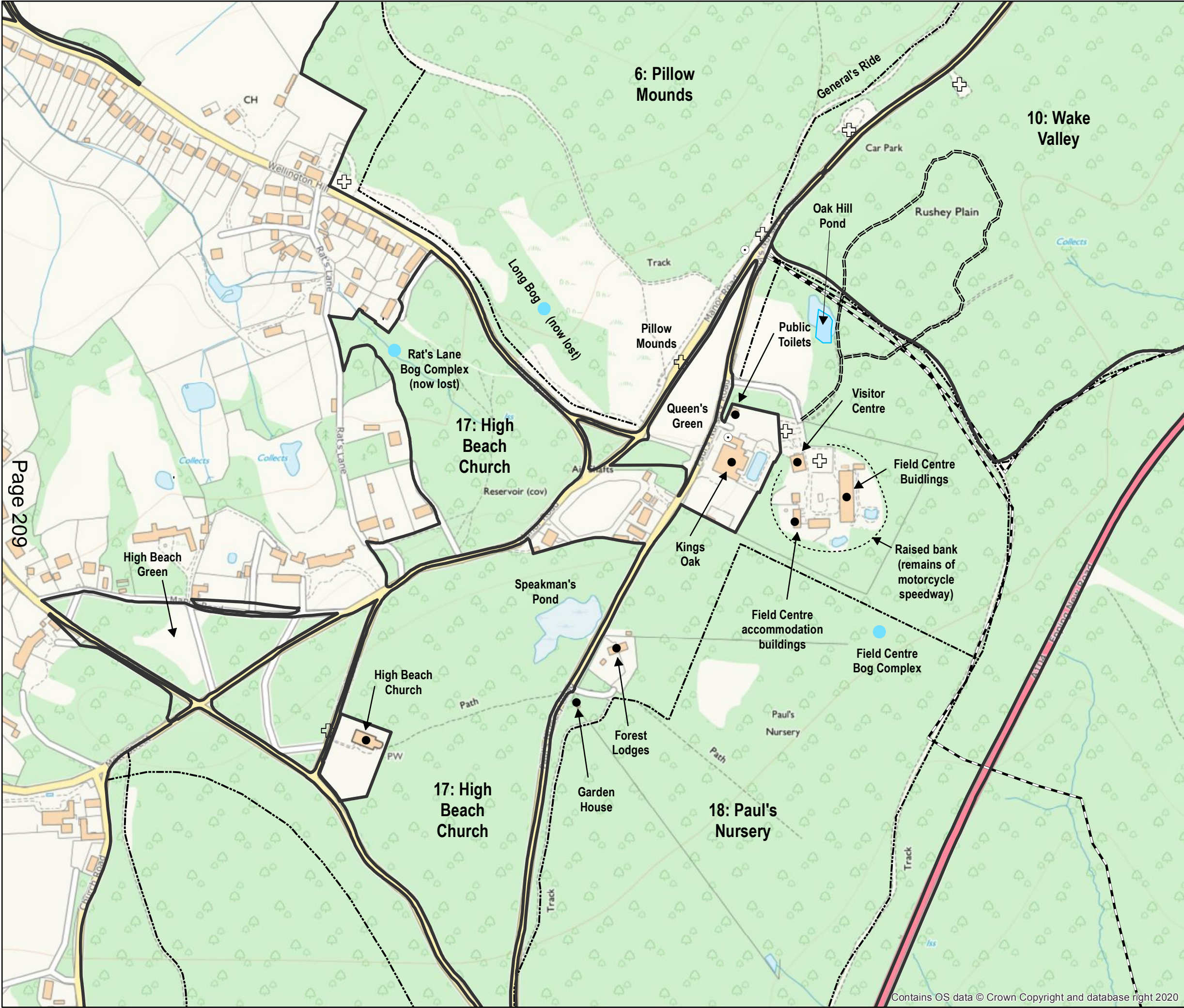


Figure 1b:
Locations of named
features in the
centre of
High Beach

- Epping Forest boundary
- Shared Use Path
- Beech Trail (waymarked)
- Easy Access Path
- Car Park
- Significant Building
- Tea Hut

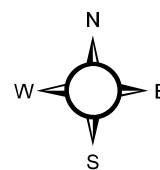
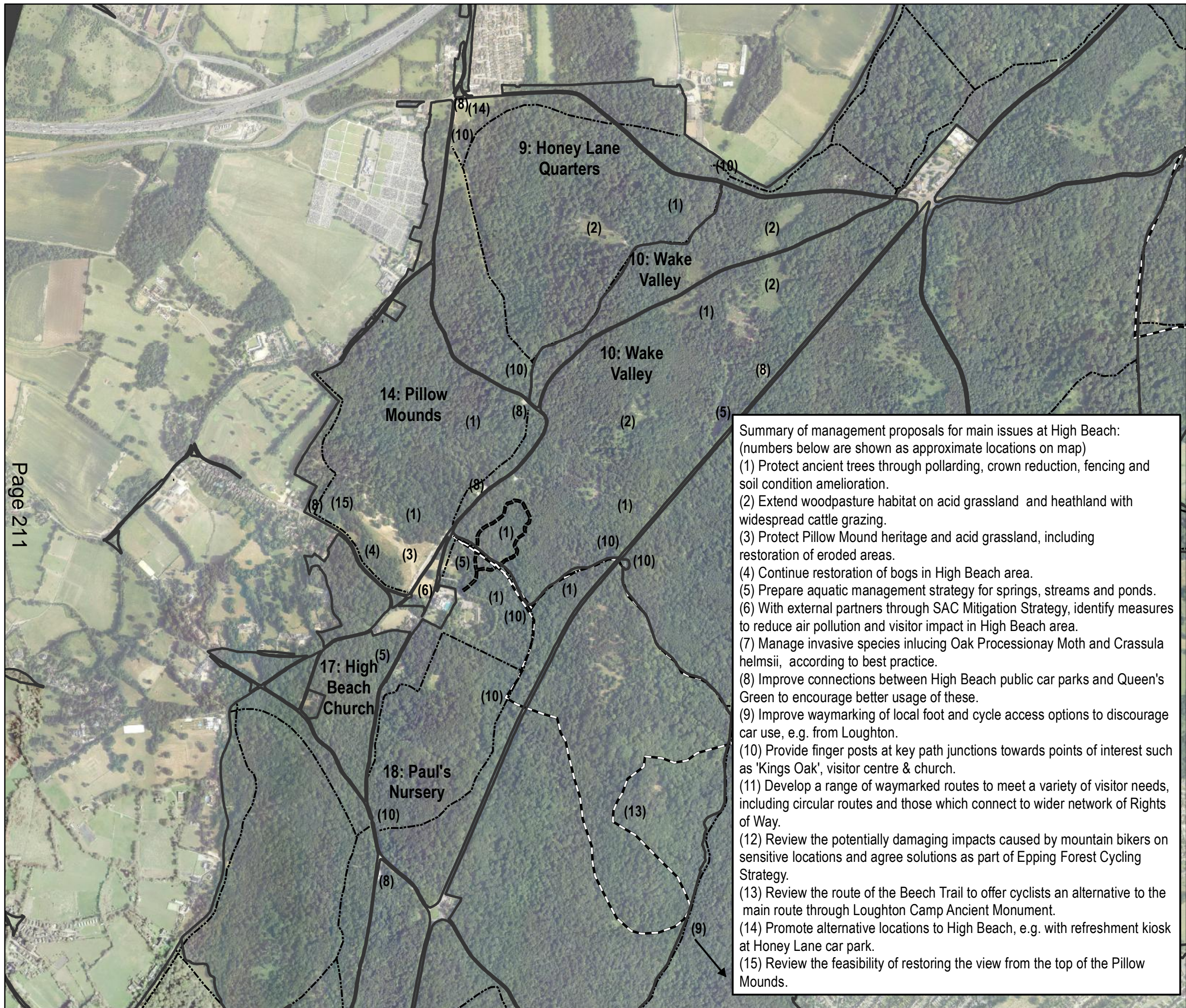
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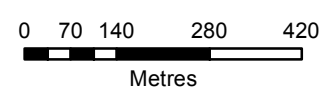
**Figure 2:
High Beach
Summary Management
Proposals**

Themes for High Beach (not shown on map):

- a) Continue to undertake COL statutory requirements
- b) Implement a programme of conservation measures to improve Epping Forest SAC
- c) Ensure that COL offers a sustainable and welcoming visitor experience
- d) Encourage local community involvement in management and enhancement of High Beach area
- e) Seek mitigation of impacts of additional visits from new housing developments around Epping Forest
- f) Finance an infrastructure Improvement Programme, partly from local income and third parties

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Management Planning Assistant

Date Created:
01 Feb 2021



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Committee(s)	Dated:
Epping Forest Consultative – For consultation	10 02 2021
Epping Forest and Commons – For decision	08 03 2021
Subject: Wanstead Park: Wetland Improvement Proposals (SEF 09/21b)	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
Report of: Colin Buttery, Director of Open Spaces	For Decision
Report author: Geoff Sinclair, Head of Operations, Epping Forest	

Summary

This report is necessary to seek Committee approval for a proposed water management project for Wanstead Park that seeks to improve the sustainable water supply to the lakes as well as provide key biodiversity improvements to the lakes and the neighbouring River Roding. The project would be within the context of the Roding, Beam & Ingrebourne (RBI) Catchment Partnership and would involve collaboration involving the City Corporation, Thames21 and The Environment Agency. The City Corporation would provide arborist staff time and funding would be sought from the EA and others to support the project's activity. The project outcomes would progress key actions identified in the Wanstead Park Parkland Plan.

Recommendation(s)

Epping Forest and Commons Committee Members are asked to:

- i. Approve option 1 of the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The Epping Forest Charity is a member of the Roding, Beam & Ingrebourne (RBI) Catchment Partnership. The RBI partnership was formed in 2012 as part of the UK Government's Catchment Based Approach (CABA) initiative to help meet the objectives of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and the measures set out in the Thames River Basin Management Plan. The RBI Catchment Partnership is co-hosted by London's waterway charity Thames21 and Thames Chase Trust.
2. Thames21 is registered charity working to improve the quality of life of people in the community by enhancing waterway environments across London. Since 2019, the Epping Forest Charity was a strategic partner of Thames21 and the charity has been working with the partners on options for addressing hydrological and aquatic biodiversity projects identified in the Wanstead Park Parkland Plan and that link with the objectives of the WFD.
3. This report presents a Epping Forest Charity and Thames21 joint project idea that will help to progress the resolution of water management issues at Wanstead Park and at the same time as supporting a goal of improving the catchment's wetland environments, as outlined in the RBI catchment action plan.

Current Position

4. Wanstead Park is East London's oldest public park and is considered to be London's greatest surviving designed waterscape. The Park has been listed as a Grade II* – 'a garden of special interest' - Registered Park and Garden (RPG) by English Heritage (now Historic England) since 2001, following an earlier Grade II designation in 1987. The Park was placed on the Heritage at Risk Register (HARR) by English Heritage in 2009 and a Parkland Plan was approved by your committee on 18th November 2019 that presents an action plan that will help to achieve removal of the Park from the HARR.
5. The condition of the water bodies in the Park has been identified as the single biggest issue to address in the Parkland Plan, including works to improve water supply/catchment and to address 'High Status' under the Reservoirs Act 1975, as amended by the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. Actions to address the High Risk status were presented to your Committee on 16th November 2020 and are being taken forward by the Wanstead Park Project Board chaired by the Director of Open Spaces.
6. "Improving water management to reduce calls upon scarce aquifer abstraction, establishing the strategy for creating a sustainable and resilient lakes system" is an objective of the Parkland Plan. At present 290,000 cubic metres per year of water from an underground aquifer via a borehole helps to maintain the lake levels, however, the water used is potential drinking water which is an increasingly scarce resource for London. In April 2016, the Environment Agency extended the water abstraction licence from the borehole until 31st March 2022, however they have indicated that aquifer water used to augment the lakes may be reduced in the future. The licence gave the condition that they would like to

see the recommendations outlined in the Wanstead Park Hydrology Study, JBA Consulting (2014) taken forward as part of efforts to maximise efficient water use in association with the EA. One of the JBA recommendations is to increase the natural inflows to the lakes through ditch clearance and investigation/clearance of the surface water drainage outlets should be undertaken. Proposals to utilise local catchment drainage to increase natural inflows to the lakes were submitted by Spa Flow Limited for the City Surveyor's Department in December 2020 with the recommendations currently being assessed for incorporation in future work programs.

7. The work of the RBI Catchment Partnership, has identified the potential role of the 14 ha of Wanstead Park cascade lakes, adjacent to the River Roding, to support actions to deliver the WFD and the Government's 25 Year Environmental Plan, which hitherto had not been fully recognised in the local river catchment plans. Particular actions identified are:
 - a. Improving water quality reaching the River Roding through reducing pollution from road runoff from the A114 through the introduction of sustainable Urban Drainage (SuD) features on the lake;
 - b. Reducing pressure on drinking water supplies by identifying and utilising more sustainable water sources;
 - c. Improving biodiversity in the river catchment through introducing wetland features to the lakes such as areas of reedbed (a priority habitat), promoting European eel and general fishery conservation and enhancing in-channel habitat on the River Roding.
8. As well as supporting the delivery of the WFD the actions would support the City Corporation's work to identify and develop a sustainable water supply for the lakes. The development of reedbeds may also help to reduce the need for water overall in the lake system.

Proposals

9. It is proposed that a joint project be established between the Epping Forest Charity, Thames21 and the Environment Agency (EA) to progress a water management project at Wanstead Park to improve the sustainable water supply and biodiversity of the Park's lakes.
10. A three-phase project is proposed:
 - a. Phase 1: Restoration of the in-channel habitat within 1.2km stretch of the River Roding bordering Wanstead Park to the east. This will involve the City Corporation arborists and volunteers working together to hinge small marginal trees into the river and securing them in place to create more diverse flow types leading to improved ecological conditions. This would also complement the City Corporation work to improve the riverside walk along the River Roding through opening vistas onto the river.
 - b. Phase 2: Commissioning of a consultant to complete a detailed scoping study of Wanstead Park that will identify the most appropriate actions for addressing the lack of wetland features, the lake's water retention issues,

the poor quality fishery and lack of European eel habitat, and the road-runoff pollution from neighbouring roads. This would require 100% funding from the EA.

- c. Phase 3: Implementation of some of the habitat improvement measures identified in the scoping study that will help improve the ecological condition of the Park's lakes. This will be subject to additional resources being identified to undertake this work.

11. The EA have been approached to canvas their view and meetings with local staff from the EA have been held. The Epping Forest Charity's C provision of free angling at Wanstead Park this was particularly well received!

Options

12. Your Committee are asked to consider two options:

13. **Option 1:** The proposal to develop a joint water management project at Wanstead Park be supported.

14. The proposal supports the development of a sustainable water supply for Wanstead Park, a key action within the Parkland Plan and also part of the requirements under the borehole water abstraction licence. The City Corporation investment is arborist and volunteer staff time to undertake practical works. **This option is recommended.**

15. **Option 2:** Do not approve the proposal to develop a joint water management project at Wanstead Park .

16. This would impede our ability to identify and progress sustainable water supply for the Park. **This option is not recommended.**

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Epping Forest Consultative Committee Feedback

17. The Friends of Wanstead Parklands. The Wren Group, London Wildlife Trust and the Bushwood Area Residents Association all offered their support.

Strategic implications

18. City of London Corporate Plan 2018 - 2023: the restoration and maintenance of the internationally and nationally important habitats of Epping Forest directly underscore the *third pillar* of the Corporate Plan, which is to "*shape outstanding environments*". The biodiversity improvements arising from this project will support improvement and diversification of wetland habitats and conservation of protected species. e.g. European eels.

19. As a Registered Park and Garden and sitting within a Conservation Area works will need the approval of Historic England and the local planning authority, the London Borough of Redbridge

20. Open Spaces Department Business Plan 2020-21: The proposals contribute towards meeting the following outcomes of the plan: 1,3,4,5,7,8,9 and 11.

Financial implications

21. The outline management program has been framed to fit within existing levels of local risk spend at Wanstead Park.
22. Several projects have been identified which will only be progressed if additional financial and practical support can be obtained, including funding from the EA.

Legal implications

23. Subject to the provisions of the Epping Forest Acts 1878 & 1880 the Conservators are under a duty at all times to keep Epping Forest uninclosed and unbuilt on as an open space for the recreation and enjoyment of the public. They are also under a duty at all times as far as possible to preserve the natural aspect of the Forest.
24. The proposals contribute towards meeting requirements under the EA Abstraction licence pending for Wanstead Park.

Charity Implications

25. 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.

Risk implications

26. None

Equalities implications

27. No negative equality impacts were identified for this proposal.

Climate implications

28. The proposals could help mitigate the impact of increased storms arising from Climate Change through the potential retention of storm water in the local catchment and surrounding roads in the lakes. Introducing areas of reedbed and improved wetland habitat to the park's lakes will also likely increase their carbon storage capacity. Along with the more effective use of drinking water these actions are part of the six-year action plan in the City Corporation Climate Action Strategy: 2020-2027.

Security implications

29. None.

Conclusion

30. A proposal for developing a joint project water management project at Wanstead Park between the Epping Forest Charity, Thames21 and the EA has been made. This would contribute towards improving sustainable water supplies for the lakes a key need under the Parkland Plan agreed for the Park. The project would further secure biodiversity enhancements through wetland habitat creation and conservation of fisheries and European eels.
31. The proposals would require allocation of Arborist team and volunteer time with further actions of the project dependent on the funding being obtained. A request to the EA for this has been submitted.

Background Papers

- Wanstead Park Ponds Project – Initial Engineering Assessment 16:11:2020
- Wanstead Park: Conceptual Options Plan (SEF 38/19b) 18:11:2019

Appendices

None

Report author

Geoff Sinclair

Head of Operations, Epping Forest, Open Spaces Department

T : 020 8532 5301 E: geoff.sinclair@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Committee: Epping Forest & Commons Committee – For decision	Dated: 08032021
Subject: 2019 Countryside Stewardship Grant Agreement Amendment (SEF 13/21)	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	11
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?	-
Report of: Colin Buttery, Director of Open Spaces	For Decision
Report author: Sally Gadsdon, Environmental Stewardship Officer	

Summary

Following your Committee's approval, an application for £5.37M was submitted in August 2019 to the Rural Payments Agency for a Countryside Stewardship Scheme grant to support the management of Epping Forest's most important habitats and ancient trees. Although this application was initially accepted and an offer of £5.37M made by the RPA in May 2020, following a prolonged delay in processing the application, a further review by the RPA resulted in a significantly reduced offer in September 2020. The RPA notified the City Corporation that the new offer would be for £1.27M across 10 years, but that the agreement start date would have to remain at 1st January 2020 because of Scheme rules.

Legal advice was sought from the City Solicitor to ensure that there were no other avenues to be explored before negotiations with the RPA were resumed in January 2021. Epping Forest Officers are finalising the details of the revised agreement and seeking to identify other measures to lessen the impact of this change in offer. The reduced grant offer means that the 10-year work programme has been revised to allow for the majority of its delivery by the Epping Forest Operations Team. The proposed 10-year CSS work programme to 2029, however, will be in line with the staff resource used for habitat conservation work over the previous ten years under the Higher-Level Scheme.

The revised agreement offer would realise an annual revenue income of approximately £95,000 alongside £320,000 capital funding, which would support the continuing essential management of important habitats and the favourable condition of Epping Forest SSSI/SAC. Approval is sought for this revised 10-year agreement offer and for the commitment of the in-house staffing resource to deliver the conservation work programme.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Authorise the Director of Open Spaces to sign the revised 10-year CSS agreement offer of approximately £1.27Million;
- Delegate authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, to agree further measures with the Rural Payments Agency that will make adjustments to the timetable, seek to maximise per hectare payments and allow flexibility in the way in which annual work is recorded and payments made.

Main Report

Background

1. Following approval by your Committee in July 2019 (see *Background Papers* report SEF 28/19), an application for a £5.37 million, 10-year grant was submitted to the government's Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS) in August 2019 as the first part of a two-stage application for funding to manage habitats in Epping Forest.
2. Funding was requested to support management of the most important habitats and ancient trees, to achieve and maintain favourable condition of the Forest. The application included requests to fund: wood pasture restoration; management of heathland, grassland and ponds; 2182 ancient pollards; vegetation on Loughton Camp Iron Age hill fort; removal of rhododendrons to remove the risk of the spread of Ramorum disease to the beech woodland in High Beach; continued support for the grazing project and the management of areas and trees that support the nationally rare, legally protected *Zygodon forsteri* moss.
3. The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) is the government agency that administers CSS. Under the RPA's timetable the application was due to be processed by December 2019 for the grant to start on 1st January 2020.
4. The processing of the application by the RPA was subject to a significant delay. However, a grant agreement offer of £5.37 million was made in May 2020. The RPA requested further information on how commoners are engaged with and their activities controlled on Forest land which was encapsulated in an internal agreement document. The grant offer were accepted and signed by the Director of Open Spaces, under delegated authority from your Committee (*Background papers*, report SEF 33-19), and was submitted with the internal agreement to the RPA at the end of July 2020.
5. After submission of the City's signed acceptance of the application it was then subjected to a further sign-off procedure by the RPA. In September 2020, the RPA notified the City of an issue with the payment level for the major component of the application related to ancient tree management. The RPA indicated that

although the application had been made correctly using the information in the CSS Handbook, and as advised by Natural England, there was a fault with the way in which the CSS Handbook had set out a payment rate for this work. As a result, the offer was to be withdrawn and was to be revised to a significantly reduced figure.

6. Given the long delay, the circumstances of this reduction and given that CSS procedure and prescriptions had been applied correctly throughout the application process, legal advice was sought from the City Solicitor and further information was requested from the RPA. The legal advice concluded that despite the error in the CSS Handbook there were no avenues for further significant amendments to the revised grant offer.
7. Unfortunately, requests for more information from the RPA were not forthcoming until late 2020. However, in January 2021 the Director of Open Spaces and the Epping Forest Environmental Stewardship Officer met with an External Affairs Manager from the RPA to discuss the revised offer and to seek amendments. Given the delay in starting the agreement, which would still be dated from January 2020, compensatory adjustments to the implementation timetable for the work were also discussed.

Current Position

8. A CSS grant offer for a revised 10-year work programme of £1.27 million has been made by the RPA. This comprises both annual revenue and one-off capital funding. The capital works are required to be carried out within the first two years of the 10-year grant period. Given the delay, an allowance has been made for this and these works are now to be completed by the end of Year 3 (31st December 2022). The capital funded items are to be delivered by contractors because the grant covers 100% of the costs.
9. Other annual habitat conservation works will be delivered, as with much of the previous Higher Level Stewardship operations, by staff from the Epping Forest Operations team. The annual staff commitment is in line with the average time spent on conservation activity by the Operations team. Some significant replacement of the Operation Team's machinery and equipment will be required early in the life of the project.
10. The Director and Epping Forest Officers are continuing to liaise with both Natural England and the RPA to finalise the remaining details of the revised agreement. Some small increase in payment levels for wood-pasture prescriptions is anticipated from the further adjustments to be made and the £1.27M agreement total is likely to change, but not to a significant degree over the 10-year period.

Proposals

11. Following 20 years of wood-pasture restoration work concentrated in Bury Wood and Walthamstow Forest, the 10-year Higher Level Stewardship agreement, between 2008-2018, allowed both a consolidation and expansion of the habitat conservation work in the Forest. This allowed a step-change in progress towards

favourable condition of the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and to prevent the loss of important species of plant and insects. Over 300 hectares of wood pasture began to be restored. Therefore, it is proposed that this core habitat conservation work should continue to be delivered in these areas supported by this new Countryside Stewardship Scheme and that the offer of £1.27M grant be accepted.

12. The grant will subsidise the essential work required to manage the internationally important habitats in Epping Forest and span 16 of the 33 SSSI compartments. Work on 2,182 ancient pollards would be achieved across the 10-year period. It would also continue to provide subsidy to the grazing restoration. Other works are as described in the earlier reports (see *Background Papers* below).
13. In addition, it is proposed that during March and April 2021 the final amendments and adjustments to the revised agreement are made to ensure that the loss of one year's work during 2020 is compensated and that the time allocations for work and prescriptions are amended to lessen the impacts of the changed grant agreement offer. Negotiations with the RPA and Natural England are also proposed to be continued to agree further flexibility in the way future applications for CSS grants might be made.

Options

14. Option 1: Instruct the Director of Open Spaces to sign the amended agreement offer for a Countryside Stewardship Scheme grant for approximately £1.27 Million and to conclude the negotiations on the exact figure, seeking compensatory measures to adjust for the delayed start to works and further small amendments to habitat prescriptions to maximise the income per hectare. This would ensure an annual income of at least £95,000 for the Epping Forest Local Risk budget alongside £320,000 capital funding for a further 10 years of essential habitat management. **This option is recommended.**
15. Option 2: Reject the amended agreement offer from the RPA. This would create a loss of momentum in managing the internationally habitats in Epping Forest (with likely consequences on the favourable condition of the SSSI and SAC) and would significantly impact on the Local Risk Budget for Epping Forest. **This option is not recommended.**

Key Data

16. The original grant application approved by your Committee in July 2019 was for £5.37M for 10 years from 1st January 2020 until 31st December 2029. As a result of an internal review of the CSS Handbook by the RPA this has been revised down to approximately £1.27M. This new offer would realise a £320,000 capital grant alongside an annual income of approximately £95,000 to Epping Forest's Local Risk Budget.
17. The grant award would allow important habitat work to be financially supported across 16 SSSI units across Epping Forest.

18. The grant would support the management of around 270 hectares of nationally (SSSI) and internationally (SAC) important habitats and the pollarding of 2,182 ancient trees.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications

19. City of London Corporate Plan 2018-2023: (12) We have clean air, land and water and a thriving and sustainable natural environment.
20. The proposed action supports the Open Spaces Department's Vision of enriching people's lives by enhancing and providing access to ecologically diverse open spaces and outstanding heritage assets across London and beyond.
21. The proposed action meets the Open Spaces Department's objective of 'Open spaces and historic sites are thriving and accessible'. It will also contribute to the Department's performance measures of the condition of our Sites of Special Scientific Interest, active ancient tree management and income generation.
22. The grant would deliver work to contribute to the government's 25 Year Environment Plan targets.

Financial implications

23. The change in agreement offer by the RPA has resulted in a decrease in grant offer from £5.37 million to £1.27 million. Part of this is grant provides £320,000 capital funding to commission contractors over the next two years, funding this work at 100% of costs. The remainder of the 10-year grant would generate an annual revenue income of approximately £95,000 to Local Risk budgets. This is vital funding to support the cost of in-house staff required to continue essential habitat conservation work in Epping Forest SSSI/SAC.
24. The previous grant funding scheme, Higher and Entry Level Stewardship, which covered all of Epping Forest and the Buffer Lands, generated an annual revenue income of £165,000 and £90,000 of capital funding over 10 years (2008-2018). The second part of the two-stage application for CSS on Epping Forest should realise further annual income and potentially further capital funding.

Resource implications

25. The revised CSS agreement requires staff time from the Epping Forest Operations and Conservation Teams. This commitment is in line with the average staff resource spent by both teams on habitat conservation work under the previous Stewardship scheme (2008 - 2018).

Legal implications

26. Legal advice was sought from the City Solicitor to review this change in agreement offer from the RPA. The legal advice concluded that despite the error

in the CSS Handbook there were no avenues for further significant amendments to the revised grant offer and that it would have to be accepted in its revised form.

27. The original grant application was granted SSSI consent under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). The revised agreement will be re-consented by Natural England with whom discussions are ongoing.

Risk implications

28. Depending on weather conditions and equipment availability there may be a reduction in capacity for other core activities by the Epping Forest Operations Teams on items such as vegetation against properties and path works.

Equalities implications

29. None.

Climate implications

30. The management of the habitats supported by the CSS grant would increase the resilience of the Forest wood-pasture to environmental and biological changes brought about by climate change. The work complements the aims of the Climate Action Strategy of the City Corporation for both climate adaptation and biodiversity enhancement.

Security implications

31. None.

Conclusion

32. The original approved CSS application for £5.37M received an offer for this amount in May 2020 from the RPA but this has now been reduced by the RPA to £1.27M. The revised agreement offer means that the original delivery model of the annual work being undertaken by a mixture of contractors and in-house staff has had to be amended. There have been adjustments made to the selection of ancient trees to be worked and other changes in methodology of working. The work will now largely be carried out by in-house Epping Forest Operations Team staff resulting in an adjustment to the balance of their core activity work.
33. The revised agreement is close to being finalised but requires some further negotiations over the timing and other details, including some levels of payments for certain habitats, which may result in slightly higher final settlement covering a proportion of the SSSI areas. However, irrespective of any negotiated minor changes, the revised agreement offer would realise an annual revenue income of approximately £95,000 alongside £320,000 capital funding to subsidise essential habitat conservation work.

Appendices

- None

Background Papers

- Report to Committee 8th July 2019: 2019 Countryside Stewardship Grant application proposals (SEF 28-19)
- Report to Committee 9th September 2019: 2019 Countryside Stewardship Grant application final details (SEF 33-19)
- Report to Committee 9th September 2019: 2019 Countryside Stewardship Grant application final budgetary details (SEF 33-19b)

Sally Gadsdon

Environmental Stewardship Officer

E-mail: sally.gadsdon@cityoflondon.gov.uk

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Committee(s): Epping Forest & Commons Committee – For Information	Dated: 08032021
Subject: London Borough of Waltham Forest Local Plan (SEF 15/21)	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	11, 12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	Local Risk
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	Y
Report of: Colin Buttery, Director of Open Spaces	For Information
Report author: Jeremy Dagley, Head of Conservation, Epping Forest, Open Spaces	

Summary

This report sets out the current situation with regards to the London Borough of Waltham Forest (LBWF) Local Plan Regulation 19 consultation, which proposes 27,000 new homes for the Borough by the year 2035. LBWF is now in the process of providing more detailed information on air quality, traffic and the mitigation of recreational pressure through discussions with Natural England and your officers to ensure amendments to its Plan-level Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).

In parallel with this process of Plan-level consultation and amendment, the Whipps Cross housing-led development of up to 1,500 homes is also being consulted upon and is itself subject to its own project-level HRA. This project is leading to its own proposals for on-site mitigation in the Forest SAC and its own assessment of air pollution impacts.

The Local Plan timetable proposes submission for examination before the end of 2021. The timetable for the Whipps Cross development proposes that outline planning permission is likely to be sought as early as April 2021.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- note the detailed response to the Local Plan consultation at Appendix 1 and to note the proposals to continue discussions with the London Borough of Waltham Forest with a view to a future report for decision

Main Report

Background

1. The London Borough of Waltham Forest (the Council) is in the process of updating and developing its Local Plan for submission and examination. Its Local Plan's housing requirement has been set at 27,000 homes by the end of the Plan period, which is year 2035.
2. This increase in residential population has significant implications for the protection and management of Epping Forest because of the potential adverse impacts on the Forest from traffic-derived air pollution, urbanisation effects and increased recreational pressure.
3. The Borough lies entirely within the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation's (SAC) 6.2km Zone of Influence (ZoI) for recreation, as determined by two recent Epping Forest Visitors Surveys (2017 and 2019), commissioned by the SAC Oversight Group of local authorities. In fact, almost the entire Borough lies within 3km of the Epping Forest SAC boundaries. Furthermore, City Corporation-owned Epping Forest Land makes up 45% of the publicly accessible green space within the Borough.
4. At the same time, within the Borough, a detailed masterplan is being developed for housing-led hospital re-development at the Whipps Cross Hospital site in Leytonstone. This is of such a scale and significance to the Forest environment alone that it is subject to its own assessment in terms of the impacts on the SAC.

Current Position

5. The Local Plan policies are at the stage of pre-submission, under Regulation 19 of the *Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012* (as amended) [the Regulations]. This included a Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy (G&BI Strategy). The allocation of sites for housing is at an earlier stage, Regulation 18 of the Regulations. The consultation period for these two sections of the Local Plan finished on 14th December 2020. A full response was made by your officers by this deadline, attached to this report as **Appendix 1**.
6. The key concerns and issues outlined in the response (see Appendix 1 - page 2 of 13) were:
 - the quantum of development (27,000 homes) proposed in the Submission Local Plan (LP1)
 - a non-compliant Plan-level Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), which does not justify its conclusions in relation to the impacts of the *likely significant effects* on EFSAC of the Local Plan alone;
 - the lack of SANGs Strategy with specific measures to provide certainty of mitigation for Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (EFSAC);
 - the lack of costed and precise mitigation measures in a Strategic Access Mitigation & Monitoring Strategy (SAMMS) for the EFSAC;

- the need for an air quality assessment;
 - the need for a comprehensive EFSAC mitigation strategy to be agreed by all local authorities under a revised MoU;
 - improved recognition for the City Corporation's current pattern of visitor facilities in the Borough and the Forest's 45% contribution to the Borough's green space provisions.
7. Since that submission, your officers have met with LBWF and Natural England officers on two occasions this calendar year to discuss these issues and, in particular, the progress on improving the HRA to meet compliance with the Habitats Regulations 2019. The Council has accepted the need for further work on the Plan-level HRA, both in terms of recreational pressures, particularly alternative sites, and also in relation to air quality.
 8. Consultants have been engaged by LBWF to cover both these aspects and traffic and air quality modelling are currently taking place. Discussions on alternative recreation sites and SAMMS are also continuing with Natural England advising on the level of provision required and how the balance between on-site SAMMS and alternative (SANGS) sites may be struck for LBWF.
 9. In parallel with these discussions, a separate project-level HRA is being conducted by consultants on behalf of Barts Hospital Trust for the proposed masterplan and housing development at the Whipps Cross hospital site, which lies immediately adjacent to EFSAC at Leyton Flats and Hollow Ponds. In late February this year the consultants revealed their second consultation with a revised masterplan, having taken on board comments from your officers and Natural England.
 10. The revision involves a reduction in housing units from 1,650 to 1,500 and an increase in green space within the site to just under 6 hectares. However, this green space provision is fragment across the site although the revised masterplan has considerably strengthened the links between the areas.
 11. The new masterplan still proposes strong links between the hospital greenspaces and Epping Forest and that non-SAC sections of the Forest should be managed to accommodate increase recreational use, particularly west of the Whipps Cross Road and south of James Lane. The consultants are seeking further discussion on the way in which the development may contribute to the SAMMS on the EFSAC.
 12. Your officers have advised that the quantum of homes seems too great related to the closeness of the site to the SAC, the increased traffic and the limitations on greenspace provision within the master-planned area. However, further work is being carried out by the Whipps Cross consultants on a project-level HRA to examine air quality impacts and to examine SANGS and alternative site (SANGS) provision. Further meetings are planned with your officers ahead of submission of an outline planning application in April.

Proposals

13. Working closely with Natural England, it is proposed that the discussions and negotiations with LBWF on its Plan-level HRA, G&BI Strategy and other refinements to its Local Plan continue over the next few months. A future report for decision will be brought to your Committee ahead of LBWF's submission of its Local Plan for examination to determine the appropriate response.
14. In relation to Whipps Cross, it is likely that a separate report will be brought to your Committee to consider a response to any outline planning application, including the potential impacts on Forest Land and the mitigation proposals within the project-level HRA and how these might fit in with the wider Plan-level HRA requirements for mitigation across the whole Borough and 'in combination' with the other local plans such as those of Epping Forest District and the London Borough of Enfield.

Key Data

15. The London Borough of Waltham Forest Local Plan is at Regulation 19 stage in the pre-submission process and proposes the building of 27,000 more homes in the Borough, all within 3km of the Epping Forest SAC boundaries, by 2035.
16. The Whipps Cross proposed masterplan re-development site is adjacent to the EFSAC at Leyton Flats. It proposes 1,500 homes (5% of the Borough total above) within the existing hospital site. Outline planning permission may be sought as early as April 2021.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

17. The engagement by officers in responding to the LBWF Local Plan and the Whipps Cross re-development proposals aims to ensure aims to be consistent with Outcomes 11 and 12 of the Corporate Plan. Outcome 11 states that: "*We will have clean air, land and water and a thriving and sustainable natural environment*" is met. Outcome 12 states that: "*Our spaces are secure, resilient and well-maintained. Build resilience to natural and man-made threats by strengthening, protecting and adapting our infrastructure, directly and by influencing others.*"

Financial implications

18. None at present. The financial implications of SAMMS were subject to a separate report to your Committee in November 2020 and remain subject to discussion by the local authorities around EFSAC, including LBWF.

Resource implications

19. Staff resources are required throughout the next financial year to negotiate and advise the Council, the other consultants for Whipps Cross and to liaise with Natural England.

Legal implications

20. None.

Risk implications

21. None.

Equalities implications

22. None.

Climate implications

23. None

Security implications

24. None.

Charity Implications

25. 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.

Epping Forest Consultative Committee

26. The Consultative Committee has not been consulted on this report due to the timing of the Local Plan Regulation 19 Consultation period last year and the subsequent meetings with the local authority officers and Whipps Cross consultants in late February. However, the Consultative Committee was appraised of the Regulation 19 Local Plan consultation and the fact that a detailed response was to be made to LBWF before the deadline of 14th December 2020.

Conclusion

27. The current proposals for housing and other development within the Local Plan, and also the Whipps Cross re-development masterplan, involve likely significant effects on the Forest and on the SAC in particular. As a result, further work is required by the respective Plan-Level and project-level Habitat Regulations Assessments to ascertain the impacts and to provide mitigation of the impacts with certainty. Further discussions and negotiations are required to seek modifications to both the Local Plan and the Whipps Cross project to ensure that any resulting proposals for development are compliant with the Habitat Regulations and protect the Forest in perpetuity. Further reports will be brought to your Committee for decision in the near future in relation to both the Local Plan and the Whipps Cross proposed development.

Appendices

- Response on behalf of The Conservators of 14th December 2020 to the London Borough of Waltham Forest Regulation 19 Local Plan consultation

Background Papers

- None

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***RESPONSE of THE CITY of LONDON CORPORATION as CONSERVATORS of EPPING FOREST
to LONDON BOROUGH of WALTHAM FOREST SUBMISSION LOCAL PLAN
'SHAPING THE BOROUGH' - (REGULATION 19) PUBLIC CONSULTATION
11th December 2020***

1. Summary of key issues

Thank you for consulting the City of London Corporation, as the Conservators of Epping Forest, on the London Borough of Waltham Forest's (the Borough) Submission Local Plan 'Shaping the Borough' Regulation 19 public consultation.

The Chairman of the Trustees of the Epping Forest Charitable Trust – the Epping Forest & Commons Committee - is responding on behalf of the trustees and this response will be received and discussed at Committee in January 2021.

Although we welcome many of the additions and changes to the Regulation 19 document since the Regulation 18 consultation of September 2019, and particularly the completion of the Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy, we remain concerned about the lack of clear off-Forest mitigation measures for the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (EFSAC). In addition, we take issue with the conclusions of the Local Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) that we consider is not compliant with the Habitat Regulations 2017.

As a result, although there is much we welcome in the Submission Local Plan, we are clear that, in its present form, the Plan is not compliant with the Habitat Regulations 2017 and that it would not protect Epping Forest as a whole from the adverse impacts from the quantum of development proposed in Plan Policy 2.

We remain concerned that our overall impression from the Local Plan is that Epping Forest's resilience to cope with the intensification of development in the Borough (Policy 2) is being taken for granted. We would urge your Council to review the proposed intensification as it impacts on the Forest and ensure that develop proportionate and precise mitigation measures alongside all detailed development masterplans

Therefore, Epping Forest Officers would welcome the opportunity to further discuss the detail of our Regulation 19 comments as part of the section 33A 'Duty to Co-operate in relation to the planning of sustainable development' duty (Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2001, as amended by the Localism Act 2011).

Key concerns and issues are:

- the quantum of development proposed in the Submission Local Plan (LP1)
- a non-compliant HRA which does not justify its conclusions in relation to the impacts of the *likely significant effects* on EFSAC of the Local Plan alone;
- the lack of SANGs Strategy with specific measures to provide certainty of mitigation for Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (EFSAC);
- the lack of costed and precise SAMMS mitigation measures;
- the need for an air quality assessment;
- the need for a comprehensive EFSAC mitigation strategy to be agreed by all local authorities under a revised MoU;
- improved recognition for the City Corporation's current pattern of visitor facilities in the Borough and the Forest's 45% contribution to the Borough's green space provision

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2. Introduction and context

Epping Forest is held as a Charitable Trust by the City of London Corporation and comprises some 6,100 acres (2,500 hectares) of public open space and high tier conservation habitat, **including 1,055 acres (427 hectares) in the Borough**. The Forest is supported by a further 1,800 acres (730 hectares) of Buffer Lands, acquired by the City Corporation to protect the North of the Forest from encroaching development and to maintain the links between the Forest and the wider countryside.

The Epping Forest Acts 1878 & 1880 charges the City Corporation, as the Conservators of Epping Forest, with a series of key duties:

- To regulate and maintain the Forest in accordance with the Acts
- To maintain Epping Forest as an open space for the recreation and enjoyment of the public
- To conserve and maintain a range of Forest habitats, particularly wood-pasture
- To preserve the Forest's unique landscape as defined by a *natural aspect* duty
- To preserve the Queens Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge and other historic Forest buildings for their heritage interest

Subsequent to its founding legislation, Epping Forest's conservation significance as one of only a few large-scale examples of surviving ancient wood-pasture including its Atlantic beech forest; North Atlantic wet heaths and European dry Heaths has received further recognition and legal protection as an internationally important IUCN Category IV Protected Area. Epping Forest is part of a European-wide network of habitats protected under the UK's Bern Convention 1979 obligations. The land is statutorily protected as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) by The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (The Habitats Regulations 2017).

The Forest area is also statutorily protected as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000) and all Forest Land within London is recognised under the “umbrella” of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) under the London Plan.

Epping Forest also contains Scheduled Ancients Monuments notified under the **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979** and Listed Buildings, features and a Grade II* Registered Park and Garden jointly designated by Historic England and Local Planning Authorities under the auspices of the **Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990**, with parts of the Forest coinciding with some 17 local plan Conservations Areas, as well as extensive Archaeological Protection Areas (APAs).

Epping Forest also contains 7 Large Raised Reservoirs, notified under the **Reservoirs Act 1975** (as amended by the Flood & Water Management Act 2010); three Flood Management Schemes and two main rivers notified under the **Water Resources Act 1991**.

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3. Epping Forest in the London Borough of Waltham Forest

The London Borough of Waltham Forest shares a special bond with Epping Forest, as the Borough takes its name from Waltham Forest, one of the four Royal Forests that remained after the disafforestation of the 13th Century Forest of Essex. Over the following 400 years, the open wood pasture of Waltham Forest gradually ceded to farmland, leaving the major Wood Pasture areas to be named Epping and Hainault Forests from the 17th Century.

Some 427 hectares (1,055 acres) of Epping Forest are located within the Borough’s jurisdiction, which equates to 11% of the Borough’s landholding, including Leyton Flats, Gilberts Slade, Walthamstow Forest, Highams Park Lake, Chingford Plain and Pole Hill. In addition to the Borough’s 296.19 hectares (731.9 acres) of open space, by virtue of greenspace land holdings provided by Epping Forest and the Lee Valley Regional Park, the Borough has an estimated 1,204.92 hectares (2,977.42 acres) of unrestricted access open space, the most parks and opens spaces of any Borough north of the River Thames. **An estimated 45% of this provision is provided by Epping Forest Land.**

The City Corporation are pleased to be an active partner with the London Borough of Waltham Forest, cooperating together alongside Transport for London on the construction of the Epping Forest Olympic Cycleway in 2011 and Forest Transport Strategy Safe Crossing Points at Dannett’s Hill, Chingford and Canada Plain, Leytonstone; and more recently, during 2019, as a bidding partner and major venue for the ‘Welcome to the Forest’ London Borough of Culture, as well as assisting in the land transfer and completion of the new Whipps Cross road junction, including the creation of a new wildflower meadow at the site.

The Local Plan process provides new opportunities to identify areas for collaboration between Waltham Forest and the City Corporation on the delivery of improvements to the

quality of life of Waltham Forest residents and visitors, while enhancing the range of ecosystem and public health benefits that greenspaces contribute to the public good.

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4. City of London Corporation Comments

The City Corporation's comments, in general, are given in response to the Submission Local Plan as The Conservators of Epping Forest in relation to all Forest Land, whether covered by the Epping Forest Act, the Habitats Regulations 2017 or the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 or all of these designations.

4.1 HRA - Proposed Submission Habitats Regulations Assessment (21st Oct 2020)

We note that the HRA identifies *likely significant effects* for Epping Forest relating to:

- Recreation
- Urban effects
- Air quality (increased road traffic)

We further note that, at appropriate assessment stage, the HRA concludes:

- Adverse effects on integrity from the plan alone are ruled out for recreation due to the mitigation set out in Policy 83 (SANG and SAMM) but in-combination effects cannot be ruled out due to uncertainty around the EFDC local plan.
- Adverse effects on integrity from the plan alone are ruled out for urban effects due to the requirement in Policy 83 for project level HRA to rule out adverse effects on integrity for all development within 500m of the SAC. In-combination effects cannot be ruled out due to uncertainty around the EFDC Local Plan and how that Plan will address urban effects.
- No conclusion is reached on air quality. The HRA states that an air quality study is underway and an addendum will be produced in November 2020 to inform consultation.

We cannot agree with the HRA's conclusions on these matters for the reasons below

The spatial strategies within the Submission Local Plan would potentially lead to 27,000 new homes within 3km of the SAC. The HRA acknowledges this but still rules out adverse effects on integrity alone. This does not seem tenable in the absence of comprehensive, secured mitigation because such an increase in the local population presents major risks to the SAC's integrity from all the identified *likely significant effects*.

4.1a The HRA and reliance on Policy 83

Policy 83 in the Local Plan is relied on for mitigation by the HRA in its appropriate assessment. This refers to a zone of 6km, which presumably means the recreational *Zone of Influence* of 6.2km which has been agreed by the SAC Oversight Group of local authorities

and Natural England in June 2020. This *Zone of Influence* was established from the evidence in the Epping Forest Visitor Surveys of 2017 and 2019 (Footprint Ecology). Policy 83 requires:

- 1-10 residential units expected to ensure the development provides “maximum ecological benefit”;
- 10-99 units will contribute to SAMMs, according to an SPD to be produced
- 100+ units will provide SANGs, according to an SPD to be produced.

This mitigation does not seem sufficient nor certain enough to justify the HRA conclusion that the Local Plan *alone* will have no adverse effects on the integrity of Epping Forest SAC with regards to recreational pressure

There is no analysis within the HRA of what proportion of growth will come forward in the different sizes of development. Developments of 1-10 units do not appear to be required to undertake any SAC mitigation and it is unclear what the phrase “*maximum ecological benefit*” might mean. Reference is made to “Policy 86” although this is taken to mean Policy 81. However, the measures in Policy 81, although positive and aspirational, do not seem to provide a clear mechanism of mitigation for the SAC habitats and qualifying features. Maximum ecological benefit is not a recognised metric as far as we are aware.

4.1b Planning Inspector’s decision

The recent Planning Inspector’s decision in the appeal case for 69, Browning Road, Leytonstone E11 (**Appeal Ref: APP/U5930/W/20/3245750**) was clear about the pathways for adverse impacts, stating: “*Additional recreational activity would, alone and in combination with other development in the area, be likely to have significant adverse effects through damage to vegetation, erosion of soils and reduction of habitat continuity*”. He makes it clear that justifications need to be provided as to why developments of below 10 units do not need to contribute to the mitigation tariff or provide alternative mitigation measures to protect the SAC from recreational pressure. The HRA does not provide clarification on this.

4.1c Uncertainty about mitigation

For developments of 10+ units there is no mitigation package secured either. It is not clear why some developments would only contribute towards SAMM and others only towards SANG. SANG and SAMM are likely to work best together, as a package, and it would seem sensible that all development should contribute towards both. Based on the wording in the HRA it is clear that the SPD is yet to be produced and could for example, with respect to SANGs, be a strategic document covering multiple authorities or specific to the Borough. Given such fundamental uncertainty around the mitigation it is our view that the HRA should be highlighting that uncertainty, rather than drawing a conclusion of insignificant effects alone. The detail of the package of SAMMS and SANGS needs to be fully explored in the HRA to demonstrate sufficient mitigation is in place in order to conclude no adverse effects on integrity, and this will be required in the HRA prior to the Local Plan being adopted.

4.1d Sites within 500m of the SAC and urban effects

Urban effects are ruled out in the HRA, for the Plan alone, due to the requirement in **Policy 83** that all development within 500m will undertake project level HRA to ensure urban effects are addressed. It is not clear why these project level HRAs would be limited to the narrow range of urban effects listed in the HRA when recreational impacts are also likely to be more difficult to mitigate at this distance from the Forest.

This project level approach creates a number of challenges. Given the nature of urban effects and their cumulative effects, it may not be possible to rule them out at project level. Options for mitigation will be limited. In addition, the range of urban effects chosen in the HRA seems to be limited as highlighted above. It is not clear from the HRA how much development is expected within 500m and whether these will be relied on to achieve the spatial strategy/levels of growth in the Plan. However, in the proposed site allocations some very large developments are proposed, including up to 1700 units at the Whipps Cross hospital site alone (Policy 9 and please see comments also in section on Site Allocations LP2 below). We would have expected the HRA to give this information. We would also expect the HRA to set out the scope for the project level assessment and sources of information that may not be available in the Plan level assessment. This would then show why the Plan level HRA had not been able to predict the impacts.

4.1e Plan level versus project level assessments

Guidance in HRA Handbook (see F.10.1.5 in Tyldesley, Chapman, & Machin, 2020¹) is clear that a plan-making body may only rely on mitigation measures at a lower tier of plan making if the higher level plan assessment cannot reasonably predict any effect on a European site in a meaningful way and where the later stage assessment will have the flexibility to enable

Given the HRA conclusion that adverse effects on integrity from urban effects cannot be ruled out in-combination, there must clearly be concern that any project level HRA could not eliminate the effect entirely and that residual effects would remain. This is not discussed or made apparent in the HRA report.

adverse effects on integrity to be avoided. It is likely to be very challenging for project level assessment to work effectively and the HRA fails to consider this.

4.1f Air Quality

Due to the lack of a completed air quality study, the HRA is unable to conclude that there would not be adverse impacts from air pollution due to traffic growth under the Local Plan

¹ Tyldesley, D., Chapman, C., & Machin, G. (2020). *The Habitats Regulations Handbook*. DTA Publications. Retrieved from <https://www.dtapublications.co.uk/handbook/>

(Section 8.3, page 41). Therefore, we look forward to seeing the completed air quality study and working closely with the Council and Natural England, as we have done in the case of the Epping Forest District Local Plan recently. We acknowledge a recent invitation to a meeting to discuss the air quality issues with your Council's officers and we will attend when the meeting is convened in early 2021.

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4.2 Proposed Submission Local Plan LP1

4.2a Vision Statement (page 9)

In responding to the Local Plan vision at Regulation 18, we proposed that the Conservators' Epping Forest Management Strategy vision was outlined in the Plan in order to demonstrate the intention for future close working between the Council and the Conservators to protect the Forest and also in recognition of Forest Land's significant role in the provision of green space in the Borough.

The Epping Forest charity, funded by the City of London Corporation as The Conservators of Epping Forest, provides an estimated 45% of the green space provision in the London Borough of Waltham Forest.

We welcome **Strategic Objective 13** (page 12) and we will certainly continue to actively work in partnership with your Council. However, given the significance of Forest Land to the Borough's character and its populations well-being and health we would repeat our request for our Epping Forest Management Strategy Vision to be embedded more clearly within in the Council's Local Plan vision. This would underscore support for the holistic approach to Forest protection that is clearly flagged in the Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy and which **Policy 83B** seems to convey.

4.2b Policies 2, 3 and 4

As stated in the introduction and elsewhere, The Conservators remain concerned that the quantum of growth and some of the locations for this growth seem likely to cause adverse impacts on the Forest. There is not sufficient mitigation outlined in the Plan and nor is it secure. More detailed explanation of these concerns are set out above (in relation to the HRA) and below in relation to the site allocations. We fully recognise that Whipps Cross Hospital redevelopment is a key infrastructure project for both the Borough, and a much wider area beyond, but we question the quantum of development, and likely traffic generation, proposed in this housing-led approach without any clear mitigation identified in the Strategic Plan HRA.

4.2c Policies 5 and 6

Policy 5C and D and Policy 6I should be important constraints within the overall Plan. However, the gaps in the Plan HRA mitigation measures and the scale of the proposals around sites like Chingford Green Conservation Area (Site Allocation LP2 - SA58) would seem

to bring into question the effectiveness of this Policy in the face of the intensification of development and scale of proposed housing.

4.2d Policy 68

The proposal for car-free developments and sustainable transport in **Policy 68** is welcome. However, although London is probably unique in the UK in terms of its level of public transport provision, a modal shift of 100% of residents from cars to other modes of transport seems highly ambitious. From academic studies of car-free developments, percentage modal shifts achieved elsewhere in the UK (e.g. Smarter Choice Schemes in Sustainable Travel Towns) are considerably lower despite significant investments. It is not clear to us that S106 agreements will be effective in ensuring this level of modal shift. Whether proposed large developments like Whipps Cross (Policy 9), with around 1,700 units, can remain car-free seems questionable. As discussed below they certainly would not be free of significant vehicular traffic generation.

4.2e Policies 72 to 75

We welcome these four policies and particularly the Council's active reviewing and updating of the Archaeological Protection Areas/Zones (APA) through the commissioning of a detailed GLAAS report. We also are pleased with the updating of the Chingford Green Conservation Area with an excellent consultation draft appraisal. We will respond to this latter report in January 2021. We also look forward to working with Council Officers to better understand management requirements for the proposed extension to the APA around the City Corporation-owned Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge.

4.2f Policy 79

We welcome Policy 79F which seeks to protect EFSAC from increased recreational pressure while promoting green corridor connections. However, this Policy could also emphasise the importance of Epping Forest as a unique cultural and wildlife landscape and one that could act as a "building block" for the enhancement of the Borough's overall green environment. Policy 79A, this could be modified to include reference to the Forest's fundamental importance to the Borough's identity, and indeed its very name. For example, the first sentence of 79A could read: "The preservation and enhancement of the landscape setting and wildlife of Epping Forest, and other green and blue infrastructure, to ensure the improvement of the quality of open spaces and access to them, as befits the historic origins of Waltham Forest."

4.2g Policy 81

Policy 81H provides important protection for biodiversity alongside Policy 79 but the test for the effectiveness of this Policy will be in the response to windfall developments and other applications. The case of 69 Browning Road, highlighted above, suggests that the provision of information about protected sites and biodiversity prior to decision-making on development planning applications may not always ensure the protection envisaged in the Plan policies. Strengthening connections between planning policy and development management work will be key to the success of these policies in the face of the significantly

increased development pressure and the likely increase in planning applications that the development management team will face.

4.2h Policy 83

We very much welcome intention and scope of this policy as a specific and separate, distinct policy to protect Epping Forest. Not only does this allow proper consideration of the protection and mitigation measures for the Special Area of Conservation (EFSAC), **that Policy 83A** seeks to address (but see our comments on the HRA above and on the details below), but it also allows a more holistic approach to the protection of the whole Forest. In this respect the inclusion of amenity and visitor enjoyment, alongside ecological integrity, is particularly welcome in **Policy 83B**, as this aligns directly with Sections 7 and 9 of the Epping Forest Act 1878 and the purposes of that Act and subsequent amendments. Some additional wording to **83B** would also be welcome in recognition of the heritage and landscape importance of the Forest to the Borough's character. For example: "... delivering enhancements to its *landscape* where possible and must not contribute to adverse impacts on ecological integrity *or heritage features*...."

However, it should be noted that we have reservations about the effectiveness of this policy and its compliance with the Habitat Regulations 2017, particularly **Policy 83A. (I - iii)**. As such detailed comments on this Policy are made above in relation to the Plan's HRA. In addition, we need to emphasise here our concern with the current text of this Policy. It contains no wording which ensures that mitigation would be in place before development commenced. The Policy simply refers to contributions being made towards mitigation packages, but it does not make clear the timing of any measures in relation to the initiation of site allocations. The Policy contains no thresholds or triggers in relation to mitigation measures that would need to be reached before commencement of works or occupancy of sites.

In addition, there is no specificity to the measures referred to in the Policy. No detailed measures are yet agreed for mitigation. **Policy 83** refers to the SAMMS and SANGS Strategies. This might be acceptable if those strategies clearly enabled the measures relied on in the Plan to be regarded as secure, but the Interim SAMMS Strategy does not yet provide sufficient detail in respect of the proposed mitigation measures to do this and there is no SANGS Strategy in place. We recognise that the Council intends to work with us and others to produce a SANGS Strategy ahead of the adoption of the Local Plan, and we wholeheartedly welcome this and look forward this work. However, the Policy text's precision will remain important and at this stage qualifying wording is required in our view.

In relation to more precise, secure and defined measures we would draw your Council's attention to the Conservators' costed proposals for on-site SAMMS mitigation (December 2020) that were sent to you under separate heading this month. These were approved by The Conservators for consultation with the local authorities in the EFSAC Oversight Group to ensure *in perpetuity* avoidance of adverse effects in conjunction with other effective off-site measures

It is also not clear how the effectiveness of the Strategies would be monitored and measured and whether, in the face of evidence of residual adverse impacts, further development would be halted until more effective measures were introduced.

It is essential, therefore, that qualifying wording is added to this policy to ensure that the Plan can be demonstrated to effectively constrain the development that it provides for until these measures relied upon by the Policy and the HRA have been defined and 'secured'. In order to do this the UK Courts have established that the Plan must include clear and firm policies to eliminate or mitigate the residual risks to the SAC which currently remain.

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4.3 LBWF Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy (LUC Nov 2020)

We very much welcome this G&BI Strategy which draws together the policies relating to green spaces and biodiversity and makes many good recommendations for improving the Borough's environment. We are also pleased with the extensive referencing of the importance of Epping Forest, and as we have discussed above, we would hope this might be reflected more strongly in the Vision and text of the Submission Local Plan (LP1) itself.

In **Paragraph 6.17**, we welcome wholeheartedly the Council's commitment to work together with partners, including The Conservators, on a SANGS Strategy and the recognition that this needs to be in place before the adoption of the Local Plan. We look forward to working with Council officers to achieve this goal as soon as possible.

4.3a Balance between SAMMS and SANGS

Our concerns expressed above about the HRA and Local Plan (LP1) **Policy 83A. (i - iii)** relate to the funding of the SANGS and the way in which the impacts on the SAC from different-sized developments might be mitigated. We also remain concerned about the balance between SAMMS and SANGS given the considerable constraints on providing new green spaces within the Borough and we question how this can be achieved with the quantum of development proposed by the Plan.

4.3b Policy 83 as a separate Epping Forest Policy

We welcome the recommendation in **paragraph 6.19** to separate Lea Valley and Epping Forest policies to ensure stronger protection for each site. As we commented back in 2012, during the consultation on the Council's Core Strategy then, we consider this a very important recognition for the Forest in the Local Plan. As stated above, we are very pleased that your Council has persevered with this separation of Policies.

4.3c Cultural and landscape importance of the Forest

In **paragraph 10.1** we are pleased to see the recognition of the cultural importance of the Forest and, in **paragraph 10.2**, the listing of it as a key historic landscape. Recognition of these attribute, alongside the Forest's international importance for biodiversity, and its

importance as a place of recreation and enjoyment for peoples' well-being and health, is especially important in taking an holistic approach to the protection of the Forest by Local Plan policies.

4.3d Gateways to the Forest

Finally, we welcome the details in Table 11.2, and particularly the highlighting of Sewardstone Road and North Chingford (Table 11.2 I and J respectively) as gateways to the Forest. However, this recognition as gateways with options for sustainable transport and access to countryside must be set against the large increases in residential populations proposed with 500m of EFSAC (see our detailed comments below on Site Allocations SA53, SA59 and SA60).

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4.4 Draft Site Allocations Document LP2 (Regulation 18)

We have already drawn attention, above, to our overriding concern with the quantum of development being proposed by the Local Plan and its intensification of recreational, urbanisation and likely pollution pressures on Epping Forest. We consider that the amount of growth proposed, and some of the allocation sites, should be reviewed alongside more specific mitigation proposals.

We would advocate a review of the level and locations of growth and suggest that the Local Plan LP2 should be revised at Regulation 19 in order to reduce likely significant effects on the Epping Forest SAC, as well as the overall heritage landscape of Epping Forest, and be accompanied by clear, precise and coordinated SAC mitigation measures that have effect at a strategic level, being Plan-led rather than Project-led

In the Site Allocations Proposals document LP2, there are particular areas which highlight the problems inherent in the Local Plan growth and the likely significant effects on the Forest. We raise particular concerns with these in the overall context of the comments on the strategic issues above.

4.4a Allocations within 500m of Epping Forest and the EFSAC

Of particular concern to The Conservators are the proposed residential developments within 500m of the Forest boundaries in general, as well as the SAC in particular. **We consider that the site allocations choices, densities and design must be modified at the Regulation 19 stage, and in the submission Local Plan itself, to protect the character of Epping Forest and ensure a more clearly “tapered” edge between dense urbanity and the Forest’s natural aspect.** This is particularly important in North Chingford and Leytonstone, as discussed below, but needs to apply to all place-making within 500m of Forest edges, including its historic green lanes. We would welcome the opportunity to collaborate with your Council in this sensitive approach to design and place-making and will be seeking to engage with major developments, such as Whipps Cross and Chingford Library, to this effect.

In the Submission Local Plan (LP1) Policy 83C, in demanding Project-level HRAs for developments in this zone, there is acknowledgement that urbanisation effects may lead to adverse impacts on the SAC. However, we would also add that for such sites within a short walking time of the Forest, it is very difficult to mitigate the impacts of recreational pressure also. Frequency of visits to the Forest from such close allocations are likely to be disproportionately high compared to allocations further away, especially in the more urban context of the Borough. Without comprehensive and approved SANGS and SAMMS Strategies in place adverse impacts cannot be ruled out.

In addition, impacts of vehicular pollution generated by these sites may also be a particular problem given that traffic pollutants (in the form of both gaseous ammonia and nitrous oxides) are the most significant contributors to air pollution on the Forest and the current exceedance of the nitrogen *Critical Load* across all the Forest's wooded, heath and grassland habitats.

4.4b Policy 9 South Waltham Forest: Leytonstone allocations

4.4bi Three site allocations in Leytonstone are particularly problematic for the protection of Epping Forest and for the mitigation of adverse impacts. Within 250 to 450m walking distance of Leyton Flats the three proposed developments, at Whipps Cross Hospital (SA17 minimum 1700 new homes - as listed in Policy 9 for South Waltham Forest), The Territorial Army Centre (SA16 minimum 130 new homes) and Tesco's, Leytonstone site (SA20 minimum 650 new homes), would create 2,280 new dwellings. Based on the average household size within the London Borough of Waltham Forest (Office of National Statistics (ONS) 2011 Census) of 2.6, this would lead to a likely population increase of nearly 6,000 people and a concomitant increase in visitor pressure on the EFSAC.

None of the developments seem to offer, or are capable of offering, any SANGS provision. The Whipps Cross site could possibly provide more green space should the housing footprint be reduced. However, the size of any green space it might provide seems unlikely to be sufficient to provide a suitable SANGS.

All three of these site allocations in Leytonstone are for greater than 100 units and, therefore, seem to directly contradict Policy 83A.iii. of the Local Plan.

4.4bii Car-free

Furthermore, although Policy 68 of the Plan proposes that all developments should be car-free, it does not mean that such large developments will not attract large amounts of traffic from delivery and other domestic services to taxis and visitors. This seems highly likely with the proposed Whipps Cross development and traffic volumes, on already congested roads and difficult junctions, would seem set to increase significantly. In our view there needs to be an overall detailed travel plan for major development such as this and it needs to tie in with the air quality study that the HRA will be undertaking. In particular, if car parking facilities are not provided or not sufficient for demand it seems likely that cars will be displaced onto other areas, including Forest car parks.

4.4c Policy 11 North Waltham Forest: North Chingford & Sewardstone Road allocations

4.4ci Together the allocations in these sites, which lie within 500m of the SAC boundaries, amount to around at least 600 new dwellings. Based on the Waltham Forest average household size (ONS 2011) of 2.6, this would result in an increase in population of over 1,500 people and a very significant increase in visitor pressure on the Forest SAC. None of these allocations can provide for SANGS, which is of particular relevance in relation to the proposed SA53 Motorpoint site of a minimum of 385 residential units.

The SA53 Motorpoint site allocation cannot provide SANGS and does not have accessible Lea Valley open spaces as alternatives to the Forest. The proposed scale of this development, in excess of 100 units, seems to be in clear conflict with Local Plan Policy 83A.iii.

In addition, the sites in North Chingford at SA59 and SA60 seem likely to have an impact on the “*natural aspect*” of the Forest, protected by the Epping Forest Act 1878, and are likely to be to the detriment of this important heritage landscape, adding to light pollution and visual intrusion. In addition to the likely significant ‘in combination’ effects on the SAC, The Conservators are concerned by the scale of these allocations in relation to the Forest boundaries. Such developments adjacent to Forest Land, particularly SA60, do not seem proportionate and would seem likely to conflict with Policy 83B.

The number of housing units, as well as the 6-storey height of the building currently proposed for the SA58 Chingford Library, seems to be out of place with this important heritage village green on Forest Land. Chingford Green is a Conservation Area because it represents the only remaining area in the borough that displays the buildings across all the periods of development from rural forest settlement through to the present day (Chingford Green Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan Nov 2020, London Borough of Waltham Forest). Its special character derives from the setting, with Forest Land preserved at its heart.

In addition to the likely significant effects ‘in combination’ on the SAC, as discussed above, we are concerned that development on this scale would damage the environs of an important area of Forest Land and would also conflict with Policy 83B.

4.4cii Car-free

It seems highly unlikely that any of these developments would remain 100% car-free and, therefore, significant traffic increases could be expected along roads through the Forest, such as along Rangers Road and the A104 out to the M25 Junction 26 and along Whitehall Road to the east and Daws Hill to the north. This seems likely to screen in as a likely significant effect which has not yet been screened in by the HRA. No specific Mitigation measures are set out in the Plan (see comments on the HRA above).

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Committee(s)	Dated: 8 March 2021
Committee name – Epping Forest & Commons Committee	
Subject: 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.	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?	N
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
Report of Colin Buttery, Director of Open Spaces Department	For Information
Report author: Andy Barnard, Superintendent of The Commons	

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. Visitor numbers have continued to be very high, even during rainy days in term time, with paths getting much wider and very muddy. Due to serious concerns about the impact of so many people on the National nature Reserve was discussed at the Burnham Beeches Consultation Group meeting on 20 January. Following urgent discussions with Buckinghamshire Council, the highways

authority has put temporary (6 months) restriction notices along the roads through the Beeches and those feeding into the area to prevent roadside parking. From 1 February the car parking capacity within the Beeches was reduced by approximately half, while maintaining access to the café and blue badge parking areas. Some parts of the woodland have been cordoned off to encourage people not to walk through them and some new desire lines have been blocked to prevent access. A concerted campaign, both using notices on site and social media, was carried out to encourage people to stay local and to keep to the surfaced paths. The social media posts have included ecological information presenting a more subtle approach regarding the impact of visitors and feedback indicates that this informative approach has been appreciated.

2. Replacement of the general information signs in and around the car parks has been completed, with new welcome signs as well as the updated information about car parking. This has also included new maps and places for topical posters as well as the byelaws.
3. As a result of the changes to the car park capacity and the cordoning off of areas, patrolling by the Rangers has been kept at an increased level and they have been busy talking to visitors to explain the reasons and the consequence of not carrying out these measures. They also continue to be busy dealing with associated visitor issues, such as litter.
4. The cafe at Burnham Beeches has remained open as a 'takeaway kiosk service' and has remained very popular.
5. Volunteer Group activity at Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common remains minimal with just a few independent individual volunteers doing on-going monitoring such as the hydrology points on Stoke Common.
6. The new car parking system with seven day a week charges and use of ANPR (automatic number plate recognition) has settled in well. Office staff continue to help those struggling with the technology to purchase season tickets and registering their blue badges. The removal of cash counting has been replaced by increased time spent dealing with computer-based payment issues.
7. All staff are continuing to work in a modified way due to the pandemic with those who can, working from home at least some of the time. Due to the very high visitor numbers having Rangers out on site as much as possible has been essential.
8. Natural England continue to liaise with Slough Borough Council (SBC) regarding planning applications for housing estates within the Borough that do not have enough mitigation regarding the impact of recreation on Burnham Beeches.

