

EPPING FOREST & COMMONS COMMITTEE
Friday, 19 November 2021

Minutes of the meeting of the Epping Forest & Commons Committee held at
HYBRID MEETING (COMMITTEE ROOMS, GUILDHALL / VIRTUAL on Friday, 19
November 2021 at 11.00 am

Present

Members:

Graeme Doshi-Smith (Chairman)
Benjamin Murphy (Deputy Chairman)
Caroline Haines
Gregory Lawrence
Jeremy Simons
Verderer Michael Chapman DL
Verderer Paul Morris

Officers:

Richard Holt	- Town Clerk's Department
Julie Mayer	- Town Clerk's Department
Kristina Drake	- Town Clerk's Department
James Gibson	- Chief Operating Officer's Department
Juliemma McLoughlin	- Executive Director for Environment
Andy Barnard	- Superintendent, The Commons
Paul Thomson	- Superintendent, Epping Forest
Jeremy Dagley	- Head of Conservation, Epping Forest
Geoffrey Sinclair	- Head of Operations, Epping Forest
Nicholas Welland	- City Surveyor's Department
Edward Sye	- City Surveyor's Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received in advance of the meeting from Alderman Robert Hughes-Penney, Alderman & Sheriff Nicholas Lyons, Peter Bennett and Verderer Nicholas Munday.

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 public minutes of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee meeting held on the 13th of September 2021.

RESOVLED- That the public minutes of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee meeting held on the 13th of September 2021 be approved as an accurate record.

4. **DEPARTMENTAL AND SERVICE COMMITTEE BUDGET ESTIMATES 2022/23**

The Committee considered a joint report of the Executive Director for Environment and the Chamberlain on the Departmental and Service Committee Budget Estimates for 2022/23.

Following a suggestion from the Deputy Chairman the Committee agreed that the damage to Epping Forest caused by the related effects of the COVID19 Pandemic needed to be formally recognised and added to the Department's Risk Register accordingly. The Deputy Chairman added that it was his view that the management of the Forest was currently underfunded and was not compliant with national guidelines on expenditure. Further to this it was agreed that the Chamberlain arrange a deep dive session on the budget with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the open spaces committees to discuss their concerns in further detail.

A member of the Committee noted that the City Surveyor needed to take a more long-term approach when considering the maintenance of property assets and highlighted that without expenditure in the short term there would be more serious maintenance issues in the future. A Member commented that the City of London Corporation did not have a good reputation locally for maintaining its assets.

Responding to a query from a member of the Committee the Chamberlain explained that the decision on whether the increased spending caused by inflation would be met from local or central risk would be decided by the Resource Allocation Sub-Committee.

RESOLVED- That: -

- I. The Epping Forest proposed revenue budget for 2022/23 be approved for submission to Finance Committee; and
- II. That the Commons proposed revenue budgets for 2022/23 be approved for submission to Finance Committee; and
- III. That the Epping Forest capital and supplementary revenue project budgets for 2022/23 be approved for submission to Finance Committee; and
- IV. The Commons capital and supplementary revenue project budgets for 2022/23 be approved for submission to Finance Committee.

5. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director for Environment on the Epping Forest Division's activities across August to September 2021.

Responding to a Member's query the Superintendent confirmed that £320,000 had been spent on tackling fly tipping in the Forest. Further to this the Deputy Chairman highlighted the successful prosecutions for fly tipping which had been achieved.

The Superintendent confirmed, in response to a Member's question, that there were twelve vaccines for permanent positions in the Epping Forest

Management Team as a result of the recruitment moratorium in relation to the Target Operating Model.

Replying to a Committee Member's enquiry it was explained that the position regarding rough sleepers in Epping Forest was returning to pre-COVID numbers, however it was generally increasing in line with the national trend.

In response to a Committee member's request for further information on the management of deer in Epping Forest the Superintendent confirmed that the Deer Management Strategy, as approved by the Committee, was being actioned. It was added that there was a lot of work to be done on this matter as temporary staff were required to fill the gaps of those staff retiring.

The Superintendent answered a committee member's query by confirming that there were in the region of forty unresolved land registration issues which were to be brought to committee for consideration.

RESOLVED-That the report be noted.

6. WANSTEAD PARK PONDS PROJECT

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director for Environment on the Wanstead Park Ponds Project.

