

Committee(s): Epping Forest and Commons Committee – For Decision	Dated: 10 05 2021
Subject: Epping Forest Consultative Committee Appointments 2021 to 2024	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 Decision
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 reviewed to reflect refreshed expressions of interest 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 highlighted some necessary clarifications in the Terms of Reference to allow a fair and equitable decision on appointments.

The Consultative Committee Terms of Reference have now been clarified and approved, and details of applications confirmed under those new terms. This report makes recommendations for the sixteen available places for the next three years.

Recommendation(s)

Epping Forest and Commons Committee Members are asked to:

- Consider the applications as explained in this report, and detailed in Appendix 1, and appoint as appropriate under the revised Terms of Reference.
- Extend thanks to organisations that have applied, particularly those who have attended for the last three years but have been unsuccessful in their

application this time around.

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 under-represented.
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.
5. Revised Terms to Reference were considered by the Consultative Committee in February 2021 and agreed by the Epping Forest and Commons Committee in March 2021. They are attached for reference at Appendix 2.
6. Applicant organisations who had applied in Autumn 2020 were contacted to resubmit or confirm their applications as per these revised terms.

Current Position

7. All applications who resubmitted or confirmed their applications to join the Consultative Committee are detailed in Appendix one, including a short paragraph about their own organisation taken directly from their website or constitution.

Options for Epping Forest and Commons Committee

8. **Option 1** – Invite organisations with “Recommendation: Appoint” to join the next three years of the Consultative Committee. The Committee are also asked to

consider three decisions as outlined below in this report. **This option is recommended**

Proposals

9. There are sixteen available places on the Consultative Committee, from the following themes of interest:

Nature Conservation <i>Conservation groups in Forest, or with wider remit</i>	3
Friends/Voluntary <i>Formal working groups e.g. litter pickers groups, 'Friends of' etc.</i>	3
Heritage <i>Historical societies, rural preservation etc.</i>	2
Informal users <i>Schools, Youth groups, families associations, local forums and interest bodies</i>	2
Recreation <i>Recreational user groups – e.g. walkers, riders, cyclists</i>	3
Sports <i>Formal organised sports on Forest e.g. Golf, Football, cricket running etc.</i>	3
	16

10. According to paragraph 26 of the Terms of Reference, “Should more expressions of interest be received than can logistically be accommodated, selection will be made by members of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee by the following (not in order of importance):
- Size of membership
 - Geographical area of interest (i.e. area of Forest covered)
 - Theme of interest
 - Record of attendance (once established)
11. Applicant organisations have all been assigned to one of these categories, and are shown in category order, then by membership numbers in Appendix 1.
12. **Nature Conservation**. Five applications received, although only three of which meet the full requirements of the Terms of Reference. It is therefore recommended that The London Wildlife Trust, Butterfly Conservation, Cambridgeshire & Essex and Wren Wildlife & Conservation Group are appointed.
13. **Friends/Voluntary**. Four applications were received for three places. On membership numbers it is recommended that Highams Park Planning Group, Epping Forest Heritage Trust and Friends of Wanstead Parklands are appointed. The fourth applicant, Epping Forest Conservation Volunteers are dependent on the outcome of **Decision 1** (see Heritage)

14. **Heritage**. One applicant organisation for two available places. It is recommended that Historic England be appointed.

15. **Decision 1** - The remaining place in Heritage may be left vacant or offered to the next-in-line in another category (EF Conservation Volunteers, South Woodford Society, Bedford House or Roding Valley Triathlon Club). Of these, it is considered that the most relevant to the aims of the Conservators, as well as the other selection points in paragraph 26 of the Terms of Reference are the Epping Forest Conservation Volunteers and it is recommended that they also be appointed.

16. **Informal Users**. Thirteen applications were received in this category for two available places. Given the considerable interest in this area, Members may wish to consider the co-option of a further place(s) as exercised for Sport in the previous 3-year Committee term (see Decision 3, para 18)

17. **Decision 2**. Loughton Residents Association are a registered Political Party, which is contrary to paragraph 20 of the Terms of Reference. A statement provided by the LRA reads *"In order for Loughton Residents Association to have our "LRA" logo on ballot papers for local council elections, we found we had to be registered as a political party and, very reluctantly, we have done so. We differ from the national parties in that our Constitution requires us to be Independent and prevents us from mandating any of our elected Cllrs"*.

Although the above statement is fully understood, their status as a Political Party, with elected local Councillors, does qualify them for Local Authority Liaison Meetings, to which they are regular and active members.

As the second largest group, Bushwood Area Residents Association are recommended for appointment. Based on membership alone the organisations next-in-line for appointment in this category are new applicant The South Woodford Society (503 members) and existing attendee the Bedford House Community Association (500 members)

18. **Decision 3**. Members are also asked to consider the Epping Forest Forum's candidacy, where while membership is lower than five of the thirteen other applicants, the Forum has a strong and broad correspondence with the other three selection criteria namely geographical coverage, themes of interest and attendance record, alongside a strong social media presence with 8000 followers. The option to co-opt for the next three-year term in addition to the sixteen core places is available under the Terms of Reference.

19. **Recreation**. Three applications received for three available places. It is recommended that West Essex Ramblers, Epping Forest Riders Association and Epping Forest Transport Action Group are appointed.

20. **Sports**. Eight qualifying applications received for three places. It is recommended that Orion Harriers and Royal Epping Forest Golf Club are appointed, with the third place subject to **Decision 4**.

21. **Decision 4.** Four cycling organisations have applied representing many different aspects of the sport, area and membership (Lee Valley Youth Cycling Club, Heales Cycle Club, East London Velo and Newham Cyclists) In order to attract the greatest representation of cyclists on the Consultative Committee it may be beneficial to encourage these varied groups to nominate one representative for all of them together – correspondence during the application process does indicate that this may be possible (particularly between LUYCC and Heales). If this is not preferred, or achievable, then the group with this highest membership is Lee Valley Youth Cycling Club.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

22. Strategic implications – The continued attendance at the Epping Forest Consultative Committee supports the Corporate Plan items 4, 10, 11 and 12.
23. 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.
24. 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.
25. 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.
26. 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.
27. 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.
28. Equalities implications –Equalities statements and policies have been incorporated into these revised terms.
29. 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.

30. Security implications – None

31. 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

32. 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.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Epping Forest Consultative Committee Applications and recommendations.
- Appendix 2 – 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

Epping Forest Consultative Committee Revised Terms of Reference March 2021

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