Discussions have started with SBC regarding the payment to Burnham Beeches of a s106 agreement for air quality monitoring

9. The Conservation Officer continues to follow up planning and development issues. Those in the last period have included with the Environment Agency regarding sewage overflow into a stream and destruction of a different stream as it flows through a neighbouring property. Both are long standing issues. Adjacent to Stoke Common there is a recent application for a model aircraft runway where we have asked for restrictions on flying over the SSSI.
10. The ponies are currently grazing at Black Park on an area of heathland. The cattle remain off-site in their winter quarters with a local farmer. Preparations for the return of the livestock have started with checks and repairs to the fences (both physical and invisible).
11. The veteran tree work programme has been completed for the year; however, the wet weather caused some alterations. The Mobile Elevated Work Platform (MEWP) was causing too much ground disturbance so after a few trees had been worked on a change was made and the local arboricultural company contacted which is used for tree safety work. They supplied climbers who had worked on the veteran trees in the Beeches before and were willing to work closely with the Ranger team. This was supplemented by the tree team from Hampstead Heath and has meant that only a couple of trees were missed because they were too fragile to climb and in difficult places to reach with the MEWP. All the clear up work following from the tree work has now been completed.
12. Contractors worked on an area of wood pasture restoration on Pumpkin Hill to link an existing area of open grassland to an area with a good number of veteran trees, which has become much scrubbier in the last 30 years. Trees have been thinned out and new pollards created from retained trees of the right size and shape. A stump grinder has been used to clear stumps to allow access to machinery for scrub clearance in the future.
13. On Stoke Common, Rangers have been continuing one day per week with the annual scrub control usually carried out by volunteers, which in the last period has included some larger trees along the edges of tracks.
14. Geological engineers have dug four boreholes in the dam structure of the Middle Pond in order to establish its composition and prepare a detailed specification of repairs that should stop the leak. The next phase will be the most expensive, so fund raising will be required before this can be carried out.
15. A virtual tour and question and answer session was carried out for students at Reading University in place of their usual site visit. This focussed on visitor issues and challenges, especially in the current circumstances.

16. The Conservation Officer has been liaising with the Conservation Manager at Epping Forest over monitoring techniques regarding the erosion and deterioration of habitat due to the high number of visitors. In the meantime, photographs of damaged areas have been taken, including some experimental pictures using a drone.
17. Partnership work with National Trust and Plantlife has continued, with plans for survey work for plants and invertebrates on land adjacent to Burnham Beeches.

The Commons Car park infrastructure project

18. The new payment system for the car parks at Farthing Downs and Riddlesdown has been running since 25 January 2021. New signage has been installed around the car park and time boards have been refreshed. Banners were added by the main entrances to the car parks along with a suite of communication material onsite and posted on social media.
19. Rangers were on hand during the initial week of introducing the new ANPR system to explain the rationale behind the charges and assist with any issues from visitors. Overall, interaction with local residents was positive with visitors generally in agreement on the financial costs of managing the sites and directing funds raised into the Commons.
20. Croydon Council have installed restricted parking signs at either end of Ditches Lane. During lockdown, many cars have parked on Ditches Lane as overspill from the oversubscribed Farthing Downs car park. Restrictions and enforcement from the Council will help to maintain clear access for emergency service vehicles, reduce pressure on the SSSI from high visitor numbers and reduce erosion to the roadside bank and ditch bordering the downs.
21. A retrospective planning application has been submitted for the installation of car park infrastructure, including plinths, car park ticketing machines and poles for ANPR cameras at Farthing Downs and Riddlesdown. The planning authority required confirmation that the structures would not adversely impact the 'Metropolitan Open Land' designation.

PARTNERSHIPS

Kenley Revival update

22. PAYE Stonework and Restoration Ltd, the project's conservation contractor, has been instructed to develop design details and specifications to rectify the defects affecting the 2017 conservation work. Initial costings are expected to arrive during the week beginning 22 February 2021. A meeting of the Kenley Board is

scheduled for 8 March to consider options for implementing the rectification works. An issues and options report will then be presented to this committee.

The West Wickham and Coulsdon Commons

23. With the announcement of a national lockdown since December, volunteer activities have remained suspended and staff have been working remotely at home, on site and in the office based on work needs and weekly rotas.
24. Visitor numbers have still been phenomenally high across throughout the lockdown period. Car parks have been full by mid-morning and the trampling pressure on paths is causing issues with mud and access. Ditches Lane on Farthing Downs has been busy with parked cars on the verges and Hayes Lane bordering Kenley Common is regularly filled with cars each day.
25. All 11 of the Jacob ewes are pregnant having been scanned with assistance from the Downlands Project. Lambing is to take place in early April.
26. Except for two calves still due to be born, the Sussex cattle have finished calving. The combination of fewer staff around the estate office due to Covid restrictions and the prevalence of larger bull calves meant that this years' calving was more difficult than previous recent years.
27. The heavy snow and cold temperatures during early February meant that the Rangers had to check livestock multiple times throughout the day to thaw frozen water troughs and pipes and check foraging levels for the livestock still outside across the Commons.
28. Three Sussex cows have been grazing 13 acre Bury and New Field on New Hill for the first time in over 100 years using virtual fencing. Signage around the perimeter and approach to these areas have encouraged dog owners to keep their dogs under control and informed visitors about the new system. The cows have made good progress at knocking back rougher grasses for the benefit of low-growing chalk grassland plants.
29. The Rangers have carried out medium and high-risk tree checks across all sites. Remedial work to clear dangerous trees has been done by the Ranger team and contractors.
30. The Downlands Conservation Partnership carried out a week of conservation work on Farthing Downs with tasks including scrub removal on 8-acre and preparing a stock fence for removal on Tollers field.

31. On Kenley Common, Rangers have been clearing scrub to maintain the open chalk grassland on Hilltop and burning arisings from the tree popping of hawthorn in the summer.
32. The three new pond scrapes created in Plantation Woods on Kenley Common and another on Coulsdon Common are holding water well. Rangers will carry out surveys in Spring to see if amphibians have been using them and assess their viability as long-term habitats.
33. Applications for the Green Flag Award have been submitted. Coulsdon Common will be additionally be entered into the Green Heritage Award for 2021. If successful, this will be complete the set of both awards for all of the West Wickham and Coulsdon Commons. The Coulsdon Commons Ranger and Information Ranger will be working on improving interpretation surrounding the local history of the Common.
34. Rangers have inputted over 100 records of species into an excel database based on incidental sightings whilst out and about on the Commons. This has confirmed several species that we suspected were using the sites but missed from the usual surveys each year.
35. A final draft of the West Wickham Commons 2021 – 2031 Management Plan has been completed.

Ashtead Common

36. The Ashtead Common Consultative Group met on February 22 and were happy to endorse the proposed 2021-31 management plan.
37. An application pack for Countryside Stewardship has arrived and work has begun on mapping options for funding. Predominantly the application will focus on veteran tree management, wood pasture restoration and wood pasture management. Options for Scheduled Monuments and grassland management will also be included.
38. The habitat management season finished on February 15 with ancient tree, scrub management and ride management work completed on schedule despite covid-19 restrictions.

Support Services Team (SST)

39. The Support Services Team having been navigating the new software and hardware associated with the car parking projects at Burnham Beeches, Farthing Downs and Riddlesdown. They are also busy dealing with members of the public

and assisting with any queries and complaints in respect of the new car parking charging arrangements.

40. Recruitment is under way for the position of Administration Assistant for the Merlewood and Ashted Estate Offices. This is a fixed term contract in line with the current recruitment moratorium.

Incidents

Burnham Beeches & Stoke Common

41. There were 27 incidents in the period 20 October to 4 January. These included 6 instances of small-scale fly tipping, 4 incidents of site misuse (2 incidents of quad bikes being driven off road, 1 each of camping and fireworks). Nine incidents related to dogs with two formal written warnings issued for PSPO/Byelaw breaches. One serious instance of a dog not being under effective control, resulted in a jogger running through the Beeches being bitten. Unfortunately, the dog's owner in this incident has not been identified to date. The incident occurred in the area of the Beeches where dogs can be off lead.
42. A fixed penalty notice, issued in September for repeatedly failing to keep a dog on a lead under the PSPO, was paid in December.

Ashted Common

43. An ongoing issue of quad bike incursions is being managed in collaboration with the police.

The West Wickham and Coulsdon Commons

44. There were 6 incidents within the period from January 4 to February 23. These related to illegal quad bike riding on Coulsdon Common, two incidents regarding dogs including a reported dog attack on Kenley Common and a loose dog on Farthing Downs, vandalism to a staff members' personal vehicle, a fire alarm activated at the estate office and metal detecting on Farthing Downs.

Filming, major events and other activities

Burnham Beeches

45. A small number of licences have been issued for small scale COVID safe activities including a small Nordic walking group and some school groups. Procedures have been updated to ensure that they are also COVID secure – but these ceased when the Beeches move to tier 4.

Report author Andy Barnard

Superintendent

Open Spaces Department

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Committee(s)	Dated:
Epping Forest and Commons Committee	8 March 2021
Subject: Letting of the Keepers Cottage, Kenley	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	5, 10, 11, 12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
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?	N/A
Report of: Colin Buttery, Director of Open Spaces	For Decision
Report author: Gerry Kiefer, Directorate Business Manager	

Summary

Across the Open Spaces Charities, a number of staff live within residential lodges 'for the better performance of their duties'. Recent minor reorganisations across The Commons have resulted in a reduction in the residential establishment of 1 Ranger post and therefore, one lodge is currently not needed as residential staff accommodation. The property which is on Kenley Lane belongs to the Coulsdon and Other Commons Charity and as such cannot be declared surplus for disposal.

The City of London Corporation (Open Spaces) Act 2018 enables buildings to be let where they are no longer required for the management of the open space. It is proposed that the Kenley lodge is let as a residential Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST). The income from such letting will be retained by the Charity and contribute towards the 12% reduction in the 2021/22 budget.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that:

- Members agree to the letting of the Keepers Cottage, Kenley Lane, Kenley., as per option 1, paragraph 16.

Main Report

Background

1. The Open Spaces Department requires employees in certain roles to reside in residential accommodation on site 'for the better performance of their duties' and to provide an out-of-hours callout service.
2. In 2017 The Commons implemented a residential lodge policy which identified 23 staff were required to provide an out-of-hours callout service. This made use of

20 residential lodges across the three charities. In the intervening years several staff have left, and operational teams have been reorganised to improve effectiveness. More recently the recruitment moratorium has seen posts filled only on fixed term contracts or left vacant to provide flexibility as the Target Operating Model is implemented. Consequently, only 19 lodges are currently now required to be occupied by staff for the better performance of their duties.

3. Standing Order (SO) 56 (formerly SO55) requires Committees to consider the effective and efficient use of all operational property assets. An operational asset is defined as *properties within the day to day control of committees that are held primarily for the provision of operational services by or on behalf of the City of London*.
4. An Operational Property Review was undertaken by the City Surveyor and Chamberlains in 2015. The Keepers Cottage, Kenley Lane (a residential lodge at Kenley Common) was one of the properties looked at as part of the review. The review highlighted that the land was held subject to the provisions of the Corporation of London (Open Spaces) Act 1878 and hence there is an express prohibition on disposal. The property is an asset of the Coulsdon and Other Commons charity (reg no. 232989) and is therefore protected under Charity law.
5. Under section 6 of the City of London Corporation (Open Spaces) Act 2018, it is now possible to let out buildings on the open spaces that are no longer required for recreational or management purposes, including empty lodges, subject to safeguards to ensure that the amenity of the open space is protected.

Current Position

6. In 2019, three Rangers who worked at City Commons left the City's employment triggering a review of that team's structure. The outcome was that the Keepers Cottage, Kenley Lane, located at the entrance of Kenley Common (see map appendix 1) was not needed as a staff residential lodge and would remain vacant pending future changes to operational need with the potential to revert to operational residency if and when required. As such the Keepers Cottage, Kenley Lane is not surplus to operational need and does not need consideration by your committee under Standing Order 56.
7. Empty properties lack the benefits of occupation regarding heating, cleaning, ventilation, routine maintenance and security, and while they are not occupied their condition continues to decline. Council tax and utilities for empty properties are met by local risk and the City Corporation is regularly challenged by the relevant local authorities to return them to use through the Empty Property Notification Scheme.
8. The Keepers Cottage, Kenley Lane is a detached, three bedroomed property with conservatory and approx. ¼ acre of surrounding garden. Outbuildings include garaging and shed with unfettered access to the highway. It is believed that this could be an attractive property to let for residential use, whilst not required operationally.

9. Epping Forest and West Ham Park currently let several lodges on AST terms using local letting and management agents.
10. As an asset of the Coulsdon and Other Commons charity, any rental income generated from the letting of the Keepers Cottage belongs to that charity.
11. The 2021/2022 budget for The Commons has been reduced by 12%, as reported to this Committee in January 2021. Recognising the impact that this will have on services, the Commons identified in the 2021/22 Business plan that they will put an emphasis on income generation activities to offset reductions in expenditure.

Proposals

12. The Keepers Cottage, Kenley Lane, Kenley is not currently required for residential accommodation for the better performance of staff duties. It is proposed that this property is let as a residential property on an AST, noting the restrictive covenant (see paragraph 22). This will provide a sustainable income stream towards the expenditure costs of Coulsdon and Other Commons Charity. This approach retains flexibility for longer term use of the lodge by staff if required. A brief market test of likely rental income suggests approx. £1,500 per month.
13. Officers from The Commons will work with City Surveyors to determine the appropriate letting approach and valuation. Officers will undertake a quote exercise to ensure the external agent used, offers the best overall value for the Charity.
14. As tenants will require a quick turnaround in addressing emergency repairs and maintenance issues, it is proposed that the emergency repairs and maintenance of this lodge is removed from the City Surveyors responsibility whilst this property is let on an AST.
15. The day to day management of the property will be transferred to the local letting agent, via a full management contract. Under such an arrangement any emergency maintenance or repair requirements are addressed to the Agent for actioning. Associated costs are then recharged to local risk budgets or deducted from rent payments. The Agent's contract will also include future inspections and testing (e.g. gas inspections etc).

Options

16. The options available to your Committee are:

- **Option 1** - To offer the Keepers Cottage, Kenley Lane, Kenley on the open market for residential use on the basis of an Assured Shorthold Tenancy through a letting agency. **This option is recommended.**
- **Option 2** - To keep the lodge empty until it may be required again for staff accommodation in the future. **This option is not recommended.**

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Corporate Strategy 2018 – 2023

17. The letting of a vacant property will help address the following two Corporate Plan strategic aims and four outcomes:

Support a thriving economy

- Businesses are trusted and socially and environmentally friendly

Shape outstanding environments

- We inspire enterprise, excellence, creativity and collaboration
- We have clean air, land and water and a thriving and sustainable natural environment
- Our spaces are secure, resilient and well maintained

Open Spaces Business Plan

18. The letting of the lodge will also help achieve the Department's top line objectives and outcomes

Business practices are responsible and sustainable.

- ✧ Our practices are financially, socially and environmentally sustainable

Financial implications

19. Is it anticipated that the letting of the lodge will generate an income to the charity of approx. £18,000 per annum less agency fees and repairs and maintenance costs This additional income will contribute towards the 12% (£189,000) budget reduction.
20. The property requires minor re-decoration to bring it to a lettable standard. In order to be let it will also require safety tests on utilities. An Energy Performance Certificate has already been obtained. These and other necessary costs will be met from local risk budgets.

Legal implications

21. Land acquired under the Corporation of London (Open Spaces) Act 1878 is to be held in perpetuity and there is an express prohibition on alienation. However, under section 6 of the City of London Corporation (Open Spaces) Act 2018, where any building held by the Corporation for purposes connected with the management of an open space or its enjoyment by the public is, in the opinion of the Corporation, no longer required for those purposes, the Corporation may let the building for any use that will not cause material injury to the amenity of the open space. A lease may be for any period not exceeding 15 years or, where there are exceptional circumstances, 21 years. Part II of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 (which provides security of tenure for commercial tenancies) and section 5 of the Housing Act 1988 (which provides security of tenure for assured tenancies) do not apply.

22. There is a restrictive covenant in relation to this property that prohibits any trade or business and that requires the land and buildings to be used solely for private residential or professional purposes.
23. Given that the Corporation is acting under statutory authority, the provisions of section 120 of the Charities Act 2011 do not apply. Nevertheless, officers will obtain the advice of persons with the requisite ability and practical experience to provide competent advice on the proposed lease and ensure that the terms of the lease are the best that can reasonably be obtained for the charity.

Charity implications

24. Coulsdon and Other Commons is a registered charity (number 232989). 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.

Conclusion

25. A lodge belonging to the Coulsdon and Other Commons charity is currently not needed for the better performance of staff duties and it is proposed that it be made available for residential letting through an Assured Shorthold Tenancy. This letting will be managed by a letting and management agency who will also be responsible for emergency repairs and maintenance so that the response times expected by non-staff residents is achieved. This proposal provides flexibility for the future, should the lodge be required again for staff accommodation. Letting the property rather than leaving it vacant will generate a small income to the Charity to help offset the 2021/22 budget savings.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Map showing location of Keepers Cottage, Kenley Lane

Gerry Kiefer

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KENLEY

KEEPERS COTTAGE. 80. KENLEY LANE.

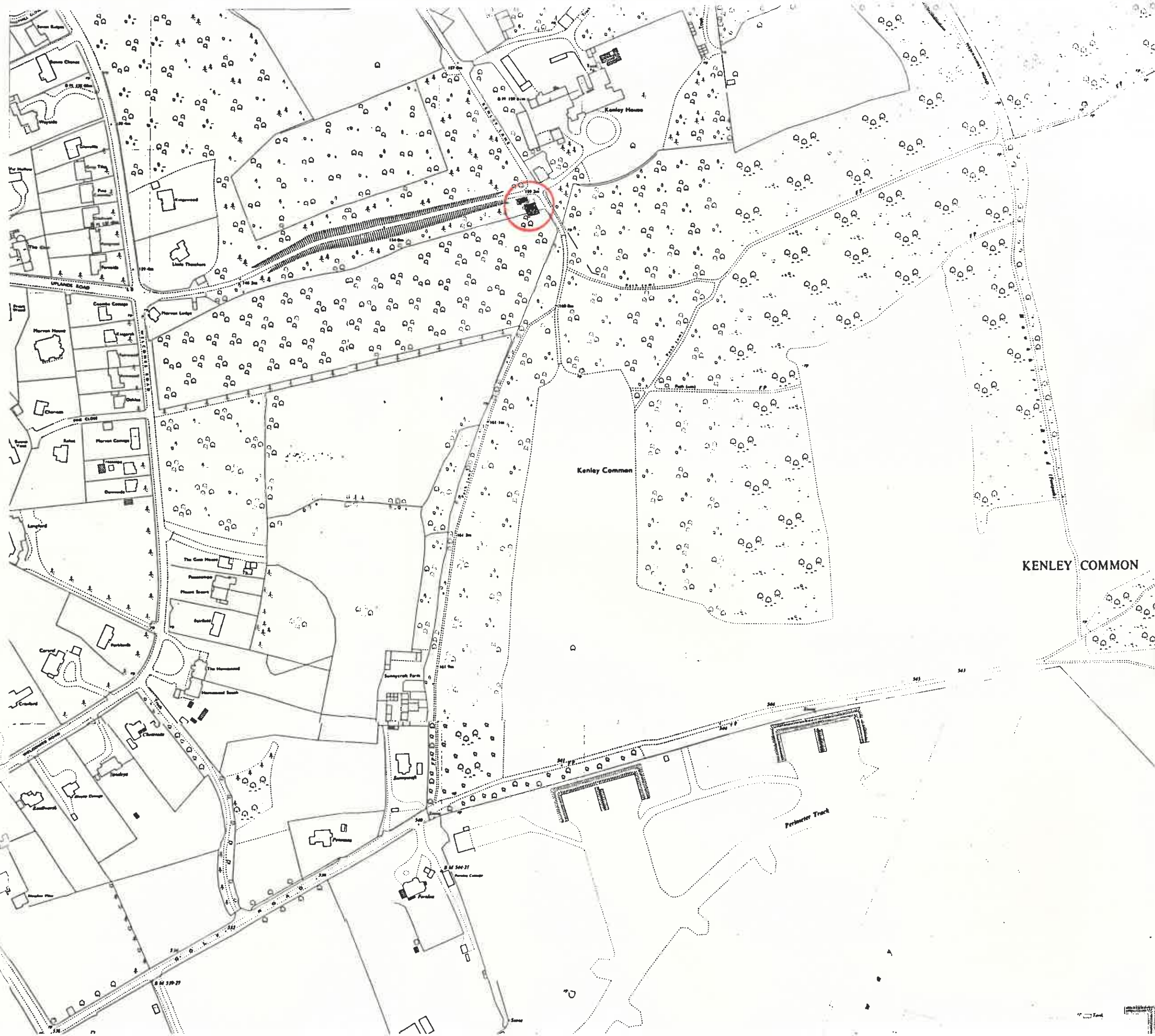
BUILT 1989. BRICK CONSTRUCTION.
FULLY DOUBLE GLAZED WINDOWS.
GAS CENTRAL HEATING.
DETACHED GARAGE.
FULLY GLAZED CONSERVATORY.

KITCHEN.
SMALL UTILITY AREA.
GROUND FLOOR TOILET/HAND BASIN
LOUNGE/DINING ROOM
3. BEDROOMS.
BATHROOM/TOILET/SHOWER
LOUNGE WOOD-BURNING STOVE.

Survey's (1:1250) map
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Committee(s)	Dated:
Committee name: Epping Forest and Commons Committee	8 March 2021
Subject: Ashtead Common, West Wickham and Spring Park Draft Management Plans and Public Consultation results	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1, 2, 11, 12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: [insert Chief Officer]	For Decision
Report author: Superintendent of The Commons	

Summary

New 10-year, draft management plans have been produced for Ashtead Common and West Wickham & Spring Park, to guide the City Corporation's work on those sites. Extensive consultation has been undertaken with a wide range of stakeholders prior to the production of these final draft versions.

Natural England's (NE) Environmental Stewardship Scheme (ESS) has until now, provided the majority of the funding for the conservation works associated with previous management plans. This source of grant funding expires in March 2021. In September 2021, a fresh grant application will be submitted for NE's new 'Countryside Stewardship Scheme' (CSS) that replaces ESS. If the application is successful, this new grant will ensure that The Commons Charities can continue essential conservation works for the duration of the proposed management plans. The cost of other works and services within these draft plans will be met from the local risk budget envelope agreed by Members as part of the City Corporation's annual budget setting process

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- i. Approve both final draft management plans (appendices 1 and 2) so that they can be submitted to Natural England for ratification and implementation as of 1st April 2021.

Main Report

Background

1. The transfer of Ashtead Common, a wooded common, Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and National Nature Reserve (NNR) to the City of London Corporation was completed in 1991. West Wickham Common and Spring Park

were transferred to the City Corporation in 1882 and 1926 respectively. Both of these are 'Sites of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation'.

2. Since their acquisition, The Commons teams based at Ashted and Merlewood Estate Offices have actively managed visitor services and conservation management. Community engagement has been central to the successful management of these sites.
3. A summary list of achievements during the period of the last plans includes:

West Wickham Common & Spring Park

- i. Brown Streak Butterfly – Spring Park now the largest known breeding colony of Kent Butterfly conservation
- ii. Geo-trail created in partnership with the London Geodiversity Partnership
- iii. Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation extended to include Spring Park meadows and pond
- iv. Full, 16-year chestnut coppice rotation completed including use of heavy horses to extract timber
- v. Completion of the hedgerow boundary restoration programme
- vi. Green Flag awards since 2012

Ashted Common

- i. Over 700 ancient trees have received tree surgery to extend their lives
- ii. Over 60,000 hours of volunteer time to help protect and care for the common
- iii. Return of the Grasshopper Warbler and significant increases in orchid populations
- iv. Onsite investigations completed at the Roman Villa
- v. Creation of new path linking local community to Ride 3
- vi. Conservation grazing scheme expanded by 75%
- vii. Solar panels installed at the Ashted Estate Office
- viii. Continuous Green Flag and Green heritage awards

Current Management Plans

4. The current management plans for Ashted Common and West Wickham Common & Spring Park ran for a 10-year period commencing 2011, expiring on 31st March 2021. The local Head Rangers and their teams have produced two new draft management plans, i.e. one for Ashted Common (Appendix 1) and a combined plan for West Wickham Common and Spring Park (Appendix 2).

Consultation.

5. Officers consulted extensively during the production of these plans. External audiences included local communities, Local Authorities, consultative groups and conservation specialists.
6. The Covid-19 pandemic excluded use of public gatherings to deliver public consultation exercises so web based exercises were undertaken for each draft

management plan using Survey Monkey. The feedback from these surveys was supportive of the contents of the draft plans. **See Appendices 3 and 4.**

7. Members approved the timetable for these draft plans in reports to this Committee in January 2020 and September 2020. The arrival of the Covid -19 pandemic prevented members from visiting the sites to assess the plans in earlier draft form.

Proposals

8. It is proposed that once approved by the Committee, both management plans will be forwarded to NE for ratification by 1st April 2021.
9. Works outlined in the ratified version of these plans will then guide the final submission for the CSS grant by 1st September 2021. Should the CSS submission be successful grant payments to support conservation works would commence on 1st January 2022 see also paragraph 13.

Options

Option 1. Approve the draft management plans. **This is the recommended option.**

Option 2. Require amendments to either or both plans. **This option is not recommended**

Strategic Implications

Option 1. Will allow the plans to be forwarded to NE for ratification and onwards for CSS grant approval, thereby enabling commencement of grant payments from January 1st 2022, should the applications be successful.

Option 2. If members require amendments to the draft plans and they are of a significant nature, the plans may require further external consultation and cause delays to the commencement of the CSS.

Financial Implications.

10. Productions costs of £7,500 for the draft management plans have been met from local risk budgets. Costs included consultation events, additional mapping/surveys and the publication of the final documents.
11. Conservation work over the 10-year period of the earlier management plans was supported by grant income from the ESS. That grant, and 'area payments' under the Rural Payment Agency's Basic Payment Scheme (BPS), covered the majority of costs associated with the conservation management of trees and other nationally important habitats.

Table 1.

	Ashtead Common	WW&SP
Annual Income from HLS & BBS	£30,000	£4,000

12. ESS grant funding for Ashtead Common and West Wickham and Spring Park ceases on 31st March 2021. BPS payments are being reduced in a phased manner as shown in **Table 2** and will cease altogether from 2027.

Table 2.

Payment Band	Scheme Year			
	2021	2022	2023	2024
Up to £30,000	5%	20%	35%	50%
£30,000 - £50,000	10%	25%	40%	50%
£50,000 - £150,000	20%	35%	55%	65%
More than £150,000	25%	40%	55%	70%

13. The funding principals for each habitat type under the CSS are slightly different to that of the ESS scheme and it is anticipated that grant income under the new scheme will not be as generous. The Director of Open Spaces is currently negotiating with NE to determine the financial impact of these changes across a number of open spaces. The ambition of the conservation works contained within the draft plans may therefore be reduced according to that outcome.
14. Members should also note that there is a 9-month funding gap between the end of the ESS grant and the beginning of the CSS grant amounting to a loss of income of approximately £23,000 for Ashtead Common and £3,000 for West Wickham Common and Spring Park. This has created an unavoidable shortfall in income for the current financial year of £26,000, which must be met from Local Risk budgets in addition to the 12% budget cuts required for 2021/22.

Resource Implications

15. Having been consulted on the production of this report the Human Resources Department has concluded that there are no likely adverse implications.

Equalities Implications

16. Your Superintendent has assessed the need for an Equality Analysis for both draft management plans. The first step under such circumstances is to carry out a 'Test of Relevance' to determine any negative, positive or neutral impacts of the draft plan. In this instance, the test of relevance concluded 'no negative impacts' so further assessment was not required.

Climate implications

17. The draft management plans ensure a positive contribution to the City's aims of carbon neutrality for its scope 1 and scope 2 emissions by 2027.

Charity Implications

18. Ashtead Common is a registered charity (number 1051510). West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood is registered charity number 232988. Charity Law obliges Members to ensure that the decisions they take in relation to these Charities must be taken in the best interests of the Charities.

Conclusion

19. Two new management plans have been developed following extensive consultation exercises with conservation experts and the public. Two grant applications under the Countryside Stewardship Scheme, based on these draft plans are being developed and subject to member approval of this report, will be submitted to Natural England by September 2021.
20. Funding of the conservation projects listed in the draft plans is under increasing pressure. Adjustments to ecological and recreational services during the period of these plans will be required if available resources decrease further.
21. Should Members approve the draft management plan it must then be ratified by Natural England.

Appendices

- Appendix 1. (Draft) Management Plan for Ashtead Common 2021– 2031.
- Appendix 2. (Draft) Management Plan for WW & SP 2021 – 2031.
- Appendix 3. Ashtead Common - Survey Monkey public consultation report 2021
- Appendix 4. WW&SP - Survey Monkey public consultation report 2021

Background Papers:

- January 2020 Timetable report
- September 2020 Timetable report
- Equalities Impact Assessment – Test of Relevance

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Ashtead Common

Registered Charity

DRAFT

Ashtead Common Management Plan 2021 - 2031

This is one of
14 green spaces
managed by the
City of London at
little cost to the
general public.



Ashtead Common is a 200-hectare area of public open space owned and managed by the City of London Corporation.

Ashtead Common is a registered charity (number 1051510) that receives the major part of its funding from the City of London Corporation.

It is a wooded common, home to over 1,000 living ancient oak pollards. Its natural and cultural heritage are of national importance, the legacy of centuries of interaction between people and the environment.

The City of London Corporation is committed to managing Ashtead Common in perpetuity to ensure that it remains a special place for generations to come.

As we progress through the 2020s and beyond, the challenge of protecting this valuable resource will increase as pressures from environmental and human factors mount. This plan explains how this challenge will be met.

456 people, mostly from the local community, helped shape this plan by contributing to a consultation exercise conducted throughout the summer and autumn of 2020.

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"Thank you for carefully managing this priceless local asset."

2020 consultation

Introduction

Ashtead Common was acquired by the City in 1991 under the Corporation of London (Open Spaces) Act 1878. This Act enables the City to acquire and protect land up to 25 miles out from the boundary of the square mile to keep it unenclosed and unbuilt upon as open space for the recreation and enjoyment of the public. The Act requires that the natural aspect, trees, pollards, shrubs, underwood and herbage are protected.

Already part of a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Ashtead Common was designated a National Nature Reserve in 1995 in recognition of its importance for wildlife and the City's commitment to its management.

There is evidence that Ashtead Common was occupied during the mid to late Iron Age up to a time around the 3rd century. During the period of early Roman influence, the site was the centre of a thriving brick and tile industry that exported products throughout south east Britain. After the tileworks were abandoned there is evidence suggestive of grazing for the rest of the Roman period, which may indicate that the use of the Common as wood pasture started at this time.

The wood pasture landscape with its characteristic open-grown pollards provides habitat that echoes characteristics of the wildwood and supports a variety of rare and declining species. The soils and topography of the Common have conspired to create an environment where it is difficult to do anything other than grow trees and graze animals to convert low quality pasture into food. This has ensured the Common's survival to this day as a rare example of an historic landscape.

A professional team of Rangers will continue to work with the local community and skilled contractors to protect and maintain the Common's important wildlife and features, while maintaining a high-quality open space for people to enjoy. This plan explains how that will happen.



Achievements and learning from the last 10 years

Ancient tree management

Over the course of the last 10 years around 700 ancient trees have received tree surgery work to prolong their lives, and over 900 have had competing vegetation managed in their vicinity. This programme is proving successful. Since 2009 76% of oak pollards have either improved (60%) or maintained (16%) their scores when assessed for health, vitality and structural integrity.

Research has shown that Ashtead oak pollards generally respond well to pruning, often producing vigorous 'frithy' regrowth.

Community involvement

Members of the community have contributed over 60,000 hours of volunteer time to help protect and care for Ashtead Common.

A visitor survey in 2013 estimated that Ashtead Common receives approximately 206,000 visits a year.



Species

The grasshopper warbler returned to the scrub grassland in spring 2018 following an absence of over 30 years.

Orchid populations have increased significantly from 156 common spotted and southern marsh orchids or their hybrids, to 412. The most significant increases in orchids occurred following scrub management work on the lower slopes. Broad-leaved helleborines have also increased from 19 to 39, predominantly along footpath 25 above the southern slopes.



A bat survey conducted in 2019 identified the presence of seven bat species.

Built heritage

Surrey Archaeological Society completed on-site investigations of Ashtead's Roman Villa, Earthworks and Tileworks in 2013, and since then work has continued behind the scenes to research and interpret the findings.

A separate archaeological investigation of the Earthworks in 2017 found evidence of a mid to late Iron Age settlement.

Habitat management

A 10 year programme of work funded by Natural England to restore wood pasture and maintain woodland, grassland and scrub habitat commenced in 2011.

An additional area of 11.7ha of scrub has been managed to achieve the desired 50:50 balance between scrub and grassland. The number of breeding bird territories within the scrub grassland has increased.

Access

940m of path have been surfaced, and a further 2,040m of path resurfaced using natural materials.

A new 200m path connecting The Greenway entrance at the Wells Estate to Ride 3 was installed.

Grazing expansion

The area grazed increased by 75% from 16ha to 28ha. Belted Galloway cattle were introduced to the site in spring 2017, in partnership with the Surrey Wildlife Trust. A traditional hardy breed, these animals are well-suited to life on the Common.

Renewable energy

Solar panels were installed at the Estate Office in 2014 and generate c.60% of the electricity used. A diesel ATV was replaced with an electric-powered model; electric chainsaws were introduced in 2019.

Challenges identified

The surface water outfall that joins the Rye Brook at Two Bridges is the single worst contributor of pollution into the Rye, which in turn feeds the River Mole, the largest tributary of the Thames.

Oak Processionary Moth (OPM) arrived in 2016 when six nests were identified and removed by specialist contractors. In subsequent years the number of nests removed went from 16 in 2017 to 244 in 2018 and over 1,000 in 2019. OPM caterpillars have toxic hairs that can cause skin rashes, eye complaints and breathing difficulties.

Ashtead Common has a high tick population and the attendant risk of Lyme disease has influenced the way the site is managed and used.

Climate change is causing a general warming, benefitting pests like OPM that continue to be introduced on plant stock from abroad. Spring is happening sooner, and exceptional weather events are becoming more frequent. Strong winds and drought are particularly hazardous to ancient trees.

With additional housing proposed in the Ashtead area, visitor pressure is likely to increase, and with it the attendant issues of habitat disturbance, waste, pollution and fire.

1.0 Site Description

1.1 Location

Ashtead Common is situated in north Surrey within Mole Valley Council District. It sits immediately below the pronounced spur of the Royal Borough of Kingston's southern boundary. To the west, a thin strip of woodland in separate ownership lies between the Common's western boundary and the A243 Kingston Road. To the east, the Common is bounded by Epsom Common.

The part owned by the City of London Corporation is 200ha in size.

1.2 Ownership and rights

The City of London acquired the Lordship of the Manor of Ashtead from the Trustees of Lord Barnby's Charitable Foundation. It was the wish of both the Trustees and Mole Valley District Council that the nature of the Common be forever preserved for the use and benefit of the general public. To achieve this, the Trustees approached Mole Valley District Council, which already held a lease for Woodfield, to see whether it would be prepared to purchase the Common.

On May 1st 1990 the Trustees entered into a contract to sell Ashtead Common to Mole Valley District Council.



In subsequent negotiations it was agreed that Mole Valley District Council would complete the acquisition of the southern part of Woodfield for the sum of £875. The Trustees transferred the remainder of the Common directly to the City of London for the sum of £29,125.



Both transfers were completed on March 25th 1991. On the same date the City sent a letter to Mole Valley District Council pledging not to exercise rights over the southern part of Woodfield.

1.3 Site Status

Ashtead Common was registered as a common in 1968; register unit number CL 280. An entry was made in the Register of Common Land in 1970 to record rights in common held by the private owners and tenant of Newton Wood. These include rights of access, right of pasture for four cattle, estovers (collection of firewood or bracken) and turbary (turf or peat).

In conjunction with Epsom Common, much of Ashtead Common (180ha) was designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in 1955 for its diversity of habitat, rare invertebrates (particularly decaying wood specialists, flies and butterflies) and rich community of breeding birds. Woodfield (7.3ha) was not included but was later designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Importance for species diversity with rare species present.

The area designated as National Nature Reserve on September 26th 1995 follows the SSSI boundary, so it too is 180ha in size.

In addition to Woodfield, the other notable exclusions are the City-owned land south of the railway line (sometimes called Howards Wood) and a thin strip adjacent to the railway line between the Woodlands Road entrance and Bridleway 38.

1.4 Financial situation

Ashtead Common is one of the City of London's more recent acquisitions, and at the start the intention was to run it differently to its other open spaces. Initially this involved employing just one member of staff who operated remotely from a base in Croydon and worked predominantly with volunteers from the local community.



Over the subsequent 15 years the operating model changed to become more like other City sites. A purpose-built office was constructed in 1997 and the team grew to include a Superintendent, Head Ranger, Senior Ranger, two Rangers and two support staff. However, the level of resourcing has reduced considerably in recent years and the annual budget of £367,000 in 2021 is £200,000 less than it was 12 years earlier.

The City of London Corporation provides funding for the management of Ashtead Common largely from its private funds. The City's revenue can now meet only part of the running costs for Ashtead Common; the nature reserve is increasingly reliant on grant income.

The success of much of this management plan depends on the ability to identify and secure significant external funding to match any savings required by the City of London. Agri-environment grants help pay for habitat conservation work, but the long-term future of these grants is uncertain.

New sources of revenue will need to be explored in coming years: the passing of a new City of London Open Spaces Act (2018) together with project specific funding may open up some new avenues.

1.5 Physical features

The greater part of Ashtead Common consists of a ridge running north-east to south-west. The highest point on the Common, at 88m above sea level, is centrally placed along that ridge. The lowest point, at 50m above sea level, is located on the Rye Brook.

The Common lies on London Clay – a heavy and impermeable sub-soil that is difficult to work. There is extreme contrast throughout the year, with frequent waterlogging and heavy run-off in the autumn and winter months and a hard surface in the summer. The site was described by early 20th century soil scientists as ‘the unmixed London Clay at its worst; undrained, sour, and cold, saturated all the winter and cracking wide during the drought, it has little economic value except for timber’ (Hall and Russell 1911).

The clay is overlain with fine sandy or silt drifts of varying depths with Plateau Gravel near the summit of the main ridge, giving rise to springs where it interfaces with the clay sub-soil. At least one spring contains magnesium sulphate (Epsom Salts) and an associated well was reputedly used to top-up the famous Epsom Well nearby at times of high demand.

The only semi-permanent stream on Ashtead Common is the Rye, which is fed by springs rising at the foot of the North Downs at the junction of the chalk and Thanet Sand.

Run-off from the Common enters the Rye, but so too does a considerable amount of water from a surface water drainage network that extends across a large part of Ashtead village.

There are four principal areas of permanent standing water, including a network of ponds and shallow pools created in 2006 along the Rye below Newton Wood. This system also includes a dam to control the release of water downstream, thereby reducing the risk of flooding for neighbouring properties.

1.6 Cultural information

1.6.1 Landscape

At one time Ashtead Common formed part of an extensive complex of woodland, parkland and common land in various ownerships that extended from the Esher estate of Prince Leopold I of Belgium, to Leatherhead Common and across to Epsom Common.

A surprising amount of this land is still open space. Epsom and Ashtead Commons adjoin to provide 375ha of contiguous open space. Prince’s Coverts (349ha) is a remnant of Prince Leopold’s land and is now managed by The Crown Estate. These three green spaces together provide 724ha (1,790 acres) of countryside within close proximity.

Ashtead Common falls within Natural England’s National Character Area Profile 114 – Thames Basin Lowlands. Ashtead Common’s significance within this area is noted several times within the profile.

In its Statement of Environmental Opportunity (SEO) relating to sustainable development the profile gives the example: *Ensuring that any development does not adversely affect ... Ashtead Common National Nature Reserve including through light, noise and air pollution and additional recreational pressures.*

The SEO relating to conservation gives the example: *Encouraging the re-introduction of traditional woodland management techniques such as coppicing and pollarding and encouraging the ongoing management of ancient pollarded trees, especially oaks on Ashtead Common National Nature Reserve.*

Ashtead Common’s wood pasture landscape derives from it historically being a wooded common.





Extract from the Ordnance Survey of 1816. Ashtead Common is clearly shown as wood pasture, as distinct from woodland such as the adjoining Horton Wood (now known as Newton Wood).

1.6.2 Archaeology

Surrey's complex geology and poor-quality soils make it difficult to farm, and as a result historically it was a very rural county with a comparatively low population. It is perhaps surprising therefore that Ashted Common, one of the least favourable parts of an unfavourable county, should be the location of a Roman villa, and a relatively high-status one at that. As with all of Ashted Common's history, the reason is explained by the clay and trees, in this case the part they played in the manufacture of brick and tile.



Excavation of the tile kiln furnace.

The Earthworks is now known to be the site of a mid to late Iron Age settlement. It was listed as a Scheduled Monument in 1913, before the Villa (1934), but it was originally thought to be a temporary encampment or animal stockade. In 2017 an archaeological investigation found the presence of domestic items such as spinning bobbin weights suggestive of more permanent habitation. There is evidence that this site was in use at the point of the Roman conquest and may still have been in use in the 2nd century.

The Roman Villa itself is a Scheduled Monument located east of the Earthworks and dates to around AD100. There is evidence of 100 years of occupation on this site, with a number of periods of construction and alteration during this time. An early chalk floored building, possibly an outbuilding of an early house, was replaced by later periods of construction that had features such as underfloor heating, brick and tile floors and 13 rooms. A separate military style bath house is an unusual feature associated with the site and may indicate a military connection.

Between the Earthworks and Villa is another early Roman building that indicates a transitional phase and therefore a peaceful change from the late Iron Age into the Roman period.

It is perhaps the features associated with the manufacture of brick and tile that have most significance.

To the east of the villa are the remains of a tile kiln that was used over an extended period and modified in a way that has preserved features of the earlier part.

In Roman times the supply of building materials was a profitable business, and products manufactured on Ashted Common can be found in several Roman towns. The British Museum displays tiles from Ashted Common, including one with a stag and hounds' motif (applied as an embossed stamp to provide a key for plaster) that is thought to be the only such design to feature animals.

Tile production on the site probably started in the late 1st century and continued through the early 3rd century. During its lifetime the facility is thought to have produced enough roof tiles for at least 50 villas, plus other kinds of tile as well.

The villa and tile kiln both show signs of modification around AD200 when the levels of both were raised, possibly in response to adverse environmental conditions. Not long after this the site was abandoned.

Trees would have provided fuel for the kilns, and it is known that then, as now, the predominant species in the vicinity of the villa were oak and hazel. Woodland cover increased after the tileworks were abandoned early in the 3rd century; evidence of grazing for the rest of the Roman period may indicate that the use of the Common for wood pasture started at this time.

1.6.3 Land use history

The Common is likely to have changed little in the 1,400 years following the period of Roman influence. The Saxons did not dramatically reorganise the country's wooded landscape. After the invasion of 1066, the Normans took complete control of the state, dividing the spoils between nobles. The Common became manorial waste, meaning it was an open, uncultivated and unoccupied part of the Lord of the Manor's estate. Some people were permitted to use the land, and over time they established the right to do so. Historically common rights to harvest wood and keep animals were exercised in concert by cutting branches above the height that animals can reach, thereby allowing the tender regrowth to escape being eaten by grazing livestock as it emerged. This is the practice of pollarding.

The arrival of the railway in 1858 bisected the Common, and a level crossing was installed to provide access for the houses north of the railway line. Woodfield Road which links the crossing with properties west of that point was constructed across the Common under an agreement with the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway. The railway bought imports of cheap coal, reducing the demand for firewood.

Despite this, Ashtead remained a wooded common managed largely as wood pasture up to the time when local farms made way for housing estates in the 1930s.

The mechanisation that enabled this development also produced improvements in agricultural technology that meant grazing on marginal land and commons declined.

The cessation of grazing and pollarding allowed for a gradual change from more open grassland and woodland conditions to denser vegetative cover.

The exception to this occurred during and after WWII, when the need to maximise food production led to the total clearance of much of the area south of Footpath 25 and the area east of Bridleway 38. Ploughing continued until as late as 1956 in the last area to be cultivated before the exercise was abandoned. An attempt to grow potatoes on Woodfield ended in failure when the crop became entombed in rock hard clay. Local people were allowed to keep any potatoes they could extricate from the ground themselves.

During both World Wars trees were felled to meet national demand for fuel and wood. Trees were taken to the north-west corner of the Common, the location of a sawmill at one time. It is not known how many trees were removed, but the presence of a series of pronounced ridges leading across the Common towards Epsom Gap indicate drag routes for the extraction of a considerable amount of timber.

1.7 Access and visitors

1.7.1 Visitor appeal

The same driving forces that led to the decline in the centuries-old land management practices of Ashtead Common encouraged a shift towards greater recreational use. In the heyday of the railway at the end of the 19th century the Common became, like Epsom Downs and Boxhill, a popular picnicking site, thanks to its proximity to central London. Various amusements and a tea-room were built on and adjacent to the Common.



Ashtead Common continues to be a popular place for recreation but is now a resource used predominantly by local people for informal recreation. A visitor survey published in 2013 found that there are about 206,000 visits to Ashtead Common a year. The largest user groups, each accounting for around 32% of visits, are dog walkers and walkers, with the latter most likely to visit in groups. Around 5% of visits are made by runners.

Although horse-riding still takes place (1% of visits), the bridleways and concessionary rides are now used more by cyclists (18% of visits). These activities are facilitated by byelaws that permit riding on bridleways and concessionary rides but prohibit these activities elsewhere.

On occasions more formal use of the Common is made by education groups and organised recreational activities such as cross-country running and fitness classes.

The City of London (Open Spaces) Act 2018 allows for the introduction of a schedule of rates to charge for these activities to raise income for the Common, and this is something that will be explored during the lifetime of this plan.

1.7.2 Access provision

In the 1960's unrestricted horse access rendered paths unusable and led to conflict between users, so Lord Barnby imposed limitations that came into effect following a public enquiry in 1969. These limited access to the bridleways, two concessionary horse rides and a free riding area south-east of Newton Wood. Many of these routes became impassable due to excessive encroachment of vegetation.

Since 1991 the City has invested considerable resource to reopen and maintain the network of paths, bridleways and concessionary rides. Some routes have been surfaced with natural material to provide year-round access and reduce the potential for conflict between user groups.

In 2010 the Ashted Common Consultative Committee (now Consultative Group) revisited an earlier recommendation not to surface any more routes on Ashted Common, which was made in response to a concern over the impact that surfacing has on the Common's sensitive hydrology. The Committee considered it acceptable to surface short sections of missing link in the surfaced path network, or localised problem spots, but maintained the opinion that path surfacing should otherwise be avoided.

A network of public rights of way links the Common with the wider area and includes a section of the Thames to Downs Link that runs from Kingston to Box Hill.

1.7.3 Visitor facilities and information provision

There are no formal car parks, toilets or refreshment facilities on Ashted Common, but these can be found just beyond the boundary of the site, particularly in Ashted village.

Information is available from the City's website, on-site notice boards and from the Ashted Estate Office. A joint site leaflet that includes Epsom Common is available from a dispenser outside the office.

Important safety information is displayed in small cabinets attached to the main notice boards at the entrances to the Common, and the messages are rotated regularly to keep them fresh

An electronic newsletter is distributed to visitors and others on a mailing list, and Rangers interact via social media.

Dog bins are provided near key entrance points. Currently, dog bags are provided from dispensers; this is subject to future review.



1.7.4 Education and research

Rangers and volunteers carry out long-term monitoring of the site and its features. Research by students and external groups is encouraged and supported. Examples include breeding bird surveys, butterfly transects, moth trapping and pollution monitoring of the Rye Brook.

Alongside this, a programme of professional research primarily focuses on the key ecological aspects of the Common, particularly those associated with the ancient trees, to advance our knowledge of the site and beyond.

Rangers run a programme of guided walks and educational activities, responding positively to requests from local school groups to use Ashted Common as an outdoor classroom.

1.7.5 Community involvement

The City of London adopted aspects of the Community Woodland model when it acquired Ashted Common in 1991, and the local community has been an integral part of the Commons' management ever since. Much of the work to manage the Common is done by members of the local community working as volunteers.

The Ashted Common Consultative Group advises the elected Members of the City Corporation on the development and implementation of this plan and provides Members with a local perspective on issues. The Group includes: Members and officers from the City Corporation and local Councils; officers from conservation organisations such as Natural England, Surrey Wildlife Trust and the Lower Mole Partnership; representatives from user groups and community interests, such as the Residents' Association, volunteers, cyclists, riders and young people.



1.7.6 Services and access

Several services and utilities traverse the Common, including high and low pressure gas pipelines, high voltage electricity cables (above ground and buried), sewers, surface water drains and an aviation fuel pipeline.

Companies have rights of access to the electricity sub-station near Craddocks Avenue and the gas depressurisation station accessed from Woodlands Road. Network Rail have no specific rights of access, but occasionally licenses are issued for maintenance work on the line or at the railway sub-station near Lady Howard's Crossing.

Registered Commoners have access rights allowing them to pass over Ashted Common with or without vehicles and livestock.



1.8 Statutory and contractual frameworks

1.8.1 National policy and legal framework

Act	Summary of content	Implications for Ashtead Common
Corporation of London (Open Spaces) Act 1878 Page 22	<p>The City of London Corporation can acquire and designate land up to 25 miles from the boundary of the City to protect it in perpetuity for the public to enjoy.</p> <p>Designated land to be kept as open space for public recreation. Natural aspect to be preserved. Various powers, rights and responsibilities conferred on the City Corporation, including the ability to make and enforce byelaws.</p>	<p>The land and access over it are protected in perpetuity.</p> <p>Byelaws protecting the site and its features to be enforced. Encroachments must be resisted and abated.</p> <p>Land to be unenclosed and unbuilt upon, except those features required for better attainment of the Act and deemed necessary by the City.</p> <p>The 1878 Act is the governing document for the Ashtead Common Charity.</p>
City of London Corporation (Open Spaces) Act 2018	<p>Restates powers listed in section 10 of the 1878 Act allowing the City to manage vegetation, scrape soil and graze with cattle or other animals.</p> <p>Events on the open space can be permitted and charged for.</p> <p>Utility companies can be granted easements or licences under whatever terms the City considers necessary to protect the open space.</p>	<p>Vegetation can be managed, and animals grazed.</p> <p>Events can be licensed and charged, but the Act states that a policy must exist to control this to protect the open space.</p> <p>Licences for installation and maintenance of utilities can contain terms deemed necessary to protect the Common.</p>
Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW)	<p>The Act defines access land but excludes from the definition 'land which is treated by section 15(1) as being accessible to the public apart from this Act.'</p>	<p>Ashtead Common is section 15 land under the Act because access is granted virtue of the 1878 Act. Consequently the provisions of the CROW Act do not apply.</p>
AMAAA 1979 *	<p>Scheduled Ancient Monuments have statutory protection.</p> <p>* <i>Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979</i></p>	<p>Historic England consent is required for any work affecting the Earthworks or Villa site. Police can prosecute under this Act.</p>

Act	Summary of content	Implications for Ashted Common
Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981	<p>Protection of wildlife (in general and for some species) and designation of SSSIs and NNRs.</p> <p>(SSSIs were first notified under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, but the current statute is the 1981 Act)</p>	<p>It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly damage, disturb or destroy SSSI land or its wildlife. It is also an offence to damage or remove SSSI signage.</p> <p>Natural England consent is required for any activity that may be likely to damage the SSSI.</p>
Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006	<p>Every public body must have due regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.</p> <p>The role of nature reserves is three-fold: conservation, research and access (Schedule 11, part 1, section 12). The Act extended the role of NNRs to include the provision of opportunities for public enjoyment of nature and/or open-air recreation.</p>	<p>The City is listed as a named body in relation to this Act.</p> <p>As a NNR, Ashted Common's role is not only to conserve, but to undertake research, provide access and provide opportunities for public enjoyment and recreation.</p>
Occupiers Liability Act 1984	<p>This legislation replaces common law rules to determine duty of care. A duty exists if the occupier is aware (or should be) of a danger, people have access to the danger (legally or not) and protection from the danger can be reasonably expected. If duty exists, reasonable warning of danger should be given.</p>	<p>Visitors must be protected from and warned of dangers.</p>
Forestry Act 1967	<p>Felling licence normally required if felling 5m³ timber in a quarter, or 2m³ in a quarter if selling the wood. However, they are not required for designated open spaces (other than those areas excluded from the definition of public open space by the Countryside Act 1967 - ie country parks).</p>	<p>Felling licences are not required for Ashted Common because it is designated as a public open space by virtue of the 1878 Act.</p>
Road Traffic Act 1988	<p>It is an offence to drive a mechanically propelled vehicle without authorisation on common land, footpaths or bridleways.</p> <p>Definitions of a road in relation to cyclists includes footpaths and bridleways. It is an offence to cycle recklessly, without due care or attention or without reasonable consideration for others.</p> <p>Even with authorisation, an offence is committed if someone drives dangerously in a public place.</p>	<p>Police might be best placed to enforce matters relating to vehicles on the Common using the Road Traffic Act.</p> <p>Staff, contractors and those with access rights are bound by the Road Traffic Act because the Common is a public open space.</p>

National Nature Reserve Standard

As a body approved by Natural England to manage Ashted Common National Nature Reserve, the City is expected to achieve a standard described in nine key principles:

- ♦ the NNR series will seek to represent the best places for England's biodiversity and geodiversity;
 - ♦ a management plan for the NNR will be kept up-to-date and will reflect the requirements of this standard;
 - ♦ the management of designated features and the wider reserve is exemplary;
 - ♦ the NNR contributes to safeguarding and restoring ecosystems beyond its boundaries;
 - ♦ the management of the NNR provides opportunities for public enjoyment, quiet recreation and engagement;
- research into the natural environment at an NNR is promoted and knowledge is shared;
- communities and stakeholders are involved in the management of the NNR;
- NNR managers will work collaboratively to promote the NNR series and wider goals;
- NNRs will support opportunities to demonstrate exemplary conservation management to others.

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1.8.2 Local policy framework

At the time of publication of this plan, Mole Valley District Council were producing their Local Plan to cover the period 2020 to 2037. An earlier iteration of this plan recognised the need to protect biodiversity, historic landscapes, wildlife habitat, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and ecological networks. It also noted the need to minimise pollution and improve water quality. However, site allocations for over 1,000 houses were made for the Ashted area, and many more for the District as a whole. (*Appendix A, p.73*)

Kingston's Core Strategy covers the period 2012-2027. It has policies to protect the natural environment and biodiversity. It states that development proposals should not harm open spaces and lists key views across open space that should be protected, including two looking towards Ashted Common. (*Appendix BA, p.73*)

The City will engage with neighbouring authorities to ensure their plans recognise the importance of protecting Ashted Common.

97% of respondents agreed that it is appropriate to maintain and restore features of the wood pasture landscape.

2020 consultation

1.8.3 Contractual framework

The City Corporation receives funding from the Rural Payments Agency under the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) for Ashted Common.

There is no financial audit for this payment, but there are a series of rules that must be adhered to (*Appendix B, p.74*). The Basic Payment Scheme is due to be phased out by 2027.

1.8.4 Countryside Stewardship

For the past 10 years Ashted Common has benefited from agri-environment funding from the government's Environmental Stewardship scheme. This grant ended in March 2021. Work has commenced on finding a replacement, which initially involves an application for funding under the Countryside Stewardship scheme. During the lifetime of this plan countryside stewardship agreements are likely to transition to the Environmental Land Management scheme, (ELMs).



Photo: Nikki Campana-Etheridge

1.9 Biological features

Wood pasture communities and flora

The main attributes of an historic wood pasture include old trees that have grown in relatively open conditions, an open ground layer, grazing animals (or a history of grazing), plenty of decaying wood, flowers and shrubs. These attributes make wood pasture a valuable wildlife habitat.

This type of habitat is dynamic and shifting. It is characterised by multiple transitions between tall and short vegetation, light and shaded areas, warm and cool places, all happening at both large and small scales. The habitat is continually changing but the essential elements – trees, grazing, scrub and ground flora – remain consistent.

The entire Common has been subject to these dynamically shifting patterns over time, creating a complex interconnectivity of resources that benefit a variety of species.

In this way Ashted Common in its entirety - the open areas, the dense areas, the scrub, closed canopy woodland, and paths and rides - can be regarded as wood pasture.

But in order to manage each part of the Common effectively and maintain biodiversity, it is necessary to look in more detail at the biological components of Ashted's wood pasture landscape, never forgetting each part plays a role in the bigger dynamic system.

“The common is a very special place.”

2020 consultation

Purple Emperor butterfly

The Purple Emperor is listed in the SSSI designation as one of Ashted Common's notable species.

This magnificent butterfly flies high in the tops of mature oak trees but lays its eggs on scrubby willows and enjoys probing for salts in animal dung. These resources are provided by the mature woodland, scrub, grassland and grazing components of the wood pasture system.



Pollarding

Pollarding is a management system where trees are repeatedly cut for product. The branches are pruned back to a point roughly 2.5m above ground level, allowing newly emerging branches to grow out of reach of livestock grazing below. Pollards are a defining characteristic of a wood pasture management system.

There are over 1,000 living ancient oak pollards on Ashted Common and 1,186 pollards left as either standing dead trees or fallen trunks with remnant stumps. They are present across much of the site, mainly north of footpath 25, and occur within closed-canopy woodland, developing woodland, and areas of open grassland, bramble and bracken.

Some pollards have been destroyed or damaged by fire. Where fires occurred, they also cleared the understorey, encouraging bracken dominated areas to develop which in turn has suppressed the growth of younger trees. This, together with timber extraction, particularly during the World Wars, has led to missing generations of oak trees. Where there have been no fires woodland has successfully established itself around the pollards. In these places it has had a significant shading effect on the ancient trees.



Ancient pollard with a dead wood stack, both important habitats for saproxylic invertebrates (p20).

Ancient trees

Ancient trees are those that have reached a great age in comparison with others of the same species. They are often gnarled, knobbly, huge, bent and hollow. Oaks that are at least 400 years old and have these characteristics, like those on Ashted Common, can be called ancient.

Previous management plans referred to the oak pollards as veteran trees. Veteran trees can be of any age but have the characteristics of ancient trees.

Ancient woodland

Defined as surviving since 1600, ancient woodland is characterised by unique and interdependent wildlife communities that have evolved together over centuries and would be irreplaceable if lost. Just 2% of British woodland can be described as ancient and the Woodland Trust estimates that over 1,000 ancient woodlands are currently under threat.

Woodland

Various component parts of the wooded common exhibit different characteristics.

The woodland found in the northern and western parts of the Common is characterised by the maturity of woody vegetation growing around the ancient pollards and the presence of ancient woodland indicators like bluebells. Previously described as Ashted Common's ancient woodland, these areas are the parts of the wooded common that have escaped the worst ravages of fire. They contain the greatest concentrations of ancient pollards, so we know that these parts were historically more open.

Since 2009 work to conserve the ancient oak pollards has involved managing woody vegetation around the old trees, recreating a more open aspect in some areas.



Secondary woodland¹ has developed in some of the places where trees were mechanically cleared, typically south of Footpath 25 and east of Bridleway 38, plus some areas in the middle of the Common that were cleared by fire. These areas gradually reverted to woodland via a transitional scrub phase.

An understory of hazel is present in places and has been managed successfully as coppice in recent years, with relatively little deer browse damage.

The presence of hazel coppice² on Ashted Common might be considered inconsistent with wood pasture management. However, we know that hazel existed on Ashted Common 2,000 years ago. Perhaps it was heavily protected after cutting to prevent animals from eating the regrowth, or perhaps it all but disappeared only to reappear in any quantity after grazing activity ceased. The latter theory is supported by the relative youth of many of the hazel stools.

¹ Secondary woodland has grown up on land that has previously been cleared of trees. It lacks the overall diversity of undisturbed ancient woodland.

² Coppice is an area of woodland in which the trees or shrubs are periodically cut back to ground level to stimulate growth and provide firewood or timber.

³ Scrub is an ecotone (a transition zone) between open grassland and woodland. It is dominated by shrubs and small trees and is important for invertebrates and breeding birds.

Scrub

Scrub³ represents a transitional stage between open habitats like grassland and closed canopy woodland. On Ashted Common it is an important habitat, supporting a variety of invertebrates and breeding birds such as the grasshopper warbler, lesser whitethroat and blackcap. It is home to large populations of wintering thrushes and finches. Nightingales were present until 2003.



Photo: Lindsey Bowes

The grasshopper warbler re-appeared in 2018 after a long absence thanks to the successful recreation of suitable habitat.

Scrub on the southern slopes is mainly blackthorn, hawthorn or sallow, while that on the ridge is predominantly young oak, birch and hazel, with stands of aspen across the upper slopes.

By the mid-1950s the abandonment of agriculture on the southern slopes led to the development of a mosaic of scrub and grassland. This helped the site obtain its SSSI designation for, amongst other things, its importance for breeding birds. However, a gradual increase in the proportion of scrub compared to grassland, and a reduction in the amount of young scrub, ultimately led to a decline in the condition of the habitat for breeding birds.

Since 1995 the City has carried out a programme of scrub management aimed at creating a 50:50 balance between scrub and open grassland. This has included the removal of overly mature scrub and secondary woodland, and in places grazing with cattle.

Oak is unusual in being both a pioneer and climax species. It is one of the first saplings to appear on a newly cleared piece of land and a dominant species in mature closed canopy woodland. Oak saplings do not like shade but providing they have enough light to grow, other scrub species like blackthorn can offer protection, leading to the saying that scrub is the nursery of the oak.

Scrub therefore takes its place within the overall system, nurturing future wood pasture with young open-grown oak trees and providing a rich source of nectar for the valuable invertebrate fauna whilst providing cover for nesting birds.

Saproxylic invertebrates

Ashted Common is home to a diverse group of invertebrates that are dependent on decaying wood. These saproxylic species were studied in detail in a report published in 2009, which concluded that Ashted Common ranked in the top 10 UK sites for decaying wood specialists, a result of international significance.

Many species of saproxylic invertebrate are extremely poor at dispersing themselves. Moving to a neighbouring tree is the human equivalent of emigrating to Australia and crossing roads and fields like emigrating to Mars. Consequently, the places where these species are found are known to have enjoyed centuries of habitat continuity.

Examples include the hornet rove beetle (*Velleius dilitatus*, Red Data Book 1), a large Devil's coach horse type beetle that lives in hornet nests.

Scrub grassland species listed in the SSSI notification

Type	Species	Habitat
Birds	Grasshopper warbler (<i>Locustella naevia</i>)	Likes marshy grassland with small bushes
	Lesser whitethroat (<i>Sylvia curruca</i>)	Likes early successional thorn and bramble
	Song thrush (<i>Turdus philomelas</i>) Mistle thrush (<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>)	Song thrush likes an intimate mosaic of grassland and mature scrub
	Finches	Variety of habitats
Insects	Purple emperor	Caterpillars like dense scrub blocks containing willow (particularly goat) near to large mature oaks

Grassland

Woodfield is a distinct 7.3ha area of open grassland on the south side of the Common. Prior to 1991 it was mown regularly without removal of the cuttings, creating a peat-like layer of partly decomposed material. It is now managed as a hay meadow and is cut on a rotation to ensure some long vegetation is left each year. This is particularly important for skylarks (Wildlife and Countryside Act protected), a species that consistently returns to Woodfield each year to breed.

Woodfield has become floristically diverse (transitioning from National Vegetation Classification MG6 (influenced by cultivation) in 1999 to MG5c (floristically diverse, acid) in 2012 with species such as knapweed, greater birdsfoot trefoil, yellow rattle, cuckoo flower and common spotted and southern marsh orchid present.



Although now subject to a conservation mowing regime, Woodfield remains one of the most accessible parts of the Common for recreation. It is perhaps therefore the area of Ashted Common where the need to strike a balance between recreation and nature conservation objectives is most keenly felt. Compromises are required to maintain that balance.

Wetland

The Rye Brook has main river status and as such falls under the remit of the Environment Agency. As riparian owner the City is responsible for managing the area around the channel, although in places the Rye demarcates a residential boundary, so the City is responsible for just one bank.

The Rye Brook is predominantly surface water fed and is therefore responsive to rainfall. During dry periods the water can disappear in places, although the flow into the Brook from the surface water outlet at Two Bridges never dries.

In 2004 a series of ponds and scrapes were created to restore a natural profile to part of the Rye Brook that had previously run in an artificially straightened channel. This river restoration project also involved the construction of a dam and flow control structure to retain water at times of peak flow. Prior to its construction there were occasions when properties downstream flooded when the Rye Brook burst its banks.

There are three distinct ponds on the Common that have different vegetation and flora to those along the Rye Brook. All three species of newt use all three ponds for breeding. Newts are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the great crested newt is fully protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

Flag Pond is situated among the clay pits of the former Roman Tileworks towards the north of the Common. It was restored in 1991 but little has been done since. It is acidic and often cloudy due to dog disturbance.

Ashted Common Pond is located next to Bridleway 38 on the eastern edge of the Common. It was enlarged in 1987 and is shaded by overhanging trees. It is dominated by duckweed, which indicates over nutrification. It too is often cloudy.

New Pond was created in 1994 near Epsom Gap in the north-western corner of the Common. It supports a variety of aquatic fauna including the grass snake.



2.0 The need for management

2.1 The importance of managing the ancient oak pollards

Ashted Common is home to over 1,000 living ancient oak pollard trees, an unusually large population and one of international significance.

The Ashted Common oaks have been closely monitored for a number of years, and consequently it has been possible to accurately determine loss rates as trees have died. The 2009 Ancient Pollard Survey calculated the annual rate of loss at 1.3%. If losses continued at that rate the population would dip below the threshold needed to sustain key insect species within 150 years. This would not allow enough time for the existing younger generation of oak trees to become ancient and provide suitable habitat for the associated species.

However, without intervention to slow the rate of decline, the loss rate would increase exponentially as the ancients become more fragile and more shaded. Consequently, it is estimated that without intervention the critical threshold would actually be reached within 60 years.

Far right: Practical management of veteran trees.

Right: Veteran pollard.

In response the City embarked upon an ambitious programme of management in 2009. Since then an average of 70 ancient trees a year have benefited from tree surgery work, and more have had competing vegetation controlled in their vicinity to prolong their lives. It is hoped that with this intervention the date at which the existing cohort of ancient trees reach the critical threshold can be pushed back by approximately 300 years which would mean achieving a rate of loss of 0.5% a year.

The art of conserving pollards is still in its infancy and the process continues to be refined. Already the 2009 ancient tree management plan has been adapted twice; first, to divide the cohort of ancients into distinct management units to prioritise work, and then to refine the individual management prescriptions based on how the trees have responded to initial work.



Response of ancients to being cut

A study commissioned in 2018 looked at how 41 ancient trees had responded to being cut. It concluded that generally oak trees on Ashted Common respond well, often producing “frithy” epicormic growth. The report recommended selecting trees with high vitality and lots of branches when prioritising work, and that only branches less than 30cm should be cut if possible, leaving a number uncut.

Generally, the approach to managing ancient pollards has transitioned away from a regime of phased retrenchment towards one-off treatments to prolong life, with possible re-visits to do more work only if the individual tree appears to have responded well to the initial cut.



2020 Ancient Oak Pollard Management Plan

Prompted by the need to revise the schedule of work for the ancient oaks in the 2021-2031 Management Plan in light of the changed approach to managing ancient trees, Luke Fay of Treeworks, the original 2009 plan's co-author, returned to the Common in the winter 2019/2020. He visited each live tree, calculated its current viability score*, compared this to the score from 2009 and then, depending on the tree's response to previous works, drew up a recommendation for future management. This will consist of either work to the tree itself, aerial work to maiden oaks in the vicinity of the tree, or clearance of understorey around it, or a combination of all three.

