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Project Briefing

Project identifier		
[1a] Unique Project Identifier		[1b] Departmental Reference Number N/A
[2] Core Project Name	<i>Epping Forest: COVID-19 damage to Shared Use Trail network</i>	
[3] Programme Affiliation <i>(If applicable)</i>	N/A Standalone project	

Ownership	
[4] Chief Officer has signed off on this document	<Confirmation of having read and agreed with the content of this document>
[5] Senior Responsible Officer	Paul Thomson
[6] Project Manager	Geoff Sinclair

Description and purpose
[7] Project Description
Paths and their verges across the Epping Forest Special Area for Conservation suffered significant environmental damage due to abnormally high visitor use during the COVID lockdown period. 14% of the path network requires urgent works to repair the most severe impacts to mitigate environmental damage and improve public safety.
[8] Definition of Need: What is the problem we are trying to solve or opportunity we are trying to realise (i.e., the reasons why we should make a change)?
<p>Epping Forest has 198 km of paths. 36 km (18.2%) of these paths are all-weather paths and have a hard surfacing and sub-surfacing comprising of a variety of materials. 162 km (81.8%) have a natural surface. Visitor numbers across Epping Forest in 2020/21 were three to five times greater than the average year. The 162 km of natural surfaced paths, in particular, have suffered considerable adverse physical impacts due the high visitor use. In addition, this increased visitor use has seen many new paths created or previously low use desire paths become more intensely used leading to a widening of the path network and damage to the surface of the Forest and increased compaction around the roots of many veteran trees. The wet weather of the winter of 2020/21 and the Spring of 2021 has further exacerbated the impact of the high visitor use.</p> <p>During February and March 2021 Epping Forest staff undertook an assessment of the condition of the managed path network across Epping Forest and the Buffer lands with the findings of the path condition audit detailed in Appendix one. Surveyed paths were divided into three zones, Zone 1 - the pathway, Zone 2 – the path verge and Zone 3 a wider indeterminate accessible area beyond the immediate path verge of Zone 2.</p> <p>Key observations arising from the audit were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surfaced paths lead to a significant reduction in environmental damage to both the verge (Zone 2) and the wider verge area (Zone 3). 76% of unsurfaced paths

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(zone 1) were found to be in a poor to very poor condition as opposed to 24% of surfaced paths.

- 93.2 ha of verges along unsurfaced paths have been severely impacted by visitor use.
- The 17% of severely impacted verge on the zone 3 of unsurfaced path is concerning as it highlights areas of wider environmental damage to paths as people seek to avoid damaged sections and thereby adversely impact areas not previously walked. This represents an area of 23.5 ha that has been permanently adversely impacted.

Damaged paths were triaged based on the severity of damage and their importance from a visitor access point of view. Overall, 59 paths were identified as requiring works representing a total length of 27,680 m or 14% of the total path network. The work required falls into four activities:

- a. Surfacing of a path to provide a robust surface to ensure users do not impact path verges and to deter them from forming nearby desire lines
- b. Path works to repair damage and to improve the accessibility of paths to deter users from damaging path verges
 - i. Pothole repairs
 - ii. Improvements to wet path sections to provide a dry pathway
 - iii. Drainage works to promote a dry path surface

[9] What is the link to the City of London Corporate plan outcomes?

[2] People enjoy good health and wellbeing.

[9] Our spaces are secure, resilient and well-maintained.

[10] Our physical spaces have clean air, land and water and support a thriving and sustainable natural environment.

[11] Our spaces are digitally and physically well-connected and responsive.

[12] Our spaces inspire excellence, enterprise, creativity and collaboration.

[10] What is the link to the departmental business plan objectives?

