

Committee(s): Epping Forest and Commons Committee	Date: 07/09/2020
Subject: Timetable update – Production of new Management plans and associated public consultation - Kenley Common, Coulsdon Common, Riddlesdown and Farthing Downs/New Hill	Public
Report of: Director of Open Spaces	For Decision
Report author: Andy Barnard	

Summary

On 13th January 2020, your committee approved the necessary actions and timetable to draft and consult on the production of seven, ten-year Site Management Plans i.e. for Ashtead Common, West Wickham Common, Farthing Downs and New Hill, Kenley Common, Coulsdon Common and Spring Park.

In that report the Superintendent of The Commons advised that there was some uncertainty with the approved timetable due to staff shortages within the Rangers' team. Those staff shortages were not resolved until April 2020 and even then only 'in part'. In the meantime, the Covid-19 pandemic has added further stress to the deadlines set by the original timetable and these issues must now be addressed. This report seeks approval for an amended timetable for the production of four of the seven new Management Plans i.e. Kenley Common, Coulsdon Common, Riddlesdown and Farthing Downs/New Hill.

The amended timetable does not negatively affect the timing of submissions for the grant related Woodland Plans and Countryside Stewardship Agreements necessary to help fund the programmes of work associated with the drafting of those plans.

The production of the remaining three Management Plans, i.e. Ashtead Common, West Wickham Common and Spring Park remain on schedule according the January 2020 approved timetable (Appendix 1).

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Approve the amended timetable for the production of the 10-year management plans for Kenley Common, Coulsdon Common, Riddlesdown and Farthing Downs/New Hill. **Table 2a.**

Main Report

Background

1. On 13th January 2020, your committee approved the necessary actions and timetable to draft and consult on the production of seven, ten-year Site Management Plans i.e. for Ashtead Common, West Wickham Common, Farthing Downs and New Hill, Kenley Common, Coulsdon Common and Spring Park.
2. In paragraph's 12 and 20 of the January 2020 report, members were forewarned that the level of confidence in the Management Plans production timetable (extract shown as **Appendix 1**) was uncertain given the then significant staff shortages that would take months to resolve.
3. As such your Superintendent committed to providing an amended timetable, should the need arise, in September 2020 for consideration by this Committee.

Current Position

4. The above mentioned staff shortages were partly resolved in April 2020 when two new Rangers and one part-time Support Service Assistant were appointed. However, the start of the management plan drafting process was necessarily delayed.
5. This position was further exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic that since March 2020 has required a very narrow management focus i.e. the delivery of essential service on the open spaces.
6. Given the above it has not been possible to meet the demands of the original Management Plan production timetable (Appendix 1) for four of the seven management plans i.e. Kenley Common, Coulsdon Common, Riddlesdown and Farthing Downs/New Hill.
7. The production of the remaining three management plans, i.e. Ashtead Common, West Wickham Common and Spring Park remain on schedule according the January 2020 approved timetable.

Proposal

8. A 'twin track' approach to the production and consultations of the draft management plans is now proposed, i.e.
 - a. Ashtead Common, West Wickham Common follow the timetable approved by this committee in January 2020 (Appendix 1)
 - b. Farthing Downs and New Hill, Riddlesdown, Coulsdon Common and Kenley Common follow the amended timetable as proposed in Table 2a below.

Table 2a. Timetable for Farthing Downs, Riddlesdown, Coulsdon and Kenley Commons

Sept 2020 – March 2021	Produce 1 st draft new Management Plans.
March/ April 2021 2020	Consult conservation specialists
April – July 2021	Public Consultation on draft management plans including WWCCSP Consultative Group. Develop detailed work programmes linked to CSSG
August – Oct 2021	Assess consultation feedback and finalise management plan. Develop detailed work programmes linked to CSSG Submission of CSSG to NE for approval.
Nov 2021	Assess Equality issues arising from the draft plan process
Jan - March 2022	Presentation of plans to WWCCSP Consultation Group
March 2022	EFCC ‘decision report’ on all management plans
March 2022	Submission of approved plans to Natural England for ratification
1 April 2022	Start date of ratified Management Plans
Key	Consultation Phases
	Development Phases

Corporate & Strategic Implications

9. The proposals in this report support the Corporate Business Plan as follows:

Contribute to a Flourishing Society

- People enjoy good health and wellbeing
- Communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need

Shape outstanding environments

- Our Spaces are secure, resilient and well maintained.
- We have clean air, land and water and a thriving and sustainable environment

10. And the Open Spaces Business Plan outcomes:

- Open Spaces and Historic Sites are thriving and accessible
- Spaces enrich people’s lives
- Business practices are responsible and sustainable

Implications

11. The rescheduling indicated by Table 2a does not affect the timing of Countryside Stewardship and Woodland grants as previously outlined in my report to this committee of January 2020.

Conclusion

12. The original timetable (Appendix 1) approved by this Committee in January 2020 will be pursued for the Ashted Common, West Wickham Commons and Spring Park plans.

13. A revised timetable (Table 2a) is recommended for the four remaining Commons.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Original timetable from January 2020 Committee report

Background Papers

- **January 2020 report to the Epping Forest and Commons Committee.** Management Plan timetable and submission of Countryside Stewardship Scheme applications and associated Woodland Plans

Andy Barnard
Superintendent, The Commons, Open Spaces Dept.
T: 020 7332 6676
E: and.barnard@cityoflondon.gov.uk