



Epping Forest & Commons Committee

Date: THURSDAY, 23 NOVEMBER 2023

Time: 11.00 am

Venue: COMMITTEE ROOM - 2ND FLOOR WEST WING, GUILDHALL

Members:

Benjamin Murphy (Chairman)	Alderman Nicholas Lyons
Caroline Haines (Deputy Chairman)	Andrew McMurtrie (Ex-Officio Member)
George Abrahams	Deputy Philip Woodhouse
Jaspreet Hodgson	Verderer Michael Chapman DL
Alderman Vincent Keaveny, CBE	Verderer William Kennedy
Gregory Lawrence	Verderer Paul Morris
	Verderer Nicholas Munday

Enquiries: Blair Stringman
Blair.Stringman@cityoflondon.gov.uk

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Whilst we endeavour to livestream all of our public meetings, this is not always possible due to technical difficulties. In these instances, if possible, a recording will be uploaded following the end of the meeting.

Ian Thomas CBE
Town Clerk and Chief Executive

AGENDA

NB: Certain items presented for information have been marked * and will be taken without discussion, unless the Committee Clerk has been informed that a Member has questions or comments prior to the start of the meeting.

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 public and non-public summary of the minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 September 2023.

For Decision
(Pages 7 - 14)

4. **MATTERS ARISING**

- a) Action Log (Pages 15 - 22)
Report of the Town Clerk.

Natural Environment

5. **EPPING FOREST & COMMONS COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Report of the Town Clerk.

For Decision
(Pages 23 - 26)

6. ***BUSINESS PLAN 2023/24 – PROGRESS REPORT (MID-YEAR, APRIL-SEPTEMBER 2023)**

Report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment.

For Information
(Pages 27 - 32)

7. ***OPERATIONAL FINANCE PROGRESS REPORT (PERIOD 6 APRIL - SEPTEMBER) 2023/24 – EPPING FOREST AND COMMONS**

Report of the Chamberlain.

For Information
(Pages 33 - 62)

8. **DEPARTMENTAL AND SERVICE COMMITTEE BUDGET ESTIMATES 2024/25**

Joint Report of the Chamberlain & Executive Director, Environment.

For Decision
(Pages 63 - 76)

9. **A104 ROAD SAFETY SCHEME (SEF 29/23)**

Report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment.

For Decision
(Pages 77 - 100)

10. **NATURAL FLOOD MANAGEMENT AT YARDLEY LANE, EPPING FOREST**

Report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment.

For Decision
(Pages 101 - 112)

Epping Forest

11. ***ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S UPDATE AUGUST – SEPTEMBER 2023 (SEF 27/23)**

Report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment.

For Information
(Pages 113 - 120)

12. **REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR EPPING FOREST CONSULTATIVE GROUP (SEF 23/23)**

Report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment.

For Decision
(Pages 121 - 134)

13. **PROPOSED INSTALLATION OF DEER 'EXCLOSURE' PLOTS (SEF 18/23)**

Report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment.

For Decision
(Pages 135 - 140)

14. ***EPPING FOREST WILDFIRE PLAN REVIEW 2022 - 2023 (SEF 28/23)**

Report of the Executive Director, Environment.

For Information
(Pages 141 - 154)

15. ***SENIOR OFFICER RECRUITMENT**

Report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment.

For Information
(Pages 155 - 156)

The Commons

16. ***ASSISTANT DIRECTORS UPDATE AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 2023**

Report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment.

For Information
(Pages 157 - 168)

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

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

Part 2 - Non-Public Agenda

19. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

MOTION: The following matters relate to business under the remit of the Court of Common Council acting for the City Corporation as charity Trustee, to which Part VA and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 public access to meetings provisions do not apply. The following items contain sensitive information which it is not in the best interests of the charity to consider in a public meeting (engaging similar considerations as under paragraphs 3 and 5 of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Act) and will be considered in non-public session.

For Decision

20. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

To agree the non-public minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 September 2023.

For Decision
(Pages 169 - 170)

21. **MATTERS ARISING**

- a) Action Log (Pages 171 - 172)
Report of the Town Clerk.

22. ***REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN**

Report of the Town Clerk.

For Information
(Pages 173 - 174)

23. **RENEWABLE ENERGY STORAGE FACILITY (SEF 24/23)**

Report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment.

For Decision
(Pages 175 - 212)

24. ***LAND ACQUISITIONS (SEF 26/23)**

Report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment.

For Information
(Pages 213 - 236)

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

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

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EPPING FOREST & COMMONS COMMITTEE

Thursday, 14 September 2023

Minutes of the meeting of the Epping Forest & Commons Committee held at
Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Thursday, 14 September
2023 at 11.00 am

Present

Members:

Benjamin Murphy (Chairman)
Caroline Haines (Deputy Chairman)
Jaspreet Hodgson
Alderman Vincent Keaveny, CBE
Gregory Lawrence
Andrew McMurtrie (Ex-Officio Member)
Verderer Michael Chapman DL
Verderer William Kennedy
Verderer Paul Morris

Officers:

Emily Brennan	- Environment Department
Jacqueline Eggleston	- Environment Department
Clem Harcourt	- Chamberlain's Department
Joanne Hill	- Environment Department
Elisabeth Hannah	- Environment Department
Bob Roberts	- Environment Department
Blair Stringman	- Town Clerk's Department
Geoff Sinclair	- Environment Department
Tristan Vetta	- Environment Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from the Rt Hon. The Lord Mayor Nicholas Lyons and Nicholas Munday.

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

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED – That, the public and non-public summary of the minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2023 be agreed as a correct record.

4. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

4.1 Action Log

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk.

RESOLVED – That, the Town Clerk update the actions as appropriate.

5. **OPERATIONAL FINANCE PROGRESS REPORT (PERIOD 3 APRIL - JUNE) 2023/24 – EPPING FOREST AND COMMONS**

The Committee received a report of the Chamberlain concerning an update on the operational finance position.

Officers introduced the report and highlighted to the Members a funding bid of £210,000 for contingencies to address dangerous trees in the forests would be discussed by the Finance Committee on 19 September. It was also noted that there had been an update to local risk budgets after the implementation of a new staffing structure, resulting in an increase of £793,000 in the committee's local risk budget.

In response to a question raised by a Member on underspend for climate action strategies, the Natural Environment Director noted that the budget is intended for a carbon removal project, a significant part of the climate action strategy. Members were informed that officers had received a final report from Arcadis, which explores opportunities for carbon storage on the Corporations open spaces. It was noted that the focus would be on protecting the existing carbon stored in these spaces since there are limited options for additional carbon storage due to nature conservation designations. The Director added that proposals involving tree planting, pond creation, and highway planting were being finalised and would be presented to the Resources Allocation Sub-Committee for approval for approximately £2.4 million in funding over the next three years to carry out this protection and enhancement work.

The Chairman noted the success related to the target operating model redesign noting the redesign has resulted in nearly £800,000 of additional investment in staffing for Epping Forest. Members were informed that this additional investment was expected to bring about positive changes in the Corporations ability to achieve its goals, especially regarding front-facing roles focused on protecting the forest.

RESOLVED – That, the report be noted.

6. **RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE REPORT**

The Committee considered a report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment concerning the risk management update.

In response to a question raised by a Member it was noted by officers that an asset management review was in progress, which would provide a list of assets and their conditions. Members noted that several assets, including lodges and signage in the Commons and Epping Forest, were in need of maintenance and the review was seen as important to create a proper investment strategy to avoid large, infrequent expenditures.

A Member expressed concern about the risk register, specifically with regards to ancient monuments, as it focused on tree damage rather than broader issues

like cycling and public access causing harm. Officers acknowledged this and noted that the matter would be reviewed comprehensively to ensure it accurately reflects the most significant risks and aligns with the corporate risk register.

In relation to staffing, the Natural Environment Director reassured the committee about concerns regarding the number of keepers on permanent contracts. She mentioned that the department had been able to maintain operations with a larger number of casual staff during a recruitment freeze. It was noted that the plan was to move towards having 16 keepers and assisting keepers, along with two keeper team managers, and litter picking teams, which was a significant increase compared to the past 10 years.

In response to a question raised on the Target Operating Model, the Chairman suggested that issues discussed should be considered for the risk register if the process took place again. The Interim Executive Director, Environment confirmed that the risk was associated with the impact of the process and that lessons learned from it will be incorporated into the corporate risk assessment.

In response to a question raised regarding tree failure the Chairman requested that the Environment Department investigate the increase in the risk level associated with tree failure and how the difference is reflected in terms of health and safety concerns.

RESOLVED – That, Members confirm on behalf of the City Corporation as Trustee, that the Risk Registers appended to the report satisfactorily identify the key risks to each of the five charities and that appropriate systems are in place to effectively identify and mitigate risks.

7. EPPING FOREST – ASSISTANT DIRECTOR’S UPDATE JUNE – JULY 2023 (SEF 20/23)

The Committee received a report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment concerning the Assistant Director (Epping Forest) update.

A Member raised concerns about three car parks that were not being charged for parking and asked for an update. Officers noted the car parks had been targets of vandalism, and the team was working to ensure that when charging infrastructure was reinstated, this would not happen again. When asked about the timeline for this, the representative couldn't provide one and mentioned the need to consult with the investigations team. The committee requested that they return with more guidance on this matter as an action item.

A Member praised the learning team in Epping Forest, for their exceptional work with 2,297 students, including those with special needs. They highlighted the importance of this work for accessibility and inclusion. The Chairman endorsed the praise but raised concerns about the cost allocation charges for learning, suggesting that further examination might be needed, as it seemed that the more students participate, the more charges are incurred.

RESOLVED – That, the report be noted.

8. **A104 ROAD SAFETY SCHEME (SEF 22/23)**

The Committee received a report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment concerning the A104 Road Safety Scheme.

A presentation was provided to the Committee by a representative of Essex County Council.

The Committee noted that the consultation process was crucial, as some people had expressed interest in suggesting changes to the scheme. It was noted that the consultation was expected to start at the end of the month with a preliminary design and will involve public engagement events, which could be both online and in person. The committee was encouraged to share their views during the consultation process, and a more detailed view would be provided once the final design is available for review.

Following discussion on the presentation, the Committee agreed that the following steps be taken:

- a) Express concerns to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation at Essex County Council about the lack of consultation regarding a scheme which is being proposed.
- b) Highlight the need to consider other users who may be affected by the scheme to avoid inadvertently creating additional road safety concerns which are contrary to the Epping Forest Transport Plan. Also recognise the potential damage which could be caused to Epping Forest by displacing non-motorised road users.
- c) Acknowledge that the surveys completed by Essex Highways may meet statutory requirements, but surveying for only 2 days does not adequately recognise the breadth of needs of all stakeholders who would be impacted by the proposed scheme (a number of whom have already contacted the Committee expressing concern).
- d) In return for the proposed damage to Epping Forest by the introduction of average speed cameras, propose that a revenue sharing agreement is created to support additional safety schemes outlined in the Epping Forest transport strategy.

RESOLVED – That, the report be noted.

9. **THE COMMONS – ASSISTANT DIRECTORS UPDATE JUN-JULY 2023**

The Committee received a report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment concerning the Assistant Director (The Commons) update.

The Chairman reported on a visit to Burnham, which he found to be outstanding. He highlighted the importance of building relationships with local stakeholders in the area and initiating conversations regarding the local plan and local transport plan, which would have a lasting impact on Burnham beaches. The Chairman expressed appreciation for the volunteering efforts and commended the work done online to share activities in the Commons, hoping to expand this practice to other open spaces in the future.

RESOLVED – That, the report be noted.

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

There were no questions.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

11.1 Proposal to vary and extend the duration of Public Spaces Protection Orders at Burnham Beeches – Outcome of the public consultation process

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Environment concerning a proposal to vary and extend the duration of Public Spaces Protection Orders.

RESOLVED – That Court Members,

- a) Approve Option 1 – extend the effect of the existing PSPOs at Burnham Beeches for a further three years from 1st December 2023, with two minor modifications.
- b) Authorise the Comptroller and City Solicitor to make the necessary Orders.
- c) Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Environment to authorise officers and agents of the City Corporation to issue Fixed Penalty Notices and otherwise act as ‘authorised persons’ in relation to the PSPOs at Burnham Beeches.
- d) Maintain the fixed penalty for breach of a PSPO at Burnham Beeches at £80 with a reduction to £50 if paid within 10 days.

- e) Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Environment to update the Dog Management Strategy and the Enforcement Protocol for Burnham Beeches.

MATTERS ARISING

The Committee received a verbal update from the Natural Environment Director.

The following was noted by the Committee:

- Ongoing development of 2024-25 high-level business plan for Natural Environment Division
- Alignment of the plan with corporate priorities and consultations with committees in early November
- Work on Natural Environment Vision and Strategies, with workshops for members and staff to align with corporate objectives and aiming for a January launch
- Plans for a dinner event in 2024 to formally launch the natural environment vision and strategies

- Introduction of a natural capital audit to assess the value of ecosystem services
- Emphasis on conveying the value of open spaces and positive media coverage, including Green Flag Awards and innovative technology use in Epping Forest
- Ongoing work on the Natural Environment Charities Review, with more details and key deliverables to follow.

12. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED – That, the following matters relate to business under the remit of the Court of Common Council acting for the City Corporation as charity Trustee, to which Part VA and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 public access to meetings provisions do not apply. The following items contain sensitive information which it is not in the best interests of the charity to consider in a public meeting (engaging similar considerations as under paragraphs 3 and 5 of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Act) and will be considered in non-public session.

13. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

RESOLVED – That, the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2023 be agreed as a correct record.

14. **MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

14.1 **Action Tracker**

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk.

15. **EPPING FOREST LEASE RENEWAL AND LICENCE RENT REVIEW (SEF 25/23)**

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Environment.

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

There were no questions.

17. **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.

The meeting ended at 1.30pm

Chairman

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Blair.Stringman@cityoflondon.gov.uk

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Number	Recommendation	Progress Update	Owner	Creation date	Target date
2022-1	<p>Emergency Planning – Fire Risk: Committee requested a report on the learnings from the wildfires which took place in the summer of 2022 and what additional, detective or preventative measures could be taken to mitigate the risk</p> <p>Update (13/11/2023) The Commons: Luckily fires were not an issue in 2022 however as reported on the 12th July 2023 we have revised the fire plan for the only ‘high risk’ site at the Commons in association with Fire brigade.</p>	<p>18 May 2023 - Superintendent to provide an update to the Committee in September 2023</p> <p>7 July 2023 – Consultants Wildfire TacAd commissioned to undertake further evaluation work.</p> <p>12 July 2023 The Commons Staff worked with the local Fire Service Team to revise the emergency Plan for the Stoke Common, the Commons most high-risk site, following the summer of 2022.</p> <p>13 July 2023 EF&CC - Recent launch event took place with the Deputy Chief Fire Officer for London and the Deputy Mayor for Fire Resilience promoting new Smarthose™ fire protection equipment showcased by the London Fire Brigade. This innovative device acts as a fire screen, effectively preventing the spread of wildfires in open spaces. The desire is to incorporate this equipment into the Epping</p>	Paul Thomson / Geoff Sinclair	13 Oct 2022	23 Nov 2023



		<p>Forest Wildfire planning to enhance fire safety measures.</p> <p>14 September 2023 EF&CC – Report due back in November on progress.</p> <p>23 November 2023 – Update Wildfire report provided to Epping Forest and Commons Committee for EF.</p>			
2022-2	<p>Buffer Land: The Superintendent of Epping Forest to provide DMOG with information on the method of counting deer and how assessments are made on deer stock across Epping Forest land.</p>	<p>16 March 2023 – PT apologies for the delay in supplying some data and would arrange for the data to be gathered.</p> <p>18 May 2023 – Update to be provided at the next meeting</p> <p>13 July 2023 – Update to be provided at the next meeting</p> <p>14 September 2023 – Officers to provide update at the next meeting.</p> <p>17 November 2023 – An email update on deer counting methodology was provided to DMOG Members.</p>	Paul Thomson	13 Oct 2022	23 Nov 2023



2022-3	<p>Buffer Land: The Superintendent of Epping Forest to provide DMOG with analysis to understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) The intended use of agricultural land forming part of the Buffer Lands ii) The extent of the anticipated damage caused by deer iii) The extent to which deer pass from Buffer Lands onto Epping Forest charity land iv) The extent to which adjacent land managers manage the deer population v) The extent to which deer fencing and other physical deer management techniques can protect the Epping Forest charity land, e.g. deer fencing on Copped Hall. 	<p>16 March 2023 – PT apologies for the delay in supplying some data and would arrange for the data to be gathered.</p> <p>13 July 2023 – Update to be provided at the next meeting</p> <p>14 September 2023 – Officers to provide update at the next meeting</p> <p>17 November 2023 – An email update on the five questions was provided to DMOG Members.</p>	Paul Thomson	13 Oct 2022	23 Nov 2023
2022-4	<p>Lodges: Income Generation: Members discussed vacant lodges that required investment. The Executive Director, Environment noted that a structure and aspiration were required for a long-term approach. It was requested that a business case on potential funding be brought back to the Committee regarding the costs of refurbishing lodges.</p>	<p>18 May 2023 – Verbal Update to be provided at the next meeting.</p> <p>13 July 2023 - Verbal Update to be provided at the next meeting.</p> <p>14 September 2023 – Update provided by the Director of Natural Environment at the meeting</p>	Bob Roberts	21 Nov 2022	23 Nov 2023
2023-5	<p>Volunteers: Committee asked Officers to find identify a suitable and consistent framework for recording and measuring the impact volunteers are having on the delivery of management plans for</p>	<p>14 September 2023 – framework to be taken to the Natural Environment Board</p>	Bob Roberts	26 January 2023	23 Nov 2023



	individual charities. Members also requested that thought be given to celebrating and rewarding volunteers.	Date - TOM Recruitment is underway for an Engagement & Volunteering Officer at Epping Forest who will help collect key volunteering information for EF.			
2023-6	Review of Dog Control Measures – Committee noted that the Commons would bring forward PSPO extension plans, but asked the Superintendent of Epping Forest to consider whether additional action is now required to tighten dog control measures, to include accreditation/ licensing of professional dog walkers, limits on number of dogs per dog walker and updates to byelaws. Hampstead Heath running a pilot study, which will feed into the approach.	<p>18 May 2023 – Verbal update to be provided at June Committee.</p> <p>13 July 2023 – Verbal Update to be provided at the next meeting.</p> <p>14 September 2023 – On-going piece of work to be taken to Hampstead Heath Management Committee, Directors agreed to come back to EF&CC with an update. The current pilot scheme is still being revised and fine-tuned with evaluation planned for late 2024.</p>	Jacqueline Eggleston	26 January 2023	23 Nov 2023
2023-7	Risk Register – Committee asked that officers review the risk register for all relevant charities, ensuring it accurately reflects the most significant risks and aligns with the corporate risk register. This should explicitly include:	A Risk Management Update report will be presented to Committee in January and will	Jo Hill/Paul Thomson	14 Sept 2023	23 Nov 2023



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) the risk of damage to our Iron Age Hillforts ii) iii) iv) the fact that dangerous trees are at the highest rated risk, but Members felt that the health and safety risk rating for staff is not sufficiently reflected in the risks experienced by staff v) future reporting to include explicit reference to the actions which have been closed or extended and detail around actions which are in-flight and funded or pending resource allocation decisions 	<p>include updated risks and actions.</p> <p>A report of protecting Scheduled Ancient Monuments will be brought to January Committee.</p>			
2023-8	<p>Theydon Bois Car Parks: the Superintendent of Epping Forest to confirm the timeline for a charging model to be implemented at the 3 car parks in Theydon Bois in Epping Forest which have been subjected to a campaign of vandalism against charity assets.</p>	<p>13 November 2023 – Season Ticket holder and pre-booked RinGo parking-only initiative launched for three sites subject to vandalism in the Theydon Bois area.</p>	Paul Thomson	14 Sept 2023	23 Nov 2023
2023-9	<p>A104 Road Safety Scheme – Following Actions to be taken</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Express concerns to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation at Essex County Council about the lack of consultation regarding a scheme which is being proposed. b. Highlight the need to consider other users who may be affected by the scheme to avoid inadvertently creating additional road safety concerns which are contrary to the Epping Forest Transport Plan. Also recognise the potential damage which could be caused to Epping Forest by displacing non-motorised road users. c. Acknowledge that the surveys completed by Essex Highways may meet statutory requirements, but surveying for only 2 days does not adequately recognise the breadth of needs of 	<p>3 October 2023 – Chairman’s letter covering points a-d sent to Essex County Council Highways Department.</p> <p>19 October 2023 – Essex County Council presentation on A104 Safety Scheme to Epping Forest Consultative Group.</p>	Bob Roberts	14 Sept 2023	November 2023



	<p>all stakeholders who would be impacted by the proposed scheme (a number of whom have already contacting the Committee expressing concern).</p> <p>d. In return for the proposed damage to Epping Forest by the introduction of average speed cameras, propose that a revenue sharing agreement is created to support additional safety schemes outlined in the Epping Forest transport strategy.</p>	<p>23 November 2023 – Further report on Road Safety Scheme brought to EF&CC.</p>			
2023-10	<p>Climate Action Strategy: The Director to provide a briefing for Members on their roles and responsibilities aligned to the Climate Action Strategy, particularly the carbon removals project in Epping Forest Buffer Land. This would include a breakdown of the key statistics from the Arcadia report.</p>	<p>Carbon Removals (Climate Action) Project Rescoping Reapproval Report being presented to 4 December 2023 Natural Environment Board and 18 January 2023 Policy & Resources Committee.</p>	Emily Brennan	14 Sept 2023	Dec 2023
2023-11	<p>Staff Recruitment: that a standing item of each agenda be introduced to provide an update to Committee on the recruitment and retention of staff.</p>		Blair Stringman	14 Sept 2023	23 Nov 2023
2023-13	<p>Target Operating Model Review: The Director to perform a formal review of the Target Operating Model changes in Epping Forest and the Commons in May 2024, which will include engagement with staff, Members and Verderers.</p>		Emily Brennan	14 Sept 2023	May 2024
2023-14	<p>Access Restrictions for Land Rest & Recovery: the Superintendent of Epping Forest to consider the appropriate framework to ‘restrict access’ to areas of Epping Forest to the public to protect them from erosion for set periods, as outlined in the 2020 cycling strategy.</p>	<p>Protections offered by Section 7.1-7.8 of the City of London (Various Powers) Act 1977 allows land (up to 100 acres or 1.6% of the Forest) to be subject to access restrictions for the purposes of regeneration. Once staffing levels are restored Officers will</p>	Paul Thomson	14 Sept 2023	23 Nov 2023



		survey and bring forward suitable proposals.			
2023-15	The Warren Battery Storage Facility Introduction: the Superintendent of Epping Forest, in conjunction with City Surveyor, to determine how to celebrate the good news story of the installation of a solar electricity battery storage facility at The Warren	The battery system is installed and awaiting connection to the EF electrical supply system managed by the City Surveyor. The City Surveyor has received quotations for the connection work.	Paul Thomson	14 Sept 2023	23 Nov 2023
2023-16	Education & Learning Cost Allocation: the Director to review the Education & Learning team's cost allocation model, which currently seems to work based on the number of students which the City encourages to visit Epping Forest, resulting in Epping Forest being a victim of its own success.		Emily Brennan	14 Sept 2023	Dec 2023
2023-17	SSSI Condition Surveys: to encourage Natural England to visit Epping Forest and Burnham Beeches to complete an overdue condition survey on each SSSI segment. Update (13/11/2023) The Commons: no progress	14 November 2023 - The Superintendent of Epping Forest wrote to Natural England, the NDPB responsible for SSSI assessment, seeking information on future condition assessments.	Paul Thomson & Geoff Sinclair	14 Sept 2023	Dec 2023
2023-18	Accessibility: the Superintendent of the Commons to identify a solution for the disabled access gate at Burnham Beeches, which is out of use. Update (13/11/2023) The gate is the process of being replaced and should be in operation by the time of the EF&CC meeting		Geoff Sinclair	14 Sept 2023	23 Nov 2023

Epping Forest & Commons Committee
Action Log



2023-19	<p>Digital Enablement: the Superintendent of the Commons to identify a solution to the lack of Wi-Fi at Coulsdon Common, which is also impacting the educational offering on site.</p> <p>Update: (13/11/2023) no progress</p>		Geoff Sinclair	14 Sept 2023	23 Nov 2023
2023-20	<p>Financial Planning: the Superintendent of the Commons to reflect upon the fact that car parking income is down, and filming income is down, therefore, how will he cut costs or explore income opportunities to balance the budget.</p> <p>Update: (13/11/2023) 2024/25 budget have been set reflecting the net budget requirements. Income generation is being reviewed and integrated with the Charity review process.</p>		Geoff Sinclair	14 Sept 2023	23 Nov 2023
2023-21	<p>Vacancy Publication: the Chief of Staff to include Members in the weekly email to staff listing all of the staff vacancies published, to help encourage applicants through their networks.</p>		Elizabeth Hannah	14 Sept 2023	23 Nov 2023

Committee: Epping Forest & Commons Committee	Date: 23 November 2023
Subject: Annual Review of Terms of Reference	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: Town Clerk	For Decision
Report author: Blair Stringman, Town Clerk's Department	

Summary

As part of the implementation of the 2021 Governance Review, it was agreed that the cycle and process of annually reviewing the Terms of Reference of all Committees/Boards should be revised, to provide more time for Committees to consider and discuss changes before they are submitted to the Policy and Resources Committee. This is to enable any proposed changes to be considered in time for the annual reappointment of Committees by the Court of Common Council.

Following approval at the Epping Forest & Commons Committee, the terms of reference of the are attached as an appendix to this report for Members' consideration.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- The terms of reference of the Epping Forest & 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;
- Members consider whether any change is required to the frequency of the Committee's meetings.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Terms of Reference

Blair Stringman

Governance Officer

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Appendix 1

LYONS, Mayor	RESOLVED: That the Court of Common Council holden in the Guildhall of the City of London on Thursday 27 th April 2023, doth hereby appoint the following Committee until the first meeting of the Court in April, 2024.
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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 Natural Environment Board (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 2023/24**

ALDERMEN

- 4 Nicholas Stephen Leland Lyons
- 1 Vincent Keaveny

COMMONERS

- 8 (4) Graeme Martyn Doshi-Smith, Deputy
- 9 (3) Gregory Alfred Lawrence
- 6 (2) Benjamin Daniel Murphy *for a three-year term*
- 2 (2) Madush Gupta, Deputy *for a three-year term*
- 7 (2) George Christopher Abrahams
- 7 (2) Caroline Wilma Haines
- 2 (2) Jaspreet Hodgson *for a two-year term*
- 9 (1) Deputy Philip Woodhouse

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 Natural Environment Board, 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)

Appendix 1

- (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 Natural Environment Board for that Committee's allocation of grants which relate to Epping Forest and Commons.

Agenda Item 6

Committee(s)	Dated:
Epping Forest and Commons Committee	23 November 2023
Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, and Queen's Park Committee	29 November 2023
Natural Environment Board	4 December 2023
West Ham Park Committee	4 December 2023
Subject: Business Plan 2023/24 – Progress Report (mid-year, April-September 2023)	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	Outcomes: 2, 3, 5, 10, 11, 12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
Report of: Bob Roberts, Interim Executive Director, Environment	For Information
Report author: Joanne Hill, Environment Department	

Summary

This report provides Members with an update on progress against the Environment Department's high-level Business Plan 2023/24. Due to the complexity and scope of the department, three separate High-Level Business Plans were produced to reflect our three key Committee 'clusters'. This report refers to the Business Plan which covers the Natural Environment Division and City Gardens.

The report summarises the progress that has been made against major workstreams and performance measures during the first six months of 2023/24. An update on the financial position is provided in the separate Chamberlain's report also presented to this Committee.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the content of this report and its appendices.

Main Report

Background

1. The Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee approved the High-Level Departmental Business Plan 2023/24 on 13 February 2023.
2. The Business Plan sets out the major workstreams and key performance indicators (KPIs) for the year ahead.
3. To ensure your Committee is kept informed, progress made against the high-level Business Plan is reported to you every six months. This approach allows Members to ask questions and have a timely input into areas of particular importance to them.

Current Position

Major workstreams

4. The high-level Business Plan set out workstreams that would be undertaken during 2023/24. Throughout the year, your Committee is kept informed on the progress of the key workstreams by way of regular Assistant Director Update reports and/or separate detailed reports. A summary of progress made to the end of September 2023 is presented below.

Carbon Removals Project

- a) Proposals for rescoping the project will be presented to the Natural Environment Board and Policy and Resources Committee for approval in the coming months.
 - The proposals extend the original project scope (i.e. creating new habitats to increase carbon sequestration capacity) to include measures to protect the existing carbon sequestration capacity.
 - The additional proposals have been drawn up in liaison with external consultants, Arcadis.

Learning and Play Programmes

- b) During the first six months of the year the following groups took part in activities which enhanced wellbeing and nature connection:
 - 10,214 school students
 - 164 students with special education needs
 - 323 13–25-year-olds, and
 - 13,733 play participants.

North London Open Spaces

- c) Support the development of volunteer skills, networks and confidence, and improve volunteer wellbeing.
 - In conjunction with partner organisation, Heath Hands, a varied programme of walks, talks, training workshops and social events runs throughout the year at Hampstead Heath.
 - The programme includes twice-weekly health walks, monthly forest bathing workshops and training in a variety of topics from bird and tree identification to history and geology. There are also 'toolbox talks' at the start of each volunteer session to aid learning.
 - All wellbeing is monitored and tracked via the annual Volunteer Opinion Survey.
- d) Develop income generating activities and continue to investigate further opportunities for funding
 - Initial proposals have been submitted by North London Open Spaces for discussion as part of the ongoing Natural Environment Charity Review. Also, Officers continue to review existing licences and agreements to ensure that market rate income is being received.
- e) Develop a gift aid system for the Natural Environment Charities
 - Hampstead Heath Charity and Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Charity can

receive Gift Aid if donations are made through the 'Just Giving' platform which collects Gift Aid from HMRC on the charities' behalf.

f) Highgate Roman Kiln

- The National Lottery Heritage Fund Awarded £250k to The Friends of Roman Highgate Kiln charity for the 'Firing London's Imagination Project'.
- A Heritage Officer has been engaged to provide support, with 50% of the cost funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Epping Forest

g) Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS).

- The Countryside Stewardship (CSS) application for the second half of the Forest is due to be completed in October 2023.
- The CSS application for buffer land will need to wait until the carbon removals rescoping has been resolved and additional staff are recruited.
- The CSS application for Wanstead Park is dependent on sufficient staffing resource to provide a project lead.

The Commons

h) Chilterns area of outstanding natural beauty (AONB)

- There has been no further progress by Chilterns AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) regarding their boundary review.

i) Stakeholder engagement on the Burnham Beeches habitat management programme

- A partnership meeting was held in early August. Various actions were agreed and will be followed up at a further meeting on 8 November 2023.

j) Burnham Beeches Strategic Access Management and Monitoring program (SAMM)

- Regular updates have been provided to partners and the annual SAMMs progress review meeting is scheduled for 11 December 2023.
- Engagement activity is being provided by Community Engagement Rangers as required.