The current viability scores demonstrate that, since 2009, 60% of the oaks have had their viability improved, 16% are unchanged, 17% have deteriorated and 6% over the 10 years have died. This gives strong validation to the large amount of practical work undertaken on and around the trees during the period of the 2011 to 2021 Management Plan.

*The viability score combines scores for the probability of collapse, probability of decline in the next 20 years, and current vitality, and allows for analysis of a tree's current health and likelihood of survival

Our aim is to keep the ancient oak pollards alive for as long as possible to protect the associated plant, animal and fungal communities while the younger oaks on the Common become old enough to provide suitable habitat.



2.2 The importance of managing bracken

"Invasive native plants include bracken in wood-pastures. Although bracken has long been present and was even a crop, it now displaces all other vegetation except bluebells. This is damaging in itself, and also the dead fronds are a fire risk, as on Ashted Common. Bracken reduction should be at the top of the agenda with wood-pastures containing old trees." Oliver Rackham, Woodlands, 2006.

Past management systems probably suppressed bracken growth, but now it covers a large proportion of the Common. A thatch of dead bracken fronds develops every winter, creating a potential fuel source for fire. This situation is particularly hazardous in spring as the Common begins to dry out, but before lush growth pushes through the old. In the past, major fires occurred every five to ten years, destroying large areas of woodland on Ashted Common, including significant numbers of ancient oak pollards.

Bracken is now managed mainly by mowing it when the plant is at its most vigorous in early summer. Spraying using a selective herbicide and cutting by hand are also utilised techniques.

Top left: Luke Fay and apprentice Louise Fletcher carry out survey work.

Bottom left: bracken management.

2.3 The importance of managing scrub and grassland

On Ashted Common scrub does not occur as an isolated habitat but forms an integral part of an ecologically rich mosaic. The scrub is an ecotone, or ecological transition, between open grassland and closed canopy woodland. Such ecotones are often the areas that provide for the greatest biodiversity in terms of both species' diversity and biomass.

The fact that scrub is a transitional phase ironically means that it both represents a threat to grassland habitat, whilst itself being under threat as it gradually transitions into secondary woodland.

Since the cessation of ploughing in 1956 the areas south of Footpath 25 and east of Bridleway 38 gradually transitioned from open aspect to dense scrub, with species benefitting and thriving from the process as it progressed. However, 40 years on a decline in species diversity was apparent. Areas of open grassland had disappeared and the scrub in many places had become overly mature.

In 1995 concerted efforts commenced to restore grassland and create younger scrub. This process has taken 25 years of on and off effort, with a strong resolve, since 2014, to reach a point where a more desirable 50% scrub and 50% grassland mix exists in many areas.



The benefits of managing scrub

A group of British Trust for Ornithology volunteers has surveyed breeding birds in part of the scrub grassland area for many years. The data they obtain enables year by year comparisons for migrant and resident species.

Between 2015 and 2019 the number of bird territories recorded increased by 79 from 277 to 356. However, the situation for individual species is varied. Of the migrants, whitethroats and garden warblers have increased in number, whilst blackcaps and chiffchaff numbers have remained consistent albeit with fluctuations year on year. Lesser whitethroat numbers have remained very low and willow warblers have disappeared from the survey area.

2.4 The importance of grazing

Grazing over millennia shaped Ashtead Common to create the landscape we have today.

After a significant period of absence grazing was reintroduced in 1999, initially to control the spread of Michaelmas daisy within the scrub grassland areas south of Footpath 25. In 2010 it was expanded to include an area on top of the Common, and the area grazed in this vicinity has increased significantly since then.

Grazing helps to maintain a more varied vegetative structure than mowing.

Conservation grazing creates a diversity in sward height, a limited and beneficial amount of soil disturbance, localised soil enrichment without the introduction of nutrients into the system overall and can produce tunnels and cavities within scrub blocks. The resulting dappled shady environment is favoured by a variety of invertebrates and essential for specialist species that rely on herbivore dung.

Grazing animals can also suppress bracken by trampling it.

"The Belted Galloways are excellent animals and I think, for the average visitor, they 'add value'."

2020 consultation



Cows graze Ashtead Common between spring and autumn each year.

2.5 Climate change

Climate change is causing higher temperatures and more extreme weather events. Projections suggest that oak trees may decline in health as a result. Other species such as rowan may fare better. Generally, this might result in a more scrubby and open woodland with lower tree canopies.

Managing Ashtead Common in the face of these uncertainties is a challenge. One way to reduce the risks associated with climate change is to make the Common more resilient. Actions to boost resilience include increasing structural diversity to promote species diversity, thereby allowing those species that can successfully adapt the space to thrive. Managing the ancient oak pollards will reduce the risk of structural failure in high winds and the fire risk can be mitigated by improving firebreaks and by managing bracken.

Another way of responding to climate change is adapting the way we work, for example by reducing the length of the habitat management (cutting) season in recognition of the earlier onset of spring.

Surveying and monitoring play an important role here in understanding the impact of climate change, species response and efficacy of our work.

Biodiversity in crisis

The UK is one of the most nature depleted countries in the world. Biodiversity has plummeted due to the loss of wildlife and wildlife habitats.

- In 1966 there were 40 million more birds in the UK than there are today.
- Numbers of the most endangered species in the UK have halved since the 1970s.
- One in 10 species in the UK is now threatened with extinction.
- 11.5% of species native to Surrey are now locally extinct (compared with 2% nationally).
- Moths have declined by 88% and butterflies by 76% since 1970.
- Approximately one plant species is lost per county per year, and the rate of loss is accelerating.
- Despite government policies and actions, 150 out of 250 'priority species' for nature conservation are still declining in number.

UK State of Nature reports (2013 and 2016).
Surrey State of Nature report (2017).
Our Vanishing Flora (2012).

Flooding

More extreme weather events will cause more flooding. It is important to consider the effects of vegetation management, particularly tree cutting, in relation to this issue. Trees can often use more water than shorter types of vegetation mainly because their aerodynamically rougher canopies can intercept more water.

When active, trees absorb water, but during winter months their effect is limited to the amount of water they can intercept with their branches and baffle with their stems and roots. For this reason, other types of natural vegetative cover can be equally as effective (sometimes more so) in intercepting and dissipating water. Particularly effective forms of cover include rough grassland, scrub and bracken. (*Water Use by Trees, Forestry Commission Information Note 065, April 2005*).

Ashtead Common can naturally absorb and retain vast amounts of water. Any attempt to drain it will inevitably mean more water enters the Rye Brook quicker than it would otherwise, potentially contributing to flooding downstream. Therefore, the decision was taken some time ago not to undertake any work that could increase the flow of water into the Rye Brook, accepting that paths and rides may at times be waterlogged as a result.

95% of respondents agreed that managing Ashtead Common to promote biodiversity is a high priority.

2020 consultation

Pollution

Water from a surface water catchment covering a large part of Ashtead enters the Rye Brook at Two Bridges. This has been identified as the single worst source of pollution along the course of the Rye Brook, introducing contaminated road water and waste poured into drains or from illegal connections into the watercourse.

The Common suffers from air, light and noise pollution, particularly from busy roads nearby that also fragment wildlife habitat. High nitrogen levels caused by pollution adversely impact the mycorrhizal fungi that aid tree growth and protect them from diseases. Long term monitoring of pollution is required to assess its impact on the plant and animal communities that live on the Common.



Pests and diseases

The Common is increasingly under threat from pests and diseases that benefit from general warming and continue to be introduced on plant stock from abroad.

The caterpillar of the Oak Processionary Moth (OPM) has toxic hairs that can cause allergic reactions. This species is a particular threat because of the severity of infestations. The caterpillars build nests of toxic hairs which can remain a hazard long after the caterpillars have gone. It is an introduced species with few natural controls, although there are indications that predators are now present in the UK and that native species are adapting to make use of the available food source.



OPM was first recorded on Ashted Common in 2016 when six nests were identified. By 2019 the number of nests had reached over 1,200. In accordance with statutory requirements the outbreak was initially treated with an insecticide in an effort to contain its spread. However, Ashted Common is noted in part for its rare butterflies and moths, and other species that spend much of their lives in a larval state, so continued use of insecticide spray is undesirable.

Ticks and the attendant risk of Lyme disease is another issue with the potential to have an impact on how Ashted Common is used and managed. Ticks live on birds and mammals of all sizes (not just deer) so have abundant food resource on the Common. Naturally controlled by cold and dry weather, the trend towards warmer and wetter conditions appears to be increasing the abundance of ticks. There is no insecticide that targets ticks alone.

Oak decline (a coverall term applied to several conditions) and acute oak decline (bacterial infection) are observed and monitored. Mildew is often observed on oak trees, although recent survey work suggests that it is not impacting significantly on tree vitality.

OPM nest, with caterpillars.

Linking to the wider environment

Fragmentation is a major threat to wildlife throughout the UK. Modern agricultural practices have reduced the land available for wildlife, and some habitat has been lost and broken up by housing and roads. The populations of plants and animals trapped on these 'islands' are too small to be resilient to the stresses of climate change, pollution and of general erosion caused by the high numbers of people living nearby.

Ashted Common is a rich resource of varied wildlife that, given the opportunity, could spill back out into the wider environment were it to offer a more extensive interconnected system of wildlife habitat.

Here as in so much of the UK, the landscape has been shaped by human activities to the extent that continued management is needed to maintain habitats so that the species that have made their home there can thrive. Without this intervention they would be displaced by other species.

Our aim is to maintain a diverse 'reservoir' of healthy species and to seek to build links with surrounding natural areas so that populations of plants, fungi and animals can expand and move between the Common and the wider environment.

2.6 Community engagement, access and visitor safety

Between 2011 and 2021 Ashted Common has achieved an average of over 6,500 volunteer hours a year. This included a significant contribution from directly managed groups, as well as volunteers from other organisations. The figure represents a significant investment by the local community in caring for Ashted Common. For every eight hours of volunteering achieved approximately one hour of staff time is needed to facilitate it, so a significant amount of the team resource has been invested in enabling community involvement.

Ashted Common has a dedicated team of professional Rangers who aim to ensure that high standards are achieved to make people feel that they are in a cared-for place.

In recognition of this the Common has achieved a Green Flag Award every year since 2003. This award assesses standards under eight overall criteria that include a welcoming place (safe and equal access, signage), safe and secure (quality of provision, safe facilities, personal security control of dogs and fouling), and well maintained and clean.

Ashted Common is valued for providing a green and tranquil oasis in the midst of busy lives, contributing to the health and wellbeing of local people. The number of people living within easy reach of the nature reserve is likely to increase in the coming years. The challenge will be to accommodate their need for green space without harming those aspects that they come to see.



Reducing our environmental impact

Green waste: reduce, reuse, recycle, and sometimes burn

Although much of the wood cut during tree management is left *in situ* as decaying wood habitat, leaving it all would create access problems for future work. To minimise bonfires, timber is milled into rails and posts for site fences, benches and other structures; brash is used to create dead hedges to mark footpaths and bridleways; cut hazel is processed into wooden stakes and pea sticks for local allotment holders; large tree trunks and branches are sold to contractors, usually for firewood; and the Ashted Common Volunteers are given access to smaller pieces for firewood for personal use. Grass on Woodfield is cut and removed as a hay crop; elsewhere grass is cut and left *in situ*.

As little green waste as possible is burned. Where this is unavoidable, all bonfires are raised above the ground on burning platforms to protect the soil from damage and keep ash away from the ground until it is removed from site. The detrimental effects of burning are partially offset by a degree of carbon offsetting (e.g. vegetation regrowth or continued carbon storage by ancient trees whose life has been extended) and the reduced risk of catastrophic wildfires due to firebreak management. However, overall the burning of green waste is detrimental to the environment, and the amount burned at Ashted Common will be reduced during the lifetime of this plan.

Grazing

Animals have grazed Ashted Common for millennia, converting low quality pasture into food. Today, we graze the Common to achieve conservation gains, often instead of using machines. The livestock are not fed supplements: they exist purely on what they can obtain from the site. There is evidence to suggest that cows that graze this way balance nutrients from a variety of grasses, herbs and shrubs to maintain healthy digestive systems; this contrasts with farming systems where animals fed on supplements have higher methane emissions.

Vehicles and machinery

Where possible, the vehicles and machinery used on Ashted Common are being replaced with electric alternatives. In addition to reducing local emissions, electric vehicles and power tools are less noisy. Photovoltaic cells on the Ashted Estate Office produce approximately 5,000kwh of electricity a year to help charge this equipment. A low ground impact electric all-terrain vehicle is often used in place of a 4x4; this is confined to the surfaced route when ground conditions are poor.



Burning platforms protect the soil beneath a fire from damage. The ash is removed to prevent localised soil enrichment.

3.0 A vision for Ashtead Common

Ashtead Common: a place for countryside recreation and wildlife conservation where community involvement remains integral to maintaining an open space of national significance, a place that resists urban pressures and strives to protect an historic landscape and its features in a setting proactively managed to retain and enhance biodiversity.

The long-term vision for Ashtead Common for the lifetime of this plan and beyond

Ashtead Common is recognised as a special place for people and wildlife protected forever by a well-supported charity dedicated to preserving the natural aspect for people to enjoy.

Outstanding habitats

The Common is proactively managed as a resource rich in wildlife, maintaining biodiversity whilst looking beyond its boundaries to promote opportunities for wide scale restoration of ecosystems.

The famous ancient pollarded oak trees are managed within a wood pasture system to keep them alive for as long as possible. In addition to the old trees there are plenty of oaks of all ages to act as replacements for the ancients.

Tree density across the Common is variable. In some areas the woodland is dense, with abundant hazel, in other areas the pollarded trees stand in open conditions. All areas are grazed with livestock.

Ground vegetation is dominated by grasses and herbs, not bracken. Wide, open rides and firebreaks are managed by mowing and grazing.

Areas of grass and scrub are maintained as an intricate mosaic, with the trees and bushes varying in density, some tightly packed and some scattered. These areas are a haven for insects, birds and rarer plants.

The Rye Brook is clean and healthy, and its meanders and wet marshy areas provide an important reserve for wetland plants and animals.

Woodfield is a glorious flowery and varied hay meadow with singing skylarks.

A place for people

People are an integral part of Ashtead Common and it is a central part of the local community.

The Common is a safe, welcoming and accessible place for informal countryside recreation. Walkers, runners, horse riders, cyclists and other users make use of a limited network of surfaced tracks as well as the many unsurfaced paths, rides and firebreaks.

Scientific study

The Common is a place of scientific study where contributions are encouraged from students, amateur naturalists and professionals to increase understanding of ecosystems within the Common and beyond.

Cultural history

The history of the site is promoted, and heritage assets are protected and conserved appropriately according to their significance.

Ashtead Common is still productive. Local people benefit from products such as firewood, coppice goods and hay as long as this does not compromise management objectives.

96% of respondents agree with this vision.

2020 consultation



4.0 Aims and targets

The aims of the 2021-2031 management plan seek to maintain a biodiverse nature reserve and provide a direction of travel towards achieving the vision for the site.

The targets detailed here will be monitored throughout the plan and adjusted as needed to achieve the overall aims.

Each aim is linked to the governing document of the Ashtead Common charity, the Corporation of London (Open Spaces) Act 1878.

Aim 1: Biological

Maintain the biodiversity of Ashtead Common by managing habitats to favourable condition and achieving conservation gains that benefit the site and beyond.

Governing document link: preserve natural aspect, protect the timber and other trees, pollards, shrubs, underwood and herbage.

Aim 2: People

Encourage the sustainable use of Ashtead Common for recreation and promote community involvement in all aspects of the site.

Governing document link: commons acquired by the City to be kept as open spaces for the recreation and enjoyment of the public.

Aim 3: Estate assets and legal issues

Protect Ashtead Common and its users from harm. Fulfil legal obligations, challenge threats and maintain assets in good condition.

Governing document link: open spaces kept unclosed and unbuilt upon. Shall by all lawful means prevent, resist and abate inclosures, encroachments and buildings upon. The City may from time to time make and alter byelaws.

A definition of favourable condition

The conservation status of a habitat will be taken to be in a favourable condition when:

- ♦ the area that it covers is stable and increasing, and
- ♦ the specific structure and functions that are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist, and are likely to do so for the foreseeable future, and
- ♦ the condition of its typical species is favourable (as defined in article 1(i))

*From European Habitats Directive 1992
Article 1(e)*

4.1 Aim 1: Biological

Maintain the biodiversity of Ashtead Common by managing habitats to favourable condition and achieving conservation gains that benefit the site and beyond.

The elements of Ashtead Common are interdependent: habitats and species cannot be managed in isolation. In general, the stronger the nature reserve is in terms of habitat vigour and diversity, the more resilient it will be to the impact of outside influences such as climate change, pollution and habitat loss in surrounding areas.

4.1.1 Restoring wood pasture

Ashtead Common is a wood pasture system. Its three key elements are the ancient oak pollards, scrub and understory components, and the grassland communities growing beneath. Conserving these elements involves restoring features of the historic Common that gradually declined following the cessation of traditional wood pasture management practices. It is important to stress that wood pasture restoration is not an attempt to recreate history, but a long-term campaign to provide and maintain habitat for as many species as possible.

The targets in the following section all contribute towards the restoration of wood pasture.

Microhabitats

The management of wood pasture areas through grazing and occasional mechanical cutting aims to maintain a wide range of microhabitats for wildlife, such as those shown here.

- a) Dung; b) Standing undisturbed deadwood;
- c) Laying undisturbed deadwood;
- d) Flowering scrub; e) Unsurfaced rides;
- f) Areas of cropped grass with flowering plants;
- g) Scrub (bramble);
- h) Open water and localised poached areas.



4.1.2 Ancient oak pollards

Our aim is to keep the old pollards alive as long as possible to protect the associated plant, animal and fungal communities.

Research has shown that when pruning ancient oaks, cutting larger branches (over 30cm diameter), leaving long stubs and using rip cuts (a technique designed to mimic natural branch drop), promotes dieback. When this guidance is followed, Ashted Common's ancient oaks tend to respond well to pruning.



Guidelines for managing ancient trees

1: Factors influencing the timing and sequencing specified of tree works

The care of the living ancient trees should be considered a priority for management. Therefore, any works intended for the care of the ancient trees must be carried out with sensitivity and skill in order to have the intended effect on tree health. With this aim the following guidelines should be followed:

- ♦ No pruning works should be carried out on trees in the year following an exceptionally dry summer. In some cases, this may over-ride works scheduled as routine tree management. However, there may be particularly high public safety risk trees or trees posing a very high risk of structural failure that will have to be worked on during this period.
- ♦ Contractors should be aware of the vulnerability of ancient trees to hot and dry weather. It is recommended that there should be flexibility in their terms of contract to ensure that financial / contractual pressures do not lead to trees being worked on during exceptionally hot periods.
- ♦ The sequencing of management on the Common is informed by a system of 10 'Districts', discrete areas, each containing between 80 and 130 live ancient trees. Sequencing of operations by district enables managers to achieve efficiencies and consistency of management outcomes.
- ♦ Sequencing and timing of operations must remain flexible so that the management team can respond appropriately to environmental and other events and factors (e.g. drought, storms, instability of an individual tree). Where long term management plans are implemented, incorporation of flexibility within these plans is particularly important in the context of increasing frequency of extreme weather associated with climate change.
- ♦ Equally it is essential, in the context of long-term management that operatives who are appropriately experienced and qualified in ancient tree management are able, where necessary, to vary work specifications in response to factors such as changes in tree stability and vitality.

TreeWork Environmental Practice 2020 Ancient Tree Survey and Management Update

Guidelines for managing ancient trees contd.

2: Arisings from tree work operations

A system for managing arisings from tree surgery and halo management works has been adopted to provide greatest saproxylic habitat benefit while maintaining sufficient clear access for management teams. This method will be applied to future works and includes the following considerations:

- ♦ Arisings are managed by the team on the ground at the time that the works are carried out.
- ♦ Large limbs and stems, providing bulk deadwood habitat are left in situ.
- ♦ Small branches are moved to eco-piles so that they do not prevent bramble management
- ♦ Halo arisings are generally chipped.

3: Trees being managed to reduce shade from their crowns on ancient trees (high halo)

15 operations have been specified to pollard, thin the crowns of or prune back branches of trees that are shading ancient trees. The trees that these works are specified to be carried out to are younger trees than the ancient trees and many of them could, with the right management, become the ancients of the future providing succession and continuity of saproxylic habitat.

It is recommended that works to develop these trees as succession to the current ancient tree population should include:

- ♦ Recording and monitoring future pollards (not all high-haloed trees will become suitable pollards).
- ♦ Applying veteranisation / deadwood habitat formation techniques to the trees when carrying out specified pruning operations.

Treework Environmental Practice 2020 Ancient Tree Survey and Management Update

Target: prolong the lives of the ancient oak pollards.

Ancient tree work programme to be delivered. Approximately 40 trees to be worked on every year. Work will include pruning and clearing surrounding vegetation.

Achieved by:

- ♦ carrying out the work programme;
- ♦ being flexible to respond to adverse conditions like drought that might adversely impact results.

Target: protect tree roots.

Achieved by identifying the 20 ancient trees most vulnerable to root compaction and taking measures to minimise damage by:

- ♦ moving paths;
- ♦ making dead hedges to exclude people from the area around the tree;
- ♦ mulching (mindful that woodchip on saturated clay can quickly turn to porridge and exacerbate the problem).

4.1.3 New pollards

New pollards will be created to promote biodiversity by offering nuanced habitat variations, offering an element of continuity of habitat for species dependent on the ancient pollards that must, even with management, decline in vigour. Although these young pollards will not contain the decaying wood, fissures and cracks initially, they will develop them more quickly than an undamaged tree.

However, as recognised in the 2000-2005 Management Plan, 'a new generation of oak pollards [will not necessarily create] a new generation of ancient trees of the quality seen today.' If the pollards created now do eventually provide suitable habitat, it will not be for hundreds of years.

Although the cultural and landscape associations of pollarding on Ashted Common add weight to the argument to create and manage new pollards, it must be recognised that it is unlikely that the historic landscape of the Common will be perpetuated without the consistent, long-term application of centuries-old woodland management processes.

"The work we have seen taking place has richly benefitted the ecology of the woodland and benefited the local community."

2020 consultation

Target: create new pollards.

Create 100+ new oak pollards.

Achieved by:

- ♦ creating blocks of 5-10 new pollards each year; these new pollards will be tagged, recorded and mapped;
- ♦ creating new pollards as a by-product of halo release as the opportunity presents; these trees will also be recorded and mapped.

Target: retain other important trees.

Retain all trees (ie not just ancients) with good habitat or high aesthetic value, unless subject to over-riding safety issues.

Achieved by:

- ♦ visual and bat assessments carried out prior to any work on the tree;
- ♦ modifying work as needed to ensure no unnecessary loss of wildlife/aesthetic value.

Illustration of stages involved in establishing a new oak pollard, based on three models presented in Establishing Oak Pollards by Neville Fay of Treework Environmental Practice, January 2020.



4.1.4 Decaying wood

Keeping a large amount and varied types of decaying wood on Ashted Common is essential.

Decaying wood habitat is found within the living ancient oak pollards, the dead standing and fallen trees, branches, stems and twigs. It is important that decaying wood is present in a variety of locations across the Common, including the scrub/ grassland areas.

91% of respondents agree with our plans to manage oaks, create new pollards and artificially create veteran tree features.

2020 consultation

Target: provide decaying wood habitat.

Ashted Common to always have a good variety of types of decaying wood.

Achieved by:

- ♦ extending the life of the ancient oak pollards by implementing the 2020 ancient tree plan;
- ♦ retaining standing dead trees and dead branches on trees unless there is an over-riding safety reason for their removal;
- ♦ leaving fallen dead trees and branches in situ unless they are blocking access;
- ♦ leaving habitat piles of cut material following management work in places where they will not impede access or compromise future management activity;
- ♦ supporting the Veteranisation Project by safeguarding the veteranised trees and contributing to the ongoing monitoring.

Oaks Damaged to Save Threatened Species

This week an international trial began to evaluate the effects of five different ways to actively damage oaks to try and get young oaks to “age” more quickly. Natural damage which occurs on older oaks such as when branches break off or when the bark is damaged by animals and hollowing will be mimicked and followed up over a 25-year period. The aim of the trial is to gain knowledge on how Red Data Book (threatened) species such as fungi, insects, lichens, birds and bats associated with old oaks can be conserved in sites where there will be a lack of ancient oaks in the future. The work is being carried out by arborists.

At 16 sites in Sweden, one in Norway and three in England, 35 oaks per site (49 at Ashted) will be damaged during the autumn. The treated trees and the control oaks will be, in cooperation with different researchers from various universities, followed up both with regard to what happens to the trees and which species colonise the newly created habitats.

The lack of and loss of ancient oaks in the landscape, has resulted as a consequence of industrialisation of agriculture and forestry over the last decades. There is often a significant age gap between the few really ancient trees of 400 years plus and the next generation which may only be 80 to 100 years old. The “delivery time” – the time it takes to create an old oak which can contain threatened species is often 200 – 300 years.

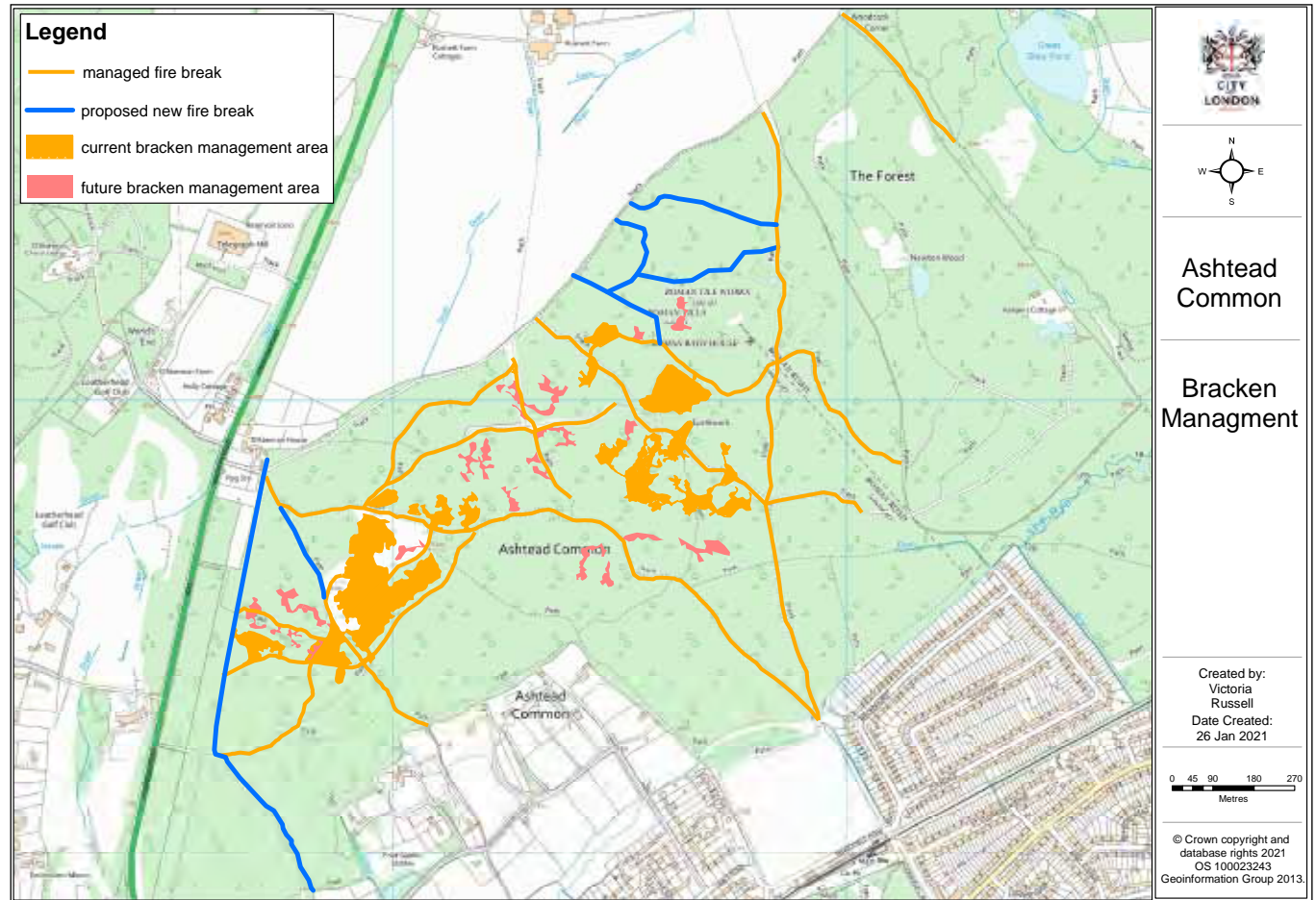
Press release Issued at the start of the 2012 -2037 Veteranisation Project

4.1.5 Bracken, firebreaks and rides

Target: control bracken.
Control bracken growth.

Achieved by:

- ♦ increase the area of bracken controlled by 2.8ha;
- ♦ application of bracken targeted herbicide in June/July;
- ♦ mow bracken areas in June/July
- ♦ selectively strim and rake areas where ant hills are present.



Above: Left unchecked, bracken rapidly shades out more fragile plants.

Right: Fire damage in 2015 - bracken control measures prevent the build up of dead and dry vegetation, limiting the spread and severity of fires.





Target: improve and maintain firebreaks and rides. Enhance the firebreak network.

Achieved by:

- ♦ increasing the firebreak network by 2,675 metres;
- ♦ maintaining the existing 8,480 metres of rides and firebreaks by mowing and controlling bracken;
- ♦ regularly mowing firebreaks and rides to maintain a low sward height across a 6m width .

94% of respondents agree with our plan to manage bracken and firebreaks.

2020 consultation

4.1.6 Grazing

The area grazed with cattle increased by 12ha during the 10 years of the previous management plan. Much of this increase occurred in incremental steps during the latter years of this period, and this is the aim going forward.

Additional areas have been identified for grazing, chosen because they either adjoin places that are currently grazed successfully and are therefore natural extensions, or are already structurally suited to grazing with a mix of open and enclosed areas containing ancient trees.

Initially grazing will follow the same model as previous years, using temporary electric fencing and a relatively small group of cattle that are moved between enclosures.

However, the long-term goal is to achieve extensive whole site grazing, and this might be achievable during the lifetime of this plan as invisible or virtual fencing technology advances.

85% of respondents agree with our plan to expand grazing.

2020 consultation

With this in mind, the new grazing areas collectively form a layout that can be adapted for invisible fencing as and when the time comes.

Cows are assessed for temperament before being turned out on site, and the herd is frequently checked and managed to reduce risk to the public. Signage is deployed near the temporary grazing enclosure and further back from it to alert people to the presence of grazing animals and advise on appropriate dog control.



Target: increase the area grazed.

Achieved by:

- ♦ increasing the area of Ashted Common grazed by 23ha, extending above Footpath 25 on the western boundary, between CR1/Footpath 31 and CR2 in the centre of the Common, and below Footpath 25 at the south-western corner of Newton Wood;
- ♦ rotating a single small herd of around 8-12 cattle between grazing areas (not all areas will be grazed every year);
- ♦ containing cattle within temporary enclosures that are erected and dismantled as the animals are moved;
- ♦ checking animals at least once a day;
- ♦ where possible, using breeds that are suited to conservation grazing; no supplemental feeding and limiting the use of spot-on treatments and wormers to assessed need;
- ♦ working with our grazing partner to monitor the development of invisible fencing systems and instigate trials if a robust, safe and low-input system is developed ;
- ♦ if trials of invisible fencing are successful, developing and implementing a plan to graze as much of the Common as possible.

Legend

Rights of Way

Permissive Horse Ride

Public Bridleway

Public Footpath

grazing areas

existing grazing areas

grazing extension areas

District 3

Aspen North

Oak North

Oak Central

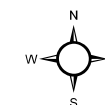
Oak South

Pine East



Ashtead Common

Grazing Areas



Created by:
Victoria
Russell
Date Created:
26 Jan 2021

0 60 120 240 360
Metres

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database rights 2021
OS 100023243
Geoinformation Group 2013.

4.1.7 Woodland

Primarily the areas of close canopy woodland on Ashted Common are maintained in association with the work to protect ancient oak pollards. Clearing competing vegetation from around the ancients involves coppicing and pollarding, and the management of bramble and holly. Therefore, much of the work to maintain woodland follows the district-based rotation of the ancient tree schedule. Some blocks of woodland without many ancient oaks receive minimal input and have in effect become non-intervention areas.

Arguably the hazel on Ashted Common is not a significant habitat type but coppicing it does present opportunities to enhance transitional zones for the benefit of insects, birds and ground flora. It may also benefit dormice.



Target: manage woodland.

Achieved by:

- ♦ halo release around ancient oak pollards as prescribed in the ancient tree management plan;
- ♦ coppicing hazel stands on rotation;
- ♦ grazing within areas of closed canopy woodland;
- ♦ manage transitional zone (ecotone); interface between woodland and other habitats by coppicing and scalloping woodland edge;
- ♦ removal of non-native species like Turkey oak.



4.1.8 Scrub

Scrub is maintained using proactive management techniques to largely suppress the establishment of trees and promote continuous scrub growth. The exception to this is where a small number of potential oak pollards of the future are identified (and subsequently managed) within the scrub areas. This concession recognises that scrub provides a nursery for the oak which can in turn provide structural diversity and localised shade.

Half the area should be covered by scrub blocks of varying ages between 0 and 15 years old, and the other half should be open grassland comprising some parts kept permanently open, including rides, paths and glades, and transitory areas of grass that form and exist temporarily within recently cleared blocks.

Cutting rotations vary so that scrub blocks are cut at different ages between 8 and 15 years.

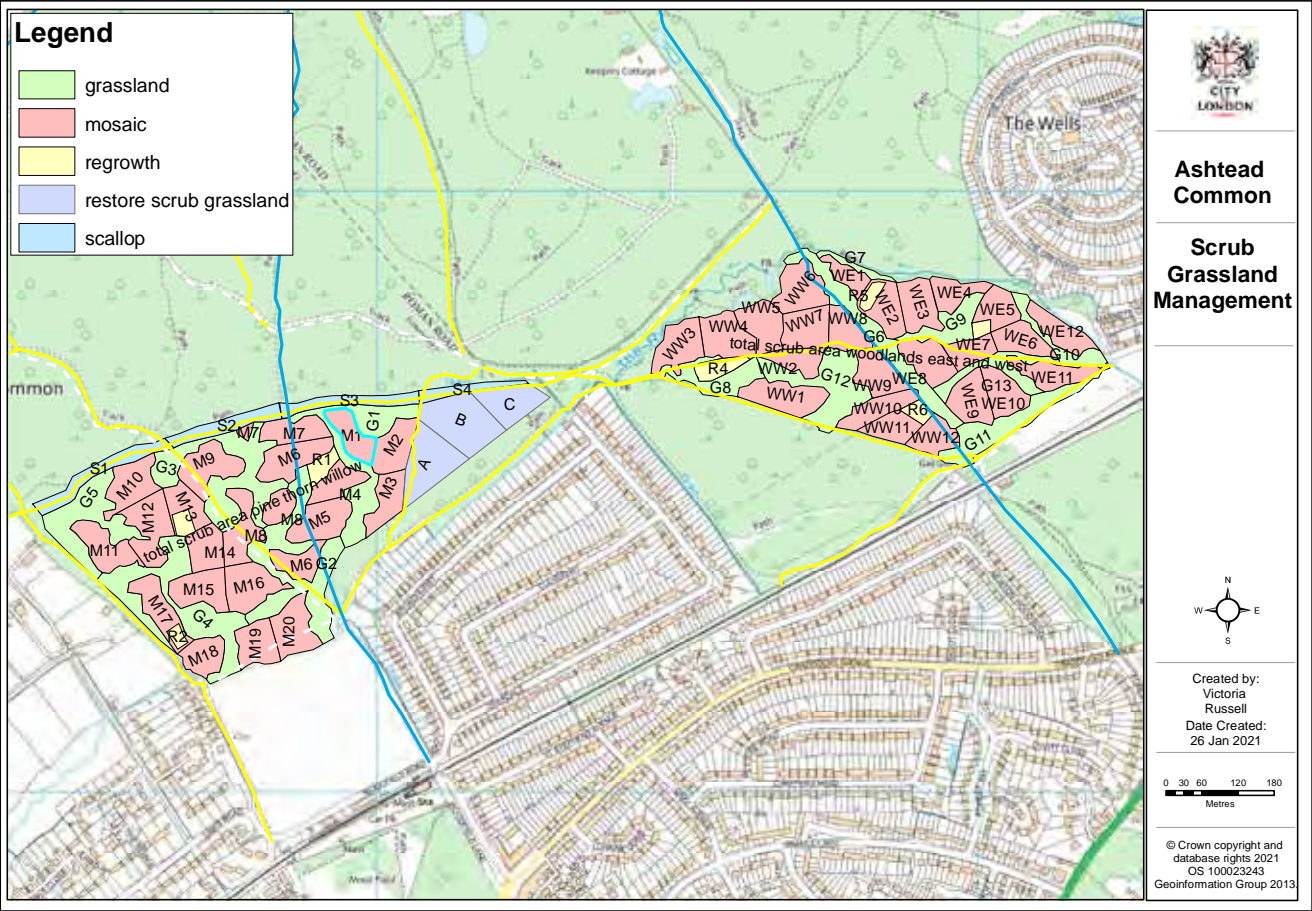
Birds that nest in scrub often require a vigorous field layer margin skirting the scrub block to protect low and vulnerable nests.

Many of the insect species associated with scrub specialise in the decaying wood component, and these insects need ready access to nectar and pollens. This highlights the need for a well-maintained mosaic that includes standing and fallen dead wood and a well-structured interface between scrub, grassland and woodland.

Although the cutting rotation is prescribed in this document, a decision must be taken each year to ensure the appropriateness of the work. This should include a review of the previous years' species data, and if necessary, a change of tack to avoid compromising active breeding locations. Consideration must also be given to the impact that practical management might have on active and ongoing survey work, particularly butterfly transects.

The rotation is designed to give the correct mix of habitat elements overall, with each block typically comprising:

- a small proportion of retained old scrub;
- a few perching trees (possibly the pollards for the future);
- significant areas of cut scrub that will be allowed to regrow;
- transitory patches of grassland (stump-ground areas) that might scrub-over very quickly or in places might hold-out a bit longer due to grazing.



Guidance for managing grass within scrub areas

Permanent grassland within the scrub grassland areas should receive only just enough management intervention to prevent it from succeeding to scrub. Grazing will contribute, but there will often be a need for mechanical intervention as well. Typically, this will involve using a tractor mounted mower set for a high cut, but sensitive areas (for example around ant hills) could be brush cut. Removing saplings by hand and treating cut stumps with herbicide to prevent regrowth are also techniques to consider.

It is important not to mow right up to the edge of scrub blocks to retain a skirt of rank vegetation around them.

In the absence of effective grazing, mechanically cutting areas of permanent grassland is preferable to not managing them at all.



Target: increase the area of scrub managed.

Achieved by:

- ♦ encourage regrowth of dense blocks of young scrub that are at least 0.5ha in size where secondary growth has been cleared;
- ♦ bringing an additional 3.1ha of mature scrub/ secondary woodland into the scrub grassland rotation;
- ♦ manage an additional 1.57ha of transitional zone (ecotone) interface between the scrub and other habitats by scalloping woodland edges.

4.1.9 Grassland - Woodfield

Skylarks often nest on Woodfield so grass cutting cannot commence until the chicks have fledged. This will inevitably favour species that prefer a later cut in the summer.



Target: manage Woodfield as a hay meadow.

Achieved by:

- ♦ cutting the grass on rotation and removing the cuttings;
- ♦ review of cutting rotation when NVC survey is complete;
- ♦ preventing scrub encroachment.

4.1.10 Wetland

The Ashtead Common ponds generally receive minimal intervention



Hazel hurdles will be used to create dog exclusion areas in selected ponds.

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Target: manage and maintain wetland habitats.

Achieved by:

- ♦ manage and maintain riparian zones to control flood risk and promote diversity;
- ♦ inspection of the dam and flow control structure by a Supervising Engineer twice a year;
- ♦ cut grass and control vegetation growth around flow control structure;
- ♦ review pond maintenance regimes and explore options for the creation of one additional pond during the lifetime of the plan;
- ♦ create small dog exclusion areas within selected ponds.

Reed bed filtration system project

Water from a surface water catchment covering a large part of Ashtead enters the Rye Brook at Two Bridges, feeding the River Mole, the largest tributary of the Thames. This surface water outfall has been identified as the single worst source of pollution along the course of the Rye Brook, introducing contaminated road water and waste either poured into drains or from illegal connections into the watercourse.

We have a design for a natural reed bed filtration system that will not only treat the pollution before it enters the Rye Brook but also turn a small corner of Woodfield into a wetland habitat that will enhance biodiversity. The design ensures it will not increase the risk of flooding upstream.

Such a project offers opportunities for partnership working and community involvement. If it happens, there will be some disruption during construction, but in the long term this project will improve water quality in the Rye, Mole and Thames, an issue that must be addressed.

This project will be expensive and can only happen if external funding is secured.

93% of respondents agree with our plan to create a reed bed.

2020 consultation

4.1.11 Monitoring and research

Conducting research is a statutory role under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. This duty is reinforced by the related NNR standard that requires that research be promoted, and knowledge shared.

A hierarchy of monitoring and research activities are supported, ranging from individual student projects to professionally conducted international studies. Local community volunteers are engaged in monitoring wildlife populations, either through directly supported surveys on behalf of the City, or indirectly supported initiatives under the umbrella of other organisations like the British Trust for Ornithology or Surrey Wildlife Trust.



It is vital to structure and coordinate these various studies carefully to ensure that the right things are being researched in the right way.

Most research is focussed on the ancient trees and the species associated with them. However, there remain gaps in our knowledge, particularly in relation to bats, flies, fungi and the impact of climate change, pollution and other human derived pressures on ecosystems.

Consequently, it is necessary to plan a programme of monitoring and research over the next 10 years to maintain the continuity of ongoing or periodic research programmes, whilst scheduling research aimed at filling knowledge gaps.

There is already a lot of data on file from surveys conducted over many years. Currently this information is dispersed, and there is a need to establish a comprehensive inventory.



Target: monitor and research the ecology of Ashted Common.

Achieved by:

- ♦ implementing a 10-year schedule for survey and monitoring (see section 5);
- ♦ recording work carried out, particularly in relation to that funded by Countryside Stewardship;
- ♦ supporting volunteers and other organisations undertaking monitoring and recording;
- ♦ commissioning comprehensive professional level surveys targeted at knowledge gaps or to maintain continuity of data (e.g. in relation to ancient tree health);
- ♦ maintaining important species map for notable species;
- ♦ casual recording of species presence;
- ♦ maintaining a list of possible student projects;
- ♦ monitoring for pests and diseases;
- ♦ constructing a comprehensive inventory and safe, accessible storage of survey data.

Far left: Scientific research into bat activity response to management.

Left: Overnight moth-trapping using light traps.

4.1.12 Targets in response to climate change

In addition to the overall mission to conserve biodiversity and maintain the resilience of the Common, some specific targets linked to climate change have been developed.

Target: adapt to climate change.

Achieved by:

- ♦ reducing the habitat management season by two weeks so that cutting ceases by February 15;
- ♦ replacing hydrocarbon powered vehicles and machinery;
- ♦ review disposal of green waste to reduce amount burnt by 30% by 2026;
- ♦ keep management policies under review.

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Although the scale of climate change can feel overwhelming, everything we do to mitigate rising carbon levels and protect biodiversity is important.

Above: Grazing is a low impact, sustainable management technique that promotes biodiversity.

Left: Management decisions can be made that promote and protect biodiversity, e.g. continuing the use of burning platforms so that management work doesn't damage soils or ground vegetation.

Right: Our ancient trees and woodland lock up carbon, produce oxygen and absorb pollution.



4.2 Aim 2: People

Encourage the sustainable use of Ashted Common for recreation and promote community involvement in all aspects of the site.

Ashted Common is protected forever for people to enjoy by virtue of the Corporation of London (Open Spaces) Act 1878. The Act allows people access to Ashted Common for recreation. Byelaws made under the Act regulate activity to protect the Common and its visitors.

The 1878 Act, together with a 2018 update, permit some other types of activity, such as organised events and some forms of commercial activity to occur under license.

The following section uses the criteria of the Green Flag Award scheme to assess service delivery in relation to people.



4.2.1 A welcoming place

Because there are many places to access Ashted Common there is no single main entrance point.

Each point of entry has a notice board to display information to visitors, including a map of the site. The current map was developed by community volunteers in 2012 and is designed to clearly show where visitors can walk and ride around the Common. Each map panel indicates if cycling and riding are permitted from that point of entry. The map is also available online and from a leaflet dispenser at the Ashted Estate Office.



Information boards at main entrance points have small A4 sized cabinets attached to them to display key safety messages. The information displayed in these is rotated regularly to keep it fresh, and covers topics such as fire, fragile trees, OPM and Lyme disease.

Three kilometres of path have been surfaced. Although there is no circular surfaced route around Ashted Common, the network of surfaced tracks provides through routes linking residential areas to Epsom Common, Princes Coverts (across the A243 Kingston Road) and countryside beyond. Generally, paths are surfaced to a width of 2.75 metres, giving people plenty of space and reducing the potential for conflict between user groups on the busiest routes.

Surfaced routes provide year-round access for wheelchairs and mobility scooters. Main entrances are generally not gated. Accessible gates are installed in places where there is gated access onto the Common.

Grazing is managed using a series of temporary enclosures that are erected immediately prior to the animals arriving and taken down when they move on. This means that only relatively small areas are fenced at any one time. Accessible gates are installed on footpaths that cross the temporary enclosures, and 'squeezes' allow access at points where unofficial desire line paths cross the fence line.

Target: maintain Ashtead Common as a welcoming place.

Achieved by:

- ♦ regular Ranger patrolling to provide a visual presence and interaction with visitors;
- ♦ printing and distributing the site leaflet (map also available online);
- ♦ keeping paths and rides clear of encroaching vegetation and regularly mown;
- ♦ maintaining dead hedges and finger post signs to demarcate footpaths;
- ♦ providing and maintaining surface paths;
- ♦ providing and maintaining gates that can be used by people with wheelchairs and pushchairs;
- ♦ closing the unsurfaced concessionary rides only when ground conditions deteriorate, and reopening them as soon as conditions allow (rather than using arbitrary calendar dates);
- ♦ tackling particularly troublesome parts of the unsurfaced path network to improve access.

Target: provide appropriate signage.

Achieved by:

- ♦ limiting the use of signage to situations where it achieves a clear purpose;
- ♦ providing and maintaining on-site signage and way-markers;
- ♦ keeping information relevant and up to date;
- ♦ regularly rotating the safety messages displayed in the A4 cabinets attached to main notice boards;
- ♦ using temporary signs (including those about grazing) before and after habitat work, and removing them before they get tired;
- ♦ using accessible language that focuses on positive behaviour e.g. 'thank you for taking your litter home' rather than 'do not drop litter'.



Muddy paths

Ashtead Common's muddiness is to be celebrated as the reason for its existence and survival. However, it does mean that much of the path network is hard to traverse in the autumn and winter months.

Section 1.7.2 explains why there are not more surfaced paths on the Common, and section 2.5 explains why it is not drained.

Particularly troublesome wet spots can be addressed, as long as alternative wetland habitat is created in the process. An example of this is Shaun's Puddle created in 2016 to improve access on CR1. Material to fill a depression was obtained by digging a small pond next to the ride. The ground immediately surrounding the area could then be drained into the pond.



83% of respondents agree that no more paths should be surfaced, other than to deal with localised problem areas.

2020 consultation

4.2.2 Healthy, safe and secure

The City has a strong safety culture and safety systems are imbedded in all aspects of work covered by this plan.

At the heart of the operation is a team of four Rangers working a rota to ensure seven-day cover with provision to respond to incidents and emergencies out of hours. Rangers regularly patrol the Common to assist visitors and advise on behaviour in relation to the byelaws.

Beyond that is a range of safety planning, inspections and systems that transcend all areas of operation to ensure that Ashted Common is a safe place to visit and work.

As a countryside site managed under legislation that requires the protection of the natural aspect (and one of the City's more recent acquisitions, unbounded by the expectations of the past as described in section 1.4) the provision of facilities on Ashted Common is limited. However, such features as surfaced paths, benches, gates, way-markers and fences are regularly inspected and kept in good order.

“We are very grateful for having access to the Common during the pandemic and have discovered areas we did not know.”

2020 consultation

Far right: Monolith tree survey, tree safety inspection.

Target: ensure Ashted Common is a healthy, safe and secure place.

Achieved by:

- ♦ maintaining a dedicated Ranger team working seven days a week and permanently on call for incidents and emergencies;
- ♦ regular patrols to assist visitors and advise on behaviour in relation to byelaws;
- ♦ system of incident recording, and incident reports shared with Police as required;
- ♦ emergency planning information and maps kept up to date and shared with the emergency services (the fire and ambulance services have keys to the site);
- ♦ robust system of tree safety inspections (see section 4.3);
- ♦ probability of collapse assessment for all ancient oak pollards completed in 2020;
- ♦ risk-based approach to managing Oak Processionary Moth infestation;
- ♦ systematic approach to managing Lyme disease risk;
- ♦ audits of countryside furniture conducted every six months;
- ♦ dog bins provided to control dog fouling.



4.2.3 Well-maintained and clean

Work across several areas of activity contributes towards the achievement of the Green Flag Award scheme standards. This work is explained throughout the plan. The relevant targets in relation to 'well maintained and clean' are summarised here. For some targets, reference is made to the sections of the plan that give more detail.

Littering and fly-tipping are not significant issues on Ashted Common. When incidents do occur, they are dealt with promptly by the Ranger team. Members of the local community often assist with litter picking.



Target: ensure that Ashted Common is well maintained and clean.

Achieved by:

- ♦ defining industry standards of arboricultural maintenance through research and practice;
- ♦ ancient tree programme with individual management prescriptions for each ancient tree (See section 4.1.3);
- ♦ programme of tree safety assessments using a zoned risk-based approach (see section 4.3.1);
- ♦ safety assessments of standing dead trees;
- ♦ litter picking patrols conducted at least twice a week;
- ♦ dog bins emptied twice a week;
- ♦ graffiti removed within a week;
- ♦ offensive graffiti removed within 24 hours;
- ♦ damage caused by vandalism made safe within 24 hours;
- ♦ grass verges areas cut 10 times a year between March and October;
- ♦ residential boundaries regularly inspected and trimmed yearly (see 4.3.5);
- ♦ bridge inspections and maintenance undertaken by the City's Department for the Built Environment (see 4.3.3);
- ♦ dam inspection conducted twice a year by a Panel Engineer (see section 4.3.4);
- ♦ Asset Management Plan overseen by the City of London Corporation's Surveyors Department (covers built structures including heritage assets).



4.2.4 Community involvement

Ashted Common has benefitted from significant levels of community involvement for over 30 years. During the lifetime of the preceding management plan the Common averaged 6,500 hours of volunteer participation a year.

This comprised contributions from: the Ashted Common Volunteers, a directly managed conservation work group; the Lower Mole Countryside Partnership; TCV; Surrey Archaeological Society; and corporate volunteer groups. It also included contributions from people engaged in surveying and monitoring and other tasks that contributed to achievements above and beyond core management tasks.

The aim is to maintain a high degree of community involvement during the next 10 years. This means keeping opportunities for engagement relevant, worthwhile and effective. If budgets continue to decrease and less can be done by staff and contractors, the importance of volunteering may increase. However, this can only happen if the existing model evolves and new ways are created for people to be involved.



Target: support at least 5,000 hours of community involvement a year.

Achieved by:

- ♦ leading a programme of regular activities for the Ashted Common Volunteers;
- ♦ holding one meeting and one site visit for the Ashted Common Consultative Group each year;
- ♦ offering a range of activities to involve the community in all aspects of our work – practical work, surveying, events and education, interpretation, administration, rangering;
- ♦ continuing to involve the Lower Mole Partnership, TCV and other volunteer organisations in the management of Ashted Common;
- ♦ seeking opportunities to promote diversity;
- ♦ reviewing volunteering to ensure it is providing the most effective and efficient way for people to contribute towards the management priorities of Ashted Common;
- ♦ planning and delivering projects that include opportunities for community involvement (reed bed project p43 and Roman Villa project p 53).

4.2.5 Marketing and communication

Applying the concept of marketing to Ashted Common means understanding the Common's significance and the benefits it provides for people and society at large. These elements can then be communicated via key messages aimed at:

- ♦ promoting the benefits people enjoy from visiting Ashted Common (as distinct from promoting Ashted Common to attract more visitors);
- ♦ highlighting the significance of Ashted Common, its history and ecological importance (sense of place);
- ♦ describing the physical evidence of our work (the benefits of management for wildlife and people, including ecosystem services that benefit latent needs);
- ♦ providing information for people to safely enjoy their visit and respect the nature reserve to keep it safe from harm.



95% of respondents agree with these key messages.
2020 consultation

Key messages

- ♦ Ashted Common is a special place, and the plants, animals and fungi that make it special are only here because it is carefully looked after.
- ♦ There is nowhere else quite like it – it's amazing.
- ♦ Nature is important to all of us, we wouldn't survive without it.
- ♦ There are many threats to wildlife in general and there are particular threats to Ashted Common.
- ♦ The City of London Corporation funds and maintains Ashted Common (which is a registered charity) using staff who are skilled at what they do.
- ♦ This is of direct benefit to local people and to the wider world.
- ♦ Visitors and others can help us to keep Ashted Common special.
- ♦ People visiting Ashted Common need to stay safe and respect the nature reserve to keep it safe from harm.
- ♦ People can help by financially supporting the Ashted Common charity.

Target Groups

All visitors should be offered key information about Ashted Common to aid their visit e.g. map, safety information (OPM, Lyme disease, fragile trees) and the unique and special nature of the reserve.

Interpretative material should be written so as to be accessible to a wide range of people, **including young people of school age**.

The **local community** needs to know that their continued love of Ashted Common and involvement in its care are crucial to its future. They must be reassured that the City of London Corporation shares their passion for protecting the site.

Ashted Common is outside of London and is not visited frequently by **City of London Staff and elected Members**. Ensuring their understanding of the issues around the management of the nature reserve is important in ensuring financial and other support.

The **Ashted Common Consultative Group** helps elected Members make decisions about the Common as well as liaising with the wider community. Keeping the group up-to-date on key issues is valuable to all.

Face to face contact: a regular staff presence offers both reassurance and a point of contact for many people. Face-to-face conversations are an effective way to target and deliver key messages to visitors.

Target: maintain a visible Ranger presence.**Achieved by:**

- ♦ a minimum of two patrols each week and a 24 hour over 365 day on-call facility;
 - ♦ Rangers to adopt a friendly approach using the four E's technique of -
 - engage
 - explain
 - encourage
 - escalate (to Police if necessary);
 - ♦ targeted pop-up activities focusing on specific issues;
- Meet the Ranger sessions delivered as part of the events programme.

Virtual contact

As this plan moves towards its expiry date in 2031 this might seem like a statement of the obvious, but many people receive their information, and form opinions based on electronic media. Ashtead Common maintains a presence on Facebook and Twitter, and it is likely that communicating with people using these platforms (and similar as they develop and change) will become increasingly important.

Visitor information is available via the City's website, but increasingly this is becoming a prospectus rather than an archive of information. Consequently, it will be necessary to develop new and innovative ways to convey detailed site and subject specific information.

For example, the opportunity to interpret the Roman Villa and Tileworks using augmented reality could be realised as part of a project to increase awareness of this important heritage asset.

Ashtead Common currently part-funds a post based elsewhere within The Commons Division to assist with interpretation and communications. It is likely that this arrangement will need revising as the demand for this area of activity increases.

It is also important that printed material, particularly the site map, remains readily available.

Target: optimise virtual interaction.**Achieved by:**

- ♦ maintaining communications via social media;
- ♦ producing a monthly electronic newsletter for subscribers;
- ♦ considering implications of resourcing social media communication within the Commons Division;
- ♦ producing site and subject specific material for electronic and physical distribution;
- ♦ providing a site map leaflet and keep office dispenser topped-up;
- ♦ seeking opportunities to interpret the Roman Villa and Tileworks.



Roman Villa project

Surrey Archaeological Society completed on-site investigations of Ashted's Roman Villa and Tileworks in 2013. Since then, work has continued behind the scenes to research and interpret the findings.

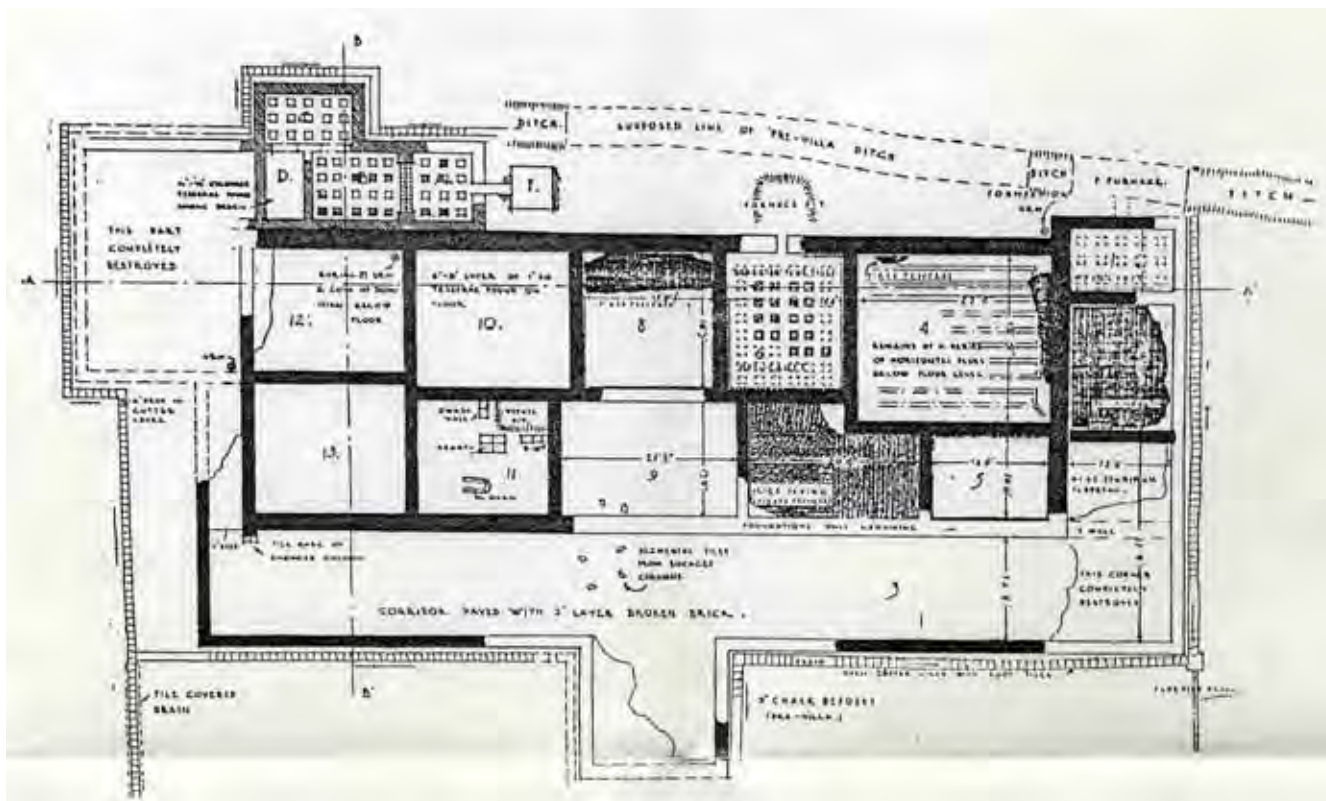
During the period of the next management plan we would like to share what we have learnt about Ashted's Roman (and Iron Age) past with visitors and the local community.

Such a project might use virtual reality and electronic media to bring the story alive. It might also have an educational element and opportunities for community involvement.

This project will need external funding to realise its potential.



Plan of the tile kiln.



88% of respondents support this project proposal.

"I've always wanted to know more about the hugely significant history of the common."

2020 consultation

4.2.6 Activities and events

Events on the Common tend to be small-scale Ranger-led activities such as guided walks. Often these are themed around nature and the work of the Ranger team. Events focussed on the Roman Villa and Tileworks are often popular, and exploration of the built heritage can be linked to the cultural heritage of the historic landscape.

The Common does not lend itself to large static events such as festivals and fairs due to the lack of infrastructure and suitable space.

When larger events like cross country runs do occur, they tend to be organised by others under license. The City of London (Open Spaces) Act 2018 allows events to take place but requires a local policy to control them to protect the open space. Ashted Common's policy limits the number of people that can attend an organised event to 250 and directs organisers of events with over 50 participants to the late summer and early autumn months when there is less chance of disturbing wildlife but before ground conditions deteriorate.

Under the 2018 Act, charges can be levied for licensing events and commercial activities.

Target: provide and facilitate events.

Achieved by:

- ♦ a Ranger-led programme of 12 low-key events a year;
- ♦ hosting one or two larger events each year that support conservation aims or provide healthy outdoor recreational opportunities and/or community benefit;
- ♦ hosting meetings for specialist groups at no cost if their visit contributes to a greater understanding of Ashted Common's ecology;
- ♦ at least outreach six talks a year to local clubs and societies;
- ♦ promoting Ashted Common at two external events a year, such as Ashted Village Day;
- ♦ promoting events through a variety of media and using electronic booking;
- ♦ exploring options for charging for events using authority given by the 2018 Act.



10K run, Ashted Common.

4.2.7 Educational visits, work experience and student studies

Ashted Common is a great place to learn about the wonders, complexity and fragility of nature. It naturally provides places for learning and play without the need for artificial enhancement. The Common can function as an outdoor classroom for a range of studies and activities.

The Ranger team responds positively to requests by schools, colleges and youth groups to provide educational sessions on site whenever possible.

Work experience can be accommodated within safeguarding constraints. Anyone under the age of 18 is considered vulnerable, but it is often possible to introduce controls to facilitate placements.

Undergraduate and postgraduate studies of Ashted Common are encouraged and supported, often through links with higher education establishments.



Target: provide opportunities for formal learning.

Achieved by:

- ♦ responding positively to requests to provide educational activities;
- ♦ supporting visits by schools and educational establishments;
- ♦ guiding educational and youth organisations on the safe use of the Common in relation to specific hazards such as ticks (Lyme disease), OPM and fragile trees;
- ♦ widening and regularly mowing paths and rides to reduce tick contacts;
- ♦ providing work experience placements when safeguarding measures are possible;
- ♦ advising students on possible topics for study;
- ♦ exploring the introduction of a scheme to license commercial activity to allow forest school activities within constraints necessary to protect the Common (e.g. no fires).

“ It is amazing to fully understand how much goes into its management and preservation!”

2020 consultation

Fungi identification walk.

4.2.8 Liaison with other public open spaces

Ashted Common shares its SSSI designation with neighbouring Epsom Common, and regular liaison with Epsom and Ewell Borough Council is maintained via a SSSI Forum that also includes Natural England, Epsom Common Association and the Lower Mole Partnership.

Part of Ashted Common is owned by Mole Valley District Council, within whose boundary the whole Common lies. It is therefore important to liaise closely with the authority. This is achieved in part through the Ashted Common Consultative Group, but also via links at officer level.

Target: maintain good working relationships with other public open spaces.

Achieved by:

- ♦ attending and chairing (on rotation) the Epsom and Ashted Commons SSSI forum;
- ♦ holding one meeting and one site visit for the Ashted Common Consultative Group each year;
- ♦ contributing to the work of the River Mole Catchment Partnership in relation to the Rye Brook.

4.3 Aim 3: Estate and asset management

Protect Ashted Common and its users from harm. Fulfil legal obligations, challenge threats and maintain assets in good condition.

4.3.1 Tree safety

The tree safety strategy for Ashted Common takes full account of the conservation importance of the site.

The inspection process should not lead to a loss of character or species diversity. Rather, it should assist the management process ensuring that, as far as reasonably practicable, balance is maintained between conservation and risk management. Accordingly, the following principles are applied:

- Standing dead timber is an important resource and is left wherever possible. Dead trees are 'reduced' if safety work is necessary.
- Limbs or timber felled are left *in situ* wherever possible.
- The presence of fungal bodies on trees is not to be taken as an automatic indication that the tree is dangerous but may act as an indicator that further, detailed, inspection is required.
- When considering remedial action to reduce risk, due consideration is given to removing the target from the hazard wherever possible.

Zoning

Zoning is an important part of managing tree risk. Each part of the Common is divided into one of three risk zones.

ZONE	FREQUENCY
High risk Main public areas, properties, roads, easy access routes etc.	Annually in autumn/winter (any trees retained noted to have defects but not felled - inspected every six months)
Medium risk Other areas frequented by the public not included above	At least every two years (retained trees every 12 months)
Low risk	During normal routine patrols
High and medium risk zones following a storm event (winds gusting 45 mph+)	Areas inspected as soon as practicable after the event (usually next day but always within five days)

Target: manage tree safety.

Achieved by:

- ♦ using a risk-based approach and a zoning system;
- ♦ annual review of the tree inspection (zoning) map;
- ♦ carrying out a documented tree hazard inspection regime;
- ♦ using experienced inspectors trained to Professional Tree Inspector level
- ♦ only recording trees with defects;
- ♦ prioritising work identified in inspections;
- ♦ inspecting after storm events;
- ♦ recording tree failures;
- ♦ survey and monitoring, particularly in relation to ancient trees.



4.3.2 Historic features

There are two Scheduled Monuments on Ashted Common. A feature listed (1005955) in 1925 as 'Camp in Ashted Forest' is actually the site of an Iron Age settlement. This feature is often shown on maps as 'Earthworks'.

The 'Roman Villa in Ashted Forest' was listed in 1934 (1003753). The areas designated exclude many of the features subsequently discovered, including the Tileworks.

These areas do however benefit from the protection afforded the whole Common under the 1878 Act.

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Currently the management of Scheduled Monuments and associated heritage assets involves managing the vegetation growing over them to limit root damage. In future years this might involve the use of livestock, but this is not envisaged during the lifetime of this plan unless a suitable virtual fence system is adopted (see 4.1.6).



Target: conserve and protect heritage assets.

Achieved by:

- ♦ producing a management statement for the Villa, Earthworks and Tileworks to guide conservation;
- ♦ defining a heritage management zone to include the Scheduled Monuments, Tileworks, Proto Villa and Well to target work to interpret, manage and protect features;
- ♦ producing interpretative signage for heritage features (see also Roman Villa project p55);
- ♦ patrolling and enforcing byelaws to protect heritage features;
- ♦ conserving and storing artefacts in good condition;
- ♦ maintaining the Coal Tax posts (see overleaf);
- ♦ managing vegetation.



Coal Tax posts

A tax on coal entering London was introduced following the Great Fire in 1666 to fund the rebuilding of the City. The tax continued for many years, and in 1861 the boundary at which the tax became payable was defined as the Metropolitan Police District and the City. About 280 posts were installed to mark the point within which duty was payable so that nobody could claim ignorance of the tax.

Almost 200 Coal Tax posts survive, including three on Ashted Common. Their existence on site is coincidental to the City's ownership of the Common.



4.3.3 Bridges

The main bridges on Ashted Common are inspected and maintained by the City's Department for the Built Environment, which also maintains the City's bridges over the Thames. The Two Bridges were strengthened in 2018 to achieve a load rating of 18 tonnes (axle limit of 11.5 tonnes). Woodlands Road Bridge is due to be strengthened in 2012. When the work is completed it will have a load rating of 40 tonnes. The bridges over the Rye Brook at the end of The Common and Overdale are rated at 7.5 tonnes.

Target: maintain bridges.

Achieved by:

- ♦ routinely inspecting bridges at The Common, Two Bridges, Overdale, Woodlands Road and The Greenway;
- ♦ monitoring of smaller structures like Adam's Bridge and The Greenway boardwalk carried out during site audits every six months.

"It is a truly special place, especially considering it is inside the M25. Well done to all the hard work that goes into keeping it in such good condition."

2020 consultation

Right: Rye Brook Dam and Flow Control Structure.
(see overleaf)



4.3.4 Rye Brook dam and flow control structure

The Rye Brook dam was installed in 2004 and designed to cope with a 1 in 100-year storm event. At capacity, the complex will not hold the 25,000 cubic metres of water needed for it to constitute a reservoir under the Reservoirs Act 1975. However, because of the potential for damage to downstream property if the structure were to fail, the City manages the dam as if it were a reservoir under the 1975 Act.

