

Committee(s): Epping Forest and Commons – For Decision	Dated: 11/07/22
Subject: Epping Forest Consultative Committee Appointments – Request to use Co-option powers (SEF25/22)	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: Executive Director Environment	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, with your Committee approving a total of 17 appointments including 1 co-opted appointment.

This report is necessary to commend to your Committee a request by the Epping Forest Conservation Volunteers, the fourth recommended appointment for the three 2020 Friends/Voluntary Groups nominations, who are seeking co-option for the remaining 2 years of the current Consultation Group, to reflect the experience of the Volunteers remarkable work across the Forest.

Recommendation(s)

Epping Forest and Commons Committee Members are asked to:

- Approve the co-option of the Epping Forest Conservation Volunteers as the fourth Friends/Voluntary application for the remaining period within the Group’s three-year term.

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. Under the Terms of Reference 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. Applicant organisations who had applied in Autumn 2020 were contacted to resubmit or confirm their applications as per these revised terms.

Current Position

6. Your Committee appointed a range of organisations drawn from the allocations to the available sixteen places drawn from:

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

with your Committee approving a total of 17 appointments including 1 additional co-opted appointment.

7. Under Heritage. One applicant organisation, Historic England was nominated for the two available places. It was recommended that the remaining place in Heritage was offered to Epping Forest Conservation Volunteers, however, the nomination was awarded to another organisation.
8. The Chairman of the Epping Forest Conservation Volunteers (EFCV) has now formally requested the Epping Forest and Commons Committee reconsider the failure to appoint the EFCV, seeking acknowledgement that the Committee Report recommended co-option of the EFCV as a fourth Friends/Voluntary Group in recognition of the valuable work achieved across the Forest by the EFCV; contributions to the work of the Consultative Group and to reflect the EFCV's service during the first three years of the Consultative Committee.

Options for Epping Forest and Commons Committee

9. **Option 1** – Use the Committee's powers of co-option to appoint the Epping Forest Conservation Volunteers (EFCV) as the second co-opted group to the Epping Forest Consultative Group bringing the total of representing groups to a manageable eighteen. **This option is recommended.**
10. **Option 2** – Maintain that the original allocation remains correct and regrettably decline the Epping Forest Conservation Volunteers (EFCV) request for reconsideration. **This option is not recommended.**

Proposals

11. There are sixteen available places on the Consultative Committee, from the undermentioned themes of interest, with one additional co-option already having been exercised. On balance recognising the value of the EFCV's contribution and noting that non-attendance averages four organisations per meeting, the additional co-option could be managed within existing arrangements, without restricting contributions from other consultative group members.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

12. Strategic implications – The continued attendance at the Epping Forest Consultative Committee supports the Corporate Plan items 4, 10, 11 and 12.
13. Financial and resource implications – The resources required for room hire (post pandemic), light refreshments, the publication of agendas; reports and minutes are met locally from Epping Forest budgets.
14. 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.
15. 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.

16. 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.
17. 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.
18. Equalities implications –Equalities statements and policies have been incorporated into these revised terms.
19. 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.
20. Security implications – None
21. 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

22. Your Committee has acted responsibly in managing co-option powers and it is considered that the further co-option of one of the Forest's leading voluntary organisations represents a sensible and relevant interpretation of co-option powers.

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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