

EPPING FOREST & COMMONS COMMITTEE
Monday, 9 September 2019

Minutes of the meeting of the Epping Forest & Commons Committee held at
Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 9 September 2019 at
11.30 am

Present

Members:

Graeme Doshi-Smith (Chairman)
Deputy Philip Woodhouse (Deputy Chairman)
Peter Bennett
Caroline Haines
Sylvia Moys
Verderer Michael Chapman DL
Verderer Dr. Joanna Thomas
Verderer Nicholas Munday
Jeremy Simons
Alderman Robert Hughes-Penney

Officers:

Richard Holt	- Town Clerk's Department
Carl Locsin	- Town Clerk's Department
Mark Jarvis	- Head of Finance Citizen Services, Chamberlains
Nicholas Welland	- City Surveyor's Department
Mark Eyre	- City Surveyor's Department
Colin Buttery	- Director & Heritage
Paul Thomson	- Superintendent, Epping Forest
Andy Barnard	- Superintendent, The Commons
Jo Hurst	- Business Manager (Epping Forest)
Jacqueline Eggleston	- Head of Visitor Services (Epping Forest)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Alderman Robert Howard and Verderer Melissa Murphy.

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

Alderman Robert Hughes-Penney declared that he owned property within the South Bucks district.

3. MINUTES

The Committee considered the public minutes and non-public summary of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee held on 8 July 2019.

Matters arising

Sport & Physical Activity Strategy

Further to an item in the minutes of previous the meeting, a Member highlighted the petition to the Court of Common Council on the subject of the City of London Corporation's Sports Strategy and requested that Members consider signing it.

Proposed Music event

Replying to a query from a Member the Director of Open Spaces confirmed that meetings with the proposed music event organisers MAMA had taken place but that there was presently no material update to be given. Further to this a Member noted that he and the other Verderers of Epping Forest were invited by the WREN Wildlife and Conservation Group to attend a visit to Wanstead Flats to inspect the areas of that site associated with the proposed music event. The Chairman commented that it would be a useful exercise and requested that he be included in the visit.

RESOLVED- That the public minutes of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee meeting on 8 July 2019 were approved as an accurate.

4. BREXIT UPDATE

The Director was heard in relation to the Brexit. The Director highlighted the importance of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Environmental Land Management grants to the Open Spaces Department's budget and the positive management of the Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

RESOLVED- That the update be received.

5. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

The Committee received a report of the Superintendent of the Commons which provided Members with a general update on issues across the nine sites within 'The Commons' division. The Superintendent highlighted that the proposed agreement with the Heathrow Limited was almost ready for consideration by the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Committee.

A Member requested further details on the incidents of Lyme Disease present at Ashted Common. Replying to this, the Superintendent outlined that extensive risk assessments for the issue had been completed and that accordingly, an updated mitigation strategy was being implemented by Officers to minimise the effect of the Lyme Disease at the Common. Replying to a query from a Member, the Superintendent explained that warnings regarding Lyme Disease at Ashted Common had been provided to the local community via the Website and local newspapers. In addition, it was confirmed that all appropriate measures were taken to avoid cross contamination of different sites within the Commons division.

Reply to a Member's queried the Superintendent explained that there were over a thousand instances of OPM (Oak Processionary Moth) at Ashted Common

but that the numbers were considerably lower at the other sites within the Commons.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

6. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

The Committee received a report of the Superintendent of Epping Forest which summarised the Epping Forest Division's activities from June to July 2019.

A Member highlighted the summer football tournaments, which had been held at Wanstead Flats, and enquired if the events had been staged on the site of the proposed music festival. The Superintendent confirmed that the events had been held at both Aldersbrook and Harrow Road pitches and had experienced no significant access issues.

In response to a Member's question on Land Registration, the Superintendent confirmed that all Land Registration had been completed and had resulted in 32 encroachments where responses would have to be determined by Committee, prior to further action. The settling of boundaries had resulted in a further project to audit access rights across Forest Land which was still underway.

A Member queried if any key drivers were associated in relation to the increased number of rough sleepers present in the Forest. The Superintendent explained that the increase was associated with pressure on hostel places; some individuals whose behaviours made them unwelcome at hostels and workers seeking to avoid the high London rents. In addition, it was explained that the Epping Forest team continued to work with the relevant authorities to resolve issues of rough sleepers. It was also noted that a new phenomenon was the associated rise in car and camper van sleepers in the Forest seeking weekday access to the London transport network.

Replying to query from a Member the Superintendent explained that the Broomhill Road case had concluded with payment of costs by both sides.

Following the clearance of the proposed play area, a Member questioned the status of the Wanstead Park play area and sought information on the timeline for the project. The Superintendent explained that the project faced challenges around funding and the responsibility for safety inspections noting the Epping Forest and Commons Committee would of course be consulted further before any permanent plans could be confirmed.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

7. **GATEWAY 6 OUTCOME REPORT- BRANCHING OUT PROJECT - CAR PARKING & ACCESS**

The Committee considered a report of the Director regarding the Gateway 6 Outcome of the Branching Out Project Car Parking & Access. The Report summarised the key conclusions of the Branching Out Project and recommend that the Car Park and Access component be closed. The Chairman noted the progress with the Branching Out Project.

Replying to point raised by a Member the Director explained that the popularity of the site had outstripped car park capacity, especially as dwell times had increased due to the proximity of the improved offer from Butlers Retreat.

RESOLVED- That the Car Park and Access project be closed.

