

<b>Committee(s):</b> Epping Forest and Commons – For Information Epping Forest Consultative Group – For Information	<b>Dated:</b> 15/07/2023 21/07/2023
<b>Subject:</b> Wanstead Park Projects Update (SEF 13/23)	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	3,4,11,12
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>If so, how much?</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Juliemma McLoughlin, Executive Director, Environment	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Jacqueline Eggleston, Natural Environment, Epping Forest	

### Summary

This report presents a briefing paper to update on various projects taking place in Wanstead Park.

### Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

### Main Report

#### Background

1. Wanstead Park was purchased as part of Epping Forest in 1880 and has subsequently been Listed as a Grade II\* Registered Park & Garden; Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC); Archaeological Protection Zone (APZ) Groundwater Protection Zone (GPZ) and forms the majority of the Wanstead Park Conservation Area.
2. The Park faces profound restoration challenges due to:
  - **Large Raised Reservoirs designated as 'High-Risk'** in 2018 to address Environment Agency assessment regarding the potential loss of life due to dam failure.
  - **Flood Risk from the River Roding** – EA scheme to build a Flood Alleviation Scheme at Shonks Mill, Ongar to flood farmland to prevent residential flooding at Woodford & Ilford (and Wanstead Park)
  - **Heritage at Risk Register (HARR)**. Notified by Historic England in 2009 to address concerns over the declining character of the designed landscape across four ownerships – City Corporation; Wanstead Sports Grounds Lt; Church of England and London Borough of Redbridge

- **Water Supply.** The 300-year-old lake cascade continues to dry out due to a combination of leaks and the loss of water supply to local development.

### **Current Position**

3. The Epping Forest Charity continues to investigate potential options to restore the lake system within the Park to address the statutory requirements of the Environment Agency in respect of the large raised reservoirs; to maintain one of London's most significant designed waterscapes and to minimise the impact of lowered lake levels on public amenity and nature conservation value.
4. Of note this has more recently included the following:
  - Wanstead Park Ponds Flood Study – August 2020
  - Spa-flow parkwide study of hydrological assets and options – November 2020
  - Roding - Ornamental Water Interaction Study – November 2021
  - Sustainable Drainage Scheme (SuDS) Feasibility Study with co-design workshops and partner engagement sessions (funded through the Green and Resilient Spaces Fund Round One) – January 2023
  - SuDS Feasibility Study RIBA Stage 3 Landscape Drawings – February 2023
  - Wanstead Park Waterscape Adaptive Pathway – February 2023
5. An application was made to the Mayor of London's 'Green and Resilient Spaces fund round two' in March. Primarily the project seeks to address how to make the park more resilient to water stress with the eventual aim of maintaining lake levels and reducing dependence on the aquifer supply. A more stable lake system has benefits for biodiversity, which in turn protects the listed landscape's ability to sequester carbon and counter the impacts of the urban heat island.
6. Although unfortunately the bid was unsuccessful the application has mapped a series of interventions that can now be addressed incrementally. A series of applications for alternative sources of funding will now be made for the individual projects as shown in the Adaptive Pathway (attached).
7. This shows the 12 interventions (taken from the options outlined in the feasibility study undertaken by McCoy Consulting in March 2023), that when combined will manage the water in the Park more sustainably:
  - London Borough of Redbridge Highway Sustainable Drainage Scheme.
  - Conveyance swale
  - Constructed wetlands.
  - Glade re-establishment
  - Educational area
  - Constructed reedbeds.
  - Tree avenues
  - Up-cascade pumping system.
  - Localised lowering in front of the Grotto

- Land drainage
  - Ditch redirection
  - River pump system.
8. Some of these interventions already being pursued by the City of London, such as the up cascade pumping system. It is also hoped that the glade re-establishment and the golf course ditch redirection may be able to be undertaken in house by the Epping Forest teams in due course.
  9. The City Corporation is investing £1.15 million to reinforce dams in the Wanstead Park ponds and implement flood prevention measures, this includes grass management to Shoulder of Mutton dam, dam strengthening works to Heronry and Perch, dam re-enforcement works to Ornamental Water (north wall and canal wall), reinstatement and extension of up cascade pumping. While initial estimates indicated a larger budget was needed to complete the works required by the Environment Agency, the studies revealed less work than originally anticipated was necessary. Works are anticipated Spring/Summer 2024.
  10. The Land Agent has successfully secured a further abstraction licence to pump 236,520 m3 of potable aquifer water each year to 2028. Future abstraction licences are likely to be curtailed as the CEO of the Environment Agency, James Bevan, has warned that within 25 years London and the South East could run out of water.
  11. Funding has also been allocated for the pump specification for the River Roding.
  12. Discussions are also in place with Thames 21 who have £80,000 to invest in works that contribute to the reduction of pumping from the aquifer so can contribute to one or more of the projects listed in the adaptive pathway. Discussions are also taking place with them around a possible application for bathing water quality monitoring on the River Roding and there will be further reports on this before a decision is made.