RESOLVED- That: -

- I. That the underspend of £30,000 from the Engineering Fees is reallocated to carry out further engineering consultancy is approved; and
- II. That an additional budget of £51,000 is approved to reach the next Gateway; and
- III. That the revised project budget of £241,000 (excluding risk) be noted; and
- IV. That the total estimated cost of the project at £500,000 - £1 million (excluding risk and possible external funding) be noted; and
- V. That Options 2 and 3, revisor safety works and water balance interventions be approved.

7. PROVISION OF STAFF WELFARE FACILITIES AT CHINGFORD GOLF COURSE EPPING.

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director for Environment for the Provision of Staff Welfare Facilities at Chingford Golf Course Epping.

RESOLVED-That: -

- I. the report and lessons learned be noted; and
- II. the closure of this project be approved.

8. FOREST OPERATIONS: PATH CONDITION ASSESSMENT FEB-MAR 2021

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director for Environment on the Forest Operations Path Condition Assessment February- March 2021.

The Chairman noted his displeasure about the condition of the paths but noted this was due to effects of increased visitors during the period effected by COVID. The Deputy Chairman agreed, noting that there was a need to resolve the current condition of the paths and establish a plan for management going forward. It was added that the condition of these paths needed to be added to the risk register.

RESOLVED- That the Committee approved officers progressing internal and external fundraising approaches for financing the works to undertake the path repair proposals.

9. **RESIDENTS PETITION OPPOSING THE RETURN OF POLICE HELICOPTERS TO THE LIPPITTS HILL AIRBASE, HIGH BEACH**

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director for Environment for Residents Petition opposing the return of Police Helicopters to Lippitts Hill Airbase High Beech.

RESOLVED- That the Committee approved to protect peaceful recreational activity, tranquillity, and the nature designations of Epping Forest from harm, the Charity will encourage NPAS and the MPS to support:

- i. the use of helicopter approach and departure routes west of Lippitts Hill avoiding flights over Epping Forest
- ii. the long-term relocation of the NPAS facility at Lippitts Hill to a more forward facility closer to London
- iii. the future adoption of quieter helicopter design, using innovations such as 'No Tail Rotor' (NOTAR) technology.
- iv. greater investment in less environmentally impactful drone replacements.

10. **PROPOSALS FOR POSSIBLE SESQUICENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS OF THE CITY OF LONDON CORPORATION'S PROTECTION OF EPPING FOREST**

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director for Environment on the proposals for possible sesquicentennial celebrations of the City of London Corporation's protection of Epping Forest.

Following a concern expressed by a Member it was confirmed that the celebratory events to be organised would be used as an opportunity to secure income for the Epping Forest Charity rather than spending valuable funds on a simply commemorative events. Further to this it was agreed that the proposed working group needed to be properly constituted to allow committee members to provide proper oversight to the proposed events.

RESOLVED- That: -

- I. The commemoration of sesquicentennial events centred on 2028, being 150 years from 1878, reflecting the focus of the previous Centenary celebration, though other important milestones could be celebrated as part of an associated narrative be approved; and
- II. That an Epping Forest Working Group be inaugurated to plan the sesquicentennial celebrations.

11. CITY OF LONDON CORPORATION RESPONSE TO NORTH ESSEX PARKING PARTNERSHIP (NEPP) REVIEW OF TEMPORARY TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER (TTRO) FOR HIGH BEACH RED ROUTE

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director for Environment on the City of London Corporation's Response to North Essex Parking Partnership Review of Temporary Traffic Regulations Order for High Beach Red Route.

The Committee discussed the need to balance the protection of Epping Forest with public access noting that the Forest is protected for the public's enjoyment. It was stated by a Committee member that the Red Routes were originally enforced as a temporary measure needed to protect the Forest from the effect of increased visitor numbers during the COVID pandemic. It was added that there was little support for these Red Routes locally which was reflected at the recent meeting of the Epping Forest Consultative Committee. The Interim Director explained that a longer term approach to visitor facilities across the Forest was being undertaken which aimed to provide a more even distribution across the Forest.

RESOLVED- Approved a reserve position to protect the SAC, and associated verge restoration work, from damage by verge parking through the installation of bollards or similar infrastructure and /or signage along the most vulnerable areas of High Beach. It was noted that this will help to reduce displacement parking but may mean parking may obstruct the use of the public highway.

12. CONSERVATION GRAZING ACTION PLAN FOR EPPING FOREST & ITS BUFFER LANDS

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director for Environment on the Conservation Grazing Action Plan for Epping Forest and its Buffer Lands.