A Supervising Engineer inspects the dam twice a year. Typical maintenance requirements include managing vegetation to ensure it does not impede water flow.

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Target: maintain Rye Brook dam.

Achieved by:

- ♦ inspection by a Supervising Engineer twice a year;
- ♦ management of vegetation to ensure channel and overspill area are not impeded.

“ We have lived in Ashtead for 25 years and have been impressed with the work over the last decade which has opened up areas of the common and increased diversity.”

2020 consultation

4.3.5 Residential boundaries

Boundaries with neighbouring residential properties are managed according to set criteria to ensure safety and consistency. Managing for light and views are not generally considered appropriate reasons to undertake work.

Generally, homeowners are not permitted access across the Common to maintain their properties, although exceptions are sometimes granted if the work benefits the Common or its visitors – for example tree safety work.

Criteria for managing vegetation along residential boundaries

Protection: to maintain the legal tenure of Ashtead Common.

Biodiversity: to remove any “undesirable species”.

Tree Safety: to improve access for carrying out tree safety inspections and works.

Fire: reduce the risk of fire crossing the residential boundary.

Flooding: clearing trees & shrubs from the banks of streams and ditches.

Access: to maintain access for routine maintenance and patrols.



Target: Manage residential boundaries.

Achieved by:

- ♦ regularly patrolling and inspecting (including tree safety);
- ♦ periodic strimming (usually under contract) to maintain access;
- ♦ using set criteria to determine requests to manage vegetation;
- ♦ granting annually renewing licence agreements to allow neighbours direct access onto the Common (or place one end of a bridge upon the Common where a ditch or the Rye Brook delineate the boundary);
- ♦ only permitting under licence access across the Common to the rear of properties for maintenance if the proposed work benefits the Common or its visitors (tree safety for example).

4.3.6 Built assets

Many of the built structures on Ashtead Common are maintained by the City Surveyors Department and are listed in a 20-year plan for periodic maintenance and replacement. Assets managed this way include the Ashtead Estate Office, entrance barriers, corporate sign (image) boards and built heritage features including the Scheduled Monuments. Some built assets are not currently managed by the Surveyors Department, most notably the road called The Common that runs along the western edge of Woodfield.

The short section of Woodlands Road that runs over Ashtead Common between the Woodlands Road entrance and Marneys Close is subject to an easement agreement drawn up in 1977. Under this agreement the City is indemnified against any claims made in relation to the condition of the road.



Target: maintain built assets.

Achieved by:

- ◆ 20-year maintenance plan;
- ◆ system for reporting and rectifying defects;
- ◆ on-site audits conducted every six months;
- ◆ monthly workplace inspections;
- ◆ periodic gully sucking of surface; water drains along The Common and Estate Office yard;
- ◆ periodic reapplication of thermoplastic lines at the Estate Office and The Common.

Ashtead Estate Office

The Ashtead Estate Office was constructed in 1997 not only to provide a base for the Ranger team, but also as a facility to support volunteering and community involvement so integral to the life of Ashtead Common. It has meeting space and office accommodation that is often shared with other City departments.

It is the only publicly accessible building north of the railway line, and as such fulfils a vital function within the community by acting as a polling station for elections.

4.3.7 Utilities

The City of London (Open Spaces) Act 2018 allows the granting of easements and licences under whatever terms the City considers necessary to protect the open space.

A map of services is maintained as a guide only and does not replace the need for thorough checks prior to any activity that might impact on services.

Target: protect utilities and infrastructure while safeguarding the Common.

Achieved by:

- ◆ granting access for the installation and maintenance of infrastructure assets under license only if the Common is adequately protected;
- ◆ ensuring companies proposing work that might damage the SSSI gain consent from Natural England;
- ◆ maintaining a map of utilities to act only as a general location guide;
- ◆ maintaining our own water supply network across the Common for grazing animals and regularly monitoring use to check for leaks.

4.3.8 Emergency planning

It is essential that plans are in place to deal with emergencies.

Target: plan for emergencies.

Achieved by:

- ♦ maintaining emergency plans and keeping them available for instant use;
- ♦ regular liaison with emergency services;
- ♦ fire service and ambulance service have keys to access the Common;
- ♦ 24 hours over 7 days rota for Ranger response;
- ♦ maintaining a 24-hour call answering service for people to report incidents.

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Robust emergency planning guides our response to incidents.

4.3.9 External accreditation

Achieving external quality standards validates management practices and gives assurance to our community, staff and elected Members that Ashted Common is being well run.

Ashted Common has successfully achieved a Green Flag award every year since 2003 and a Green Heritage award since 2007.

External assessments of wildlife and habitat quality are welcomed and outside input into surveying and data analysis is sought.

Target: seek external accreditation.

Achieved by:

- ♦ applying annually for Green Flag and Green Heritage accreditation;
- ♦ seeking professional input into wildlife and habitat assessments;
- ♦ welcoming specialist groups to survey for species.



4.3.10 Local development

Ashted Common must be protected from potential harm caused by development near its boundaries, land use changes or proposed initiatives that could increase pressure on the site.

This will involve working with neighbouring authorities and others to ensure potential impacts of development proposals are fully explained. The obvious impacts of increased infrastructure and housing are often understood, but less considered factors such as light pollution and habitat fragmentation should also be highlighted.

Target: protect Ashted Common from inappropriate development beyond its borders that could adversely impact the site.

Achieved by:

- ♦ monitoring plans for development beyond the boundaries of the Common;
- ♦ commenting on and objecting to development plans if they are considered detrimental to the Common;
- ♦ working with neighbouring authorities and others to ensure Ashted Common is recognised and valued.

The work programme years run from 1 April to 31 March. Each numbered row is associated with a detailed work plan.

Key to projects: 1 - essential; 2 - highly desirable; 3 - desirable

[illegible]

AIM 1: BIOLOGICAL		Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10
Code	Grazing	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
1.12	Graze Ashtead Common	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
1.13	Increase the area grazed by 23ha		2	2	2	2					
1.14	Monitor development of virtual fencing systems			3			3			3	
Code	Woodland	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
1.15	Coppice hazel stands on rotation	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
1.16	Manage transition zones	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
1.17	Remove non-native species	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
1.18	Control invasive species	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Code	Scrub	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
1.19	Manage scrub on rotation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
1.20	Create new blocks of dense young scrub growth	1		1		1		1		1	
1.21	Bring additional 3.1ha into rotation		3			3			3		
1.22	Increase area of managed ecotones by 1.57ha			3			3			3	
1.23	Mow grassland within scrub areas	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Code	Grassland	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
1.24	Cut grass on rotation and remove arisings	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
1.25	Review Woodfield cutting rotation	2									
1.26	Excavate encroaching scrub on Woodfield and ditch		1		1		1		1		1

AIM 1: BIOLOGICAL		Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10
Code	Wetland	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
1.27	Review pond maintenance regimes			3							
1.28	Create a new pond							3			
1.29	Create dog exclusion zones in some ponds		2			2					
Code	Monitoring and research	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
1.30	Ancient tree 1 - next 10 year plan and condition										1
1.31	Veteranised tree survey										
1.32	SSSI Assessment and Woodfield										
1.33	Flies	2									
1.34	Birds				2				2		
1.35	Grasshoppers and crickets			3							
1.36	Bees and wasps					3					
1.37	Spiders							3			
1.38	Grassland beetles									3	
1.39	Ferns		3								
1.40	Lichens						3				
1.41	Mosses										
1.42	Wetland assessment				2						

AIM 1: BIOLOGICAL		Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10
Code	Monitoring and research contd.	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
1.43	Saproxylic invertebrates			2							
1.44	Fungi	2									
1.45	Soil pH and nitrogen										
1.46	Maintain important species map	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
1.47	Collate survey data into one accessible place		2								
Code	Adapt to climate change	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
1.48	End cutting season early (and review timing periodically)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
1.49	Replace hydrocarbon-powered vehicles and equipment									1	
1.50	Reduce amount of green waste burnt					1					
1.51	Reduce electricity consumption	2					2				

Key to projects: 1 - essential; 2 - highly desirable; 3 - desirable

“Thank you for all your hard work maintaining the common; it is a superb natural resource that benefits the whole community and is at the very heart of Ashted.”

2020 consultation

AIM 2: PEOPLE		Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10
Code	A welcoming place	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
2.1	Regular Ranger patrols	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2.2	Print and distribute site leaflet	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
2.3	Mow paths and rides	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2.4	Maintain dead hedges and finger posts	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
2.5	Maintain surfaced paths	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
2.6	Maintain gates	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
2.7	Open and close concessionary rides	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
2.8	Tackle issues with unsurfaced path network	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
2.9	Provide and maintain on-site signage	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2.10	Regularly rotate safety messages	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2.11	Temporarily sign grazing and work areas	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Code	Healthy, safe and secure	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
2.12	Maintain 24hr, 365 day Ranger cover	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2.13	Record and report incidents	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2.14	Maintain and update emergency planning information	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2.15	Maintain risk-based approach to managing OPM	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2
2.16	Maintain risk-based approach to managing Lyme disease	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

AIM 1: PEOPLE		Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10
Code	Healthy, safe and secure contd.	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
2.17	Conduct audits of countryside furniture every six months	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
2.18	Provide dog bins	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Code	Well-maintained and clean	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
2.19	Litter-picking patrols at least twice a week	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2.20	Dog bins emptied twice a week	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2.21	Graffiti removed within a week	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
2.22	Offensive graffiti removed within 24 hours	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2.23	Damage caused by vandalism made safe within 24 hours	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2.24	Grass verges cut 10 times each year	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Code	Community involvement	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
2.25	Lead programme of directly-managed volunteer activity	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
2.26	Meet the Ashted Common Consultative Group twice a year	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2.27	Provide a range of volunteering opportunities	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
2.28	Involve other volunteer organisations such as Lower Mole, TCV	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
2.29	Review volunteering						1				

Key to projects: 1 - essential; 2 - highly desirable; 3 - desirable

AIM 1: PEOPLE		Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10
Code	Marketing and communication	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
2.30	Maintain social media presence	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
2.31	Develop capacity to resource social media										
2.32	Produce site and subject specific material	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2.33	Produce monthly electronic newsletter	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Code	Activities and events	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
2.34	Deliver Ranger-led programme of 12 events each year	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
2.35	Host 1-2 larger events to promote conservation, health etc.	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
2.36	Deliver six outreach talks to local clubs and societies	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
2.37	Promote Ashted Common at two external events each year	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
2.38	Introduce scheme to license activities and events	2									
Code	Educational visits, work experience and students	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
2.39	Provide educational activities where possible, on request	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
2.40	Provide opportunities for work experience where possible	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
2.41	Maintain a list of possible study topics	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
2.42	License educational activities in accordance with scheme	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2

Key to projects: 1 - essential; 2 - highly desirable; 3 - desirable

AIM 3: ESTATE AND ASSET MANAGEMENT		Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10
Code	Tree safety	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
3.1	Inspect trees in accordance with tree safety policy	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
3.2	Undertake tree safety work	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
3.3	Annual review of zoning map	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
3.4	Inspect standing dead trees	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Code	Conserve and protect heritage assets	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
3.5	Produce management statement for heritage assets	3									
3.6	Produce interpretative signage for heritage features		3								
3.7	Maintain Coal Tax posts			2							
3.8	Manage vegetation growing on heritage assets	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Code	Estate and asset management	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
3.9	Boundaries regularly inspected and maintained	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
3.10	Bridges regularly inspected by Dept. of Built Environment										
3.11	Rye Brook Dam inspected twice a year by Panel Engineer	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
3.12	Mow dam and control vegetation growth in channel	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
3.13	Inspect and maintain banks of the Rye Brook	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
3.14	Maintain and implement 20-year asset management plan	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
3.15	Clean drains at Estate Office yard and along The Common		2			2			2		

AIM 1: ESTATE AND ASSET MANAGEMENT		Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10
Code	<i>Estate and asset management contd.</i>	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
3.16	Reapply thermoplastic lines at office and The Common	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
3.17	Grant licences for infrastructure installation and maintenance	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
3.18	Maintain water supply to drinking troughs	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Code	External accreditation	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
3.19	Green Flag and Green Heritage	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Code	Income generation	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
3.20	Administer grants and apply for grant funding	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
3.21	Wayleaves	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Code	Special projects	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
SP1	Reed bed filtration system at Two Bridges										
SP2	Interpretation of the Roman Villa and environs										

Key to projects: 1 - essential; 2 - highly desirable; 3 - desirable

“ You have dramatically turned around the gradual decline of The Common because of lack of management to what it is today - a National Nature Reserve. Thank you!”

2020 consultation

Appendix A: Local Plans

Mole Valley Local Plan (At the time of writing this is in development: the information below is subject to change)	
Policy	Summary of content
Strategy SS Rural Areas	High priority placed on protecting rural character, areas of recognised biodiversity, landscape and heritage importance.
Policy EN1 Green Belt	Inappropriate development within the Green Belt will not be permitted.
Policy EN9 Enhancing biodiversity	Development should protect, enhance or recover wildlife habitat, particularly in or adjacent to sites designated for their nature importance. Development within SSSIs or SNCIs will not generally be permitted. Where practical, development proposals are required to achieve measurable net gains in biodiversity, increase coherence of ecological networks, offer opportunities for improved health and wellbeing, provide educational opportunities.
Policy EN13 Promoting Environmental Quality	Development should minimize emission of pollutants, maintain or improve watercourse quality and mitigate potential adverse impact.
Kingston Core Strategy 2012-2017	
Policy	Summary of content
Policy CS3 The natural and green environment	Access to and protection of open space. Promote management of biodiversity, including working in partnership to protect and enhance Kingston's open space network. The document also states the need to maintain key views across open space and shows two such views looking towards Ashted Common.
Policy DM5 Green Belt	Development adjacent to Green Belt must not adversely impact. Ensure new development contributes to the provision and improvement of open space. Ensure development proposals do not harm open space. Green Belt will be protected from inappropriate development (stated elsewhere in plan).
DM6 Biodiversity	Ensure new development does not result in a net loss of biodiversity.

Appendix B: Basic Payment Scheme Cross Compliance Requirements

Condition	Summary of content	Implications for Ashted Common
GAEC 5	Limiting soil erosion	Minimize damage to soil caused by livestock or vehicles and machinery.
GAEC 7a	Protect boundary features such as hedgerows and banks	Take reasonable steps to ensure green cover within 2m of the centre of a hedgerow. Do not cut a hedgerow between March 1st and August 31st. Do not remove earth banks.
GAEC 7b	Public Rights of Way	Do not obstruct paths. Maintain footpath furniture to make them safe and easy to use.
GAEC 7c	Trees	Trees must not be felled between March 1st and August 31st apart from safety requirements.
GAEC 7e	Scheduled Monuments	Historic England consent required for anything affecting Scheduled Monuments.
SMR 1	Nitrate Vulnerable Zones	The Common is not in a NVZ (but it is in a Drinking Water Safeguard Zone, with no specific requirements).
SMR 2	Wild birds	Comply with management notices served by Natural England. Must not recklessly destroy or damage interest features.
SMR 3	Habitats and species	Must not destroy a plant of European protected species.
SMR 7	Cattle	Must tag, have passports and notify the British Cattle Movement Service of movements and deaths.
SMR 13	Animal welfare	Includes the need for a daily inspection of animals



The City of London Corporation aims to contribute to a flourishing society, support a thriving economy and shape outstanding environments.

Outcomes related to this last aim include having clean air, land and water and a thriving and sustainable natural environment, with spaces that are secure, resilient and well maintained.

The City owns and manages almost 4,500 hectares of green spaces, parks and gardens in and around London as part of its commitment to sustaining a world class city. These green spaces, most of which are charitable trusts, are run at little cost to the communities that they serve. They are funded principally by the City of London from private reserves.

Every year over 24 million people visit these sites. The award-winning open spaces range from the National Nature Reserve of Burnham Beeches in Buckinghamshire, Epping Forest – London's largest open space, Hampstead Heath with its amazing views, and the Coulsdon and West Wickham Commons with their rolling chalk downland and woodland on London's southern fringe.



Ashtead Common

Registered Charity

Ashtead Common
Ashtead Estate Office
Woodfield Road
Ashtead
KT21 2DU

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Email: city.common@cityoflondon.gov.uk

<https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do-/green-spaces/ashtead-common>

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West Wickham Commons

Registered Charity

West Wickham Common
Spring Park

Management Plan

2021 - 2031

Page 345

This is one of
14 green spaces
managed by the
City of London at
little cost to the
general public.



West Wickham Common and Spring Park are two unique public open spaces owned and managed by the City of London Corporation.

The two sites combined form the West Wickham Commons registered charity (number 232988) and receive the major part of their funding from the City of London Corporation.

West Wickham Common itself is a relic remnant of ‘wood pasture’ with ancient pollarded oak trees harking back to a time when the woodlands were traditionally managed for harvesting timber. It sits within a

wider, wooded downland landscape that extends well into the surrounding countryside and is characteristic of this type of habitat.

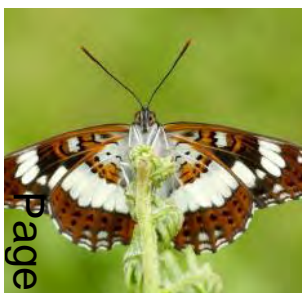
Spring Park is similarly wooded but unlike West Wickham Common is not associated with the historical wood pasture system of management; it is instead an area of ancient woodland and neutral grassland. This too is a remnant of a much larger forested landscape which is now rare in the area.

Both sites, which are separated by less than a mile, are situated in an increasingly urbanised landscape on the fringes of South London and

the pressures they are under require innovative approaches to management which allow for people and nature to coexist. The City of London are working carefully to manage these two important sites, involving the local community at all levels to try and minimise the deterioration of habitats and reduce the impacts of increased fragmentation.

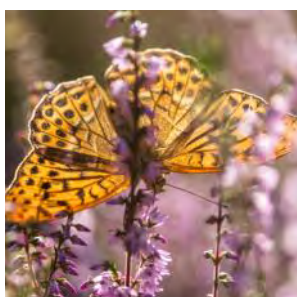
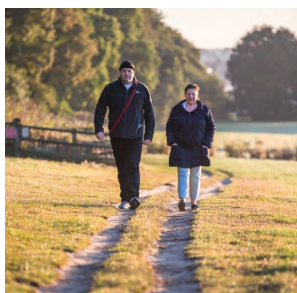
The City of London Corporation is committed to managing the West Wickham Commons in perpetuity to ensure that they remain as truly special places.

Contents



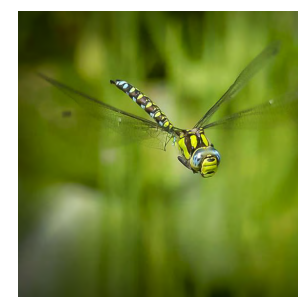
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Cover image: Silver washed fritillary

Inside image: Spring Park, (Mike Shoesmith)

Introduction

West Wickham Common and Spring Park were acquired under the Corporation of London (Open Spaces) Act 1878. This Act enables the City of London to acquire and protect land up to 25 miles out from the boundary of the Square Mile. Enacted over 130 years ago, the City of London has a duty to protect and conserve West Wickham Common and Spring Park for public recreation and wildlife conservation in perpetuity'. It is further safeguarded by national legislation.

Both sites have been influenced by the legacy of centuries of interactions between people and the environment. There is evidence that West Wickham Common was occupied from as far back as the Late Bronze Age up to the Medieval Period. Centuries of grazing and harvesting of timber have worked hand-in-hand to shape what was a much more open landscape that gave way to the magnificent oak 'pollards', heathland and woodland that now support a variety of rare and declining species.

Similarly, Spring Park, which was once part of a larger expanse of manorial woodland

of the Wickham Court Estate, with ties to the Boleyn family, has a long history of growing and extracting timber and wood products from 'coppice' woodland dating back to the 16th century.

The soils and topography of West Wickham Common and Spring Park have conspired to create an environment where it was difficult to do anything other than grow trees and graze animals in the past. This has **ensured both sites' survival to this day as rare examples of historic landscapes.**

West Wickham Common and Spring Park are, however, much more than nature reserves or time capsules from a bygone era; they are living landscapes and places for people to find beauty, quiet and space in an increasingly busy and hectic modern society that is becoming disconnected from nature.

The challenge for the City, as land managers, is to balance traditional habitat management with 21st century expertise and expectations, and to ensure that West Wickham Common and Spring Park are prepared for the mounting social and environmental pressures as we progress **through the 2020's and beyond.**

These two sites, sitting as they do entirely within the West Wickham Commons charity,

are just two of six Open Spaces managed locally by the City of London. The other four sites (Farthing Downs, Riddlesdown, Kenley Common and Coulsdon Common) sit within a separate charity based on their close proximity to each other and are covered by separate site management plans.

This new management plan aims to summarise why, when and how the West Wickham Commons will be managed over the next 10 years. It builds upon the achievements of previous plans and is part of a series of documents that provide the vision and overall guidance to managing both sites. The plan is also a practical working document to guide the many hundreds of tasks that will take place over the next decade.

West Wickham Common and Spring Park are managed by a dedicated site Ranger and supported by a wider team of Rangers, administration staff, volunteers and contractors to protect and maintain the important features of the sites for people and wildlife.

Our thanks go out to all those who have helped to influence and produce this document and members of the public who participated in the consultation of this **plan's main actions.**

Achievements 2010-2020



Left: White
admiral,
(Ian Leach)



Left: Veteran oak,
West Wickham Common

West Wickham Common

Looking after the ancient oak pollards

Annual condition assessments of West Wickham Common's 15 ancient oak pollards have been carried out to extend the lives of these culturally and biologically valuable ancients through targeted habitat management.

Improving the secondary woodland for wildlife

Holly clearance, canopy thinning and planting of hazel within the secondary woodland areas has been carried out by Rangers and volunteers. The new hazel plants, along with the natural regeneration of species such as cherry, rowan and birch is starting to increase diversity through the woodland and the creation of sunny, open glades has encouraged wildflowers and butterflies.

Showcasing the Earthworks' unique history

A new interpretation panel was installed exploring the historic origins and mystery of the undated mounds, banks and ditches on the Common.

Contributing to national monitoring schemes

Annual butterfly transects have recorded 25 species of butterflies throughout the woods and across the heath including occasional sightings of green hairstreak (*Callophrys rubi*), purple hairstreak (*Neozephyrus quercus*), white admiral (*Limenitis camilla*) and silver-washed fritillary (*Argynnis paphia*) contributing to the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme.

Green Flag & Green Heritage Award

Achieved this benchmark standard of world-class and accessible green spaces each year since 2012. Since 2015, the site has also attained the Green Heritage Award in recognition of good conservation standards of historic features in the landscape.

Heathland extension and translocation

Work has focused on preserving the existing area of heath throughout the Earthworks and increasing the area of new and potential heathland throughout the site. The spreading of heather seed and the successful translocation of young plants has already extended existing areas and facilitated the colonisation of new ones to preserve this fragile habitat.

Achievements 2010-2020



Left:
Traditional
working
horses for
hauling
timber

Below:
Brown
hairstreak
butterfly
&
WWaSPs
Volunteers



Spring Park

Brown hairstreak butterfly eggs

Work in the previous management plan was delivered to conserve a diverse age range of blackthorn scrub for wildlife including the brown hairstreak butterfly (*Thecla betulae*). A total of 67 brown hairstreak eggs were counted during a survey in 2019 making Spring Park the largest known breeding colony to Kent Butterfly Conservation.

Regionally Important Geological Site (RIGGS)

The significance of the underlying geology at Spring Park is recognised under this proposed designation which may be confirmed by the Greater London Authority in the New London Plan 2020. A geotrail was developed with the London Geodiversity Partnership.



Green Flag Award

Achieved this benchmark standard of world-class and accessible green spaces each year since 2012.

Diversity of habitats recognised

An existing Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation designation was extended to include the Spring Park meadows and pond. Annual hay cutting of the meadows has improved the diversity of wildflowers including the first records of a pyramidal orchid (*Anacamptis pyramidalis*) and the nationally-rare greater yellow rattle (*Rhinanthus angustifolius*).

Reinstating traditional coppice woodland

A full 16-year chestnut coppice rotation has been completed in woods adjacent to Woodland Way. The first decade of a 10-year hazel coppice rotation has also been met and the second decade is progressing well. Heavy horses were used to extract timber adjacent to the Spring Park Office as part of the sustainable management of this unique woodland.

Planting a new hedgerow

The West Wickham and Spring Park Volunteers (WWaSPs) and staff planted a 150m stretch of hedgerow to provide a corridor for wildlife and restore the boundary between the two historic meadows.

1

Site Description

West Wickham Common

Location

West Wickham Common is located in the London Borough of Bromley covering an area of 10 hectares (25 acre). West Wickham Common remains part of a 'green space' of urban commons, gardens and other open spaces on the boundary between London and the wider Kent countryside. It is immediately above Coney Hall Village in the South. To the north and east the common is bounded by the A232 Croydon Road. Hayes Common lies adjacent to the north of the site.

Ownership

West Wickham Common is owned by the City of London which acquired it in 1892 from Colonel Sir John Farnaby Lennard, part of the last Lennard baronets of Wickham Court. In the 1860s, Sir John Lennard began to sell off plots of West Wickham Common for villas and it was feared that without intervening, the Common would be lost forever. The City's acquisition under the Corporation of London (Open Spaces) Act

1878 ensured the public have open access to all areas subject to the byelaws.

Site status

West Wickham Common is now not a registered common. It became exempt in December 1966 under Section 11 of the Commons Registration Act 1965. There are therefore no rights registered over the site.

In conjunction with the River Ravensbourne, Ravensbourne Valley Woodlands and Hayes and Keston Commons, all of West Wickham Common is classified by the Greater London Authority as a Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). The SINC designation acknowledges West Wickham Common's diversity of habitat (specifically the mosaic of ancient woodland, acid grassland and heathland).

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) are areas designated for their importance for wildlife.

Local sites are designated by local authorities in cooperation with Wildlife Trusts. Their selection is typically based upon habitats that support rare or scarce species of plants and animals.



Above: Open heathland, West Wickham Common

1.4 Physical features

West Wickham Common lies on a steep slope which rises from 76m above sea-level at the western end of the site to its highest point at 98m. The greater part of the common consists of an extensive plateau and gives far-reaching views across the Addington Valley.

The majority of the common lies on South London Pebbly Sands over the older rocks of the Harwich Formation comprising of sands, clays (mixed soils of sand, silt and clay) and pebbles. Overlaying these deposits, the soils are generally thin, free-draining and acidic. These impoverished soils, unsuitable for arable farming, provide the right conditions for heathland and acid grassland and a variety of otherwise uncommon plants and animals. In summer, these soils are susceptible to drying out and, where paths have eroded on the steeper slopes, compacted sand and pebbles are exposed.

No permanent running or standing water is present on West Wickham Common. Historically, a pond was located near Gates Green Road, with early records documenting it as far back as 1888 until it was drained and levelled in 1952. West Wickham Common is in the upper part of the River Ravensbourne catchment, which feeds into the River Thames.

Below: Viewpoint towards the Addington Valley, West Wickham Common



“

I appreciate all that has been done on West Wickham Common to return it to heathland. Also managing trees to maintain open views across Coney Hall to Addington is excellent.

- 2020 consultation response

1

Site Description

Spring Park

Location

Spring Park extends over 20 hectares (50 acres) and represents both a natural and cultural landscape that has changed very little since the City's acquisition. Spring Park, adjacent to the West Wickham Common, is situated in the London Borough of Bromley. The site lies between the A2022 Addington Road, and the south west tip of the residential area of West Wickham. The site is bounded by two open spaces in separate ownership; Spring Park adjoins Croydon Council's Threehalfpenny Wood to the west and Bromley Council's Sparrows Den and Cheyne Wood to the east.

Ownership

The acquisition of Spring Park came in several parts. Decades after the original sale of West Wickham Common to the City from Colonel Sir John Farnaby Lennard, the woodland at Spring Park was gifted to the corporation in 1926 by Colonel Sir Arthur and Stephen Hallam Farnaby Lennard, also from Wickham Court. The transfer of land to

the City came under the same act of parliament to preserve Spring Park for quiet recreation and public enjoyment. One year later, the parcel of land containing the two open meadows was purchased from the same vendor, completing Spring Park as it is seen today.

Site status

Spring Park is designated a SINC by the Greater London Authority. This designation primarily relates to the ancient woodland, and the assemblage of woodland flora.



Above: Walkers on a woodland path, Spring Park

Specifically, Spring Park holds an important population of small-leaved lime (*Tilia cordata*), a nationally-rare tree species and a sign of undisturbed ancient woodland. Like West Wickham Common, Spring Park is not registered common land.

Physical features

Spring Park is geologically complex and showcases a wealth of landscape features otherwise hidden from view in the urbanised landscape of South London. The woodland slope at Spring Park consists of a south-facing scarp slope formed in the Palaeocene period over 55 million years ago at a time when the climate was significantly warmer than it is today. From the highest point at 95m above sea-level, the woodland slopes towards a flat, dry river valley extending across the meadow.

Paths on the highest part of Spring Park towards Woodland Way where the soils are thin reveal large pebbles from the Harwich Formation whilst the steepest parts of the slope are formed of clay strata from the Lambeth Group. Both the Harwich Formation and the Lambeth group are characteristic of the London Basin and are remnants of the prehistoric River Thames where it cut its course through the landscape. Towards the base of these formations, groundwater emerges at

several locations on the woodland slope. From these “springs”, the water flows down and then sinks deep below the ground into the sand and pebble beds at the base of the slope.

Spring Park is named after these numerous “springs” and channels that remain damp even during the summer months. Historically, in exceptionally wet years, the grassland at the base of the slope would have been subject to seasonal flooding from the bourne of the Ravensbourne. However, this river has since been diverted underground to prevent future flooding impacts.

A pond at the foot of the slope and grassland was excavated in 1993 as part of a landscape restoration project. Situated in the same location as a former pond from a 1887 OS map, this is the only permanent body of standing water on the site.

Supply of water for the maintenance of the pond is mainly met by diverting some of the seasonal streams from the springs above. The pond is occasionally subject to shortfall in water in dry summer months but is replenished by heavier rainfall during the wet winter months.

“

I used to play as a child in Spring Park Wood - I remember the spring, puff balls and the beautiful trees.

- 2020 consultation response



Below: Common toads
(© Mark Shoesmith)

Right: Wet woodland,
Spring Park

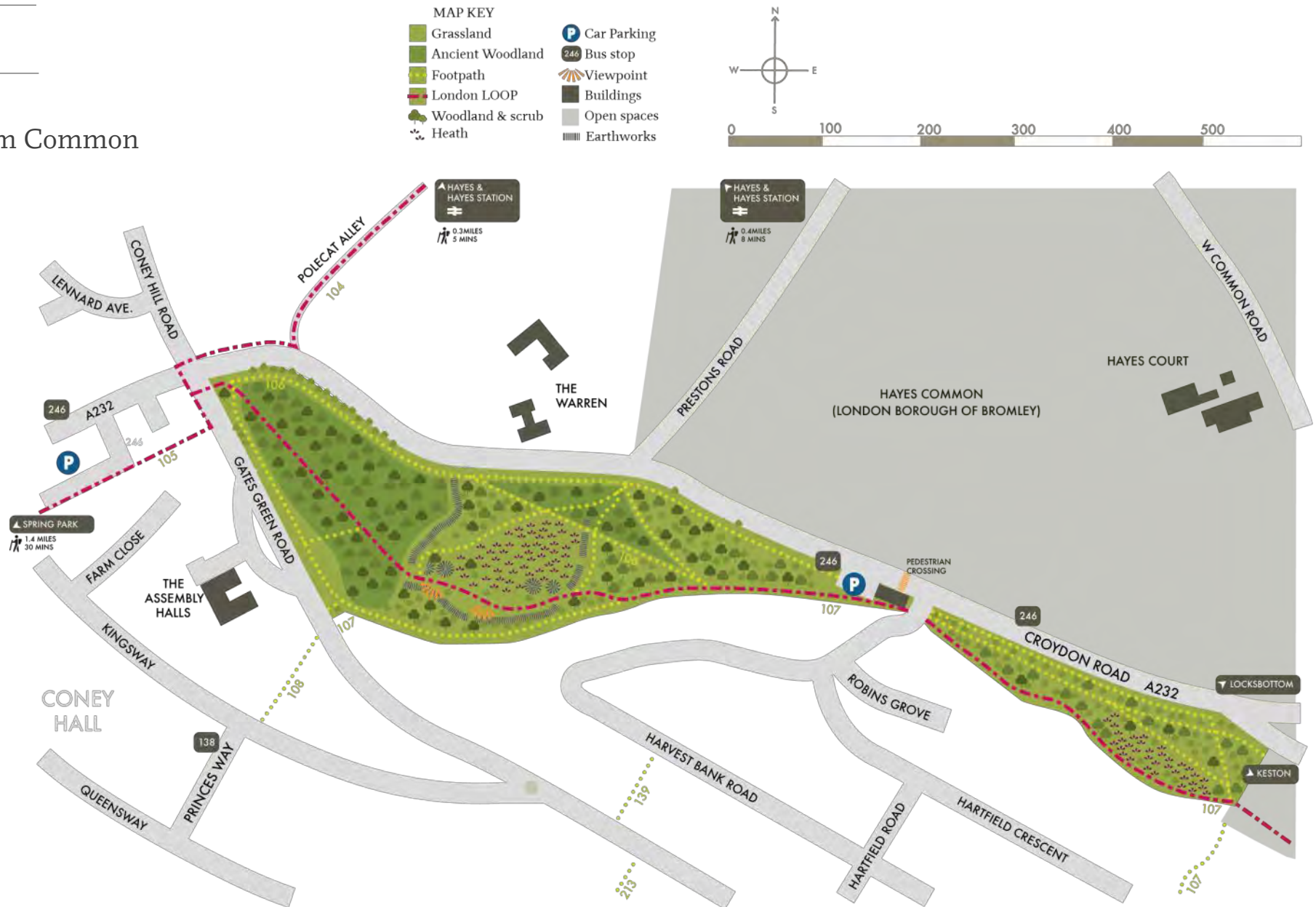


Above: The restored pond,
Spring Park

Site Map

West Wickham Common

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Site Map

Spring Park



Cultural Information

West Wickham Common

Landscape

Both West Wickham Common and Spring Park lie within the landscape character area of the North Kent Plains. In a more local context, historically, the area around the two sites was lightly settled and thus the area is still characterised by parcels of surviving woodland, heathland and common land. These were places where for centuries local people could graze cattle, gather food for livestock and collect firewood. Most of the many large, ancient trees around the area are a direct result of past human management and traditional woodland practices.

There are around 15 veteran oak pollards, some at least 600 years old. One of these was painted by Sir John Everett Millais in 1853 for his painting 'The Proscribed Royalist, 1651'. The painting depicts a young Puritan woman protecting a fleeing Royalist soldier after the Battle of Worcester in 1651, the decisive defeat by Charles II by Oliver Cromwell. The Royalist is hiding in a hollow

tree, a reference to a famous incident in which Charles himself hid in a tree to evade capture from his pursuers.

Archaeology

With visible archaeological features, there are clear signs that West Wickham Common was used periodically by humans for various means. Past archaeological surveys coupled with a recent Royal Commission on Historical Monuments of England (RCHME) study indicate that there are landscape features of potentially regional significance. West Wickham Common falls within Bromley Council's Hayes and West Wickham Common's Archaeological Priority Area with a series of Earthworks in the centre of the common being the main point of interest. The Earthworks could be the site of a Iron

Age hill fort. A deep defensive ditch to either side of an entrance causeway forms an incomplete ring which may have been further fortified by a row of upright spiked logs, called a palisade. The defences are believed to be incomplete with no known reason to why it was never finished. Long straight banks continue on to Hayes Common and are probably part of a Medieval field system (1066 – 1540).

Some earth mounds scattered around the site may be the remains of artificial rabbit warrens kept as an important source of protein, prized amongst wealthy landowners. A map of 1772 shows warrens in this area and local place names such as "Coney" (meaning rabbit) or "The Warren" suggest a link.

Below: An artist's impression of the earthworks, West Wickham Common



Left: "The Proscribed Royalist, 1651" (John Everett Millais)

Cultural Information

Spring Park

As part of a historical manorial landscape, Spring Park's existence today is a small snapshot of what the surrounding countryside looked like. The nearby West Wickham Court, would have once been the centre of an interweaving mix of commons and woodlands with small irregular fields for grazing animals.

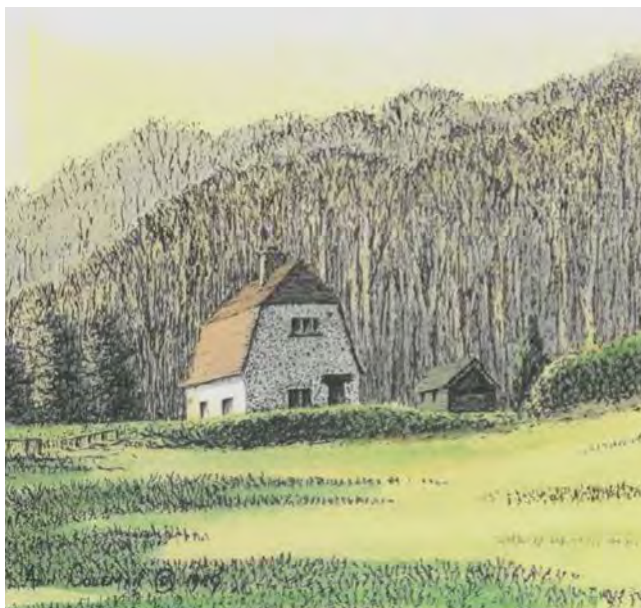
Landscape

A Portland stone drinking fountain, in commemoration of Margaret Anderson McAndrew who lived at Wickham House from 1881-1925, is one of the key historic features to see at Spring Park. It is located at the entrance to Spring Park from Woodland Way. This structure is on Bromley Council's protected buildings list.

Going back further in time, a prominent line of small-leaved lime trees growing along the bank and ditched southwest boundary coincides with the old county boundary of Kent and Surrey. Another small bank and ditched boundary runs along the entire

length between Spring Park and Threehalfpenny Woods including southwards to Addington Road.

A small wood bank along the south-eastern boundary marking the woodland and meadow edge within Spring Park. A small keepers lodge built in the 19th century still stands, having been altered over the years to accommodate on-site Rangers.



Above: The Keeper's Cottage, Spring Park



Above: The Portland stone drinking fountain, Spring Park

Access and Visitors

Visitor appeal

Visitors to the West Wickham Commons come for informal recreation and activities such as hiking, jogging and walking. The qualities which draw visitors include their natural aspect, regionally rare wildlife and local distinctiveness. Further, they provide the visitor with a glimpse into the past and perhaps, more importantly in today's hectic world, a restorative opportunity for quiet reflection and thoughtful contemplation.

Access provision

The majority of visitors arrive to the sites on foot or by car. West Wickham Common is served by regular bus services from Bromley and Westerham with the nearest railway station at Hayes. Spring Park is similarly well-connected by bus with links to Croydon, Eltham, Addington and Bromley. There are regular tram services from East Croydon Station, Wimbledon and Beckenham alighting at Addington Village interchange which is 1.6km from Spring Park. Spring Park is also well-placed near to the National Cycle Route 21 running from Greenwich to Crawley. A short, marked

cyclepath linking to the route follows the Addington Road at the edge of the site. A surfaced easy-access trail runs around the perimeter of the Earthworks from the car park at West Wickham Common. There are 6km of footpaths throughout Spring Park and 3.5km of footpaths on West Wickham Common creating connections within the site but also joining to the network of public rights of way in the wider countryside. This includes Section 4 of the London Outer Orbital Path (London LOOP) through Spring park and section 3 at West Wickham Common.

Visitor facilities and information provision

Spring Park has two tarmacked car parks along the Addington Road that provide 26 regular spaces with 2 additional disabled bays; at West Wickham Common there is just one car park with 5 regular and 1 disabled bays. The car parks at Spring Park are rarely full as many visitors use the substantial car park provided by Bromley Council at Sparrows Den, which adjoins Spring Park to the east.

Wooden notice boards on Spring Park and West Wickham Common are regularly updated with information about events, current issues and news. These are strategically placed in key areas to maximise potential readership. Information

about current news and issues is also available from the City's website, social media pages and an electronic newsletter distributed to visitors and others on a mailing list.

Recently a new interpretation panel has been erected at the Earthworks on West Wickham Common to provide heritage information about this important archaeological feature. Whilst many of these type of boards have been present on the sites over the years, a renewed focus has been placed on designing and creating



Above: Waymarkers for the London LOOP, Spring Park

imaginative interpretive materials which celebrate local history, wildlife and other points of interest to showcase Spring Park and West Wickham Common's story. The management story can also be told through traditional methods used to make infrastructure in keeping with the wooded,

social and natural history of both sites; Where possible, timber produced as part of the 'coppicing' rotations on Spring Park is turned into a range of products including fencing materials, benches and the occasional interpretive sign.

In the same way that coppice products were historically a fundamental part of the rural economy for hundreds of generations, this use of locally produced timber maintains that link with our past and offers perhaps a route to conservation and sustainable management of these woodland resources.

“

West Wickham Common is one of my favourite places to walk. I walk across it every day and have done for the 25 years I lived here. It never ceases to enhance my happiness, whatever the weather.

- 2020 consultation response



Left: Benches provide a welcome place for walkers, West Wickham Common

Large map and byelaw boards are presently situated at the main approaches, gates and entrances to both sites. These provide visitors with general information about the sites, contact details and the byelaws which are unique to each site.

During the last decade, many of these boards have become unstable and have since been removed for the safety of visitors. The byelaw boards require increasing maintenance and monitoring due to their ageing and declining structural integrity. Options are being explored to redesign and install updated boards that balance the original look of the historic boards with a welcoming impression for visitors.

Dog bins are provided near key entrance points. Currently dog bags are provided from dispensers as well, but this provision of service is subject to future review.

Education and research

Schools and college groups regularly visit the West Wickham Commons to learn about nature management and conservation. Student and other research projects are encouraged and the staff and volunteers also carry out long-term monitoring to further our knowledge of how these sites benefit people and wildlife.

Examples of these are butterfly transects, moth trapping, plant communities and dragonfly and damselfly monitoring. These surveys underpin and contribute to regional and national monitoring programmes to build a national picture of ecosystem health and the changes happening to protected sites across Britain.

The sites have been well-recorded for different species. With several technological changes in ecological monitoring there is the potential to enable greater contributions from volunteers and citizen scientists. Successful community 'BioBlitz' led by the rangers (events to take a snapshot of the variety of life found in a specific location) and species recording apps such as iNaturalist could build a bigger picture of ecosystem health and support a deeper knowledge of wildlife using the sites. This could also help to deepen people's connection with nature on their doorstep.



Above: Volunteers collecting heather seed for heathland restoration, West Wickham Common



Above: West Wickham and Spring Park Volunteers (WWaSPs) digging in new signage,

Community involvement

True to the original Act which set out to protect the West Wickham Commons for the benefit and use of the public, the local community is an integral part of the two sites' management. Primarily, it is through practical conservation volunteering that the local community has the most involvement. The West Wickham and Spring Park volunteers (affectionately known as the 'WWaSPs'), meet on two days a month during the winter season and one in

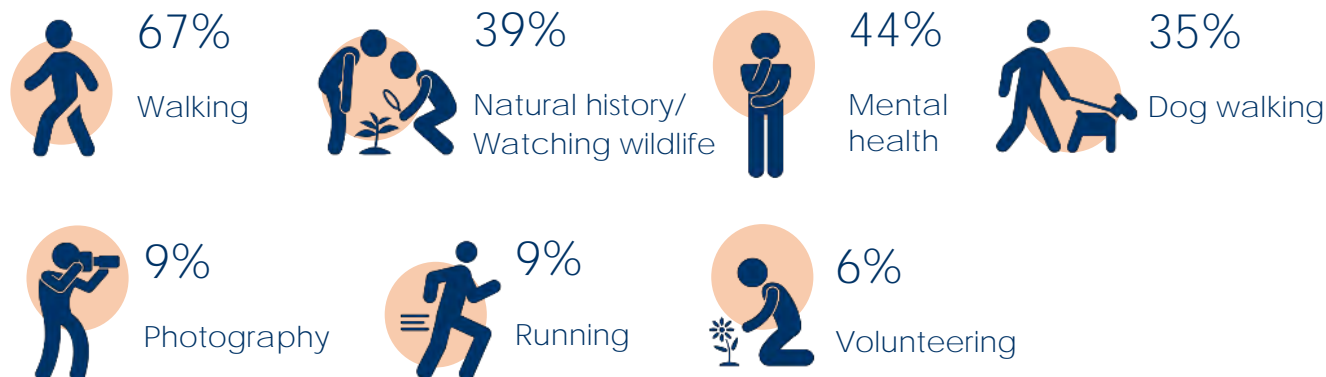
summer. Much of the work to manage the two sites is literally done by the local community themselves. Additionally, the West Wickham Commons Consultative Group advises the City on the development and implementation of the management plan. It comprises a broad representation from the City and interested parties from the local community.

Services and access

Several services and utilities traverse the sites; two utility companies have statutory rights of access onto Spring Park and one company on West Wickham Common to repair and maintain their structures. At Spring Park there are two purpose-built buildings that function as a base for the on site ranger to store equipment and materials and also as a place for volunteers to assemble prior to tasks. There are Rangers Lodges on both West Wickham Common and Spring Park facilitating a site presence 365 days a year.

Current use

Under the Open Spaces Act the requirement is for West Wickham Common and Spring Park to be managed for informal recreation. Given the popularity of these two sites and location in one of the most densely populated regions in the UK, care must be taken to ensure that recreation



Primary reasons for visiting Spring Park & West Wickham Common Results from the 2020 consultation

activities remain low key and do not result in damage and that there is minimal conflict between recreation and conservation. Legal obligations such as the NERC (Natural Environment and Rural Communities) Act and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 require positive management for nature conservation; this is strengthened and supported by grant funding through Countryside Stewardship.

Financial situation

The City of London Corporation provides funding for the management of West Wickham Common and Spring Park largely from its private funds. For the last 10 years there have been increasing pressures to make revenue savings and these are likely

to continue. The City's revenue can now meet only part of the running costs for West Wickham Common and Spring Park; the sites are increasingly reliant on grants and other sources of income. The success of much of this management plan depends on the ability to identify and secure significant external funding to match any savings required by the City of London. Countryside stewardship grants help pay for habitat conservation work but the long term future of these grants is uncertain.

New sources of revenue will need to be explored in coming years: the passing of a new Open Spaces Act (2018) together with increased use of technology may open up some new avenues.

Biological Features

West Wickham Common

Habitats

With a mixture of veteran trees, secondary woodland, scrub, heathland, acidic grassland and wood pasture, the habitats now present on the Common likely developed in a wood pasture system which combined the grazing of livestock with the traditional management practice of 'pollarding'. The main attributes of a historic wood pasture system include old trees that have grown in relatively open conditions, an open ground layer, plenty of decaying wood, flowers and shrubs. The overall picture of West Wickham Common is a mosaic of different habitats with a value for wildlife that is more than the sum of its parts. The most important and extensive habitats are described below.

Wood pasture

Much of the western end of West Wickham Common is a living example of relic wood pasture. In order to manage each part of West Wickham Common effectively and maintain biodiversity, it is necessary to look in more detail at the plant communities.



Right: Veteran oak pollards,
West Wickham Common

What is wood pasture?

Land containing trees that is or was grazed with domestic animals or deer is referred to as wood pasture. The density of trees can be very variable, ranging from dense woodland to open grassland or heathland with scattered trees.

It is a habitat reminiscent of the ancient Neolithic 'wildwood' with a history of large herbivores (including deer and livestock) grazing amongst trees. In the past, much of West Wickham Common was probably managed as wood

pasture with the land under its trees mostly being rough heathland. Within the wood pasture there were areas where the trees were regularly 'pollarded'.

Today, we value this habitat for its wildlife and recreational value and are working to conserve the ancient trees that were enabled through the wood pasture system.

Ancient trees

Ancient trees are a vital habitat and a treasured part of socio-ecological landscapes; a single specimen can contain micro-habitat features supporting vast amounts of other plants, animals, and fungi within its canopy, trunk and root system. These trees are those that have reached a great age in comparison with others of the same species. They are often gnarled, knobbly, huge, bent and hollow. There are 15 ancient oak pollards on the common and the majority of these trees, judging by their girth, are thought to be at least 600 years old. The remains of at least 16 dead pollards can be traced in the undergrowth and no doubt others have rotted away contributing to rich deadwood habitat, nutrient systems and underground life.

Ancient trees are often an indicator of past human activity and are therefore an important biomarker of cultural, genetic and natural heritage. Past site managers recognised the importance of these old trees but practices for conserving ancient trees have somewhat changed; up until the 1950s, cables were attached to some pollards on the common to prevent them splitting apart under their own weight. Some of these chains and braces are still visible today. Concrete was also poured into some of the hollow trunks to prevent malicious fire damage. In

the 1950s, the tops were cut out of some trees to reduce the weight of the limbs. In some cases, this work proved a little severe compared with the modern approach of gradual weight reduction. It is probable that some trees may have died following this work.

In 1990 further work took place to reduce the height of most of the pollards. On this occasion relatively small sections of timber were removed. In 2004, a Veteran Tree Survey looked at every tree in detail and produced individual 30-year management schedules.

Right: Standing dead pollards,
West Wickham Common

Pollarding:

Pollarding is an age-old management system where the trees are repeatedly cut for a product; it can be carried out on almost any broad-leaved tree species. The branches are pruned back to a point roughly 2.5m above ground level; this allows new branches to grow out of reach of any grazing animals.



Woodland

The woodland habitat on West Wickham Common can be roughly split into two different communities; the western section which is characterised by mature woodland amongst the ancient pollards and the exposed eastern section, which is a fairly young, dense, closed canopy woodland. The woodland in the western part of the common is dominated by oak and beech with holly and hazel and sometimes bramble as a shrub layer. Other, rarer plants which appear here include Butcher's broom (*Ruscus aculeatus*) and green-flowered helleborine (*Epipactis atrorubens*). It contains the greatest concentrations of ancient pollards, so we know that these parts were historically more open.

Over the last decade, work to conserve this habitat has involved creating a more open aspect again; this woodland is now characterised by multiple transitions between tall and short vegetation, light and shaded areas, warm and cool places. The micro-variations within this woodland area benefit a variety of plant and animals that occupy specific niches at the woodland edge, canopy and understory.

The woodland found in the eastern section of the common has developed where there

would have been an expanse of open heath or grassland in the past. Following a gradual reversion to woodland via a transitional scrub phase, this area of secondary woodland is today dominated by oak and birch with an understory of often densely-growing holly.



Right: Intricate flowers of the green flowered helleborine, West Wickham Common



Left: Holly, West Wickham Common

Heathland

An expanse of heathland is located around the north west of the common. Occurring below 300m above sea level, lowland heathland is a rare and threatened habitat; the UK supports 20% of the world's lowland heathland habitat.

In Bromley, the majority of this habitat is found on Keston and Hayes Common with small patches on Chislehurst Common, West Wickham Common, Farnborough Common and Petts Wood. Only around 15% of heathland that existed in 1800 remains, having either been built on or replaced by woodland and grassland, not least around London.

It is a nutrient-deprived habitat, characterised by sandy, mineral soils and a mosaic of low-growing heather, scattered trees and areas of bare ground. Heathland originates from the historic clearance of woodland and was used by people for thousands of years for taking gorse, turf, gravel and for grazing livestock. Today conservation management replaces these past activities on the heathland and its existence relies solely upon human activity 'holding back' the natural process of succession to stop it reverting into woodland again.

From a nature conservation perspective, the heathland is one of the most valuable features on the common. It is a Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitat and supports highly-adapted plants that thrive in the nutrient poor soils. The exposed, hot and dry microclimate also provides the optimum conditions for basking or sheltering invertebrates such as the green hairstreak (*Callophrys rubi*) butterfly.

The heather-dominated (*Calluna sp.*) community grows within the Earthworks where a few areas of buried seed germinated following disturbance of the mineral soil by machinery in the 1990's. This original area of heathland has now spread to over 0.5 hectares in size. Following a restoration project with funding from the London's Heathland Heritage Partnership in 2007, the heathland was enlarged using an excavator to remove the nutrient rich woodland soil to reveal the underlying mineral subsoil and subsequently seeded using heather cuttings from sites in Surrey.

This newer heathland area, which is growing and spreading

rapidly now covers over 1 hectare of land within Earthworks.

Dormant heather seeds have also germinated in the east corner of the Common following several years of woodland glade creation. This new area could potentially become a second significant heathland during the life of this Management Plan and could act as a stepping-stone for mobile heathland species that are found on the remnant heaths across the road on Hayes Common.



Left: Varied age structure of heather provides a habitat for many different species of plants and animals

Grassland

There is a small area of acid grassland on the north side of the common. Acid grassland is a rarity within Greater London and is often found as part of the lowland heath landscapes such as West Wickham Common.

Much like the low-nutrient soils under the heath, this type of grassland supports a diverse community of invertebrates and uncommon plants including common bent grass (*Agrostis capillaris*), slender trefoil (*Trifolium micranthum*) and bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*). The infertile acidic soil (pH4.5-5.5) means that the grasses are generally small and grow close to the ground offering up light and space for less competitive wildflowers.

Deadwood habitat

Veteran trees, with their standing and aerial deadwood and associated fallen timber play a vital role in providing ecological niches for a range of flora and fauna such as fungi, lichen, invertebrates, birds and bats.

Despite this essential role, deadwood has been removed from woodland ecosystems by humans for thousands of years; it is important to the health of woodlands and plays a big part in nutrient recycling. When



Left: Fungi,
Spring Park
(© Mark Shoesmith)

Above: Wasp beetle,
The beetle's larvae live in dry,
dead wood

left to decay in situ, deadwood provides a constantly changing series of microhabitats. The value of this unique habitat differs between different species, age of the tree and decay time amongst other factors. The cavities, holes and hollows associated with the decay of heartwood provide valuable nesting and roosting sites for birds, bats and hibernating invertebrates.



Right: Deadwood provides a vital
role in functioning ecosystems

Biological Features

Spring Park

The habitats found at Spring Park are a living legacy of traditional landscape management and varied geology. A visitor to Spring Park a hundred years ago would have found a working “coppice” woodland alongside a hay meadow.

During the course of the past century, with the declining demand for woodland products and less intensive management, the coppice has grown into mature trees with large oaks which stand tall throughout the woodland. The old meadows and “coppice” woodland are now an important relic of the agricultural and pastoral landscape of the area and support flora and fauna that are otherwise uncommon in the surrounding urban landscape.

Ancient woodland

Spring Park contains one of the best examples of Ancient Woodland in the local area. The dominant species is pedunculate oak, followed by sweet chestnut, small-leaved lime and hazel with smaller

populations of sliver and downy birch, beech, and alder. Ancient Woodland in England can be defined as areas of woodland that have persisted since 1600. Ancient woodlands are the richest and most complex terrestrial habitat and cover a small portion of the UK.

The population of small-leaved limes is significant as it is most likely the largest population in Greater London. Small-leaved lime trees, once favoured for their pliable bark for rope making, are now nationally vulnerable due to their inability to successfully spread by seed. Small populations still exist, but their tendency to be found in established and ancient woodland means they are a rare sight.

The woodland occupies the entirety of the slope at Spring Park. Various component parts of the woodland exhibit different characteristics and are divided into defined compartments based on tree species, underlying soils and how they are managed.

Small-leaved lime:

A native tree of England and Wales, the small-leaved lime was believed to be the dominant tree of much of England before the pedunculate oak. The small-leaved lime is a hugely beneficial tree for pollinating invertebrates which are attracted to its sweet-smelling flowers. Its demise was thought to have happened over centuries of grazing in woodlands. Now uncommon, small populations, like the one at Spring Park, exist as the late naturalist Oliver Rackham described, “as a living link to the Mesolithic wildwoods after the last ice age”.



Right: Characteristics of the small-leaved lime



Above: Bluebells

Left: Chestnut coppicing, Spring Park

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Coppice woodland

Sweet chestnut trees are distributed in patches throughout the entire woodland and there are some significant and notable areas where planted sweet chestnut forms a community with large oak “standards” These compartments or “coupes” of sweet chestnut coppice are located in a strip adjacent to Woodland Way on the upper plateau of Spring Park above the meadow. This sweet chestnut understory is cut on a series of rotations creating different sizes of timber over a 16 year period. This traditional form of woodland management was reintroduced as a management objective in 1985.

Other coppice woodland includes a block of hazel coppice through the centre of the

woodland area on the steepest section of the slope as well a small-leaved lime coup in the far south-west corner of the site. By removing some of the canopy through coppicing to create a coup (a defined area of coppice woodland), more light and heat can reach the forest floor presenting an opportunity for woodland flowers, such as British bluebells (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), wood anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), dog violets (*Viola* sp.) and yellow archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon*).

“

The bluebells this year were the best that I've seen in 24 years of living here. Lots of other wild flowers too. The coppicing is having a brilliant affect.

What is coppicing?

Woodlands in the UK have been traditionally managed, often intensively, for centuries making use of the self-renewing abilities of trees to gather an indefinite supply of timber for building, fuel and fodder for domestic animals.

The practice of coppicing involves cutting the tree close to ground level; this allows successive new branches (shoots) to emerge from the stump (stool) which can be repeatedly cut to gather wood. Today the focus is on creating a more open and diverse structure to the woodland which benefits wildlife, rather than the produce from coppicing. The resources produced are still utilised to make a range of timber products for the commons such as benches, fence posts and signs.

Creating different levels of shade and vegetation density provides a wider variety of habitat niches, which are filled by a diversity of invertebrates, mammals and birds. Butterfly species such as speckled wood (*Pararge aegeria*) utilise the warm, sunny woodland glades and edges and are almost always found in patches of dappled light. Violets attract silver-washed fritillaries (*Argynnis paphia*) as it is their food plant which their caterpillars need to survive when they hatch.

Over the last century, coppicing has decreased drastically, which has had a largely negative impact on open woodland specialists, such as the white admiral butterfly (*Limenitis camilla*).

Alder woodland

Along the spring lines at Spring Park there are small patches of woodland that is comprised primarily of alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) alongside downy birch (*Betula pubescens*).

The understorey is dominated by hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*), with lesser amounts of rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*), spindle (*Euonymus europaea*) and guelder-rose (*Viburnum opulus*). Under the trees

there is a mixture of damp and shade tolerant wildflowers and grasses including tufted hair-grass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*) yellow archangel, remote sedge (*Carex remota*), wood sedge (*Carex sylvatica*) and common figwort (*Scrophularia nodosa*).

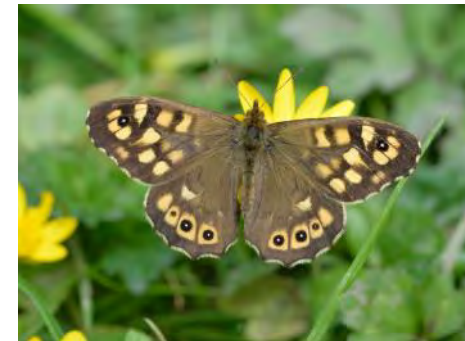
Oak and sweet chestnut woodland

An expanse of woodland that has been managed as non-intervention woodland is in the far east of Spring Park. Many of the trees in this area have not been felled or thinned and subsequently the woodland has a closed canopy with dominant species of oak and sweet chestnut vying for light.

Compared with the adjacent coppice woodland, there is a notable absence of

the typical ground flora associated with old woodland and many of the animals that go with it. With this in mind, this block is seen to hold less conservation and amenity value.

To increase the area's value for nature conservation, the woodland block will be thinned to avoid the problem of continued over-shading.



Left: Speckled wood, (Bob Eade)



Above: Sweet violet



Right: Wood anemone, Spring Park (Moira O'Donnell)



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Above: Collecting hay from the meadow, Spring Park

Neutral grassland

Since 1966, the grassland at Spring Park has been managed as an amenity area with three rugby pitches cut several times throughout each growing season. Management of the grassland as a hay meadow was reintroduced in 1991 when the third rugby pitch, nearest the south western end of the meadow, was no longer needed.

In recent years, maintaining the entirety of the meadow as a grassland for biodiversity has been prioritised and in 2016 it ceased its use as seasonal rugby pitches. The neutral

and acid grassland supports a number of positive indicator species of flora and adds to the semi-natural quality of Spring Park. The floristic diversity suggests that the semi-improved grassland habitat may be roughly divided into two different communities: the north eastern third (Kent Field) which is a relatively species-poor, agriculturally improved community, and the south west section which is floristically rather more diverse and includes an area of calcareous grassland towards the top of the slope (Little Kent Field).

In this more diverse grassland, notably Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*) is generally dominant together with annual meadow

grass (*Poa annua*) and sheep's fescue (*Festuca ovina*). Herbs and flowers include ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*) and common bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*).

The nationally rare greater yellow rattle (*Rhinanthus angustifolius*) has spread through the entire meadow over the last decade and is now a major component of the grassland. Known as 'the meadow maker' or 'nature's lawnmower', yellow rattle is a semi-parasitic plant that draws water and nutrients from plants growing nearby, especially grasses. Yellow rattle can suppress the growth of grasses by as much as 60% meaning that in the resulting space, other, less common flowers have room to grow.

The meadows are usually cut for hay in late summer when the majority of wildflowers have set seed. The wildflowers, which are the fabric supporting much of the pollinating invertebrates, can be sustained by the annual cutting and removal of plants to prevent nutrients from enriching the soil.

In September 2020, parts of the meadow were reseeded with a mixture of native wildflower seeds as part the Brilliant Butterflies landscape initiative for pollinating invertebrates led by Butterfly Conservation.

Hedgerows

The two major hedgerows found at Spring Park, along the south western and southern sides of the meadow are relatively recent additions to the site having both been planted on new earth banks in 1990 to create a link between different habitats. The hedges were created using a diverse range of native woody shrubs.

The dense growth of the hedges is providing an increasingly important habitat and natural corridor for a wide variety of wildlife. The wildlife value of the hedges is further enhanced by a wide herbaceous habitat on the other side of the southern hedgerow, and the blackthorn scrub coppice alongside the south western hedge.

In 2011, the West Wickham and Spring Park volunteers (WWaSPs) planted a new hedge running north-south across the meadow approximately along the line of an ancient hedgerow which is visible in old aerial photographs from the 1940's.

Hedgerows provide food and cover for many species including a vast majority of UK woodland birds, small mammals and amphibians. Several bat species also use the hedges as navigable landmarks for their orientation to feeding or roosting sites.



Above: Fixing stakes and binders to a newly-laid hedge, Spring Park

Successional areas and scrub

The scrub is a component of woodland edge habitat within glades and along paths but is also found in a key area of Spring park as a result of deliberate management. A belt of blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) dominated scrub is located along the south western end of the meadow, adjacent to the hedgerow along the driveway to the Spring Park Office. To stop the area developing into secondary woodland, resulting in a gradual loss of habitat diversity and a decline in associated species of plants and animals, a four-year coppice rotation was introduced here in 2003.

This belt supports a large breeding colony of brown hairstreak butterfly (*Thecla betulae*) which has been recorded as the largest known site monitored by Kent Butterfly Conservation following egg searches in December 2019. It was noted that the vast majority of eggs had been deposited on plants that had two years of growth since coppicing so the management of this area must continue to ensure two year old growth is always available for the butterflies.

The southern woodland edge at Spring Park along the meadow is also managed as part of the coppice rotation. This

variation in structure enriches the habitat between the woodland and open grassland by providing the micro heterogeneity in habitats which different animals can benefit from such as invertebrates, small mammals and birds.

Value of scrub

Scrub provides a valuable niche for nesting songbirds, overwintering invertebrates and other animals as a source of shelter and food.

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Scrub of varied age, species and structure supports the widest range of wildlife, as some species depend on specific growth stages of certain plants throughout the year.

Trees and shrubs that produce flowers and bear fruit and berries, for example, are a reliable source of food and nectar at times of the year when other habitats are resource deficient.

Wetland

The seasonal ditches running through the woodland significantly add to the diversity plants found at Spring Park. The more reliable ditches, where the ground is at least moist even in the driest of summers, ensures that the stands of alder and other wetland loving plants and insects thrive in the otherwise dry expanse of woodland.

The pond located on the edge of the meadow and woodland at Spring Park has typical pond and riparian flora along its

banks including purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), lesser water plantain (*Baldellia ranunculoides*) marsh woundwort (*Stachys palustris*) water forget-me-not (*Myosotis scorpioides*) and yellow flag iris (*Iris pseudacorus*).

It provides a home for significant breeding odonata populations of damselflies and dragonflies with 13 species recorded. Frogs, toads and smooth newt (*Lissotriton vulgaris*) frequently use the pond to breed and small populations return to the pond each year.



Right: Water forget-me-not,
Spring Park
(Moira O'Donnell)

Below: Marsh woundwort,
Spring Park
(Moira O'Donnell)



Rare Species & Wildlife

West Wickham Common

Plants

The acid woodland at West Wickham Common contains a number of plants of local interest such as climbing corydalis (*Geratocapnos claviculata*), Solomon's seal (*Polygonatum multiflorum*) and butcher's broom (*Ruscus aculeatus*) – the latter a plant steeped in human history for its uses as a scrubber to clean butcher's blocks and its antibacterial properties.

Fungi

Fungi are an integral component of woodland ecosystems chiefly because of their invaluable role in driving the process of wood decay and decomposition of organic matter. The combined effort of both professional and amateur mycologists over the years has resulted in more than 180 species of fungi being recorded on the common with a number of important species identified in recent surveys.

Lichens, bryophytes, mosses and liverworts are also well represented. The mosaic of



Left: Silver washed fritillary

different habitats and veteran trees means that there is a strong representation across many of the major fungal groups. Of note, there are several fungal species associated with decaying and standing deadwood including oak pin (*Cudoniella acicularis*), birch polypore (*Piptoporus betulinus*) and conifer blueing bracket (*Postia caesia*).

Butterflies

As a result of ongoing survey efforts by volunteers and professional recorders, there are also good records of butterflies and moths present on West Wickham Common. The most significant species are the woodland specialists, such as the white admiral (*Limenitis camilla*), silver-washed fritillary (*Argynnis paphia*) and speckled wood (*Pararge aegeria*) which thrive within the sunlit clearings provided by the

woodland glade creation work and the dry, warm expanse of the open heathland.

Moths

Through a combination of moth surveys carried out during 2015 and 2012 with further casual sightings undertaken periodically, a total of 255 moth species have now been recorded on West Wickham Common. A large proportion of these moths have their associated food plants of oak trees, scots pine and the various lichens and algae found on trees. This demonstrates that the Common supports a very rich community of moths through these range of habitats. The toadflax brocade moth, (*Calophasia lunula*), is one of several Red Data Book species present.

Saproxyllic invertebrates

A 'saproxyllic' species is one that depends on dead or decaying wood in order to live. Some feed on the wood, others use it as a retreat or hunting surface.

Ancient trees, pollards and old coppiced stools are home to a wide range of saproxyllic species because they have abundant dead and decaying wood in a variety of different moisture and light conditions. The occurrence of carefully managed ancient oak pollards ensures that there is a high proportion of beetles which utilise this resource on West Wickham Common.

A survey of saproxyllic beetles in 2009 recorded 62 species with 8 species having conservation status either as notable or Red Data Book. Rare species include *Procræus tibialis*, a click beetle which is found solely on native veteran trees, and *Dorcatoma dresdensis*, a beetle species whose larvae feed exclusively in decayed heartwood on the tiny strand-like filaments of fungi.

West Wickham Common is one of the remaining strongholds of the saproxyllic stag beetle (*Lucanus cervus*), the UK's largest terrestrial beetle. The larvae live in the decaying wood of deciduous trees, often in roots, stumps and fallen timber of broad-

leaved trees, and take between three and a half and six years to become fully grown. Once mature, their adult lifespan is short; they emerge in May with the sole purpose of mating and die in August once the eggs have been laid in decaying wood.

The stag beetle is listed on Annex II of the EC Habitats Directive and is a priority species in both the UK and Bromley Biodiversity Action Plans. The presence and continuity of deadwood habitat which has been left to decay in-situ is essential in the conservation of this species.

