

Committee(s):	Dated:
Epping Forest Consultative Committee – For Discussion	10 02 2021
Epping Forest and Commons Committee – For Decision	08 03 2021
Subject: Revised Terms of Reference for Epping Forest Consultative Committee (SEF 06/21)	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: Director of Open Spaces	For Information
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.

According to the agreed Terms of Reference, membership of this Consultative Committee is reconsidered every three years. The process was initiated in October 2020, and 38 applications were received for an available sixteen places. The large number of applications has highlighted some necessary clarifications in the Terms of Reference to allow a fair and equitable decision on appointments.

Recommendation(s)

Epping Forest Consultative Committee Members are asked to:

- Note the content of this report and the draft Consultative Committee Terms of Reference at Appendix 1.
- Offer any further comment on the Terms of Reference for consideration at the Epping Forest and Commons Committee.

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, with sixteen places available according to the agreed Terms of Reference.
2. In 2017 nineteen applications were received, three of which did not meet selection criteria, the remaining sixteen were therefore appointed. In June 2018 one further member, Royal Epping Forest Golf Club, was co-opted as it was felt that Golf and formal sports in general were underrepresented.
3. Under the Terms of Reference (Appendix 2) membership is established for three years, after which the application and appointment process is begun anew. Invitations for Expressions of Interest in the next three years of the Consultative Committee were launched in October 2020.
4. By December 2020, 38 applications were received for consideration for sixteen available places at meetings in 2021-23, but this highlighted inconsistency in figures provided, most notably in the definition of the organisation's membership and types of organisation to be considered.

Current Position

5. In January 2021 it was agreed that definitions should be clarified through revised Terms of Reference and figures then resubmitted from applicants under those terms ready for appointment in May 2021. The February meeting of the Consultative Committee will therefore be with existing membership.
6. Revised Terms of Reference for the Epping Forest and Commons Committee are included at Appendix 1.

Options for Epping Forest and Commons Committee

7. **Option 1** – Adopt the updated Terms of Reference for the Epping Forest Consultative Committee and instruct officers to clarify data provided by applicants under these terms ready for membership decision in May 2021. **This option is recommended**

Proposals

8. Changes to the updated terms include a fuller definition of 'member', numbers of which are a key factor in prioritising applicants for the Consultative Committee. Paragraph 27 of the revised terms gives this definition.

9. Paragraph 22 gives examples of alternative governance documentation that may be acceptable as an alternative to a Constitution, as many organisations may use different terms.
10. Paragraph 23 requires organisations to have an Equality Statement or Policy which was not a specification of the previous terms.
11. Paragraphs 19-21 are an expansion of the types of organisation the Epping Forest & Commons Committee seeks to appoint to the Consultative Committee, and also explains exclusions more fully.
12. Paragraph 31 encourages attendees to communicate and cooperate with other groups of similar interest in order to have the broadest and best representation of stakeholder views.
13. Paragraph 33 gives the Epping Forest and Commons Committee Chairman the authority to exclude members or organisations contravening the terms.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

14. Strategic implications – The continued attendance at the Epping Forest Consultative Committee supports the Corporate Plan items 4, 10, 11 and 12.
15. Financial and resource implications – The resources required for room hire (post pandemic), light refreshments, the publication of agendas; reports and minutes are provided by the Town Clerk's Department.
16. Legal implications – The Epping Forest Consultative Committee 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.
17. 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.
18. Since the Consultative Committee 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 have also been updated on this basis.
19. Risk implications – This is a revision of an existing Consultative Committee structure and is therefore 'business as usual' and considered low risk. Implementation of the City of London Governance Review may require a further review of the status of this Committee.

20. Equalities implications –Equalities statements and policies have been incorporated into these revised terms.
21. Climate implications – The UK Government has binding targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and hence global warming by 2050, with the Consultative Committee 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.
22. Security implications – None
23. 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

24. An excellent level of applications has been received to take part in the next three years of the Epping Forest Consultative Committee, which is testimony to its success in its first three years.
25. Oversubscription, particularly in some themes of interest, has required clarification of some organisation particulars in order to make appointments for the next three years. Revised Terms of Reference are included here for consideration.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Epping Forest Consultative Committee - Terms of Reference – Full Revised 2021

Background Papers

Epping Forest Consultative Committee Membership 2021-23 (SEF 02/21) Epping Forest & Commons Committee 18 01 2021

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