

Committees: Epping Forest and Commons Committee - <i>for information</i> Projects Sub - <i>for information</i>	Dates: 18 November 2019 16 December 2019
Subject: Branching Out Project – Summary Report SEF 45/19 Unique Project Identifier: <i>N/A – Programme summary for information</i>	Complex Final Progress Report Post-Gateway 6
Report of: Director of Open Spaces Report Author: Laura Lawson	For Information
<h1>PUBLIC</h1>	

1. Status update	<p>Project Description: <i>Epping Forest Branching Out Project</i></p> <p>Project vision: ‘Innovative Open Spaces Management achieved through social inclusion, education and enjoyment’</p> <p>The Branching Out project comprised numerous interlinked projects/deliverables intended to mitigate the adverse impact of external factors, beyond the City’s control, and to promote public understanding and enjoyment of the Forest.</p> <p>For the purposes of internal reporting the programme was disseminated into 4 capital projects. These were reallocated with the responsibility for project management shared between Open Spaces (OS) and the City Surveyors (CS) Departments. Your Committee has already received G6 reports for these four projects, and approved closure.</p> <p>There was also significant revenue expenditure required to manage and deliver the wider Branching Out project. Examples of revenue expenditure are; the successful learning package, ‘Discovering Epping Forest’; events such as the operation of the new Visitor Centre and all the staff and volunteer costs including recruitment, training, uniform, equipment and expenses. All revenue expenditure was included in the project bid submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).</p>
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	<p>The total budget of £6.8M for 'Branching Out' included the capital project expenditure, the revenue expenditure, development costs and in-kind payments.</p> <p>At the tail end of the period, unspent budget from the 3 capital projects completed earlier in the project programme, was transferred to the 4th project to meet the required spend and maximise the grant aid available from the HLF.</p> <p>For the purposes of external reporting and drawing down funding from the HLF a financial summary was used. This summary consisted project lines for numerous capital and activity (revenue) expenditure. This report collates the capital, revenue and in-kind expenditure for the whole project and presents the Whole Project Evaluation Report (Appendix 1).</p> <p>The evaluation report highlights the project successes and possible areas for improvement when embarking on future externally funded multi-faceted projects.</p> <p>RAG Status: Amber</p> <p>Risk Status: Low</p> <p>Total Estimated Cost of Project: £6.8M</p> <p>Spend to Date: £6.8M (<i>Final Out-turn cost</i>) (Appendix 2)</p> <p>Costed Risk Provision Utilised: N/A (pre-gateway)</p>
<p>2. Key points to note</p>	<p>The project represented excellent value for money and was delivered on budget. The maximum amount of grant aid was levered from the Heritage Lottery Fund with £4.97M (73%) successfully claimed for the development and implementation of the project.</p> <p>The project was not completed in line with the initial programme. This was primarily due to issues with the design and planning consent for the gateways which coincided with a Departmental rebrand and a lengthy planning consent process. This was outlined in the Gateway 6 - Car Parking and Access report. In the absence of City Corporation capital funding the project relied on significant levels of local risk funding which negatively impacted on existing work programmes.</p>
<p>3. Reporting period</p>	<p>2009 - 2017</p>
<p>4. Progress to date</p>	<p>Complete</p>
<p>5. Next steps</p>	<p>It is recommended that the key lessons learnt be noted and shared;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When embarking on externally funded, ambitious, multi-faceted projects in the future, it would not be recommended to separate the project into smaller, discrete projects. This worked to match existing City processes; however, it did cause significant duplication of effort for financial management. A programme approach would be more

	<p>efficient and prevent delays towards the end of the project particularly due to project governance.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The revenue elements of the project would have been better contained within the overall project budget, again to avoid duplication of effort and simplifying the reconciliation to claim external funding over several years. 3. The initial project programme was possibly too ambitious and lacked adequate time for the major capital construction works - the build took 12 months longer than planned. In future funding bids, desire to meet funders preference for high spend early in the programme should be carefully considered. 4. End user business as usual function was not adequately considered and earlier engagement with operational tenants, staff or contractors could have seen improvements for BAU and efficiencies long term. 5. The PM resigned before completion of the project which impacted on the project delivery programme. Project management staff retention incentives at the City of London could be reviewed. Alternatively, specific project support staff could have been employed thus not having a complete dependency on one team member for detailed knowledge of the whole programme.
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Appendices

Appendix 1	Whole Project Evaluation Report
Appendix 2	Branching Out Project Financial Summary

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Appendix 2

Branching Out Project	Capital Expenditure	Revenue Expenditure									Total Programme
	2009 - 2017	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	2009 - 2017	2009-2017
QEHL Visitor Centre	£ 1,695,497	£ 76,297	£ 162,240	£ 150,600	£ 119,047	£ 51,586	£ 40	£ -	£ -	£ 559,810	£ 2,255,307
Butlers Retreat	£ 618,583	£ 5,407	-£ 2,907	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 2,500	£ 621,083
Car Parks and Access	£ 2,022,438	£ 15,518	£ 38,071	£ 30,154	£ 32,109	£ 31,148	£ 28,462	£ 2,893	£ 9,798	£ 188,153	£ 2,210,590
Grazing	£ 292,299	£ 92,184	£ 115,725	£ 210,089	£ 139,147	£ 119,662	£ 70,768	£ 2,214	£ -	£ 749,790	£ 1,042,089
Grazing @Gregories	£ 48,200	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 48,200
										Subtotal	£ 6,177,269
										development	£ 311,000
									in kind	volunteer	£ 153,150
										lodges	£ 102,925
Non bid items*		£ 4,659	-£ 1,858	£ 12,405	£ 509	£ 34,188	£ 10,966	£ -	£ -	£ 60,868	£ 60,868
										Total	£ 6,805,212

**This line refers to items which were not contained within the original HLF bid and therefore could not be used as match funding for the HLF bid.*