In 2006 and 2007 a project took place on the edge of the Earthworks on West Wickham Common to create new habitat using piles of tree trunks, vegetation, wood chip and earth. This proved a suitable habitat for these magnificent creatures during their long juvenile life stage before emergence as adults. The pile is topped-up with timber, wood chip and grass cuttings each winter to maintain the habitat. Stag beetle larvae are often observed under trunks, stumps and wood piles in many other areas of West Wickham Common and Spring Park.



Right: Stag beetle life cycle: egg, larva, pupa and female/ male adult.

Tree hole-using birds and bats

The wide variety of old trees and standing deadwood provides an important function for hole-nesting birds such as greater spotted woodpecker (*Dendrocopos major*), blue tit (*Parus caeruleus*) and tawny owl (*Strix aluco*). The large coniferous scots pine additionally attract large flocks of long-tailed tit (*Aegithalos caudatus*) and occasional goldcrest (*Regulus regulus*), the UK's smallest bird; goldcrests have specially adapted beaks to feed on insects between narrow tree needles.

As biological indicators of ecosystem health, the presence of bat species across the two sites suggests that there is a plentiful supply of insects. Five species have been recorded using the site for feeding, specifically noctule (*Nyctalus noctule*), serotine (*Eptesicus serotinus*), brown long-eared (*Plecotus auratus*), common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*).

Reptiles

Heathlands provide the right micro-climate and biological needs because of the open aspect and fine soils to support reptile species. Although there are no positive records of reptile use of this habitat, reptile species including grass snake (*Natrix natrix*), common lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*), slow

worms (*Anguis fragilis*) and adder (*Vipera berus*) are documented on neighbouring Keston Common and Hayes Common.

The road which fragments and dissects West Wickham Common and these open spaces is a major impediment on reptile movements.

Below: Goldcrest,
(Francis C. Franklin)

Right: Common Lizard,
(Natural England/Allan
Drewitt)



Rare Species & Wildlife

Spring Park

Plants

The characteristic flora of Spring Park is centred around woodland wildflowers and herbs as well as the aquatic flora in and around the margins of the pond. Although not rare, the assemblage of wildflowers, many of which indicate the continuity of ancient woodland, are locally important in terms of biodiversity value and supporting a wide range of specialist species.

Swathes of bluebells carpet the woodland each year as well as patches of wood anemone, primrose, sanicle and dog violet. Species of note in the Spring Park meadow includes, among many others, the nationally rare greater yellow-rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*).

Butterflies

As mentioned earlier, Spring Park is recognised as one of the top breeding colony sites in the South East for brown hairstreak butterfly (*Thecla betulae*). The brown hairstreak butterfly is a Red Book List species and a conservation priority within Greater London.

The butterfly species has declined rapidly in the last 60 years and are confined to areas where there are dense networks of hedges and small woodlands. Across the life stages of the butterfly, there is a near sole reliance on blackthorn; microscopic eggs (around 1mm across) are laid on new growth of blackthorn twigs which in turn emerge as larvae to feed on unfurling buds.

The variety of woodland and grassland flora sustains other butterflies including marbled white, silver washed fritillary, meadow brown and occasional sightings of both the chalk hill blue butterfly and white admiral.



Above: Lifecycle of the brown hairstreak butterfly: ovum, larva, pupa and adult

Left: Peacock butterfly caterpillar, Spring Park (Moirá O'Donnell)



Left: Ruddy darter
(Ian Leach)

Below: Smooth newt
(Ian Kirke)



Dragonflies and damselflies

Informal surveys of invertebrates associated with wetland habitat have been carried out since 2006, mainly by the pond on Spring Park.

To date 13 species have been recorded, many breeding, including the nationally notable ruddy darter dragonfly (*Sympetrum sanguineum*), large red damselfly (*Pyrrhosoma nymphula*) and broad-bodied chaser dragonfly (*Libellula depressa*).



Above: Common whitethroat,
Andreas Trepte

Birds

Alongside West Wickham Common, the site's ancient woodland contains various cracks, holes and cavities that attract woodland birds to nest, perch and scour for food.

Birds commonly associated with open grassland and urban parks are also spotted including green woodpecker (*Picus viridis*), starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) and song thrush (*Turdus philomelos*), a BAP priority bird species. In recent years, there has been consistent records of common whitethroat (*Sylvia communis*) in the blackthorn scrub at Spring Park. This small passerine is suspected to be breeding during the summer months following their passage from Sub-Saharan Africa. Another regular summer visitor is the swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) and can be seen feeding on the wing in the open meadow.

Reptiles and amphibians

The pond at Spring Park supports breeding populations of common frog (*Rana temporaria*), common toad (*Bufo bufo*) and smooth newt (*Lissotriton vulgaris*). The arisings of harvested wood from winter tree work has been stacked in the area surrounding the pond to create hibernacula for amphibians and supports connections with the damp woodland, pond and their associated terrestrial habitat.

3

Vision

West Wickham Common

West Wickham Common will continue to be a beautiful natural place, open for public enjoyment. The unique nature of the majestic ancient pollards set in a landscape of open heath, acid grassland, ancient field systems and quiet meandering pathways will be treasured by local people and all of those who come to visit.

Whether for daily exercise, a Sunday afternoon walk with family or just that special place for quiet contemplation and a chance to get close to nature, we are committed to the conservation, protection and enhancement of West Wickham Common for future generations.

The local community will be encouraged to join in with efforts to conserve and celebrate the site through volunteering, joining us on ranger-led educational activities and promotion of the site through innovative media. Our aim is to enhance the ecological functioning of the site at a landscape scale, maintain its place as a key component of the wider cultural landscape and a direct link to

our past as well as providing a vital store of carbon in response to climate change. Our Management will balance the conservation of biodiversity and cultural heritage, and protection of the ancient oaks and the open areas of heath and grassland as refugia for wildlife.

There will be clear and inclusive access and interpretation measures enabling visitors to make the most of their visit. These measures will reflect the special nature of the site. Recreational activities that co-exist with the landscape and wildlife will be encouraged.

The vision for the next ten years will specifically focus on key projects to:

- Protect and enhance the ancient pollard oaks
- Maintain and enhance wildlife habitats with particular focus on the open heath, edge habitat along rides and landscape elements such as ponds
- Provide innovative interpretation about the site, in particular the ancient trees and archaeological features
- Improve the access to the site by upgrading key tracks and maintaining rights of way for walkers
- Diversify age structure and species within the woodland to support greater biodiversity and increase resilience to

stresses such as disease and climate change.



Above: Dog walker on the heath, West Wickham Common



3 Vision

Spring Park

Spring Park will continue to be a beautiful natural place, open to public enjoyment. The unique nature of the woods will be treasured by local people and all those who visit and there will be a commitment to its conservation and enhancement for future generations.

The local community will be encouraged to join in with efforts to conserve and celebrate the woods through widening participation and enhancement of volunteering. The aim of this will be to enhance the ecological functioning of the site at a landscape scale, maintain a key component of the wider cultural landscape, and provide vital ecosystem services in response to the challenges of a warming climate and an ecological crisis.

Our management will balance the conservation of biodiversity and cultural heritage, maintain the long-established coppice cycles and collection of rare small-leaved lime and encourage the

understanding of and respect for Spring Park's long standing meadows, woodland and freshwater habitats.

There will be clear and inclusive access and interpretation measures enabling visitors to make the most of their visit. These measures will reflect the special nature and qualities of the site in an increasingly urban setting on London's fringe. Recreational activities that co-exist with the landscape and wildlife will be encouraged.

The vision for the next ten years will specifically focus on key projects to:

- Maintain the current Sweet Chestnut coppice rotation to produce regular marketable short- and medium-term crops.
- Maintain and enhance wildlife habitats for biodiversity with particular focus on open space and edge habitat along rides.
- Diversify age structure and species within the woodland to support greater biodiversity and increase resilience to stresses such as disease and climate change.
- Improve the access to the woodland by upgrading key tracks and maintaining rights of way.

96% of respondents supported the 2021-2031 vision for managing Spring Park

– 2020 consultation



Above: Walkers at Spring Park







Aims & methodology

The aims of the 2021-2031 management plan seek to maintain the West Wickham Commons as biodiverse open spaces and provide a direction of travel towards achieving the vision for the site.

The targets detailed here will be monitored throughout the plan and adjusted as needed to achieve the overall aims.

Each aim is linked to the governing document of the West Wickham Commons charity, the Corporation of London (Open Spaces) Act 1878.

Aim 1: Biological

Maintain the biodiversity of the West Wickham Commons by managing habitats to favourable condition and achieving conservation gains that benefit the site and beyond.

Aim 2: People

Encourage the sustainable use of the West Wickham Commons for recreation and public enjoyment and promote community involvement in caring for them.

Aim 3: Estate assets and legal issues

Protect the West Wickham Commons and its users from harm. Fulfil legal obligations, challenge threats and maintain assets in good condition for future generations to enjoy.

“

Just a big thank you for the wonderful work that you all do. Both sites are well managed and as a result appreciated by local residents.

– 2020 consultation response

Aim 1: Biological

West Wickham Common

Maintain the biodiversity of the West Wickham Commons by managing habitats to favourable condition and achieving conservation gains that benefit the site and beyond.

The elements of West Wickham Common are interdependent: habitats and species cannot be managed in isolation. In general, the stronger the site is in terms of habitat vigour and diversity, the more resilient it will be to the impact of outside influences such as climate change, pollution and habitat loss in surrounding areas.

Ancient trees

Our aim is to keep the old pollards alive as long as possible to protect the associated plant, animal and fungal communities. Trees need regular inspections and pruning to reduce the weight of the branches. When cutting, care is taken to leave enough foliage to keep the tree alive whilst still removing enough wood to stop the heavy

branches tearing the tree apart or causing it to fall over.

It is also essential to ensure each tree receives enough light. As the height of the crown is reduced, more surrounding young trees may need to be removed.



The small clearings (halos) around each pollard start to join up over time, and grazing helps this become more open. Care needs to be taken that the environment **around the old trees doesn't change too quickly**: a sudden change in wind flow leaves trees susceptible to high winds or drought.

The pollards have been cut several times in recent years. However, despite detailed attention, many are increasingly fragile and need additional help. Some trees have been propped and tethered to prevent them falling over and fences are used round ones that are most vulnerable.

The health and condition of the ancient trees are monitored regularly to assess changes to their condition and to check for pests and diseases. A work programme details which year each tree needs to be worked on and what needs to be done. Each old tree has its own management plan that takes into account its specific needs: for some this means substantial work, for others it is just occasional checks. New pollards are created to provide continuity of habitat and historical context for the future and, ultimately, will replace the old pollards in time.

Left: Pollarding of the ancient oaks, West Wickham Common

Target: Conserve and enhance ancient trees

Achieved by:

- Annual condition check on old pollards
- Practical work on old pollards
- Installing, replacing and checking cables/props

The structural and species diversity helps to build in resilience to the ecosystem to help negate external influences such as disease or climate change. Some species also require a balance of age classes and structural variation to sustain healthy populations.

The overall aim is to achieve a varied habitat mosaic throughout the woodland. For improving habitat value for wildlife this should incorporate a diversity of tree ages and all stages of the full succession appropriate to the landscape of West Wickham Common from grassland and heathland through to scrub, to secondary woodland and ultimately ancient woodland in the future.

This will be achieved by gradually clearing portions of scrub and woodland avoiding bird nesting season (February to August). Where present, stands of oak, birch and hazel will be retained alongside standing deadwood and decaying timber for wildlife. Higher light levels will confer a range of benefits within the canopy and ground habitats, such as encouraging a greater diversity of invertebrates, epiphytic lichens and wood-decaying fungi.

Target: Improve ecological value of secondary woodland

Achieved by:

- Cutting and treating dense holly understorey
- Thinning dense woodland canopies to encourage natural regeneration
- Planting native woodland shrubs and trees
- Creating woodland edge wildlife corridors
- Maintaining woodland edge wildlife corridors
- Cutting and treating invasive species: Laurel, Portuguese Laurel & Rhododendron
- Surveying & controlling Oak Processionary Moth infestations

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Secondary woodland and scrub

With the cessation of grazing livestock on West Wickham Common, there has been a gradual encroachment of scrub and secondary woodland in some areas. A dense wall of holly in an oak and birch woodland of uniform height has led to a decline in habitat diversity.

Generally, woodlands that are structurally diverse, that is woodlands which have a range of vegetation heights and trees of different ages, have a wider range of micro-habitats and niches for wildlife to exploit. Research has indicated that many species find the first ten meters from a woodland edge more favourable than dense woodland because of the greater availability of light.



Right: Habitat management work by volunteers, West Wickham Common

Heathland

Heathland has been shaped almost entirely due to human activity and once provided basic necessities to local communities for grazing livestock. Nowadays, heaths provide a valuable habitat for a diverse range of species including invertebrates, birds and reptiles. It exists as a state held back from reaching its climax community vegetation; if left undisturbed, heathland will naturally revert into secondary woodland as trees and enrich the nutrient-depleted soils over time.

One characteristic of well-managed heathland is a mosaic of different age groups of heather; the different stages of heather growth are an important feature used by species including nesting birds. The micro variation within the heathland is achieved by expanding the heathland area to create new growth.

The patchy mosaic of heather provides sunny spots for reptiles and invertebrates to bask, networks of tunnels for animals to move through unnoticed and taller tufts of heather for birds to demark their territories. In older areas or large patches of a uniform height and size, it might be necessary to break up clusters using mechanical methods. However in recent years several deliberate (acts of arson) and accidental



Left: Heather in flower,
West Wickham Common

fires that have affected large parts of the heath have, by coincidence, created a **very varied age structure** so it's unlikely intervention will be required for a while.

Scrub will be encouraged along the edges of the open heathland and the adjoining woodland to provide habitat, primarily for birds, mammals and invertebrates; this will need routine cutting to prevent it from developing into secondary woodland.

The open expanse of heathland on West Wickham Common is an island within a patchwork of heathland stretching across



Above: Surveying for invertebrates,
West Wickham Common

the adjacent Hayes and Keston Commons. The heaths that survive in the UK today are incredibly rare and a small fraction of what existed 100 years ago.

There is evidence to suggest that West Wickham Common used to be a much more open landscape and that an expanse of heath covered a larger portion of the site than it does today.

Over the last decade, heath on the Common has been expanded and new areas have been made by translocating heather seeds. The cultural and landscape

associations of heath on West Wickham Common add weight to the argument to conserve and support new areas offering stepping stones for heathland species that will support and protect the existing patches.

Target: Conserve and enhance the heathland

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Achieved by:

- Maintaining existing heath by clearing bracken, bramble and saplings
- Extending existing heath by spreading seed and plug planting
- Establishing new heath by clearing trees, scrapping-off woodland soils and seed spreading

Below: The gradation of vegetation height from heather communities to the woodland edge provides ideal habitat for many species and blurs otherwise abrupt boundaries for wildlife living on fringes.

“

The heather has regenerated fantastically. Lowland heathland is rare and disappearing. This is a vital project.

– 2020 consultation response

Right: Different structure in heathland vegetation, West Wickham Common (Adrian Steel)



Grassland

The gravelly, sandy soils of West Wickham Common contain areas of acid grassland – a habitat of national and local importance due to the variety of rare and declining plants and animals it supports including grasses, wildflowers, invertebrates and fungi. Acid grassland occurs on free-draining soil with acid conditions and is characterised by grassy tussocks and bare ground. In the UK, it is becoming increasingly rare.

Acid grassland can be an important part of heathland systems, adding to the overall diversity.

There are several small patches found on West Wickham Common on the southern edge of the Croydon Road. These strips are managed by annual cutting and removal of vegetation to preserve the balance of this nutrient-deprived system. We will expand these habitats by thinning scrub and secondary woodland incrementally around the grassland edges.

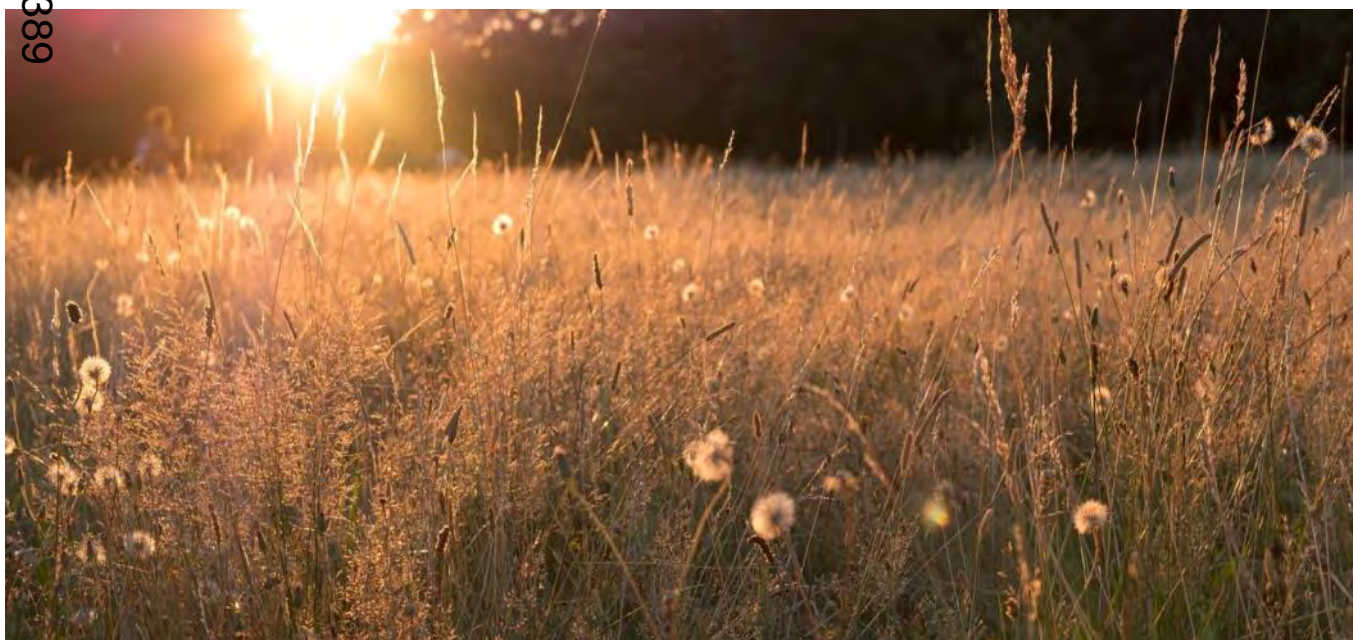
Target: Conserve and enhance grasslands

Achieved by:

- Maintaining existing grasslands by annual hay cutting and removal of arisings
- Controlling undesirable species e.g. Ragwort
- No loss of grassland through scrub encroachment

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Below: Acid grassland



Below: Mating marbled white butterflies, (Bill Downey)



Aim 1: Biological

Spring Park

Maintain the biodiversity of the West Wickham Commons by managing habitats to favourable condition and achieving conservation gains that benefit the site and beyond.

Coppice woodland

Coppice woodlands are an intrinsic part of the UK's natural and cultural heritage - rich in landscape character, wildlife and land use history. The coppice woodland at Spring Park is managed today much in the same way as it was done in past centuries. Areas, or coups of sweet chestnut, hazel and small-leaved lime are coppiced during the winter work season (September to April).

The smaller trees within each compartment known as the understory are cut almost to ground level and send up healthy new shoots in the following spring. This technique of woodland management extends the life of these trees, rejuvenating it each time the stems are harvested.



Below: Regrowth stages of coppicing

The harvested wood is used to create piles within the coppice coups, providing great habitat for a large variety of invertebrates, mosses, lichens and fungi left to naturally decompose. Timber produced from coppicing is also used for stakes and binders in hedgelaying and fence posts. Routes for extracting the timber are carefully planned to avoid vulnerable parts of the woodland

and traditional heavy horses have been used in the past to access steep slopes. As mentioned earlier in the document, through opening up the area to light, different levels of shade and vegetation density are created. This ensures a wider variety of habitat 'niches', which are filled by a diversity of plants and animals. In the areas cut in the last winter, there is a



Above: Traditional working horses used to carefully haul timber through the woodland, Spring Park (Luke Ellis)

burst of wildflowers including violets, bluebells and anemones. The various ages of regrowth provide ideal habitats for nesting birds and mammals in the dense regrowth of the coppiced 'stools'.

The compartments are cut on a rotation depending on the tree species in the coup. By cutting small areas on rotation, a mosaic of habitats, all at different ages and heights, are created within the expanse of woodland.



Above: Vigorous growth of coppiced hazel

95% of people agreed with the proposed options to manage the coppice woodland

Target: Conserve and enhance coppice woodland

Achieved by:

- Creating habitat piles from brushwood/ timber
- Maintaining established coppice rotations
- Establishing new coppice rotations

Coppice rotations per species

Coppice - Sweet chestnut: takes place on a 16 year rotation. All stems are cut to a stub of >100mm, using chainsaws. All mature oak trees and some standards of other native species are left uncut to form the canopy layer

Coppice - Hazel: takes place on a 10 year rotation. All stools are cut to neat stubs using bowsaws.

Hazel is planted and layered to 'beat up' the coups and increase density. Standards are removed where necessary to allow light to the new coppice growth.

Coppice – Small-leaved lime: takes place on a 20 year rotation where it exists as a single species mono-culture. Small-leaved limes found within coups dominated by chestnut or hazel are coppiced on the 16 or 10 year cycles prescribed for these species. Occasional lime standards are left uncut to form a component of the canopy layer.

Woodland

A large portion of woodland in the north-east section of Spring Park bordering Cheyne Woods and Sparrow's Den has been previously managed and maintained with minimal input or intervention over the last few decades.

Arguably, the woodland in this section possesses less biological value than that of the surrounding coppiced areas – the trees heavily compete for light and water and grow uniformly. The dense canopy formed by similar tree ages shades out less common flowers and plants that would otherwise be found on the woodland floor. Carrying out

works to vary the age structure by gradually thinning some of the trees would create sun-filled open glades enabling more plants to grow and improving this habitat's value for wildlife. Native trees might also be planted to supplement natural regeneration that has otherwise not occurred due to the availability of light.

Several large trees brought down by the heavy winds of the 1987 storm are still present in the understory today. Increasing the temperature, humidity and density of light to the woodland floor could alter the woodland for the decaying processes led by beetles, and fungi to accelerate.

Target: Improve ecological value of secondary woodland

Achieved by:

- Cutting and treating dense holly understorey
- Thinning dense woodland canopies to encourage natural regeneration
- Planting native woodland shrubs and trees
- Creating woodland edge wildlife corridors
- Maintaining woodland edge wildlife corridors
- Cutting and treating invasive species: Laurel, Portuguese Laurel & Rhododendron
- Surveying & controlling Oak Processionary Moth infestations
- Retaining piles of deadwood and safe fallen trees for invertebrates and fungi



Left: Broadleaved woodland, Spring Park

Grassland

The grassland at Spring Park is managed to encourage wildflowers and provide an important habitat for birds and invertebrates. Work is carried out to prevent the rapid encroachment of shrubs in the meadow. This is done by carrying out an annual conservation hay cut. The hay is baled and supplies food throughout the winter for a herd of conservation grazing cattle on the nearby Coulsdon Commons.

In recent years, greater yellow rattle, a nationally-rare wildflower, has appeared in the grassland habitat at Spring Park. A specialist to chalk and neutral grasslands, the success of the greater yellow rattle highlights the potential to improve the grassland sward to contain a greater diversity of species that reflects the downland landscape Spring Park sits within. Similar habitats occur nearby at Hutchinson's Bank and Chapel Bank Nature Reserves with diverse neutral and chalk grasslands.

The short turf, low nutrients and patches of bare ground in the meadow means that there are opportunities for less-common wildflowers to grow. Similarly, these patches of exposed, fine sandy soil have been utilised by burrowing solitary wasps and bees including the beewolf (*Philanthus Triangulum*) - a large bee-predating wasp.

Wildflowers like Kidney vetch (*Anthyllis vulneraria*) are one of the desirable grassland species that would enhance the quality of the grassland at Spring Park for invertebrates; kidney vetch is the food plant for the small blue butterfly (*Cupido minimus*), but is also generally utilised by similar uncommon butterfly species including the chalkhill blue (*Polyommatus coridon*) and adonis blue butterfly (*Polyommatus bellargus*).

Below: Beewolf,
Spring Park

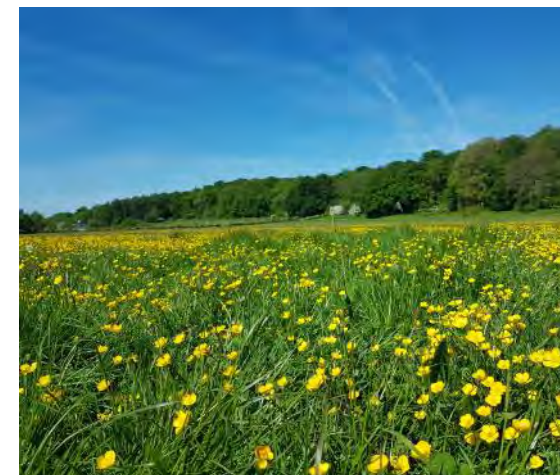


Target: Conserve and enhance grasslands

Achieved by:

- Maintaining existing grasslands by annual hay cutting and removal of arisings
- Extending grasslands by clearing trees and holly understory
- Controlling undesirable species e.g. Ragwort

Below: Buttercups in flower,
Spring Park



Freshwater pond

The freshwater pond is a rich habitat for a diverse range of aquatic invertebrates, wetland plants and amphibians. This vital source of water is also a key resource used by mammals, birds and other invertebrates in the wider landscape - a habitat in decline in the UK, especially within Greater London.

Smooth newts are one of the species which benefit most from managing the pond, particularly the vegetation around the pond margins. Newts are particularly sensitive to changes within ponds and, to successfully breed, require a diverse range of plant species in which they can wrap their eggs such as water mint (*Mentha aquatica*) and water forget-me-not (*Myosotis scorpioides*). In previous years, rotting vegetation, logs and piles of silt have been left on the bank of the pond to create an artificial 'hibernacula' - a place in which amphibians, such as frogs and newts, can use throughout the winter to protect themselves from the cold.

Based on recommendations for managing the freshwater pond at Spring Park, past practical activities have included regular small-scale tree clearance to maintain the edges in dappled shade, remove undesirable vegetation and more substantial silt removal.

The pond has suffered from vigorous growth of undesirable species in the pond margin including reed mace (*Typha latifolia*) and water horsetail (*Equisetum fluviatile*) which are regularly controlled.

The appearance of New Zealand pigmyweed (*Crassula recurva*), listed on Schedule 9 of the UK Wildlife and Countryside Act as an invasive, non-native species, has developed in the pond, posing a threat to native species due to depleted oxygen levels and its mat forming abilities.

Below: Common frogs,
Spring Park
(Mark Shoesmith)



Target: Conserve and enhance coppice freshwater habitat

Achieved by:

- Removal of silt and accumulated leaf litter
- Maintaining pond habitat
- Establishing new hibernacula for amphibians
- Controlling invasive and undesirable species e.g. New Zealand Pigmyweed



Above: Removing undesirable pond species,
Spring Park

Successional habitats

A mosaic of habitats at both site and landscape scale is essential for specific BAP species (in particular, assemblages of invertebrates and breeding birds). If managed well, scrub is an extremely valuable habitat to support blocks of woodland and grassland.

One species which benefits from regularly cut scrub is the brown hairstreak butterfly. A blackthorn thicket between the Spring Park Office and meadow is a key habitat managed for the brown hairstreak. A four year rotation of cutting is designed to give the correct mix of habitat elements required to support egg laying of the brown hairstreak.

Target: Conserve and enhance successional habitats

Achieved by:

- Maintaining established scrub coppice rotation based on target species management (e.g. brown hairstreak)
- Maintaining woodland habitats through rotational cutting



Above: Newly created hedgerow, Spring Park



Right: Blackbird, Spring Park (Mike Shoesmith)

Hedgerows

The hedgerows at Spring Park are maintained to provide habitat for a diversity of wildlife and a cultural feature that demarks old field boundaries. Much like successional habitats, hedges are an **important 'ecotone'** - an edge between habitat types through which many animals

can move, forage and take shelter within. Well managed hedges are dense, offering few gaps for predators to seek out nesting or vulnerable animals. The traditional approach of laying hedges, a countryside craft practiced for hundreds of years, offers the most sympathetic management for wildlife.

Target: Conserve and enhance hedgerows

Achieved by:

- Maintaining hedges by rotational cutting
- Enhancing hedgerow habitat by rotational hedge laying

Timing work on hedges is vital to viable habitats; work is carried out on a rotational basis to ensure that these systems are not disturbed at critical times of the year for wildlife.

96% of respondents agreed with management options for biodiversity

– 2020 consultation

Monitoring and survey work

Knowing what rare and threatened species live on the West Wickham Commons is essential for us to plan management works to ensure that they benefit from our work and are not adversely impacted. This can be challenging: many of these species are small and/or hard to find or identify.

As habitat restoration progresses and areas change, the associated fauna and flora will also change. Throughout all our work it is important to record actions that are carried out and to evaluate the success of techniques used. In addition, long term monitoring is especially valuable because it provides data showing how species and habitats are being affected by climate change that can be used to inform mitigation and response measures.

The data we collect contributes to many national monitoring programmes: the data gathered informs not only the work carried out on the nature reserve but also across the country. Research projects add to the information available about the West Wickham Commons and can influence activities beyond the two sites too. Examples of current recording projects include regular butterfly transects, butterfly egg counts for black hairstreak and recording moths through light trapping.

Right: Surveying for tree dwelling invertebrates, West Wickham Common



Below: Surveying for brown hairstreak eggs



Above: Moth trapping at night

Target: Monitor and survey habitats/ species

Achieved by:

- Monitoring of target species and reporting to local and national monitoring schemes e.g. butterflies and moths
- Annual monitoring and reporting for Countryside Stewardship Scheme
- Assessing condition of habitats in line with the newly-established Countryside Stewardship requirements

Aim 2: People

Encourage the sustainable use of the West Wickham Commons for recreation and public enjoyment and promote community involvement in caring for them.

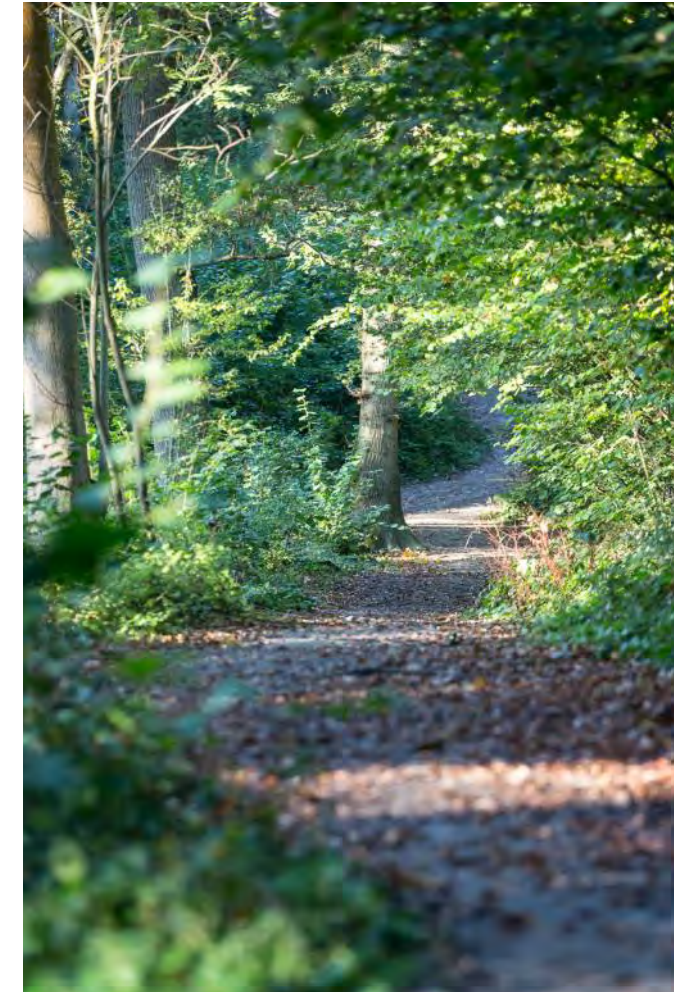
Access and recreation

The West Wickham Commons are well used by people and exist as green oases within a wider network of commons and open spaces in and around the fringes of Greater London. It is important that visitors enjoy the time they spend on these two commons, but it is equally important that their impact is as light as possible to conserve and support the features, habitats and wildlife that make these sites special. The activities of some visitors can detract from the enjoyment of others if not carefully managed.

The West Wickham Commons play a vital role not only in relation to biodiversity but also social capital by restoring, supporting and boosting our physical and mental health and wellbeing. The vision for the West Wickham Commons is for quiet, informal and responsible recreation that coexists with the landscape and wildlife present.

True to the original words in the Corporation of London (Open Spaces) Act in 1878, the West Wickham Commons are protected in perpetuity for people to access for recreation. Byelaws made under the Act help regulate activities.

The site Ranger, supported by local volunteers, plays a huge role in making the West Wickham Commons a welcoming and accessible place for visitors. Both sites are recipients of the Green Flag Award, having been judged according to an international standard of good practice within the green space sector. To this end, the targets of the objective in this section of the plan uses the criteria of the Green Flag Award scheme to assess service delivery in relation to people.



Above: Woodland paths,
Spring Park

Left: Family walking,
West Wickham Common

Target: Prevent and discourage inappropriate use and behaviour

Achieved by:

- Attending Police Community Advisory Panel meetings and liaising with local police teams
- Encouraging visitors to take all litter home through signage and ranger presence
- Encouraging responsible dog walking through highlighting legal responsibilities and enforcing negative behaviour
- Removing fly tipping
- Maintaining an out-of-hours rota of rangers to respond to incidents 365 days a year

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West Wickham Common is well managed without looking over managed!

– 2020 consultation response

Right: Dog walker,
West Wickham Common



Target: Provide welcoming and accessible Open Spaces

Achieved by:

- Maintaining information and byelaw boards at key entrances
- Participation in Green Flag Award by facilitating independent audit of site facilities
- Maintaining accessible surfaced paths
- Maintaining unsurfaced paths by regular mowing throughout April-October and path-side vegetation clearance
- Providing and maintaining pathway infrastructure including fingerposts, gates and waymarkers
- Providing and maintaining byelaw boards at key entrances, noticeboards and benches
- Providing and maintaining provision for car parking including disabled access
- Regular patrolling by Rangers to provide a visual presence and interaction with visitors



Left: Local connections to the sustainable travel network

Sustainable transport

Services are provided for accessing the West Wickham Commons by a variety of transport options. With the challenges of a growing urban population and climate change, reaching the two open spaces by foot, bike or public transport should be prioritised to improve air quality, reduce dependence on fossil fuels and enhance the quality of visitor experience.

At Spring Park, an over provision of free parking spaces has encouraged users to travel by car rather than opting for more sustainable transport options such as walking, arriving by bus or cycling.

Spring Park's proximity to national cycling routes and local public transport hubs should be utilised to promote and encourage greater use of low-carbon travel.

Target: Improve provision for visitors arriving by sustainable transport

Achieved by:

- Working in partnership with Bromley Council & Transport for London work up design options, cycle parking and the linear cycle path alongside Addington Road
- Identifying sources of funding for improvements from local or national sustainable transport initiatives Implement and publicise new transport options to encourage sustainable use

77% of respondents agreed in improving travel to Spring Park by bike

– 2020 consultation

“

Keeping the path separate from the road is useful as the road is very busy and being straight, cars travel fast on it. It makes a route for people with young families/prams to walk as well.

– 2020 consultation response

Interpretation and education

The popularity and location of the West Wickham Commons presents an ideal opportunity for informal interpretation and formal education about the wildlife, history and management of these two sites. Information and stories about the West Wickham Commons have often been produced and interpreted with the support, knowledge and expertise from local interest groups, charities and organisations with aligning visions. Partners from previous years have included fruitful collaborations with the Ancient Tree Forum, London Biodiversity Partnership and London Wildlife Trust.

In recent years, there has been a growing concern that with the fast-pace of modern life, society has become more and more distanced from nature. The visions for the West Wickham Commons supports the use of these sites for recreation that is sensitive to and co-exists with the landscape and nature - slower activities that help beat stress, anxiety and connect with nature. Alongside this, interpretation and education plays a supporting role, offering a greater understanding and awareness of wildlife, landscape and heritage features that might otherwise get overlooked or passed by. Interpretation and engagements are aimed

Below: New interpretation exploring the history of the Earthworks, West Wickham Common



at a broad audience so all visitors can enjoy the sites and have a better understanding of their most important features and the role that the City of London and volunteers have in their management.

Target: Inform and promote appreciation of the West Wickham Commons

Achieved by:

- Providing up-to-date and relevant information for visitors at key areas and on noticeboards
- Providing attractive interpretation panels to highlight special habitats, species and heritage features
- Working with partners to develop and promote interpretation in new ways
- Using temporary signs before and after habitat work that explain why it is needed and beneficial to the site's management

Left: Volunteers surveying wildlife, Spring Park

Activities and events

The Rangers organise events on the West Wickham Commons ranging from guided walks to ecological workshops, art events and 'bioblitz' citizen science-led sessions to produce a snapshot of all wildlife on the site at a point in time. There are many interesting and enjoyable ways to deliver key messages and opportunities to link with the popularity of green spaces for health and wellbeing.

Events should aim to interpret the West Wickham Commons as a place of natural and historical significance. Formal talks and presentations off-site to groups such as societies, schools and clubs can be a good way to deliver accurate information to a large group and provide an insight into all aspects of the work that the City of London rangers and volunteers do.

Target: Provide a diverse range of events and activities across the West Wickham Commons

Achieved by:

- Organising a Ranger-led programme of events throughout the year
- Supporting occasional events each year arranged by local groups with conservation interests or aims to provide healthy outdoor recreational opportunities and/or community benefit
- Providing outreach talks to local clubs and societies
- Promoting events through a variety of media and using electronic booking to support voluntary donations



Left: Identifying galls, Spring Park



Left: Discovering mushrooms on a fungal foray, Spring Park

Key messages and communication

The West Wickham Commons represent two sites of significance for wildlife that also benefit people and are important to the physical environment for society at large. These elements and benefits might not necessarily be seen, understood or mutually perceived by everyone; It is important that the value and significance of these sites are clearly communicated via key messages aimed at:

- Page 402.**
- Promoting the benefits people enjoy from visiting the West Wickham Commons (as distinct from promoting the West Wickham Commons to attract more visitors).
 - Highlighting their historical significance and ecological importance
 - Describing the physical evidence of our work (the benefits of management for wildlife and people, including ecosystem services that benefit latent needs)
 - Provide the appropriate information for people to safely enjoy their visit and respect the nature reserve to conserve it

The way in which we receive information and experience activities, even outdoors, is constantly evolving and being shaped by emerging technologies that are part of our everyday lives. These technologies can be a fantastic opportunity to engage with



Left: Visitors taking part in a survey, West Wickham Common

different visitor demographics, provide information and be a creative tool to exploring the West Wickham Commons. Visitor information is available via the City of London website, but increasingly this is becoming a streamlined prospectus rather than an archive of information. Consequently, it will be necessary to develop new and innovative ways to convey detailed site and subject specific information.

For example, digital walking trails, including sections across both of the West Wickham

Commons, are helping smartphone users to accurately navigate routes, see images of what to look out for and have detailed information of interesting sights at the touch of a button.

The West Wickham Commons have a dedicated Facebook page and maintain a presence on Twitter. With the growing number of users across all social media platforms, sharing information via these channels will likely become increasingly important.

Target: Communicate key messages across multiple digital platforms and media

Achieved by:

- Maintaining communications via social media
- Producing a monthly electronic newsletter for subscribers
- Producing site and subject specific material for electronic and physical distribution
- Researching new technologies and changes to nature and heritage interpretation and communication

people engaged in surveying and monitoring and other tasks that contributed to achievements above and beyond core management tasks.

The elected Members of the City Corporation who make decisions about the West Wickham Commons are guided by a Consultative Group who meet primarily to advise on the development and implementation of this plan and provide

Below: WWaSP volunteers,
West Wickham Common

City Members with a local perspective on issues. The West Wickham Commons Consultative Group comprises local representatives including conservation specialists and representatives of user groups and community interests.

99% of respondents agreed with our actions to support existing and new volunteers in a range of practical tasks

– 2020 consultation

Community involvement

The West Wickham Commons have benefitted from significant levels of community involvement. During the lifetime of the proceeding management plan, a large portion of the practical work tasks could not have been completed without the many hours of volunteer participation each year.

This comprised contributions from the West Wickham and Spring Park Volunteers, affectionately known as the WWaSPs in addition to occasional corporate volunteer groups. It also included contributions from



Target: Encourage community involvement in supporting the work of the West Wickham Commons

Achieved by:

- Promoting and providing volunteering opportunities through monthly work tasks and individual projects
- Supporting volunteer groups and individuals through provision of training, tools and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Publishing issues relevant to the West Wickham Commons at local events and stakeholder meetings
- Facilitating work experience students, Duke of Edinburgh participants, research projects and corporate volunteering
- Planning and delivering projects that include opportunities for community involvement and are beneficial beyond the borders of the West Wickham Commons (e.g. see sustainable transport)



Left: Collecting hay,
West Wickham Common

“

As a WWaSP volunteer, I think it's really important to encourage more volunteering. In that way people feel a connection to the area and help to ensure its place in the community.

– 2020 consultation response



Left: WWaSP volunteers,
West Wickham Common



Above: Spring Park

Coronavirus Impact

Since the start of the coronavirus pandemic in 2020, the West Wickham Commons have become more popular with people and visited more frequently.

During our 2020 consultation on this plan, many comments reflected just how important the sites are to the local community; the pandemic has raised so many issues about their role in society and how these spaces are being used.

One of the most significant outcomes from the ongoing pandemic has been their importance not just for physical exercise but **their restorative effect on people's mental health and wellbeing.**

There will be many challenges to these sites **when restrictions on people's movement** ease. We will take the opportunity to build on some of lessons learnt from the pandemic so the West Wickham Commons can continue to support the communities that use them.

“

Since COVID, it's been a lifeline having Spring Park so close by and being able to enjoy this space more often than normal. Thanks and credit to the team who look after it.

Aim 3: Estate Assets & Legal Issues

Protect the West Wickham Commons and its users from harm. Fulfil legal obligations, challenge threats and maintain assets in good condition for future generations to enjoy.

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Historic features
The remains of the likely Iron Age fort on West Wickham Common is the principal heritage feature that requires conserving alongside the various smaller settlements of an unknown age and several ancient wood bank systems on Spring Park.

Currently the management of the fort and other features involves managing the vegetation growing over them to limit root damage. Keeping an open aspect to these monuments is beneficial for the management and also helps visitors to appreciate them.

Target: Conserve and protect heritage features

Achieved by:

- Maintaining heritage features by controlling scrub growth
- Liaising with Historic England and key stakeholders
- Maintaining and producing interpretative signage features
- Patrolling and enforcing byelaws to protect heritage features

Built assets

Many of the built structures on the West Wickham Commons are maintained by the City Surveyors Department and are listed in a 20-year plan for periodic maintenance. Assets managed this way include the Spring Park Office, entrance barriers and byelaw boards.

The Spring Park Office

The Spring Park Office was constructed to provide a base for the site Ranger, but also as a facility to support volunteering and community involvement so integral to the



Right: Archaeological examination of the earthworks
West Wickham Common



Above: The Spring Park Office,

life of the West Wickham Commons. It has office accommodation, a workshop and toilet facilities which enables the Rangers to host events from here with direct access onto Spring Park.

The Rangers are supported by a wider team of City of London staff at the Merlewood Estate Office in Caterham which is the main base from which the Coulsdon Commons are managed from.

Target: Maintain built assets

Achieved by:

- Managing a system for reporting and rectifying defects
- Facilitating contractor inspections and working with the City Surveyors Department according to the agreed service responsibilities

Residential boundaries

Residential boundaries are managed according to set criteria to ensure safety and consistency. Managing for light and views are not generally considered appropriate reasons to undertake work.

Generally, homeowners are not permitted access across the Common to maintain their properties, although exceptions are sometimes granted if the work benefits the Common or its visitors – for example tree safety work.

Target: Manage residential boundaries

Achieved by:

- Granting annual license agreements to allow neighbours direct access onto the West Wickham Commons
- Only permitting under license access across the Common to properties for maintenance if the proposed work benefits the Commons or their visitors (tree safety for example)

Utilities

Any maintenance or replacement of underlying pipework for water, gas and other utilities requires careful management to minimise damage to the West Wickham Commons. It is also essential that habitat and other work does not damage underground services.

Target: Protect utilities and infrastructure while safeguarding the West Wickham Commons

Achieved by:

- Ensuring records for utilities are up to date and accessible
- Liaising with utility companies and the City Surveyors Department to ensure due care and diligence to statutory responsibilities
- Granting access for the installation and maintenance of infrastructure assets under license only if the sites are adequately protected

Emergency planning

It is essential that plans are in place to deal with emergencies and, that where possible and appropriate, access is granted to

emergency services to respond to incidents on the West Wickham Commons.

Target: Plan for emergencies

Achieved by:

- Maintaining emergency plans and keeping them available for instant use
- Regular liaison with emergency services
- 24hours over 7 days rota for Ranger response to incidents

External accreditation

Achieving external quality standards validates management practices and gives assurance to our community that the sites are being well run.

Target: Retain Green Flag Awards for both sites and Green Heritage award for West Wickham Common

Achieved by:

- Applying for accreditation and meeting the standards for performance

Illegal access

Target: Prevent illegal encroachment and ensure banks and posts prevent damage to the reserve by vehicles

Achieved by:

- Regular inspections and repairs to secure boundaries
- Providing clear contact details and responding effectively to incidents
- Maintaining posts and banks in good condition
- Keeping estate boundaries clearly determined with wayleaves and licences up to date



A wonderful resource which I hope will be valued and enjoyed for many years to come

– 2020 consultation response

Tree Safety

The tree safety strategy for the West Wickham Commons takes full account of the conservation importance of the site.

The inspection process should not lead to a loss of character or species diversity, rather it should assist the management process ensuring that, as far as reasonably practicable, balance is maintained between conservation and risk management.

Accordingly, the following principles are applied:

- Standing dead timber is an important resource and is left wherever possible. Dead trees are 'reduced' if safety work is necessary.
- Limbs or timber felled are left in situ wherever possible.
- The presence of fungal bodies on trees is not to be taken as an automatic indication that the tree is dangerous but may act as an indicator that further, detailed, inspection is required.
- When considering remedial action to reduce risk, due consideration is given to removing the target from the hazard wherever possible.

Target: Manage tree safety

Achieved by:

- Using a risk-based approach and a zoning system
- Undertaking an annual review of the tree inspection (zoning) map
- Carrying out a documented tree hazard inspection regime
- Using experienced inspectors trained to Professional Tree Inspector level
- Prioritising work identified in inspections
- Inspecting after storm events
- Recording tree failures, surveying and monitoring tree condition



Right: Stacked wood for habitat, Spring Park

Being mindful of the impact of our activities
The management of the West Wickham Commons aims to maintain and improve the conservation and historic value of both sites, and ensure visitor enjoyment.

However, these actions also have the potential to cause negative impacts. All contractors working in the West Wickham Commons follow a bio-security protocol to reduce the chance of invasive species and diseases being introduced.

Target: Reduce the environmental footprint of other activities

Achieved by:

- Following the bio-security policy
- Regular review of activities and practices while exploring options for reducing environmental impact
- Encouraging visitors to consider their impact when visiting, take litter home and avoid single-use plastic items
- Pursuing sustainable use of timber products from conservation work

5

2021 –2031 Work Programme

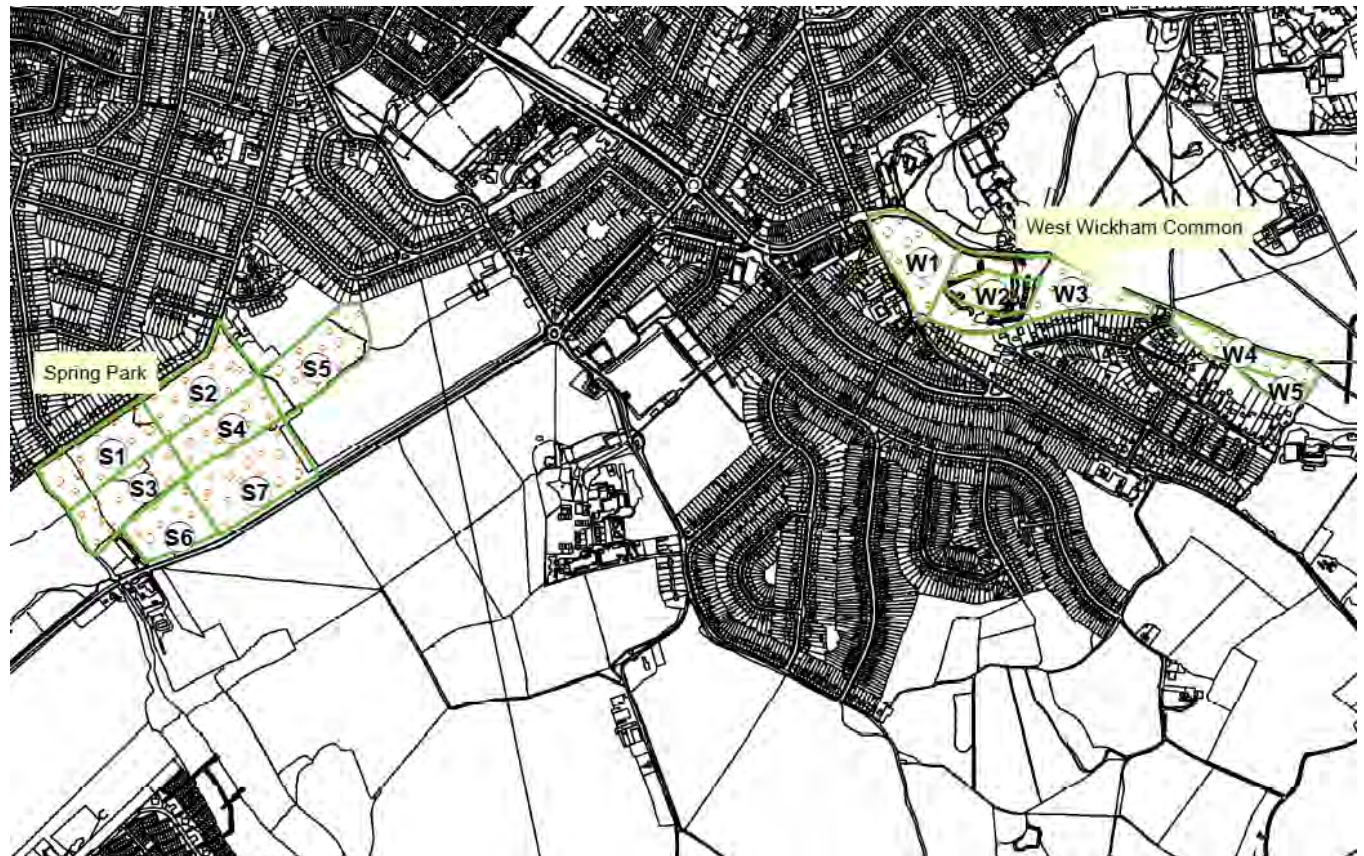
The following section details the works that will be carried out to achieve the aims and objectives of this management plan.

The table on the following pages summarises when the major projects will be undertaken in the West Wickham Commons in the next 10 years. These tables also detail where work will be carried out in each year of the management plan according to the site compartments which are shown on the map. An annual plan and details of each project further guide the work.

Other documents steer our work too. For example, the Open Spaces Department Business Plan is a City of London document listing the key projects for the Department and each open space.

This aims to enrich people's lives by enhancing and promoting access to ecologically diverse open spaces and outstanding Heritage assets across London and beyond.

The West Wickham Commons have grant funding from Natural England in the form of a Countryside Stewardship Scheme Agreement. This gives an area payment for some habitat types and also money for some specific projects.



Spring Park and West Wickham Common compartment boundaries and numbers
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Location:

SP - Spring Park WW - West Wickham Common

Key to projects:

1 - essential 2 - highly desirable 3– desirable

CODE	OBJECTIVE 1: BIOLOGICAL	COMPARTMENT	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10
BIO1	Target: Conserve and enhance veteran trees	SP WW	2021 -22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
BIO1.1	Annual condition check on old pollards	W1, W3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
BIO1.2	Practical work on old pollards	W1, W3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
BIO1.3	Install, replace and check cables/props	W1, W3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
BIO1.4	Create new pollards	W1, W3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
BIO1.5	Young pollard rotational cutting	W1, W3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
BIO2	Target: Conserve and enhance coppice woodland	SP WW	2021 -22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
BIO2.1	Create habitat piles and veteranise trees	All	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
BIO2.2	Maintain established coppice rotations	S1 - S4	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
BIO2.3	Establish new coppice rotations	S5	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
BIO3	Target: Improve secondary woodland	SP WW	2021 -22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
BIO3.1	Cut and treat dense holly understorey	W1, W3, W4	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
BIO3.2	Thin dense woodland canopies to encourage natural regeneration	S5	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
BIO3.3	Plant native woodland shrubs and trees	S1, S2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
BIO3.4	Create woodland edge wildlife corridors	W1, W3, W4	3	3	3							
BIO3.5	Maintain woodland edge wildlife corridors	W1, W3, W5			2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
BIO3.6	Cut and treat invasive species: Laurel, Portuguese Laurel & Rhododendron	S1 - S5	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
BIO3.7	Survey & control Oak Processionary Moth infestations	Any	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
BIO4	Target: Conserve & enhance heathland	SP WW	2021 -22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
BIO4.1	Maintain existing heath by clearing bracken, brambles and young trees	W2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

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BIO4.2	Extend existing heath by spreading seed and plug planting		W2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
BIO4.3	Establish new heath by clearing trees, scrapping off woodland soils and spreading seed		W5	2	2	2	2	2					
BIO5	Target: Conserve & enhance grasslands	SP	WW	2021 -22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
BIO5.1	Maintain existing grasslands by annual hay cutting and removal	S6, S7	W2, W3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
BIO5.2	Extend grasslands by clearing trees and holly understorey		W3	2	2	2	2						
BIO5.3	Control undesirable species: Ragwort	S6, S7	W2, W3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
BIO6	Target: Conserve & enhance successional habitats	SP	WW	2021 -22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
BIO6.1	Maintain established scrub coppice rotation	S6		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
BIO6.2	Maintain woodland edge habitats by rotational cutting	S6, S7		2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
BIO6.3	Maintain pond by aquatic vegetation removal	S6		2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
BIO7	Target: Conserve & enhance hedgerows	SP	WW	2021 -22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
BIO7.1	Maintain hedges by rotational cutting	S6, S7	W1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
BIO7.2	Enhance hedgerow habitat by hedge laying	S6, S7			3	3			3	3	3		
BIO8	Target: Survey & monitor habitats & species	SP	WW	2021 -22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
BIO8.1	Review survey & monitoring in line with new Countryside Stewardship requirements	All	All	1									
BIO8.2	Annual monitoring and reporting for Countryside Stewardship Scheme	All	All		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
BIO8.3	Butterfly Transects - NBMS	All	All	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
CODE	OBJECTIVE 2: PEOPLE.	COMPARTMENT		Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10
PEO1	Target: Improve provision for visitors arriving by sustainable transport	SP	WW	2021 -22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
PEO1.1	Working in partnership with Bromley Council and TfL to improve cycling facilities			3	3	3							
PEO1.2	Identify sources of funding to implement and publicise improved sustainable transport options			3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3

Target: Promote knowledge and appreciation of the West Wickham Commons		SP	WW	2021 -22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
PEO2.1	Organise events & guided walks and educational visits			2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
PEO2.2	Provide up-to-date information for visitors on rustic noticeboards			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
PEO2.3	Investigate historical status of 'the Earthworks' by organising a 'community archaeology dig'				3	3							
PEO2.4	Provide attractive interpretation panels to highlight special habitats, species and heritage features				3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
PEO3 Target: Provide welcoming Open Spaces		SP	WW	2021 -22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
PEO3.1	Monitor and promptly clear litter, graffiti and fly-tipped rubbish			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
PEO3.2	Maintain Green Flag Award status by facilitating independent audit of site facilities			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
PEO3.3	Maintain uniformed ranger presence			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
PEO4 Target: Discourage inappropriate use		SP	WW	2021 -22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
PEO4.1	Attend Police Community Advisory Panel meetings and liaise with local police teams			2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
PEO4.2	Encourage visitors to take all litter home through signage and ranger presence			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
PEO4.3	Encourage responsible dog walking by highlighting legal responsibilities			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
PEO5 Target: Encourage public involvement		SP	WW	2021 -22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
PEO5.1	Support volunteers groups and individuals through provision of a wide variety of practical tasks and wildlife monitoring opportunities.			2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
PEO5.2	Supply appropriate training, tools and PPE for volunteer practical work and monitoring activities			2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2

CODE	OBJECTIVE 3: ESTATE ASSETS & LEGAL ISSUES	COMPARTMENT		Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10
EST1	Target: Provide accessible Open Spaces	SP	WW	2021 -22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
EST1.1	Provide and maintain byelaw boards, noticeboards and benches	All	All	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
EST1.2	Provide & maintain pathway infrastructure including fingerposts, gates and waymarkers	All	All	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
EST1.3	Maintain surfaced paths		W1, W2, W3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
EST1.4	Maintain unsurfaced paths by mowing and path side vegetation clearance	All	All	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
EST2	Target: Fulfil health & safety obligations	SP	WW	2021 -22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
EST2.1	Routine tree safety surveys and resulting work	All	All	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
EST2.2	Emergency tree safety surveys and resulting work	Any	Any	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
EST3	Target: Fulfil all other legal obligations	SP	WW	2021 -22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
EST3.1	Liaise with Natural England	Any	Any	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
EST3.2	Liaise with Historic England	Any	W2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
EST3.3	Produce new Management Plan	Off-site	Off-site										1
EST3.4	Fulfil all Countryside Stewardship and GAEC requirements	All	All	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

6

Background Information

Glossary

Ancient woodland: woodland that has existed since at least 1600.

Low coppice: a tree or block of trees cut once or more, close to ground level to obtain wood from the branches.

Heathland: an area of vegetation characterised by heathers, on impoverished soils that is the result of thousands of years of exploitation by humans.

In favourable condition: a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) that meets with Natural England conservation objectives.

Pollard: a tree that has been cut once or more, at a height of above 1.5m to obtain a crop of branches out of the reach of grazing animals.

Red data book: list (originally a red book) of rare and threatened species of plant and animal.

Secondary woodland: woodland that has grown up on previously open land such as heathland or farmland.

Wood pasture: Land containing trees that is or was grazed with domestic animals or deer is referred to as wood pasture.

Credits

The 2021-31 West Wickham Commons Management Plan has been ratified by Natural England [tbc]. The plan was drawn up by Tom Oliver, Allan Cameron and Barry Gutteridge; illustrations by Dan Powell; photographs kindly contributed by Mark Shoesmith and Moira O'Donnell. Thank you to those who commented on the plan, including City of London staff and volunteers.

Below: Emperor dragonfly,
Spring Park
(Mark Shoesmith)





Above: Fungi, Spring Park (Mark Shoesmith)

The City of London Corporation is the governing body for the Square Mile dedicated to a vibrant and thriving City, supporting a diverse and sustainable London within a globally successful UK.

The City owns and manages almost 4,500 ha of green spaces, parks and gardens in and around London as part of its commitment to sustaining a world class city. Each Open Space is a unique resource managed for the use and enjoyment of the public and for the conservation of wildlife and historic landscape.

The City's Open Spaces are protected under their own Acts of Parliament (Corporation of London (Open Spaces) Act, 1878 and City of London Corporation (Open Spaces) Act 2018). These enable the City to acquire land which, under the terms of the 1878 Act, must remain unenclosed and unbuilt upon as open spaces for the recreation and enjoyment of the public whilst preserving the natural aspect and protecting the trees and ground vegetation.

The 2018 Act clarifies that the City of London can undertake management and husbandry

activities such as cutting trees, managing the other vegetation and grazing.

The City of London is required by law to comply with certain duties relating to conservation as set out in section 28G of the Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981, as amended) and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006). These require the City of London to take reasonable steps to further the conservation and enhancement of its Open Spaces



West Wickham Commons

Registered Charity

West Wickham Common
Spring Park

Merlewood Estate Office
Ninehams Road
Waterham
Surrey
CR3 5LN

city.common@cityoflondon.gov.uk
www.cityoflondon.gov.uk

If you would like to receive this publication in your language or an alternative format such as large print, Braille or audio tape, please contact the Open Spaces Department, City of London, PO Box 270, Guildhall, London EC2P 2 EJ. Telephone 0207 332 3505.

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CITY
OF
LONDON

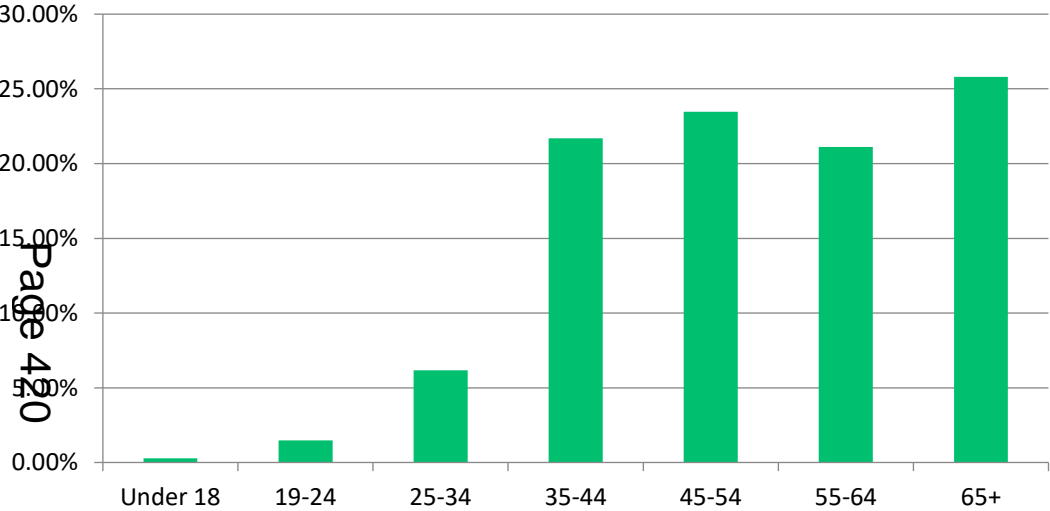
Ashtead
Common

Registered Charity

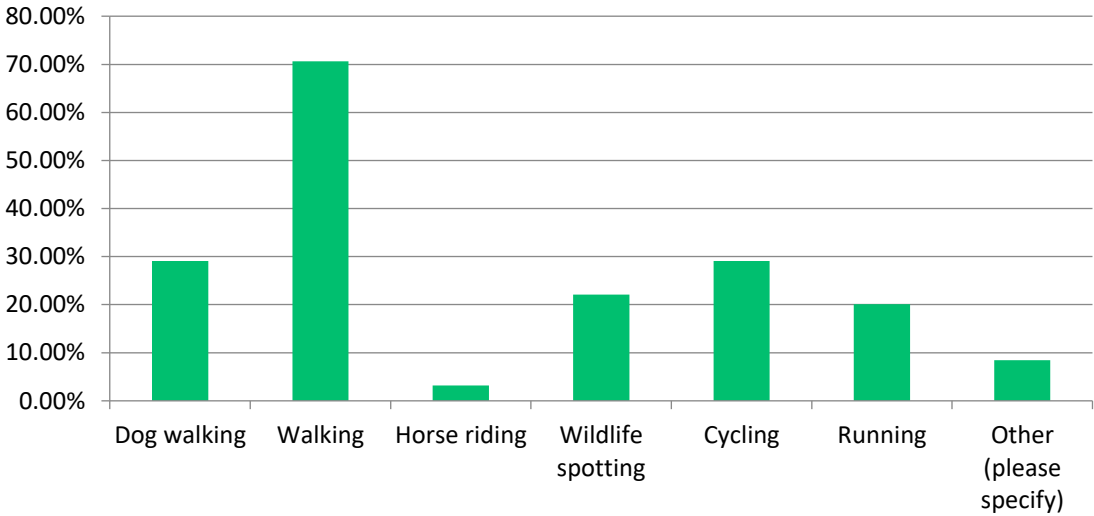
Ashtead Common Management Plan 2021-2031. Results of public consultation conducted between August and early October 2020

Analysis of 456 Responses

What is your age?



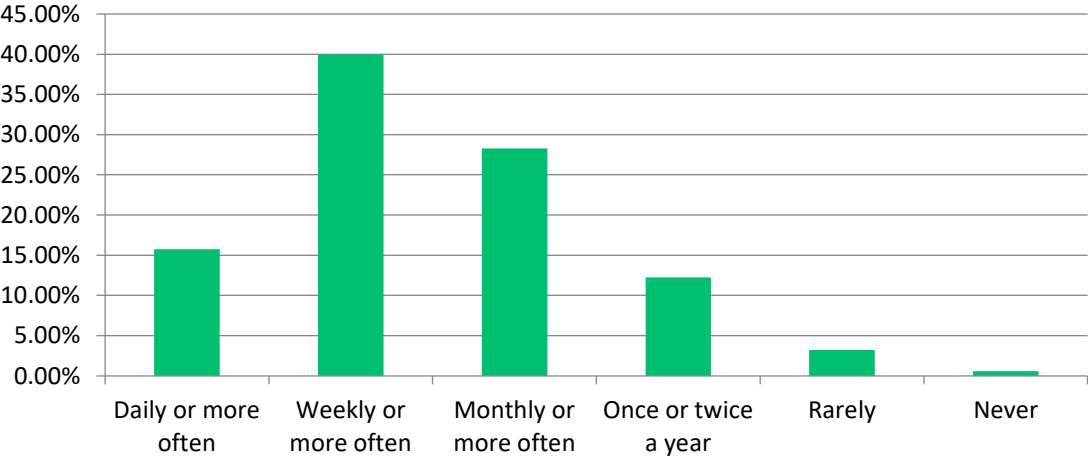
What do you primarily visit Ashted Common for?



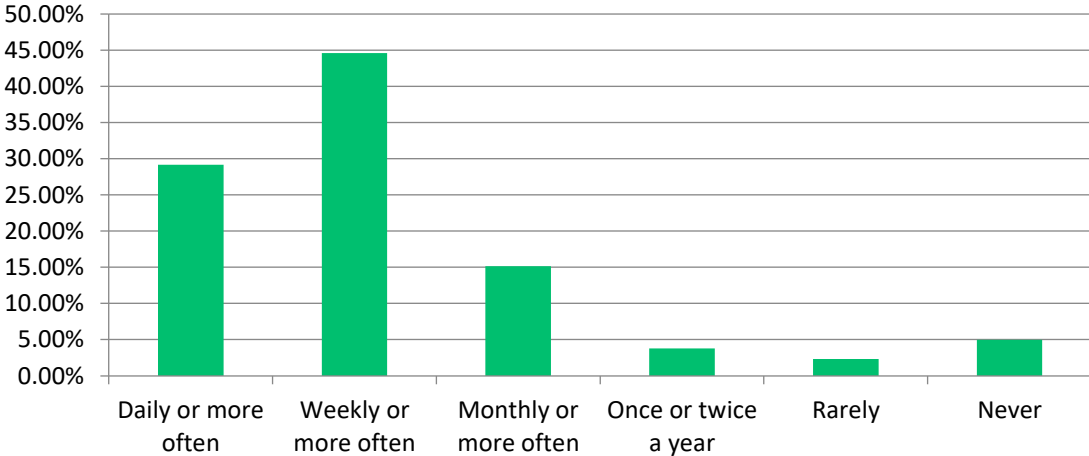
Other

	% of comments	% of responses
Volunteering	34%	2.9%
Commuting	17%	1.5%
Being in nature	17%	1.5%
Photography	10%	0.9%
Geocaching	7%	0.6%

Before the COVID-19 pandemic (prior to March 2020), how frequently did you visit Ashtead Common?



During the COVID-19 pandemic (since March 2020), how frequently have you visited Ashtead Common?