RESOLVED-That: -

- I. The eight key aims of the Conservation Grazing Action Plan 2022- 2027, subject to future liaison with commoners in 2022 be approved; and
- II. That the option of winter grazing in selected parts of the Forest wood-pasture habitats for enhanced biodiversity conservation, subject to feedback from liaison with commoners and subject to Section 5(2) of the City of London (Open Spaces) Act 2018 be approved; and
- III. That authority be delegated to the Superintendent of Epping Forest (in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of Epping Forest and Commons Committee) to consider any liaison feedback from commoners and to determine whether the key aims and winter grazing should be approved as set out in the above recommendations having regard to any such feedback and further delegate to the Superintendent of Epping Forest (in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee), in each year winter grazing is proposed, authority to take reasonable steps to ascertain the extent to which relevant rights of common are likely to be

exercised in that year and to ensure a sufficient area of land is maintained so as to allow for the exercise of those rights to the extent they are ascertained (in accordance with S.5(2) City of London (Open Spaces) Act 2018); and

- IV. That the expansion of the GPS management under the Action Plan, as resources allow, to provide collars for each animal in the herd to allow for fenceless grazing by any animal across the Buffer Lands and Forest be approved.

14. DRAFT PUBLIC MINUTES OF THE EPPING FOREST JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

The Committee received the draft minutes of the Epping Forest Joint Consultative Committee held on the 21st of October.

The Town Clerk informed the Committee that there remained two places on the Joint Consultative Committee for Epping Forest and Commons Committee members and invited applications from those Committee members present. Verderer Paul Morris indicated his willingness to serve and was appointed accordingly.

RESOLVED: That: -

- I. The draft minutes be noted; and
- II. That Verderer Paul Morris be appointed to the Epping Forest Joint Consultative Committee.

15. DRAFT MINUTES OF THE EPPING FOREST CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

The Committee received the draft minutes of the Epping Forest Consultative Committee meeting held on the 20th of October.

RESOLVED- That the draft minutes be noted.

16. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director for Environment on the Superintendent's update for the Commons.

The Deputy Chairman noted that improved relationships with Thames Water were being established which would assist in resolving some ongoing issues.

The Committee discussed the recent vandalism which had taken place at Kenley and noted regret that this had taken place. The Superintendent explained that there was no reason to believe the instance was motivated by anything more than opportunism and that CCTV was not currently being considered for the site.

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

There were no questions received in the public session.

18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

There was no urgent business considered in the public session.

19. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED: That under Section 100(A) 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.

20. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

The Committee considered the non-public minutes of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee meeting held on the 13th of September 2021.

RESOVLED- That the non-public minutes of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee meeting held on the 13th of September 2021 be approved as an accurate record.

21. **WHIPPS CROSS HOSPITAL & RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT MITIGATION STRATEGY**

The Committee considered a late report of the Executive Director for Environment on the Whipps Cross Hospital & Residential Development Mitigation Strategy.

RESOLVED- That the report was approved.

13. **GREAT GREGORIES INFRASTRUCTURE**

The Committee considered a late report of the Executive Director for Environment on the Great Gregories Yard Future Proofing Buildings.

RESOLVED- That the report be approved.

22. **EPPING FORESTERS CRICKET CLUB LICENCE**

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director for Environment on the Epping Forest Cricket Club Licence.

RESOLVED- That the report be approved.

23. **REQUEST FOR THE PROVISION OF A DEED OF GRANT EASEMENT - 34 MORNINGTON ROAD, WOODFORD GREEN**

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director for Environment on the request for the provision of a deed of grant easement 34 Mornington Road Woodford Green.

RESOLVED- That the report be approved.

24. **COMMERCIAL WAYLEAVES UPDATE - THE ELMS CARAVAN PARK**

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director for Environment on the Commercial Wayleaves Update The Elms Caravan Park.

At 1pm Members agreed to extend the business of the agenda beyond two hours, in accordance with Standing Order 40, in order to conclude the business on the agenda.

RESOLVED- That the report be approved

25. **COMMERCIAL WAYLEAVES UPDATE**

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director for Environment on the Commercial Wayleaves.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

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

The Town Clerk informed the Committee that as the Committee was no longer Quorate in accordance with Standing Order 36 (3) the formal meeting would be dissolved.

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk on the report of action taken outside of the meeting.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

27. **DRAFT NON-PUBLIC MINUTES OF THE EPPING FOREST JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

The Committee received the draft non-public minutes of the Epping Forest Joint Consultative Committee.

RESOLVED- That the draft minutes be noted.

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

There was one questions received in the non-public session.

29. **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 1.25 pm

Chairman

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