

<b>Committee:</b> Epping Forest & Commons Committee – For decision	<b>Dated:</b> 10-05-2021
<b>Subject:</b> Copped Hall Parkland Management Plan (SEF 22/21)	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	2, 11 and 12
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	<b>N</b>
If so, how much?	-
What is the source of Funding?	-
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	-
<b>Report of: Colin Buttery</b> , Director of Open Spaces	<b>For Decision</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Jeremy Dagley, Head of Conservation - Epping Forest	

### Summary

This report presents a brief summary of the Copped Hall Parkland Management Plan (PMP), prepared for the City of London Corporation by two expert consultants and part-funded by the statutory agencies, Historic England and Natural England. The purpose of the PMP was to provide a complete heritage and ecological assessment of the this Registered Park and Garden (RPG) Grade II\* site and to make recommendations for the protection and long-term management of the exceptional heritage, whilst working in sympathy with the conservation and access management of Epping Forest. This report proposes that the full PMP itself is now more widely shared with key stakeholders.

### Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- approve Option 1 below, to make the PMP publicly available and to allow dialogue with key stakeholders from 11<sup>th</sup> May 2021 onwards.

### Main Report

#### Background

1. The City Corporation acquired 295 hectares (ha) of the Copped Hall Estate in 1992 in order to protect to protect the boundaries of the Forest from development and to provide support for the Forest’s wildlife. This acquisition was one of a series of Buffer Lands acquisitions during the 1980s and early 1990s made to

protect the Forest in a strategy recognised and endorsed in October 1993 by Policy and Resources Committee.

2. Of this acquisition, 130ha lies within the 165ha national Registered Park and Garden designation (RPG). The remainder of the RPG area is in other ownership, including the hall and gardens owned by the Copped Hall Trust that also acquired their area in 1992 (see map at **Appendix 2**).
3. Copped Hall park and gardens are recorded as Grade II\* on the Historic England *Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest for England*. The national significance is recognised by Historic England's designation as Grade II\* on its Register of Parks and Gardens (one of 38 registered sites in Essex, and 1610 registered sites nationwide –approximately 30% of all sites are Grade II\*). Comparison with other estates regionally and nationally concludes that it was of a high status and contains a relatively rare package of relict features.
4. Within the City Corporation's ownership of Copped Hall, the Registered Park and Garden area, as well as the earlier historic boundaries of the park are divided, at the current time, into different land designations and occupiers (see map at **Appendix 2**). To the south of the M25 the Warren Plantation and Holly Hedge Field have been incorporated as Forest Land under the Epping Forest Act 1878, the latter field only incorporated in the year 2000 to mark the start of the new Millennium.
5. North of the motorway Copped Hall is divided into two Buffer Land compartments Copped Hall North and South (respectively Compartment nos. 54 and 55). The whole of Copped Hall South and some fields in Copped Hall North have been managed in-house since acquisition. The areas, including the Deer Park, were returned to and have been managed as grassland with the support of consecutive Countryside Stewardship and Environmental Stewardship grants in 1993, 2003 and 2008. The last of these agreements terminated in 2018.
6. The rest of Copped Hall North is under an agricultural tenancy. This is currently a 1-year Farm Business Tenancy (FBT), as recently approved by your Committee in March this year.
7. In 2015, a Conservation Statement for Copped Hall and the Buffer Lands was prepared by Historic Environment Associates ('*Copped Hall Conservation Statement*', March 2015). The Conservation Statement provided an outline assessment of the site's landscape and heritage importance and flagged up gaps in knowledge, providing pointers to further archive sources. It also helped to open an early dialogue with both Copped Hall Trust and the officers at Epping Forest District Council responsible for the Local Plan's Conservation Area status of Copped Hall.

### **Current Position**

8. The PMP was commissioned in 2017, with 80% grant support from Historic England and Natural England. Two expert consultants in heritage assets, historic and farmed landscapes were engaged to carry out the detailed assessment of

Copped Hall's heritage and wildlife value with a view to providing advice and recommendations for management planning and external grant applications, particularly Countryside Stewardship.

9. In addition to cataloguing and assessing, in detail, the importance of the site and the key priorities for management, the PMP also sought to provide a framework for integrating the conservation actions across the multiple ownership of the RPG.
10. In addition to document research and extensive fieldwork during 2017 and 2018, the consultants also arranged discussions with Epping Forest management team and other officers and with the Copped Hall Trust. Following feedback and revisions from officers the PMP (in eight parts) was completed in December 2018. After a full review, Historic and Natural England advisors met with officers in summer 2019 to confirm that the PMP met their objectives.
11. Epping Forest officers have since been considering options and developing proposals on changes to the land management, based on the PMP recommendations and also new information in relation to climate action, and these proposals would be the subject of separate reporting.
12. A brief summary of the PMP's findings and recommendations is attached at **Appendix 1**, with the aim of developing this into a more complete PMP summary document to aid future consultations and discussions with stakeholders. The full PMP document is in eight sections, including a gazetteer and maps. Historic and Natural England have indicated that they are in a position to sign-off the PMP and, therefore, that the City Corporation is in a position to publish it.
13. The PMP demonstrated and enhanced the national importance of the heritage landscape at Copped Hall through its research findings. In particular, the earthworks within Rookery Wood were considered of exceptional significance due to their Tudor origins. It also recommended land within the RPG boundary in the City ownership should be reunited as some of this is divided between tenanted and in-house management at present. A series of recommendations were made on the built structures including the eastern and western ha-has and the two WW2 pill-boxes.
14. In addition, the PMP reiterated the importance of the ecological continuity of the landscape with that of the Forest. It recommended tree-planting across the historic park to reinstate the extent of the earlier lowland wood-pasture and parkland landscape, recommending the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century lay-out as a guide to this, but recognising the need for flexibility and the ecological links with the Forest. The PMP also recognised the importance of grazing to the future of the landscape management.
15. The PMP also considered the issues of access, including car parking and the issues this would pose with areas in multiple ownership around the central attraction of the Hall. Low-key interpretation was proposed, including possible grant support through Stewardship. Increasing visitor pressure and its implications were explored in the approaches to future management and the