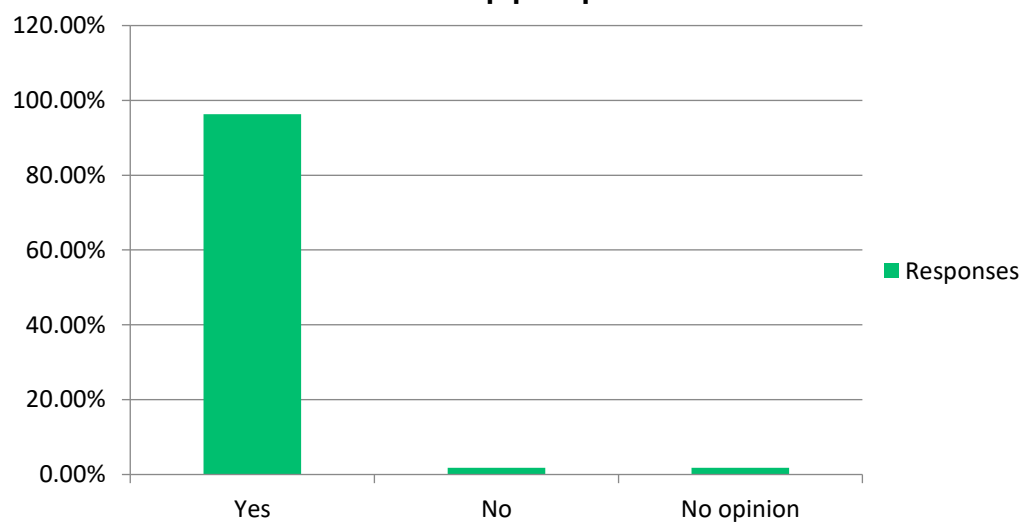
Vision Statement

Proposed Vision Statement

Ashted Common: a place for countryside recreation and wildlife conservation where community involvement remains integral to maintaining an open space of national significance, a place that resists urban pressures and strives to protect an historic landscape and its features in a setting proactively managed to retain and enhance biodiversity.

NB – the text in red was added after the consultation to address the comments on grammar

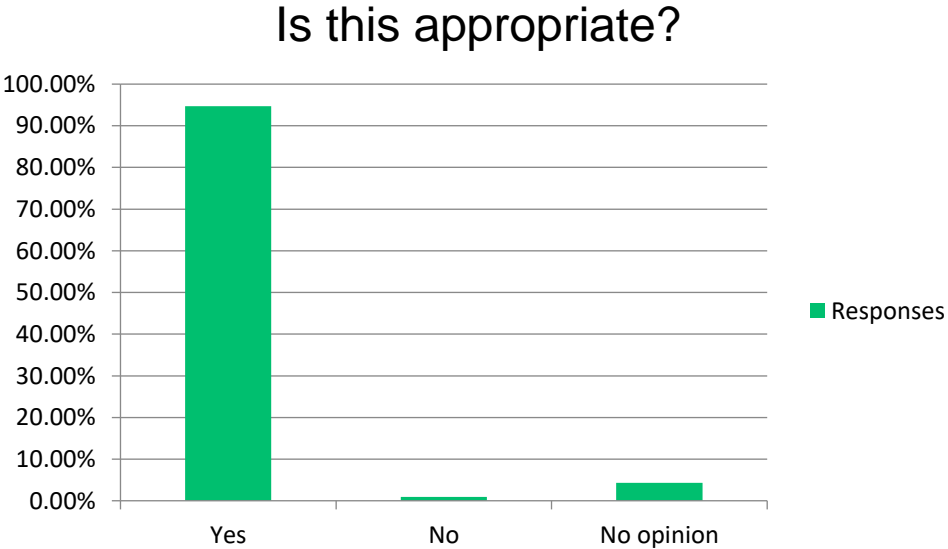
Is this appropriate?



Comment	Number	% of comments	% of 433 responses
Grammar	9	21	2
General comment on need to protect	7	16	2
Agree with statement	6	14	1
Should include play / education	4	9	1
Behaviour concern linked to recreation	3	7	1

Biodiversity

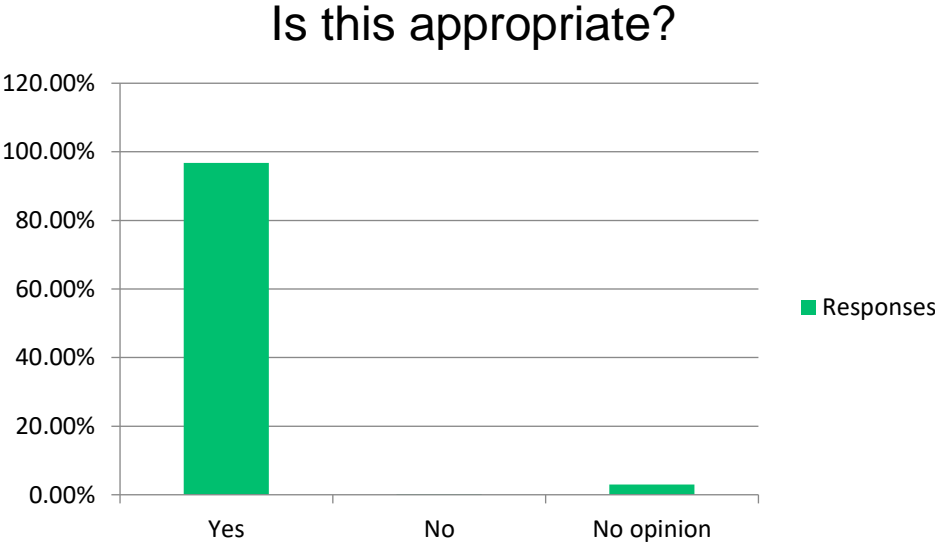
The proposed plan prioritises managing Ashtead Common to promote biodiversity.



Comment	Number	% of comments	% of 415 responses
Agree	9	38	2
Encourage new trees to grow	4	17	1

Wood pasture

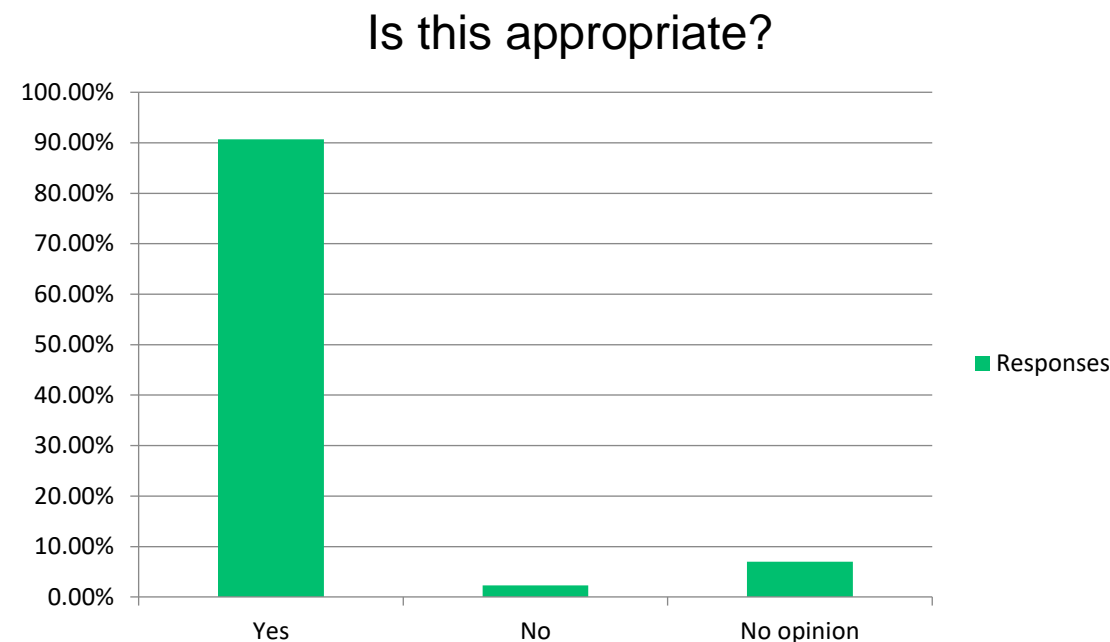
The plan proposes the conservation of features associated with a wood pasture landscape.



Comment	Number	% of comments	% of 398 responses
Agree	6	21	2
Some concern about recreating wood pasture (how much?)	5	17	1
Expressed like for wood pasture features (species and livestock)	4	14	1
Want species introduction	2	7	1
Want pollarding reintroduced	2	7	1
Concern about impact on recreation	2	7	1
Can people get firewood	2	7	1
Concerns about management - flowers gone, too much bracken	2	7	1

Ancient trees

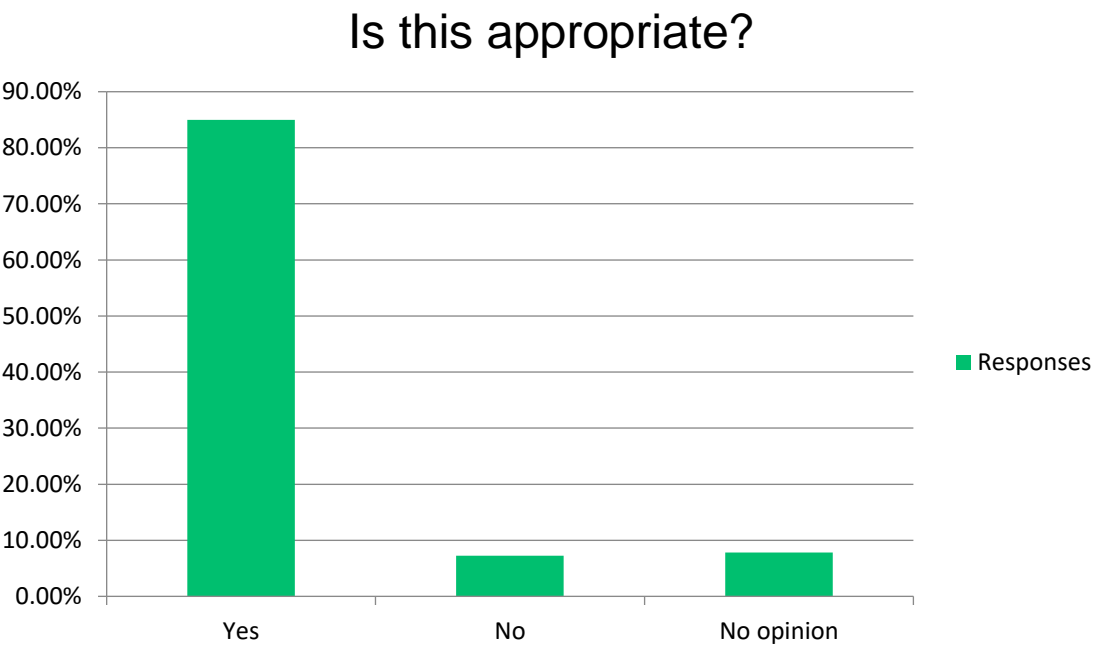
The plan emphasises the need to proactively manage the ancient oak pollards, and conserve and create veteran tree features.



Comment	Number	% of comments	% of 387 responses
Encourage young oaks	4	18	1
Concern about veteranisation	3	14	1
Promote more diversity of trees	2	9	1
More communication/ signage	2	9	1

Grazing

The plan proposes to increase the area grazed by 23ha. Developments in geo-fencing might mean more can be grazed in the future, but this will be consulted upon separately.

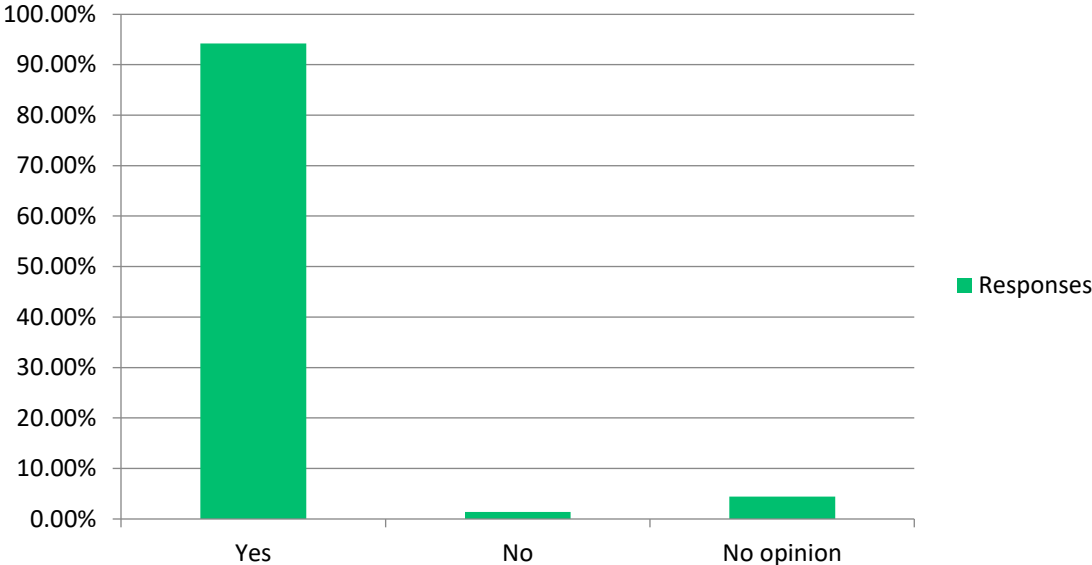


Comment	Number	% of comments	% of 372 responses
Comment on virtual fencing (would consult seperately on this)	8	16	2
Agree/ supportive	7	14	2
Have some reservations	7	14	2
No - against	6	12	2
Concern that it will have a negative impact	3	6	1
Highlighted need for signage	2	4	1
Sounds interesting	2	4	1
Consider different types of animal	2	4	1

Bracken and firebreaks

The proposed plan states that managing bracken and maintaining firebreaks are priority activities.

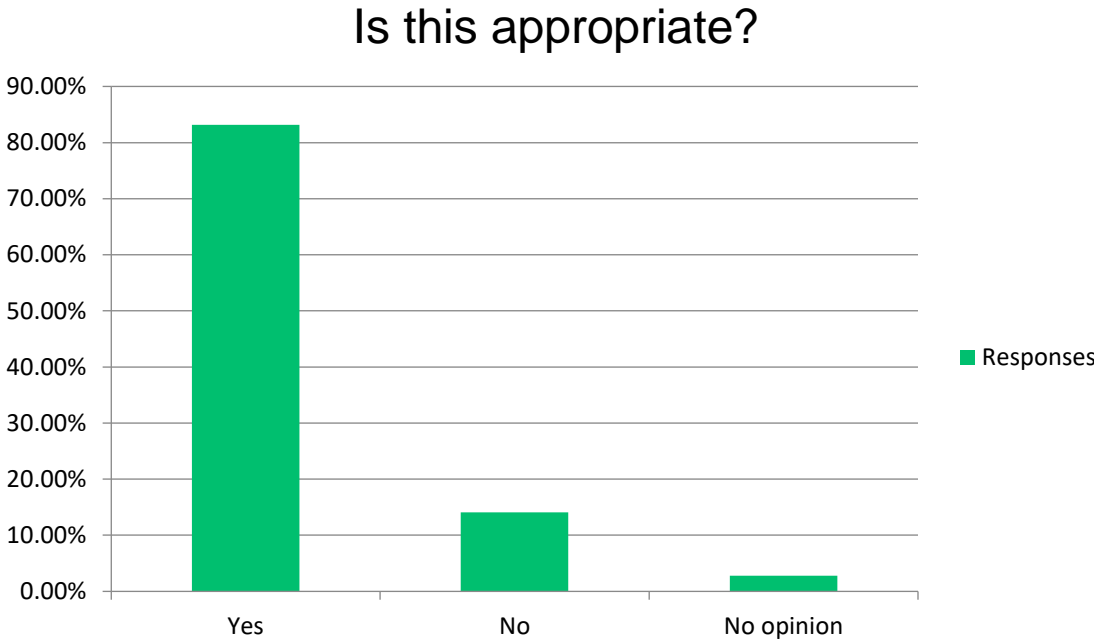
Is this appropriate?



Comment	Number	% of comments	% of 364 responses
Positive/ supportive	11	31	3
Should be doing more	6	17	2
Against spraying	4	11	1
Community/ volunteers could do more	2	6	1
Is controlled burning an option for bracken?	8	8	1

Paths and rides

The proposed plan explains why there will not be any additions to the surfaced path network.

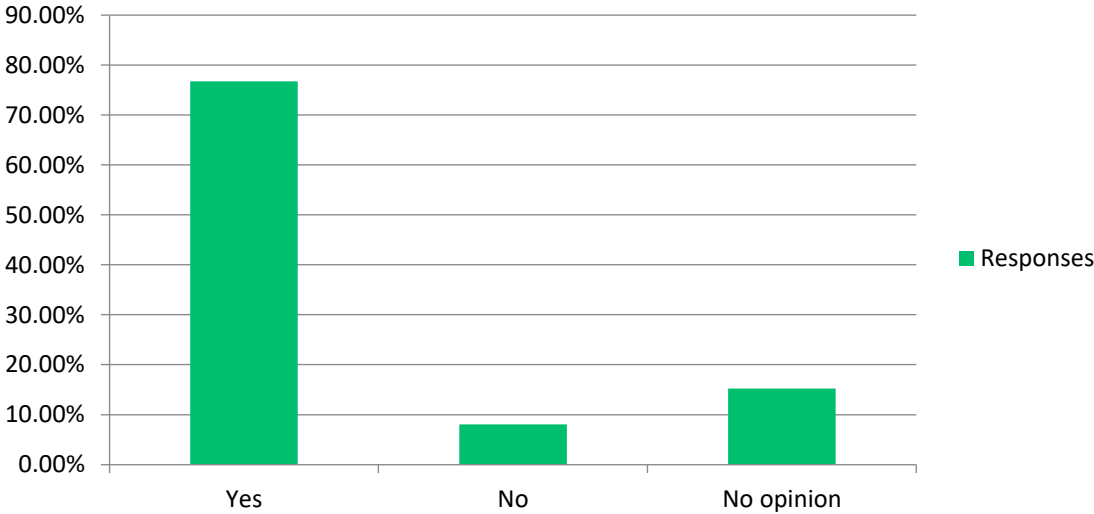


Comment	Number	% of comments	% of 362 responses
Want improvements	46	48	13
Agree with proposal not to surface more routes	30	32	8
Want maintenance of existing network	9	9	2
Comment on behaviour of other users	4	4	1

Woodfield

The plan explains that the needs of recreation and conservation management must sometimes be balanced against each other. Woodfield was used as an example.

Do we currently have the balance right on Woodfield?



Comment	Number	% of comments	% of 361 responses
Recommend fewer paths and better signs	12	18	3
Current balance is ok	10	15	3
Should be more control on visitors to protect wildlife	9	14	2
Should be more dog control	8	12	2
Management suggestion (eg grazing, acquire land elsewhere)	7	11	2
Would like more facilities for families - play/ picnic etc	4	6	1

Key messages

Ashtead Common is a special place, and the plants, animals and fungi that make it special are only here because it is carefully looked after

There is nowhere else quite like it – it’s amazing

Nature is important to all of us, we wouldn’t survive without it

There are many threats to wildlife in general and there are particular threats to Ashtead Common

The City of London Corporation funds and maintains Ashtead Common (which is a registered charity) using staff who are skilled at what they do

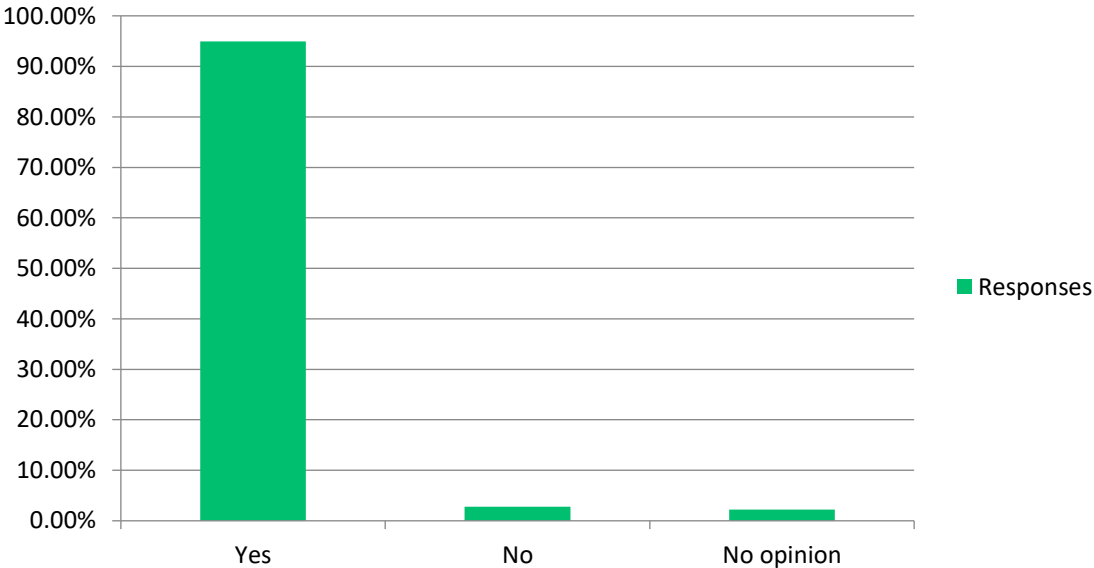
This is of direct benefit to local people and the wider world
Visitors and others can help us to keep Ashtead Common special

People visiting Ashtead Common need to stay safe and respect the nature reserve
to keep it safe from harm

People can help by financially supporting the Ashtead Common charity

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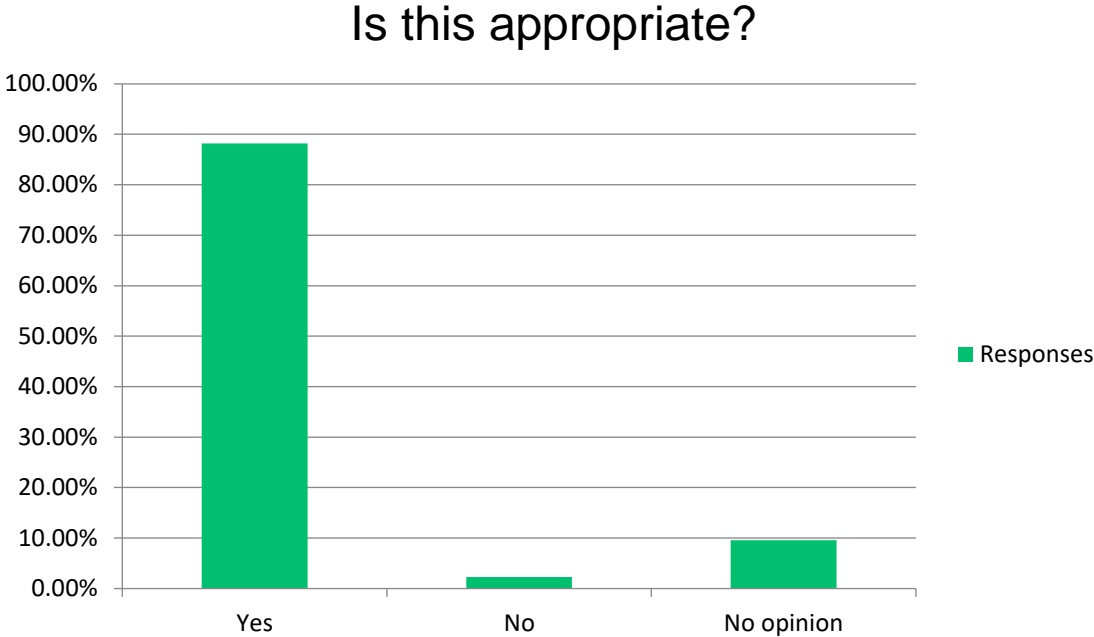
Are these key messages appropriate?



Comment	Number	% of comments	% of 359 responses
More on volunteers/ community involvement	8	15	2
More on users, activities and user groups	8	15	2
Comment on behaviours	7	13	2
General positive comments about Ashtead Common	6	11	2
Make more of charity status	6	11	2
Not concise/ punchy enough	5	9	1

Volunteering

The plan suggests that volunteering could become a more significant feature of Ashted Common in the next ten years, but in order to do so it must evolve and become more diverse.

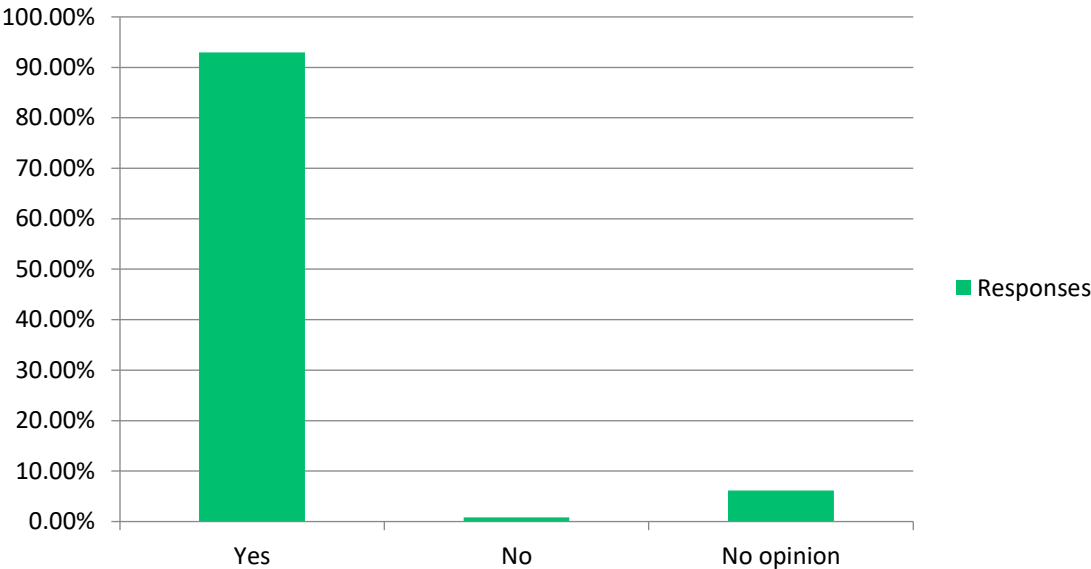


Comment	Number	% of comments	% of 356 responses
Promote volunteering more	11	22	3
Should have greater diversity of volunteers	10	20	3
General pro volunteering comments	7	14	2
Agree on need to review volunteering	5	10	1
Concern about changing existing arrangements	4	8	1

Reed Bed project

The plan outlines a potential project to construct a reed bed filtration system to clean polluted water entering the Rye Brook.

Would you like to see this happen?

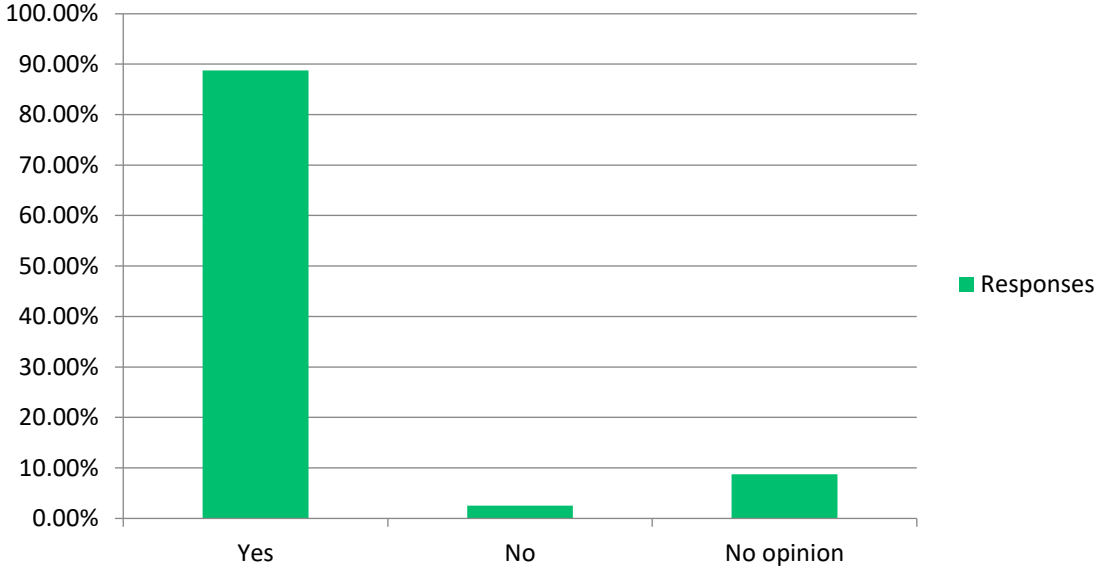


Comment	Number	% of comments	% of 356 responses
Support project	17	43	5
Need to control pollution	6	15	2
Comment on the cost and funding arrangements	6	15	2
Suggestions on water management	3	8	1
Access restricted	2	5	1

Roman Villa project

The plan outlines a potential project to improve the interpretation of the Roman Villa.

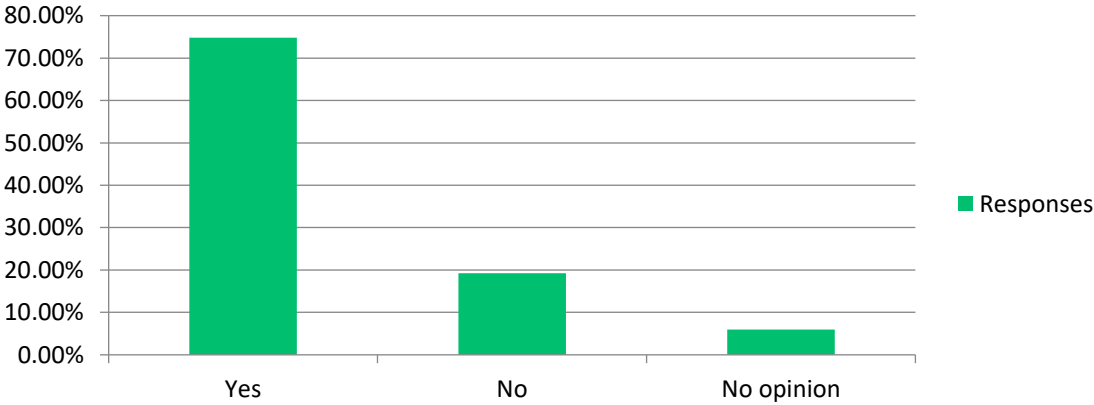
Would you like to see this happen?



Comment	Number	% of comments	% of 356 responses
Agree, would like more information on the villa or suggestions	29	55	8
No - disagree or have reservations	9	17	3
Highlighted opportunity for community engagement or education	4	8	1
Questions about the Bronze Age pot	2	4	1
Comment on Surrey Archaeological Society work	2	4	1

Licences and charges

Would you agree to the introduction of a charging schedule for commercial activities that make use of Ashted Common?



Comment	Number	% of comments	% of 353 responses
Yes charge - but with limitations	19	22	5
Yes	18	20	5
No, or proposed unworkable limitations	17	19	5
No because all commercial use should be restricted	12	14	3
Charities and clubs should be exempt	7	8	2
Difficult or impossible to enforce	7	8	2
Money raised should be targeted to particular use	3	3	1

Additional comments

Comment	Number	% of 121 responses
Complimentary - thank you	44	36
Behaviour of others - dogs and bikes	14	12
Love the common	11	9
Improve paths	11	9
Provide more information, communicate more	6	5
Would like somewhere to get tea and coffee	3	2
Provide play facilities	2	2
Link with other areas	2	2

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West Wickham Commons

Registered Charity

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This is one of
14 green spaces
managed by the
City of London at
little cost to the
general public.

Management Plan

2021 - 2031
Results of Public
Consultation

Contents

Background information		Our communications	14
Participant profile	3	Events and engagement	15
Coronavirus impact on visitor habits	4	Commercial charging	16
Visions		Additional comments and suggestions	17
West Wickham Common	5-6		
Spring Park	7-8		
Management questions			
Biodiversity	9		
Woodland management	10		
Provision for arriving by bike	11		
Volunteering	12		
Widening participation	13		



Participant profile

Main reasons for visiting

Percentage of responses:



67%
Walking



39%
Natural history/
Watching wildlife



44%
Mental
health



35%
Dog walking



9%
Photography



9%
Running

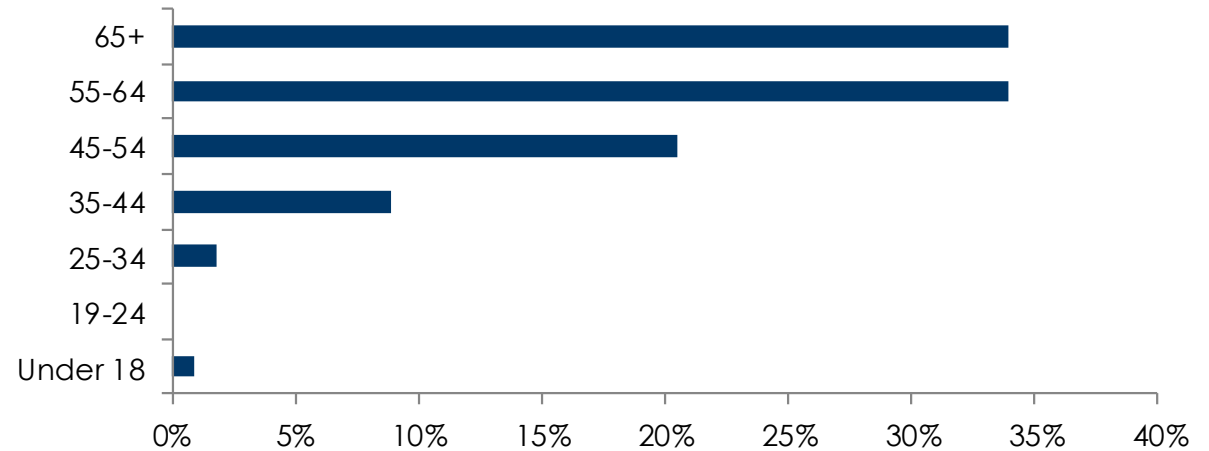


6%
Volunteering

7%

Other:
Foraging and
commuting plus
variations of reasons
already mentioned

Participant age groups



Survey trends

Total no. of responses

141

Completion rate

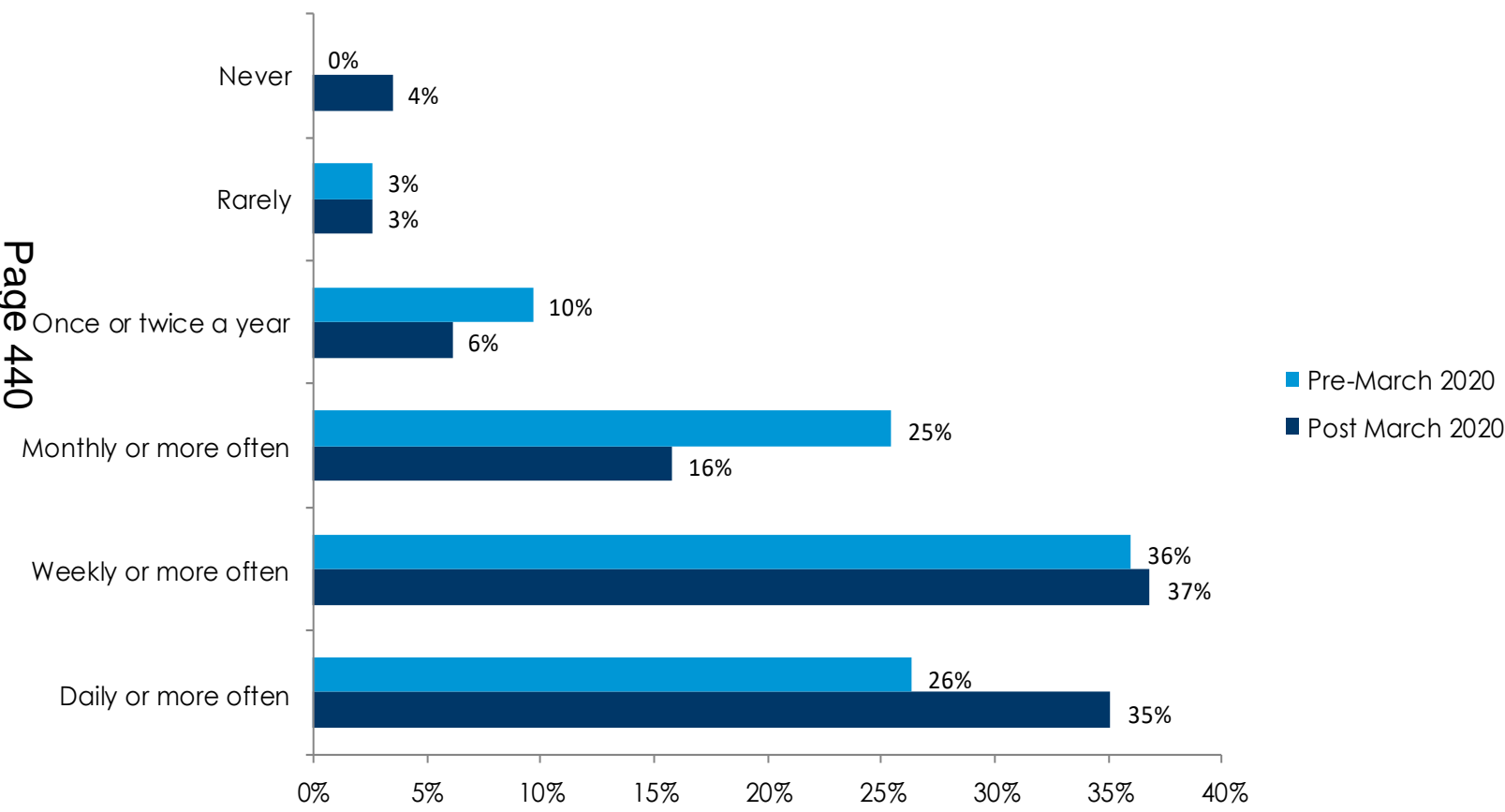
80%

Avg. time spent

12m 50s

Coronavirus impact on visitor habits

Frequency of visits before coronavirus (Pre March 2020) and during the pandemic (Post March 2020)



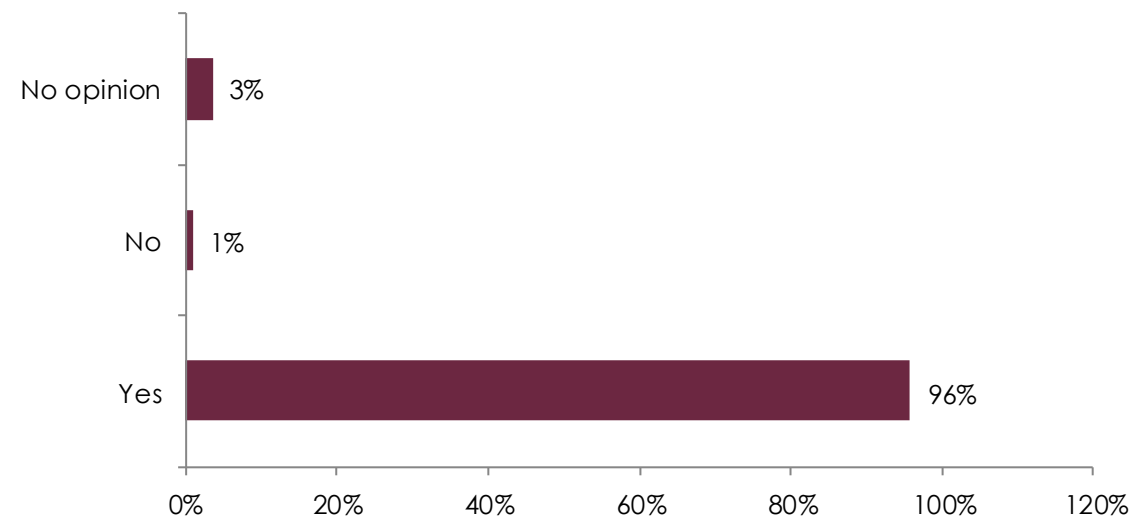
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Vision statement

WEST WICKHAM COMMON

This question relates to the appropriateness of the main actions for the next 10 years and the vision statement:

“
West Wickham Common will continue to be a beautiful natural place, open for public enjoyment. The unique nature of the majestic ancient pollards set in a landscape of open heath, acid grassland, ancient field systems and quiet meandering pathways will be treasured by local people and all of those who come to visit.



COMMENT	NO.	% OF COMMENTS	% OF 141 RESPONSES
Pond creation	5	36	4
Behaviour concern linked to recreation/users	2	14	1
Positive comments on habitat/general management	2	14	1
More signage & communication	1	7	1
Disagree with woodland management activities	2	14	1
Cooperation with organisations, LBC/LBB	1	7	1

Vision statement

Vision illustration for West Wickham Common



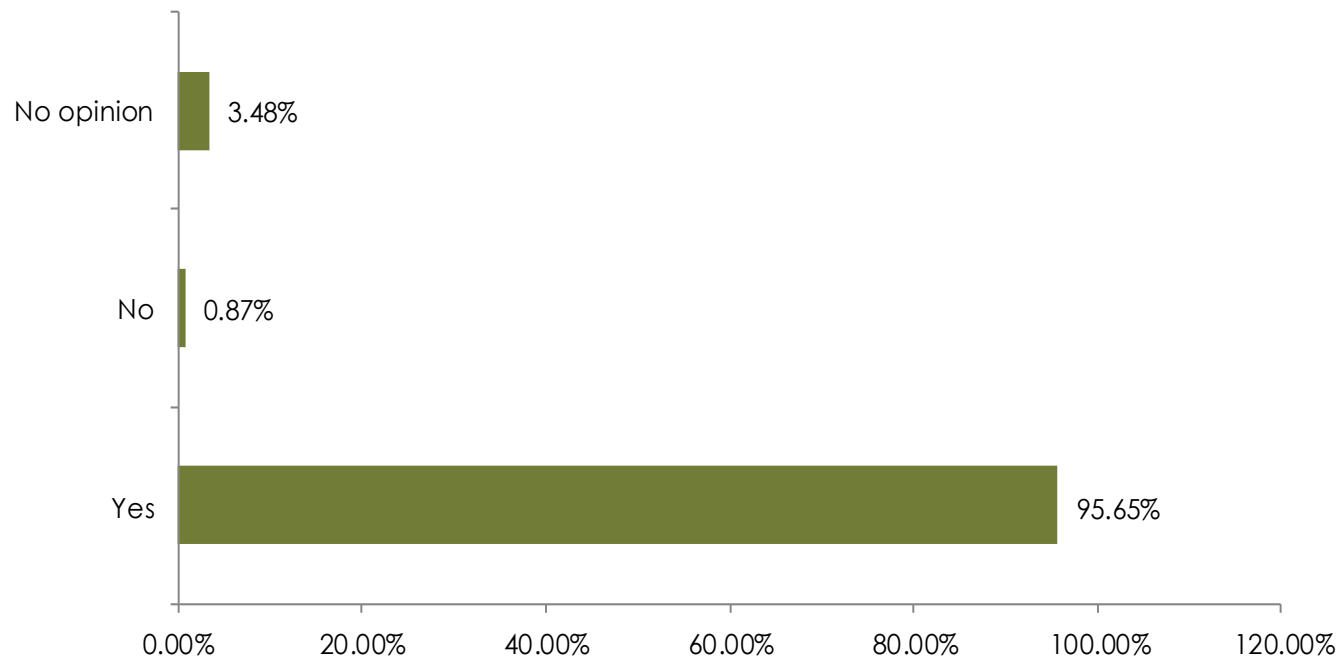
Vision statement

SPRING PARK

This question relates to the appropriateness of the main actions for the next 10 years and the vision statement:



Spring Park will continue to be a beautiful natural place, open to public enjoyment. The unique nature of the woods will be treasured by local people and all those who visit and there will be a commitment to its conservation and enhancement for future generations.



COMMENT	NO.	% OF COMMENTS	% OF 141 RESPONSES
Agree - positive comment e.g. habitat management, aspirations	3	38	2
Concern of bikes/motor vehicles on paths	2	25	1
High use of paths during lockdown	1	13	1
Cooperation with organisations, LBC/LBB	1	13	1
Upgrading paths not essential	1	13	1

Vision statement

Vision illustration for Spring Park



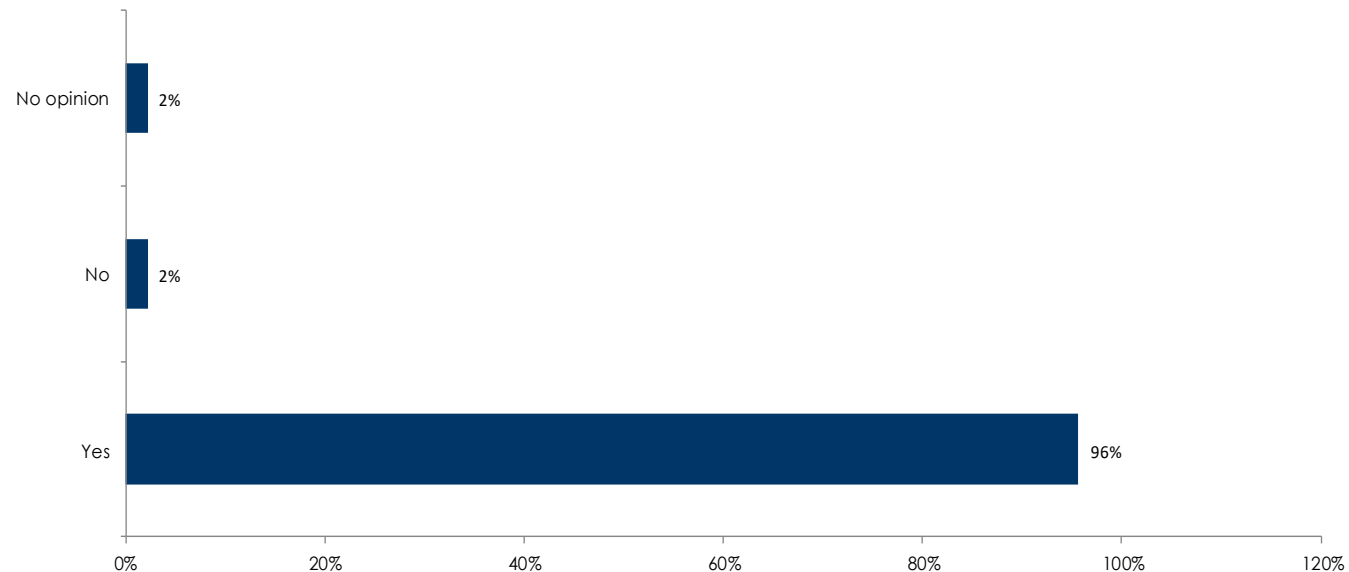
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Biodiversity

Participants were asked about the appropriateness of management actions to conserve and improve the biodiversity of flora and fauna.

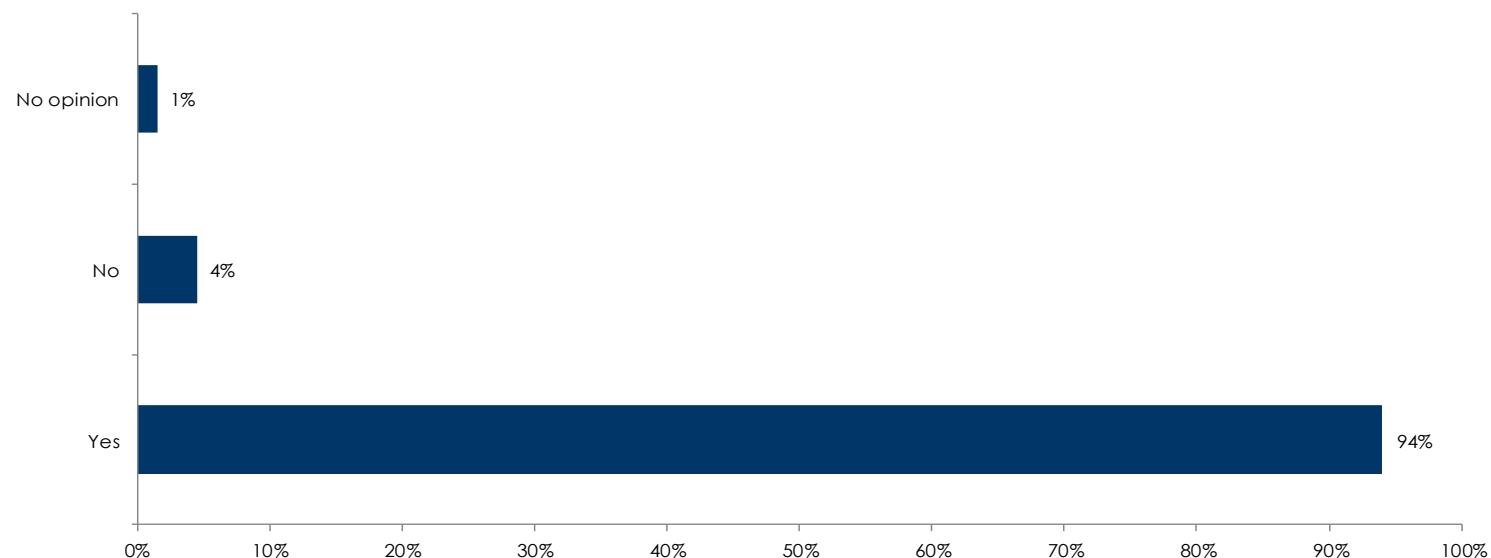
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COMMENT	NO.	% OF COMMENTS	% OF 136 RESPONSES
Pond creation	2	20	1
Concern of tree management - impact on recreation	1	10	1
Concern of tree management - perceived impact of thinning to wildlife/ no new veteran trees	1	10	1
Positive comments about achievements	2	20	1
More awareness/promotion of achievements to public	1	10	1
Habitat management suggestions e.g. more wildlife corridors, parakeet cull, composting of brash from tree work	3	30	2

Woodland Management

This question asked about the appropriateness of proposed management of woodland habitats through coppicing, pollarding of ancient oak trees and thinning of secondary woodland.

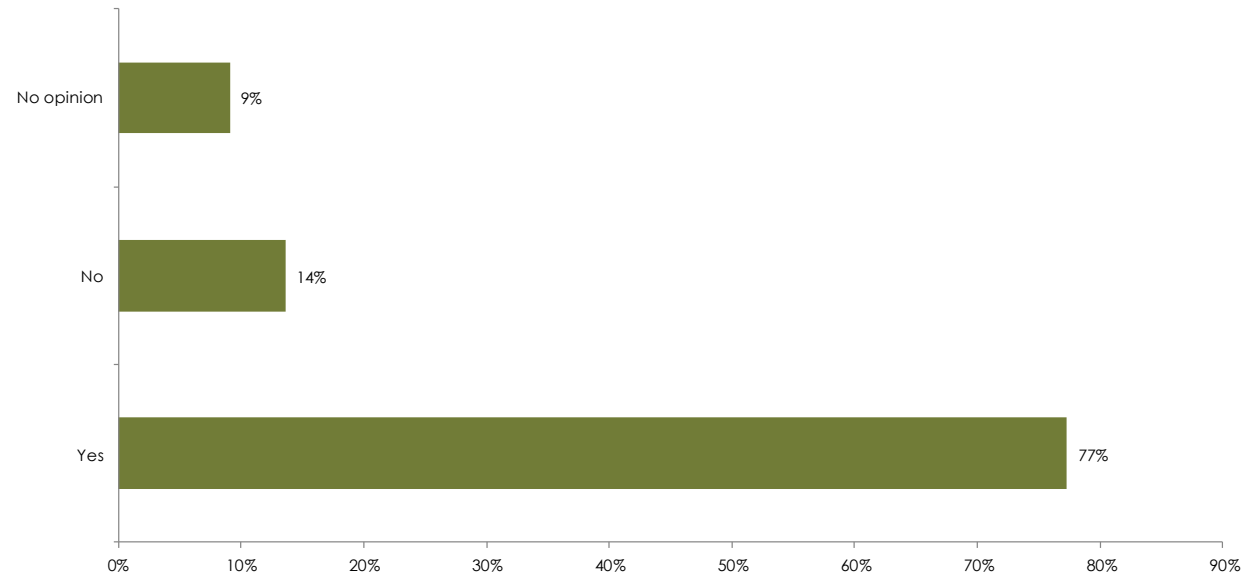


COMMENT	NO.	% OF COMMENTS	% OF 134 RESPONSES
Pond creation	1	8	1
Agree - positive comment on woodland management	4	31	3
More signage/interpretation of coppicing to public	2	15	1
Cooperation with LBC/LBB	1	8	1
Reservation about unsympathetic coppicing e.g. on wildlife	2	15	1
Disagree - concern about growth of mature chestnut, conflicts with recreation	2	15	1
Request for coppicing products/materials	1	8	1

Improving provision for visitors arriving by bike

SPRING PARK

Survey participants were asked if it is a good idea to upgrade the segregated cycle lane along the A2022 Addington Road to encourage safe bike use when travelling to Spring Park.

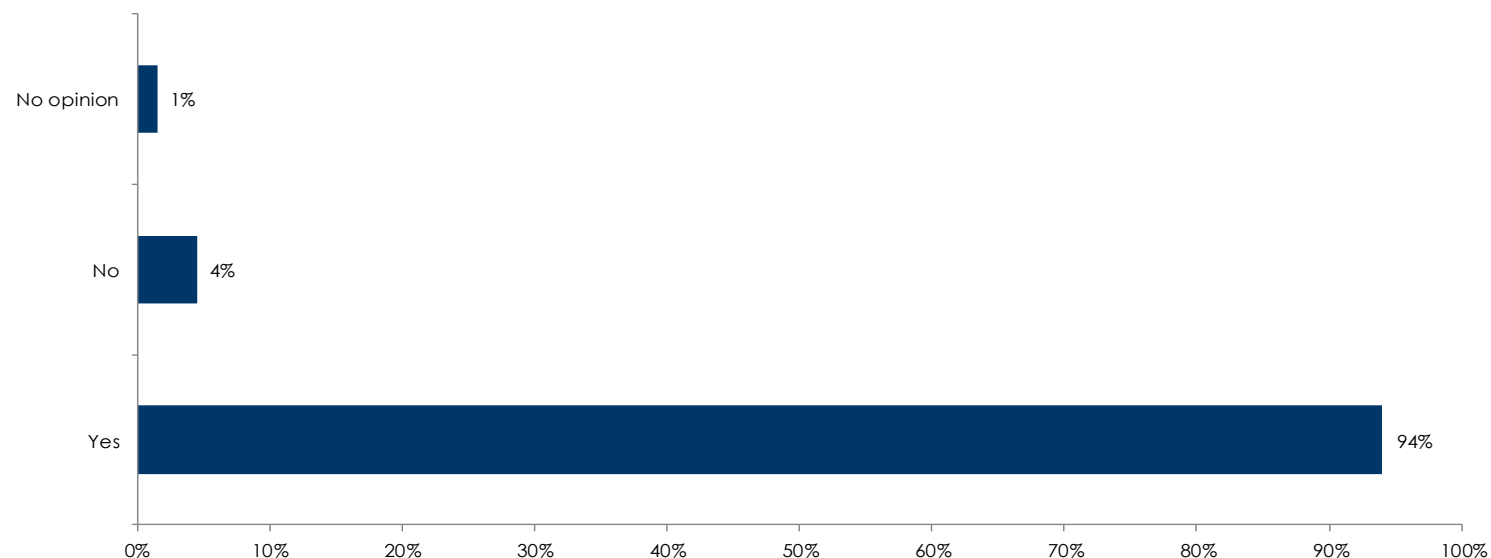


COMMENT	NO.	% OF COMMENTS	% OF 132 RESPONSES
Agree - positive comment e.g. uptake of cycling during lockdown, safety for families,	13	46	9
Concerned with cycling on footpaths/on the common & behaviour of users	7	25	5
Roadside management for biodiversity	2	7	1
Cooperation with LBC/LBB	1	4	1
Provision of natural play areas, trim trails, forest school	1	4	1
Disagree - interference of natural quality	2	7	1
Linkage to cycling infrastructure locally	2	7	1

Volunteering

This question asked if it is a good idea to continue to facilitate and support the existing WWaSP (West Wickham and Spring Park) volunteers and new groups to assist Rangers with managing the sites.

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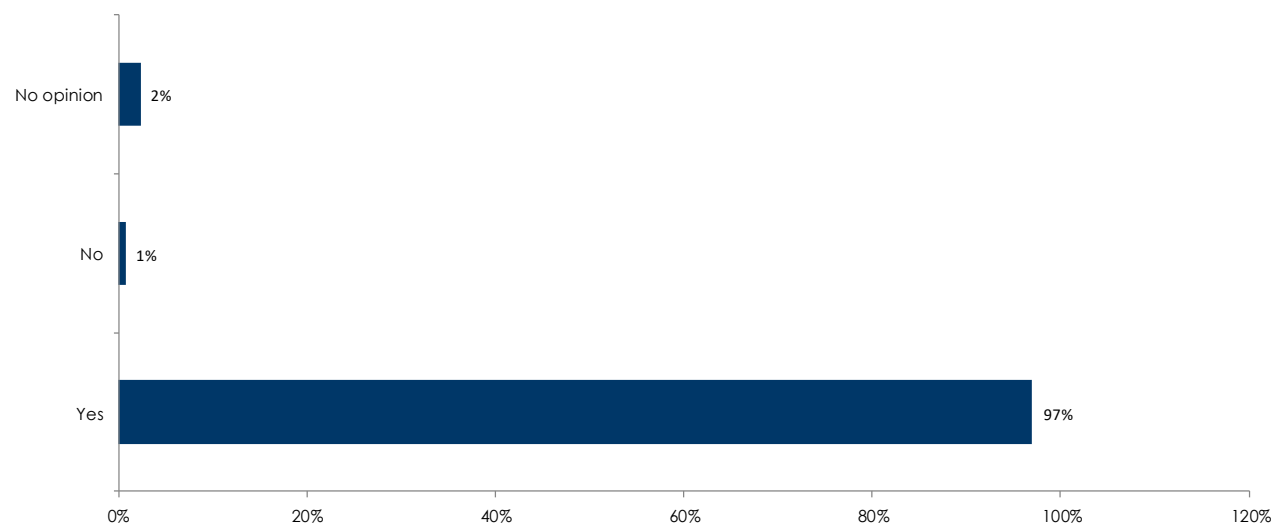


COMMENT	NO.	% OF COMMENTS	% OF 131 RESPONSES
Agree - positive comment on volunteering	3	33	2
Unaware of existing opportunities/more promotion	2	22	2
Wish to volunteer	1	11	1
Cooperation with Environmental Action Coney Hall (local group)	1	11	1
More inclusive activities for ethnic minorities & people with specific disabilities	2	22	2



Widening Participation

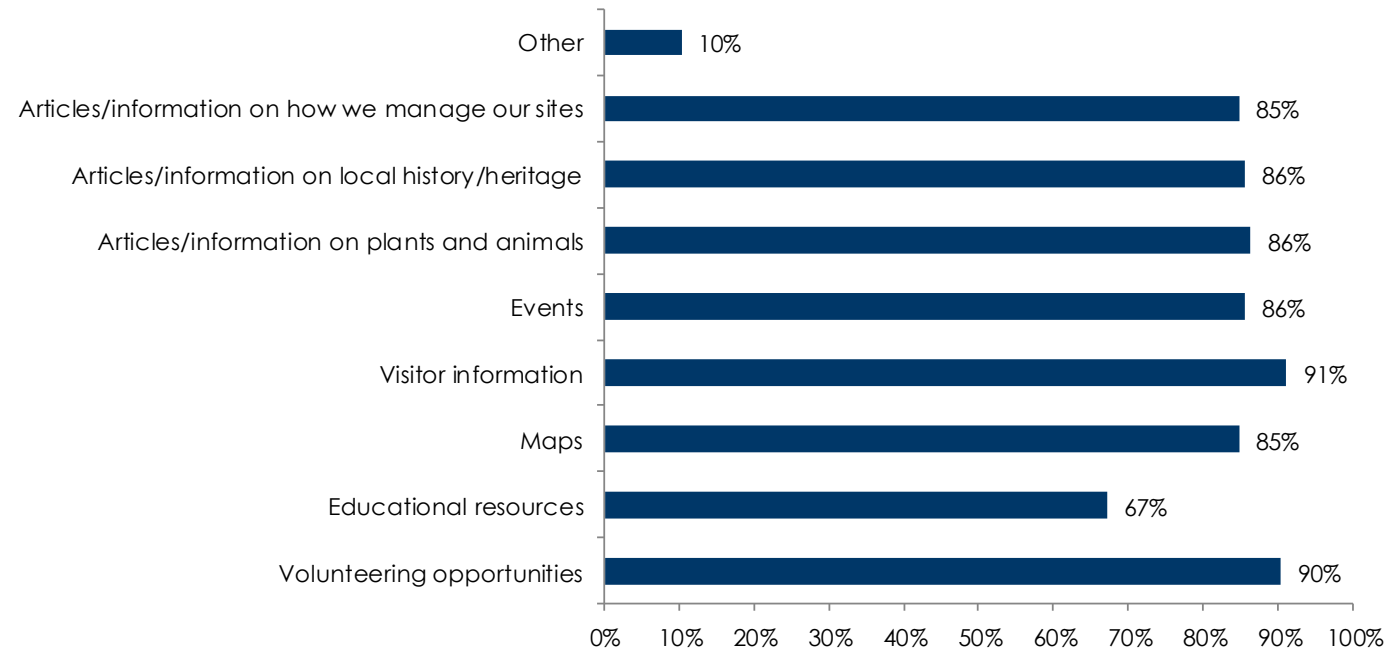
This question asked if it is a good idea to encourage more members of the community in the management and conservation of the two sites, alongside more opportunities for youth volunteering, DofE award participants and apprentices.



COMMENT	NO.	% OF COMMENTS	% OF 129 RESPONSES
Agree - positive comment on widening participation	5	25	4
Involvement of local schools & DofE award	7	35	5
Raise awareness of environmental responsibility to visitors	2	10	2
Cooperation with LBC/LBB, local residents associations	2	10	2
More inclusive activities for ethnic minorities & people with specific disabilities e.g. anxiety, mental health	2	10	2
Consultation/communication with local residents e.g. on management activities	1	5	1
Request for forest school	1	5	1

Our Communications

This question asked participants to select the type of information they would expect to find on our website, social media and information boards.

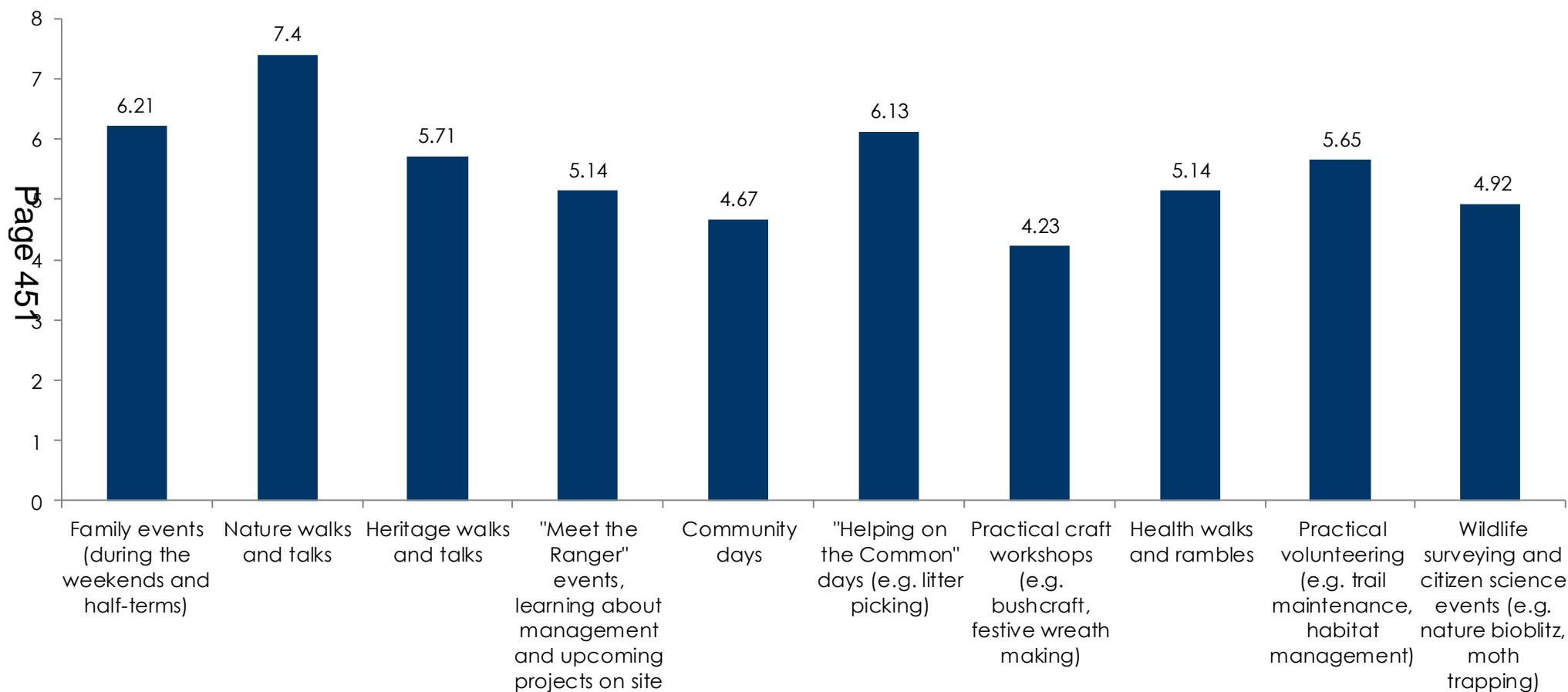


COMMENT	NO.	% OF COMMENTS	% OF 125 RESPONSES
Agree - positive comments	4	31	3
Consideration of digital poverty/access to physical resources	3	23	2
Promotion of conservation management in communications	1	8	1
More site signage e.g. maps, no cycling signs	2	15	2
Specific information e.g. local geology, birds/bats, wildlife gardening	3	23	2

Provision of Events & Engagement

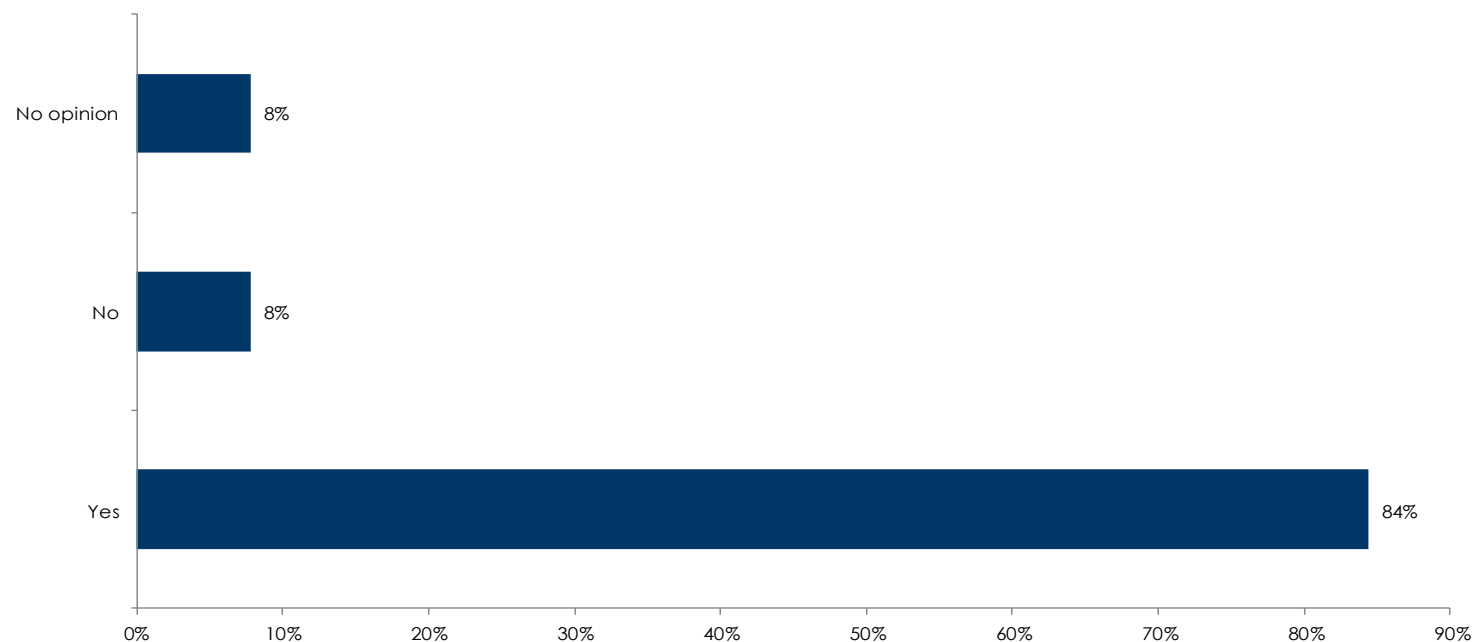
This question asked participants to rank the type of events/activities based on their preference. The plan focuses on providing a varied programme of events each year.