City Gardens

k) Biodiversity Action Plan

- The Biodiversity Action Plan programme to improve gardens and planting along the biodiversity routes has commenced, and the first two gardens (St Mary Aldermanbury and All Hallows by the Tower) have been delivered.
- The vacant post which is being funded by the Woodland Accelerator Fund has now been filled and trial pits are being dug ahead of this year's planting programme to deliver the Street Tree Development Programme.

l) Fleet replacement

- Electric vehicles to replace the remaining diesel fleet will be delivered in Spring 2024.

Performance Measures

5. 10 Key Performance Indicators were identified in the Business Plan. These measures are monitored to assess performance against targets and the progression of key workstreams. Details of performance to the end of September 2023 is provided at Appendix 1.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications – The monitoring of key workstreams and performance measures links to the achievement of the aims and outcomes set out in the Corporate Plan 2023-24.

Financial Implications – Financial implications are addressed in the separate Chamberlain’s report presented to this Committee.

Resource implications – Recruitment to vacant posts across the division is underway.

Risk implications - Risks to achieving the objectives set out in the Business Plan are identified and managed in accordance with the City of London Risk Management Framework. Risk Registers are reported to this Committee quarterly.

Climate implications – An update on the Carbon Removals Project is presented in a separate report to your Committee.

Charity implications - Many of the Natural Environment sites are registered charities. Any decisions must be taken in the best interests of the relevant charity.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Performance measures

Contact

Joanne Hill, Business Planning and Compliance Manager, Environment Department

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Progress against Key Performance Indicators 1 April 2023 – 30 September 2023

↑	The Mid-Year performance of this indicator has been above or on target .
↓	The Mid-Year performance of this indicator has been below target .

Performance Measure Description	Target 2023/24	Performance 2023/24 (Mid-Year Result)
Retain our Green Heritage Site Accreditation.	13 Awards	13 Awards ↑
Retain our Green Flag Awards.	14 Awards	14 Awards ↑
Number of volunteer work hours.	N/A <i>(Comparable baseline data for 2022/23 is not available)</i>	The Commons: 7,816 Epping Forest: 3,166 HH, QP & HW: 8,841 West Ham Park: 921 Keats House: 352 Total: 21,906
Number of Ranger days spent interacting with visitors in Burnham Beeches with regards to SAMM commitments and Section 106 agreements.	>100 days by year end	N/A, annual measure
Number of visitors to The Queens Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge (QEHL) and the Temple at Epping Forest.	QEHL: >10,644 The Temple: baseline data for 2022/23 is not available	QEHL: 7,041 ↑ Temple: 617
Number of visitors to Keats House.	> 5,149 <i>(2022/23 performance)</i>	4,206 ↑
Number of visitors recorded at the Bathing Ponds and Lido at Hampstead Heath.	N/A <i>(Baseline data for 2022/23 is not available)</i>	Lido: 181,372 Ponds: 280,137 Total: 461,509
Self-reported perception of wellbeing by Learning Programme participants.	Positive result	9% ↑
Progress toward achieving net zero (carbon) (improvement against baseline).	-16.2 kilo tonnes CO ₂ e	-16.2kt CO ₂ e ↑
Health and safety accident investigations completed within 21 days.	85% <i>(Corporate target)</i>	87% ↑

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Committee(s): Epping Forest & Commons Committee	Dated: 23/11/2023
Subject: Operational Finance Progress Report (Period 6 April - September) 2023/24 – Epping Forest and Commons	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?	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: Chamberlain	For Information
Report author: Clem Harcourt, Chamberlain’s Department	

Summary

This report provides an update on the operational finance position as @ period 6 (April – September) 2023/24 for your Committee’s local risk revenue budget to date and projected year-end outturn position, current live capital projects and outstanding debt position. It also provides additional information on the various reserve funds held and other relevant finance information for the divisions of service and Charities which fall within the remit of your Committee.

This report does not specifically concentrate on just charity finance in isolation, as this work will be part of the ongoing Charity Review and will be developed in conjunction with that project. As part of the Charity Review, future training sessions will be designed for both Members and Officers on key aspects of charity finance. This report is designed to also report on budgetary management issues that the Interim Executive Director Environment is responsible for to successfully manage the operations and finances of your Committee which sits within the Natural Environment Division.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the content of this report and its appendices.

Main Report

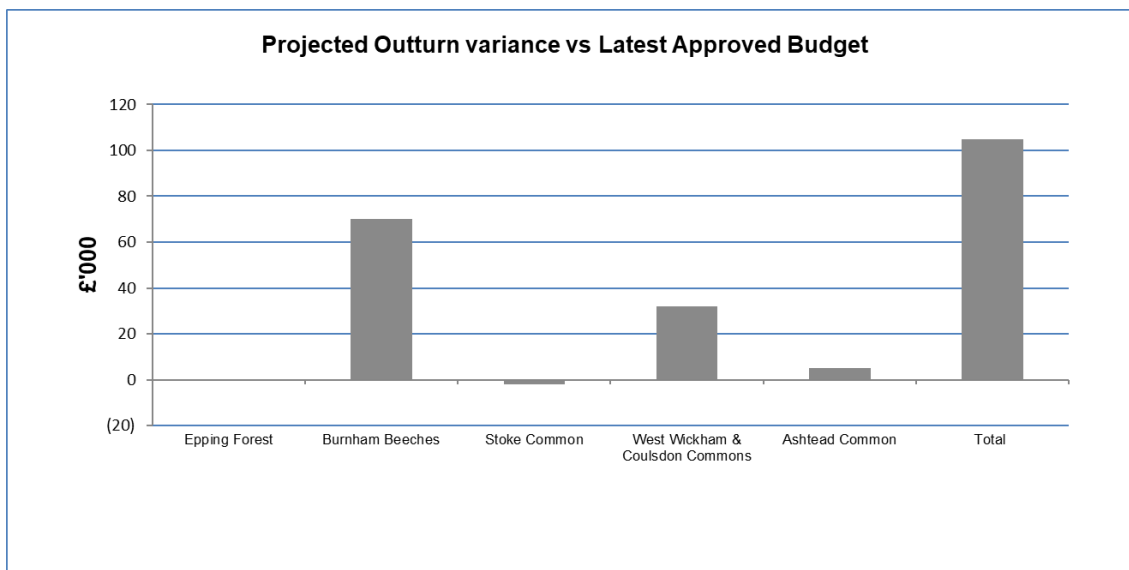
Background

1. In order to improve financial reporting to your Committee, a set of various financial appendices and commentary have been produced to enable greater clarity of revenue and capital budgets and other financial information needed to allow greater scrutiny of the financial performance of the various divisions of services and Charities within the Natural Environment Division that report to your Committee, to ensure they remain within the Interim Executive Director Environment’s local risk resources for 2023/24.

- To ensure your Committee is kept informed, an update on progress made against budgets will be reported to you on a quarterly basis. This approach will allow Members to ask questions and have a timely input into areas of particular importance.

Local Risk Revenue Forecast Outturn 2023/24

- The divisions of service and Charities that fall within the remit of your Committee has an overall net local risk expenditure revenue budget of £4.957m as reported at the end of September 2023. The current forecast outturn for 2023/24 as @ period 6 (September) is £4.853m, a forecast year-end underspend of £104k. This represents an increase in the projected underspend of £90k compared with the position to the end of June 2023, reported previously to your Committee.
- This forecast underspend is part of a wider underspend currently projected for other divisions of service within the Natural Environment Division of £286k reported at the end of September 2023.
- In the graph below, the forecast outturn budget performance by each individual division of service within your Committee is listed. Appendix 1 sets out a more detailed financial analysis of each individual division of service reporting to your Committee, including reasons for significant budget variations.



Notes:

- Zero is the baseline latest approved budget for each Division of Service.
- Graph shows projected outturn position against the latest approved budget.
- A variance above the baseline is favourable i.e. either additional income or reduced expenditure.
- A variance below the baseline is unfavourable i.e. additional expenditure or reduced income.
- Forecast outturn is £4.853m, representing a projected underspend of £104k against the latest approved budget of £4.957m.
- The overall local risk forecast position is currently relatively close to the latest budget, with a small underspend of £104k (2.10%) forecast at year end against the approved budget. Though there are variations within these net figures, they offset each other overall and are close to matching the overall budget. Details of all the offsetting variations can be seen within Appendices 6-10.

7. It should also be noted that the latest local risk budgets for 2023/24 have been adjusted to reflect the new Target Operating Model (TOM2) staffing structure within the Natural Environment division.
8. The main outturn variances projected are at Burnham Beeches where there is currently forecast to be a £69k underspend compared with the latest approved budget. This can be explained by additional income generated from filming projects as well as underspends in employment costs attributable to staff vacancies. The projected underspend is partly offset by additional grounds maintenance costs and reduced income from car parking.
9. In addition there is projected to be an underspend of £32k on the local risk budget at West Wickham & Coulsdon Commons. This can be explained by underspends on salary costs due to a staff vacancy, as well as additional income generated from the sale of vehicles. These underspends are partly offset by an overspend on grounds maintenance costs.
10. Finally, outturn variances for Epping Forest relate to salary underspends as a result of existing staff vacancies from the new TOM2 structure yet to be recruited. This in addition to extra income generated from sales at the Visitor Centre and from Chingford Golf Course. These underspends are planned to be fully offset by additional spending relating to new vehicle purchases and grounds maintenance costs, as well as professional fees incurred due to there being a greater need for the use of contractors due to staff vacancies whilst the TOM2 staffing restructure has been undertaken.

Local Risk Actual Position to Date

11. Appendices 2 and 3 set out the year-to-date income and expenditure actual position against year-to-date budget, including notes for significant budget variations. In addition, there is a graphical split of the mix of the type of income and expenditure categories making up these actual figures for your Committee.
12. Appendix 2 highlights that your Committee has received actual income to date of £1.460m against a budget to date of £1.248m, a favourable variance of £212k.
13. The above variation is largely explained by income at Epping Forest being £184k greater than the income budget profile to date. This can be explained by additional income generated from Chingford Golf Course as well as the Visitor Centre.
14. In addition, income from West Wickham & Coulsdon Commons is £48k higher than the expected budget profile. This is attributable to grant income received being greater than budgeted as well as additional income generated from sale of vehicles and rent.
15. Appendix 3 highlights that your Committee has incurred actual expenditure to date of £3.345m against a budget to date of £3.887m, a favourable variance of £542k to date.
16. The main expenditure variances relate to Epping Forest where there is a favourable position to date of £434k mainly due to underspends on salary costs due to vacant posts in the new TOM2 structure yet to be recruited.

17. In addition, expenditure at Burnham Beeches is currently £85k underspent against profile mainly due to vacant posts.
18. Variances to date can be incurred due to a variety of reasons including timing differences, incorrect budget profiling, new items of income or expenditure that weren't originally budgeted or planned, as well as genuine increases/decreases in expenditure or income. They do not always mean that these will result in a year-end overspend or underspend, as the Department look to offset ups and downs and make budget adjustments to control unexpected items to remain within overall budget constraints.
19. To enable further detailed consideration of the service areas relating specifically to your Committee, Appendices 6-10 detail the individual division of service local risk and central risk monitoring reports to the end of September 2023.

Capital Projects

20. Table 1 below outlines the current list of live capital projects in progress against their currently approved budget. It should be noted that the "current approved budget" is the amount currently agreed by Members to progress the project to either the next project gateway or until Officers request further release of capital funds to progress the scheme and may not equal the total estimated cost of the project to finalisation.
21. Out of a current approved budget of £1.319m, £577k has been spent or committed to date, leaving a remaining budget of £742k to progress the various projects to the next project gateway or release of further capital funds.
22. It should be noted that the current estimate for the total cost of the 'Climate Action Strategy Carbon Removals Year 1' project is projected to underspent compared with the project's latest budget. This is due to the budget for contingencies which is not currently expected to be utilised and the cost of feasibility studies and works currently forecast to be underspent.

Table 1 – Live Capital Projects

Epping Forest and Commons - Capital Projects - September 2023 (Period 6)

Capital Projects - Epping Forest & Commons	Total Estimated Cost of Project	Current Approved Budget	Prior Year Actual Spend	In Year Actual Expenditure	In Year Committed Expenditure	Current Approved Budget Unspent
	£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s
<u>Epping Forest</u>						
Artificial Grass Pitch Provision at Wanstead Flats (Parklife)	10,000,000	70,000	41,426	0	0	28,574
Climate Action Strategy - Carbon Removals Year 1	154,684	504,905	132,676	573	0	371,656
Epping Forest - COVID-19 Path Restoration Project	250,000	0	0	0	0	0
Epping Forest Various Sites - BEMS Upgrade Phase 2	357,520	0	0	0	0	0
Wanstead Park Ponds Project	1,142,501	241,000	166,821	(641)	0	74,820
Baldwins & Birch Hall Park Ponds	1,740,938	502,600	233,644	42	2,450	266,464
TOTAL EPPING FOREST AND COMMONS COMMITTEE	13,645,643	1,318,505	574,568	(27)	2,450	741,515

23. The capital bidding process for 2024/25 is currently underway for new capital projects with a pot of £20m being made available within City Fund and £5m for City's Cash services. New capital bids are to be reviewed against the

department's overall capital programme and timescales for delivery with bids only expected to be put forward on a by exception basis and on the assumption that the projects will commence in 2024/25.

24. Four new City Cash bids totalling £1.122m were submitted to the Chamberlain in this process relating to projects at Epping Forest, The Commons and West Ham Park. These were considered at the recent Priorities Board where all three of the bids relating to this Committee were successfully approved for onward submission to RASC in November, to be considered by Members as part of the annual capital bid process:
- City Commons – boundary livestock fencing replacement £92k;
 - City Commons – entrance board replacement £160k; and
 - Epping Forest - Copped Hall Park Tudor Square pond sluice gates £470k.

Outstanding Invoiced Debts

25. At the end of September 2023, total outstanding invoiced debt for your Committee was £142,185 out of a total debt for the Natural Environment Division (including City Gardens) of £209,361. Relating to your Committee, £67,636 (48%) was over 120 days, £3,557 (2%) was between 60-120 days and £70,992 (50%) was under 60 days.
26. Appendix 4 shows a graphical representation of the total invoiced debts over 120 days outstanding, which is the maximum age of debt set by the Chamberlain to recover outstanding sums. The top graph shows the time trend of the level of 120 day+ debt outstanding over the previous 6-month period.
27. The lower graph analyses the split of this debt across the various divisions of service for your Committee. The majority of the £67,636 outstanding 120 day+ debt balance relates to Epping Forest (£59,201 / 88%). The overall debt for your Committee is made up of £25,578 in rent receivable debtors and £42,058 in other debtors, including £21,736 owed by one individual debtor with this debt currently being pursued by the Comptroller & City Solicitor's department.
28. The increase in outstanding debts over 120 days compared with the position reported at the end of June 2023 can be explained by £19,000 currently being owed by an individual debtor. This debt is currently being pursued by staff at Epping Forest.

Charity Funds (Restricted, Unrestricted and Endowments)

29. Appendix 5 lists the various restricted, unrestricted and endowment funds held by each charity. It details the opening balance for the 2023/24 financial year and any movements up to period 6 (April-September 2023).
30. Movements within reserve funds since the start of the current financial year primarily relates to a capital receipt of £99k which was credited to the Epping Forest Fund Reserve (Capital Fund) in relation to a deed of grant easement received for an individual property. This has increased the balance held to £894,162. All other movements in reserve funds in 2023/24 to date relate to the

receipt of donations income which amounts to a total of £11,178 received for all charities related to your Committee.

31. It should be noted that the external audit of the 2022/23 accounts for individual Natural Environment charities is currently taking place and the 2023/24 opening balances shown for each reserve fund in Appendix 5 may be subject to revision.
32. There are various types of restricted, unrestricted and endowment funds held by the Natural Environment charities which have different rules as to how they can be spent and time periods held. These are categorised in the following way:
 - **Restricted Income Fund** - funds have been given to a charity for application for a specific element of the charity's objects and can only be spent in accordance with the requests of the donor or the specific campaign under which funds were raised. As these are income funds they should be spent within a reasonable period of time.
 - **Unrestricted Income Fund** - incoming resources that become available to a charity and can be applied by the Trustee to any of the charity's objects. Unrestricted income funds should be spent within a reasonable period of time and should not be held for the long term, although the Trustee should set a policy for the minimum required level of funds which is a target minimum to be held in case of particular identified risk. In the case of the City's Cash funded charities, the current deficit funding model means that no such minimum can be identified, as at year end the difference between income and expenditure is balanced by the deficit funding grant from City's Cash.
 - **Designated (Unrestricted Income Fund)** - are those unrestricted funds which have been set aside by the Trustee for an essential spend or future purpose. Whilst there is no legal restriction on their use for general purposes, and they can be undesignated by those acting on behalf of the Trustee at any time, these funds are effectively 'ring-fenced' and no longer form part of your free reserves/general funds. Designated funds must be spent within a reasonable period of time and should not be held for the long term.
 - **Endowment** - these are funds of the charity that must be invested and are intended to be held for the long term. There are two classes of endowment:
 - **Permanent Endowment** - must be invested and held in perpetuity. These funds can either be invested to provide income to support the charity's purposes e.g. the Hampstead Heath Trust Fund. The other class of permanent endowment is a functional permanent endowment where assets must be retained and used for the charity's purposes.
 - **Expendable Endowment** - an expendable endowment fund is a fund that must be invested to produce income, but the Trustee has the power to convert all or part of it into an income fund which can then be spent.

Deficit Funding

33. The current funding model is for each charity's total net expenditure (local risk, central risk and recharges) to be fully funded from City's Cash. This also includes the cost of any capital expenditure incurred during the year as well any

works managed by the City Surveyor under the Cyclical Works Programme (CWP) carried out over the course of the year. It should be noted that any changes to the amount of expenditure incurred or income generated over the course of the year by an individual charity will have an impact on the overall level of deficit funding required by the relevant charity at year end. The amount of deficit funding for each charity is therefore calculated based on its **actual total net running costs for the year** in addition to any capital expenditure and CWP costs incurred during the year.

34. Therefore year on year there are variations in the level of deficit funding received depending upon actual total net running costs incurred for the year. However, at the start of the following year, available budget funding is reset to the levels agreed by your Committee at the estimates review, so as to remain within the resource envelope set by RASC. At no stage is the budget reduced (and potentially the level of deficit funding required) unless agreed by your Committee within this annual process managed and reported by the Chamberlain to gain approval of the annual estimates.
35. The table below details previous year's levels of deficit funding grant made from City's Cash to the various Natural Environment charities within your Committee, with a forecast of that sum currently required for 2023/24. This is broken down by the level of expenditure and income generated by each charity as well as any CWP works and capital expenditure funded through City's Cash which comprises the total level of deficit funding required for each charity.
36. The projection for the current financial year is based on the forecast for local and central risk net expenditure (as at the end of September 2023) in addition to latest budgets for recharges and budgets managed by the City Surveyor, for CWP projects. Please note that the amount of deficit funding provided by City's Cash is unique to each individual charity and deficit funding cannot be used to offset the level of funding provided to a separate charity. Please also be aware that deficit funding figures shown for 2022/23 are currently provisional as the external audit for the individual Natural Environment charities has not yet been completed.

Table 2 – Deficit Funding – 2020/21 to 2023/24

Ashtead Common	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	£'000s	£'000s	(Prov.)	(Est.)
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
Gross Expenditure (excluding Cyclical Works)	525	491	542	567
Gross Income	32	12	35	60
Cyclical Works Expenditure	18	(8)	17	0
Capital Expenditure financed through Deficit Funding	0	0	0	0
Total Deficit Funding - Ashtead Common	511	471	524	507
Burnham Beeches & Stoke Common	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	£'000s	£'000s	(Prov.)	(Est.)
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
Gross Expenditure (excluding Cyclical Works)	1,124	1,088	1,324	1,294
Gross Income	281	411	486	495
Cyclical Works Expenditure	-9	131	134	0
Capital Expenditure financed through Deficit Funding	202	88	79	
Total Deficit Funding - Burnham Beeches & Stoke Common	1,036	896	1,051	799
Epping Forest	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	£'000s	£'000s	(Prov.)	(Est.)
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
Gross Expenditure (excluding Cyclical Works)	6,316	6,871	7,308	8,003
Gross Income	1,581	2,737	3,310	2,305
Cyclical Works Expenditure	349	480	293	610
Capital Expenditure financed through Deficit Funding	67	57	197	
Total Deficit Funding - Epping Forest	5,059	4,527	4,879	6,308
West Wickham & Coulsdon Common	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	£'000s	£'000s	(Prov.)	(Est.)
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
Gross Expenditure (excluding Cyclical Works)	1,266	1,113	1,224	1,036
Gross Income	231	239	158	181
Cyclical Works Expenditure	124	14	198	0
Capital Expenditure financed through Deficit Funding	89	158	0	
Total Deficit Funding - West Wickham & Coulsdon Common	1,094	1,046	1,264	855
Committee Total	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	£'000s	£'000s	(Prov.)	(Est.)
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
Gross Expenditure (excluding Cyclical Works)	9,231	9,563	10,398	10,900
Gross Income	2,125	3,399	3,989	3,041
Cyclical Works Expenditure	482	617	642	610
Capital Expenditure financed through Deficit Funding	358	303	276	
Total Deficit Funding - Epping Forest & Commons Committee	7,700	6,940	7,718	8,469

37. As can be seen from the table above, 2022/23 saw an increase in the amount of deficit funding provided by City's Cash to each of the charities related to your

Committee compared with the previous year. This can be explained by an increase in gross expenditure partly related to an increase in recharges from the Natural Environment Directorate as well as the re-phasing of projects under the CWP managed by City Surveyor's. Please note that the CWP does not form part of the City Surveyor's local risk budget and is a programme of works over multiple financial years, with any variances carried over to future financial years. The carry-over of unspent balances are reported to the Projects and Procurement Sub-Committee as part of closing of accounts. The increase in deficit funding at Epping Forest compared with 2021/22 was partly offset by an increase in income generated in 2022/23 which was attributable to additional income from both car parking and the Visitor Centre as well as the proceeds received from an insurance settlement relating to Loughton Golf Course.

38. The current forecast for 2023/24 indicates an increase in the amount of deficit funding due to be provided to your Committee's charities overall by City's Cash compared with the provisional outturn for 2022/23. This can largely be explained by an increase in Epping Forest's local risk net expenditure budget for 2023/24 as a result of additional resources being provided following the introduction of the new TOM2 restructure. The increase is partly offset by a reduction in the level of expenditure forecast for West Wickham and Coulsdon Commons as a result of a decrease in repairs and maintenance costs managed by the City Surveyor compared with 2022/23.

Other Relevant Financial Issues

39. Members may also wish to note that Finance Committee recently agreed to provide £210k in additional funding from City's Cash contingency monies to support works on known dangerous trees at Epping Forest during 2023/24.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Local Risk Revenue Budget Forecast Outturn 2023/24

Appendix 2 - Income Performance 2023/24 as @ September 2023 (period 6)

Appendix 3 - Expenditure Performance 2023/24 as @ September 2023 (period 6)

Appendix 4 - Outstanding Invoiced Debt 120 Days as @ September 2023 (period 6)

Appendix 5 – Charity Funds (Restricted, Unrestricted & Endowments)

Appendix 6 to Appendix 10 - Epping Forest & Commons Committee individual Division of Service Local Risk and Central Risk Monitoring Reports @ September 2023 (period 6)

Contact

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Appendix 1

Epping Forest and Commons - Local Risk Revenue Budget Forecast 2023/24 - September 2023 (Period 6)

(Expenditure and unfavourable variances are shown in brackets)

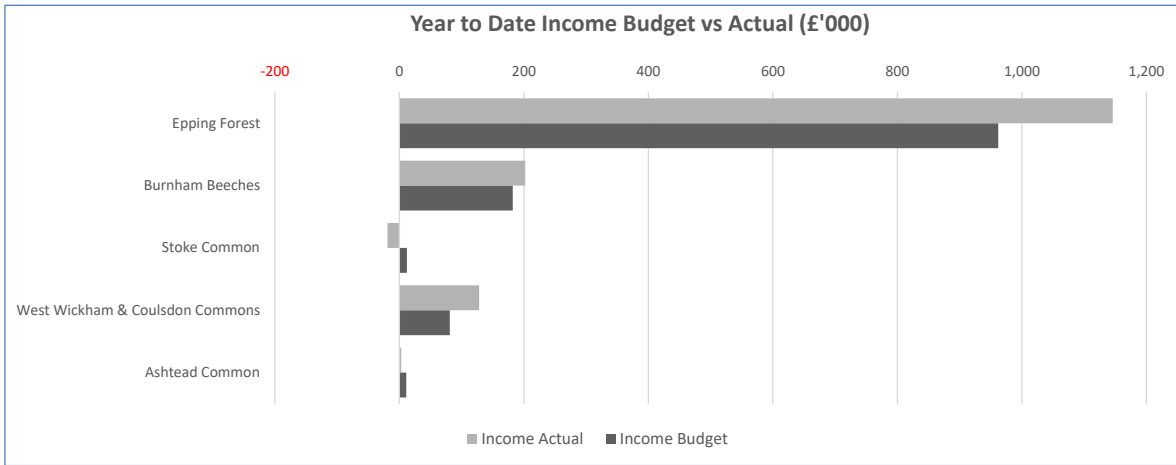
Committee / Division of Service	Latest Approved Budget 2023/24 £'000	Forecast for the Year 2023/24		Notes
		Projected Outturn £'000	Variance from Latest Approved Budget 2023/24 £'000	
<u>Epping Forest and Commons Committee (City's Cash)</u>				
Epping Forest	(3,384)	(3,384)	0	
Burnham Beeches	(511)	(442)	69	1
Stoke Common	(26)	(28)	(2)	
West Wickham & Coulsdon Commons	(626)	(594)	32	2
Ashted Common	(410)	(405)	5	
TOTAL EPPING FOREST AND COMMONS COMMITTEE	(4,957)	(4,853)	104	

Notes:

- 1. Burnham Beeches** - projected underspend due to additional income generated from filming as well as underspends on staff costs as a result of vacancies.
- 2. West Wickham & Coulsdon Commons** - underspend largely explained by lower than anticipated salary costs due to one role currently being vacant as well as additional income generated from sales.

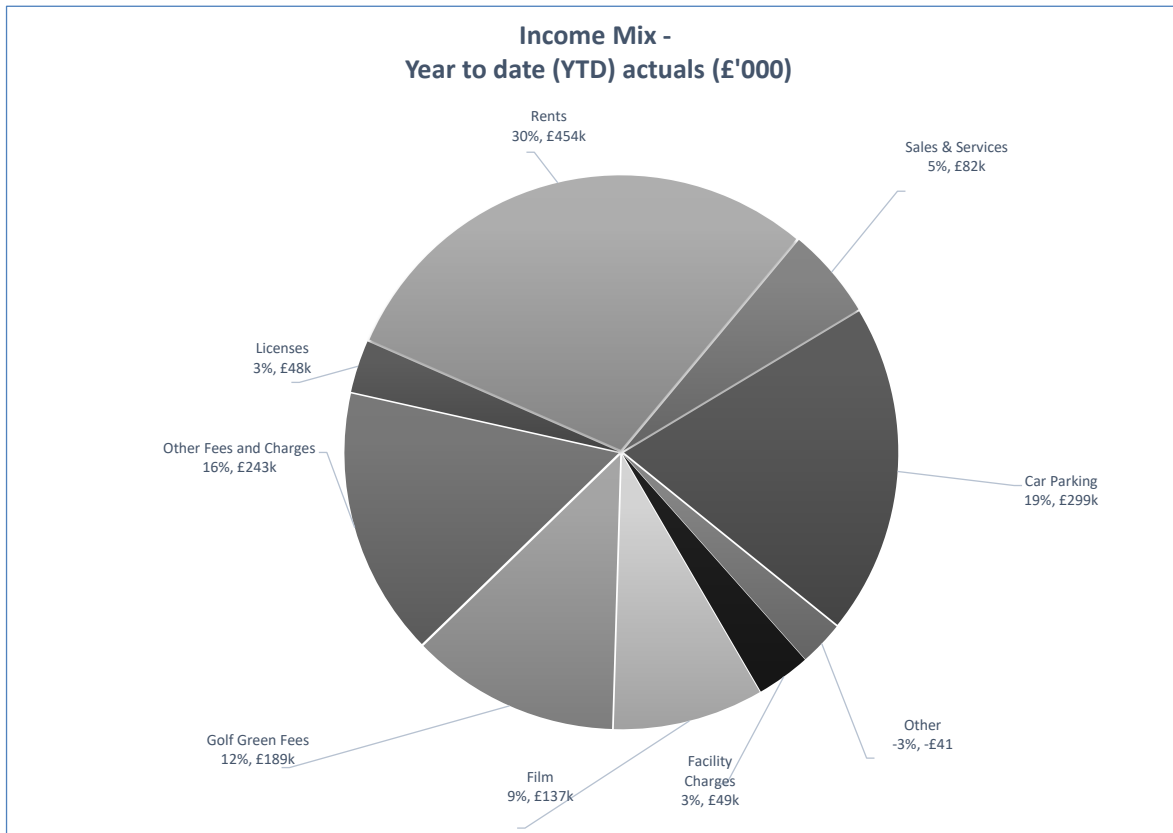
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Epping Forest and Commons - Income Performance 2023/24 - September 2023 (Period 6)



Notes:

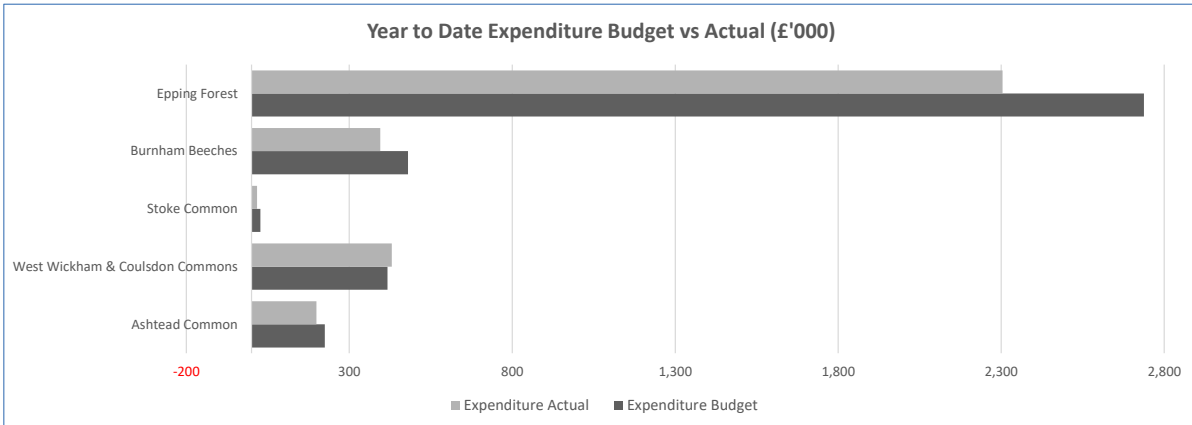
- Epping Forest** - income is £184k ahead of profile as a result of increased income from Chingford Golf Course as well as additional sales generated from the Visitor Centre.
- West Wickham & Coulsdon Commons** - income is currently ahead of the budget to date by £48k explained by grant income currently being greater than the budget profile as well as higher than anticipated income generated from both sales and rents.