PMP recommended that a consultancy specialising in access provision to historic environments should be engaged to develop options and proposals

## Proposals

16. This report provides a summary of the PMP to capture the key issues. It further proposes that the PMP, and a summary document based on the attached summary, be made publicly available to local stakeholders immediately after the Committee meeting. Amongst those local stakeholders would be the Epping Forest Consultative Committee at its June meeting, the Copped Hall North FBT tenant, the Copped Hall Trust and officers at Epping Forest District Council responsible for the Local Plan's Conservation Area designation.
17. It is proposed that officers would contact The Copped Hall Trust early in the process of dissemination of the PMP, in consideration of its ownership of the Hall and gardens and its involvement in the provision of information to the consultants for the PMP.
18. A delivery plan, with options for seeking external grant support, based on the PMP recommendations and the proposed role of the Copped Hall land for the City Corporation's *Carbon Removals* project, would be presented as a separate report (or reports) to both this Committee and the Consultative Committee.

## Options

19. Option 1: To "sign off" the Copped Hall PMP and to make it publicly available as soon as practicably possible, along with a summary document, and for officers to begin a dialogue to receive feedback on the PMP with Copped Hall Trust, EFDC officers, the tenant and the Consultative Committee. **This option is recommended.**
20. Option 2: To provide, at this stage, only a summary document to local stakeholders and to seek text modifications with Historic and Natural England to the main document while awaiting further development of external grant applications before consultation on the PMP with other stakeholders. **This option is not recommended.**

## Key Data

21. The City Corporation owns 295ha of Copped Hall as buffer lands acquired in 1992. Of this 130ha is within the 165ha Registered Park and Garden Grade II\* (RPG).
22. The RPG heritage interest dates back to the Tudor period and some of this heritage is of exceptional significance.
23. The RPG is within multiple ownerships and the City Corporation's owned land is divided between Forest Land, in-house and tenanted Buffer Lands. The in-house land has been managed with the support of UK Government Stewardship schemes between 1993 and 2018.

## Corporate & Strategic Implications

### Strategic implications

24. The PMP and its further development would contribute significantly to City of London Corporate Plan 2018-2023 Outcome 2 *People enjoy good health and well-being*; Outcome 11: *We have clean air, land and water and a thriving and sustainable natural environment* and Outcome 12: *Our spaces are secure, resilient and well maintained* .
25. The aim of the PMP and its recommendations are to support the Open Spaces Department's Vision of enriching people's lives by enhancing and providing access to ecologically diverse open spaces and outstanding heritage assets across London and beyond.

### Financial implications

26. None at this stage. A further report is to follow which will set out options for implementing recommendations from the PMP and seeking external grant funding. Some of the elements of the PMP would also be implemented through the *Carbon Removals* Project funding under Strand 9 of the City Corporation's Climate Action Strategy (CAS).

### Resource implications

27. The consultation work on the PMP over the next year would require Epping Forest officer time to discuss the PMP recommendations with local stakeholders, including Copped Hall Trust and Epping Forest District Council. There would also be significant resources required to develop the recommendations into an external grant proposal. Some of this work has already been completed and will be presented as a separate report to Committee in July. In addition, the new Carbon Removals Project posts will provide the required additional resources for the development of the grant proposals and further external consultations.

### Legal implications

28. None at this stage. This report covers only the distribution of and consultation about the PMP document.

### Risk implications

29. None at this stage as no direct works are proposed in this report.

### Equalities implications

30. None.

### Climate implications

31. None as part of this report. The future action plan for implementation of the recommendations of the PMP will be of fundamental importance to the

achievement of the Carbon Removals contribution to the City Corporation's CAS targets.

Security implications

32. None.

## **Conclusion**

33. The PMP has shown that the heritage landscape of Copped Hall landscape, within the ownership of the City of London Corporation, is of national significance with some exceptional features spanning several centuries of parkland development. The PMP recommends heritage and ecological restoration go hand-in-hand, with wood-pasture and parkland a key to the future management of the habitats and landscape. Of the heritage features the Tudor Square Pond is the most significant and requires careful restoration. Dialogue with key neighbours, including the Copped Hall Trust is encouraged and more work to sensitively integrate access and interpretation is required.

## **Appendices**

- **Appendix 1:** Summary of Copped Hall PMP highlights
- **Appendix 2:** Map of Copped Hall heritage boundaries and land use

## **Background Papers**

- *Copped Hall Conservation Statement* (Final Report). Historic Environment Associates March 2015

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