Ranked 1 (most desirable) to 10 (least desirable)



Commercial Charging

This question related to new legislation that would allow for scaled charges for events, licenses and certain activities on the open spaces e.g. commercial dog walking, sports groups etc. Participants were asked if they agreed with a possible introduction of commercial charging.



COMMENT	NO.	% OF COMMENTS	% OF 115 RESPONSES
Agree - e.g. under provision it is sympathetic to management of site/linked to	11	65	10
Free/discounted for local residents	2	12	2
Charges should not be excessive	2	12	2
Appropriate for commercial dog walking	1	6	1
Not appropriate for commercial dog walking	1	6	1

Additional Comments & Suggestions

COMMENT	NO.	% OF COMMENTS	% OF 33 RESPONSES
Positive comments on management of sites	16	49	49
Too many dogs/behaviour of users	3	9	9
Cooperation with LBC/LBB, local environmental action groups	2	6	6
Greater focus on recreation (over biodiversity), more amenities (e.g.) picnic benches	2	6	6
More bins, emphasis on taking waste home	2	6	6
Woodland management to clear deadwood, reducing fire risk	2	6	6
Excavation of WWC earthworks to further knowledge of heritage	1	3	3
More Ranger presence to reduce ASB	1	3	3
Commercial charging to not impede public enjoyment	1	3	3
Request for guided tour	1	3	3
Roadside verge management for biodiversity	1	3	3
Consultation/communication with local residents e.g. on management activities	1	3	3



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Committee(s)	Dated:
Epping Forest and Commons	8 March 2021
Subject: Ashtead Common Trustees Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2020	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?	n/a
What is the source of Funding?	n/a
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	n/a
Report of: The Chamberlain Director of Open Spaces	For Information
Report author: Beatrix Jako - Chamberlains	

Summary

The Trustee's Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year ended 31 March 2020 for Ashtead Common (charity registration number 1051510) are presented for information in the format required by the Charity Commission.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that the Trustee's Annual Report and Financial Statements for the 2019/20 Financial Statements be noted.

Main Report

1. The Trustee's Annual Report and Financial Statements are presented for information, having been signed on behalf of the Trust by the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Finance Committee and the auditors BDO LLP. The information contained within the Annual Report and Financial Statements has already been presented to your Committee via budget and outturn reports.
2. Following on from a previous review of the charities for which the City is responsible, (completed in 2010), which detailed key reports that should be presented to your Committee. The Trustees Annual Report and Financial Statements was one of these reports. Information from these statements will form the Annual Return to the Charity Commission. Since this undertaking the City Corporation has recently approved that a further comprehensive review be

undertaken across all of its charities, the outcome of which will be reported to this committee in due course.

3. The Trustee's Annual Report and Financial Statements were submitted to the Charity Commission within the regulatory deadline of 31 January 2021.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Ashtead Common Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2020

Beatrix Jako

Acting Senior Accountant – Chamberlain's Financial Services Division, Citizen Services

E: Beatrix.Jako@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Ashtead Common

Annual Report and Financial Statements for the
year ended 31 March 2020

Charity registration number 1051510

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ORIGINS OF THE CHARITY

Ashtead Common is a 200-hectare area of open space, home to over 1,000 living veteran oak pollards. Its natural and cultural heritage are of national importance, the legacy of centuries of interaction between people and the environment. The Ashtead Common charity was established under the Corporation of London (Open Spaces) Act 1878 which states that the purpose of the charity is the preservation of the Common at Ashtead for the recreation and enjoyment of the public.

Acquisition

The City of London acquired the Lordship of the Manor of Ashtead from the Trustees of Lord Barnby's Charitable Foundation on March 25th 1991. It was the wish of the Trustees that the nature of the Common be forever preserved for the use and benefit of the general public. To achieve this, they approached Mole Valley District Council, who already held a lease for Woodfield, to see whether they would be prepared to purchase the Common. In subsequent negotiations it was agreed that Mole Valley District Council would complete the acquisition of the southern part of Woodfield for the sum of £875. The Trustees transferred the remainder of the Common directly to the City of London for the sum of £29,125.

Protected rights and designations

Ashtead Common was registered as a common in 1968 (register unit number CL 280). An entry was made in the Register of Common Land in 1970 to record rights in common held by the private owners of Newton Wood. These include rights of access, right of pasture for four cattle, estovers (collection of fallen branches or bracken) and turbary (turf or peat). In conjunction with Epsom Common, much of Ashtead Common (180 hectares) was designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in 1955 for its diversity of habitat, rare invertebrates (particularly decaying wood specialists, flies and butterflies) and rich community of breeding birds. Woodfield (8 hectares) was not included but was later designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Importance for species diversity with rare species present. The area designated as National Nature Reserve on September 26th 1995 follows the SSSI boundary, so it too is 180 hectares in size. As well as Woodfield, the other notable exclusions include the City owned land south of the railway line (sometimes called Craddocks Wood), and a thin strip adjacent to the railway line between the Woodlands Road entrance and Bridleway 38. Ashtead Common was registered as a charity on December 19th 1995.

Community involvement and visitors

The City of London adopted aspects of the Community Woodland model when it acquired Ashtead Common in 1991, and the local community has been an integral part of the Commons' management ever since. Primarily it is through practical conservation volunteering that the local community is involved. Much of the work to manage the Common is literally done by the local community itself.

TRUSTEE'S ANNUAL REPORT

STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE

GOVERNING DOCUMENTS

The Governing Document is the Corporation of London (Open Spaces) Act 1878. The charity is constituted as a charitable trust.

GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The Mayor and Commonalty and Citizens of the City of London (also referred to as 'the City Corporation' or 'the City of London Corporation'), a body corporate and politic, is the trustee of Ashtead Common. The City Corporation is trustee acting by the Court of Common Council of the City of London in its general corporate capacity and that executive body has delegated responsibility in respect of the administration and management of this charity to various committees and sub-committees of the Common Council, membership of which is drawn from 125 elected Members of the Common Council and external appointees to those committees. In making appointments to committees, the Court of Common Council will take into consideration any particular expertise and knowledge of the elected Members, and where relevant, external appointees. External appointments are made after due advertisement and rigorous selection to fill gaps in skills. Elected Aldermen and Members of the City of London Corporation are appointed to the Epping Forest and Commons Committee governing Ashtead Common by the Court of Common Council of the City of London Corporation.

Members of the Court of Common Council are unpaid and are elected by the electorate of the City of London. The Key Committees which had responsibility for directly managing matters related to the charity during 2019/20 were as follows:

- **Policy and Resources Committee** – responsible for allocating resources and administering the charity.
- **Finance Committee** – responsible for controlling budgets, support costs and other central charges that affect the charity as a whole.
- **Audit and Risk Management Committee** – responsible for overseeing systems of internal control and making recommendations to the Finance Committee relating to the approval of the Annual Report and Financial Statements of the charity.
- **Epping Forest and Commons Committee** - responsible for the activities undertaken at Ashtead Common, approving budget allocations for the forthcoming year and acting as Trustee of the charity.

All of the above committees are ultimately responsible to the Court of Common Council of the City of London. Committee meetings are held in public, enabling the decision-making process to be clear, transparent and publicly accountable. Details of the membership of Committees of the City Corporation are available at www.cityoflondon.gov.uk

The charity is consolidated within City's Cash as the City of London Corporation exercises operational control over their activities. City's Cash is a fund of the City Corporation that can be traced back to the 15th century and has been built up from a combination of properties, land, bequests and transfers under statute since that time. Investments in properties, stocks and shares are managed to provide a total return that:

- Allows City's Cash to use the income for the provision of services that are of importance nationally and internationally as well as to the City and Greater London;
- Maintains the asset base so that income will be available to fund services for the benefit of future generations.

The trustee believes that good governance is fundamental to the success of the charity. A comprehensive review of governance commenced during the year and is ongoing to ensure that the charity is effective in fulfilling its objectives. Reference is being made to the good practices recommended within the Charity Governance Code throughout this review. Focus is being placed on ensuring regulatory compliance and the ongoing maintenance of an efficient and effective portfolio of charities that maximise impact for beneficiaries.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

The charity is administered in accordance with its governing instruments and the City Corporation's own corporate governance and administration framework, including Committee Terms of Reference, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Officer Scheme of Delegations. These governance documents can be obtained via a request to the email address stated on page 31.

Each Member by virtue of their membership of the Court of Common Council, its relevant committees and sub-committees, has a duty to support the City Corporation in the proper exercise of its functions and in meeting its duties as trustee of the charity by faithfully acting in accordance with charity law, the Terms of Reference of the relevant committee or sub-committee, and the City of Corporation's agreed corporate governance framework as noted above, backed up by its standards regime.

INDUCTION AND TRAINING OF MEMBERS

The City Corporation makes available to its Members, seminars and briefings on various aspects of its activities, including those concerning the charity, to enable Members to carry out their duties efficiently and effectively. Induction meetings are provided on specific aspects of the work of Ashtead Common. If suitable seminars or other training options are identified that are relevant to the charity, Members are advised of these opportunities.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The objective of the charity is the preservation in perpetuity of the common at Ashtead as an open space for the recreation and enjoyment of the public.

Purposes of the charity as set out in the governing document, the Corporation of London (Open Spaces) Act 1878:

- Ashtead Common to be kept as open space for public recreation.
- Natural aspect to be preserved.
- Protect the timber and other trees, pollards, shrubs, underwood and herbage.
- Land to be unenclosed and unbuilt upon, except those features required for better attainment of the Act and deemed necessary by the City.
- Byelaws protecting the site and its features to be enforced.
- Encroachments to be resisted and abated.

Main activities undertaken in relation to these purposes:

- Practical conservation management activities to maintain the biodiversity of Ashtead Common, such as tree surgery work on the veteran oak pollards, bracken suppression and management of firebreaks, scrub, grassland and wetland habitats.
- Providing volunteering opportunities to encourage community involvement.
- Providing and maintaining facilities for informal recreation.
- Grazing with cattle.
- Protecting Ashtead Common and its users from harm by patrolling, enforcing byelaws, resisting encroachments, challenging threats and managing assets.
- Providing educational activities and events.
- Surveying and monitoring, for wildlife, visitor use, archaeological investigations and pollution monitoring.
- Managing and protecting Scheduled Monuments, including a Roman villa and tileworks.
- Managing and creating watercourses and water management systems

Ashtead Common's natural and cultural heritage are of national importance, the legacy of centuries of interaction between people and the environment. As we progress through the 2020's and beyond the challenge of protecting this valuable resource will increase as pressures from environmental and human factors mount

Aims of the charity

- Maintain the biodiversity of Ashtead Common by managing habitats to favourable condition and achieving conservation gains that benefit the site and beyond.
Governing document link: preserve natural aspect, protect the timber and other trees, pollards, shrubs, underwood and herbage.
- Encourage the sustainable use of Ashtead Common for recreation and promote community involvement in all aspects of the site.
Governing document link: commons acquired by the City to be kept as open spaces for the recreation and enjoyment of the public
- Protect Ashtead Common and its users from harm. Challenge threats and maintain assets, including heritage assets, in good condition.

Governing document link: open spaces kept unenclosed and unbuilt upon. Shall by all lawful means prevent, resist and abate enclosures, encroachments and buildings upon. The City may from time to time make and alter byelaws.

The Ashtead Common Management Plan describes the strategy for achieving these aims.

Volunteers

Ashtead Common is particularly successful in providing volunteer opportunities. The Common has an average of around 6,500 hours of volunteer input a year.

Remuneration Policy

The charity's senior staff are employees of the City Corporation and, alongside all staff, pay is reviewed annually. The City Corporation is committed to attracting, recruiting and retaining skilled people and rewarding employees fairly for their contribution. As part of this commitment, staff are regularly appraised and, subject to performance, eligible for the payment of bonuses and recognition awards.

The above policy applies to staff within the charity's key management personnel, as defined within note 7 to the financial statements.

The charity is committed to equal opportunities for all employees. An Equality and Inclusion Board has been established to actively promote equality, diversity and inclusion in service delivery and employment practices. The Board is responsible for monitoring the delivery of the Equality and Inclusion Action Plan and progress against the Equality Objectives for 2016-20. This also includes addressing the City Corporation's gender pay gap.

Senior staff posts of the City Corporation are individually evaluated and assessed independently against the external market allowing each post to be allocated an individual salary range within the relevant grade, which incorporates market factors as well as corporate importance.

Fundraising

Section 162a of the Charities Act 2011 requires charities to make a statement regarding fundraising activities. The legislation defines fundraising as "soliciting or otherwise procuring money or other property for charitable purposes". Although Ashtead Common charity does not undertake widespread fundraising from the general public, any such amounts receivable are presented in the financial statements as "voluntary income" including grants.

In relation to the above we confirm that all solicitations are managed internally, without involvement of commercial participators or professional fund-raisers, or third parties. The day to day management of all income generation is delegated to the executive team, who are accountable to the trustee. The charity is not bound by any regulatory scheme and does not consider it necessary to comply with any voluntary code of practice.

The charity has received nil complaints in relation to fundraising activities in the current year (2018/19: nil). Individuals are not approached for funds, hence the charity does not consider it necessary to design specific procedures to monitor such activities.

Public benefit statement

The Trustee confirms that it has referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing Ashtead Common's aims and objectives and in planning future activities. The purpose of the charity is the preservation in perpetuity of the common at Ashtead as an open space for the recreation and enjoyment of the public. Almost the entire open space is designated as a National Nature Reserve and Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Past land use has influenced the Common, creating its rich ecological and cultural diversity. Today it is an important amenity resource for local people, who use the site for a variety of informal recreational and educational activities. Local people are actively encouraged to become involved as volunteers in all aspects of managing the Common.

Consequently, the Trustee considers that Ashtead Common operates to benefit the general public and satisfies the public benefit test.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

The administrative details of the charity are stated on page 31.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Volunteering at Ashtead continues to flourish, with a weekly directly managed practical project group meeting every Monday and Thursday. The smaller Monday group tends to focus on infrastructure tasks such as fencing, signage and tool maintenance whilst the larger Thursday group is mainly engaged in habitat and conservation improvement projects.

The volunteers' passion and contribution to the conservation of Ashtead Common culminated this year in over 6,500 volunteer hours. These volunteer numbers were, once again, boosted by contributions from The Conservation Volunteers (TCV), Lower Mole Countryside Partnership, and various corporate groups.

The Ranger Team was augmented by the addition of an Apprentice Ranger in November 2019. The successful applicant will be with the charity for 18 months while they gain experience and complete a level two course at Sparsholt College.

Generally, the approach to managing veteran pollards has transitioned away from a regime of phased retrenchment towards one-off treatments to prolong life, with possible re-visits to do more work only if the individual tree appears to have responded well to the initial cut. This means that our original 2009 veteran tree management plan needs revising, and Treeworks have been commissioned to undertake this work. Each veteran tree has been surveyed and its vitality assessed, before the individual management prescriptions are revised. The new plan is likely to form the basis of an application for Countryside Stewardship funding (see following page).

Oak processionary moth nest infestation dominated events on the Common this year with the number of infected trees now in excess of 600. 1259 nests were removed from the infected trees at a cost of £40,000.

The City achieved the return of some copper alloy artefacts that were illegally removed from Ashtead Common in 2017. The artefacts were assessed by the British Museum and determined to be early Roman. This meant that they were not considered to be treasure trove.

Scrub management work continues on the lower slopes and there is an indication that this work is having a positive impact on the breeding bird population. In 2019 there were 356 bird territories recorded in the scrub-grassland areas. This compares with 345 in 2018, 299 in 2017 and 294 in 2016.

Ten cows from our grazing partners at Surrey Wildlife Trust arrived to graze the newly extended Phoenix grazing area, which doubled in size this year. The Belted Galloway cattle supplied by the Trust proved well suited to conditions on the Common. Surrey Wildlife Trust use a robust safety system to match animals to differing environments, and they helped with movements on site, advised on welfare and assisted with health checks.

The combined Entry Level and Higher-Level Stewardship Scheme continues to advance the capacity of the Ashtead team to deliver an effective and sustainable program of conservation management projects. Referred to as the Environmental Stewardship Scheme (ESS), the agreement with Natural England was signed on 21 March 2011 for implementation from April 2011 onwards and covering a period of 10

years. ESS provides incentive payments to manage land to conserve or restore habitats. Work is underway to apply for the temporary replacement to ESS, called Countryside Stewardship, for the 2022 calendar year onwards. In theory this agreement, if successful, will last for 10 years, but it is likely that within this period we will transition to the Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS) currently in development.

The veteran tree management program is now established using a district zoning method, rather than a whole site approach. This has made the task quicker and more sustainable financially, meaning that more of the ground's maintenance budget is available to fund other priorities on the Common such as bracken management.

The Ashtead team are working on the next 10-year management plan that will cover the period from April 2021 to March 2031.

The key targets for 2019-20 were

- **Realign resources** and work programmes as required to respond to prevailing financial conditions. *The City Corporation commenced a Fundamental Review of its work. However, the process was postponed for a year, so this target will roll into 2020-21.*
- **Vision & management planning** - continue programme to define management aims and objectives and develop plans to deliver these over the long term. *Operational plans for key areas of work were produced and work is underway on the first draft of the 2021-2031 management plan.*
- **Survey and monitor** for the presence of bats and the impact of veteran tree management works on their behaviour. Develop a comprehensive survey and monitoring schedule for the surveying over the lifetime of the next management plan. *Much of the fieldwork for the bat survey has been completed. The results of the survey will be published later in 2020. A schedule of survey and monitoring has been produced for the next management plan.*
- **Veteran trees** - continue with the district-based approach to deliver the veteran tree management programme. *Work has been completed on District Three. Aerial work on 85 trees has been completed and 1,200 volunteer hours contributed to groundworks around the veterans.*
- **Grazing** - extend Phoenix grazing area to the new fence line along the western boundary. *Area has been extended and successfully grazed.*
- **Mowing** - maintain a mowing regime that ensures firebreaks and rides are maintained to an adequate width. Mow some areas within restored scrub areas to maintain open grass sward. *Mowing has been completed.*
- **Bracken control** - control bracken by mowing and spraying. *Bracken mown and sprayed.*
- **Oak Processionary Moth** - respond to the scale of the issue by targeting resources at surveying, nest removal, information dissemination and visitor management. *1,259 nests have been removed.*
- **Volunteering** - maintain the Monday and Thursday volunteer groups, support work

experience placements and provide corporate volunteering opportunities. *6,500 volunteer hours achieved.*

- **Scrub grassland** - Continue the restoration program to establish a 50% mix of scrub and grassland. *2019-20 programme achieved.*

PLANS FOR FUTURE PERIODS

Perhaps the most significant work currently underway relates to the development of the next management plan and, by association, the application for Countryside Stewardship funding. Together these will set the agenda for the next 10 years of management work on Ashtead Common, linking work programmes to the delivery of Ashtead Common's charitable objectives.

The Management Plan will include a programme for the veteran oak pollards to prolong their lives for as long as possible. It has been estimated that without management intervention Ashtead Common's veteran oaks will all but disappear within 60 years. With intervention it is possible that the veteran oaks can survive in viable numbers for as many as 300 years. Since England is home to over half the world's veteran oak population, and Ashtead Common is a stronghold for veteran oaks in the UK, this work is significant.

The charity's ability to undertake practical conservation work relies on the support and involvement of Ashtead's local community. This is why the investment made by the community in caring for Ashtead Common through their volunteer contributions is so important. The charity will continue to invest time in supporting this contribution.

The new management plan will guide all aspects of work from 2021 to 2031. It will set targets to manage scrub, expand grazing, increase the firebreak network and manage grassland and wetland habitats. It will also consider future projects relating to pollution of the Rye Brook and the care and interpretation of Ashtead Common's heritage assets.

The threats posed by global warming and more frequent extreme weather events must be considered. The best way to maintain resilience is to promote species diversity and undertake work that will reduce the impact of events like fire, flood and storms. Such work is integral to the annual work programme of Ashtead Common.

Prior to the end of the financial year of the charity, a global pandemic of Coronavirus began. The charity has undertaken a revised forecasting exercise in order to ascertain the likely impact upon finances during the next 12-month period, which enables the Trustee to confirm that the charity remains a going concern.

The City of London Corporation's City's Cash fund has also undertaken the same revised forecasting exercise, which offers assurances that the charity's running costs will continue to be funded in this way. The Trustee does not consider there to be any material uncertainty around going concern and further detail regarding this is set out on page 20. The Trustee is monitoring the situation and will continue with its conservation work and management plans for Ashtead Common, preserving the open space for the benefit of the public.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Overview of Financial Performance

Income

In 2019/20 the charity total income for the year was £557,026, an overall increase of £1,763 against the previous year (£555,263).

Income from Charitable Activities comprised £501 from charges for use of facilities (2018/19: £1,375), £1,461 from licenses (2018/19: £1,492) and £5,924 from sales of woodland products and auction sales (2018/19: £1,550 from auction sales only).

Grants income of £34,235 was received in the year, restricted towards specific programmes administered by the charity (2018/19: £31,119). The grants relate to Agri-environment schemes that provide funding to farmers and land managers to farm in a way that supports biodiversity, enhances the landscape, and improves the quality of water, air and soil.

An amount of £512,448 (2018/19: £518,425) was received from the City of London Corporation's City's Cash as a contribution towards the running costs of the charity.

Expenditure

Total expenditure for the year was £557,026 (2018/19: £555,263) all of which related to charitable activities.

Funds held

The charity's total funds held were £nil as at 31 March 2020 (2018/19: £nil).

Details of all funds held, including their purposes, is set out within note 13 to the financial statements.

Reserves

The charity is wholly supported by the City of London Corporation which is committed to maintain and preserve Ashtead Common out of its City's Cash Funds. These Funds are used to meet the deficit on running expenses on a year by year basis. Consequently, this charity has no free reserves and a reserves policy is considered by the trustee to be inappropriate.

Principal Risks and Uncertainties

The charity is committed to a programme of risk management as an element of its strategy to preserve the charity's assets. In order to embed sound practice the senior leadership team ensures that risk management policies are applied, that there is an on-going review of activity and that appropriate advice and support is provided. A key risk register has been prepared for the charity, which has been reviewed by the Trustee. This identifies the potential impact of key risks and the measures which are in place to mitigate such risks.

The principal risks faced by the charity, and actions taken to manage them are as follows:

Risk	Actions to manage risks
Health and Safety Failure	Policies and procedures developed and under active review. Staff training for roles and activity undertaken. Regular compliance checks including annual audit.
Reduction in funding	Seek additional grant funding from Natural England's Countryside Stewardship scheme. Ensure future plans are scalable and reduce costs where necessary.
Climate change – fire, storms, drought	Increase firebreak network. Increase mowing regimes. Increase area of bracken managed. Maintain Professional Tree Inspector (PTI) capacity within team. Continue managing habitats to promote species diversity.
Tree Diseases and Other Pests	Biosecurity policies and procedures in place and regularly reviewed. Education and information for visitors. Staff & volunteer training to help them recognise issues at early stages. Programme of tree health and annual tree safety inspections in place. Active involvement with leading partners such as Forestry Commission and Natural England
Pressures from the built environment	Progress Rye Brook reed bed project. Work with community scientists and education establishments to monitor pollution. Use social media and face-to-face contact to promote responsible recreational use.
Impact of Covid-19 on income generation and financial management	Working closely with Chamberlain to monitor budget lines and keep them informed as financial situation develops. Predictions on loss of income being worked up to aid longer term decision making, including rental, sports provision, catering and retail.
Impact of Covid-19 on health and safety of visitors and staff	Public health and safety works continues. Social distancing measures erected and reviewed/renewed. Car parks closed to reduce risk of incident. Equipment inspections have continued as required. Fleet and equipment checks continue 'in-house'. Risk Assessments and Safe Systems of Work have been revised and circulated due to Covid-19 risks, particularly provision and use of PPE. Procurement of necessary PPE and cleaning material needs identified. Cleaning contract standards and frequency remain a concern and is being monitored
Covid-19 impact on care and husbandry of animals	Livestock work continues. Animal welfare is being maintained daily. Livestock grazing on sites as far as safely and reasonably practicable. Access to local vets is available. Food, bedding, etc is available through existing suppliers.

TRUSTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

The Trustee is responsible for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Charity law requires the Trustee to prepare financial statements for each financial year in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under charity law the Trustee must not approve the financial statements unless the Trustee is satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustee is required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Trustee is responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable the Trustee to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011. The Trustee is also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the Trustee is aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charity's auditors are unaware; and
- the Trustee has taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

Financial statements are published on the Trustee's website in accordance with legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements, which may vary from legislation in other jurisdictions. The maintenance and integrity of the Trustee's website is the responsibility of the Trustee. The Trustee's responsibility also extends to the ongoing integrity of the financial statements contained therein.

Adopted and signed for on behalf of the Trustee.

Jeremy Paul Mayhew MA MBA
Chairman of Finance Committee of
The City of London Corporation
Guildhall, London
10 November 2020

Jamie Ingham Clark FCA, Deputy
Chairman of Finance Committee
of The City of London Corporation

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEE OF ASHTEAD COMMON

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Ashtead Common (the charity) for the year ended 31 March 2020 which comprise the statement of financial activities, the balance sheet and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 *The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland* (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charity's affairs as at 31 March 2020 and of its incoming resources and application of resources for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the Charity in accordance with the ethical requirements relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions related to going concern

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the ISAs (UK) require us to report to you where:

- the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is not appropriate; or
- the Trustees have not disclosed in the financial statements any identified material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the Charity's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Trustees are responsible for the other information.

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Charities Act 2011 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion;

- the information contained in the financial statements is inconsistent in any material respect with the Trustee's Annual Report; or
- adequate accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of Trustees

As explained more fully in the Trustee's responsibilities statement, the Trustee is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustee determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustee is responsible for assessing the charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustee either intend to liquidate the charity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located at the Financial Reporting Council's ("FRC's") website at:

<https://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities>

This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charity's Trustee, as a body, in accordance with the Charities Act 2011. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's Trustee those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's Trustee as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

BDO LLP

BDO LLP, statutory auditor
London

28 January 2021

BDO LLP is eligible for appointment as auditor of the charity by virtue of its eligibility for appointment as auditor of a company under section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

BDO LLP is a limited liability partnership registered in England and Wales (with registered number OC305127).

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

		Unrestricted Funds	Unrestricted Funds
	Notes	2019/20 £	2018/19 £
Income from:			
Voluntary activities	2	36,692	32,421
Charitable activities	3	7,886	4,417
Grant from City of London Corporation	4	512,448	518,425
Total income		557,026	555,263
Expenditure on:			
Charitable activities:			
Preservation of Ashtead Common	5	557,026	555,263
Total expenditure		557,026	555,263
Net income/(expenditure)		-	-
Net movement in funds		-	-
Reconciliation of funds:			
Total funds brought forward	13	-	-
Total funds carried forward	13	-	-

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities.

There were no other recognised gains and losses other than those shown above.

The notes on pages 20 to 30 form part of these financial statements.

BALANCE SHEET**AS AT 31 MARCH 2020**

	Notes	2020 Total £	2019 Restated Total £
Current assets			
Debtors	9	9,538	39,985
Total current assets		9,538	39,985
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	10	(7,538)	(37,985)
Net current assets		2,000	2,000
Total assets less current liabilities		2,000	2,000
Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year	11	(2,000)	(2,000)
Total net assets		-	-
The funds of the charity:			
Unrestricted income funds	13	-	-
Total funds		-	-

The notes on pages 20 to 30 form part of these financial statements

Approved and signed on behalf of the Trustee.



Dr Peter Kane

Chamberlain of London

25 January 2021

BALANCE SHEET restated**AS AT 31 MARCH 2019**

	Notes	2019 Total £	2018 Total £
Current assets			
Debtors	9	39,985	9,954
Cash at bank and in hand		-	9,398
Total current assets		39,985	19,352
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	10	(37,985)	(16,352)
Net current assets		2,000	3,000
Total assets less current liabilities		2,000	3,000
Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year	11	(2,000)	(3,000)
Total net assets		-	-
The funds of the charity:			
Unrestricted income funds	13	-	-
Total funds		-	-

The split between amounts within the Balance Sheet for Creditors over one year and under one year has been restated following review. The overall net funds of the charity remain unchanged.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The following accounting policies have been applied consistently in dealing with items that are considered material in relation to the financial statements of the charity.

(a) Basis of preparation

The financial statements of the charity, which is a public benefit entity under FRS102, have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) Accounting and Reporting by Charities, published in 2015, Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' (FRS 102) (2nd Edition) and the Charities Act 2011.

(b) Going concern

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis as the Trustee considers that there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern. The governing documents place an obligation on the City of London Corporation to preserve the open spaces for the benefit of the public. Funding is provided from the City of London Corporation's City's Cash. On an annual basis, a medium-term financial forecast is prepared for City's Cash. The latest forecast anticipates that adequate funds will be available in the next five years to enable the charity to continue to fulfil its obligations.

In making this assessment, the trustee has considered the potential impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the future income levels and the liquidity of the charity over the next 12-month period. The charity has undergone a revised forecasting exercise to help provide assurances that it can continue to keep operating over the next 12-month period. The full year impact has been assessed. For this reason, the Trustee continues to adopt a going concern basis for the preparation of the financial statements.

(c) Key management judgements and assumptions

The preparation of the financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the application of policies and reported amounts of assets and liabilities, income and expenditure. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and various other factors that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances, the result of which form the basis of decisions about carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The resulting accounting estimates will, by definition, seldom equal the related actual results.

Estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised and in any future periods affected. Management do not consider there to be any material revisions requiring disclosure.

In preparing the financial statements, management has made the following key judgements: the recovery of debts.

(d) Statement of Cash Flows

The charity has taken advantage of the exemption in FRS102 (paragraph 1.12b) from the requirement to produce a statement of cash flows on the grounds that it is a qualifying entity.

A Statement of Cash Flows is included within the City's Cash Annual Report and Financial Statements 2020 which is publicly available at www.cityoflondon.gov.uk.

(e) Income

All income is included in the Statements of Financial Activities (SOFA) when the charity is legally entitled to the income; it is more likely than not that economic benefit associated with the transaction will come to the charity and the amount can be quantified with reasonable certainty. Income consists of charges for use of facilities, contributions, grants, sales and license income

The City of London Corporation's City's Cash meets the deficit on running expenses of the charity and also provides funding for certain capital works. This income is recognised in the SOFA when it is due from City's Cash.

(f) Expenditure

Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under the principal categories of 'expenditure on raising funds' and 'expenditure on charitable activities'. Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that settlement will be required, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Governance costs include the costs of governance arrangements which relate to the general running of the charity as opposed to the direct management of functions inherent in the activities undertaken. These include the costs associated with constitutional and statutory requirements such as the cost of Trustee meetings.

Support costs (including governance costs) include activities undertaken by the City Corporation on behalf of the charity, such as human resources, digital services, legal support, accounting services, committee administration, public relations and premises costs. The basis of the cost allocation is set out in Note 6.

The Trustee, the City Corporation, accounts centrally for all payroll related deductions. As a result, the charity accounts for all such sums due as having been paid.

(g) Foreign currencies

Transactions in foreign currencies are recorded at the rate of exchange ruling at the date of the transaction. Monetary assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currencies are valued at the year-end rate exchange. All gains or losses on translation are taken to Statement of Financial Activities in the year in which they occur.

(h) Pension costs

Staff are employed by the City of London Corporation and are eligible to contribute to the City of London Local Government Pension Fund, which is a funded defined benefit scheme. The estimated net deficit on the Fund is the responsibility of the City of London Corporation as a whole, as one employer, rather than the specific responsibility of any of its three main funds (City Fund, City's Cash and Bridge House Estates) or the trusts it supports.

The Fund's estimated net liability has been determined by independent actuaries in accordance with FRS102 as £630.4m as at 31 March 2020 (£608.6m as at 31 March 2019). Since any net deficit is apportioned between the financial statements of the City of London's three main funds, the charity's Trustee does not anticipate that any of the liability will fall on the charity. The charity is unable to identify its share of the pension scheme assets and liabilities and therefore the Pension Fund is accounted for as a defined contribution scheme in these financial statements.

Barnett Waddingham, an independent actuary, carried out the latest triennial actuarial assessment of the scheme as at 31 March 2019, using the projected unit method. The actuary will carry out the next assessment of the scheme as at 31 March 2022, which will set contributions for the period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2024. Contribution rates adopted for the financial years 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20 have been set at 21% (2016/17: 17.5%).

(i) Taxation

The charity meets the definition of a charitable trust for UK income tax purposes, as set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 of the Finance Act 2010. Accordingly, the charity is exempt from UK taxation in respect of income or capital gains under part 10 of the Income Tax Act 2007 or section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

(j) Fixed Assets**Heritage Land and Associated Buildings**

Ashtead Common comprises 200 hectares (500 acres) of land located in North East Surrey, together with associated buildings. The object of the charity is the preservation in perpetuity of the common at Ashtead as an open space for the recreation and enjoyment of the public. Ashtead Common is considered to be inalienable (i.e. may not be disposed of without specific statutory powers).

Land and the original associated buildings are considered to be heritage assets. In respect of the original land and buildings, cost or valuation amounts are not included in these financial statements as reliable cost information is not available and a significant cost would be involved in the reconstruction of past accounting records, or in the valuation, which would be onerous compared to the benefit to the users of these accounts.

Additions to the original land and capital expenditure on buildings and other assets would be included as fixed assets at historic cost, less provision for depreciation and any impairment, where this cost can be reliably measured.

(k) Funds structure

Income, expenditure and gains/losses are allocated to particular funds according to their purpose:

Unrestricted income funds – these funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objects at the discretion of the Trustee and include both income generated by assets held representing unrestricted funds. Specifically, this represents any surplus of income over expenditure for the charity which is carried forward to meet the requirements of future years, known as free reserves.

(l) Insurance

The charity, elected Members and staff supporting the charity's administration are covered by the City Corporation's insurance liability policies, and otherwise under the indemnity the City Corporation provides to Members and staff, funded from City's Cash.

2. INCOME FROM VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted funds 2019/20 £	Unrestricted funds 2018/19 £
Grants	34,235	31,119
Donations and legacies	-	20
Contributions	2,457	1,282
Total	36,692	32,421

3. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted funds 2019/20 £	Unrestricted funds 2018/19 £
Charges for use of facilities	501	1,375
Sales	5,924	1,550
Licenses	1,461	1,492
Total	7,886	4,417

4. INCOME FROM THE CITY OF LONDON CORPORATION

	Unrestricted funds 2019/20 £	Total 2018/19 £
Revenue and capital grant from City of London Corporation	512,448	518,425

Income for the year included:

Grants – being amounts received from organisations towards specific programmes operated by the charity. Grants have been received from Natural England's Stewardship Scheme and the Rural Payments Agency under the basic payment scheme.

Contributions – being amounts contributed towards corporate volunteering events and by the public towards free events such as guided walks.

Grants from the City of London Corporation – being the amount received from the City of London Corporation's City's Cash to meet the deficit on running expenses of the charity.

Charitable activities – being amounts generated from the sale of woodland products such as timber and hazel poles and auction sales; wayleave licenses and charges made to the public for the use of facilities and hire of office space for use as a polling station.

5. EXPENDITURE

Expenditure on charitable activities

	Direct costs £	Support costs £	Total 2019/20 £	Direct costs £	Support costs £	Total 2018/19 £
Preservation of Ashtead Common	483,630	73,396	557,026	483,087	72,176	555,263
Total	483,630	73,396	557,026	483,087	72,176	555,263

Charitable activity

Expenditure on the charitable activities includes labour, premises costs, equipment, materials and other supplies and services incurred in the running of Ashtead Common.

Auditor's remuneration and fees for other services

BDO are the auditors of the City of London City's Cash Fund and all of the different charities of which it is Trustee. The City of London Corporation charges the audit fee to its City's Cash Fund and does not attempt to apportion the audit fee between all of the different charities. No other services were provided to the charity by its auditors during the year (2018/19: £nil).

6. SUPPORT COSTS

Support costs include activities undertaken by the City of London Corporation on behalf of the Charity, such as human resources, digital services, legal support, accounting services, committee administration and premises costs. Such costs are determined on a departmental basis, and are allocated on a cost recovery basis to the charity based on time spent, with associated office accommodation charged proportionately to the space occupied by the respective activities, with the split of costs as follows:

	Charitable activities £	Governance £	2019/20 £	2018/19 £
Department:				Restated
Chamberlain	16,609	-	16,609	17,679
Comptroller & City Solicitor	-	-	-	4,451
Town Clerk	-	14,783	14,783	13,203
City Surveyor	10,140	-	10,140	9,472
Open Spaces directorate	12,017	-	12,017	7,819
Other governance & support costs	1,686	-	1,686	1,564
Digital Services	18,161	-	18,161	17,988
Sub-total	58,613	14,783	73,396	72,176
Reallocation of governance costs	14,783	(14,783)	-	-
Total	73,396	-	73,396	72,176

Support costs restated

	Charitable activities £	Governance £	2018/19 £	2017/18 £
Department:				Restated
Chamberlain	17,679	-	17,679	16,840
Comptroller & City Solicitor	4,451	-	4,451	7,529
Town Clerk	-	13,203	13,203	14,955
City Surveyor	9,472	-	9,472	9,838
Open Spaces directorate	7,819	-	7,819	8,460
Other governance & support costs	1,564	-	1,564	1,439
Digital Services	17,988	-	17,988	17,299
Sub-total	58,973	13,203	72,176	76,360
Reallocation of governance costs	13,203	(13,203)	-	-
Total	72,176	-	72,176	76,360

All support costs are undertaken from unrestricted funds. Governance costs are allocated based on a proportion of officer time spent on the administration of Trustee and Committee related meetings.

During the year a reanalysis of costs was undertaken between Town Clerks, Chamberlains and Governance costs. The reanalysed costs are included in the table above.

7. DETAILS OF STAFF COSTS

All staff that work on behalf of the charity are employed by the City Corporation. The average number of people directly undertaking activities on behalf of the charity during the year was 6 (2018/19: 7).

Amounts paid in respect of employees directly undertaking activities on behalf of the charity were as follows:

	2019/20	2018/19
	£	£
Salaries and wages	199,109	192,430
National Insurance costs	19,692	18,979
Employer's pension contributions	44,979	43,497
Total emoluments of employees	263,780	254,906

The number of directly charged employees whose emoluments (excluding employer's pension contribution and national insurance contribution) for the year were over £60,000 was nil (2018/19: nil).

Remuneration of Key Management Personnel

The charity considers its key management personnel to comprise the Members of the City of London Corporation, acting collectively for the City Corporation in its capacity as the Trustee, and the Director of Open Spaces who manages the seven open spaces funded by the City of London Corporation. A proportion of the Directors' employment benefits are allocated to this charity.

Support is also provided by other chief officers and their departments from across the City of London Corporation, including the Town Clerk and Chief Executive, Chamberlain, Comptroller and City Solicitor and City Surveyor.

The amount of employee benefits received by key management personnel totalled £2,204 (2018/19: £2,178). No members received any remuneration, with directly incurred expenses reimbursed, if claimed. Expenses totalling £nil were claimed in 2019/20 (2018/19: £nil).

8. HERITAGE ASSETS

Since 1995 the primary purpose of the charity has been the preservation in perpetuity of the common at Ashtead as an open space for the recreation and enjoyment of the public. As set out in Note 1(j), the original heritage land and buildings are not recognised in the Financial Statements. Policies for the preservation and management of Ashtead Common are contained in the Ashtead Common Heritage Conservation

Plan 2010. Records of heritage assets owned and maintained by Ashtead Common can be obtained from the Director of Open Spaces at the principal address as stated on page 31.

9. DEBTORS – AMOUNTS DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2020 £	2019 £
Prepayments and accrued income	2,900	5,130
Recoverable VAT	6,494	5,662
Other debtors	144	29,193
Total	9,538	39,985

Other debtors consist of rental debtors with wayleave licences. In 2018/19 these included a £29,000 listed debtor for Rural Payment Agency grant income with the remainder relating to wayleave licences.

10. CREDITORS – AMOUNTS DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2020 £	2019 Restated £
Trade creditors	2,389	7,156
Accruals	1,629	9,816
Deferred income	295	301
Rent deposits	-	1,000
Other creditors	3,225	19,712
Total	7,538	37,985

Other creditors consist of bank overdraft of £2,480 (2018/19: £18,116) and listed creditors £745 (2018/19: £1,596)

Deferred income relates to license income received in advance for periods after the year-end.

	2020 £	2019 £
Deferred income analysis within creditors:		
Balance at 1 April	301	316
Amounts released to income	(301)	(316)
Amounts deferred in the year	295	301
Balance at 31 March	295	301

CREDITORS – AMOUNTS DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR restated

	2019 £	2018 £
Trade creditors	7,156	6,576
Accruals	9,816	8,203
Deferred income	301	316
Rent deposits	1,000	-
Other creditors	19,712	1,257
Total	37,985	16,352

Following a review of reporting in the prior year, the charity noted that creditors had not been split out between amounts due within one year and after one year. As at the 31 March 2019, creditors due within one year included amounts due after one year of £2,000 which the Trustee does not consider material. There was no impact on the funds of the charity. The restated Balance Sheet details the adjustment which has been made as a result.

11. CREDITORS – AMOUNTS DUE AFTER MORE THAN ONE YEAR

	2020 £	2019 £
Rent Deposits	2,000	2,000
Total	2,000	2,000

The current year rent deposit relates to a telecommunications wayleave.

CREDITORS – AMOUNTS DUE AFTER MORE THAN ONE YEAR restated

	2019 £	2018 £
Rent Deposits	2,000	3,000
Total	2,000	3,000

12. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BY FUND

At 31 March 2020	Unrestricted funds Total at 31 March 2020	Unrestricted funds Total at 31 March 2019
	£	£
Current Assets	9,538	39,985
Current Liabilities	(9,538)	(39,985)
Total	-	-

At 31 March 2019	Unrestricted funds Total at 31 March 2019	Unrestricted funds Total at 31 March 2018
	£	£
Current Assets	39,985	19,352
Current Liabilities	(39,985)	(19,352)
Total	-	-

13. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

At 31 March 2020	Total as at 1 April 2019	Income	Expenditure	Total as at 31 March 2020
	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds:				
General funds	-	557,026	(557,026)	-

At 31 March 2019	Total as at 1 April 2018	Income	Expenditure	Total as at 31 March 2019
	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds:				
General funds	-	555,263	(555,263)	-

14. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

The City Corporation is the sole Trustee of the charity, as described on page 12. The City Corporation provides various services to the charity, the costs of which are recharged to the charity. This includes the provision of banking services, charging all transactions to the charity at cost and crediting or charging interest at a commercial rate. The cost of these services is included within expenditure, as set out in note 5.

The charity is required to disclose information on related party transactions with bodies or individuals that have the potential to control or influence the charity. Members are required to disclose their interests, and these can be viewed online at www.cityoflondon.gov.uk.

Members and senior staff are requested to disclose all related party transactions, including instances where their close family has made such transactions.

Figures in brackets represent the amounts due at the balance sheet date. Other figures represent the value of the transaction during the year.

Related party	Connected party	2019/20 £	2018/19 £	Detail of transaction
City of London Corporation	The City of London Corporation is the Trustee for the charity	73,396 (nil)	72,176 (nil)	Management, surveying and administrative services provided for the charity
		512,448 (nil)	518,425 (nil)	The City of London Corporation's City's Cash meets the deficit on running expenses of the charity

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATION DETAILS

CHARITY NAME: Ashtead Common

Registered charity number: 1051510

PRINCIPAL OFFICE OF THE CHARITY & THE CITY CORPORATION:

Guildhall, London, EC2P 2EJ

TRUSTEE:

The Mayor and Commonalty & Citizens of the City of London

SENIOR MANAGEMENT:

Chief Executive

John Barradell OBE - The Town Clerk and Chief Executive of the City of London Corporation

Treasurer

Dr Peter Kane - The Chamberlain of the City of London Corporation

Solicitor

Michael Cogher - The Comptroller and City Solicitor of the City of London Corporation

Open Spaces

Colin Buttery – Director of Open Spaces

AUDITORS:

BDO LLP, 55 Baker Street, London, W1U 7EU

BANKERS:

Lloyds Bank Plc., P.O.Box 72, Bailey Drive, Gillingham Business Park, Kent ME8 0LS

Contact for The Chamberlain, to request copies of governance documents & of the Annual Report of City's Cash:

PA-DeputyChamberlain@cityoflondon.gov.uk

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Committee(s)	Dated:
Epping Forest and Commons	8 March 2021
Subject: Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common Trustees Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2020	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?	n/a
What is the source of Funding?	n/a
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	n/a
Report of: The Chamberlain Director of Open Spaces	For Information
Report author: Beatrix Jako - Chamberlains	

Summary

The Trustee's Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year ended 31 March 2020 for Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common (charity registration number 232987) are presented for information in the format required by the Charity Commission.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that the Trustee's Annual Report and Financial Statements for the 2019/20 Financial Statements be noted.

Main Report

1. The Trustee's Annual Report and Financial Statements are presented for information, having been signed on behalf of the Trust by the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Finance Committee and the auditors BDO LLP. The information contained within the Annual Report and Financial Statements has already been presented to your Committee via budget and outturn reports.
2. Following on from a previous review of the charities for which the City is responsible, (completed in 2010), which detailed key reports that should be presented to your Committee. The Trustees Annual Report and Financial Statements was one of these reports. Information from these statements will form the Annual Return to the Charity Commission. Since this undertaking the City Corporation has recently approved that a further comprehensive review be

undertaken across all of its charities, the outcome of which will be reported to this committee in due course.

3. The Trustee's Annual Report and Financial Statements were submitted to the Charity Commission within the regulatory deadline of 31 January 2021.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2020

Beatrix Jako

Acting Senior Accountant – Chamberlain's Financial Services Division, Citizen Services

E: Beatrix.Jako@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common

Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year
ended 31 March 2020

Charity registration number 232987

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ORIGINS OF THE CHARITY

Burnham Beeches is a 220-hectare area of open space, home to hundreds of living veteran beech and oak pollards. Its natural and cultural heritage area of international importance, the legacy of centuries of interaction between people and the environment.

Burnham Beeches is designated as Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), it is also a National Nature Reserve and a Special Area of Conservation; there are requirements under the Wildlife and Countryside Act and also a European obligation to manage the Beeches for the benefit of its wildlife.

Stoke Common is an 80-hectare area of open space and contains the largest remnant of Buckinghamshire's once extensive heathland and is also designated as Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

The Burnham Beeches charity was established under the Corporation of London (Open Spaces) Act 1878 which provided that the purpose of the charity is the preservation in perpetuity of the Open Space known as Burnham Beeches, "the Beeches", as Open Space for the recreation and enjoyment of the public.

On 12 September 2011 the assets of Stoke Common (unregistered) were transferred to Burnham Beeches (232987). After this date the Charity is called Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common.

The objects of the Charity are the preservation in perpetuity by the Corporation of London of the Open Spaces known as Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common, for the perpetual use thereof by the public for recreation and enjoyment and to preserve the natural aspect.

TRUSTEE'S ANNUAL REPORT

STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE

GOVERNING DOCUMENTS

The governing document is the Corporation of London (Open Spaces) Act 1878 as amended. The charity is constituted as a charitable trust.

GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The Mayor and Commonalty and Citizens of the City of London (also referred to as 'the City Corporation' or 'the City of London Corporation'), a body corporate and politic, is the Trustee of Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common-City Of London. The City Corporation is Trustee acting by the Court of Common Council of the City of London in its general corporate capacity and that executive body has delegated responsibility in respect of the administration and management of this charity to various committees and sub-committees of the Common Council, membership of which is drawn from 125 elected Members of the Common Council and external appointees to those committees. In making appointments to committees, the Court of Common Council will take into consideration any particular expertise and knowledge of the elected Members, and where relevant, external appointees. External appointments are made after due advertisement and rigorous selection to fill gaps in skills.

Members of the Court of Common Council are unpaid and are elected by the electorate of the City of London. The Key Committees which had responsibility for directly managing matters related to the charity during 2019/20 were as follows:

- Policy and Resources Committee – responsible for allocating resources and administering the charity
- Finance Committee – Responsible for administering the Trust on behalf of the Trustee.
- Audit and Risk Management Committee – Responsible for overseeing systems of internal control and making recommendations to the Finance Committee of the charity.
- Epping Forest and Commons Committee – responsible for the activities undertaken at Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common approving budget allocations for the forthcoming year and acting as Trustees of the charity.
- Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common Consultation Group – provides a forum for local residents and users to comment upon both the management of Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common.

Individuals collectively act as Trustee by virtue of positions that they hold in the City of London Corporation in accordance with the governing document. They act as a Trustee during their tenure of these positions.

All of the above committees are ultimately responsible to the Court of Common Council of the City of London. Committee meetings are held in public, enabling the decision-making process to be clear, transparent and publicly accountable. Details of the

membership of Committees of the City Corporation are available at www.cityoflondon.gov.uk

The charity is consolidated within City Cash as the City of London Corporation exercises operational control over their activities. City's Cash is a fund of the City Corporation that can be traced back to the 15th century and has been built up from a combination of properties, land, bequests and transfers under statute since that time. Investments in properties, stocks and shares are managed to provide a total return that:

- Allows City's Cash to use the income for the provision of services that are of importance nationally and internationally as well as to the City and Greater London;
- Maintains the asset base so that income will be available to fund services for the benefit of future generations.

The Trustee believes that good governance is fundamental to the success of the charity. A comprehensive review of governance commenced during the year and is ongoing to ensure that the charity is effective in fulfilling its objectives. Reference is being made to the good practices recommended within the Charity Governance Code throughout this review. Focus is being placed on ensuring regulatory compliance and the ongoing maintenance of an efficient and effective portfolio of charities that maximise impact for beneficiaries.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

The charity is administered in accordance with its governing instruments and the City Corporation's own corporate governance and administration framework, including Committee Terms of Reference, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Officer Scheme of Delegations. These governance documents can be obtained via a request to the email address stated on page 29.

Each Member by virtue of their membership of the Court of Common Council, its relevant committees and sub-committees, has a duty to support the City Corporation in the proper exercise of its functions and in meeting its duties as Trustee of the charity by faithfully acting in accordance with charity law, the Terms of Reference of the relevant committee or sub-committee, and the City of Corporation's agreed corporate governance framework as noted above, backed up by its standards regime.

INDUCTION AND TRAINING OF MEMBERS

The City Corporation makes available to its Members, seminars and briefings on various aspects of its activities, including those concerning the charity, to enable Members to carry out their duties efficiently and effectively. Induction meetings are provided on specific aspects of the work of Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common. If suitable seminars or other training options are identified that are relevant to the charity, Members are advised of these opportunities.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The objectives of the charity are the preservation and maintenance of Burnham Beeches and Stoke common, as Open Spaces for the recreation and enjoyment of the public and to maintain their natural aspect.

Purposes of the charity as set out in the governing document, the Corporation of London (Open Spaces) Act 1878:

- Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common to be kept as open space for public recreation.
- Natural aspect to be preserved.
- Land to be unenclosed and un-built upon, except those features required for better attainment of the Act and deemed necessary by the City.
- Byelaws protecting the site and its features to be enforced.
- Encroachments to be resisted and abated.

Main activities undertaken in relation to these purposes (All day to day activity is governed by 10-year site management plans):

- Practical conservation management activities to maintain the biodiversity of Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common, such as tree surgery work on the veteran and young replacement pollards, restoration of wood pasture and heathland habitats and management of firebreaks, scrub, grassland, bracken and wetland habitats.
- Providing volunteering opportunities to encourage community involvement.
- Providing and maintaining facilities for informal recreation.
- Grazing with cattle, ponies and other livestock where appropriate.
- Protecting Ashted Common and its users from harm by patrolling, enforcing byelaws, resisting encroachments, challenging threats and managing assets.
- Providing educational activities and events.
- Surveying and monitoring, for wildlife, visitor use, archaeological investigations and pollution monitoring.
- Managing and protecting 3 Scheduled Monuments, including an iron age hillfort and 13th century moated farmstead.

Issues the charity is seeking to tackle:

- Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common's natural and cultural heritage are of national and international importance, the legacy of centuries of interaction between people and the environment. As we progress through the 2020's and beyond the challenge of protecting this valuable resource will increase as pressures from environmental and human factors mount.

Aims:

- Maintain the biodiversity of Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common by managing habitats to favourable condition and achieving conservation gains that benefit the site and beyond.

Governing document link: preserve natural aspect, protect the timber and other trees, pollards, shrubs, underwood and herbage.

- Encourage the sustainable use of Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common for recreation and promote community involvement in all aspects of the site.

Governing document link: commons acquired by the City to be kept as open spaces for the recreation and enjoyment of the public

- Protect Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common and site users from harm. Challenge threats and maintain assets, including heritage assets, in good condition.

Governing document link: open spaces kept uninclosed and unbuilt upon. Shall by all lawful means prevent, resist and abate inclosures, encroachments and buildings upon. The City may from time to time make and alter byelaws.

The Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common Management Plans describe the strategy for achieving these aims.

Volunteers:

- Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common provide a wide range of volunteer opportunities. The Charity has averages around 6000 hours of volunteer input a year helping deliver habitat restoration and site maintenance, monitoring activity, visitor events and care of livestock all year round.

Investment Policy

The charity itself has no underlying supporting funds or investments and therefore there is no investment policy.

Remuneration Policy

The charity's senior staff are employees of the City Corporation and, alongside all staff, pay is reviewed annually. The City Corporation is committed to attracting, recruiting and retaining skilled people and rewarding employees fairly for their contribution. As part of this commitment, staff are regularly appraised and, subject to performance, eligible for the payment of bonuses and recognition awards.

The above policy applies to staff within the charity's key management personnel, as defined within Note 8 to the financial statements.

The charity is committed to equal opportunities for all employees. An Equality and Inclusion Board has been established to actively promote equality, diversity and inclusion in service delivery and employment practices. The Board is responsible for monitoring the delivery of the Equality and Inclusion Action Plan and progress against the Equality Objectives for 2016-20. This also includes addressing the City Corporation's gender pay gap.

Senior staff posts of the City Corporation are individually evaluated and assessed independently against the external market allowing each post to be allocated an

individual salary range within the relevant grade, which incorporates market factors as well as corporate importance.

Fundraising

Section 162a of the Charities Act 2011 requires charities to make a statement regarding fundraising activities. The legislation defines fundraising as “soliciting or otherwise procuring money or other property for charitable purposes”. Although Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common charity does not undertake widespread fundraising from the general public, any such amounts receivable are presented in the financial statements as “voluntary income” including grants.

In relation to the above we confirm that all solicitations are managed internally, without involvement of commercial participators or professional fund-raisers, or third parties. The day to day management of all income generation is delegated to the executive team, who are accountable to the Trustee. The charity is not bound by any regulatory scheme and does not consider it necessary to comply with any voluntary code of practice.

The charity has received no complaints in relation to fundraising activities in the current year (2018/19: Nil). Individuals are not approached for funds, hence the charity does not consider it necessary to design specific procedures to monitor such activities.

Public benefit statement

The Trustee confirms that it has referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission’s general guidance on public benefit when reviewing Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common aims and objectives and in planning future activities. The purpose of the charity is the preservation of Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common in perpetuity by the City of London Corporation as the Conservators of Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common, as Open Spaces for the and to conserve the natural aspect.

Consequently, the Trustee considers that Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common operates to benefit the general public and satisfies the public benefit test.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

The administrative details of the charity are stated on page 29.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Key targets for 2019/20 and review of achievement

The key targets for 2019/20 together with their outcomes were:

Burnham Beeches - A new 10 year management plan for the Beeches is required by the 1 April 2020. 2019/20 will see consultation with a variety of stakeholders including Natural England, site visitors, local communities and wildlife interest groups to ensure the new plan is in place by 31 March 2020. *Following extensive consultation with variety of stakeholders including Natural England, site visitors, local consultation group, local communities in South Buckinghamshire and wildlife interest groups, a new 10-year management plan for Burnham Beeches was produced. The new plan received final ratification from Natural England and will start on the 1st April 2020.*

Countryside Stewardship – With funding secured for Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common under the new scheme key heathland and wood pasture restoration capital projects will be undertaken in the Autumn of 2019 – this will be the final round of major restoration at Stoke Common and see the delivery of a significant part of a long-term wood pasture restoration project at the Beeches. The planned first year of capital projects were completed at Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common with nationally important habitat restoration work undertaken amounting to 0.69 hectares of wood pasture at Burnham Beeches and 1.642 hectares of heathland at Stoke Common. Additional capital grant funded habitat works involving the specialist cutting of 114 young pollarded trees was completed at the Beeches. The remainder of the work will be carried out in the second (and final) year of the capital works programme, as planned, in order to spread the work load.

Interpretation - New information boards will be installed at both Stoke Common and Burnham Beeches along with new sculptures on the sensory trail at the Beeches. *Information boards were installed at all key entrances at Stoke Common, and near Druids oak in Burnham Beeches, in April 2019 and replacement sculptures were installed along the easy access path – improving information and experience for all visitors.*

Scheduled ancient monuments – The iron age hill fort at Burnham Beeches, known as Seven Ways Plain, will be subject to investigation and interpretation over the next two years as part of the partnership with an HLF (Heritage Lottery Fund) funded project – Beacons of the past – Hillforts in the Chilterns Landscape. In 2019/20 this will involve a LIDAR survey of the whole of the Beeches (and Stoke Common), and public events to interpret the monument to visitors and involve them in its care.

The LIDAR survey was completed in May 2019 and an exploratory archaeological dig of a believed ancient wood bank leading from the hillfort across the site was undertaken in September 2019. The excavation was undertaken by volunteers, supervised by an archaeologist over two weeks and culminated in an event to highlight the hillfort and iron history with demonstrations, events and guided walks on the 14th September attended by over 450 local people.

Impact of development - The team at Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common will continue to work with South Bucks & Chiltern District Council/Slough Borough Council/Heathrow and Natural England to obtain the best protection possible from development pressure through the local plan and other development mitigations. A particular focus will be on air quality issues. *Burnham Beeches staff worked closely with South Bucks and Chiltern District Council and Natural England to reach agreement over the impact of the local plan on the SAC. Mitigation measures have been proposed, largely in relation to the impact of recreation pressure. These measures are now being adopted but they will be subject to scrutiny by an inspector during a public hearing before the local plan is finalised. Staff have also held meetings with Slough Borough Council and mitigation has been agreed for one large development in the Borough.*

Grazing – Plans to graze more than the current 163 Ha grazing area at Burnham Beeches will be put into action with a gradual expansion in 2019/20 as part of the vision to graze as much of the remaining un-grazed 60 Ha as possible by 2020. *Grazing at Burnham Beeches was further expanded with 2.75Ha additional land, not grazed for decades, grazed by cattle during May, June and July 2019.*

Ponds – Use a range of techniques to investigate the outflow area middle pond to allow any necessary repairs to be undertaken. *Investigation & survey work of a buried manhole and pipe valve at middle pond outflow was undertaken and further investigative actions recommended.*

Veteran Trees – carry out clearance & reduction work as per the new 10-year work programme and maintain efforts on squirrel control to ensure reduction in damage on old pollards. *This planned work was postponed in 2019/20 due to the very long dry summer and concerns over the health of the trees should cutting take place – it was reduced to emergency work on just 11 trees only. All work has been deferred for one year and work cutting young pollards, less vulnerable to the dry conditions that was planned for 2020/21 was undertaken instead.*

PLANS FOR FUTURE PERIODS

The aim of the charity is the preservation in perpetuity by the Corporation of London of the Open Spaces known as Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common, for the perpetual use thereof by the public for recreation and enjoyment and to preserve the natural aspect.

Prior to the end of the financial year of the charity, a global pandemic of Coronavirus began. This may have an impact on income. The City of London Corporation's City Cash has undertaken a revised forecasting exercise which offers assurances that the charity's running costs will continue to be funded in this way, this enables the Trustee to confirm that the charity remains a going concern.

The Trustees do not consider there to be any material uncertainty around going concern and further detail regarding this is set out on page 20.

The Trustee is monitoring the situation and will continue with its plans in line with the charity's objectives.

Protection of Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common from Impact of development - The team at Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common will continue to support South Bucks and Chiltern District Council during the period of translating the agreed mitigation into the final local plan to ensure it fulfils the requirements. The team will continue to work with Slough Borough Council to obtain the best protection possible from development pressure caused by housing development and the local plan.

Caring for scheduled Ancient Monuments - The iron age hill fort at Burnham Beeches, known as Seven Ways Plain, will be subject to further investigation and interpretation over the next year as part of the partnership with an HLF (Heritage Lottery Fund) funded project – Beacons of the past – Hillforts in the Chilterns Landscape. In 2020/21 this will involve public events to interpret the monument to visitors and involve them in its care. Work will also be carried out at the Moat SAM to protect it from visitor pressure and allow access without damaging the banks of the monument – the work will be supported by site volunteers.

Countryside Stewardship – With funding secured for Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common under the new scheme the final heathland restoration capital projects will be undertaken in the Autumn of 2020 – this will be the final round of major restoration at Stoke Common and a significant achievement for the current management plan to restore this locally and nationally important heathland site.

Veteran Trees – carry out clearance & reduction work as per the new 10-year work programme and maintain efforts on squirrel control to ensure reduction in damage on old pollards which are the most important habitat feature at Burnham Beeches and of international significance

Grazing – Plans from the new management plan 2020 -2029 to further expand the area of Burnham Beeches grazed by livestock will continue in 2020/21 with change to fenced areas as part of the vision to graze as much of the remaining un-grazed 60 Ha as possible over the life of the new plan.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Overview of Financial Performance

Income

In 2019/20 the charity total income for the year was £1,387,712, an overall increase of £287,805 against the previous year (£1,099,907). The principal source of income was from City of London Corporation's City's Cash fund (see below).

Income from Charitable Activities comprised £104,785 from fees charged (2018/19: £109,881), £29,877 from rents (2018/19: £29,607) and £581 from sales (2018/19: £330). The reduction in fees is the consequence of the covid-19 lockdown where car parking income has been affected during the latter part of the financial year.

Grants income of £146,489 was received in the year, restricted towards specific programmes administered by the charity (2018/19: £40,195). The significant increase in grant income is due to new arrangements introduced by the Rural Payments Agency which include annual base payments and a one-off Capital grant payment.

An amount of £1,089,292 (2018/19: £878,144) was received from the City of London Corporation's City's Cash as a contribution towards the running costs of the charities. The increase in contribution was mainly due to an increase in the amount of cyclical building works taking place during the year (see expenditure below).

Expenditure

Total expenditure for the year was £1,355,141 (2018/19: £1,091,971) with charitable activities expenditure in the year totalling £1,355,141 (2018/19: £1,091,971). The increase in expenditure is mainly due to a number of cyclical building works taking place during the year. The City has a programme of cyclical repairs and maintenance works to maintain its operational properties in good condition. This is delivered in a number of overlapping three year programmes of works. The programme is monitored by the Corporate Asset Sub Committee of the City of London.

Funds held

The charity's total funds held increased by £32,571 to £789,714 as at 31 March 2020 (2018/19: increased by £7,936 to £757,143).

The charity's designated funds consist of unrestricted income funds which the Trustee has chosen to set aside for specific purposes. Such designations are not legally binding, and the Trustee can decide to 'undesignate' these funds at any time. Designations as at 31 March 2020 totalled £634,748 (2018/19: £602,896). These represent designated funds within the unrestricted income fund which represents the net book value of fixed assets held.

A restricted fund of £25,000 (2018/19: £25,000) was held at year-end. This relates to a legacy payment for the purpose of specific restoration work.

Details of all funds held, including their purposes, is set out within Note 14 to the financial statements.

Reserves

The charity is wholly supported by the City of London Corporation which is committed to maintain and preserve Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common out of its City's Cash Funds. These Funds are used to meet the deficit on running expenses on a year by year basis. Consequently, this charity has no free reserves and a reserves policy is considered by the Trustee to be inappropriate.

Principal Risks and Uncertainties

The charity is committed to a programme of risk management as an element of its strategy to preserve the charity's assets. In order to embed sound practice the senior leadership team ensures that risk management policies are applied, that there is an on-going review of activity and that appropriate advice and support is provided. A key risk register has been prepared for the charity, which has been reviewed by the Trustee. This identifies the potential impact of key risks and the measures which are in place to mitigate such risks.

The principal risks faced by the charity, and actions taken to manage them are as follows :

Risk	Actions to manage risks
Health and Safety Failure	Policies and procedures developed and under active review. Staff training for roles and activity undertaken. Regular compliance checks including annual audit.
Local Planning Issues	Impact of visitor and development pressure monitored. Environmental monitoring including of Hydrology and air quality carried out. Local plans continue to be developed and are scrutinised and commented on by officers. Production of Mitigation strategies with neighbouring local authorities as part of the local plan process.
Tree Diseases and Other Pests	Biosecurity policies and procedures in place and regularly reviewed. Education and information for visitors, Staff & volunteer training to help them recognise issues at early stages. Programme of tree health and annual tree safety inspections in place. Active involvement with leading partners such as Forestry Commission and Natural England.
Climate and Weather	Storm procedures in place and regularly reviewed. Fire plans in place and subject to annual review. Research of impact of climate change on protected habitats of Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common.

Risk	Actions to manage risks
Pond Embankments, Burnham Beeches - risk of overtopping failure	Condition assessments carried out and options costed. Inspections / monitoring of outflow condition
Reduction in direct grant available from the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) to deliver conservation related services across the charity and reduction in Basic payment schemes	CSS grants secured until 2028. Monitoring of proposed changes to grant options with phasing out of BPS and responding to consultations as required.
Budget Reduction	Review of operational working and financial income streams to try to mitigate any effects.

TRUSTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

The Trustee is responsible for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Charity law requires the Trustee to prepare financial statements for each financial year in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under charity law the Trustee must not approve the financial statements unless the Trustee is satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustee is required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Trustee is responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable the Trustee to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011. The Trustee is also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the Trustee is aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charity's auditors are unaware; and
- the Trustee has taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

Financial statements are published on the Trustee's website in accordance with legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements, which may vary from legislation in other jurisdictions. The maintenance and integrity of the Trustee's website is the responsibility of the Trustee. The Trustee's responsibility also extends to the ongoing integrity of the financial statements contained therein.

Adopted and signed for on behalf of the Trustee.

Jeremy Paul Mayhew MA MBA
Chairman of Finance Committee of
The City of London Corporation

Jamie Ingham Clark FCA, Deputy
Chairman of Finance Committee
of The City of London Corporation

Guildhall, London
10 November 2020

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO TRUSTEES OF BURNHAM BEECHES AND STOKE COMMON

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common (the charity) for the year ended 31 March 2020 which comprise the statement of financial activities, the balance sheet and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 *The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland* (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charity's affairs as at 31 March 2020 and of its incoming resources and application of resources for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the Charity in accordance with the ethical requirements relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions related to going concern

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the ISAs (UK) require us to report to you where:

- the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is not appropriate; or
- the Trustees have not disclosed in the financial statements any identified material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the Charity's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Trustees are responsible for the other information.

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Charities Act 2011 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion;

- the information contained in the financial statements is inconsistent in any material respect with the Trustee's Annual Report; or
- adequate accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of Trustees

As explained more fully in the Trustee's responsibilities statement, the Trustee is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustee determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustee is responsible for assessing the charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustee either intend to liquidate the charity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located at the Financial Reporting Council's ("FRC's") website at:

<https://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities>

This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charity's Trustee, as a body, in accordance with the Charities Act 2011. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's Trustee those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's Trustee as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

BDO LLP

BDO LLP, statutory auditor
London

28 January 2021

BDO LLP is eligible for appointment as auditor of the charity by virtue of its eligibility for appointment as auditor of a company under section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

BDO LLP is a limited liability partnership registered in England and Wales (with registered number OC305127).