- Total year to date actual income as @ September 2023 (Period 6) = £1.460m.
- Other income primarily relates to government grants.
- Fees & Charges relates to use of facilities and admissions mainly at Epping Forest.
- Sales & Services relates to various sports provided and Visitor Centre shop at Epping Forest.

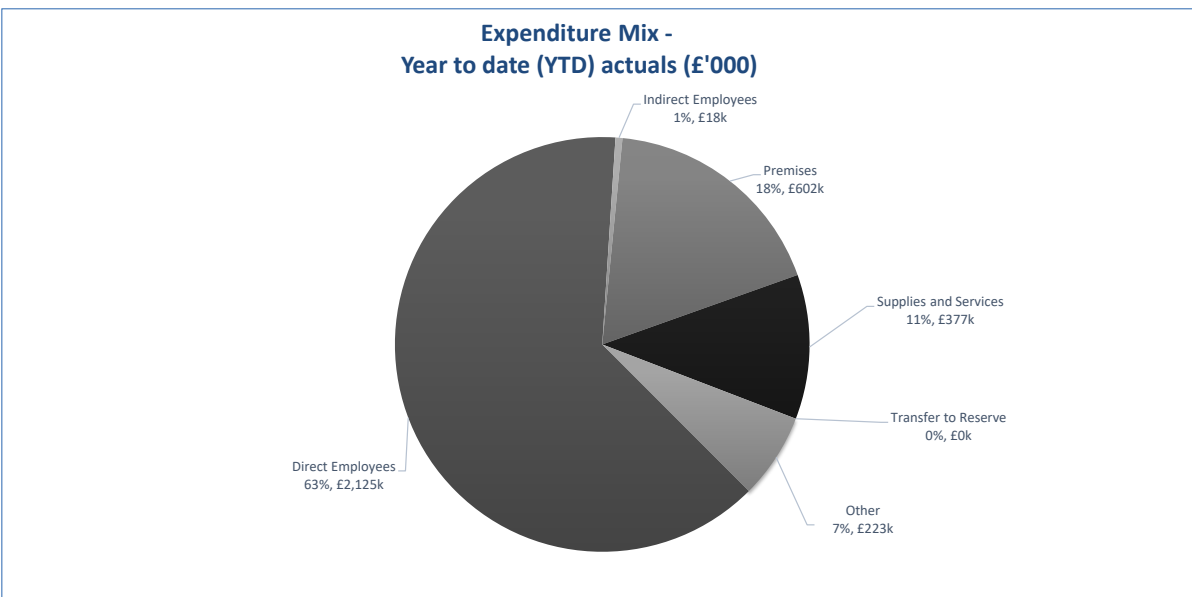
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Epping Forest and Commons - Expenditure Performance 2023/24 - September 2023 (Period 6)



Notes:

- Epping Forest** - favourable variance of £434k largely explained by underspends on salary costs as a result of current vacancies with recruitment for posts related to the new TOM2 structure currently ongoing.
- Burnham Beeches** - underspend against budget profile of £85k largely explained by lower than anticipated salary costs due to vacant posts as well as the costs incurred to date on grounds maintenance and fees and services currently being behind the budget profile.
- Ashtead Common** - £26k underspend on expenditure due to grounds maintenance costs currently being less than the expected budget to date.

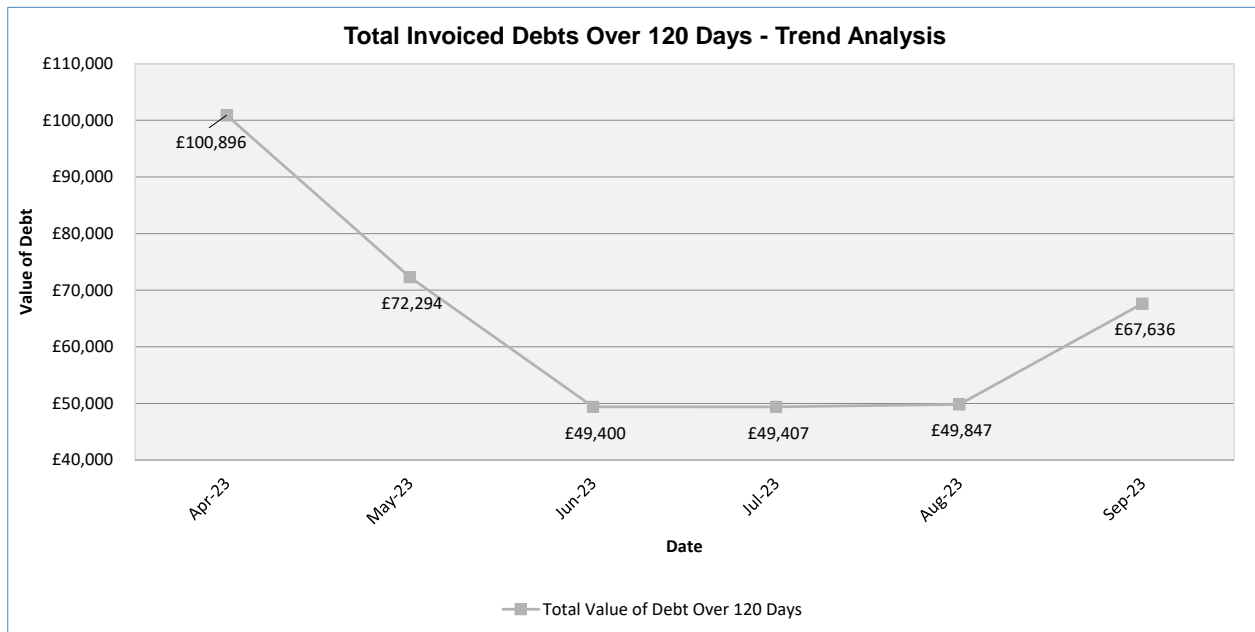


Notes:

- Total year to date actual expenditure as @ September 2023 (Period 6) = £3.345m
- Premises costs mainly relate to cleaning & refuse; electricity & gas; rates; repairs & maintenance; water etc.
- Supplies & Services costs mainly relates to equipment; furniture & materials; communication & computing; livestock; professional fees & services; uniforms etc.
- Other costs mainly relate to cleansing charges; third party payments; transport.

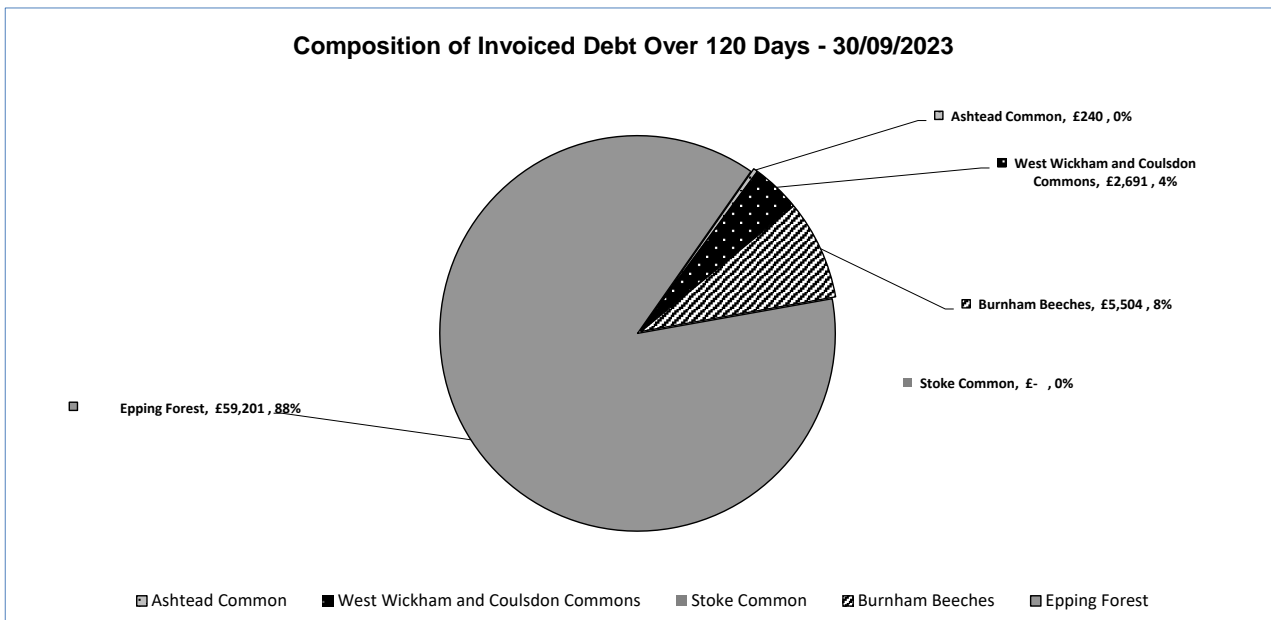
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Epping Forest and Commons
Outstanding Invoiced Debts Over 120 Days - September - (Period 6)



Note:

September 2023 total debt over 120 days is £67,636 for Epping Forest and Commons, an increase of £17,789 from the August debt position. The majority of this debt relates solely to Epping Forest (£59,201 / 88%).



Breakdown of Epping Forest and Commons debt £67,636

1. £25,578 - Rent Receivables (Lease Agreements)
2. £21,736 – Chingford Festival Chingford Plain
3. £19,000 - Development grant funding
4. £1,322 - Other small debtors

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Charity Funds (Restricted, Unrestricted and Endowments) - September 2023 (Period 6)

	Opening Balance 2023/24	Income	Expenditure	Gains, (Losses) & Transfers	Closing Balance 2023/24
	£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s
Epping Forest					
Restricted Income Funds:					
Campaign Donations	785	25			810
Countryside Stewardship Scheme	251,147				251,147
Unrestricted Income Funds:					
Unrestricted Income Funds	6,109	8,512			14,621
Designated (Unrestricted Income Fund):					
Tangible Fixed Assets (Land & Buildings, Infrastructure, Vehicle & Plant, and Equipment)	4,619,544				4,619,544
Heritage Assets	377,950				377,950
Epping Forest Fund Reserve (Capital Fund)	795,162	99,000			894,162
Ancient Trees Maintenance Fund	15,000				15,000
Sports Ground Deposit	4,061				4,061
Golf Course Machinery Fund	12,717				12,717
Knighton Wood Maintenance	5,801				5,801
Branching Out Project	42,423				42,423
Future Green Infrastructure fund	5,051				5,051
Cattle Purchase Fund (Grazing Account)	152,788				152,788
Wanstead Park/ Flats future Projects fund	100,000				100,000
South Lodge the Warren (Loughton Golf Course)	496,800				496,800
Total Epping Forest	6,885,339	107,537	0	0	6,992,875
Burnham Beeches					
Restricted Income Funds:					
Legacy Income - Pond Maintenance	60,014				60,014
Campaign Donations	6,228	218			6,446
Section 106 Contributions	721,310				721,310
Unrestricted Income Funds:					
Unrestricted Income Funds	2,268	676			2,944
Designated (Unrestricted Income Fund):					
Stoke Common	132,586				132,586
Capital Adjustment Account (Fixed Assets)	470,086				470,086
Infrastructure (Fixed Assets)	137,725				137,725
Furniture and Equipment (Fixed Assets)	232,487				232,487
Plant (Fixed Assets)	50,000				50,000
Total Burnham Beeches	1,812,704	894	0	0	1,813,598
West Wickham & Coulsdon Commons					
Restricted Income Funds:					
Campaign Donations - Farthing Downs	2,524	20			2,544
Unrestricted Income Funds:					
General Funds	3,272	1,027			4,299
Designated (Unrestricted Income Fund):					
Capital Reserve Funds	570,809				570,809
Total West Wickham & Coulsdon Commons	576,605	1,047	0	0	577,652
Ashtead Common					
Designated (Unrestricted Income Fund):					
Ancient Trees Reserve	1,660	701	0	0	2,361
Total Ashtead Common	1,660	701	0	0	2,361
Total Epping Forest and Commons Committee	9,276,308	110,178	0	0	9,386,485

Note:

The various sub-totals shown above should not give the impression that the individual funds held by each individual charity can be either consolidated or cross-utilised. It is key that individual charity funds are not viewed as available to be 'offset' against each other, bearing in mind the different objects held.

Please note that the external audit of the 2022/23 charity accounts is currently taking place and the above opening balances shown for each reserve fund are subject to revision.

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Natural Environment - Local Risk Revenue Budget 2023/24 - September (Period 6)

2022/23 Actuals £	EPPING FOREST	Latest Approved Budget 2023/24 £	Actual to Date £	Projected Outturn 2023/24 £	Variance from Latest Approved Budget 2023/24		
					£	%	
2,952,290	Direct Employees	4,217,000	1,392,589	3,328,000	(889,000)	-21%	1
15,773	Indirect Employees	23,000	7,953	23,000	0	0%	
210,004	Repairs and Maintenance	80,000	10,308	120,000	40,000	50%	2
92,768	Energy	55,000	51,626	55,000	0	0%	3
91,671	Rates	68,000	118,144	118,000	50,000	74%	4
45,588	Water	50,000	23,236	55,000	5,000	10%	
86,108	Cleaning & Domestic Supplies	75,000	50,304	130,000	55,000	73%	5
292,032	Grounds Maintenance Costs	323,000	217,419	473,000	150,000	46%	6
818,171	Premises	651,000	471,038	951,000	300,000	46%	
58,884	Vehicle Purchase	78,000	45,561	578,000	500,000	641%	7
60,625	Vehicle R&M	68,000	29,200	68,000	0	0%	
62,119	Vehicle Running Costs	56,000	26,969	56,000	0	0%	
28,651	Hired Transport	2,000	14,915	30,000	28,000	1400%	8
495	Staff Travelling Expenses	2,000	605	2,000	0	0%	
9,121	Car Allowances	3,000	5,134	10,000	7,000	233%	
219,894	Transport	209,000	122,383	744,000	535,000	256%	
491,741	Equipment, Furniture and Materials	223,000	153,451	223,000	0	0%	
8,915	Books	7,000	3,124	7,000	0	0%	
12,304	Animals and Livestock	0	4,498	13,000	13,000	n/a	
11,184	Clothes, Uniform and Laundry	8,000	4,835	8,000	0	0%	
30,328	Printing, Stationery and General Office Expenses	22,000	13,129	22,000	0	0%	
260,584	Fees and Services	68,000	95,701	260,000	192,000	282%	9
113,832	Communications and Computing	47,000	32,338	47,000	0	0%	
5,696	Expenses	2,000	1,878	4,000	2,000	100%	
1,386	Grants and Subscriptions	2,000	470	2,000	0	0%	
275	Miscellaneous Expenses	3,000	523	3,000	0	0%	
40,224	Contributions to Provisions	0	0	0	0	0%	
976,469	Supplies and Services	382,000	309,946	589,000	207,000	54%	
727,604	Transfer to Reserve	0	0	0	0	0%	
0	Third Party Payments	0	207	0	0	0%	
5,710,201	Total Expenditure	5,482,000	2,304,116	5,635,000	153,000	3%	
(299,895)	Government Grants	(257,000)	9,889	(257,000)	0	0%	10
0	Non Government Grants	0	(11,057)	(11,000)	(11,000)	n/a	
(90,638)	Other contributions	(3,000)	(8,537)	(8,000)	(5,000)	167%	
(145,405)	Sales	(80,000)	(54,488)	(108,000)	(28,000)	35%	11
(483,493)	Car Parking	(445,000)	(238,411)	(445,000)	0	0%	
(377,189)	Golf Green Fees	(291,000)	(189,031)	(355,000)	(64,000)	22%	12
(325,394)	Licenses	(149,000)	(47,530)	(149,000)	0	0%	
(116,220)	Facility Charges	(108,000)	(30,565)	(108,000)	0	0%	
(507,525)	Other Fees and Charges	(22,000)	(213,047)	(67,000)	(45,000)	205%	13
(488,724)	Rents, tithes, etc	(694,000)	(363,210)	(694,000)	0	0%	
(25,596)	Recharges to Capital Projects	(49,000)	0	(49,000)	0	0%	
(349,147)	Transfer from Reserves	0	0	0	0	0%	
(3,209,225)	Income	(2,098,000)	(1,145,988)	(2,251,000)	(153,000)	7%	
2,500,976	Total Net Expenditure - Local Risk	3,384,000	1,158,128	3,384,000	0	0%	
0	Central Risk						
0	Employees	61,000	0	61,000	0	0%	
39,356	Premises	0	0	0	0	0%	
6,300	Supplies and Services	0	0	0	0	0%	
447,413	Capital charges	462,000	0	462,000	0	0%	
(11,550)	Interest	(18,000)	(1,438)	(18,000)	0	0%	
481,519	Total Net Expenditure - Central Risk	505,000	(1,438)	505,000	0	0%	

Notes:

- Underspend on salaries due to existing staff vacancies with recruitment for new roles as part of the TOM2 structure unlikely to be completed until later in 2023/24. Repairs and maintenance costs are currently behind profile but expenditure is forecast to be overspent at year-end as a result of additional works likely to take place later in the year.
- Projected overspend of £45k due to energy price increases will now be met from central contingency.
- Overspend on council tax expenditure for 2023/24 as a result of increases in council tax.
- Projected overspend based on actual to date and current level of commitments.
- Overspend as a result of additional works being required on dangerous trees as well as investment in car park surfacing now being a priority since introducing car parking fees. Finance Committee recently agreed a bid to cover additional tree safety works which will be in addition to the budget shown above.
- Additional vehicle purchases are likely to be required during 2023/24 which will be funded from the projected underspend on salaries.
- Overspend in relation to hired transport costs with actual costs to date currently amounting to £7.5k per quarter.
- Projected overspend on fees and services due to higher requirement for contractors during final stages of TOM.
- Negative income figure due to reversal of listed debtor from 2022/23 for government grants with income from grants not yet fully received.
- Additional income received from sales in relation to Visitor Centre. Forecast increased based on £27k income per quarter.
- Extra income from golf received over the summer and is expected to be ahead of the current budget based on income received to date.
- Forecast to be kept under review - actual relates to income due to be reallocated to other budget lines.

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Natural Environment - Local Risk Revenue Budget 2023/24 - September (Period 6)

2022/23 Actuals £	BURNHAM BEECHES	Latest Approved Budget 2023/24 £	Actual to Date £	Projected Outturn 2023/24 £	Variance from Latest Approved Budget 2023/24		
					£	%	
546,102	Direct Employees	704,000	312,126	663,000	(41,000)	-6%	1
17,232	Indirect Employees	11,000	4,260	11,000	0	0%	
112,675	Premises	82,000	39,661	112,000	30,000	37%	2
92,653	Transport	14,000	5,230	16,500	2,500	18%	
29,190	Fees and Services	44,000	15,469	39,000	(5,000)	-11%	
61,842	Equipment, Furniture and Materials	37,000	9,182	37,000	0	0%	
63,301	other	22,000	9,509	22,000	0	0%	
154,332	Supplies and Services	103,000	34,160	98,000	(5,000)	-5%	
727,422	Transfer to Reserve	0	0	0	0	0%	
1,650,417	Total Expenditure	914,000	395,437	900,500	(13,500)	-1%	
(54,844)	Government grants	(35,000)	48,758	(35,000)	0	0%	3
(772,898)	Other Grants, Reimbursements and Contributions	(110,000)	(894)	(110,000)	0	0%	
(125,089)	Car Parking	(140,000)	(60,857)	(125,000)	15,000	-11%	4
(174,485)	Film	(71,000)	(136,557)	(137,000)	(66,000)	93%	5
(57,082)	Rents etc	(44,000)	(47,854)	(48,000)	(4,000)	9%	
(4,727)	Other	(3,000)	(4,405)	(4,000)	(1,000)	33%	
(1,189,125)	Income	(403,000)	(201,809)	(459,000)	(56,000)	14%	
461,292	Total Net Expenditure - Local Risk	511,000	193,628	441,500	(69,500)	-14%	
	Central Risk						
0	Direct Employees	6,000	0	6,000	0	0%	
5,951	Fees and Charges for Services, Use of Facilities	0	0	0	0	0%	
48,257	Capital charges	49,000	0	49,000	0	0%	
5,875	PIP - Facilitating Biodiversity Net Gain	0	0	0	0	0%	
0	Income	0	(155)	0	0	0%	
60,083	Total Net Expenditure - Central Risk	55,000	(155)	55,000	0	0%	

Notes:

- Projected underspend due to staff vacancies.
- Projected overspend due to increased grounds maintenance costs.
- Actual to date reflects reversal of listed debtor from 2022/23 for grant income which will not be received until the result of an appeal is known. This is in addition to reduced BE6 payments for 2023/24.
- Car park takings are currently behind budget due to reduced usage over the summer holidays. The budget is currently forecast to be behind budget at year-end.
- Filming income is projected to be ahead of budget due to additional filming projects during 2023/24.

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Natural Environment - Local Risk Revenue Budget 2023/24 - September (Period 6)

2022/23 Actuals £	STOKE COMMON	Latest Approved Budget 2023/24 £	Actual to Date £	Projected Outturn 2023/24 £	Variance from Latest Approved Budget 2023/24	
					£	%
17,923	Direct Employees	22,000	9,099	20,000	(2,000)	-9%
0	Indirect Employees	0	0	0	0	0%
32,299	Premises	23,000	8,163	31,000	8,000	35%
0	Transport	0	0	0	0	0%
11,660	Supplies and Services	5,000	0	1,000	(4,000)	-80%
2,146	Transfer to Reserve	0	0	0	0	0%
157	Third Party Payments	1,000	157	1,000	0	0%
64,185	Total Expenditure	51,000	17,419	53,000	2,000	4%
(32,226)	Government grants	(25,000)	19,347	(25,000)	0	0%
(2,146)	Interest	0	0	0	0	0%
(34,371)	Income	(25,000)	19,347	(25,000)	0	0%
29,814	Total Net Expenditure - Local Risk	26,000	36,766	28,000	2,000	8%

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Notes:

1 Projected overspend due to additional grounds maintenance costs.

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West Wickham and Coulsdon Commons - Local Risk Revenue Budget 2023/24 - September (Period 6)

2022/23 Actuals £	WEST WICKHAM & COULSDON COMMONS	Latest Approved Budget 2023/24 £	Actual to Date £	Projected Outturn 2023/24 £	Variance from Latest Approved Budget 2023/24		
					£	%	
528,968	Direct Employees	599,000	254,593	552,000	(47,000)	-8%	1
4,222	Indirect Employees	4,000	3,370	4,000	0	0%	
0	Repairs and Maintenance	1,000	0	1,000	0	0%	
11,844	Energy Costs	9,000	2,547	9,000	0	0%	2
22,426	Rates	17,000	23,738	24,000	7,000	41%	
5,416	Water Services	7,000	4,477	10,000	3,000	43%	
29,998	Cleaning and Domestic Supplies	30,000	10,011	25,000	(5,000)	-17%	
74,819	Grounds Maintenance Costs	73,000	25,388	100,000	27,000	37%	3
144,503	Premises	137,000	66,161	169,000	32,000	23%	
33,196	Transport	14,000	86,104	14,000	0	0%	4
84,744	Supplies and Services	35,000	19,341	30,000	(5,000)	-14%	
11,088	Transfer to Reserve	0	0	0	0	0%	
806,721	Total Expenditure	789,000	429,568	769,000	(20,000)	-3%	
(23,411)	Government Grants	(50,000)	(37,095)	(55,000)	(5,000)	10%	
(8,674)	Other Contributions	0	(1,280)	(1,000)	(1,000)	n/a	
(19,924)	Sales	(4,000)	(27,692)	(29,000)	(25,000)	625%	5
(40,975)	Fees and Charges	(45,000)	(18,305)	(28,000)	17,000	-38%	6
(66,345)	Rent	(64,000)	(43,238)	(62,000)	2,000	-3%	
(1,465)	Transfer from Reserves	0	0	0	0	0%	
(160,793)	Income	(163,000)	(127,610)	(175,000)	(12,000)	7%	
645,927	Total Net Expenditure - Local Risk	626,000	301,958	594,000	(32,000)	-5%	
	Central Risk						
5,500	Supplies and Services	0	0	0	0	0%	
800	Support Services	0	0	0	0	0%	
932	Capital Charges	1,000	0	1,000	0	0%	
7,232	Total Net Expenditure - Central Risk	1,000	0	1,000	0	0%	

Notes:

- 1 Projected underspend on salaries as a result of one role currently being vacant which is due to be recruited later in 2023/24.
- 2 Projected overspend of £2k due to energy price increases will now be met from central contingency.
- 3 General spend forecast to be considerably higher than budgeted, particularly in relation to tree safety works.
- 4 Actual to date primarily relates to vehicle purchase which is due to be transferred to a capital project.
- 5 Forecast increased as a result of anticipated proceeds from sale of vehicles.
- 6 Reduced parking income forecast as a result of reduced demand and usage.

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Ashtead Common - Local Risk Revenue Budget 2023/24 - September (Period 6)

2022/23 Actuals £	ASHTEAD COMMON	Latest Approved Budget 2023/24 £	Actual to Date £	Projected Outturn 2023/24 £	Variance from Latest Approved Budget 2023/24	
					£	%
300,701	Direct Employees	310,000	156,420	313,000	3,000	1%
2,124	Indirect Employees	2,000	2,595	3,000	1,000	50%
71,588	Premises	79,000	17,308	104,000	25,000	32%
811	Transport	11,000	8,897	11,000	0	0%
27,068	Supplies and Services	31,000	13,604	28,000	(3,000)	-10%
50	Transfer to Reserve	0		0	0	0%
402,343	Total Expenditure	433,000	198,824	459,000	26,000	6%
(30,942)	Government grants	(20,000)	0	(51,000)	(31,000)	155%
(4,703)	Other	(3,000)	-2,971	(3,000)	0	0%
(35,645)	Income	(23,000)	(2,971)	(54,000)	(31,000)	135%
366,698	Total Net Expenditure - Local Risk	410,000	195,853	405,000	(5,000)	-1%

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Notes:

1 Projected overspend as a result of increased expenditure on grounds maintenance relating to works from the previous year as a result of drought.

Additional income from government grants predicted as a result of more trees being worked on and an increase in the payment rates from the 2 stewardship scheme.

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Agenda Item 8

Committee(s)	Dated:
Epping Forest and Commons	23/11/2023
Subject: Departmental and Service Committee Budget Estimates 2024/25	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?	No
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of funding?	N/A
Has the funding source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: The Chamberlain Interim Executive Director Environment	For Decision
Report Author: Clem Harcourt, Chamberlain's Department	

Summary

This report presents for approval the revenue and capital budgets for the Epping Forest and Commons Committee for 2024/25, for subsequent submission to Finance Committee.

Overall, the proposed revenue budget for 2024/25 totals (£8.571m), an increase in net expenditure of (£2.043m) compared to the 2023/24 original budget of (£6.528m) agreed by your Committee on 21 November 2022.

The proposed budget for 2024/25 has been prepared within the resource envelope allocated to each Chief Officer by Resource Allocation Sub-Committee, including an inflationary increase of 3% and the full year impact of pay increases to staff arising from the pay deal effective from July 2023. The proposed budget for your Committee has also been adjusted to reflect the impact of the recently introduced TOM 2 staffing restructure within the Natural Environment Division.

The resource envelope must be adhered to, as failure to do so will impact Finance Committee's ability to set a balanced budget for the year ahead.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- i) note the latest revenue budget for your Committee for 2023/24;
- ii) review and approve the Epping Forest proposed revenue budget for 2024/25 for submission to Finance Committee;
- iii) review and approve The Commons proposed revenue budget for 2024/25 for submission to Finance Committee;
- iv) review and approve your Committee's capital and supplementary revenue project budgets for 2024/25 for submission to Finance Committee; and

- v) agree that amendments for 2023/24 and 2024/25 budgets arising from changes to recharges & support services or for any further implications arising from corporate contracts, energy price increases, changes to the Cyclical Works Programme (CWP) and capital charges during budget setting be delegated to the Chamberlain in consultation with the Interim Executive Director Environment.

Main Report

Introduction

1. The City of London Corporation owns and manages almost 11,000 acres of historic and natural Open Spaces for public recreation and enjoyment. This includes Epping Forest, City Commons, Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common which are registered charities and are funded from City's Cash. They are run at no cost to the communities that they serve, as they are funded principally by the City, together with donations, sponsorship, grants and trading income.
2. This report sets out the proposed budgets for 2024/25 for these areas. The revenue budget management arrangements are to:
 - provide a clear distinction between local risk, central risk, and recharge budgets;
 - place responsibility for budgetary control on departmental Chief Officers; and
 - apply a cash limit policy to Chief Officers' budgets.
3. The overall proposed 2024/25 budget for your Committee which include the Interim Executive Director Environments local risk, central risk and recharges & support services budgets, plus the City Surveyor's CWP and Building Repairs & Maintenance budget is (£8.571m) net expenditure. This is an increase of (£2.043m) when compared with the 2023/24 original budget of (£6.528m) net expenditure agreed by your Committee on 21 November 2022.
4. The latest budget for 2023/24 and provisional original budget for 2024/25 for your Committee, is summarised in Table 1 below and further analysed by risk and Chief Officer in Appendix 1.
5. Income, increases in income, and reductions in expenditure are shown as positive balances, whereas brackets will be used to denote expenditure, increases in expenditure, or shortfalls in income. Only significant variances (generally those greater than £30k) have been commented on and are referenced in the relevant table in Appendix 1.

Table 1 - Epping Forest & The Commons	Original Budget (OR) 2023/24 £000	Latest Budget 2023/24 £000	Original Budget (OR) 2024/25 £000	Movement 2023/24 OR to 2024/25 OR £000
Net Local Risk	(4,005)	(4,957)	(5,285)	(1,280)
Net City Surveyor	(424)	(517)	(545)	(121)
Net Cyclical Works Programme	(231)	(610)	(353)	(122)
Net Central Risk	(488)	(561)	(494)	(6)
Recharges & Support Services	(1,380)	(1,928)	(1,894)	(514)
Total Net Expenditure	(6,528)	(8,573)	(8,571)	(2,043)

Latest Revenue Budget for 2023/24

6. Overall, the 2023/24 latest budget for your Committee is net expenditure of (£8.573m) as reported at September 2023, a net increase of (£2.045m) compared to the 2023/24 original budget of (£6.528m) net expenditure as agreed by your Committee on 21 November 2022. The main reasons for this increase are:

- (£793k) net increase in your Committee's local risk budget following implementation of the new TOM 2 staffing structure within the Natural Environment Division;
- (£548k) net increase in support services costs relating to additional recharges covering the cost of corporate departments;
- (£379k) increase relating to CWP projects following rephasing of works by the City Surveyor;
- (£120k) increase in salary budgets following £1k payments made to staff in July 2023;
- (£93k) additional costs relating to planned and reactive works managed by the City Surveyor;
- (£67k) approved Priorities Investment Pot (PIP) central risk carry forwards from 2022/23 in relation to the Epping Forest Licences, Leases and Wayleaves project and the Biodiversity project at Burnham Beeches;
- (£39k) funding provided by the Natural Environment Directorate to support activities relating to your Committee;
- (£6k) additional capital charges.

