

<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
Epping Forest and Commons Committee	18 January 2021
<b>Subject:</b> Open Spaces Department Business Plan for 2021/22	<b>Public</b>
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	Outcomes: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 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
<b>Report of:</b> Colin Buttery, Director	<b>For information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Gerry Kiefer, Directorate Business Manager	

### Summary

This report presents for information the high-level Business Plan for the Open Spaces Department for 2021/22. This plan identifies seven major workstream for the whole Department together with the actions within various Corporate strategies that the Department is helping to deliver, sets out the current Departmental risks, provides financial information and identifies our performance measures. This report also identifies next year's key areas of work for The Commons and Epping Forest.

### Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report

### Main Report

#### Background

1. Business Plans for 2021/22 are being presented based on current departmental structures. These will be adjusted, alongside budgets, when any changes to these structures are implemented.

## Current Position

2. Business Plans are aligned to Departments, so all financial information presented within the Business Plan reflects the Departmental budget rather than the Committee budget.

## Proposal

3. The high-level summary Business Plan for the Open Spaces Department is presented at **Appendix 1**. This plan identifies the 7 major workstreams over the next year for the whole Department, some of which will be progressed by officers from The Commons and Epping Forest.
4. The Commons have identified the following as their *additional key areas of work* over the next year:
  - Complete the 8 management plans (and associated Countryside Stewardship Grant applications) across the south Commons
  - Progress the roadside verges parking restrictions project at Burnham Beeches in partnership with parish council, Buckinghamshire Council and the local community
  - Protection of Burnham Beeches SAC through the Slough Borough Council's local planning process.
  - Conclude the HLF funded Kenley Revival Project and resolve consultation issues with the built heritage assets.
  - Conclude safety works at Riddlesdown quarry
  - Achieve financial savings as required with a continuing emphasis on appropriate income generation activities according to the conservation status of the individual commons
  - Review single use plastic usage across The Commons
5. Epping Forest have identified the following as their *additional key areas of work* over the next year:
  - Achievement of financial savings and efficiency targets, particularly through income diversification, including use of available assets for rental and the introduction of car parking charges.
  - Protection of SAC and SSSI through the planning process, promoting avoidance, management and mitigation of harm through rising population pressures.
  - Safety of Epping Forest staff, visitors, residents and neighbours with the implementation of Reservoir Safety plans across water bodies in Wanstead, Loughton and Theydon Bois.
  - Pursue partnerships with other organisations to improve and enhance sport and recreation facilities in the Forest, particularly Football and Golf.
  - Improved environmental efficiency of our operations, buildings and fleet, achieving compliance with next phases of ULEZ.

## Corporate & Strategic Implications

6. Strategic implications – Strategic priorities and commitments are expressed in Appendix 1, sides 1 and 2.

7. Financial implications – The high-level summary Business Plan at Appendix 1 has been drawn up taking into consideration increasing employee costs as well as a 12% reduction in the departmental budget compared to 2020/21.
8. Risk implications – Key risks managed by the department are included in the high-level summary Business Plan. The COVID19 risks which are reported corporately but relate to this Department are also included in the Business Plan.
9. Resource implications – Any changes to resources will be identified and delivered through the move to the Target Operating Model and/or to meet budget savings. Requests for capital funding for projects will be made as part of the annual capital bidding process.
10. Equalities implications – Where we develop new policies, strategies, service provision and capital projects we will undertake ‘tests of relevance’ and where appropriate a full equalities analysis.
11. Climate Implications – Open Spaces already offset 40% CoL scope 1 and 2 co2 emissions. An annual capital bid has been made as part of the overall Climate Action Strategy funding request; to support the work to increase co2 sequestration through land management and innovative working, which will contribute to 100% reduction target of CoL scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2025.
12. The capital funding will enable this project to build on the initial works that have mapped the carbon sequestration benefits from City Corporation Open Spaces and accelerate this function through re-introduction of best land management practices. The second area is to create a commercially sustainable future use of the sustainably produced timber and other agricultural products.
13. Security implications – there are no security implications arising from this report

## **Conclusion**

14. This report presents the Open Spaces Department high-level Business Plan for 2021/22 and key areas of work at a local level for the services that report to this Committee.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Open Spaces Department High-level Business Plan 2021/22

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