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2020

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2019/20 Total Funds £	2018/19 Total Funds £
Income from:					
Voluntary activities	2	162,469	-	162,469	80,860
Charitable activities	3	135,243	-	135,243	139,818
Grant from City of London Corporation	4	1,089,292	-	1,089,292	878,144
Investments	5	708	-	708	1,085
Total Income		1,387,712	-	1,387,712	1,099,907
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities:					
Preservation and operation of Burnham Beeches & Stoke Common	6	1,355,141	-	1,355,141	1,091,971
Total Expenditure		1,355,141	-	1,355,141	1,091,971
Net Income (expenditure)		32,571	-	32,571	7,936
Transfer between funds	14				
Net movement in funds		32,571	-	32,571	7,936
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward	14	732,143	25,000	757,143	749,207
Total funds carried forward	14	764,714	25,000	789,714	757,143

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities.

There were no other recognised gains and losses other than those shown above.

The notes on pages 20 to 30 form part of these financial statements.

BALANCE SHEET**AS AT MARCH 2020**

	Notes	2020 Total	2019 Total
Fixed assets:			
Tangible assets	10	634,748	602,896
Total fixed assets		634,748	602,896
Current assets			
Debtors	11	130,315	49,978
Cash at bank and in hand		181,005	175,250
Total current assets		311,320	225,228
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	12	(156,354)	(70,981)
Net current assets/(liabilities)		154,966	154,247
Total assets less current liabilities		789,714	757,143
The Funds of the charity:			
Restricted income funds	14	25,000	25,000
Unrestricted income funds	14	764,714	732,143
Total funds		789,714	757,143

The notes on pages 20 to 30 form part of these financial statements

Approved and signed on behalf of the Trustee.



Dr Peter Kane

Chamberlain of London

25 January 2021

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The following accounting policies have been applied consistently in dealing with items that are considered material in relation to the financial statements of the charity.

(a) Basis of Preparation

The financial statements of the charity, which is a public benefit entity under FRS102, have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) Accounting and Reporting by Charities, published in 2015, Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' (FRS 102) (2nd Edition) and the Charities Act 2011.

(b) Going concern

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis as the Trustee considers that there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern. The governing documents place an obligation on the City of London Corporation to preserve the open spaces for the benefit of the public. Funding is provided from the City of London Corporation's City's Cash. The Trustee considers the level of grant funding received and plans activities as a result of this. On an annual basis, a financial forecast is prepared for City's Cash.

In making this assessment the Trustee has considered the potential impact of the covid-19 pandemic on the future income levels and the liquidity of the charity over the next 12-month period. The charity will be able to reduce its expenditure principally on vehicle and equipment replacement, and Grounds maintenance.

The charity is funded by the City of London Corporation's City Cash which has undergone a revised forecasting exercise to help provide assurances that it can continue to keep operating over the next 12-month period. For these reasons the Trustee continues to adopt a going concern basis for the preparation of the financial statements.

(c) Key management judgements and assumptions

The preparation of the financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the application of policies and reported amounts of assets and liabilities, income and expenditure. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and various other factors that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances, the result of which form the basis of decisions about carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The resulting accounting estimates will, by definition, seldom equal the related actual results.

Estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised and in any future periods affected. Management do not consider there to be any material revisions requiring disclosure.

In preparing the financial statements, management has made the following key judgements: useful economic life of fixed assets and the recovery of debts.

(d) Statement of Cash Flows

The charity has taken advantage of the exemption in FRS102 (paragraph 1.12b) from the requirement to produce a statement of cash flows on the grounds that it is a qualifying entity.

A Statement of Cash Flows is included within the City's Cash Annual Report and Financial Statements 2020 which is publicly available at www.cityoflondon.gov.uk.

(e) Income

All income is included in the Statements of Financial Activities (SOFA) when the charity is legally entitled to the income; it is more likely than not that economic benefit associated with the transaction will come to the charity and the amount can be quantified with reasonable certainty. Income consists of donations, charges for use of facilities, contributions, grants, investment income, interest, sales and rental income:

The City of London Corporation's City's Cash meets the deficit on running expenses of the charity and also provides funding for certain capital works. This income is recognised in the SOFA when it is due from City's Cash.

(f) Expenditure

Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under the principal categories of 'expenditure on raising funds' and 'expenditure on charitable activities'. Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that settlement will be required, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Governance costs include the costs of governance arrangements which relate to the general running of the charity as opposed to the direct management of functions inherent in the activities undertaken. These include the costs associated with constitutional and statutory requirements such as the cost of Trustee meetings.

Support costs (including governance costs) include activities undertaken by the City Corporation on behalf of the charity, such as human resources, digital services, legal support, accounting services, committee administration, public relations and premises costs. The basis of the cost allocation is set out in Note 7.

The Trustee, the City Corporation, accounts centrally for all payroll related deductions. As a result, the charity accounts for all such sums due as having been paid.

(g) Pension Costs

Staff are employed by the City of London Corporation and are eligible to contribute to the City of London Local Government Pension Fund, which is a funded defined benefit scheme. The estimated net deficit on the Fund is the responsibility of the City of London Corporation as a whole, as one employer, rather than the specific

responsibility of any of its three main funds (City Fund, City's Cash and Bridge House Estates) or the trusts it supports.

The Fund's estimated net liability has been determined by independent actuaries in accordance with FRS102 as £630.4m as at 31 March 2020 (£608.6m as at 31 March 2019). Since any net deficit is apportioned between the financial statements of the City of London's three main funds, the charity's Trustee does not anticipate that any of the liability will fall on the charity. The charity is unable to identify its share of the pension scheme assets and liabilities and therefore the Pension Fund is accounted for as a defined contribution scheme in these financial statements.

Barnett Waddingham, an independent actuary, carried out the latest triennial actuarial assessment of the scheme as at 31 March 2019, using the projected unit method. The actuary will carry out the next assessment of the scheme as at 31 March 2022, which will set contributions for the period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2024. Contribution rates adopted for the financial years 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20 have been set at 21% (2016/17: 17.5%).

(h) Taxation

The charity meets the definition of a charitable trust for UK income tax purposes, as set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 of the Finance Act 2010. Accordingly, the charity is exempt from UK taxation in respect of income or capital gains under part 10 of the Income Tax Act 2007 or section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

(i) Fixed Assets

Heritage Land and Associated Buildings

Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common comprises 303 hectares (748 acres) of land in South Buckinghamshire, together with associated buildings. The object of the charity is the preservation of Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common in perpetuity as Open Spaces for the recreation and enjoyment of the public. Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common is considered to be inalienable (i.e. they may not be disposed of without specific statutory powers).

Land and the original associated buildings are considered to be heritage assets. In respect of the original land and buildings, cost or valuation amounts are not included in these financial statements as reliable cost information is not available and a significant cost would be involved in the reconstruction of past accounting records, or in the valuation, which would be onerous compared to the benefit to the users of these accounts.

Additions to the original land and capital expenditure on buildings and other assets are included as fixed assets at historic cost, less provision for depreciation and any impairment, where this cost can be reliably measured.

Tangible Fixed Assets

Assets that are capable of being used for more than one year and have a cost greater than £50,000 are capitalised. Such assets are stated at cost less accumulated

depreciation and accumulated impairment losses. Depreciation is charged from the year following that of acquisition, on a straight-line basis, in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life as follows:

	Years
Operational buildings	30 to 50
Improvements and refurbishments to buildings	up to 30
Equipment	5 to 25

(j) Funds structure

Income, expenditure and gains/losses are allocated to particular funds according to their purpose:

Restricted Funds – These include income that is subject to specific restrictions imposed by donors, with related expenditure deducted when incurred.

Unrestricted Income Funds – these funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objects at the discretion of the Trustee and include both income generated by assets held within the permanent endowment fund and from those representing unrestricted funds. Specifically, this represents the surplus of income over expenditure for the charity which is carried forward to meet the requirements of future years, known as free reserves.

Designated Funds – these are funds set aside by the Trustee out of unrestricted funds for a specific purpose.

(k) Insurance

The charity, elected Members and staff supporting the charity's administration are covered by the City Corporation's insurance liability policies, and otherwise under the indemnity the City Corporation provides to Members and staff, funded from City's Cash.

2. INCOME FROM VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted Income Funds	Restricted Income Funds	Total 2019/20	Unrestricted Income Funds	Restricted Income Funds	Total 2018/19
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Grants	146,489	–	146,489	40,195	–	40,195
Donations	15,980	–	15,980	40,665	–	40,665
Total	162,469	–	162,469	80,860	–	80,860

3. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted Income Funds	Restricted Income Funds	Total 2019/20	Unrestricted Income Funds	Restricted Income Funds	Total 2018/19
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Charges for facilities	104,785	–	104,785	109,881	–	109,881
Sales	581	–	581	330	–	330
Rental Income	29,877	–	29,877	29,607	–	29,607
Total	135,243	–	135,243	139,818	–	139,818

4. INCOME FROM THE CITY OF LONDON CORPORATION

	Unrestricted Income Funds	Restricted Income Funds	Total 2019/20	Unrestricted Income Funds	Restricted Income Funds	Total 2018/19
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Revenue and Capital grants	1,089,292	–	1,089,292	878,144	–	878,144
Total	1,089,292	–	1,089,292	878,144	–	878,144

5. INCOME FROM INVESTMENTS

	Unrestricted Income Funds	Restricted Income Funds	Total 2019/20	Unrestricted Income Funds	Restricted Income Funds	Total 2018/19
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Interest	708	–	708	1,085	–	1,085
Total	708	–	708	1,085	–	1,085

Income for the year included:

Grants – being amounts received from organisations towards specific programmes operated by the charity;

Contributions – being amounts contributed towards furniture and equipment purchases;

Donations – being voluntary amounts received from the public for non-enforced car parking or supporting the Charity through the Corporation's website. The previous year saw a legacy payment for pond restoration work.

Grants from the City of London Corporation – being the amount received from the City of London Corporation's City's Cash to meet the deficit on running expenses of the charity, alongside funding for capital purchases;

Charitable activities – being amounts generated from the sales of leaflets, books, maps cards and other publications relating to Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common; charges made to the public for the use of facilities, admissions and services, and from the rental of the Beeches Eco Café.

6. EXPENDITURE

Expenditure on charitable activities

	Direct costs	Support costs	Total 2019/20	Direct costs	Support costs	Total 2018/19
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Preservation and operation of Burnham Beeches & Stoke Common	1,219,952	135,189	1,355,141	961,688	130,283	1,091,971

Charitable activity

Expenditure on the charitable activities includes labour, premises costs, equipment, materials and other supplies and services incurred in the running of Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common

Auditor's remuneration and fees for other services

BDO are the auditors of the City of London's City's Cash Fund and all of the different charities of which it is Trustee. The City of London Corporation charges the audit fee to its City's Cash Fund and does not attempt to apportion the audit fee between all of the different charities. No other services were provided to the charity by its auditors during the year (2018/19: nil).

7. SUPPORT COSTS

Support costs include activities undertaken by the City of London Corporation on behalf of the Charity, such as human resources, digital services, legal support, accounting services, committee administration and premises costs. Such costs are determined on a departmental basis, and are allocated on a cost recovery basis to the charity based on time spent, with associated office accommodation charged proportionately to the space occupied by the respective activities, with the split of costs as follows:

	Charitable activities	Governance	2019/20	2018/19
	£	£	£	£
Department				
Chamberlain	11,745	15,171	26,916	28,262
Comptroller & City Solicitor	-	-	-	5,570
Open Spaces Directorate	23,642	-	23,642	13,141
Town Clerk	-	18,502	18,502	16,525
City Surveyor	14,779	11,535	26,314	25,819
Digital Services	32,922	-	32,922	34,049
Other governance and support costs	6,893	-	6,893	6,917
Sub-total	89,981	45,208	135,189	130,283
Reallocation of governance costs	45,208	(45,208)	-	-
Total Support Costs	135,189	-	135,189	130,283

All support costs are undertaken from unrestricted funds. Governance costs are allocated based on a proportion of officer time spent on the administration of Trustee and Committee related meetings.

8. DETAILS OF STAFF COSTS

All staff that work on behalf of the charity are employed by the City Corporation. The average number of people directly undertaking activities on behalf of the charity during the year was 13 (2018/19: 13).

Amounts paid in respect of employees directly undertaking activities on behalf of the charity were as follows:

	2019/20	2018/19
	£	£
Salaries and wages	397,846	394,266
National Insurance costs	39,420	39,019
Employer's pension contributions	88,253	87,126
Compensation for loss of office	-	-
Total emoluments of employees	525,519	520,411

The number of directly charged employees whose emoluments (excluding employer's pension contribution) for the year were over £60,000 was nil (2018/19: nil).

Remuneration of Key Management Personnel

The charity considers its key management personnel to comprise the Members of the City of London Corporation, acting collectively for the City Corporation in its capacity as the Trustee, and the Director of Open Spaces who manages the seven open spaces funded by the City of London Corporation. A proportion of the Directors' employment benefits are allocated to this charity.

Support is also provided by other chief officers and their departments from across the City of London Corporation, including the Town Clerk and Chief Executive, Chamberlain, Comptroller and City Solicitor and City Surveyor.

The amount of employee benefits received by key management personnel totalled £nil (2018/19: £nil). No members received any remuneration, with directly incurred expenses reimbursed, if claimed. Expenses totalling £nil were claimed in 2019/20 (2018/19: £nil).

9. HERITAGE ASSETS

Since 1880 the primary purpose of the charity has been the preservation of Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common for the recreation and enjoyment of the public and the preservation of the natural aspect. As set out in Note 1(j), the original heritage land and buildings are not recognised in the Financial Statements. Policies for the preservation and management of Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common are

contained in the Management plans for Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common. Records of heritage assets owned and maintained by Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common can be obtained from the Director of Open Spaces at the principal address as stated on page 29.

10. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Land and Buildings £	Equipment £	Total £
Cost			
At 1 April 2019	835,256	-	835,256
Additions	-	50,000	50,000
Disposals	-	-	-
At 31 March 2020	835,256	50,000	885,256
Depreciation			
At 1 April 2019	232,360	-	232,360
Charge for the year	18,148	-	18,148
Disposals	-	-	-
At 31 March 2020	250,508	-	250,508
Net book value			
At 31 March 2020	584,748	50,000	634,748
At 31 March 2019	602,896	-	602,896

11. DEBTORS

	2020 £	2019 £
Rental Debtors	10,327	3,951
Prepayments and accrued income	3,451	3,637
Recoverable VAT	17,045	7,172
Other Debtors	638	716
Sundry Debtors	98,854	34,502
Total	130,315	49,978

12. CREDITORS – AMOUNT FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2020	2019
	£	£
Trade creditors	21,407	13,492
Accruals	74,565	50,927
Deferred Income	5,827	1,878
Other Creditors	54,555	4,684
Total	156,354	70,981

Other creditors consist of sundry creditors

Deferred income relates to rental income received in advance for periods after the year-end.

Deferred Income analysis within creditors:	2020	2019
	£	£
Balance at 1 April	1,878	6,396
Amounts released to income	(1,878)	(6,396)
Amounts deferred in the year	5,827	1,878
Balance at 31 March	5,827	1,878

13. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BY FUND

At 31 March 2020	Unrestricted Income Funds		Restricted Funds	Total at 31 March 2020	Total at 31 March 2019
	General Funds	Designated Funds			
	£	£	£	£	£
Tangible Assets	-	634,748	-	634,748	602,896
Current Assets	156,354	129,966	25,000	311,320	225,228
Current Liabilities	(156,354)	-	-	(156,354)	(70,981)
Total	-	764,714	25,000	789,714	757,143

At 31 March 2019	Unrestricted Income Funds		Restricted Funds	Total at 31 March 2019	Total at 31 March 2018
	General Funds	Designated Funds			
	£	£	£	£	£
Tangible Assets	-	602,896	-	602,896	621,045
Current Assets	70,981	129,247	25,000	225,228	179,584
Current Liabilities	(70,981)	-	-	(70,981)	(51,422)
Total	-	732,143	25,000	757,143	749,207

14. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

At 31 March 2020	Total as at 1 April 2019 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Gains & Losses £	Transfers £	Total at at 31 March 2020 £
Restricted Funds:						
Legacy income	25,000	-	-	-	-	25,000
Total Restricted Funds	25,000	-	-	-	-	25,000
General Funds	-	1,337,712	(1,336,993)	-	(719)	-
Total General Funds						
Designated Funds:						
Stoke Common	129,247	-	-	-	719	129,966
Capital Adjustment Account	602,896	-	(18,148)	-	-	584,748
Furniture and Equipment	-	50,000	-	-	-	50,000
Total Designated Funds	732,143	50,000	(18,148)	-	719	764,714
Total Unrestricted Income Funds	732,143	1,387,712	(1,355,141)	-	-	764,714
Total Funds	757,143	1,387,712	(1,355,141)	-	-	789,714

At 31 March 2019	Total as at 1 April 2018 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Gains & Losses £	Transfers £	Total at at 31 March 2019 £
Restricted Funds:						
Legacy income	-	25,000	-	-	-	25,000
Total Restricted Funds	-	25,000	-	-	-	25,000
General Funds	-	1,074,907	(1,073,822)	-	(1,085)	-
Total General Funds						
Designated Funds:						
Stoke Common	128,162	-	-	-	1,085	129,247
Capital Adjustment Account	621,045	-	(18,149)	-	-	602,896
Furniture and Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Designated Funds	749,207	-	(18,149)	-	1,085	732,143
Total Unrestricted Income Funds	749,207	1,074,907	(1,091,971)	-	-	732,143
Total Funds	749,207	1,099,907	(1,091,971)	-	-	757,143

Purposes of restricted funds

Legacy payment: To be held and spent in accordance with the donator's wishes in maintaining a pond area.

Purposes of designated funds

Designated funds have been set aside by the Trustee for the following purposes:

Fixed Assets – Plant and equipment are included at historic cost less provision for depreciation and any impairment. The net book value of fixed assets at 31 March 2020 was £634,748 and is represented by a designated fund (2018/19: £602,896)

15. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

The City Corporation is the sole Trustee of the charity, as describe on page 2. The City Corporation provides various services to the charity, the costs of which are recharged to the charity. This includes the provision of banking services, charging all

transactions to the charity at cost and crediting or charging interest at a commercial rate. The cost of these services is included within expenditure, as set out in Note 6.

The charity is required to disclose information on related party transactions with bodies or individuals that have the potential to control or influence the charity. Members are required to disclose their interests, and these can be viewed online at www.cityoflondon.gov.uk.

Members and senior staff are requested to disclose all related party transactions, including instances where their close family has made such transactions.

The amounts shown below represent amounts due (to)/from another entity at the balance sheet date. Other figures represent the value of transactions during the year.

Related Party	Connected Party	2019/20 £	2018/19 £	Detail of transaction
City of London Corporation	The City of London Corporation is the Trustee for the charity	1,039,292 (nil)	878,144 (nil)	The City of London Corporation's City's Cash meets the deficit on running expenses of the charity
		135,189 (nil)	130,283 (nil)	Administrative services provided for the charity

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATION DETAILS

CHARITY NAME Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common

Registered charity number 232987

PRINCIPAL OFFICE OF THE CHARITY & THE CITY CORPORATION

Guildhall, London, EC2P 2EJ

TRUSTEE

The Mayor and Commonalty & Citizens of the City of London

SENIOR MANAGEMENT *(to be updated for any changes in reporting period & up to approval date)*

Chief Executive

John Barradell OBE - The Town Clerk and Chief Executive of the City of London Corporation

Treasurer

Dr Peter Kane - The Chamberlain of the City of London Corporation

Solicitor

Michael Cogher - The Comptroller and City Solicitor of the City of London Corporation

Open Spaces

Colin Buttery – Director of Open Spaces

AUDITORS

BDO LLP, 55 Baker Street, London, W1U 7EU

BANKERS

Lloyds Bank Plc., P.O.Box 72, Bailey Drive, Gillingham Business Park, Kent ME8 0LS

Contact for The Chamberlain, to request copies of governance documents & of the Annual Report of City's Cash:

PA-DeputyChamberlain@cityoflondon.gov.uk

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Committee(s)	Dated:
Epping Forest and Commons	8 March 2021
Subject: West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood, Coulsdon and Other Commons Trustees Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2020	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?	n/a
What is the source of Funding?	n/a
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	n/a
Report of: The Chamberlain Director of Open Spaces	For Information
Report author: Beatrix Jako - Chamberlains	

Summary

The Trustee's Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year ended 31 March 2020 for West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood, Coulsdon and Other Commons (charity registration numbers 232988 and 232989) are presented for information in the format required by the Charity Commission.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that the Trustee's Annual Report and Financial Statements for the 2019/20 Financial Statements be noted.

Main Report

1. The Trustee's Annual Report and Financial Statements are presented for information, having been signed on behalf of the Trust by the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Finance Committee and the auditors BDO LLP. The information contained within the Annual Report and Financial Statements has already been presented to your Committee via budget and outturn reports.
2. Following on from a previous review of the charities for which the City is responsible, (completed in 2010), which detailed key reports that should be presented to your Committee. The Trustees Annual Report and Financial Statements was one of these reports. Information from these statements will form

the Annual Return to the Charity Commission. Since this undertaking the City Corporation has recently approved that a further comprehensive review be undertaken across all of its charities, the outcome of which will be reported to this committee in due course.

3. The Trustee's Annual Report and Financial Statements were submitted to the Charity Commission within the regulatory deadline of 31 January 2021.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood, Coulsdon and Other Commons Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2020

Beatrix Jako

Acting Senior Accountant – Chamberlain's Financial Services Division, Citizen Services

E: Beatrix.Jako@cityoflondon.gov.uk

West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood
Coulsdon and other Commons

Annual Report and Financial Statements for the
year ended 31 March 2020

Charity registration numbers 232988 and 232989

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ORIGINS OF THE CHARITY

West Wickham, Spring Park and Coulsdon and other Commons is a collection of separate sites comprising of over 275-hectares of area of open space, made up of natural chalk grassland, wooded pasture, copse and natural wooded areas, including several veteran species. Its natural and cultural heritage are of national importance, the legacy of centuries of interaction between people and the environment. The Coulsdon and other Commons designated as part of the South London Downs National Nature Reserve in 2019.

Acquisition

In 1883 the City of London Corporation bought the freehold to the greater part of Coulsdon Common as one of the four Coulsdon Commons. Further acquisitions were made in 1924 (a strip of land on the north side of Stites Hill Road and part of Rydens Wood), 1936 (the remainder of Rydens Wood), 1939 (the area known as Merlewood) and 2003 (an enclosure which was the site of a windmill). The City of London Corporation also owns a plot of land adjacent to, but not part of Coulsdon Common that is occupied by the Merlewood Estate Office, tied accommodation for its Rangers and the Lodge Garden. This land is not public open space. In 1926, the City of London Corporation was given the woodland at Spring Park as a gift from Colonel Sir Arthur and Stephen Hallam Farnaby Lennard of Wickham Court. In 1927, the area of open meadow between the woodland and the Addington Road was sold to the City of London Corporation from the same vendors for a cost of £1623 2s 6d.

The City of London Corporation bought the four Coulsdon Commons, including Kenley, in 1883 from the Lord of the Manor of Coulsdon, Edmund Byron. During the First World War the Air Ministry requisitioned the whole Common (20.6 hectares) to form part of Kenley Aerodrome. After the war only the northern half was returned but 25 ha of adjacent agricultural land was compulsory purchased and given to the City in substitution for the land lost to the airfield, now owned by the Ministry of Defence (MoD). In 1965 the City of London Corporation extended its holding when it bought land between Welcomes Road and Kenley Lane. Then in 1983 the City acquired land outside the perimeter track of the airfield that was no longer required for military purposes. Finally, in 2004, a small parcel of land, (0.63 hectares) linking Kenley and Coulsdon Commons was returned from the MoD.

Farthing Downs was also part of the 1883 acquisition. Prior to this, it belonged to the Lord of the Manor of Coulsdon. In 2002 New Hill, together with Eight and Ten Acre, was bought at auction by the City of London Corporation from a developer. In 2004, Woodplace Farm Fields to the west of Farthing Downs were also purchased by the City of London Corporation, following a successful local fund-raising appeal.

Riddlesdown Common was the last of the four 'Coulsdon Common' also acquired in 1883. Coombes Wood and Donkey Field were acquired in 1929, the Bull Pen in 1973, Riddlesdown Quarry and adjacent Quarry Field in 1996, and the Riddlesdown Cottage plot in 2006.

TRUSTEE'S ANNUAL REPORT

STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE

GOVERNING DOCUMENTS

The governing document is the Corporation of London (Open Spaces) Act 1878. The charities are constituted as charitable trusts.

GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The Mayor and Commonalty and Citizens of the City of London (also referred to as 'the City Corporation' or 'the City of London Corporation'), a body corporate and politic, is the trustee of West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood Coulsdon and other Commons. The City Corporation is trustee acting by the Court of Common Council of the City of London in its general corporate capacity and that executive body has delegated responsibility in respect of the administration and management of these charities to various committees and sub-committees of the Common Council, membership of which is drawn from 125 elected Members of the Common Council and external appointees to those committees. In making appointments to committees, the Court of Common Council will take into consideration any particular expertise and knowledge of the elected Members, and where relevant, external appointees. External appointments are made after due advertisement and rigorous selection to fill gaps in skills. Elected Aldermen and Members of the City of London Corporation are appointed to the Epping Forest and Commons Committee governing West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood Coulsdon and other Commons by the Court of Common Council of the City of London Corporation.

Members of the Court of Common Council are unpaid and are elected by the electorate of the City of London. The Key Committees which had responsibility for directly managing matters related to the charities during 2019/20 were as follows:

- **Policy and Resources Committee** – responsible for allocating resources and administering the charity.
- **Finance Committee** – responsible for controlling budgets, support costs and other central charges that affect the charity as a whole.
- **Audit and Risk Management Committee** – responsible for overseeing systems of internal control and making recommendations to the Finance Committee relating to the approval of the Annual Report and Financial Statements of the charity.
- **Epping Forest & Commons Committee** – responsible for the activities undertaken at West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood, Coulsdon and Other Commons approving budget allocations for the forthcoming year and acting as Trustees of the charity.
- **West Wickham, Spring Park and Coulsdon Commons Consultation Group** - provides a forum for local residents and users to comment upon both the management of Coulsdon Common and its neighbouring public open spaces: Kenley Common (with its World War II-era airfield), Riddlesdown, and Farthing Downs and New Hill.

All of the above committees are ultimately responsible to the Court of Common Council of the City of London. Committee meetings are held in public, enabling the decision-making process to be clear, transparent and publicly accountable. Details of the membership of Committees of the City Corporation are available at www.cityoflondon.gov.uk

The charity is consolidated within City's Cash as the City of London Corporation exercises operational control over their activities. City's Cash is a fund of the City Corporation that can be traced back to the 15th century and has been built up from a combination of properties, land, bequests and transfers under statute since that time. Investments in properties, stocks and shares are managed to provide a total return that:

- Allows City's Cash to use the income for the provision of services that are of importance nationally and internationally as well as to the City and Greater London;
- Maintains the asset base so that income will be available to fund services for the benefit of future generations.

The trustee believes that good governance is fundamental to the success of the charities. A comprehensive review of governance commenced during the year and is ongoing to ensure that the charities are effective in fulfilling objectives. Reference is being made to the good practices recommended within the Charity Governance Code throughout this review. Focus is being placed on ensuring regulatory compliance and the ongoing maintenance of an efficient and effective portfolio of charities that maximise impact for beneficiaries.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

The charities are administered in accordance with their governing instruments and the City Corporation's own corporate governance and administration framework, including Committee Terms of Reference, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Officer Scheme of Delegations. These governance documents can be obtained via a request to the email address stated on page 34.

Each Member by virtue of their membership of the Court of Common Council, its relevant committees and sub-committees, has a duty to support the City Corporation in the proper exercise of its functions and in meeting its duties as trustee of the charities by faithfully acting in accordance with charity law, the Terms of Reference of the relevant committee or sub-committee, and the City of Corporation's agreed corporate governance framework as noted above, backed up by its standards regime.

INDUCTION AND TRAINING OF MEMBERS

The City Corporation makes available to its Members, seminars and briefings on various aspects of its activities, including those concerning the charities, to enable Members to carry out their duties efficiently and effectively. Induction meetings are provided on specific aspects of the work of West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood Coulsdon and other Commons. If suitable seminars or other training options are identified that are relevant to the charities, Members are advised of these opportunities.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The objectives of the charities are the preservation and maintenance of West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood Coulsdon, as Open Spaces for the recreation and enjoyment of the public.

Purposes of the charity as set out in the governing document, the Corporation of London (Open Spaces) Act 1878 and the Open Spaces Act 2018:

- West Wickham and Spring Park Wood and Coulsdon and other Commons to be kept as open space for public recreation.
- Natural aspect to be preserved.
- Protect the timber and other trees, pollards, shrubs, underwood and herbage.
- Land to be unenclosed and un-built upon, except those features required for better attainment of the Act and deemed necessary by the City.
- Byelaws protecting the site and its features to be enforced.
- Encroachments to be resisted and abated.

Main activities undertaken in relation to these purposes:

- Practical conservation management activities to maintain the biodiversity of the open spaces, including tree surgery work on the veteran oaks, bracken suppression and management of firebreaks, scrub, chalk grassland and wetland habitats.
- Providing volunteering opportunities to encourage community involvement.
- Providing and maintaining facilities for informal recreation
- Grazing with cattle, sheep and goats
- Protecting the open spaces and its users from harm by patrolling, enforcing byelaws, resisting encroachments, challenging threats and managing assets
- Providing educational activities and events
- Surveying and monitoring, for wildlife, visitor use, archaeological investigations and pollution monitoring
- Managing and protecting Scheduled Monuments, including Farthing Downs, a scheduled ancient monument and Kenley airfield and the World War II heritage assets.
- Managing and creating chalk downland and woodland pasture.

West Wickham and Spring Park Wood and Coulsdon and other Commons natural and cultural heritage are of national importance, the legacy of centuries of interaction between people and the environment. As we progress through the 2020's and beyond the challenge of protecting this valuable resource will increase as pressures from environmental and human factors mount.

Aims of the charity

- Maintain the biodiversity of West Wickham and Spring Park wood and Coulsdon and other Commons by managing habitats to favourable condition and achieving conservation gains that benefit the site and beyond. *Governing document link: preserve natural aspect, protect the timber and other trees, pollards, shrubs, underwood and herbage.*
- Encourage the sustainable use of West Wickham and Spring Park Wood and Coulsdon and other Commons for recreation and promote community involvement in all aspects of the site. *Governing document link: commons acquired by the City to be kept as open spaces for the recreation and enjoyment of the public.*
- Protect West Wickham and Spring Park Wood and Coulsdon and other Commons and its users from harm. Challenge threats and maintain assets, including heritage assets, in good condition. *Governing document link: open spaces kept unenclosed and unbuilt upon. Shall by all lawful means prevent, resist and abate enclosures, encroachments and buildings upon. The City may from time to time make and alter byelaws.*

The West Wickham and Spring Park Wood and Coulsdon and other Commons Management Plans describe the strategy for achieving these aims.

Volunteers

Active recruitment of conservation volunteers has ensured particularly busy groups across all sites and contribute to a total of around 5,000 hours per year.

Remuneration Policy

The charities senior staff are employees of the City Corporation and, alongside all staff, pay is reviewed annually. The City Corporation is committed to attracting, recruiting and retaining skilled people and rewarding employees fairly for their contribution. As part of this commitment, staff are regularly appraised and, subject to performance, eligible for the payment of bonuses and recognition awards.

The above policy applies to staff within the charities key management personnel, as defined within note 7 to the financial statements.

The charities are committed to equal opportunities for all employees. An Equality and Inclusion Board has been established to actively promote equality, diversity and inclusion in service delivery and employment practices. The Board is responsible for monitoring the delivery of the Equality and Inclusion Action Plan and progress against the Equality Objectives for 2016-20. This also includes addressing the City Corporation's gender pay gap.

Senior staff posts of the City Corporation are individually evaluated and assessed independently against the external market allowing each post to be allocated an individual

salary range within the relevant grade, which incorporates market factors as well as corporate importance.

Fundraising

Section 162a of the Charities Act 2011 requires charities to make a statement regarding fundraising activities. The legislation defines fundraising as “soliciting or otherwise procuring money or other property for charitable purposes”. Although West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood Coulsdon and other Commons charities does not undertake widespread fundraising from the general public, any such amounts receivable are presented in the financial statements as “voluntary income” including grants.

In relation to the above we confirm that all solicitations are managed internally, without involvement of commercial participators or professional fund-raisers, or third parties. The day to day management of all income generation is delegated to the executive team, who are accountable to the trustee. The charities are not bound by any regulatory scheme and does not consider it necessary to comply with any voluntary code of practice.

The charity has received no complaints in relation to fundraising activities in the current year (2018/19: nil). Individuals are not approached for funds, hence the charities do not consider it necessary to design specific procedures to monitor such activities.

Public benefit statement

The Trustee confirms that it has referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission’s general guidance on public benefit when reviewing West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood Coulsdon and other Commons aims and objectives and in planning future activities. The purposes of the charities are the preservation in perpetuity of West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood Coulsdon and other Commons as an open space for the recreation and enjoyment of the public.

Consequently, the Trustee considers that West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood Coulsdon and other Commons operates to benefit the general public and satisfies the public benefit test.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

The administrative details of the charities are stated on page 34.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Update of the 2019/20 key achievements are as follows:

Grassland – restore open areas on Farthing Downs, New Hill, Coulsdon Common, Kenley Common, Riddlesdown to achieve ESS agreement options.

This is an ongoing programme and will continue into 2019-20. The majority of this programme is now complete; however, it will be ongoing to the expiry of the current ESS agreement to fulfil required prescriptions from Natural England.

Scrub – manage blocks of retained scrub on Farthing Downs and restore succession on New Hill.

This piece of work continues and is a rolling project and as a natural habitat this is seasonal, and species varied depending on the time of year and climatic conditions.

Boundaries – review to ensure site protected and safety of people.

Ditch and bank constructed at Farthing Downs and repairs made to existing infrastructure on Coulsdon Common.

Ditch and bank completed for the entirety of Ditches Lane bordering the natural habitat of Farthing Downs. This has vastly reduced vehicles transgressing the boundaries and eliminated vehicle access on to site.

Ditch and bank has also been reinstated along Stites Hill Road and Fox Lane, across Coulsdon Common, with the desired achievement of limiting vehicle transgressions on to the boundary and damaging the natural habitat.

Both the Farthing Downs and Coulsdon Common projects have also significantly reduced the risk of traveller encampments on the open spaces.

Stock fencing – carry out repair and replacement of stock fencing.

An ongoing programme to replace weathered stock fencing to ensure safe and accessible grazing for livestock.

Most of this programme has now been completed enabling livestock to graze in areas previously unsafe to do so. However, with a timber network of fencing, repair and replacement will be an ongoing project across livestock fencing boundaries.

Car parking – car park monitoring/survey to commence establishing traffic frequency to aid proposed car park charges.

Survey of traffic frequency completed enabling analysis of vehicle movement type and frequency data and the implementation of the car park charging project, to be implemented in the autumn of 2020.

National Nature Reserve (NNR) – Proposed NNR status recognising the high recreational and conservation value of the site.

NNR now established and we are working closely with our partners, Croydon Borough Council and Natural England to ensure consistent and agreed future ways of working together and conservation management planning.

Conservation works – analysis of test panels to enable conclusion of conservation works.

Test panels completed and sent for analysis for mortar deterioration to the Buildings Research Establishment. Results are currently with consultants to discuss the findings.

Signage – new Kenley Revival Project signage to be installed.

Planning for part installation of signage granted. This has now been installed and further planning permission granted to complete the installation of the rest of the interpretation by the end of October this year.

PLANS FOR FUTURE PERIODS

Key projects for the year ahead include:

Management planning

All sites current ten-year site Management Plans expire in 2021 and the existing, current Environmental Stewardship Scheme ends 31 March 2021 – this grant funds our conservation work.

We need to apply for new Countryside Stewardship funding during 2021 to start January 2022 – if accepted, this will fund our conservation work for five years.

To apply for Countryside Stewardship, we need to prepare the following documents:

- **Woodland Management Plan** covering all areas of permanent woodland across the West Wickham & Coulsdon Commons. Draft application submitted April 2020. Forestry Commission will guide us through the production of the ten-year plan. deadline for completion December 2020.
- **New 10-year Site Management Plans** are being drafted. Spring Park and West Wickham Common is being combined into one plan as these are small sites. The larger Coulsdon Commons will have individual plans. Public consultation for the draft plans may need to be in a virtual format to accommodate social distancing rules. Draft plans ready for Committee approval in January 2021.

'Expressions of Interest' for the new Countryside Stewardship Scheme Grant (CSSG) must be submitted to Natural England by March 2021. If accepted, final grant applications must be submitted to Natural England by September 2021 for approval.

Countryside management -

Grassland

Ongoing maintenance of species-rich chalk grassland habitats through grazing and hay-cutting that satisfies prescription from Natural England and enhances and enriches biodiversity across all sites.

Scrub

Scrub control to create and maintain open downland focusing on chemical-free “tree-popping”. This enables larger grazing areas and enhances the mosaic of grassland habitats across the sites.

Woodland

Tree safety management, coppicing and glade creation. Ash dieback clearance on New Hill. This will enhance the natural environment whilst removing dead and dying Ash trees. This will hopefully inhibit the transmission of the disease to other Ash trees in the vicinity.

Ranger presence

Increased patrols and site safety checks whilst Coronavirus restrictions remain in place, ensuring boundaries are secure and staff and members of the public are safe.

Safe boundaries also ensure livestock are secure and able to graze securely and effectively, enhancing and enlarging current grazing areas.

Car parking

With the onset of car parking charges at Riddlesdown Common and Farthing Downs car parks are a large programme of visitor number analysis and planning for car park charging infrastructure is currently underway with the expectation, at this stage, that charges will be introduced at these two sites late summer 2020.

Prior to the end of the financial year of the charity, a global pandemic of Coronavirus began which subsequently impacted upon the income streams of the charity, in particular donations, fees and charges from events, licences and rental income. This is expected to impact on the future level of income available to meet the day-to-day running expenses of the charity.

The charity has undertaken a revised forecasting exercise in order to ascertain the likely impact upon finances during the next 12-month period, which enables the Trustee to confirm that the charity remains a going concern. The City of London Corporation's City's Cash fund has also undertaken the same revised forecasting exercise, which offers assurances that the charity's running costs will continue to be funded in this way.

The Trustees do not consider there to be any material uncertainty around going concern and further detail regarding this is set out on page 21.

The Trustee is monitoring the situation and will continue with its purpose which is the preservation in perpetuity of the Open Spaces known collectively as West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood, or for Coulsdon and Other Commons the preservation in perpetuity of the Open Spaces known collectively as Coulsdon Commons for the recreation and enjoyment of the public.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Overview of Financial Performance

Income

In 2019/20 the charity's total income for the year was £1,242,929 an overall decrease of £233,436 against the previous year (£1,476,365). The principal source of income was from City of London Corporation's City's Cash fund (see below).

Income from Charitable Activities comprised £420 from fees charged (2018/19: £1,299), £32,441 from rents (2018/19: £32,480) and £7,458 from sales (2018/19: £11,336).

In total grant income of £114,013 was received in the year, towards specific programmes administered by the charities (2018/19: £195,495) (see below).

- A government grant of £73,417 (2018/19: £57,175) was received from the Rural Payment Agency in relation to Agri - environment schemes that provide funding to farmers and land managers to farm in a way that supports biodiversity, enhances the landscape, and improves the quality of water, air and soil.
- A grant of £40,596 (2018/19: £138,320) was received from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) towards the Kenley Revival project which aims to conserve the historic airfield structures associated with Kenley Airfield during World War II and to promote the heritage resource to make it accessible to a wider range of people. There was a reduction in the 2019/20 expenditure which required less funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

Contributions – being amounts contributed towards corporate volunteering events and by the public towards free events such as guided walks. In total £16,528 was received during the year (2018/19: £20,307). 2019/20 contributions included reimbursement of legal costs of £14,536 in relation to the Kenley Revival project (2018/19: £16,673).

Donations – being amounts received from the public for walks and talks advertised via Eventbrite. In total £896 was received during the year (2018/19: £1,973).

An amount of £1,071,173 (2018/19: £1,213,475) was received from the City of London Corporation's City's Cash as a contribution towards the running costs of the charities. The decrease in contribution was mainly due to a fewer number of cyclical building works taking place during the year (see expenditure below).

Expenditure

Total expenditure for the year relating to charitable activities expenditure was £1,251,613 (2018/19: £1,442,152). The decrease in expenditure is owing to a fewer number of cyclical building works taking place during the year. The City has a programme of cyclical repairs and maintenance works to maintain its operational properties in fair to good condition. This is delivered in a number of overlapping three year programmes of works. The programme is monitored by the Corporate Asset Sub Committee of the City of London Corporation.

Funds held

The charity's total funds held decreased by £8,684 to £481,302 as at 31 March 2020 (2018/19: £489,986).

The charity's designated funds consist of unrestricted income funds which the Trustee has chosen to set aside for specific purposes. Such designations are not legally binding, and the Trustee can decide to "undesignate" these funds at any time. Designations as at 31 March 2020 totalled £481,302 (2018/19: £489,986).

Details of all funds held, including their purposes, is set out within note 14 to the financial statements.

Reserves

The charities are wholly supported by the City of London Corporation which is committed to maintain and preserve West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood Coulsdon and other Commons out of its City's Cash Funds. These Funds are used to meet the deficit on running expenses on a year by year basis. Consequently, these charities have no free reserves and a reserves policy is considered by the trustee to be inappropriate.

Principal Risks and Uncertainties

The Trustee is committed to a programme of risk management as an element of its strategy to preserve the charities assets. In order to embed sound practice the senior leadership team ensures that risk management policies are applied, that there is an on-going review of activity and that appropriate advice and support is provided. A key risk register has been prepared for the charities, which has been reviewed by the Trustee. This identifies the potential impact of key risks and the measures which are in place to mitigate such risks.

The principal risks faced by the charities, and actions taken to manage them are as follows:

Risk	Actions to manage risks
Reduction in funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek additional grant funding from Natural England's Countryside Stewardship scheme and Forestry Commission. • Ensure future plans are scalable and reduce costs where necessary.
Climate change – fire, storms, drought	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update plan bi-annually. • Fire management and monitoring policies and plans in place and link to staff training and local emergency services. • Storm monitoring & management and closure policies across all sites linked to high staff awareness and training. • Understanding of the potential impacts of climate change on the open spaces. • Engagement in climate change research and debate.

Risk	Actions to manage risks
Tree pests and other diseases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure staff training is kept updated to enable timely identification of pest and knowledge of correct treatment/ prevention. • Annual tree inspections undertaken through qualified personnel. • Active involvement with leading partners such as Forestry Commission and Natural England. • Measures in place for staff, volunteers and contractors including public messages.
Riddlesdown Quarry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structural failure of landscape feature. Collapse or rock fall from quarry cliff face through natural events and management operations. • Consultant to produce an action plan once analysis has been completed and options for future management of risk and stabilisation.
Farthing Downs cattle grid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cattle grid within Farthing Downs is at risk of failing. Traffic movements, weather events and natural environment means it is at the end of its lifespan. Establish ownership of highway/grid and develop an action plan once ownership has been identified.
Local planning issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion in core strategy planning documents - where applicable. • Close partnership working with local planning authorities. • Active monitoring of planning applications with responses as appropriate. • All ongoing and/or as and when.
Health & safety failure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate and appropriate training for staff and volunteers - link to PDR's (all line managers). • Links to other departmental service providers in Open Spaces Department. • Clear and appropriate communication.
Impact of Covid-19 on income generation and financial management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working closely with Chamberlain to monitor budget lines and keep them informed as financial situation develops. • Predictions on loss of income being worked up to aid longer term decision making, including rental, catering and retail.
Impact of Covid-19 on health and safety of visitors and staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public health and safety works continues. Social distancing measures erected and reviewed/renewed. • Car parks closed to reduce risk of incident. • Equipment inspections have continued as required. • Fleet and equipment checks continue 'in-house'. • Risk Assessments and Safe Systems of Work have been revised and circulated due to Covid-19 risks, particularly provision and use of PPE. Procurement of necessary PPE and cleaning material needs

Risk	Actions to manage risks
	identified. Cleaning contract standards and frequency remain a concern and is being monitored
Covid-19 impact on care and husbandry of animals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Livestock work continues. • Animal welfare is being maintained daily. • Livestock grazing on sites as far as safely and reasonably practicable. • Access to local vets is available. • Food, bedding, etc is available through existing suppliers.

TRUSTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

The Trustee is responsible for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Charity law requires the Trustee to prepare financial statements for each financial year in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under charity law the Trustee must not approve the financial statements unless the Trustee is satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustee is required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Trustee is responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable the Trustee to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011. The Trustee is also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the Trustee is aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charity's auditors are unaware; and
- the Trustee has taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

Financial statements are published on the Trustee's website in accordance with legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements, which may vary from legislation in other jurisdictions. The maintenance and integrity of the Trustee's website is the responsibility of the Trustee. The Trustee's responsibility also extends to the ongoing integrity of the financial statements contained therein.

Adopted and signed for on behalf of the Trustee.

Jeremy Paul Mayhew MA MBA
Chairman of Finance Committee
of The City of London Corporation
Guildhall, London
10 November 2020

Jamie Ingham Clark FCA, Deputy
Chairman of Finance Committee
of The City of London Corporation
Guildhall, London

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF WEST WICKHAM COMMON AND SPRING PARK WOOD COULSDON AND OTHER COMMONS

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood Coulsdon and other Commons (the charity) for the year ended 31 March 2020 which comprise the statement of financial activities, the balance sheet and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 *The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland* (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charity's affairs as at 31 March 2020 and of its incoming resources and application of resources for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the Charity in accordance with the ethical requirements relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions related to going concern

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the ISAs (UK) require us to report to you where:

- the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is not appropriate; or
- the Trustees have not disclosed in the financial statements any identified material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the Charity's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Trustees are responsible for the other information.

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Charities Act 2011 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion;

- the information contained in the financial statements is inconsistent in any material respect with the Trustee's Annual Report; or
- adequate accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of Trustees

As explained more fully in the Trustee's responsibilities statement, the Trustee is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustee determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustee is responsible for assessing the charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustee either intend to liquidate the charity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located at the Financial Reporting Council's ("FRC's") website at:

<https://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities>

This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charity's Trustee, as a body, in accordance with the Charities Act 2011. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's Trustee those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's Trustee as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

BDO LLP

BDO LLP, statutory auditor
London

28 January 2021

BDO LLP is eligible for appointment as auditor of the charity by virtue of its eligibility for appointment as auditor of a company under section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

BDO LLP is a limited liability partnership registered in England and Wales (with registered number OC305127).

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

		Unrestricted Funds	Unrestricted Funds
	Notes	2019/20 £	2018/19 £
Income from:			
Voluntary activities	2	131,437	217,775
Charitable activities	3	40,319	45,115
Grant from City of London Corporation	4	1,071,173	1,213,475
Total income		1,242,929	1,476,365
Expenditure on:			
Charitable activities:			
Preservation and operation of West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood	5	1,251,613	1,442,152
Total expenditure		1,251,613	1,442,152
Net movement in funds		(8,684)	34,213
Reconciliation of funds:			
Total funds brought forward	14	489,986	455,773
Total funds carried forward	14	481,302	489,986

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities.

There were no other recognised gains and losses other than those shown above.

The notes on pages 21 to 34 form part of these financial statements.

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2020

	Notes	2020 Total £	2019 Total £
Fixed assets:			
Heritage assets	8	463,341	462,673
Tangible assets	9	7,821	8,753
Intangible assets	10	10,140	18,560
Total fixed assets		481,302	489,986
Current assets			
Debtors	11	95,082	122,494
Cash at bank and in hand		34,761	-
Total current assets		129,843	122,494
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	12	(129,843)	(122,494)
Net current assets/(liabilities)		-	-
Total assets less current liabilities		481,302	489,986
The funds of the charity:			
Unrestricted income funds	14	481,302	489,986
Total funds		481,302	489,986

The notes on pages 21 to 34 form part of these financial statements

Approved and signed on behalf of the Trustee.



Dr Peter Kane

Chamberlain of London

25 January 2021

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The following accounting policies have been applied consistently in dealing with items that are considered material in relation to the financial statements of the charities.

(a) Basis of preparation

The financial statements of the charities, which is a public benefit entity under FRS102, have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) Accounting and Reporting by Charities, published in 2015, Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' (FRS 102) (2nd Edition) and the Charities Act 2011.

(b) Going concern

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis as the Trustee considers that there are no material uncertainties about the charities ability to continue as a going concern. The governing documents place an obligation on the City of London Corporation to preserve the open spaces for the benefit of the public. Funding is provided from the City of London Corporation's City's Cash. On an annual basis, a medium-term financial forecast is prepared for City's Cash. The latest forecast anticipates that adequate funds will be available in the next five years to enable the charities to continue to fulfil its obligations.

In making this assessment, the Trustee has considered the potential impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the future income levels and the liquidity of the charity over the next 12-month period. The charity has undergone a revised forecasting exercise to help provide assurances that it can continue to keep operating over the next 12-month period. For this reason, the Trustee continues to adopt a going concern basis for the preparation of the financial statements.

(c) Key management judgements and assumptions

The preparation of the financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the application of policies and reported amounts of assets and liabilities, income and expenditure. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and various other factors that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances, the result of which form the basis of decisions about carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The resulting accounting estimates will, by definition, seldom equal the related actual results.

Estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised and in any future periods affected. Management do not consider there to be any material revisions requiring disclosure.

In preparing the financial statements, management has made the following key judgements: useful economic life of fixed assets and the recovery of debts.

(d) Statement of Cash Flows

The Trust has taken advantage of the exemption in FRS102 (paragraph 1.12b) from the requirement to produce a statement of cash flows on the grounds that it is a qualifying entity.

A Statement of Cash Flows is included within the City's Cash Annual Report and Financial Statements 2020 which is publicly available at www.cityoflondon.gov.uk.

(e) Income

All income is included in the Statements of Financial Activities (SOFA) when the charities are legally entitled to the income; it is more likely than not that economic benefit associated with the transaction will come to the charities and the amount can be quantified with reasonable certainty. Income consists of donations, charges for use of facilities, contributions, grants, sales and rental income.

The City of London Corporation's City's Cash meets the deficit on running expenses of the charities and also provides funding for certain capital works. This income is recognised in the SOFA when it is due from City's Cash.

(f) Expenditure

Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under the principal categories of 'expenditure on raising funds' and 'expenditure on charitable activities'. Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charities to that expenditure, it is probable that settlement will be required, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Governance costs include the costs of governance arrangements which relate to the general running of the charities as opposed to the direct management of functions inherent in the activities undertaken. These include the costs associated with constitutional and statutory requirements such as the cost of Trustee meetings.

Support costs (including governance costs) include activities undertaken by the City Corporation on behalf of the charities, such as human resources, digital services, legal support, accounting services, committee administration, public relations and premises costs. The basis of the cost allocation is set out in note 6.

The Trustee, the City Corporation, accounts centrally for all payroll related deductions. As a result, the charities account for all such sums due as having been paid.

(g) Foreign currencies

Transactions in foreign currencies are recorded at the rate of exchange ruling at the date of the transaction. Monetary assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currencies are valued at the year-end rate exchange. All gains or losses on translation are taken to Statement of Financial Activities in the year in which they occur.

(h) Pension costs

Staff are employed by the City of London Corporation and are eligible to contribute to the City of London Local Government Pension Fund, which is a funded defined benefit scheme. The estimated net deficit on the Fund is the responsibility of the City of London Corporation as a whole, as one employer, rather than the specific responsibility of any of its three main funds (City Fund, City's Cash and Bridge House Estates) or the trusts it supports.

The Fund's estimated net liability has been determined by independent actuaries in accordance with FRS102 as £630.4m as at 31 March 2020 (£608.6m as at 31 March 2019). Since any net deficit is apportioned between the financial statements of the City of London's three main funds, the charities Trustee does not anticipate that any of the liability will fall on the charities. The charities are unable to identify its share of the pension scheme assets and liabilities and therefore the Pension Fund is accounted for as a defined contribution scheme in these financial statements.

Barnett Waddingham, an independent actuary, carried out the latest triennial actuarial assessment of the scheme as at 31 March 2019, using the projected unit method. The actuary will carry out the next assessment of the scheme as at 31 March 2022, which will set contributions for the period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2024. Contribution rates adopted for the financial years 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20 have been set at 21% (2016/17: 17.5%).

(i) Taxation

The charities meets the definition of a charitable trust for UK income tax purposes, as set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 of the Finance Act 2010. Accordingly, the charities are exempt from UK taxation in respect of income or capital gains under part 10 of the Income Tax Act 2007 or section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

(j) Fixed Assets**Heritage Land and Associated Buildings**

West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood Coulsdon and other Commons comprises 277 hectares (685 acres) of land located in the London Boroughs of Bromley and Croydon, together with associated buildings. The objects of the charities are the preservation of West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood Coulsdon and other Commons in perpetuity as an Open Space for the recreation and enjoyment of the public. West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood Coulsdon and other Commons is considered to be inalienable (i.e. they may not be disposed of without specific statutory powers).

Land and the original associated buildings are considered to be heritage assets. In respect of the original land and buildings, cost or valuation amounts are not included in these financial statements as reliable cost information is not available and a significant

cost would be involved in the reconstruction of past accounting records, or in the valuation, which would be onerous compared to the benefit to the users of these accounts

Additions to the original land and capital expenditure on buildings and other assets are included as fixed assets at historic cost, less provision for depreciation and any impairment, where this cost can be reliably measured.

Tangible fixed assets

Assets that are capable of being used for more than one year and have a cost greater than £50,000 are capitalised. Such assets are stated at cost less accumulated depreciation and accumulated impairment losses. Depreciation is charged from the year following that of acquisition, on a straight-line basis, in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life as follows. Land is not depreciated.

	Years
Infrastructure	up to 20
Heavy vehicles and plant	5

Intangible fixed assets

Intangible assets comprise website design relating to the Kenley Revival project which are capitalised at cost and reflected within the financial statements at amortised historic cost.

Amortisation is calculated by allocation of the balance sheet value of the asset, less any residual value, to the periods expected to benefit from its use on a straight-line basis over 3 to 7 years. Amortisation charges are charged to the SOFA.

(k) Stocks

Stocks are valued at the lower of cost or net realisable value. All stocks are finished goods and are held for resale as part of the charities operations.

(l) Funds structure

Income, expenditure and gains/losses are allocated to particular funds according to their purpose:

Unrestricted income funds – these funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objects at the discretion of the Trustee and include both income generated by assets held representing unrestricted funds. Specifically, this represents any surplus of income over expenditure for the charities which is carried forward to meet the requirements of future years, known as free reserves.

Designated funds – these are funds set aside by the Trustee out of unrestricted funds for a specific purpose.

(m) Insurance

The charity, elected Members and staff supporting the charity's administration are covered by the City Corporation's insurance liability policies, and otherwise under the indemnity the City Corporation provides to Members and staff, funded from City's Cash.

2. INCOME FROM VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted income funds 2019/20 £	Unrestricted income funds 2018/19 £
Grants	114,013	195,495
Donations and legacies	896	1,973
Contributions	16,528	20,307
Total	131,437	217,775

3. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted income funds 2019/20 £	Unrestricted income funds 2018/19 £
Charges for use of facilities	420	1,299
Sales	7,458	11,336
Rental income	32,441	32,480
Total	40,319	45,115

4. INCOME FROM THE CITY OF LONDON CORPORATION

	Unrestricted income funds 2019/20 £	Unrestricted income funds 2018/19 £
Revenue and capital grants from City of London Corporation	1,071,173	1,213,475
Total	1,071,173	1,213,475

Income for the year included:

Grants – being amounts received from organisations towards specific programmes operated by the charity. Grant income received from the Rural Payment Agency (RPA) which provides funding to farmers and land managers to farm in a way that supports biodiversity, enhances the landscape, and improves the quality of water, air and soil and from Heritage Lottery Fund towards the Kenley Revival Project which aims to conserve the historic airfield structures associated with Kenley Airfield during World War II and to promote the heritage resource to make it accessible to a wider range of people.

Donations – being amounts received from the public for walks and talks advertised via Eventbrite.

Contributions – being amounts contributed towards corporate volunteering events and by the public towards free events such as guided walks. Contributions also include reimbursement of legal costs in relation to the Kenley Revival project.

Charitable activities – being amounts generated from the sales of livestock and woodland products such as timber and charcoal; from charges made for the use of facilities, such as for filming on City Commons and from rental of catering facilities, licence for Underground Shelter and wayleave licences.

Grants from the City of London Corporation – being the amount received from the City of London Corporation's City's Cash to meet the deficit on running expenses of the charities, alongside funding for capital purchases.

5. EXPENDITURE

Expenditure on charitable activities

	Direct costs £	Support costs £	Total 2019/20 £	Direct costs £	Support costs £	Total 2018/19 £
Preservation and operation of West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood	1,090,793	160,820	1,251,613	1,271,463	170,689	1,442,152
Total	1,090,793	160,820	1,251,613	1,271,463	170,689	1,442,152

Charitable activity

Expenditure on the charitable activities includes labour, premises costs, equipment, materials and other supplies and services incurred in the running of West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood Coulsdon and other Commons.

Auditor's remuneration and fees for other services

BDO are the auditors of the City of London's City's Cash Fund and all of the different charities of which it is Trustee. The City of London Corporation charges the audit fee to its City's Cash Fund and does not attempt to apportion the audit fee between all of the different charities. No other services were provided to the charity by its auditors during the year (2018/19: nil).

6. SUPPORT COSTS

Support costs include activities undertaken by the City of London Corporation on behalf of the charities, such as human resources, digital services, legal support, accounting services, committee administration and premises costs. Such costs are determined on a departmental basis, and are allocated on a cost recovery basis to the charities based on time spent, with associated office accommodation charged proportionately to the space occupied by the respective activities, with the split of costs as follows:

Support costs

	Charitable activities £	Governance £	2019/20 £	2018/19 £ Restated
Department:				
Chamberlain	35,117	-	35,117	42,045
Comptroller & City Solicitor	-	-	-	7,462
Town Clerk	-	24,887	24,887	22,136
City Surveyor	37,620	-	37,620	37,449
Open Spaces directorate	24,033	-	24,033	15,408
Other governance & support costs	10,154	-	10,154	10,547
Digital Services	29,009	-	29,009	35,642
Sub-total	135,933	24,887	160,820	170,689
Reallocation of governance costs	24,887	(24,887)	-	-
Total support costs	160,820	-	160,820	170,689

All support costs are undertaken from unrestricted funds. Governance costs are allocated based on a proportion of officer time spent on the administration of Trustee and Committee related meetings.

During the year a reanalysis of costs was undertaken between Town Clerks, Chamberlains and Governance costs. The reanalysed costs are included in the table above, with a restatement of costs for the previous year in the table below.

Support costs restated

	Charitable activities £	Governance £	2018/19 £	2017/18 £
Department:				
Chamberlain	42,045	-	42,045	38,231
Comptroller & City Solicitor	7,462	-	7,462	12,759
Town Clerk	-	22,136	22,136	25,125
City Surveyor	37,449	-	37,449	39,858
Open Spaces directorate	15,408	-	15,408	16,005
Other governance & support costs	10,547	-	10,547	8,635
Digital Services	35,642	-	35,642	34,276
Sub-total	148,553	22,136	170,689	174,889
Reallocation of governance costs	22,136	(22,136)	-	-
Total support costs	170,689	-	170,689	174,889

7. DETAILS OF STAFF COSTS

All staff that work on behalf of the charities are employed by the City Corporation. The average number of people directly undertaking activities on behalf of the charities during the year was 11 (2018/19: 12).

Amounts paid in respect of employees directly undertaking activities on behalf of the charities were as follows:

	2019/20	2018/19
	£	£
Salaries and wages	350,351	371,304
National Insurance costs	33,909	34,917
Employer's pension contributions	80,423	82,949
Total emoluments of employees	464,683	489,170

The number of directly charged employees whose emoluments (excluding employer's pension contribution) for the year were over £60,000 was nil (2018/19: nil).

Remuneration of Key Management Personnel

The charities considers its key management personnel to comprise the Members of the City of London Corporation, acting collectively for the City Corporation in its capacity as the Trustee, and the Director of Open Spaces who manages the seven open spaces funded by the City of London Corporation. A proportion of the Directors' employment benefits are allocated to these charities.

Support is also provided by other chief officers and their departments from across the City of London Corporation, including the Town Clerk and Chief Executive, Chamberlain, Comptroller and City Solicitor and City Surveyor.

The amount of employee benefits received by key management personnel totalled £4,408 (2018/19: £4,492). No members received any remuneration, with directly incurred expenses reimbursed, if claimed. No expenses were claimed in 2019/20 (2018/19: £nil).

8. HERITAGE ASSETS

	2016 £	2017 £	2018 £	2019 £	2020 £
Cost					
At 1 April	-	-	-	418,248	462,673
Additions	-	-	324,094	44,425	668
Transfers	-	-	94,154	-	-
At 31 March	-	-	418,248	462,673	463,341
Depreciation					
At 1 April	-	-	-	-	-
Charge for the year	-	-	-	-	-
At 31 March	-	-	-	-	-
Net book value					
At 31 March 2020	-	-	418,248	462,673	463,341
At 31 March 2019	-	-	-	462,673	463,341

Heritage assets represent the historic cost of restoring the blast pens on Kenley airfield.

Since 1892 the primary purpose of the charities has been the preservation of West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood Coulsdon and other Commons for the recreation and enjoyment of the public. As set out in note 1(j), the original heritage land and buildings are not recognised in the Financial Statements. Policies for the preservation and management of West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood Coulsdon and other Commons are contained in the West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood Coulsdon and other Commons Conservation Plans 2010-2020. Records of heritage assets owned and maintained by West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood Coulsdon and other Commons can be obtained from the Director of Open Spaces at the principal address as stated on page 34.

9. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Infrastructure	Plant	Total
	£	£	£
Cost			
At 1 April 2019	730	8,955	9,685
At 31 March 2020	730	8,955	9,685
Depreciation			
At 1 April 2019	36	896	932
Charge for the year	37	895	932
Disposals	-	-	-
At 31 March 2020	73	1,791	1,864
Net book value			
At 31 March 2020	657	7,164	7,821
At 31 March 2019	694	8,059	8,753

10. INTANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Website development £
Cost	
At 1 April 2019	27,840
Additions	860
At 31 March 2020	28,700
Depreciation	
At 1 April 2019	9,280
Charge for the year	9,280
At 31 March 2020	18,560
Net book value	
At 31 March 2020	10,140
At 31 March 2019	18,560

11. DEBTORS – AMOUNTS DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2020 £	2019 £
Rental debtors	1,918	132
Recoverable VAT	30,753	21,536
Other debtors	62,411	100,826
Total	95,082	122,494

Other debtors consist of sundry debtors of £57,856 (2018/20: £95,743) and listed payment in advance of £4,555 (2018/19: £4,907). The decrease in the 2019/20 sundry debtors relates to a reduction in the Heritage Lottery Funding (HLF) in respect of the Kenley Revival project.

12. CREDITORS – AMOUNTS DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2020 £	2019 £
Trade creditors	57,743	17,110
Accruals	12,563	18,695
Deferred income	9,446	9,389
Sundry deposits	30,778	30,585
Other creditors	19,313	46,715
Total	129,843	122,494

Other creditors consist of sundry creditors. Deferred income relates to rental income received in advance for periods after the year-end.

	2020 £	2019 £
Deferred income analysis within creditors:		
Balance at 1 April	9,389	9,365
Amounts released to income	(9,389)	(9,365)
Amounts deferred in the year	9,446	9,389
Balance at 31 March	9,446	9,389

13. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BY FUND

At 31 March 2020	Unrestricted income funds			
	General funds	Designated funds	Total at 31 March 2020	Total at 31 March 2019
	£	£	£	£
Heritage assets	-	463,341	463,341	462,673
Tangible assets	-	7,821	7,821	8,753
Intangible assets	-	10,140	10,140	18,560
Current assets	129,843	-	129,843	122,494
Current liabilities	(129,843)	-	(129,843)	(122,494)
Total	-	481,302	481,302	489,986

At 31 March 2019

Unrestricted income funds

	General funds £	Designated funds £	Total at 31 March 2019 £	Total at 31 March 2018 £
Heritage assets	-	462,673	462,673	418,248
Tangible assets	-	8,753	8,753	9,685
Intangible assets	-	18,560	18,560	27,840
Current assets	122,494	-	122,494	125,205
Current liabilities	(122,494)	-	(122,494)	(125,205)
Total	-	489,986	489,986	455,773

14. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

At 31 March 2020	Total as at 1 April 2019 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Total as at 31 March 2020 £
Unrestricted funds:				
General funds	-	1,202,333	(1,202,333)	-
Designated funds:				
Capital reserve funds	489,986	40,596	(49,280)	481,302
Total funds	489,986	1,242,929	(1,251,613)	481,302

At 31 March 2019	Total as at 1 April 2018 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Total as at 31 March 2019 £
Unrestricted funds:				
General funds	-	1,338,045	(1,338,045)	-
Designated funds:				
Capital reserve funds	455,773	138,320	(104,107)	489,986
Total funds	455,773	1,476,365	(1,442,152)	489,986

Purposes of designated funds

Designated funds have been set aside by the Trustee for the following purposes in relation to the Kenley Revival project:

- i. *Fixed Assets* – these are included at historic cost less depreciation on a straight line basis to write off their costs over their estimated useful lives and less any provision for impairment. At 31 March 2020 the net book value of fixed assets relating to direct charitable purposes amounted to £7,821 (2018/19: £8,753).
- ii. *Heritage Assets* – this represents the historic cost of restoring the blast pens on Kenley airfield. The net book value of heritage assets relating to direct charitable purposes at 31 March 2020 was £463,341 (2018/19: £462,673).
- iii. *Intangible Assets* - comprise website design relating to the Kenley Revival project which are capitalised at cost and reflected within the financial statements at amortised historic cost. Amortisation is calculated by allocation of the balance sheet value of the asset, less any residual value, to the periods expected to benefit from its use on a straight-line basis over 3 to 7 years. At 31 March 2020 the net book value of intangible fixed assets relating to direct charitable purposes amounted to £10,140 (31 March 2019: £18,560).

The Kenley Revival project aims to conserve the historic airfield structures associated with Kenley Airfield during World War II and to promote the heritage resource to make it accessible to a wider range of people.

15. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

The City Corporation is the sole Trustee of these charities, as described on page 2. The City Corporation provides various services, the costs of which are recharged to the charities. This includes the provision of banking services, charging all transactions to the charities at cost and crediting or charging interest at a commercial rate. The cost of these services is included within expenditure, as set out in note 5.

The charities are required to disclose information on related party transactions with bodies or individuals that have the potential to control or influence the charities. Members are required to disclose their interests, and these can be viewed online at www.cityoflondon.gov.uk.

Members and senior staff are requested to disclose all related party transactions, including instances where their close family has made such transactions.

Figures in brackets represent the amounts due at the balance sheet date. Other figures represent the value of the transactions during the year.

Related party	Connected party	2019/20 £	2018/19 £	Detail of transaction
City of London Corporation	The City of London Corporation is the Trustee for the charity	1,071,173 (nil)	1,213,475 (nil)	The City of London Corporation's City's Cash meets the deficit on running expenses of the charity
		160,820 (nil)	170,689 (nil)	Administrative services provided for the charity

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATION DETAILS

CHARITY NAMES: West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood Coulsdon and other Commons

Registered charity numbers: 232988 and 232989

PRINCIPAL OFFICE OF THE CHARITIES & THE CITY CORPORATION:

Guildhall, London, EC2P 2EJ

TRUSTEE:

The Mayor and Commonalty & Citizens of the City of London

SENIOR MANAGEMENT:

Chief Executive

John Barradell OBE - The Town Clerk and Chief Executive of the City of London Corporation

Treasurer

Dr Peter Kane - The Chamberlain of the City of London Corporation

Solicitor

Michael Cogher - The Comptroller and City Solicitor of the City of London Corporation

Open Spaces

Colin Buttery – Director of Open Spaces

AUDITORS:

BDO LLP, 55 Baker Street, London, W1U 7EU

BANKERS:

Lloyds Bank Plc., P.O.Box 72, Bailey Drive, Gillingham Business Park, Kent ME8 0LS

Contact for The Chamberlain, to request copies of governance documents & of the Annual Report of City's Cash:

PA-DeputyChamberlain@cityoflondon.gov.uk

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