Proposed Revenue budget for 2024/25

7. This report presents at Appendix 1, the budget estimates for 2024/25 for your Committee analysed between:

- **Local Risk Budgets** - these are budgets deemed to be largely within the Chief Officer's control;
- **Central Risk Budgets (including capital charges)** – these are budgets comprising specific items where a Chief Officer manages the underlying service, but where the eventual financial outturn can be strongly influenced by external factors outside of his/her control or are budgets of a corporate nature (e.g. interest on balances and rent incomes from investment properties); and
- **Recharges & Support Services** - these cover budgets for services provided by one activity to another. The control of these costs is exercised at the point where the expenditure or income first arises as local or central risk.

8. The proposed 2024/25 budget is net expenditure of (£8.571m), an increase of (£2.043m) compared to the 2023/24 original budget agreed by your Committee on 21 November 2022. Further detail can be found in Appendix 1. The main variations relate to:

Epping Forest:

- (£1.042m) increase in employment costs to cover additional staffing resources required following implementation of the new TOM 2 staffing structure, plus the full year impact of the pay award effective from July 2023, as well as costs related to incremental and career grade progression;
- (£356k) net increase in recharges owing to an increase in the cost of central support departments and the Natural Environment Directorate being recharged to Epping Forest;
- (£121k) increase in premises related costs largely attributable to increased grounds maintenance expenditure being funded through the Countryside Stewardship Scheme;
- £99k projected increase in income from government grants largely attributable to the Countryside Stewardship Scheme 'Forest 2' programme;
- £71k savings in transport related costs attributable to reduced expenditure on the purchase and maintenance of vehicles; and
- £43k net reduction in budgets managed by the City Surveyor primarily relating to the rephasing of works falling under the CWP.

The Commons:

- (£286k) net increase in budgets managed by the City Surveyor primarily attributable to the rephasing of works falling under the CWP;
- (£197k) increase in employment costs due to the full year impact of the pay award effective from July 2023 as well as costs associated with incremental and career grade progression;
- (£158k) net additional recharges owing to an increase in the cost of central support departments and the Natural Environment Directorate being recharged to the individual charities;
- (£72k) reduction in unidentified savings no longer being required for 2024/25. (£33k) of this amount relates to West Wickham & Coulsdon Commons which has been achieved by savings generated from the staffing restructure across the Natural Environment Division. The remaining (£39k) relates to Burnham Beeches which has been met through savings on the Natural Environment Directorate's contingency budget; and

- £37k additional income from government grants largely attributable to an increase forecasted to be achieved from the Countryside Stewardship Scheme at Ashted Common.

- In light of recommendations from Resource Allocation Sub-Committee, the proposed 2024/25 budget includes a 3% uplift for inflation and the full year impact of pay increases to staff arising from the pay deal effective from July 2023. Members should also note that the proposed budget for 2024/25 includes an increase of (£793k) to your Committee's local risk resource base following implementation of the Natural Environment Division's TOM 2 staffing restructure. A detailed breakdown of budget movements of the 2023/24 local risk original budget as agreed by your Committee on 21 November 2022 to the proposed 2024/25 local risk original budget can be found in Appendix 2.
- Recharges & support services and capital charge budgets have not yet been finalised so further changes to the proposed original budget for 2024/25 may be required. Members are asked to agree that the decision as to the changes required to these budgets are delegated to the Chamberlain in consultation with the Interim Executive Director Environment.
- Analysis of the movement in staff related costs are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2 - Staffing statement	Original Budget 2023/24		Latest Budget 2023/24		Original Budget 2024/25	
	Staffing	Estimated	Staffing	Estimated	Staffing	Estimated
	Full-time Equivalent	Cost £000	Full-time Equivalent	Cost £000	Full-time Equivalent	Cost £000
Epping Forest	72.05	(3,393)	96.30	(4,301)	91.30	(4,435)
The Commons	34.48	(1,619)	32.72	(1,658)	32.72	(1,816)
Total	106.53	(5,012)	129.02	(5,959)	124.02	(6,251)

- It should be noted that the increase in Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) staff in the 2024/25 proposed budget compared with the original budget for 2023/24 is explained by additional staffing resource being provided to Epping Forest following the introduction of the second phase of the Target Operating Model (TOM2) within the Natural Environment Division. Meanwhile, the decrease in FTEs for 2024/25 compared with the 2023/24 latest budget is attributable to administrative staff at Epping Forest transferring to the Natural Environment Directorate from April 2024.

13. Members should note that the CWP figures included in this report relate only to elements of previously agreed programmes. The separate bid for CWP works in 2024/25 has not been included in this report, as it is to be considered by Projects and Procurement Sub-Committee in November 2023 and will then require approval by Resource Allocation Sub-Committee to agree the funding. Once both Sub-Committees have agreed the 2024/25 programme Members will be advised of the outcome and Members are asked to authorise the Chamberlain to revise the budgets to allow for these approvals.
14. Table 3 and Table 4 below details the budgets held for the City Surveyor's CWP and Building Repairs & Maintenance:

Table 3 – CWP & City Surveyor Local Risk Epping Forest	Original Budget 2023/24 £'000s	Latest Budget 2023/24 £000's	Original Budget 2024/25 £'000
Cyclical Works Programme	(225)	(610)	(70)
Planned & Reactive Work – Breakdown & Servicing (City Surveyor Local Risk)	(229)	(300)	(317)
Cleaning (City Surveyor Local Risk)	(41)	(61)	(65)
Total CWP and City Surveyor – Epping Forest	(495)	(971)	(452)

Table 4 – CWP & City Surveyor Local Risk The Commons	Original Budget 2023/24 £'000s	Latest Budget 2023/24 £000's	Original Budget 2024/25 £'000
Cyclical Works Programme			
Ashtead Common	0	0	0
West Wickham	(6)	0	(233)
Burnham Beeches	0	0	(50)
	(6)	0	(283)
Planned & Reactive Work – Breakdown & Servicing (City Surveyor Local Risk)			
Ashtead Common	(5)	(7)	(7)
West Wickham	(44)	(47)	(48)
Burnham Beeches	(92)	(98)	(104)
	(141)	(152)	(159)
Cleaning (City Surveyor Local Risk)			
West Wickham	(10)	(1)	(1)
Burnham Beeches	(3)	(3)	(3)
	(13)	(4)	(4)
Total CWP and City Surveyor – The Commons	(160)	(156)	(446)

Draft Capital and Supplementary Revenue Project budgets for 2024/25

15. The latest estimated costs of your Committee's current approved Capital and Supplementary Revenue Projects are summarised in the table below:

Service	Project	Exp. Pre 01/04/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	Later Years £'000	Total £'000
The Commons	Burnham Beeches Gates Replacement (3 No. Electric Gates)	67	20			-	87
Epping Forest	Baldwins & Birch Hall Pond	232	126	144		-	502
Epping Forest	Artificial Grass Pitch Provision at Wanstead Flats (Parklife)	41	29				70
Epping Forest	CAS Carbon Removals	118	361				479
Epping Forest	Wanstead Park Ponds Project	167	74			-	241
TOTAL EPPING FOREST & COMMONS COMMITTEE		625	610	144	0	0	1,379

16. The latest Capital and Supplementary Revenue Project forecast expenditure on new capital bids and currently approved schemes will be presented to the Court of Common Council for formal approval in March 2024.

Conclusion

17. This report presents the Revenue and Capital budget estimates for 2024/25 for your Committee's Members to consider and approve.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Committee Summary Budget – by Risk and Chief Officer
- Appendix 2 – Movement Between 2023/24 Original Local Risk Budget to 2024/25 Original Local Risk Budget (Epping Forest and The Commons)

Clem Harcourt

Chamberlain's Department

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Appendix 1 (Epping Forest)

Committee Summary Budget – by Risk and Chief Officer

Analysis of Service Expenditure	Local or Central Risk	Actual 2022/23 £'000	Original Budget 2023/24 £'000	Latest Budget 2023/24 £'000	Original Budget 2024/25 £'000	Movement 23/24 OR to 24/25 OR £'000	Notes
EXPENDITURE							
Employees	L	(2,968)	(3,393)	(4,240)	(4,435)	(1,042)	1
Employees	C	-	-	(61)	-	-	
Premises Related Expenses	L	(818)	(651)	(651)	(772)	(121)	2
Premises Related Expenses	C	(39)	-	-	-	-	
City Surveyor – All Services	L	(602)	(495)	(971)	(452)	43	3
Transport Related Expenses	L	(220)	(209)	(209)	(138)	71	4
Supplies & Services	L	(976)	(379)	(382)	(406)	(27)	
Supplies & Services	C	(6)	-	-	-	-	
Support Services	C	(1)	-	-	-	-	
Transfer to Reserves	L	(743)	-	-	-	-	
Transfer to Reserves	C	(200)	-	-	-	-	
Capital Charges- Depreciation	C	(431)	(461)	(462)	(462)	(1)	
Total Expenditure		(7,004)	(5,588)	(6,976)	(6,665)	(1,077)	
INCOME							
Government Grants	L	300	257	257	356	99	5
Other Grant, Reimburse & Cont.	L	91	3	3	3	-	
Other Grant, Reimburse & Cont.	C	197	-	-	-	-	
Customer, Client Receipts	L	2,444	1,789	1,789	1,786	(3)	
Investment Income	C	11	18	18	18	-	
Transfer from Reserves	L	349	-	-	-	-	
Transfer from Reserves	C	3	-	-	-	-	
Recharges to Capital Projects	L	26	49	49	49	-	
Total Income		3,421	2,116	2,116	2,212	96	
TOTAL NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE) BEFORE SUPPORT SERVICES		(3,583)	(3,472)	(4,860)	(4,453)	(981)	
SUPPORT SERVICES							
Central Support		(921)	(811)	(873)	(889)	(78)	6
Recharges within Fund		(551)	(227)	(515)	(515)	(288)	7
Recharge across Fund		23	(17)	(60)	(7)	10	
Total Support Services		(1,449)	(1,055)	(1,448)	(1,411)	(356)	
TOTAL NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		(5,032)	(4,527)	(6,308)	(5,864)	(1,337)	

Notes:

- Increase in employment budgets of (£1.042m) due to additional staffing resources being provided to Epping Forest following the TOM 2 restructure of the Natural Environment Division. This is in addition to increased staffing costs following the implementation of the pay award effective from July 2023.
- (£121k) additional premises related costs primarily due to additional grounds maintenance costs to be funded through the Countryside Stewardship Scheme.

3. £43k decrease in budgets managed by the City Surveyor due to re-phasing of works managed under the Cyclical Works Programme amounting to £155k partly offset by a (£112k) increase in budgets for planned and reactive works.
4. £71k budgeted reduction in transport related costs explained by lower expenditure anticipated on the purchase of new vehicles as well as on the running costs of existing vehicles.
5. £99k increase in income from government grants attributable to income from the Countryside Stewardship Scheme 'Forest 2' programme due to commence in 2024.
6. (£78k) increase in central support relating to an increase in the cost of corporate departments being recharged to Epping Forest.
7. (£288k) increase primarily relating to additional recharges from the Natural Environment Directorate following changes arising from the introduction of the Environment Department's Target Operating Model.

Appendix 1 (The Commons)

Committee Summary Budget – by Risk and Chief Officer

Analysis of Service Expenditure	Local or Central Risk	Actual 2022/23 £'000	Original Budget 2023/24 £'000	Latest Budget 2023/24 £'000	Original Budget 2024/25 £'000	Movement 23/24 OR to 24/25 OR £'000	Notes
EXPENDITURE							
Employees	L	(1,417)	(1,619)	(1,652)	(1,816)	(197)	1
Employees	C	-	-	(6)	-	-	
Premises Related Expenses	L	(361)	(299)	(321)	(316)	(17)	
City Surveyor – All Services	L	(636)	(160)	(156)	(446)	(286)	2
Transport Related Expenses	L	(126)	(39)	(39)	(55)	(16)	
Supplies & Services	L	(281)	(160)	(174)	(163)	(3)	
Supplies & Services	C	(19)	-	-	-	-	
Support Services	C	(2)	-	-	-	-	
Third Party Payments	L	-	(1)	(1)	(1)	-	
Transfer to Reserves	L	(739)	-	-	-	-	
Unidentified savings	L	0	72	-	-	(72)	3
Capital Charges- Depreciation	C	(49)	(45)	(50)	(50)	(5)	
Total Expenditure		(3,630)	(2,251)	(2,399)	(2,847)	(596)	
INCOME							
Government Grants	L	141	130	130	167	37	4
Other Grant, Reimburse & Cont.	L	782	110	110	112	2	
Customer, Client Receipts	L	492	335	374	344	9	
Investment Income	L	2	-	-	-	-	
Total Income		1,417	575	614	623	48	
TOTAL NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE) BEFORE SUPPORT SERVICES		(2,213)	(1,676)	(1,785)	(2,224)	(548)	
SUPPORT SERVICES							
Central Support		(318)	(265)	(298)	(301)	(36)	5
Recharges within Fund		(213)	(60)	(182)	(182)	(122)	6
Total Support Services		(531)	(325)	(480)	(483)	(158)	
TOTAL NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		(2,744)	(2,001)	(2,265)	(2,707)	(706)	

Notes:

1. (£197k) increase due to additional salary costs as a result of full year impact of the pay award effective from July 2023.
2. Increase of (£286k) in budgets managed by the City Surveyor due to re-phasing of projects under the Cyclical Works Programme amounting to (£277k) and (£9k) increase in budgets for planned and reactive works.
3. (£72k) unidentified savings budget not required for 2024/25 at West Wickham & Coulsdon Commons and Burnham Beeches due to savings achieved as a result of the staffing restructure across the Natural Environment Division and additional funding being provided from the Natural Environment Directorate.
4. £37k projected increase in income from government grants primarily relates to Ashted Common due to additional income forecast from the Countryside Stewardship Scheme.
5. Additional (£36k) central support relating to an increase in the cost of corporate departments being recharged.
6. (£122k) increase relates to additional recharges from the Natural Environment Directorate following changes arising from the introduction of the Environment Department's Target Operating Model.

Appendix 2

Movement between 2023/24 Original Local Risk Budget and 2024/25 Original Local Risk Budget (Epping Forest)

Epping Forest	£000
Original Net Local Risk Budget (Interim Executive Director Environment & City Surveyor) as agreed on 21 November 2022	(3,029)
Interim Executive Director Environment	
Adjustments to resource base following implementation of National Environment Division TOM 2 staffing restructure	(760)
Pay award effective from July 2023	(368)
3% uplift for inflation	(87)
Adjustments to resource base following loss of rental income related to sale of Woodredon Farm	(45)
Transfer of administrative staff to Natural Environment Directorate	237
City Surveyor	
Planned & Reactive Works including Cleaning	(112)
Re-phasing of projects falling under Cyclical Works Programme	155
Original Net Local Risk Budget (Interim Executive Director Environment & City Surveyor)	(4,009)

Movement between 2023/24 Original Local Risk Budget and 2024/25 Original Local Risk Budget (The Commons)

The Commons	£000
Original Net Local Risk Budget (Interim Executive Director Environment & City Surveyor) as agreed on 21 November 2022	(1,631)
Interim Executive Director Environment	
Pay award effective from July 2023	(142)
3% uplift for inflation	(48)
Unidentified savings for Burnham Beeches met through additional funding from Natural Environment Directorate	(34)
Unidentified savings for West Wickham & Coulsdon Commons met through savings in staffing restructure across Natural Environment Division	(33)

City Surveyor	
Re-phasing of projects falling under Cyclical Works Programme	(277)
Planned & Reactive Works including Cleaning	(9)
Original Net Local Risk Budget (Interim Executive Director Environment & City Surveyor)	(2,174)

Committee(s): Epping Forest and Commons Committee – For Decision Epping Forest Consultative Group – For Information	Dated: 23/11/2023 28/02/2023
Subject: A104 Road Safety Scheme (SEF 29/23)	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1.2.3
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?	
Report of: Bob Roberts, Interim Executive Director, Environment	For Decision
Report author: Jacqueline Eggleston, Epping Forest	

City’s Corporate Plan

Contribute to a flourishing society

1. *People are safe and feel safe.*

Shape outstanding environments

2. *We have clean air, land and water and a thriving and sustainable natural environment.*
3. *Our spaces are secure, resilient and well-maintained*

Summary

This report presents further context and updates on proposals for a road safety scheme along the A104 between Buckhurst Hill and the Wake Arms Roundabout. The road safety scheme will include road crossing points connecting car parks and defined tracks to the surrounding Forest area; a section of high friction surface on the approach to Robin Hood roundabout; alteration to the existing speed limits and installation of average speed cameras. The scheme is funded through the Department of Transport’s (Dft) Safer Roads fund and is being managed by Essex Highways.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Support the draft proposals contained in Appendix A for a road safety scheme pending Essex Highways considering comments received from recent engagement and providing detailed drawings.

Main Report

Background

1. A Forest Transport Strategy (FTS) was adopted by your committee on 11 May 2009. This followed a public consultation exercise on the strategy, jointly conducted by the Conservators and Essex County Council, which ran for three months.
2. 64% of respondents were in favour of crossing points on the A104 and design of these formed one of the first action points for the strategy.
3. The strategy acknowledged that schemes would be implemented gradually dependent on funding availability. The crossing points have not been implemented to date because funding had not yet been identified.
4. However, in April 2023, the government announced a £50m spending programme, which included £1,360,000 identified for a road safety scheme along the A104.
5. The funding was earmarked specifically for the A104 which was identified by the International Road Assessment Programme (IRAP) as one of Britain's top 75 most persistently high-risk A roads.
6. In September 2023 your committee received a report with outline proposals for this road safety scheme led by Essex Highways.

Current Position

7. A draft proposal for the road safety scheme is shown within the presentation in Appendix A.
8. The scheme proposes:
 - Average Speed Cameras to enforce the existing 30mph and 40mph speed limit
 - A northwards extension to the existing 30mph speed limit in Woodford to cover the Rangers Road junction which also includes average speed cameras
 - a series of traffic islands along the length including crossing points at the key forest crossing points, working with conservators to provide an integrated approach with the car park access improvements. Detailed drawings for these elements are currently being prepared.
9. Funding for the scheme can only be used for specific safety measures.

Options

- a. Option 1 – To support the proposed road safety scheme. This will support the implementation of road crossings and reduced speed limit as agreed in the Forest Transport Strategy, as well as speed cameras to enforce the 40mph limit introduced by the FTS. Supporting the scheme will promote partnership working that will better enable the already programmed gating of three Forest car parks as well as contributing to the preparation of an updated Forest Transport Strategy that can address wider transport issues around the Forest. **This is recommended.**
- b. Option 2 – Not to show support for the proposed road safety scheme. The scheme has been prepared by experts in road safety to deliver safety measures to address one of the highest road accident records in Britain. It delivers previously agreed proposals in the Forest Transport Strategy. Not supporting the fully externally funded scheme may jeopardise opportunities for synergistic works to the Forest car parks, and future

partnership work on the Forest Transport Strategy update. **This is not recommended**

Proposals

10. An Officer from Essex County Council Highways (ECC) presented the scheme proposals to your September committee and to the Epping Forest Consultative Group (EFCG) at their meeting in October. The presentation is attached as Appendix A.
11. The EFCG were keen to see if road cyclists could be better accommodated and there was a general feeling that the central cross hatching would not be beneficial to cyclists.
12. EFRA opposed the crossing points as they felt they could not be used by horse riders.
13. The Ramblers welcomed the crossing points which they felt helped walkers who currently struggle to cross safely.
14. The lower speed limit and cameras were generally welcomed.
15. The officer explained that additional proposals such as alternative routes for cyclists, Pegasus crossings and other measures will be considered and widely consulted on, in preparing an updated Forest Transport Strategy in partnership with the Conservators. This new document will be the way a wide range of road and transport issues can be agreed and for which further funding sources can be sought to address new proposals.
16. The officer agreed to revert to the ECC and DfT road safety teams to see if revisions can be made to the scheme within budget that might better serve the needs of cyclists. If any further revisions are available a verbal report will be presented to this committee.
17. Essex Highways are preparing detailed drawings, expected imminently, which will allow a more detailed understanding of the proposed locations of the infrastructure and how they will interact with Forest land.

Key Data

18. The total cost of the road safety scheme is projected to be £1,500,000 of which £1,360,000 is met by the grant from the DfT Safer Roads Fund.
19. Match funding up to £100,000 and £40,000 officer time to project manage the scheme is being met by Essex Highways
20. In addition to this scheme approximately £80,000 has been identified in local risk to pay for three lots of entrance gates at three of the car parks along the route which can be installed at the same time as the safety scheme.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications

21. These changes support the Corporate Plan Policy aims and priorities.
 - Shape outstanding environments

Financial implications

22. The cost of the road safety scheme is fully funded from external sources. Car park entrance improvements including gates are already planned to be met from local risk at an estimated total cost of £80,000 for three sites, in this financial year. It is planned that these works will be managed to coincide with the delivery of the road safety scheme thereby reducing additional costs that would have had to be met from local risk such as road closures and planning permissions.

Legal Implications

23. Under s.95A of the Highways Act 1980 (“HA 1980”) the highway authority has the power to install speed cameras on or near a highway. Under s.65 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (“RTRA 1984”), the traffic authority can place traffic signs on or near a road. Section 66 of the HA 1980 places a duty on the highway authority (in certain circumstances) to provide footway where considered necessary or desirable for the safety or accommodation of pedestrians, and s.68 enables the highway authority to provide places of refuge for the protection of pedestrians crossing the carriageway.
24. Pending receipt of the detailed design for the scheme from EH, it is not yet clear whether the footways associated with the crossing points are within the area currently designated as highway. Once EH has provided more detailed plans, further advice can be given on any requirements to enable use of these areas as footway.
25. The parts of the verges proposed for installation of signage and cameras are within the areas of the Forest designated as a Special Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC). On current information, it is not considered that the scheme will impact on any of the qualifying features of either designation, [but Essex Highways will seek Natural England consent for the works as required (pursuant to the duties on public authorities under e.g. sections 28G and 28H of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981)].
26. To the extent that planning permission is required for any aspect of the scheme, consent will be sought by Essex Highways.

Property Implications

27. The final scheme will require replacement and reduction in highway signage as well as the installation of cameras and associated cabling along the Forest verges. As noted above, the HA 1980 and RTRA 1984 enable Essex County Council (as the highway and traffic authority for the area) to place signage and cameras on adjacent land to the highway. Any required installations will be captured in Epping Forest wayleaves, made under the authority to grant minor wayleaves delegated to the Executive Director Environment.

Charity Implications

28. 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.

Resource Implications

29. Involvement in the scheme will be met from existing staff resources and local risk.

Risk Implications

30. A full risk register has been prepared as part of the road safety scheme.

Equalities Implications

31. The road safety scheme will create island refuges which is likely to improve safety at road crossings for the less physically able.

Climate implications

32. The road safety scheme will reduce speeds along the A104 which cuts through the heart of the Forest. This will help to reduce emissions on this stretch of road.

Security implications

33. Security risk will be covered by the project risk register.

Conclusion

34. The road safety plans for the A104 are still being planned, however the need to deliver safety measures are of a national priority. Co-operation between the Conservators, Essex Highways and Epping Forest District Council will be key to the successful delivery of the scheme.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – ECC Presentation

Background Papers

[Report of: Superintendent of Epping Forest \(corpoflondon.gov.uk\)](#)

[Env Dept - Natural Environment - Forest Transport Strategy FINAL Nov 2008.pdf - All docs \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

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A104 Epping New Road Safer Roads Fund scheme

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Briefing to Epping Forest Consultative Group

David Sprunt – Essex County Council

19 September 2023



Agenda

➤ Review of Scheme History

➤ Progress to date – surveys etc

➤ Review of Draft Scheme

➤ Next Steps

➤ Questions

Scheme History

On an annual basis the DfT, through the Road Safety Foundation identify the 50 most dangerous stretches of road in England and these are targeted with funding through the DfT Safer Roads Fund (SRF). The A104 Epping New Road between the Wake Arms roundabout and the border between Essex and Redbridge was one of the stretches of roads identified. Earlier this year after completing a bid document Essex County Council was awarded £1.36M by the SRF.

The A104 Epping New Road is an important A-Road linking Epping, Theydon Bois, the M25 (via Junction 26) and the M11 (via Junction 7) with Greater London. Within Essex the road runs through Epping Forest, which is well used for leisure and recreation by pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians. The road is long and straight, and average vehicle speeds typically exceed the current 40mph speed limit, which was reduced from 60mph over 10 years ago.

The aim of the scheme is to provide a consistent safer road environment for all road users using the A104 through Essex, through providing compliant road user speeds throughout both the urban and rural environments and improved crossing facilities for non-motorised users (NMUs). The visual aspect of the highway will be altered, thereby bringing about a change in how road users perceive, interact and travel along the A104 and also help to reduce the severance between the two areas of the forest.

Overview of survey Data

Progress to Date

- ATC (automatic traffic count) giving motorised vehicle volumes and speed data (using cameras) complete May 2023
- Non-Motorised User Surveys (using cameras) completed May 2023
- Topographical Survey (using laser scanning equipment) completed in July / August 2023
- Statutory Undertakers records obtained
- Initial design team visit completed to assess outline proposals



ATC surveys were carried out in 4 locations over a 7 day period

- Wake Valley Car Park
- Clay Ride
- Lincolns Lane car Park
- Manor Road



Observations:

- Roughly 90,000 (combined north and southbound) vehicle movements to the north of Robin Hood Roundabout
- Roughly 110,000 (combined north and southbound) vehicle movements to the south of Robin Hood Roundabout
- Over 30% of vehicles travelling in a northbound direction are travelling at speeds greater than 40mph
- Over 60% of vehicles travelling in a southbound direction are travelling at speeds greater than 40mph
- Maximum speeds recorded are between 90-100mph and occur at various points of the day
- The majority of the excess speed is between 40–50mph

NMU surveys were carried out in 9 locations over a 2 day period

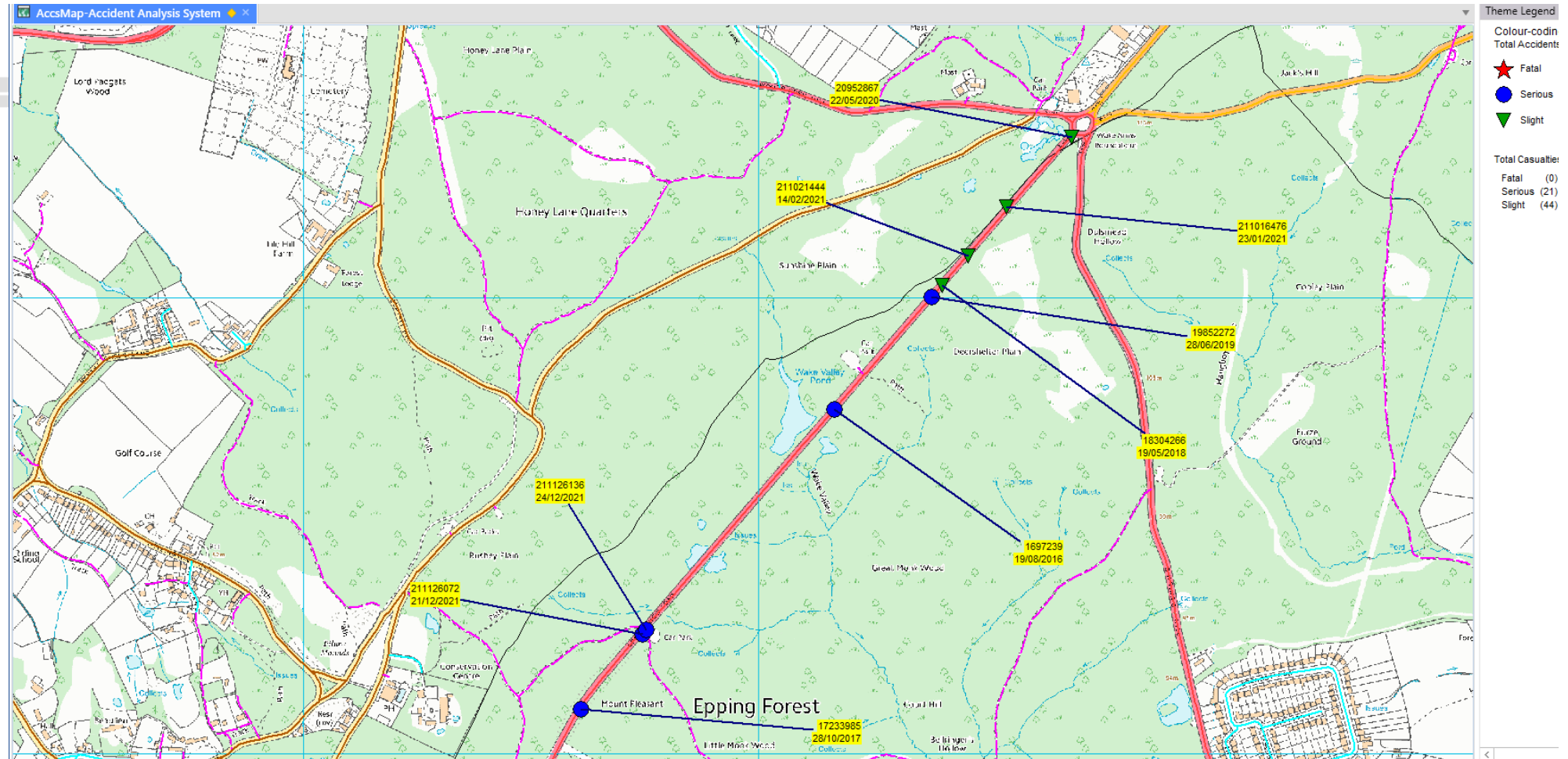
- Wake Valley Car Park
- Mount Pleasant Car Park
- Clay Ride
- Kates Cellar
- Robin Hood Roundabout
- Lincolns Lane car Park
- Warren Hill
- Manor Road
- Warren Hood Pub

Observations:

- More pedestrians cross the road than cyclists
- Mount Pleasant and Lincolns Lane car parks are the busiest locations for crossing the road
- Equestrian movements were recorded at Lincolns Lane (2 movements recorded) and Mount Pleasant (5 movements recorded)
- Robin Hood has a reasonably high number of crossing movements
- Manor Road has minimal crossing movements
- There are over 200 cyclists travelling along the carriageway to the north of Robin Hood Roundabout, however this increases to over 400 to the south of Robin Hood Roundabout

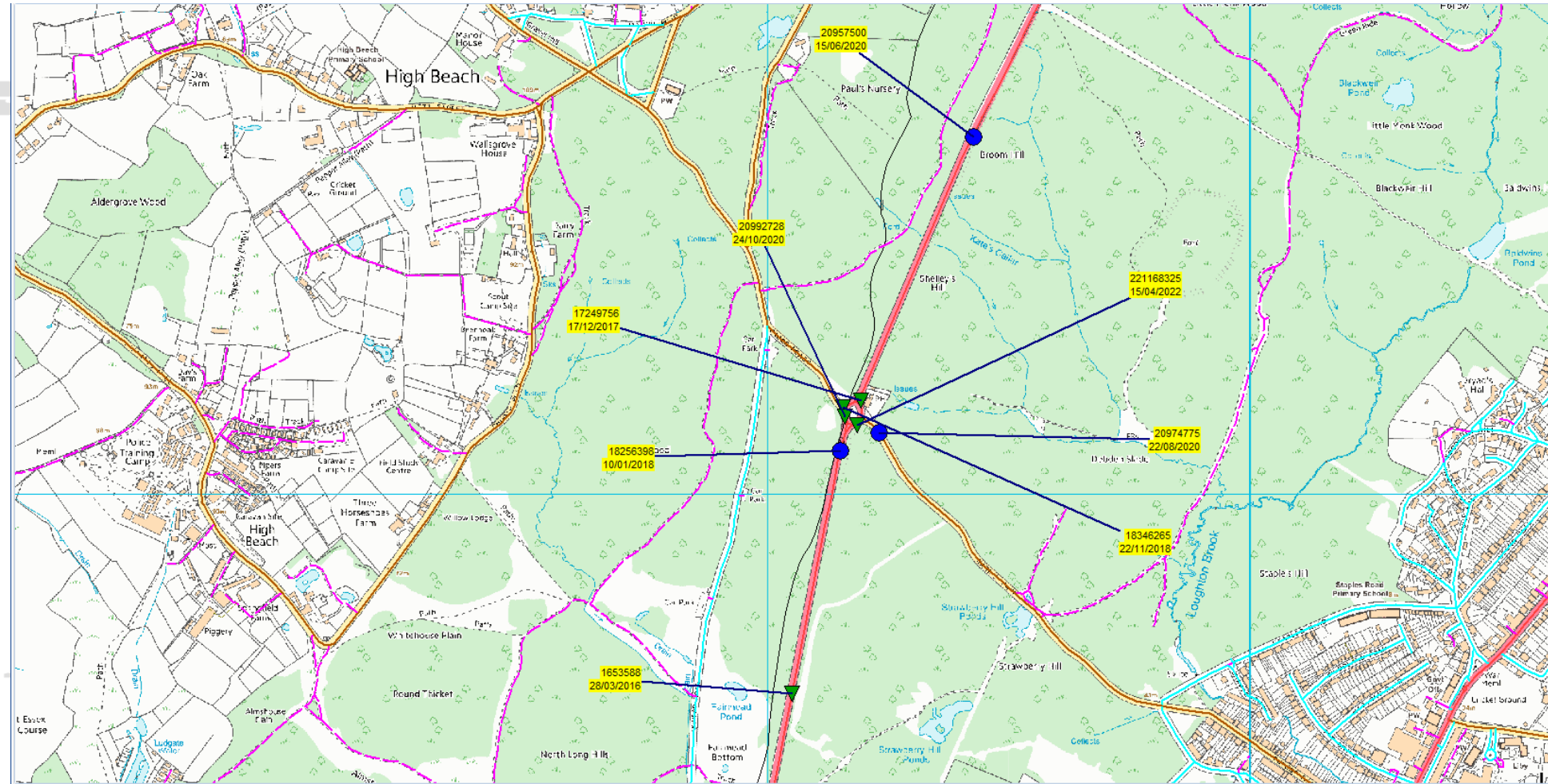
Accident data collected between January 2016 and September 2022.