8. **CITY OF LONDON CORPORATION RESPONSE TO THE LONDON BOROUGH OF WALTHAM FOREST 'SHAPING THE BOROUGH DRAFT LOCAL PLAN 2020 - 2035 CONSULTATION DOCUMENT (SEF 31/19)**

The Committee considered a report of the Director on the City of London Corporation response to the London Borough of Waltham Forest 'Shaping the Borough Draft Local Plan 2020 – 2035 consultation document. The report explained that the timing of the consultation prevented a detailed report being considered by the Committee and consequently requested delegated authority be granted to approve the final response.

The Director informed the Committee that he and the Chair of Policy & Resources Committee had met with the London Borough of Waltham Forest Leader and CEO in February and that a further meeting is planned. In addition, it was noted that there were many equivalent issues with the Epping Forest District Local Plan and a strong representation is planned.

RESOLVED- Authority be delegated to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman and Director, to provide detailed comments regarding the Local Plan's impact on and protection of Epping Forest.

9. **PROPOSAL FOR ART INSTALLATION AT LEYTON GREEN (SEF 32/19)**

The Committee considered a report of the Director on the proposal by the London Borough of Waltham Forest for a light-based art installation on an outlier of Forest Land at Leyton Green. The report provided Members with details of the proposed art installation and, at appendix 1, its original designs.

Members discussed various maintenance issues regarding the proposed artwork and noted that the London Borough of Waltham Forest would be responsible for the continued maintenance of the site and the artwork. The Director observed that the London Borough of Waltham Forest would be responsible securing all the appropriate consents for the installation. Members noted the Borough's cultural ambitions and that this small outlier of the Forest was in a busy urban location. However, it was felt that the proposed artwork did not properly represent Epping Forest. In addition, a Member commented that approval to the artwork might represent a disadvantageous precedent for the future use of Forest Land.

Members commented that they did not disagree with the principle of an art installation at Leyton Green, but expressed that they were not content with proposed designs for the art installation. The Chairman requested that Officers note the comments made by the Committee and inform the London Borough of Waltham Forest accordingly in order that an updated design be produced for consideration by the Committee.

RESOLVED- That the Committee did not approve the proposed installation and requested that the London Borough of Waltham Forest propose an updated design with a more suitable location or abandon the project.

10. **EPPING FOREST COUNTRYSIDE STEWARDSHIP GRANT APPLICATION 2019 (1ST APPLICATION) - SIGN-OFF ON THE FINAL DETAILS OF MANAGEMENT OPTIONS (SEF 33-19)**

The Committee considered a report of the Director on the Epping Forest Countryside Stewardship Grant application 2019. The report outlined the changes to the application since the last report to the Committee in July 2019.

RESOLVED- That: -

- I. The changes to the application details be noted; and
- II. That the completion and signing of a CSS application be approved for submission to the Rural Payments Agency for its determination.

11. **EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL: EXAMINATION OF THE DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN, 2011-2033 (SEF 34/19)**

The Committee received a report of the Director on the Epping Forest District Council Examination of the District Local Plan.

Members congratulated Officers on their work on the Local Plan and noted the complexity of the issues.

A Member noted their disappointment at the lack of clarity provided by the Epping District Council at a recent Liaison Meeting on the estimated date for responding to the issues raised by the Local Plan Inspector.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

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

A Member commented on the helpful and informative visit to Burnham Beeches on the 7th of September and thanked the Officers for their work in organising.

The Director noted that the Epping Forest and Commons Committee appointments to the Epping Forest Joint Consultative Common were overallocated and confirmed that the relevant Members involved would be contacted to resolve this.

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

There was no other business considered in the public session.

14. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

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

15. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

The Committee considered the non-public minutes of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee on 8 July 2019.

RESOLVED-That the non-public minutes of the meeting of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee held on 8 July 2019 be agreed as an accurate record.

16. **LOUGHTON GOLF COURSE - SECTION 146 NOTICE (SEF 35/19)**

The Committee received a report of the Director regarding Loughton Golf Course.

RESOLVED- That the report be agreed.

17. **USE OF FOREST FUND FOR CHINGFORD GOLF COURSE STAFF WELFARE FACILITIES (SEF 36/19)**

The Committee receive a report of the Director on the Use of Forest Fund for Chingford Golf Course Staff Welfare Facilities.

RESOLVED- That the report be agreed.

18. **LEASE RENEWAL – THE BOATING AND REFRESHMENT KIOSK, HOLLOW PONDS, LEYTON FLATS, E11**

The Committee received a report of the City Surveyor on a Lease Renewal for the Boating and Refreshment Kiosk at Leyton Flats.

RESOLVED- That the report be agreed.

19. **LEASE RENEWAL – TEA HUT, HIGH BEECH, LOUGHTON, IG10 4AE**

The Committee received a report of the City Surveyor on a proposed lease renewal for the Tea Hut at High Beech Loughton.

RESOLVED- That the report be agreed.

20. **LEASE RENEWAL – THE REFRESHMENT KIOSK, WANSTEAD PARK, LONDON, E11**

The Committee considered a report of the City Surveyor on a proposed lease renewal for the Refreshment Kiosk at Wanstead Park.

RESOLVED- That the report be approved.

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

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk on action taken between meetings of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

22. **2019 COUNTRYSIDE STEWARDSHIP GRANT APPLICATION FINAL BUDGETARY DETAILS (SEF 33-19B)**

The Committee received a report of the Director on the 2019 Countryside Stewardship Grant application final budgetary details.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

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

There were no questions received in the private session.

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

There was no urgent business considered in the private session.

The meeting ended at 1.10 pm

Chairman

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