

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Ashtead Common Consultative Committee	29 Jan 2013
Subject: Consultative Committee Review	Public
Report of: The Superintendent of the City Commons	For Decision
<p>Summary</p> <p>The time is right to change the consultative committee arrangements for City Commons to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cascade the aims of the City's governance review to local consultative committee arrangements. • Reflect the aim of City's charities review to ensure each charity is treated as a distinct entity. • Review arrangements to ensure consistency across the service. <p>Recommendation(s)</p> <p>Members are asked to endorse the following recommendations to go forward to the Epping Forest and Commons Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal consultative committee meetings are held once a year for each of the 3 charities – Ashtead Common, the Coulsdon Commons and the West Wickham Commons. • In addition, the City Commons Division introduces an annual community consultation meeting for each charity. These meetings will be tailored to local need and outcomes will be recorded for presentation to the next formal meeting or the next Epping Forest and Commons Committee. • The terms of reference for the Ashtead Common Consultative Committee are reviewed and terms of reference for the Coulsdon Commons and West Wickham Commons Consultative Committees are introduced. 	

Main Report

Background

1. City Commons comprises 3 charities; Ashtead Common (1051510), West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood (232988), and Coulsdon and Other Commons (232989).

2. The review of the City Corporation's Charities conducted during 2009-10 stressed the importance of recognising our open spaces as distinct charitable entities.
3. The recent governance review placed emphasis on ensuring that processes and arrangements are fit for purpose and the future. Consultative committees aid the decision making process and it is therefore appropriate to cascade the aims of the governance review down to them.
4. The Ashted Common and City Commons Consultative Committees are not decision making bodies. Decisions are made by the Epping Forest and Commons Committee.
5. Under its terms of reference, the Epping Forest and Commons Committee appoints 'such Consultative Committees as are considered necessary for the better performance of its duties.'
6. Consultative Committee arrangements have not been reviewed since the merger that created the City Commons Division in 2006. The terms of reference for the Ashted Common Consultative Committee are due for a review. New terms of reference will be needed for the two new committees.

Current Position

7. City of London representatives on the consultative committees are appointed by the Epping Forest and Commons Committee via the Town Clerks Committee Appointments Report.

Ashted Common Consultative Committee

8. The Ashted Common Consultative Committee currently meets in January and July. The January meeting is held at Guildhall. The July meeting is held at Ashted.
9. The meetings are attended by the Chairman and Deputy Chairman and typically 1 or 2 additional representatives of the City of London, approximately 7 committee members and between 2 and 6 officers depending on the venue. There are no observers.
10. The meetings are clerked by the Town Clerks Department.

City Commons Consultative Committee

11. The City Commons Consultative Committee currently meets in March and September/October. Both meetings are held in the evening at the Merlewood Estate Office.
12. The meetings are attended by the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, and typically 1 or 2 additional representatives of the City of London, approximately 15 committee members and 6 or 7 officers. Observers are permitted to attend and in recent years have been permitted to speak.
13. Meetings are not clerked by the Town Clerks Department.

Proposals

14. It is proposed that from 2013 each charity has its own distinct consultative committee, namely:
 - Ashtead Common Consultative Committee – Ashtead Common.
 - Coulsdon Commons Consultative Committee – Farthing Downs, Coulsdon Common, Kenley Common and Riddlesdown.
 - West Wickham Commons Consultative Committee – Spring Park and West Wickham Common.
15. Each committee will have 1 formal meeting a year, reducing the annual number from 4 to 3.
16. The Chairman and Deputy Chairman will continue to chair these consultative committee meetings, supported at each by the Town Clerks Department. This increases the number of clerked meetings from 2 to 3.
17. In-between formal committee meetings, the Superintendent will host a consultation meeting for each charity for the committee members. These events will be tailored to local need. For example a guided walk might be arranged to look at a particular issue, followed by a brief recorded discussion on the matter, with recommendations then presented to the next formal committee meeting or the next meeting of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee depending on the issue.
18. The number of opportunities for local people to become involved in the decision making process therefore increases from 4 to 6, with the additional benefits that these opportunities will be tailored more specifically to a particular locality and made more accessible by the variation in format.
19. It is proposed that each consultative committee undertakes a review of its membership to ensure fair and appropriate representation.
20. A Divisional Consultation Plan will be produced to cover the full range of local consultation activity and media.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

21. The recommendations of this report support the Open Spaces Vision theme of inclusion; specifically the improvement objective:

“Extend partnership working within the community and continue to develop closer links with local authorities, to improve the way we involve people in decision making”

Implications

22. The proposals are designed to cascade the aims of the City’s reviews into governance and charities by:
 - Increasing the amount of consultation and the quality of local stakeholder involvement in the management of the Commons.
 - Making local consultation more accessible and relevant to local stakeholders.

- Ensuring that the Epping Forest and Commons Committee is kept informed of local issues.
- Ensuring the meeting schedule and arrangements remain consistent and appropriate.
- Ensuring the City Commons Charities are treated equally and distinctly.

Conclusion

23. This report proposes changing arrangements for the City Commons Consultative Committees to reflect the aims of the City's reviews into governance and charities and to ensure consistency across the service.
24. The report recommends that the number of consultative committee meetings is reduced from 4 to 3 a year (1 for each charity) and that an interim consultation meeting is introduced for each charity, increasing the number of opportunities for local people to be involved in consultation from 4 to 6.

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