Wake Arms towards Robin Hood roundabout

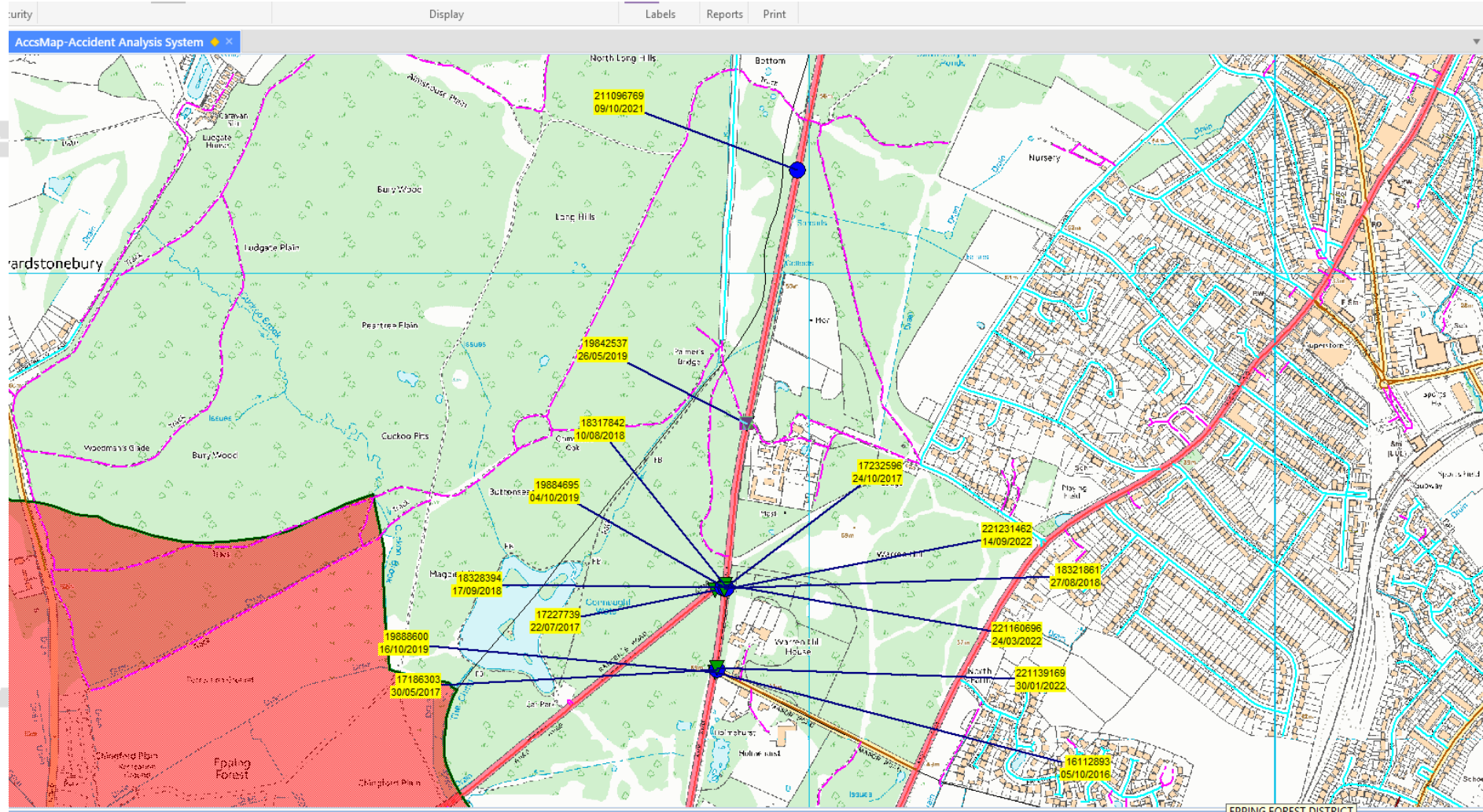


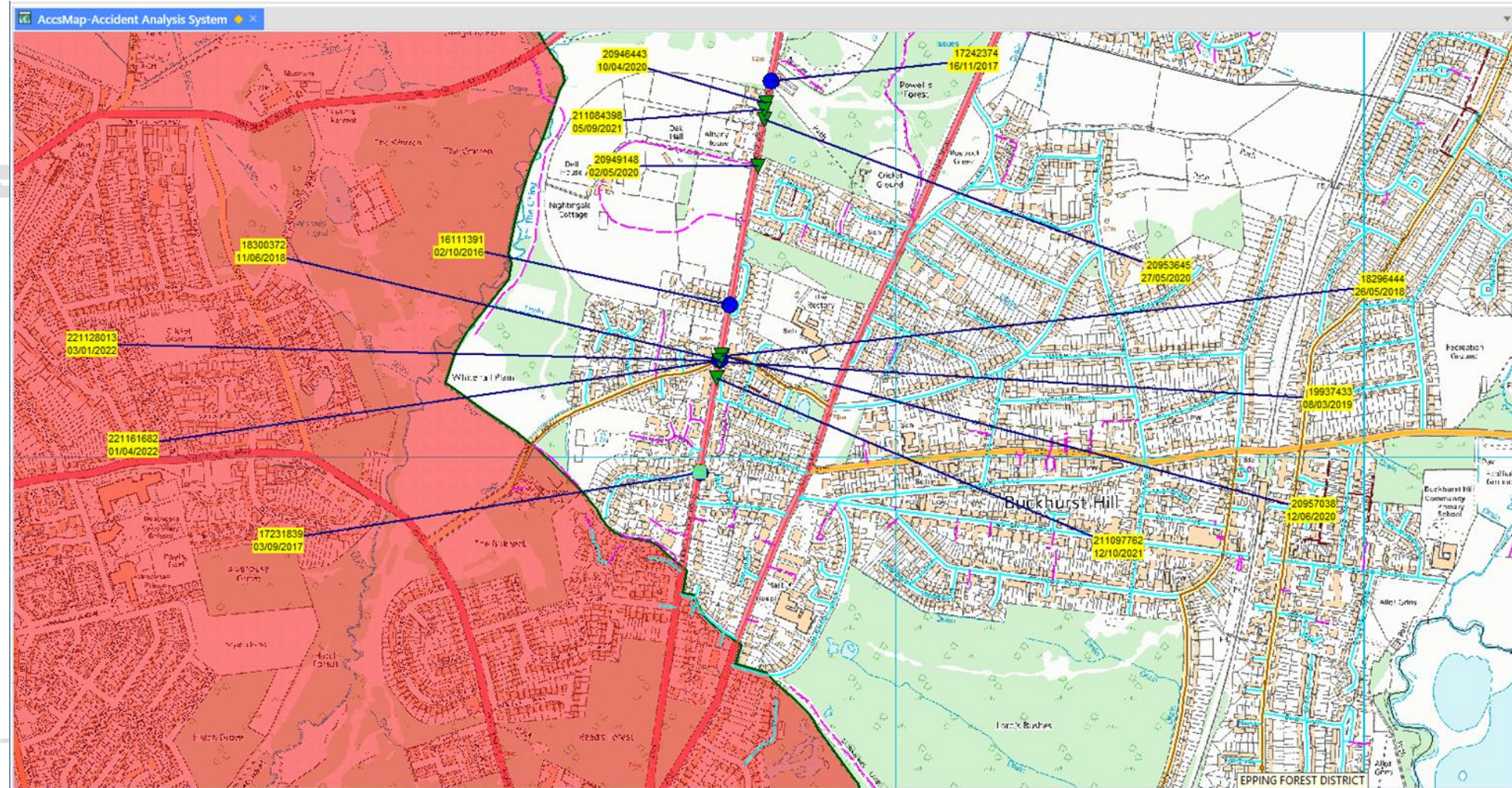
A104 Plot 2

Page 97
Robin Hood
roundabout area



South of Robin Hood roundabout to Rangers Road

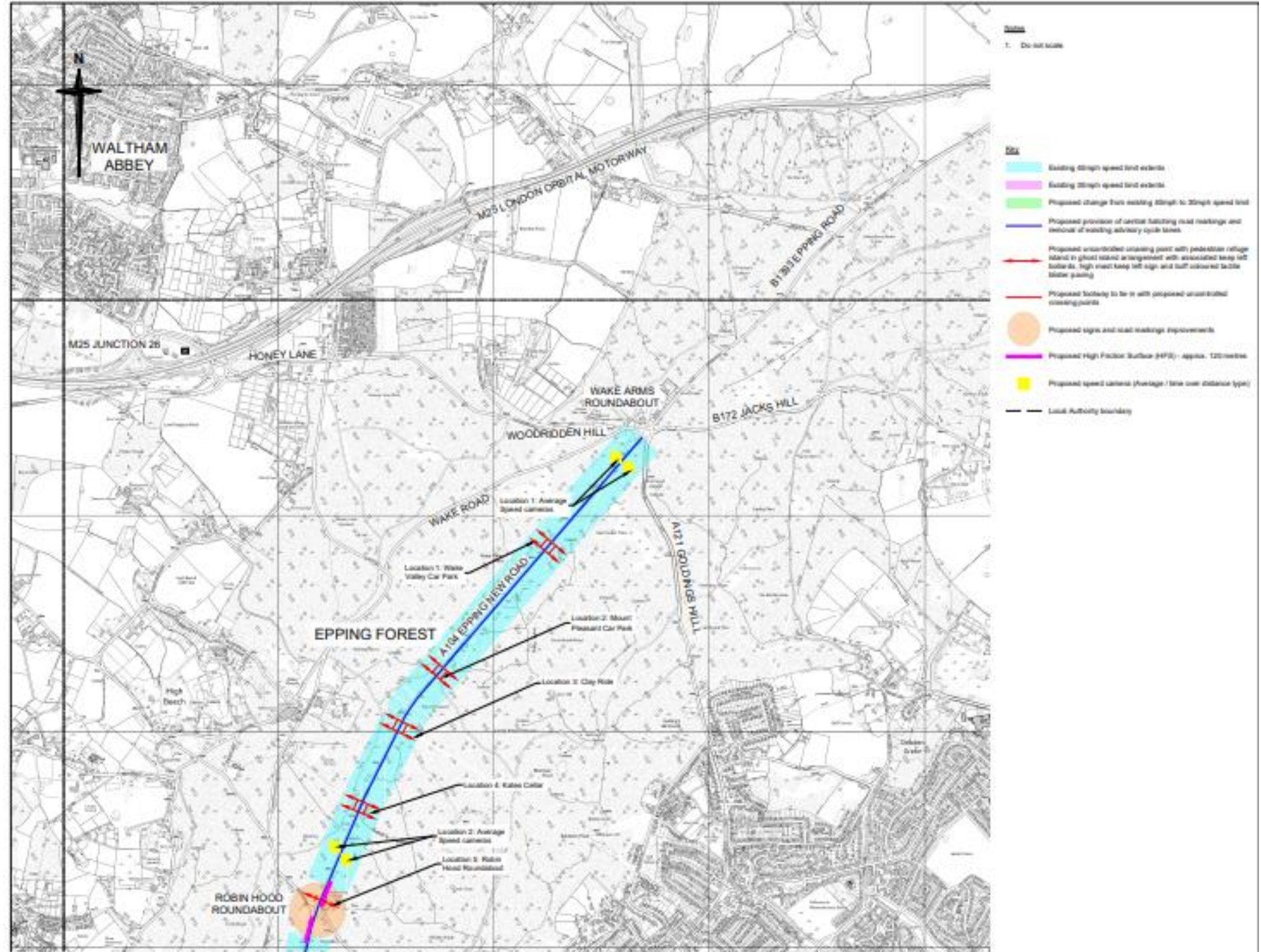




Scheme Proposals

Scheme Proposals

- Extend the current 30mph speed limit from its current termination just to the north of Fernside northwards to Rangers Road.
- Average Speed Cameras along Epping New Road between Wake Arms Roundabout and the junction with Rangers Road to enforce the current 40mph speed limit
- Average Speed Cameras along Epping New Road between Rangers Road and the Essex / Redbridge County Boundary to enforce the extended 30mph speed limit
- Installation of kerbed central islands defining crossing points at multiple locations between Wake Arms Roundabout and Rangers Road. These will align with existing car parks and routes through the forest to encourage permeation of forest users across the road.
- Installation of central hatching along the length of Epping New Road to help define the carriageway and discourage unsafe overtaking and provide space for vehicles to safely pass cyclists
- Removal of the substandard advisory cycle routes along Epping New Road
- Safety improvements to Robin Hood Roundabout
- Review current signage alongside new requirements and undertake a decluttering exercise
- Remove sections of hardened verge where deemed unnecessary





- Existing 40mph speed limit extends
- Existing 30mph speed limit extends
- Proposed change from existing 40mph to 30mph speed limit
- Proposed provision of central hatching road markings and removal of existing advisory cycle lanes
- Proposed uncontrolled crossing point with pedestrian refuge island in ghost island arrangement with associated lamp bollards, high mast keep left sign and buff coloured tactile slitter paving
- Proposed footway to be in with proposed uncontrolled crossing points
- Proposed signs and road markings improvements
- Proposed High Friction Surface (HFS) - approx. 120 metres
- Proposed speed camera (Average / time over distance type)
- Local Authority boundary

Rev	Date	Description of revision	Drawn	Checked	Reviewed	Approved

DRAWING STATUS: **PRELIMINARY**



Essex Highways, Seax House, Victoria Road South, Chelmsford, CM1 1QH. Tel: 0345 6037631 © Essex County Council

SCHEME TITLE: **A104 EPPING NEW ROAD SAFER ROADS SCHEME**

DRAWING TITLE: **PROPOSED ROAD SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS WITH 30MPH SPEED LIMIT EXTENSION**

DESIGNED	DRAWN	CHECKED	REVIEWED	APPROVED
AR	AR	GCW	MPA	MPA
DATE MAY 23	DATE MAY 23	DATE MAY 23	DATE MAY 23	DATE MAY 23

DRAWING UNITS U.N.O. SCALE AT A1 (841X564mm) DIMENSIONS IN METRES 1:10,000

DRAWING No: **B3553T77-00-001** REV: -



A127 Average Speed Camera Scheme

Examples of Average Speed Cameras located along the A127 in South Essex

- Older style camera on the right
- Newer camera on the right

Benefits of the scheme:

- Greater adherence to the speed limit (was reduced from 70mph to 50mph)
- Improved traffic flow
- Reduction of incidents at the Fortune of War Roundabout
- Possible Improvement in air quality

Next Steps

Ongoing to December 2023

- Progress with Preliminary design to confirm proposals are achievable
- Complete Level 1 construction cost estimate
- Start discussions with Camera supplier to agree equipment specification and locations
- Draft and advertise TRO for extended 30mph speed limit
- Integrate City of London car park works
- Engagement
- Carry out detailed design
- Complete level 2 construction cost estimate
- Produce Works Information documentation

January 2024 – August 2024

- Tender and Award contract
- Construction Phase





Committee(s): <u>Epping Forest & Commons Committee – For decision</u>	Dated: 23/11/2023
Subject: Natural Flood Management at Yardley Lane, Epping Forest	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1, 11 & 12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	Y
If so, how much?	£35,000 - £50,000
What is the source of Funding?	External grant
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/A
Report of: Bob Roberts, Interim Executive Director Environment	For Decision
Report author: Ella Brown, Ben Bishop (Environment)	

Summary

This report is to seek approval to submit an application for grant funding for, and subsequently deliver, a Natural Flood Management (NFM) project along a small section of a stream in the west of Epping Forest. NFM measures mimic natural processes and are designed to slow the flow of water during heavy rainfall events and therefore alleviate the risk of flooding. The project will consist of a small number of leaky dams and overland flow interceptors which will be made from natural materials that will be locally acquired from Epping Forest.

If the application for grant funding is successful, the funding for the project will be delivered by the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (TRFCC), who are supporting the delivery of Natural Flood Management interventions across the Thames catchment.

The proposed NFM measures will reduce the risk of flooding to the residential area surrounding Yardley Lane, which is situated downstream of the project site. The project will provide additional benefits to the Forest by retaining more water to lessen the effects of climate change on trees and vegetation from drought and heat stress, including the risk of wildfires. The measures protect habitats and tree root systems by reducing the high flow rates associated with extreme rainfall events. Extreme rainfall events are expected to become more frequent as a result of climate change, therefore it is vital that we ensure the City of London Corporation’s land is resilient to the changing climate.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.
- Endorse the application for £35,000 - £50,000 funding from the Thames RFCC NFM Fund.
- Delegate authority to the Superintendent to enter into all necessary arrangements and agreements to secure the funding and implement the scheme, in consultation with the City Solicitor.

Main Report

Background

1. Natural Flood Management (NFM) measures (such as leaky dams and brush bundles) are interventions which are designed to mimic and work with nature to slow the flow of water and store more water in the landscape, thus reducing flood risk. NFM measures can also result in a host of other benefits such as improving water quality, reducing impacts of drought and wildfires and supporting crucial wildlife habitats to boost biodiversity.
2. The Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (TRFCC) is a committee established by the Environment Agency under the Flood and Water Management Act (2010) that brings together members appointed by Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs) and independent members with relevant experience for the purpose of communicating flood risks, encouraging investment for flood schemes and to establish links between stakeholders in the affected areas.
3. The TRFCC has awarded £1 million of funding towards the delivery of small-scale Natural Flood Management schemes, up to the value of £50k per scheme. The funding would cover 100% of the cost of the proposed works. A FAQ document provided by TRFCC on the funding is included in Appendix 1.
4. The proposed project site is located in the west of Epping Forest, to the south of Yardley Hill and to the north of Chingford Plain. An unnamed stream runs in a south easterly direction towards the River Lea and into London Borough of Waltham Forest. The downstream section of the stream runs through a residential area to the south of Yardley Lane. Online Environment Agency mapping indicates that a surface water flow path follows the course of the stream.

5. The delivery of this project will be a demonstration project of the benefits of NFM as part of the Climate Action Strategy (CAS). The Environmental Resilience Team are producing guidance on NFM and how it could be used across the City of London Corporation's land as part of the 'Mainstreaming Climate Resilience Programme' within the CAS.
6. Epping Forest has been supporting flood management ecosystem services schemes since 1987. The Charity has approved the construction of three flood management schemes (Cripsey Brook-Thornwood Flood Alleviation Scheme, Staples Road Pond Flood Storage Reservoir, Cobbins Brook Flood Storage Area).
7. Most recently, Epping Forest approved the creation of the Hillyfields Flood Alleviation Scheme in 2019 and the construction of leaky dams as part of a planning condition for the 2022 repair of the Birch Hall Park Small Raised Reservoir in Theydon Bois.

Current Position

8. A desk-based assessment and an initial site investigation by the Environmental Resilience Team and Epping Forest Conservation Team officer (conducted on the 28/09/23) have confirmed the suitability of the Site near Yardley Lane for the implementation of NFM.
9. The Environmental Resilience team are seeking permission to progress our investigations and apply or participate in the application for funding from TRFCC to support the delivery of these measures.
10. There is one existing NFM structure in the form of a leaky dam present at the proposed project site. It is proposed to introduce additional leaky dams and overland flow interceptors (brush bundles). An indicative location map of the proposed NFM measures is included in Appendix 2.
11. The City Corporation will need to collaborate with the LLFA, the London Borough of Waltham Forest, regarding the application for funding and implementation of the measures. Discussions with Waltham Forest regarding the implementation of NFM in Epping Forest have already taken place and are ongoing.

Options

12. Agree to the Environmental Resilience Team taking all necessary steps for the preparation and submission of a funding application and then implementation and agreements with other parties (such as the LLFA) (**recommended**).

13. Not agree to take the steps proposed in paragraph 9. This would free up time to allow work on other activities but would mean that a source of funding would not be available to progress a well suited project some of which have been identified as key resilience measure in the Climate Action Strategy (**not recommended**).

Proposals

14. The proposed project entails the construction of up to fifteen leaky dam structures in conjunction with up to three overland flow interceptors.
15. Leaky dams are debris barriers which sit within and across a watercourse at a 90* angle to the flow of water. Leaky dams hold back water during high flows but allow normal flows to pass through uninterrupted. These structures result in diverse spatial patterns of flow and sediment which supports a variety of in-stream habitats.
16. Overland flow interceptors are structures that lie across flow paths that are activated when it rains. The structures are positioned perpendicular to the flow pathways and slow the delivery of water to nearby watercourses. These can be made up of small logs or brash bundles, which can be secured in place if necessary.
17. The Environmental Resilience team as part of the CAS has the objective of scoping and supporting the trialling and delivery of NFM.
18. Implementing these measures will directly benefit local stakeholders and infrastructure through reducing the risk of flooding to properties and along Yardley Lane.
19. The project will increase the resilience of protected habitats and veteran trees by capturing more water within the forest. This will result in increased groundwater retention and will therefore improve the Forest's resilience during drier weather, drought periods and to the risk of wildfires.
20. Additional natural benefits alongside reducing flood risk are associated with the project, such as contributing towards the protection of the Forest's carbon stores and enhancing biodiversity through habitat creation and conservation.
21. The project will help trial measures that could be implemented in other areas of Epping Forest, and throughout other sites managed by the Natural Environment.
22. The deadline for the submission of funding applications is the 15th of December 2023. To meet the criteria, it is required that applicants identify and investigate sites suitable for Natural Flood Management through a

desktop survey. A site investigation is also required, which has already been conducted.

23. By indicating the number of and location of the measures for the scheme, an estimation of the volume of water attenuated as a result of the scheme can be calculated.
24. If the grant is accepted, design options will need to be specified as part of the tender process. A specification will be drawn up and provided to contractors once tender is agreed. It is expected that once a contractor has been appointed, ground works will begin in Autumn 2024.
25. As required by the grant, some monitoring should take place before the end of the grant. This will be agreed as part of the grant process and costed into project management. The monitoring role is likely to require input from the Epping Forest team and would need to be included within their operations.
26. This fund requires that a monitoring report is produced once the project is completed, within two years of the grant being awarded. It is anticipated that this will be produced by the Environment Resilience Team.
27. It is expected that the structures should be maintained for their lifetime which is five years. Inspections should take place every 6 months. Inspections should also be carried out after heavy rainfall events.
28. The design of the NFM structures will be specified based on their location along the watercourse, but typically will be no wider than 5m and no taller than 1m. Leaky dams are comprised of natural woody material laid across water channels with a base-gap provided at the bottom of the structure to allow normal base-flows to pass through.
29. Leaky dams can use a range of log sizes and other woody material depending on the channel and surrounding sites. These will be pinned in place creating a 90° barrier at which peak flow will be held back.
30. The leaky dams will be constructed of locally sourced materials that is acquired through the habitat management work of the forest such as felling, pollarding and coppicing. It is intended that this element of the project will primarily be delivered by contractors with some support from volunteers where possible.
31. The project will implement up to fifteen leaky dams to provide up to 500m³ of water storage during peak flow. The placement of the dams will ensure no detrimental impact to access on paths and rides.
32. Overland flow interceptor structures will be constructed of locally sourced materials, including logs acquired through habitat work or 'brash' through scrub and land clearance.

33. Interceptors will be secured using stakes. These will be primarily constructed by volunteers with some contractor support if required, including movement of materials and installation of structures at more complicated sites.
34. Interceptors are only active during peak flow events. Three interceptors will be provided to reduce the flow of water towards the watercourse during peak flows, supporting the attenuation of 500m³ of water.

Key Data

35. The Thames RFCC funding application window opened on Monday 11th September 2023 and closes on Friday 15th December 2023.
36. Up to £50,000 can be sought per scheme.
37. Projects need to be completed within 2-years of approval of application.
38. Up to 15 leaky dams and 3 overland flow interceptors proposed to provide up to 500 m³ of flood water storage.
39. Up to five properties at direct risk of in a 1 in 30 year (3.3% annual probability) surface water flood event in London Borough of Waltham Forest.
40. Online Environment Agency mapping shows surface water flooding with depths > 0.3 m are shown to occur along Yardley Lane and external property areas during the 1 in 30 year flood event. Depths greater than 0.3 m are not considered passable by people and vehicles therefore there are access / egress implications for residents associated with the existing level of flood risk.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications

41. The implementation of NFM aligns with the City Corporation's Climate Action Strategy through building adaptive capacity through delivery of resilience measures. These measures are referenced as key project objectives within the Cool Streets and Greening Programme.
42. The emerging Natural Environment Strategy will include a commitment to improving habitat resilience and adaptation measures that will be enhanced by the proposed NFM measures.

Financial implications

43. Works will not go ahead if the grant is unsuccessful and will incur no further costs than that supported by the grant.

Resource implications

44. Staff time from the Environmental Resilience Team and Epping Forest team will be required to support the application, development and implementation of the project. Following installation, 6-monthly inspections will be needed for five years.

Legal implications

45. Advice will be provided in respect of any necessary agreements as discussions with other stakeholders, including the London Borough of Waltham Forest (as LLFA) evolve and the respective roles of the parties is determined.

Risk implications

46. If the grant is unsuccessful then the project will not go ahead. NFM installations are increasingly becoming a common management technique. The Epping Forest team has experience of installing leaky dams and not progressing with this project would be missed opportunity for developing this experience.
47. Any delay in providing specifications, tendering and agreeing contracts could have significant impact on project completion, as works can only be completed within autumn and winter. This means that programming should also take into account the possibility of extreme weather and poor working conditions, which could cause delay in construction.

Climate implications

48. The use of NFM interventions will increase the resilience of the habitats to environmental and biological changes brought about by climate change. It will reduce local flood risk and the impact of water stress on habitats within the Forest caused by periods of drought and heat.
49. Extreme weather events such as flooding are predicted to become more frequent, implementation of NFM can build the adaptive capacity of the Forest to reduce the impacts of surface water flooding on biodiversity and accessibility.
50. Risk of fire to the Forest is going to increase as a result of rising temperatures and drought. The proposed measures will result in more water being retained within the Forest, increasing ground moisture and water available to vegetation and therefore reducing the risk of fire.
51. As a result of this, the work will enhance biodiversity and increase resilience by; protecting the Forest's carbon stores, its habitats and through the creation of microhabitats such as temporary pools and wet grassland. The work complements the aims of the Climate Action Strategy of the City Corporation for both climate adaptation and biodiversity enhancement.

Security implications

52. None.

Charity implications

53. 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

54. The Environmental Resilience Team is seeking permission to submit or participate in the submission of a funding application to the TRFCC for £35 000 to £50 000 to wholly support the delivery of NFM measures within Epping Forest. If the funding application is successful, arrangements and agreements are likely to be required with other stakeholders. Delegated authority is sought for the Superintendent to enter into all necessary arrangements and agreements to secure the funding and implement the scheme, in consultation with the City Solicitor. The proposed NFM measures (up to fifteen leaky dams and three overland flow interceptors) would provide multiple benefits, such as reducing flood risk to downstream properties and roads, improving the resilience of protected habitats and veteran trees to drought, heat stress and wildfires by conserving water on the Forest, and improving biodiversity through habitat creation and conservation.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee grant Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- Appendix 2 – Yardley Lane Natural Flood Management intervention location map – locations shown are indicative

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Environmental Resilience Officer

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Frequently Asked Questions

What is the aim of the Thames Regional Flood & Coastal Committee (RFCC) Natural Flood Management (NFM) fund?