The Project delivers actions related to four outcomes on the Open spaces 2021-22 Business plan:

- “Our open spaces, heritage and cultural assets are protected, conserved and enhanced”: *The project reverses significant environmental damage caused to the Epping Forest Special for Conservation during by high visitor footfall during the COVID crisis.*
- “Our spaces are accessible, inclusive and safe”: *Damage to paths during the COVID 19 crisis that led to poor accessibility in the most visited parts of the Epping Forest will be repaired. This will improve accessibility and safety, especially for cyclists.*
- “Our habitats are flourishing, biodiverse and resilient to change”: *Works to mitigate significant environmental damage made to 116.7 ha of internationally protected wildlife habitat will be*

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<p>undertaken. The works will improve the resilience of the paths to withstand future extreme conditions, including adverse weather events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “People feel welcome and included”: The improvement of the condition of the paths concerned will ensure greater year-round accessibility and present a more welcoming prospect for visitors. 					
[11] Note all which apply:					
Officer: Project developed from Officer initiation	Y	Member: Project developed from Member initiation	Y	Corporate: Project developed as a large scale Corporate initiative	N
Mandatory: Compliance with legislation, policy and audit	Y	Sustainability: Essential for business continuity	Y	Improvement: New opportunity/ idea that leads to improvement	N

Project Benchmarking:
[12] What are the top 3 measures of success which will indicate that the project has achieved its aims? <These should be impacts of the activity to complete the aim/objective, rather than ‘finishes on time and on budget’>>
1) 4510 m of new path constructed to provide a robust surface to ensure users do not impact path verges and to deter them from forming nearby desire lines
2) 13,000 m of paths repaired to improve the accessibility of paths to deter users from damaging path verges
3) 21,000 m of paths with drainage improvements to promote a robust all-weather surface
[13] Will this project have any measurable legacy benefits/outcome that we will need to track after the end of the ‘delivery’ phase? If so, what are they and how will you track them? (E.g., cost savings, quality etc.)
Reduced environmental damage to paths and verges in the Epping Forest Special Area for Conservation. Repeat of the path and verge survey on the paths worked after three winters use.
[14] What is the expected delivery cost of this project (range values)[£]?
Lower Range estimate: £250,000 Upper Range estimate: £377,364 (Appendix One)
[15] Total anticipated on-going revenue commitment post-delivery (lifecycle costs)[£]:
New surfaced path maintenance. The nature of these capital works is that maintenance works are minimal on the path surface and work is focussed on the maintenance of the associated drainage features.
Culvert maintenance: 3 days for a COL team of two (£560/day) responding to blockages and cleaning key culverts. £1680
Vegetation management of ditches Cut on a <i>circa</i> three-year cycle 5000m @ £0.16/m £800/year
Reactive maintenance of repaired ditches: 2 days for COL team (£560/day) to clear blockages and ensure free movement of water. £1120
[16] What are the expected sources of funding for this project?
Local Risk

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[17] What is the expected delivery timeframe for this project (range values)? Are there any deadlines which must be met (e.g., statutory obligations)?
Lower Range estimate: start – 30/03/2024 Upper Range estimate: start – 30/12/2024
Natural England: Permission to undertake works needs to consented by Natural England prior to commencement

Project Impact:	
[18] Will this project generate public or media impact and response which the City of London will need to manage? Will this be a high-profile activity with public and media momentum?	
It is very likely the works will generate public and media communication needs. To a large extent it would be a very good news story and something the COL would wish to promote and would get good key stakeholder support.	
The nature of the works can be seen as intrusive, and some may find this a reason to comment and communications pre and during works will be required	
[19] Who has been actively consulted to develop this project to this stage? <(Add additional internal or external stakeholders where required) >	
Chamberlains: Finance	Beatrix Jako
Chamberlains: Procurement	James Carter
IT	Officer Name:
HR	Officer Name:
Communications	Officer Name:
Corporate Property	Officer Name:
External	
[20] Is this project being delivered internally on behalf of another department? If not ignore this question. If so: Please note the Client supplier departments. Who will be the Officer responsible for the designing of the project? If the supplier department will take over the day-to-day responsibility for the project, when will this occur in its design and delivery?	
Client	Department:
Supplier	Department:
Supplier	Department:
Project Design Manager	Department:
Design/Delivery handover to Supplier	Gateway stage: <Before Project Proposal>, <Post Project Proposal>, <Post Options Appraisal>, <Post Detailed design>, <Post Authority to start work>