### **Play Area**

13. The installation of the natural play area is almost complete with the play equipment and safety surfacing all in place. Picnic benches, bin and signage will be installed in early June. A small section of fencing is still outstanding but will be completed by Epping Forest staff over the coming weeks
14. A preliminary Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) audit was undertaken prior to completion of the installation of the play equipment to ensure that the design and construction would be safe. Some small alterations were made and the final ROSPA audit has just been completed confirming that the play area meets the appropriate safety standards.
15. A formal opening of the play area is scheduled for June 16 at 4:00 PM.

### **The Grotto**

16. A new project board has been established to oversee the grotto project which has three key outputs:

- **Structural investigations** to understand the foundations and ground conditions around the grotto are imminent.
  - **Archaeological and geological** recording of loose material has been completed along with retrieval of loose stones from the Ornamental Water lake bed. This work is now complete and recovered material has been catalogued and stored.
  - **Consolidation of the landing stage.** Phase one was completed in 2022 and following the structural investigations the landing stage phase two will take place.
17. The next step will be to commission a restoration and maintenance plan to RIBA stage 3 for the restoration of the Grotto and landing stage and other considerations. Funding has been secured for this phase and a tender for a project manager has been submitted,

### **The Temple**

18. Purcell have been commissioned to undertake a conservation management plan (CMP) for The Temple.
19. The first draft was issued in March 2023 and reviewed in a workshop with stakeholders. A further draft will now be produced along with a follow-up workshop before completion of the conservation management plan.
20. The CMP sets out the history of The Temple, articulates its significance and analyses the issues, risks and opportunities associated with the building. It also provides a set of conservation policies within a conservation framework to guide the future management of the site. A condition survey and maintenance and management plan will be produced in tandem with the CMP.

### **The Park Fence**

21. The original Georgian Parkland fencing is thought to have been lost in a major property sale in 1822. Survey work will be undertaken of the current failing concrete and steel fencing system installed in the 1950s to replace an earlier Oak Paling system installed in 1882.

### **Countryside Stewardship: Mid-Tier or Higher-Tier application**

22. Officers at Epping Forest have completed work on the Forest Two Countryside Stewardship application in April 2023 alongside works on the Carbon Recovery work for the Natural Environment Division.
23. Work continues on scoping Countryside Stewardship bids for the two Grade II\* Registered Parks & Gardens at Epping Forest: Copped Hall and Wanstead Park.

### **Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGS)**

24. Discussions are ongoing with the London Borough of Redbridge regarding a SANGs Award from Residential Development to undertake works to protect the SAC from additional recreational demand. Payment is likely now to link project commencement, rather than project consent as the starting point for SANGS payment to the LPA.

## **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

### **Financial implications**

25. Projects have their own budgets. Some projects will require additional funding which will have to be raised from external sources.

### **Resource implications**

26. The Temple CMP, Play Area, Grotto and dams work are sufficiently resourced. Additional staff resource will need identifying to progress further work towards the Parkland Plan

### **Legal implications**

27. Each project has its own risk register.

### **Risk implications**

28. Each project has its own risk register.

### **Equalities implications**

29. Each project has its own risk register.

### **Climate implications**

30. Many of the projects actively seek to address the impact of climate change.

### **Security implications**

31. None

### **Charity implications**

32. 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**

33. A series of projects continue to be pursued within Wanstead Park with an overall aim of achieving progress on the Wanstead Parkland Plan and to remove the Park from the Heritage At Risk Register.
34. Further funds and resources will need to be sought to complete some projects, particularly relating to the waterscape.

## **Appendices**

None

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