In December 2020, the Thames RFCC awarded £1million of local levy towards the delivery of small scale NFM schemes, up to the value of £50,000 per scheme.

The NFM fund was agreed with the intention to develop a new proportionate method for Lead Local Flood Authorities to apply for the funding. It follows recognition that it is inhibitive difficult for the intended small-scale schemes to demonstrate the benefits usually required to access Grant in Aid (GiA) funding.

The proportionate application process consists of an NFM Application Form and NFM Application Calculator, instead of an Outline Business Case and Partnership Funding Calculator.

Learning from this application process will be shared with the Thames RFCC and the relevant Environment Agency teams to help demonstrate the benefits of a more streamlined and proportionate application process.

Who can apply for the funding?

Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs).

Can LLFAs collaborate with other organisations on an application and delivery?

Yes, LLFAs can collaborate with other organisations on an application, but the LLFA must commit to being the application lead and be able to resource this. Current statutory funding guidance states that Flood & Coastal Erosion Risk Management grants, including Local Levy, can only be paid to certain organisations. This is why only LLFAs can apply to the Thames RFCC NFM funding.

If an LLFA wanted to commission the delivery of the work to another organisation this may be an option as long as this is transparent and all LLFA procurement rules are followed.

All communication regarding the application will be directed through the application lead.

How does the NFM Calculator relate to the NFM Application Form?

Majority of the scores the applicant provides in the NFM calculator are driven by answers to the NFM application form questions. The application form should justify the scores provided in the calculator.

What is the monitoring expectation for projects?

Only low-level monitoring is expected to demonstrate project success. Monitoring isn't specifically funded through the Thames RFCC NFM fund.

Although only low-level monitoring is expected it is important to be included within the application so that project successes and lessons learnt can be captured and feedback to the Thames RFCC for future learning.

Some examples of monitoring from the first funding round include;

- Flow monitoring
- Fixed point photography
- Flood Group Monitoring (Visits to NFM features, photos etc)
- Drone imagery

A monitoring budget could be justifiable in the case of newer, less researched, NFM techniques that would add to the NFM knowledge base. This would be assessed on a case by case basis and would be subject to Thames RFCC approval.



Natural Flood Management Measures - Indicative Locations

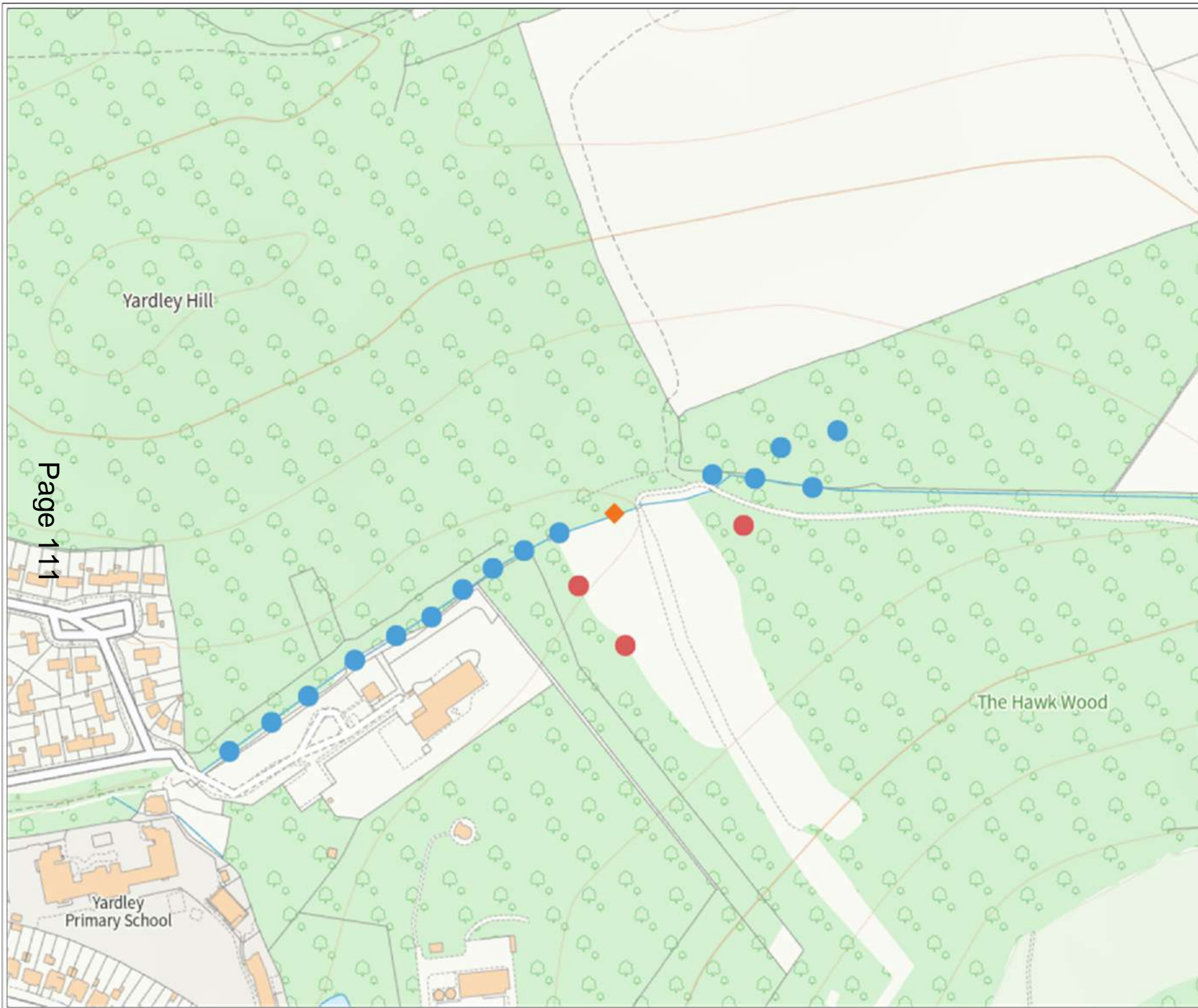
-  Existing Leaky Dam
-  Proposed Leaky Dam
-  Proposed Brush Bundle

Created By:
Ella Brown

Date Created
11 Oct 2023

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Metres

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Committee(s)	Dated:
Epping Forest and Commons Epping Forest Consultative Group	23/11/23 28/02/24
Subject: Epping Forest – Assistant Director’s Update August – September 2023 (SEF 27/23)	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?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/A
Report of: Bob Roberts, Interim Executive Director Environment Department	For Information
Report author: Paul Thomson – Assistant Director (Superintendent) of Epping Forest	

Summary

The purpose of this report is to summarise Epping Forest’s activities between August and September 2023.

Of particular note was the award of an additional £210,000 from the City of London Corporation to support urgent tree works; a notable increase in household waste fly tips to a total of 104 tips, averaging at 52 incidents a month compared to the previous 2023 average of 36 incidents each month; the delivery of another successful big walk led by the Epping Forest Heritage Trust; the creation of a new waymarked trail from Loughton Station to the Forest; the award of a modern Freedom of the City of a longstanding volunteer; and the granting of planning permission, subject to conditions, for the Great Gregories Agricultural Pollution Project.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Epping Forest Local Risk Financial Summary – Appendix 1

1. Appendix 1 contains graphical representation of financial data to the end of September 2023 (period 0624). These figures relate to Epping Local Risk only and do not include central risk elements such as City Surveyors projects.
2. The first table in Appendix 1 gives actual expenditure to the end of September 2023 against whole year budget, subdivided by type and Department of Service (DOS), where CGC is Chingford Golf Club, CSS is Countryside Stewardship, WF is Wanstead Flats (football) W&W is Woodredon and Warlies and EF is all other expenditure/income at Epping Forest. This is further summarised graphically in Budget and Actuals by Type, across all these Departments of Service for this financial year.
3. Debt figures have gone up in this period, particularly due to short-term property remated debts corresponding with a new billing period. Longer term debts are due to a small number of difficult cases that are being formally dealt with. Property debts are largely wayleaves, and similar property transactions, administered through one system, while non-property debts are all other payable invoices raised by the Epping Forest office. Negative numbers are credit notes or payments received but not yet allocated against invoices.
4. The overall financial summary at Appendix 1 shows figures on 30th September. Staffing resource allocation following new Target Operating Model (TOM) structures is £760,000 greater than previous, which has now been allocated to local risk.
5. As recruitment is commencing in the second quarter of the financial year, staffing budgets are predicted to underspend in this financial year with investment in ride surfacing works, development costs for Forest Transport Strategy #2, landscaping at Wellington Hill and significant investment in ULEZ complaint vehicles planned.
6. The key data and statistics dashboard (previously Appendix 2) is under review following TOM restructure, vacancies and sickness absence of key staff.
7. **Car Parking Income**– Monthly income for car parking in Financial Year 2023/24 is approximately the same as that received in the previous financial year.
8. **Licencing** - Licencing continues to do well, particularly in Filming and Photography. This is an unpredictable income stream, but work continues to focus on growing this area where possible.
9. **Golf** – Green fee income continues to be up on last year for August and September. The golf course remains number 1 ranked for online bookings within the county. Regular cutting requirements as well as additional

presentation work across the golf course was carried out to present the course to a high standard to host two semi-final events and the final of the Leslie Wood for Essex Golf Union for August. Green hollowing coring and verti-draining took place in September to remove thatch levels to help improve turf quality and drainage for winter months.

10. **Energy Consumption** Additional investment in renewable energy through battery storage for our existing large solar arrays will allow the Charity to utilise power during peak periods, avoiding the loss of value by channelling excess power to the National Grid at an artificially low tariff. The battery storage system is onsite and is still awaiting final connection with input needed from City Surveyors Department.
11. **Fly tips**– 63 fly tips were recorded in August and 41 in September, this is a significant increase on the average of 36 recorded per month since January. General household waste continues to dominate the fly tips experienced across Epping Forest followed by builder's waste.
12. Epping Forest Enforcement Officers are investigating 20 Fly tip reports; 4 vandalism to car park events; 2 Damage to Forest reports and 3 matters relating to a dog attack; Parking (in Forest) and Anti-Social behaviour associated with a motorcycle. Of the 29 incidents 6 were subject to Conditional cautions issued for total of £920 and 3 warning letters, with 20 incidents remaining under investigation.
13. **Staff Vacancies**- Epping Forest Senior Management continue to prioritise recruitment to key roles with assistance from HR and other colleagues.
14. **Volunteering (table 8)** – Fifteen Corporate staff volunteers from Thames Water Company Volunteering cleared some of the lakeside vegetation and reopened views over the water at Alexandra Lake. The stalwart Forest Lodge Estate Litter picking volunteers organised an event at Leyton Flats. Litter picking volunteer Andy Crossman who has been volunteering for the Forest for 55 years was awarded the modern Freedom of the City at a ceremony at Guildhall on 1 September.
15. **Current Lodge Occupancy** –Thirteen lodges are currently empty, including some in poor condition, particularly 44 The Plain, The Caddy House Flat and 1 & 2 Jubilee Retreat. Refurbishment works, including removal of known asbestos containing materials are being undertaken from local risk and Forest Fund, with proposals on future staff use to be determined by the Director. These figures do not include facilities at Field Studies Centre High Beach, or the Warren House. One additional Lodge, which was not a high priority for staff occupation, has been let in this period.
16. As part of a City of London Corporation-wide assessment, 22 properties have been locally identified as having as having the potential to have Reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) elements. Further assessment work will be completed in November.

17. **Outstanding Tree Works** – Additional funds £210,000 to contribute to tree works have been approved and due to be applied to budgets. Work continues at full pace with all inhouse arborist teams now concentrating on tree safety works until the figures are once again manageable.
18. **Grazing (table 12)** - Planning permission has been granted by Epping Forest District Council for roofing and new livestock buildings at Great Gregories Yard, works are planned to start early next year.
19. Three visits were conducted with Land Use Consultancy, Members of Pasture For Life and Writtle College by the Grazing and Conservation team, the visits were to promote and educate on the undertaking and application of conservation and livestock work undertaken in the Forest.
20. **Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (table 13)** - Natural England's current assessment places 30 of the Forest's 38 SSSI compartments in 'Favourable' or 'Unfavourable Recovering' condition.
21. **Quality Awards** - Green Flag and Green Heritage Site awards last renewed 18 July 2023. The coveted Visit England 'Blue Badge' Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme (VAQAS) also renewed.

Forest Services

22. While the early summer month of July was dominated by Very High Fire Severity ratings, on a 5-point scale of Low to Exceptional. Periods of heavy rainfall in August and September reduced the incidents of Very High Severity index ratings. The Fire Brigades and Forest keepers attended 22 wildfires on Forest Land between 10 April and 20 July, with Keepers also attending 9 log fires, 24 campfires: 21 barbeques over a similar period. Fortunately, above average rainfall later in July, substantially reduced the wildfire risk. The red High Fire Risk signs at prominent points across the Forest were retained into September to help maintain public vigilance. The Charity continued to work with both Fire Brigades to coordinate public safety messages during the continuing High-Risk periods.
23. A successful 'Big Walk' event was organised by the Epping Forest Heritage Trust with support from the Forest Keeper and Visitor Centre teams on 17 September. A partnership between Epping Forest Heritage Trust, Loughton Town Council, Transport for London and the Epping Forest Charity, funded by City Enjoying Greenspaces funding launched orientation boards and waymarking linking Loughton Station with Epping Forest.

Operations

24. Work has been principally focused on tree safety and vegetation against property responsibilities. The externally contracted work for the summer has been completed and further procurement is underway. An in-house drive-by survey of green zones is underway and is further increasing the tree safety

workload. Arborist supervisors are working on new and recurring subsidence issues as well as responding to claims regarding fallen trees.

Fleet

25. Work continues to bring into Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) compliance with the removal of non-complaint diesel vehicles. Opportunities are also being taken to increase the efficiency of the fleet investing in a smaller mobile elevated work platform (MEWP) and the conversion of one of the arborist crew cabs with a dumper function that will remove woodchip from difficult to access Forest areas.

Learning

26. The learning team are leading a new 'Climate Action Pathways in Education' (CAPE) alliance, bringing together teachers and researchers to develop best practice in climate education. The alliance will work together to change today's education for tomorrow's climate, equipping people with the knowledge and skills to take climate action and protect the environment.
27. The learning programme has engaged 2,497 school students at Epping Forest (April – September 2023). The programme has reached schools from some of London's most deprived boroughs, including Hackney, Waltham Forest and Haringey. Schools took part in facilitated workshops that support the National Curriculum and boost fusion skills, wellbeing and connection to nature.
28. Children from Newham took part in summer holiday learning activities in Epping forest. The children were part of 'Ambition, Achieve, Aspire' - a charity working with Newham families in need. Learning activities promoted wellbeing and forest exploration. The Learning Team also hosted a staff away-day for the CoL DCCS team.

Projects

29. **Countryside Stewardship Grant Scheme** - An application to the government's Countryside Stewardship (CS) grant scheme has been completed for the second half of the Forest, which follows on from the first CS 10-year agreement started in 2020. The works cover restoration of nationally important habitats, preservation of historic features and assisting visitors to navigate the Forest. Scheme proposals have been updated following public consultation and these changes were presented to July Epping Forest & Commons Committee, as a separate report. The final application will be completed by November 2023.
30. **Baldwins Pond Small Raised Reservoir Dam Repairs** – The Environment Department's District Surveyors Team has secured approval for a Design and Build contract in order to progress plans for the repair of the leaking 6.4-metre-high dam. Site meetings are underway with works planned to commence in early Summer 2024.

31. **Great Gregories Farm – Roofing improvement and Barn Project –**
Planning determination under EPF/0105/23 for the construction of a Hay Barn under permitted development rights has been agreed for the site on 14 February 2023. Planning consent has now been provided for EPF/1054/23 for the erection of three agricultural buildings, roof canopy to existing building, water storage tank and retrospective consent for staff welfare cabin.
32. **Climate Action Strategy – Carbon Recovery Project** - Consultants Arcadis have completed further analysis of the measures needed to maintain the current levels of carbon sequestration across NED sites. This data will be reported to the relevant Committee across the winter.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Epping Forest Local Risk Financial Summary

Paul Thomson

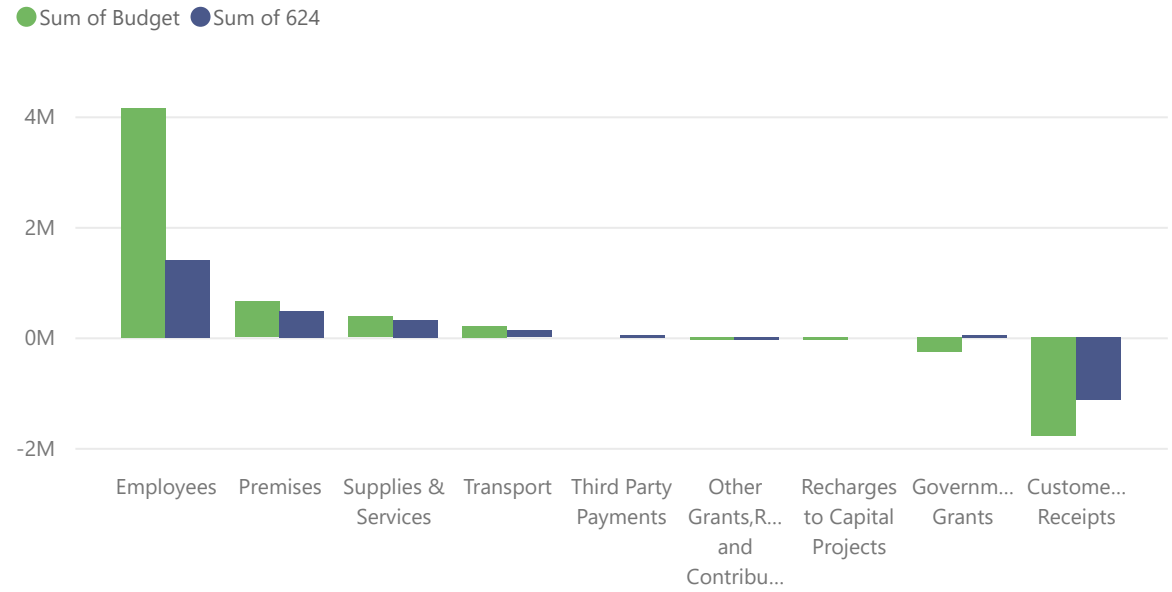
T: 0208 532 1010

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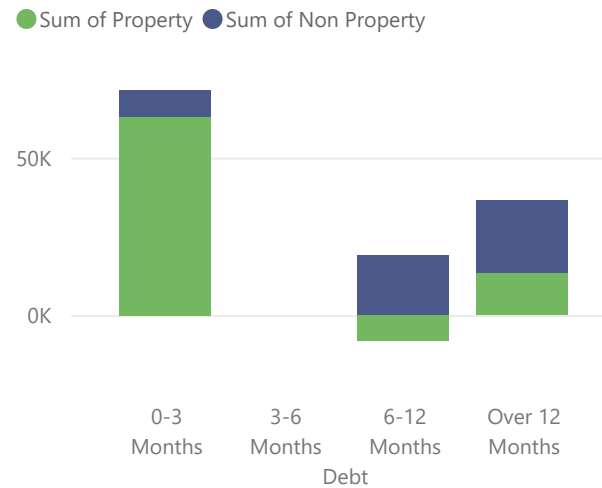


Exp/Inc	P&L Header	DOS	Sum of Budget	Sum of 624
Expenditure	Employees	CGC	143000	86,324.00
Expenditure	Employees	EF	3713000	1,193,422.00
Expenditure	Employees	W&W	52000	26,025.00
Expenditure	Employees	WF	245000	94,768.00
Expenditure	Premises	CGC	29000	12,837.00
Expenditure	Premises	CSS	173000	3,196.00
Expenditure	Premises	EF	408000	433,693.00
Expenditure	Premises	W&W	6000	3,953.00
Expenditure	Premises	WF	35000	17,355.00
Expenditure	Supplies & Services	CGC	50000	43,108.00
Expenditure	Supplies & Services	EF	317000	257,900.00
Expenditure	Supplies & Services	WF	12000	8,938.00
Expenditure	Third Party Payments	EF	0	207.00
Expenditure	Transport	CGC	8000	8,942.00
Expenditure	Transport	EF	190000	111,944.00
Expenditure	Transport	WF	11000	1,496.00
Income	Customer,Client Receipts	CGC	-348000	-394,600.00
Income	Customer,Client Receipts	EF	-1292000	-716,878.00
Income	Customer,Client Receipts	W&W	-69000	-10,321.00
Income	Customer,Client Receipts	WF	-80000	-14,481.00
Income	Government Grants	CSS	-173000	12,174.00
Income	Government Grants	EF	-72000	-2,285.00
Income	Government Grants	W&W	-12000	0.00
Income	Other Grants,Reimbursements and Contributions	EF	-3000	-19,594.00
Income	Recharges to Capital Projects	EF	-49000	0.00
Total			3294000	1,158,123.00

Budget and Actuals by type



Debt ↑ Up £90,756.98 since last report



Expenditure

5392000 42.73%

Sum of Budget 624 divided by Bud...

2,304,108.00

Sum of 624

Income

-2098000 54.62%

Sum of Budget 624 divided by Bud...

-1,145,985.00

Sum of 624

Epping Forest performance against budget to end Sep 23 (period 0624, 50% of FY)

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Committee(s): Epping Forest and Commons Committee – For Decision Epping Forest Consultative Group – For Discussion	Dated: 23/11/2023 28/02/2024
Subject: Revised Terms of Reference for Epping Forest Consultative Group (SEF 23/23)	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: Bob Roberts, Interim Executive Director Environment	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, which have been conveyed to the Epping Forest and Commons Committee to help inform decision-making.

A series of changes to the Terms of Reference are required to reflect recent administrative changes within the City of London, as well as learning points from applications and admissions processes and new stakeholder engagement proposals adopted by Committee in July 2023. These updates include the new name, Epping Forest Consultative Group.

Recommendation(s)

Epping Forest and Commons Committee Members are asked to:

- Approve the adoption of revised Terms of Reference for the Epping Forest Consultative Group that reflect both the recommendations of the Lisvane Report and the Stakeholder Engagement report adopted by your Committee on 13 July 2023

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.
2. Since that time the Consultative Committee has met three times per year. The attendance was reviewed, according to the Terms of Reference, in early 2021.
3. Lord Lisvane's review of the City Corporation's Committee Structure between 2020 and 2021 resulted in a series of changes to Governance arrangements, including the devolution of the administration of various Consultative Committees from the Governance and Members Services Team in the Town Clerks Department to the relevant local service Departments. The final recommendations were agreed by the Court of Common Council in December 2021.
4. The Epping Forest and Commons Committee also adopted a series of 14 recommendations around the Stakeholder Engagement process on 13 July 2023 (see Appendix 1).
5. An update to the Terms of Reference also presents an opportunity for clarification around aspects of the admissions process.

Current Position

6. Revised Terms of Reference for the Epping Forest and Commons Committee are included at Appendix 2.
7. Key changes include a change to the group's name reflecting the decision of the Court of Common Council, an update to management and administration and additional clarification of the three-yearly admissions process.
8. A report on Stakeholder Engagement adopted by the Epping Forest and Commons Committee of 13 July 2023, considered 14 areas for modernisation and improvement, making six specific recommendations for the Epping Forest and Commons Committee:
 - a. The Chairman to appoint a Verderer to Chair the meetings on a trial basis. The Chair will rotate between the Verderers.
 - b. Reduction from three meetings each year to two, subject to a Charity Review recommendation to introduce an annual review meeting to bring the total number of consultative meetings back to a total of 3).
 - c. Retaining the hybrid format of virtual and physical representation

- d. Replacement of detailed minutes with action logs, which would be made transparent to EF&CC
 - e. Commence work planning to improve the diversity and inclusion within the group.
 - f. Conduct a skills audit of group members to allow the experience and skills of individual members and organisations to be fully leveraged by the charity.
9. Recommendation 1 - the appointment of the EFCG Chair is clarified at paragraph 16 of the Terms of Reference
 10. Recommendation 2 – is confirmed at paragraph 12 of the Terms of Reference, and proposals for a Public Annual Review Meeting is subject to the recommendations of the current Charity Review of Epping Forest.
 11. Recommendation 3 – the retention of hybrid meeting arrangements introduced in 2021 and improved through uploading to the video sharing platform YouTube™ is consolidated at paragraph 16 of the Terms of Reference.
 12. Recommendation 4 – the transfer to simplified action logs from detailed minutes is addressed at paragraph 3 of the Terms of Reference.
 13. Recommendation 5 – work to improve the diversity and inclusion of EFCG member groups is outlined at paragraph 30 of the Terms of Reference.
 14. Recommendation 6 – regarding skills audits of EFCG members is added at a new paragraph 37 of the Terms of Reference.
 15. A further recommendation raised at the last EFCG regarding the improved integration of EFCG member's oversight of the three Epping Forest and Commons Committees, that are not preceded by an EFCG meeting, is included at a new paragraph 6 of the Terms of Reference.

Options for Epping Forest and Commons Committee

16. **Option 1** – Adopt the updated Terms of Reference for the Epping Forest Consultative Committee **This option is recommended.**

Proposals

17. The group is no longer referred to as the Epping Forest Consultative Committee, but instead the Epping Forest Consultative Group.
18. Paragraphs 15-18 reflect changes in management, with the Group now administered directly by Environment Officers (no longer Town Clerk's) and meetings Chaired by Assistant Director Environment (previously known as Superintendent Epping Forest). Chairman and Deputy Chairman are invited but no longer obliged to attend.

19. Paragraph 26 clarifies information to be provided by applicant organisation expressing interest in taking part each three years.
20. Four paragraphs are amended, and 2 new paragraphs added to reflect the changes implemented by the Stakeholder engagement proposals adopted by Committee in July 2023.
21. Discussion at the Epping Forest Consultative Group recognised that changes were small and sought reassurance that meetings would continue with a wide a range of groups with specific interest in the Forest as possible.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

22. Strategic implications – The continued attendance at the Epping Forest Consultative Committee supports the Corporate Plan items 4, 10, 11 and 12.
23. Financial and resource implications – The resources required for room hire light refreshments, the publication of agendas; reports and minutes are from Epping Forest Local Risk.
24. Legal implications – The Epping Forest Consultative Group 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.
25. 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.
26. Since the Consultative Committee/Group 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 reflect this.
27. Risk implications – This is a revision of an existing Consultative Group structure and is therefore 'business as usual' and considered low risk.
28. Equalities implications – Equalities statements and policies are incorporated into these terms.
29. Climate implications – The UK Government has binding targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and hence global warming by 2050, with the Consultative Group 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.
30. Security implications – None

31. 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

32. The Consultative Group has been a valuable asset to communication at Epping Forest since its foundation in 2018.

33. Necessary amendments following administrative changes at the City of London have been incorporated into these updated Terms of Reference, with the opportunity also taken to clarify selection criteria and processes in readiness for the next review.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Report to Epping Forest & Commons Committee
- Appendix 2 – Epping Forest Consultative Committee - Terms of Reference – Full Revised October 2022

Jo Hurst

Business Manager Epping Forest

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Authors: Jo Hurst & Paul Thomson
Date: October 2023



Epping
Forest

Registered Charity

Epping Forest Consultative Group – Terms of Reference

Table of Contents

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Purpose of Group

1. The Epping Forest Consultative Group (EFCG) considers and discusses areas of current concern or debate at Epping Forest. EFCG receives public reports following initial consideration by Epping Forest and Commons Committee (EF&CC) and provides advice or opinion on those matters.
2. Members of the EFCG will be in attendance to listen to views expressed by consultees, and to represent them back to the EF&CC where necessary and appropriate.
3. Action Logs from EFCG meetings and the outcomes of the EFCG's discussions will be considered by the subsequent EF&CC in a public report to inform decision making. Likewise, the most recent minutes and action logs of the EF&CC are to be reviewed by the EFCG.
4. The EF&CC acts as the Trustee representatives for the City of London Corporation and is mandated to make management policy and spending decisions in relation to deficit grant arrangements. The EFCG is not a formal decision-making body, however, EFCG's views will be noted and considered in formal reports to the EF&CC.
5. EFCG meetings are to be scheduled several weeks prior to alternate EF&CC meetings to consider papers and matters arising, with sufficient time scheduled for revisions to papers to be made for EF&CC, and action points to be included in documentation.
6. Information regarding the agenda and reports presented to the alternate EF&CC meetings, not preceded by the EFCG, will be shared with standing members of the EFCG.

Conduct, attendance and other principles

7. The City of London Member's Code of Conduct 2018, associated guidance, declarations appendices establish the principles of behaviour and conduct expected by Members of this Group.
8. 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.
9. 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.

10. EFCG Members are representatives of their organisation, affiliates and theme of interest, but Code of Conduct 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

11. EFCG Meetings will retain the hybrid format of virtual Microsoft Teams™ meetings and physical representation introduced in 2021 in the aftermath of COVID-19 public health restrictions. Meetings will be scheduled at The Warren 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.
12. Meetings are on a weekday evening, avoiding school and public holidays.
13. There will be a minimum of three meetings a year, reducing to two meetings subject to an Epping Forest Charity Review recommendation to introduce an Annual Review meeting to bring the total number of EFCG meetings back to a total of three annual meetings.
14. 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.
15. Meetings will be held in public (numbers subject to venue capacity) and will be shared for 12 months as recording held for public access on YouTube® online video sharing and social media platform. Public questions are at the discretion of the Chairman.

Allocation of positions

16. The EFCG has representation from Members of the EF&CC including Verderers. The Chairman and Deputy Chairman may attend according to availability and agenda.

17. Meetings are to be chaired by an Epping Forest Verderer nominated by the EF&CC Chairman on a trial basis, or another EF&CC Member or other nominated Officer in their absence.
18. Other City of London officers will attend as required.
19. The meetings are administered by the Environment Department's Stakeholder Engagement Officer or in their absence a nominated City of London Environment Officer.
20. 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.
21. 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.
22. In the interests of impartiality and equality, political parties and religious groups are not invited to attend.
23. Organisations with or supportive of extremist policies or views including supporting, planning or carrying out criminal activity motivated by a political or ideological viewpoint are prohibited
24. 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.
25. 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.
26. Invitations to express interest and to nominate representatives are advertised through press release, social media, email and direct correspondence by City of London.
27. Applications require details of how the nominating organisation meets the above criteria and must include:
 - The theme of interest the organisation wishes its application to be considered under.

- A brief (maximum 150 words) explanation of the purposes and aims of the organisation.
- Number of members at time of application (see definition at 30 below)
- Name and contact details of nominated representative.
- Copies of Constitution, Equality Statement and other relevant documentation.
- Any other relevant and necessary information requested by Officers at the time of application.

28. 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

29. 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 (if existing attendee)

30. 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.

31. Work planning will be undertaken to report on improvements to the diversity and inclusion of the membership of the EFCG.
32. Epping Forest and Commons Committee may appoint further members or co-opt representatives (for example subject matter experts) to attend where it deems appropriate.
33. The Consultative Group serves as established for three years (starting in 2018), after which the invitation and nomination process outlined above is repeated.

Requirements and responsibilities

34. 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).
35. 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.
36. Representatives must share agenda and documentation internally within their organisation (subject to confidentiality) as well as minutes and outcomes of discussions.

37. Any representative or organisation found to contravene any of the terms herein may be excluded from the Consultative Group permanently and without notice by order of the Chairman of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee.
38. A regular skills audit of group members will be undertaken to allow the experience and skills of individual members and organisations to be fully leveraged by the Charity.

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Committee(s): Epping Forest and Commons	Dated: 23/11/2023
Subject: Proposed Installation of Deer ‘exclosure’ Plots (SEF 18/23)	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?	Y
If so, how much?	£13,000 one-off cost, plus annual maintenance of £500-£1,000
What is the source of Funding?	Local Risk Budget
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	Y
Report of: Bob Roberts, Interim Executive Director Environment	For Decision
Report author: Ben Rosendale – Visitor Experience Manager, Epping Forest	

Summary

This report is necessary to seek Committee approval for the installation of thirty ‘deer ‘exclosure’ plots’ across Epping Forest and the Buffer Lands. ‘Deer ‘exclosure’ plots’ were recommended for scientific monitoring and public education purposes, as part of the Deer Management Strategy Review of 2021 adopted at your Committee of 8 March 2021.

Monitored over a period of a few years, in combination with deer counts and regular vegetation damage assessments, the plots will provide an indication of the impact of deer grazing on the Forest understorey and tree regeneration.

Monitoring of these plots will form part of the wider programme of deer impact monitoring, the results of which will inform future deer management plans to better meet the needs of the Forest.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Approve the installation of thirty ‘exclosure’ plots at selected sites across Epping Forest and the Buffer land at a cost of £11,000 (+ £2,000 for interpretation panels) and annual maintenance costs of between £500-£1,000 per annum over 5 years.

Main Report

Background

1. Section 4 of the Epping Forest Act 1878 makes all deer in the Forest the property of the Conservators, to be preserved as 'objects of ornament'. However, section 7(3) of that Act also requires the Conservators to protect the 'timber and other trees, pollards, shrubs, underwood, heather, gorse, turf, and herbage growing on the Forest'.
2. Epping Forest officers manage the deer population on the Buffer Lands and within the Birch Hall Deer Park (Deer Sanctuary) as recommended by the Epping Forest Deer Management Strategy Review and overseen by your Committee's Deer Management Oversight Group (DMOG).
3. Epping Forest has a sizeable number of Fallow Deer (*Dama dama*) and a growing population of Reeves Muntjac Deer (*Muntiacus reevesi*). The 2021 Deer Management Strategy Review recognised the damaging impact through grazing and browsing by deer on the ecology of the Forest particularly the regeneration of tree and understorey species and recommended the installation of 'exclosure' plots

Current Position

4. There are presently no 'exclosure' monitoring plots in Epping Forest and only one on the Buffer Lands. They are referred to as 'exclosures' rather than 'enclosures' because their purpose is to exclude deer (and to a lesser extent other animals) rather than to enclose them.
5. A Deer Impact Assessment (DIA) Survey was carried out in 2019, and a further DIA survey has been commissioned and completed for 2023-24. These show that deer are having a significant impact on woodland understorey regrowth and are inhibiting regrowth of trees across the northern Forest and Buffer Lands.
6. While some level of browsing by deer and other animals can be beneficial to habitat regeneration and maintenance, a high level of browsing negatively impacts habitats. There is no control point or benchmark by which to gauge the rate of regrowth that is without impact from the present deer population.
7. Deer drone surveys have also been commissioned for 2023 (November). DIAs and drone surveys provide valuable information on deer populations within and around the Forest, and the information from the proposed deer exclosure plots will help create a more complete data set.
8. The proposed deer exclosure plots would be 4x4m plots, fenced to 1.5m high, to prevent deer from grazing or browsing within each exclosure enabling the study of the impact of deer grazing or browsing on representative habitats. Monitored over a period of a few years, in combination with deer counts and regular

vegetation damage assessments, the plots will provide an indication of the impact of deer grazing/browsing on the Forest understorey.

Options

9. Install deer monitoring 'exclosure' plots at a cost of £11,000 to support the assessment of deer grazing/browsing impacts to help guide management levels for deer numbers. **This option is recommended.**
10. Do not install deer monitoring 'exclosure' plots, relying instead on other assessment techniques. This would save £11,000 but would not provide the same level of data. **This option is not recommended.**

Proposals

11. The installation of thirty deer 'exclosure' as per Forestry Commission guidance on deer management best practice would provide additional information on the impact of grazing/browsing by deer and cattle across the Forest. The 'exclosure' plots will be located mainly in glades and or open areas free from shade across 25 locations within the Forest and Buffer Lands.
12. A further 5 'exclosure' plots will be located in areas of predominantly beech woodland in a mixture of shaded and open areas to form part of longer-term monitoring, owing to the slower rate of regeneration in Beech woodland environments.
13. Interpretation signage will be affixed to all exclosures informing the public of their purpose. Exclosures will be placed to avoid intrusion on the public, this will be done by where possible placing them away from well used paths and desire lines.
14. Yearly fixed-point photography will be used to monitor the sites and contribute to the greater understanding of deer impact across the Forest, including vegetation surveying where appropriate. The results of plot monitoring will feed into the development of future Forest Deer Management plans and help inform officers as to the effectiveness of those management plans.
15. Regular monitoring of the plots will be undertaken to ensure that their effectiveness is not undermined by vandalism or damage. This is anticipated to be on a 3month cycle.
16. The exclosure plots will be constructed to meet the Forestry Commission's design specification. This specification will mitigate the risk of wildlife becoming trapped in the plots, through the use of appropriate size mesh and height of fencing.
17. Natural England consent has been sought and granted in principle for these 'exclosure' pending detailed location maps. It is proposed that these 'exclosure' plots remain in situ until such time and the monitoring is no longer required or that they are no longer useable for monitoring purposes and will be re-sited to other suitable locations.

Key Data

18. Thirty deer monitoring 'enclosure' plots would be created across the Forest and Buffer lands to enable monitoring of regrowth free from browsing pressure.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

19. **Strategic implications** – The proposal will help to inform the long term protection of the Forest environment from over grazing by deer and contributes to the Corporate Plan *Shape outstanding environments*.
20. **Financial implications** The cost of materials for these enclosures will be £11,000 + £2,000 for interpretation panels. Additionally there will be estimated annual maintenance costs of approximately £500-£1000 pa. These costs will be met from Epping Forest local risk budget.
21. **Resource implications** – Epping Forest staff will be responsible for any ongoing maintenance. However, they are not resourced to install the number enclosures that are required, so contractors will be brought in to do this.
22. Further resource from the Keeper/ Volunteer teams will be required to monitor the plots between surveys. This is estimated at 5 days per year and could be completed by a volunteer or assistant keeper given suitable training.
23. The monitoring could also be included in any future Deer Impact Assessments commissioned from contractors depending on staff availability.
24. **Legal implications** - There is a general duty under section 7(1) of the Epping Forest Act 1878 to keep Epping Forest unenclosed. However, section 33(1)(iii) of that Act empowers the Conservators to make enclosures for certain purposes, including to manage the timber and other trees, pollards and underwoods, and to plant trees and shrubs for shelter or ornament.
25. The most relevant power for present purposes though is contained in section 7(1) of the City of London (Various Powers) Act 1977, which provides that:
 - (1) *For so long as the Conservators consider it necessary to do so for the purposes of the regeneration of any part of parts of Epping Forest to preserve the natural aspect thereof, or of the protection of the Forest as an open space for the recreation and enjoyment of the public, the Conservators may from time to time—*
 - (a) *by notices posted at such places in the Forest as they think fit, restrict or prohibit access to any such part of parts of the Forest;*
 - (b) *enclose such part or parts of the Forest and suspend the rights of common over the lands enclosed and all other rights the exercise of which will in their judgement be inconsistent with the objects of such enclosures.*

26. The area of Forest which can be enclosed for these purposes is limited by section 7(2) to 100 acres, but clearly the current proposals fall far within that. Likewise, there are additional notification and consultation requirements where the area to be enclosed exceeds 2¹/₂ acres, but again the current proposals are not extensive enough to trigger this requirement. Notices will need to be displayed as per section 7(1).

27. **Risk implications** – There is a risk of the plots suffering from damage, due to a lack of understanding over their purpose. This should be mitigated with adequate signage.

The risk of wildlife becoming trapped within exclosures, is mitigated by the design and construction of the plots.

28. **Equalities implications** – Not Applicable

29. **Climate implications** – Browsing and grazing by deer have a negative impact of tree and understorey regeneration and therefore scientific data from “exclosure” plots acting as scientific controls will help guide the management of the Forest to better manage Carbon Sequestration.

30. **Security implications** – N/A

31. **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

32. The installation of ‘Deer ‘exclosure’ plots will secure the better monitoring of the impact of deer on the Forest and Buffer Lands to inform future management plans and to assist in analysing their effectiveness. The plots could also provide a valuable interpretive and educational tool highlighting the negative impact of high levels of deer grazing/browsing on Forest vegetation.

Appendices - None

Background Papers

Deer Management Strategy SEF 07/21b EF&CC 8/3/21

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Committee(s): Epping Forest & Commons Epping Forest Consultative Group	Dated: 23/11/2023 28/02/2024
Subject: Epping Forest Wildfire Plan Review 2022 – 2023 (SEF 28/23)	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 A further report will be bought forward if the spending discussed in the report is progressed
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
Report of: Bob Roberts, Interim Executive Director	For Information
Report author: Paul Thomson, Assistant Director Epping Forest	

Summary

This report updates your Committee with regard to the review of actions being undertaken following Forest wildfires in the summers of 2022 and 2023. The review is seeking to provide assurance of risk reduction through the removal of mature vegetation which can fuel wildfires, improvements to fire breaks and signage, together with dedicated fire patrols and the training of personnel, a review of equipment, and a continuing commitment to partnership working with the fire brigades and community.

Recommendation(s)

Your Committee is requested to note this report.

Main Report

Background

1. Following significant fires on Leyton and Wanstead Flats in 2013 and London’s largest wildfire on Wanstead Flats in 2018, the Epping Forest Emergency Plan – Wildfire Plan was substantially reviewed to reflect the experiences and learning from the 2013 and 2018 wildfire seasons.
2. Epping Forest was also asked to give evidence, alongside the London Fire Brigade (LFB), in October 2022 on behalf of the Open Spaces sector, to the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on fire prevention in the countryside, which

was considering pilot bans on the sale of disposable barbeques. The serious wildfires at Beam Park Country Park, Dagenham affecting 14 homes and the 100-acre wildfire affecting 14 homes at the Green, Wennington have also focused the APPG's attention on the risk to property from wildfires.

3. The summer of 2022 saw prolonged periods of low rainfall and record-breaking temperatures driving a series of heatwaves, resulting in very low soil moisture content levels and the drying up of many Forest watercourses and waterbodies. On 12 August 2022 a drought was declared in eight Environment Agency areas including Thames and East Anglia which include the full extent of Epping Forest. During 2022, Epping Forest recorded fifty-nine incidents of fires on Forest and Buffer Land, a corrected figure on the previously reported level of sixty-eight. Eleven of these incidents were significant wildfires in terms of size and length of burn, occurring between mid-July and mid-August, with nine wildfires located across the Leyton and Wanstead Flats grassland and heathland areas.
4. In contrast, 2023 was a very warm and rather wet year. Preceded by some very dry spring months, June was warm, dry, and settled with high pressure and was the UK's warmest and fourth sunniest June on record. In contrast, July and August mainly comprised unsettled weather. Through May - July 2023, thirty-three fires were reported on Epping Forest land, of which ten were wildfires with the remaining fires originating from campfires and barbeques.

Current Position

5. The risk of wildfire on Forest Land continues each year and is recorded on the Charity's Risk Register as a score of 8 (yellow). The prevalence of wildfires is directly related to key elements of the fire 'triangle' which consists of Oxygen, Heat and Fuel. At Epping Forest, the reduced spring rainfall and dry hot dry summer periods drove the 'heat' element of the triangle with the habitat type and importantly its fuel load has clearly key factors. There is also an additional element regarding visitor behaviour related to discarded litter, the careless disposal of cigarette ash and stubs, together with the growth of cooking and barbeque fires.
6. This report highlights measures taken since 2022, with the aim of further reducing the severity of new wildfires in both the high-likelihood grassland areas and across the Forest as a whole. The review has considered the following areas:

Fire Breaks

7. The frequency of fire break cutting across Wanstead and Leyton Flats has increased been from a single cut in June or July to three cuts – June, July, August, with the arisings of the first cut being collected and removed to minimise the fire risk. Particular attention has also been focused on ensuring a full three metre width to the fire breaks. Further consideration is being given to subsoiling the centre line of fire breaks during High Fire Severity periods to remove all vegetation and break the soil pan which can resist soil saturation from fire hoses. Subsoiling will require Natural England approval in Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) areas.

Decarbonisation and Fuel reduction

8. The 2018 wildfire plan sought to remove the later carbon-rich seral succession stages in heathland development. The presence of mature gorse and broom and young standard aspen and birch trees in the later succession stages are particularly likely to fuel wildfires and increase their spread.
9. Approximately 2ha of broom and bramble were removed from areas either side of Centre Road and near Alexandra Lake, Wanstead Flats during November and December 2022. Approximately 2ha of overmature gorse was also removed across Leyton Flats. These areas are maintained in accordance with site scrub management plans for rejuvenation - removal of old, dead material and management of re-growth - in some areas, and prevention of re-growth in others.

Vegetation Against Property

10. A key response to the devastating 2022 property fires at Dagenham and Wennington is the proposed creation of new fire breaks adjacent to residential areas designed to provide defendable boundaries by improving access for firefighters; starving wildfires of fuel and to better manage the higher vegetation that tends to be associated with boundaries. Trees associated with high underlying shrub vegetation are described as 'fire ladders' which can convey wildfires into trees and onto gardens and buildings. Surveying is underway to update the Vegetation Against Property Policy approved by your Committee in 2020 to facilitate additional regular cutting work. This work may be controversial as many properties often consider impenetrable bordering vegetation barriers on Forest Land as a security benefit to their property.
11. Individual isolated properties across the Forest have also raised concerns regarding the wildfire risk associated with boundary vegetation. The Urban Health Partnership has promoted the benefit of the 'Firewise UK communities' initiative, first developed in the USA. Through a dedicated website and associated leaflets, Firewise provides valuable information on how to minimise the risks to property through pre-emptive action. Firewise is a franchised arrangement and will require the purchase of promotional rights.

Equipment

12. Two Cam-Am Tractor utility vehicles were purchased in March 2022 to enable more efficient access to fire sites with smaller containers of water and to support dedicated staff fire patrols.
13. The existing bowser trailer has been fully overhauled to include a new pump and fire-fighting hoses providing additional capacity to extinguish and dampen medium and larger areas of wildfire.
14. Funds are also being sought for a second fire fogger as outlined in the 2018 Wildfire Plan to provide more versatility and redundancy. Recent experience has demonstrated that the current fire fogger mounted on a fixed trailer cannot be towed across more challenging terrain. A powered trailer or independent platform may be preferable, however, costs at £85,000 for a mobile platform will need to rely on third party fundraising.

15. The Forest Keepers completed the purchase of four new Villfirest 20 litre backpack fire pumps to aid the Forest Service team in extinguishing small fires.
16. Discussions have been held with the LBF regarding loan arrangements with Essex Fire and Rescue Service and requests that the Charity purchases further equipment to support wildfire fighting. Some National Parks have sought partnership funding to purchase All-terrain platforms to carry fire fighters and firefighting equipment to more remote and less accessible moorland and forest areas.
17. The LBF has invested in 11 'Smarthose™' reels that can quickly saturate firebreaks and lines ahead of advancing wildfires. The Smarthoses were successfully trialled and launched at Wanstead Flats on 10 July 2023.

Training

18. Annual pre-summer training on use on the fire fogger was undertaken by the Forest Services Team.
19. A new Lantra accredited computer-based wildfire training is in the process of being rolled out to the Forest Service Team and will be repeated following further recruitment.

Partnership working

20. Meetings with both London and Essex Fire Brigades have taken place to determine fire-fighting capabilities, roles and responsibilities.

Communications

21. Local signage and social media communications have been enhanced with additional large red roadside banners highlighting the fire severity and risk associated with campfires and barbeques to potential visitors whilst reminding them that these are prohibited under the local byelaws.
22. The Fire Brigades and City Corporation also coordinated social media messaging at the beginning of the fire season to ensure public awareness of risks. The LFB also dual messaged around the risk of drowning from thermal shock in water bodies during hot weather especially in early summer. This issue will be addressed by the Charity by revisions to the current Water Safety Policy.
23. During high summer in 2022 additional fire patrols in high likelihood areas during peak periods across 12noon to 8pm were mounted drawing Managers and staff from other duties. Each fire patrol has provided up to 100 advisory conversations, and as well as focusing on removing combustible material especially litter.

Smoking in Open Spaces

24. The dedicated fire patrols were welcomed by Forest users. Staff identified smokers as a 'hard to reach' audience regarding discarded smoking materials. Many smokers who avoid smoking at home, or at facilities provided at work or in places of entertainment, are particularly reliant on open spaces as an

unregulated area for smoking and were resistant to requests around changed behaviour regarding discarded ash and cigarette stubs. A sponsor will be sought for the next wildfire season to fund the free distribution of personal metallised pouches for the temporary storage of ash and stubs.

Increased habitat resilience and adaptation

25. The new Natural Environment Strategy will include objectives around improving the resilience and adaptation capacity of existing habitats. This could include initiatives such as widening Forest rides to provide greater fire break capacity, impeding drainage to retain more moisture in Forest habits for longer or expanding conservation grazing across the Flats areas, to graze down grassland and heath land fuel loads. These initiatives would be principally designed to offer more fortitude in the face of climate change and would also offer benefits in managing wildfire exposure.

Options

26. To further reduce fuel load within the higher risk areas may have a negative impact on biodiversity and habitat. Consideration should be given to the scrub and broom within the skylark enclosure and how this could be managed to better reduce wildfire risk whilst maintaining a suitable habitat for the ground-nesting birds.
27. Increase the number or width of fire breaks at the cost of biodiversity.
28. Re-introduce cattle to reduce fuel load through trampling and grazing. This option would improve the landscape ecology. However, the lack of suitable infrastructure and risk to livestock welfare posed by the public and, dogs has prevented this action being taken before.
29. Reduction of fuel by the process of spring swaling or prescribed burning is an option that requires specialist skills and human resource. However, this may be difficult to deliver within the urban surrounding and would not necessarily offer the benefits seen in larger areas of heathland due to the smaller mosaic landscapes at Epping Forest, punctuated by roads and cut fire breaks.

Proposals

30. Further removal of gorse and bramble at Wanstead Flats is planned for the coming winter of 2023/24.
31. An additional 10m fire break to be introduced at Manor Flats.

Key Data

32. None.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

33. Financial implications – The increased frequency of fire break cutting has been included within existing staff resources for conservation mowing, with arisings

disposal being part of the annual composting contract with a local farmer. Further fire break cutting of Forest boundaries with residential areas will present additional costs, as will subscription to the Firewise Communities network. External funding is likely to be sought to help fund additional fire-fighting machinery.

34. Resource implications – Work is currently underway to assess a winter/spring initiative designed to cut boundary vegetation bordering urban areas. Given the current pressures on hazardous tree work, this work will initially at least be conducted by contractors using specialist mulching equipment.

35. Legal implications – None

36. Risk implications – New training to support the wildfire plan will place an emphasis on supporting fire professionals in fire fighting major fires. Epping Forest staff will not fight major fires and will instead focus on extinguishing small fires where safe to do so and damping down areas where fires have been previously extinguished.

37. Equalities implications – None

38. Climate implications – Wildfires will release carbon being sequestered in woody material and grassland humic layers. Fire reduction measures will help preserve the work of carbon sequestration.

39. Security implications - None

Conclusion

40. Epping Forest remains at risk of vegetation wildfires due to its key designated habitat types, particularly acid grassland and wet heath, together with its peri-urban location and pressure from high levels of recreational visits.

41. Managing the landscape to reduce fuel load, implementing effective fire and access breaks, providing suitable training and equipment to Forest staff, and maintaining good relationships with the emergency services and communities help reduce the severity of wildfires. Improved communications with the public are intended to reduce the likelihood of fires being started.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – List of wildfire locations 2022
- Appendix 2 - List of wildfire locations 2023
- Appendix 3 – Fire Mapping

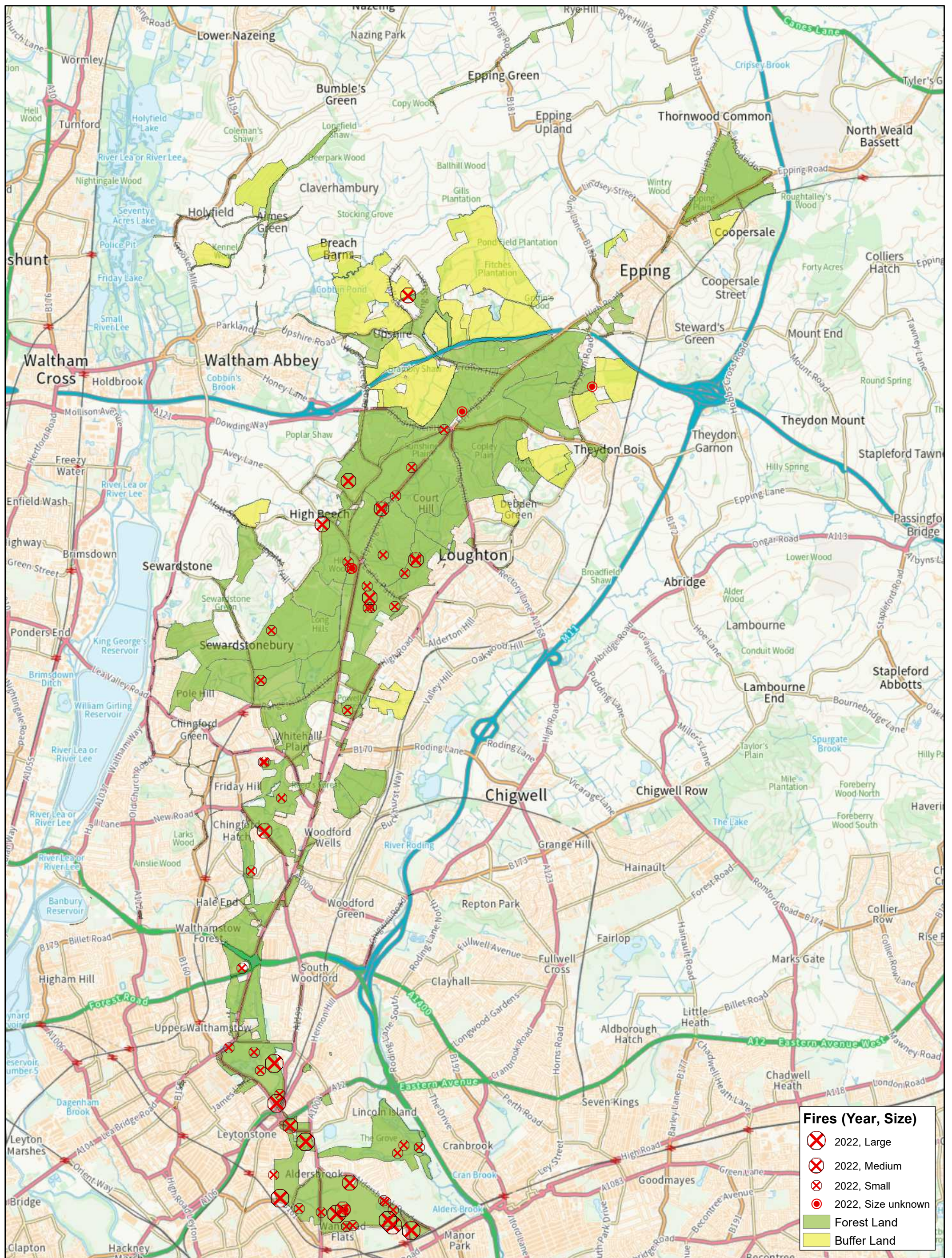
Paul Thomson

Assistant Director Epping Forest

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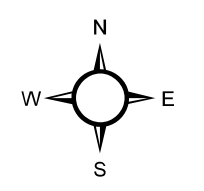
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Fires (Year, Size)

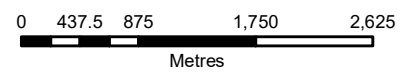
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- 2022, Medium
- 2022, Small
- 2022, Size unknown
- Forest Land
- Buffer Land



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Forest Fires overview
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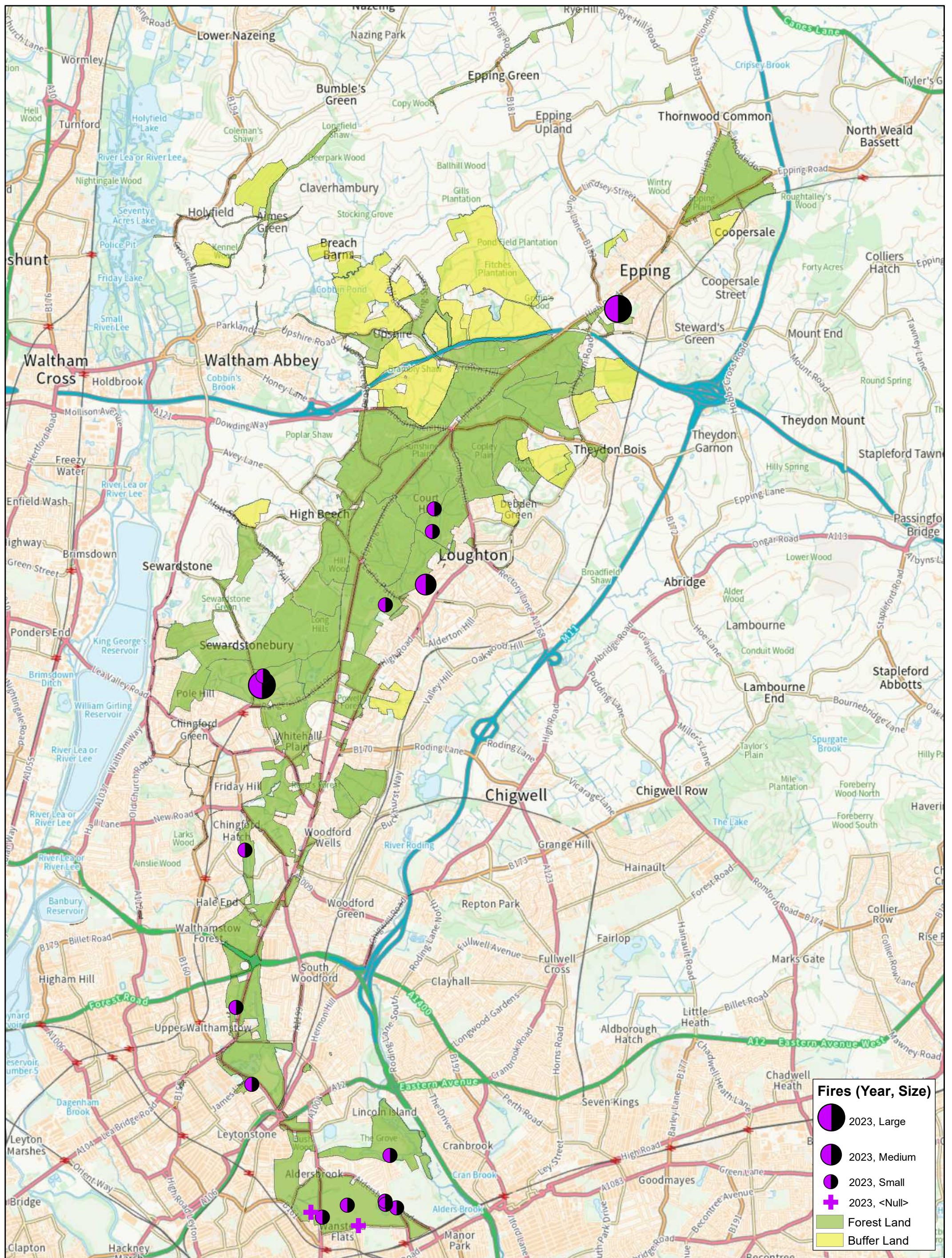
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GIS Officer

Date Created:
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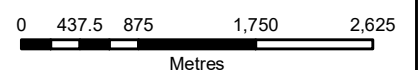
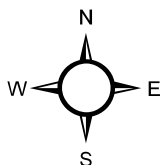
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Fires (Year, Size)

- 2023, Large
- 2023, Medium
- 2023, Small
- 2023, <Null>
- Forest Land
- Buffer Land



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Date	Type	Location	
May			
11	Fire	Alex Lake	
18	Fire	High Beech	
20	BBQ	Wanstead Flats	
24	BBQ	Opp 120 Capel Rd	
26	BBQ	High Beech	
29	Camp Fire	The Glade	
30	Fire in tree	Forest Glade	
30	Camp fire	Wanstead Flats	
31	Camp fire	Bell Common	
31	BBQ	Wanstead Flats	
31	Camp Fire	Chingford Plain	
31	Camp Fire	Woods N of Chingfd Pn	
June			
1	Smoke	Yates Meadow	
3	Fire	Wanstead Flats	
4	BBQ	Wanstead Pk (River Roding)	
5	Fire in tree	Centre Rd CP	
7	Camp Fire	Opp Staples Rd Sch	
10	BBQ	Connaught Water	
10	BBQ	Wanstead Park Ave opposite	
11	BBQ	Hollow Ponds	
11	BBQ	Wanstead Flats	
14	BBQ	Opp Golden Fleece Pub	
14	BBQ	East Heath Rd	
15	BBQ	Alex Lake	
16	Camp Fire		
23	Fire	Stubbles	
23	Small fire	Stubbles	
24	Fire	Forest Glade	
24	Smouldering	Bluehouse Lane	
24	Camp Fire	Chingford Lane	
24	Camp Fire	St Peters in the Forest	
25	Fire	Baldwins Hill	
25	Smouldering	Great Monk Wood	
25	BBQ	Wanstead Flats	
27	Camp Fire	Strawberry Pond	
July			
2	BBQ	Hollow Ponds	
2	BBQ	Wanstead Flats	
2	BBQ	Perch Pond	
2	BBQ	Fair Ground Site	
7	Fire	Opp COL Cemetary	
7	BBQ	Wanstead Flats, Centre Rd	

10	Fire	Capel Rd/Ridley Rd	
11	Embers burning	Baldwins Pond	
13	Smouldering tree	Loughton camp	
15	BBQ	Alex Lake	
19	Fire	Woodbury Hill	
20	Smouldering log	Walthamstow Forest	
20	Camp fire	Jacks Hill	
21	BBQ	B Hill Cricket Ground	
26	Camp fire	Knighton Lake	
29	Camp Fire	East of Cuckoo Brook	
August			
6	Camp Fire	Wanstead Flats (cemetery side)	
11	BBQ	Wanstead Flats (Bushwood)	
23	Smouldering	Strawberry Hill Pond	
Totals	Camp Fire/Fire	24	
	BBQ	21	
	Smouldering/logs	9	

Committee(s) Epping Forest & Commons Committee	Dated: 23 November 2023
Subject: Senior Officer Recruitment	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 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: Executive Director Environment	For Information
Report author: Emily Brennan	

Summary

Under the Senior Officer Recruitment Procedure, a Chief Officer should report the resignation/ retirement of a senior officer. This report notes the retirement of a senior officer and recruitment plan.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The Assistant Director (Superintendent), Epping Forest & Commons has submitted a notice of retirement effective 31 January 2024. However, taking HR arrangements into account, his last working day is likely to be 19 January 2024.

Current Position

2. The post is a critical senior management position and its role and responsibilities have been assessed internally within the Department and evaluated as a key role in the Natural Environment Division.
3. The job description for the Assistant Director (Superintendent) has been updated to better reflect the duties of the post holder within the new Natural Environment Division. While there have been subtle nuances of emphasis on responsibilities, there has been no change to the main purpose of the post, its grade or duties and responsibilities.

Proposals

4. The interim post will be advertised internally to all City of London staff on a six month secondment/acting up basis from mid November 2023 - mid May 2024 to give staff a development opportunity. This will provide stability and continuity for the Epping Forest team whilst an external recruitment programme is taking place for the permanent replacement. The outgoing Assistant Director will hand over

most of his operational responsibilities to the interim postholder between mid-November and his departure in January to enable him to plan a comprehensive handover.

5. An external recruitment programme will begin in November 2023.
6. In accordance with the Senior Officer Recruitment Procedure, the Chair and Deputy Chairman of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee will be involved in the recruitment process for a permanent replacement.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

7. This is a key senior leadership post critical to leading and providing strategic, operational, financial and stakeholder management of the Epping Forest portfolio and team, ensuring high standards in accordance with the policies laid down by the City of London Corporation and the Corporation's statutory obligations in managing the sites.

Conclusion

8. This paper outlines our plans to ensure continuity of leadership at Epping Forest through enabling a comprehensive handover by the outgoing Assistant Director (Superintendent), recruiting an internal interim for a period of six months from mid-November 2023 to mid-May 2024, and recruiting a permanent replacement by spring 2024.

Appendices

None

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Committee(s): Epping Forest and Commons Committee – For information	Dated: 23/11/2023
Subject: The Commons – Assistant Directors Update August-September 2023	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?	
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/A
Report of: Bob Roberts , Interim Executive Director Environment Department	For Information
Report author: Geoff Sinclair, Assistant Director The Commons	

Summary

The purpose of this report is to summarise activities across The Commons between August and September 2023. Key data is presented in a dashboard format with further detail given in the main report.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. Appendix 1 contains a graphical representation of financial data to the end of September 2023 (period 06-24) These figures are The Commons Local Risk only and do not include non-local risk elements such as City Surveyors projects.
2. The first table in appendix 1 gives actual expenditure to the end of September 2023 against the whole year budget, subdivided by type and Division of Service (DOS), where BB is Burnham Beeches, SC is Stoke Common, WW is West Wickham and Coulsdon Commons and AC is Ashtead Common. This is further summarised graphically in the chart ‘Budget and Actuals by Type’, across all the DOS combined for this financial year.
3. There are no significant discrepancies between the budget and actual figures to note. Government grant income figures are still being impacted by the late

payment of grant income for the 2022 calendar year and payments for 2023 are yet to be fully received. Transport expenditure for this year includes spending in 2023/24 on new vehicles at Burnham Beeches and West Wickham and Coulsdon Commons which are due to be charged to a previously agreed capital project for the purchase of the vehicles.

The Commons Key Data – Appendix 2

4. **Car Parking Income (Fig 1):** The most recent car park information is still to be uploaded and will be reported in the next report
5. **Volunteering (Fig 4):** Volunteers undertook 2075 hours (296 seven-hour days) of work during the period, the equivalent of £20,750 using the National Lottery Heritage Fund's match funding calculator. Overall, in the six months since April, volunteer time represents the equivalent of £78,160 of much appreciated 'matched funding' from local people. At the West Wickham and Coulsdon Commons, volunteer tasks included hazel coppicing, woodland glade creation and a final ragwort pulling day. 644 of the total hours were achieved at Ashted Common, where volunteers engaged in tasks to enable grazing, enhance firebreaks and manage scrub.
6. **Energy use and Production (Fig 2):** PV energy production was down by 11% in August/September on the five-year average.
7. **Accidents:** Accident data is given on figures 7 (Accidents by month) and 8 (Accidents by type). Overall number of accidents is low with 11 accidents recorded, however, this is above average for the Commons where we would expect around 4 for the same period. During the current period one accident involved a slow vehicle collision with a COL Landover with no injuries or damage to the COL vehicle and a cyclist falling from their bicycle when manoeuvring around a work team and requiring first aid from the team.

Additional Important Updates

Wayleaves and Licences

8. Across the City Commons several wayleave and licence issues have been pending resolution for a while. Over this period the Assistant Director has initiated work on these, along with colleagues from the City Surveyors and Town Clerks Department. In total there are around six substantive issues to work through with the sums of money involved relatively small and the main issues revolving around property damage and ownership.

Rural Payments Agency Independent Agricultural Appeals Panel

9. The Assistant Director and Conservation Officer represented the City Corporation at the Rural Payments Agency's (RPA) Independent Agricultural Appeals Panel. This was the final stage in the long-standing appeal to the RPA on them changing the payment schedule for the agreed Countryside Stewardship Scheme at

Burnham Beeches. The outcome of the appeal will be notified from the Minister of Agriculture's office around December 2023.

Training and Development

10. At the West Wickham and Coulsdon Commons, various members of the ranger team attended training courses as part of their Continued Professional Development. The courses included NPTC polesaw, Lantra woodchipper & NPTC Safe use of pesticides. The training forms part of a local commitment to ensure each member of the ranger team acquires a useful new skill with a recognised qualification, during 2023-24.
11. At Ashted Common the entire ranger team completed an accredited course in vegetation fire run by LANTRA in association with the Forestry Commission. They also undertook an NPTC accredited refresher in tractor and grass cutting machinery. One team member went on an advanced bat handling course and another completed accredited training in herbicide and pesticide use.

Events and educational activities

12. Brownies and Cubs enjoyed Bat Walks on West Wickham Common. The ancient oak pollards were highlighted by the rangers leading these walks as important homes for bats and other nocturnal species. Pipistrel bats put on exciting displays, swooping low over the children, whilst tawney owls hooted throughout the woodland. A bat evening for the public also took place on Kenley Common, and was attended by 18 people including several small children who were fascinated by 2 hours of constant bat flights, and hearing their echolocation sounds through the bat detectors.
13. On Farthing Downs Historic England joined the ranger and the Friends of Farthing Downs residents' group, to lead a walk celebrating the life of Brian Hope Taylor who excavated the Saxon burial mounds on the Downs in the late 1940's, discovering numerous skeletons along with associated grave goods. His work on the Downs hugely improved our knowledge of the rich archaeological history of Farthing Downs leading to its designation as London's largest Scheduled Monument.
14. The largest single event in Ashted Common's calendar – the 10k run - occurred on August 30. A license was issued for £444 to enable approximately 200 runners to take part. There were also two guided walks during this period, one looking at bats and the other grazing.
15. In August approximately 800 Burnham Joggers passed through the northern part of Burnham Beeches. The license for this activity was awarded at £1,500 plus there was around £450 in additional car park income. An event for 150 Herts Orienteers in September achieved £444 plus around £240 in additional car park income. The Conservation Officer led a walk during the period for MSc students from Oxford Brookes University

16. Small scale events run during this period at Burnham Beeches have proved popular. These included two sessions looking at creatures of the night, and the ever popular film locations walk.
17. At Burnham Beeches the Community Engagement Rangers held a series of events including a week of activities. They attended events such as the Farnham Common Apple Day and supported Slough Hub with events and walks to promote Slough parks as alternative destinations to Burnham Beeches.

Recruitment and Apprentices

18. The West Wickham and Coulsdon Commons welcomed a new Apprentice Ranger to the team in September. He will be with us for 23 months learning the day to day skills needed to be a ranger. Sparsholt College will lead him through his apprenticeship and providing him with classroom lectures covering, amongst other topics, Countryside Law, Health & Safety and wildlife Ecology. He will also acquire some important technical skills with industry recognised accreditation including brushcutters, chainsaws and First Aid.
19. The third round of recruitment for the Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common Conservation Officer failed to find a suitable candidate. Revised approaches to this recruitment are being identified with the support of Business Support Team and other colleagues

Livestock

20. Sadly, the West Wickham and Coulsdon Commons lost three unborn calves in September, probably due to *Neospora*. *Neospora caninum* is a parasite carried in dog faeces and has been the highest cause of abortions in cattle throughout the UK over the past several years. Infected cattle are three to seven times more likely to abort their calves than uninfected cattle. There is no way to treat the infection. Our cattle are blood tested every year and any cow found to have the disease must be taken out of the breeding herd and prematurely culled. The disease cannot be passed from cow to cow but can be passed down genetically from a mother to her calf. Posters highlighting the risk and instructing dog walkers to pick up after their pets, are displayed around the sites.
21. The ranger team at the Coulsdon Commons replaced sections of dilapidated livestock fencing on Farthing Downs and on Kenley Common. Jacob sheep and Sussex cows are now grazing various species-rich downland areas across all four of the Coulsdon Commons and the goats have returned to Riddlesdown Quarry.
22. The 10 Belted Galloway cattle at Ashted Common returned temporarily to their owner – Surrey Wildlife Trust – for TB testing. They will come back in October for an early autumn graze of the scrub, grassland area.

Project work

23. The last section of the Stoke Common fire break was cleared as part of a planned eight-year rotation.
24. Orders have been placed for pollard restoration works at both Burnham Beeches and Ashtead Common.

Survey and monitoring

25. The field work element of Ashtead Common's latest saproxylic invertebrate survey has concluded and has yielded interesting results. For example, a rare and illusive species called *Lacon querceus*, that hitherto was only found at Windsor Great Park, was identified.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – The Commons Local Risk Financial Summary
- Appendix 2 – The Commons Key Data

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Assistant Director, The Commons

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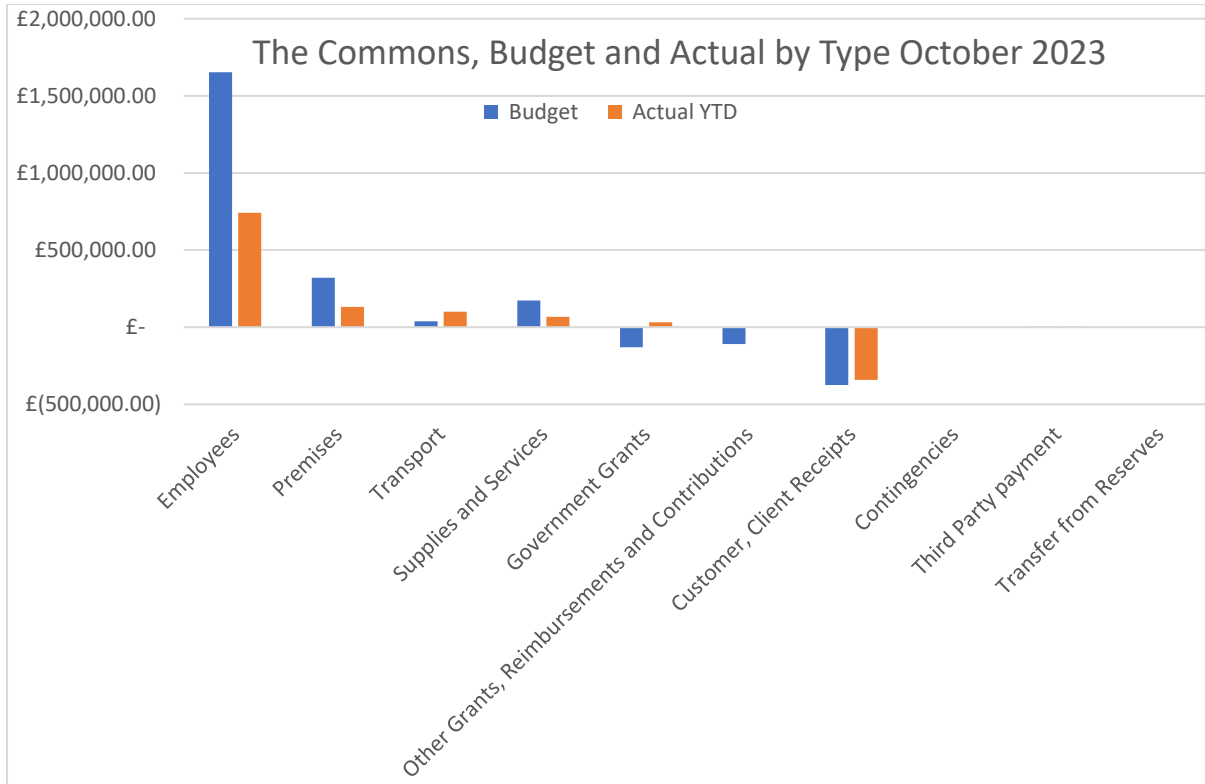
E: geoff.sinclair@cityoflondon.gov.uk

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Summary of The Common's Expenditure and Income for the year to date (Six months)

Exp/Inc	P&L Header	DOS	Budget	Actual YTD
Expenditure	Contingencies	BB	0	0.00
Expenditure	Contingencies	WW	0	0.00
Income	Customer, Client Receipts	AC	-3,000	-1,956.05
Income	Customer, Client Receipts	BB	-258,000	-249,673.36
Income	Customer, Client Receipts	WW	-113,000	-89,235.14
Expenditure	Employees	AC	312,000	159,015.22
Expenditure	Employees	BB	715,000	316,386.00
Expenditure	Employees	SC	22,000	9,099.00
Expenditure	Employees	WW	603,000	257,963.04
Income	Government Grants	AC	-20,000	0.00
Income	Government Grants	BB	-35,000	48,758.00
Income	Government Grants	SC	-25,000	19,347.00
Income	Government Grants	WW	-50,000	-37,095.20
Income	Other Grants, Reimbursements and Contributions	AC	0	-1,015.20
Income	Other Grants, Reimbursements and Contributions	BB	-110,000	-893.50
Income	Other Grants, Reimbursements and Contributions	WW	0	-1,279.56
Expenditure	Premises	AC	79,000	17,308.11
Expenditure	Premises	BB	82,000	39,661.00
Expenditure	Premises	SC	23,000	8,163.00
Expenditure	Premises	WW	137,000	66,160.97
Expenditure	Supplies and Services	AC	31,000	13,603.89
Expenditure	Supplies and Services	BB	103,000	34,159.96
Expenditure	Supplies and Services	SC	5,000	0.00
Expenditure	Supplies and Services	WW	35,000	19,340.73
Expenditure	Third Party payment	SC	1,000	157.00
Income	Transfer from Reserves	WW	0	0.00
Expenditure	Transport	AC	11,000	8,896.75
Expenditure	Transport	BB	14,000	5,229.90
Expenditure	Transport	WW	14,000	86,103.65
Total			1,573,000	728,205

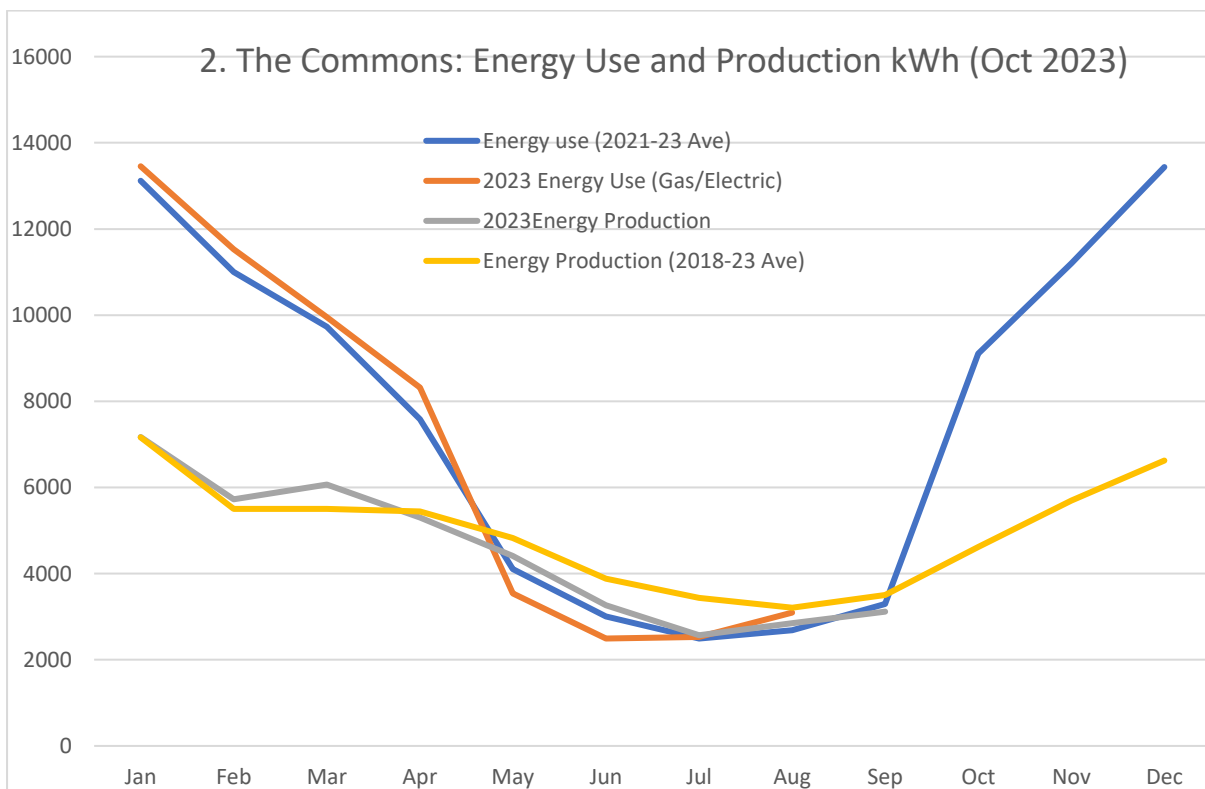
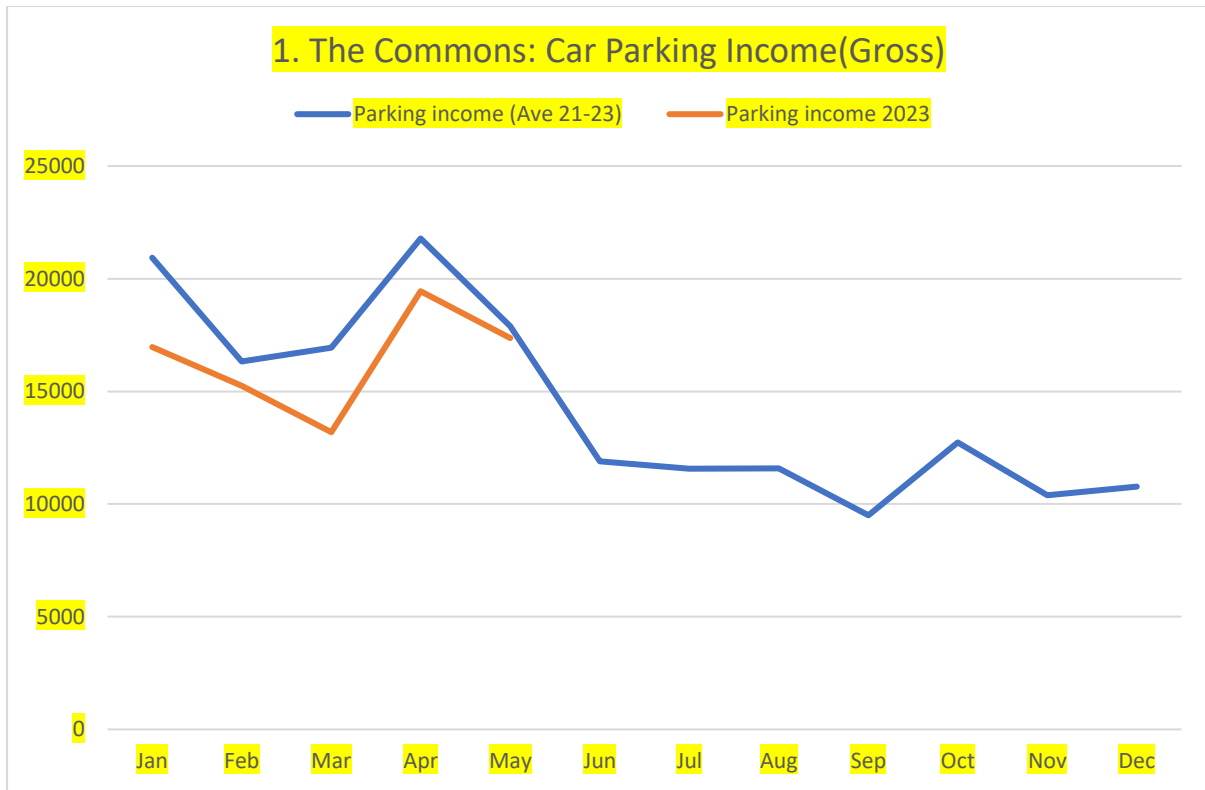
Appendix 1: The Commons performance against budget to end Oct 2023 (Period 06-24, 50% of FY)



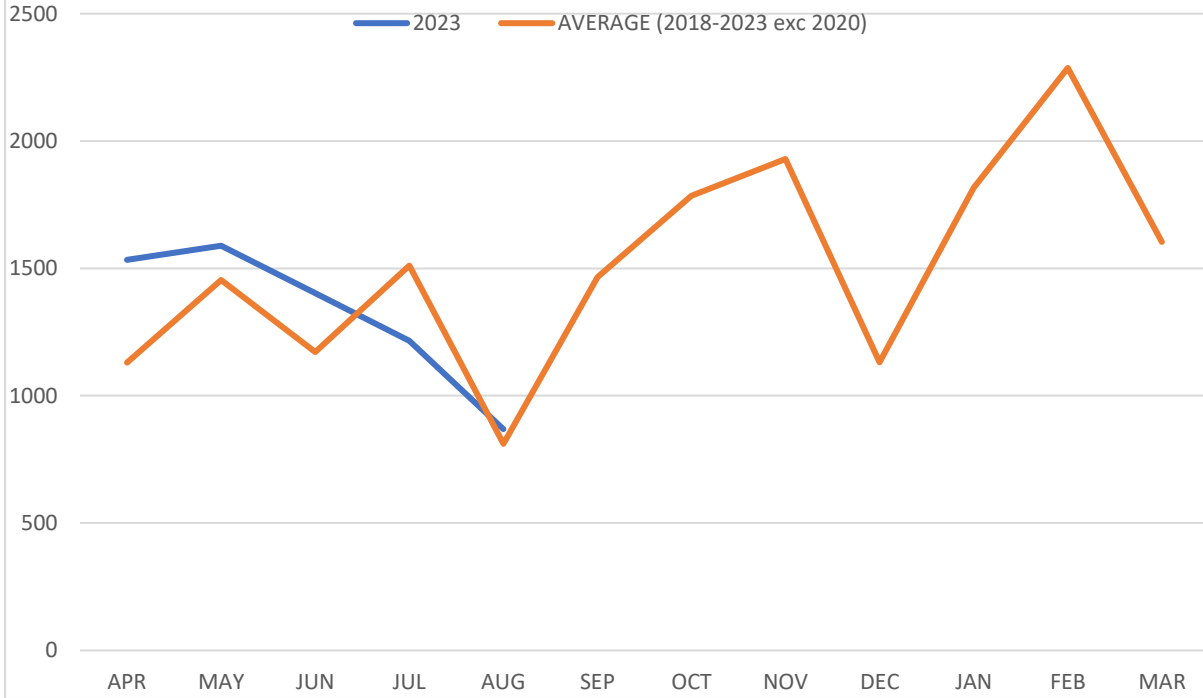
Progress Against Budget for the year to date (Six months)

EXPENDITURE	
£2,187,000	48%
Sum of Budget	Actual by Budget
£1,041,248.22	
Sum of Actual YTD	
INCOME	
-£614,000	51%
Sum of Budget	Actual by Budget
-£313,043.01	
Sum of Actual YTD	

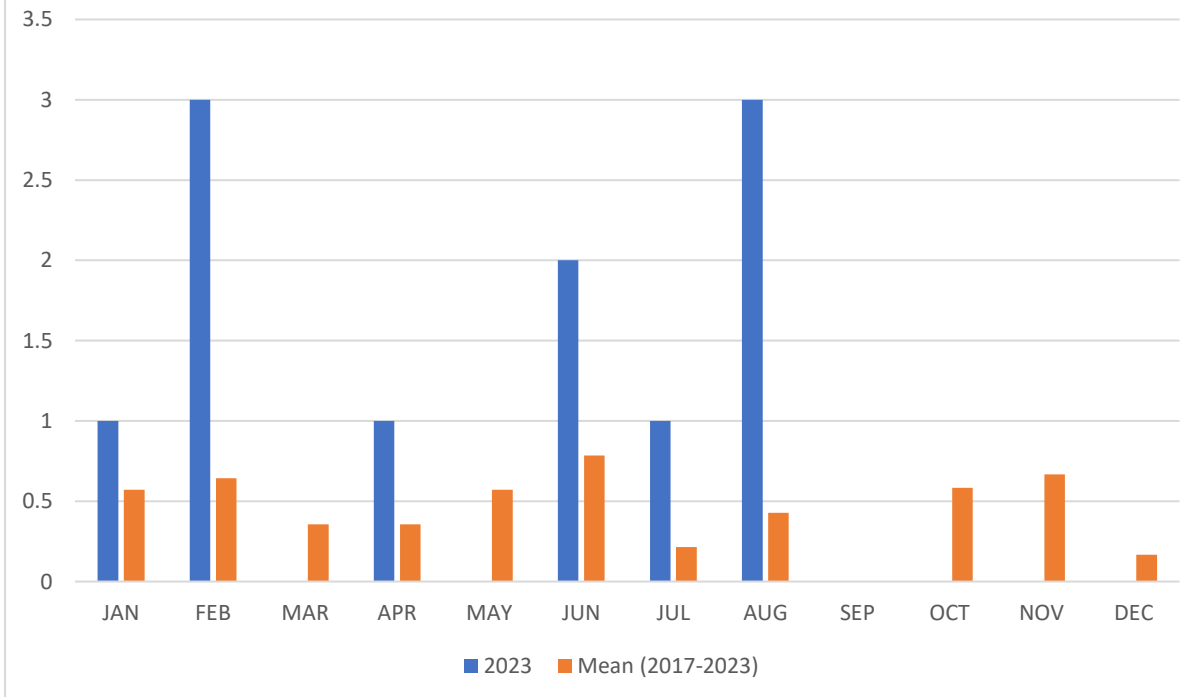
Appendix 2: The Commons: Key Data, July 2023

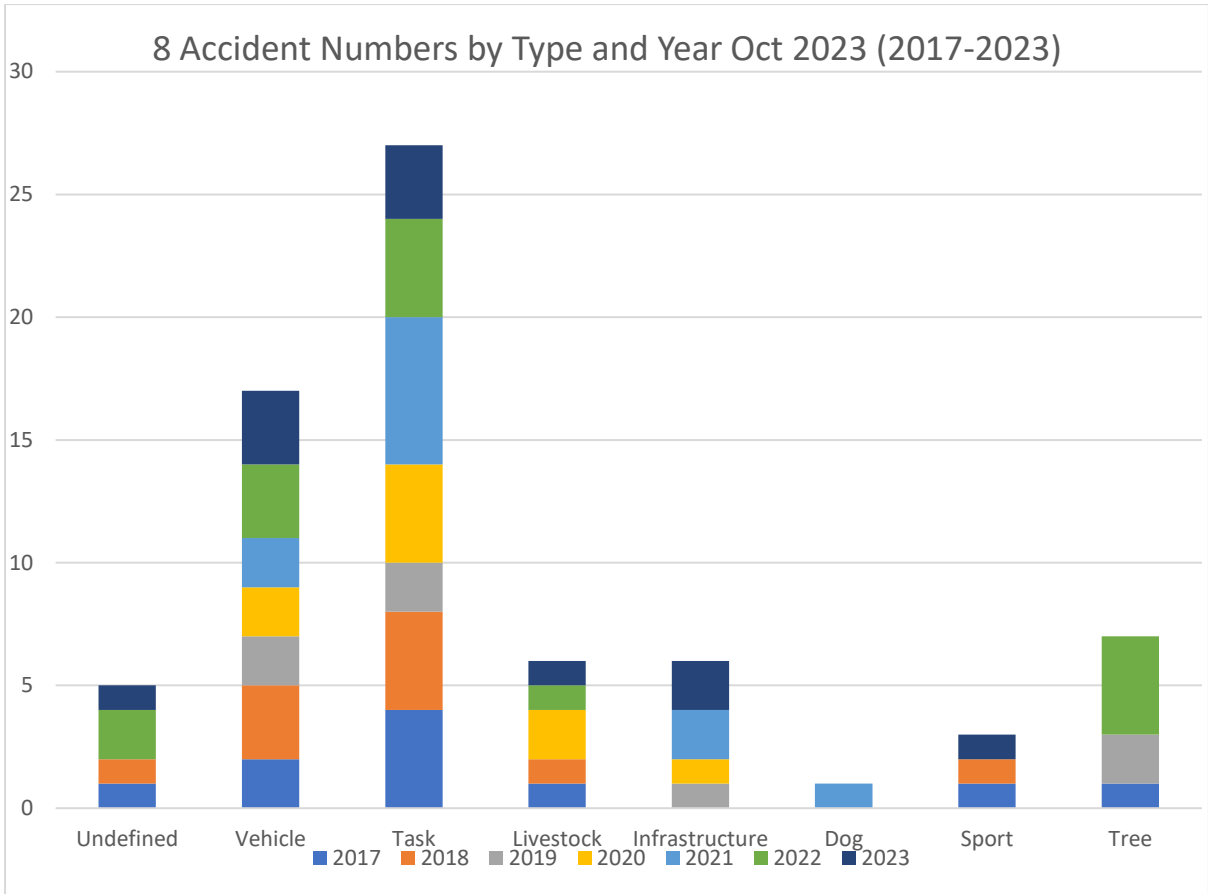


4. The Commons, Volunteer Hours (Oct 2023)



7. Accidents by Month (Oct 2023)





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