

<b>Committee(s)</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
Epping Forest and Commons Epping Forest Consultative Group	13/07/23 21/10/23
<b>Subject:</b> Epping Forest – Assistant Director’s Update April – May 2023 (SEF 16/23)	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	<b>2, 5, 11 &amp; 12</b>
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>If so, how much?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	<b>City’s Cash Local Risk if required</b>
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?</b>	<b>Y</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Juliemma McLoughlin, Executive Director Environment Department	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Paul Thomson – Assistant Director (Superintendent) of Epping Forest	

### Summary

The purpose of this report is to summarise Epping Forest’s activities between April and May 2023. The Assistant Directors report is presented in a revised format that retains essential information for Members, using a dashboard style to summarise key data and statistics. Further data streams will be added to subsequent reports.

Of particular note the death of a cyclist crossing Epping New Road; the continuing rise in fly tips despite the introduction of new household waste pre-booking arrangements at Waltham Forest; empty lodges associated with the recruitment process and the submission of a second Countryside Stewardship Scheme associated with Epping Forest.

### Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

## Main Report

### Epping Forest Local Risk Financial Summary – Appendix 1

1. Appendix 1 contains graphical representation of financial data to the end of March 2023 (period 1223). These figures are Epping Local Risk only and do not include central risk elements such as City Surveyors projects.
2. The first table in appendix 1 gives actual expenditure to the end of May 2023 against whole year budget, subdivided by type and Department of Service (DOS), where CGC is Chingford Golf Club, CSS is Countryside Stewardship, WF is Wanstead Flats (football) W&W is Woodredon and Warlies and EF is all other expenditure/income at Epping Forest. This is further summarised graphically in Budget and Actuals by Type, across all these Departments of Service for this financial year.
3. Debt figures have been managed downward very significantly over the last twelve months, a reduction in debt by £50,844.62 since the last report. Property debts are largely wayleaves and similar, administered through one system, while non-property are all other payable invoices raised by the Epping Forest office.
4. The overall financial summary at Appendix 1 shows figures at 31<sup>st</sup> May. We are broadly on budget as expected at this early stage of the financial year.
5. All financial information shown in Appendix 2 is a subset of these Appendix 1 figures.

### Epping Forest Key data – Appendix 2

6. **Car Parking Income (table 1)** – Monthly income for car parking in FY 22/23 is approximately the same as that received in the previous financial year.
7. **Licencing (table 2)** - Licencing continues to do well, particularly in Filming and Photography. This is an unpredictable income stream, but work continues to focus on growing this area where possible. The large miscellaneous element in April 23 is annual fair licence fees.
8. **Golf Income (table 3)** – Income is reduced for April and May mainly due to the wet weather. Yearly income totals show a healthy outturn against budget. Project work on holes 3, 9, 15 & 16 to rebuild and level the teeing areas continued. Irrigation on these holes along with holes 2 & 10 were upgraded to improve water delivery improving playing surfaces in peak season months.
9. **Energy Consumption (table 4)**- The Epping Forest team are have invested in battery storage for our existing large solar arrays to utilise power during peak periods, avoiding the loss of value by channelling excess power to the

National Grid at a low tariff. These are on site awaiting final connection.

10. **Waste Disposal (table 5)** - The 1.95% rise in Landfill Tax Disposal charges to £98.60 per tonne since April 2022 continues to be reflected in the rise in disposal charges, alongside fluctuations in fly tipping experienced. These disposal costs include our own waste generated as well as that collected from litter, fly tip clearance or speciality waste.
11. This data will be utilised to monitor the impact of trials of new time slot booking and identification requirements at Household Waste Recycling Centres in Essex, which began on 13 March 2023.
12. **Fly tips (table 6)** – General household waste continues to dominate the fly tips experienced across Epping Forest.
13. **Staff Vacancies (table 7)** - This pie chart shows FTE posts in current structure (not proposed structure post-TOM phase 2) filled either by permanent or fixed term contract, versus vacant. Posts filled with casual or temporary staff are shown as vacant.
14. **Volunteering (table 8)** – Although variable, volunteer hours continue to average at around 1,000 hours per month level. There is often a lag in hours work and data recorded, so recent months will be updated in future reports.
15. **Current Lodge Occupancy** –13 lodges are currently empty. Refurbishment works, including removal of known asbestos containing materials are being undertaken from local risk and Forest Fund, but outcome of TOM is awaited prior to making decisions on future use. These figures do not include facilities at Field Studies Centre High Beach, or the Warren House.
16. **Visitor Centre Numbers (table 10)** - Visitor numbers mirrored previous year trends.
17. **Outstanding Tree Works** – Formal confirmation of funds carried forward from 222/23 financial year is awaited but work continues at full pace with all in house arborist teams now on 100% tree safety works until the figures are once again manageable.
18. **Grazing (table 12)** - Due to the lack of rain in spring the main herd of cattle were kept in 4 weeks longer than last year. All the cattle are out grazing on various sites across the Forest and Buffer Lands. Warren Hill is being grazed for the first time in recent history with 5 cows, this links in with previous 10-year stewardship scheme to restore wood pasture habitat and increase the open grass glades.
19. **Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (table 13)** - Natural England's current assessment places 30 of the Forest's 38 SSSI compartments in 'Favourable' or 'Unfavourable Recovering' condition.

20. **Quality Awards** - Green Flag and Green Heritage Site awards last renewed 30<sup>th</sup> July 2022. Coveted Visit England 'Blue Badge' Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme (VAQAS) also renewed.

21. **Social Media** – Follower numbers on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter remain healthy.

### Forest Services

22. A serious collision on the Epping New Road has resulted in the death of a cyclist who appeared to be crossing an informal route between Wakes Arms and Robin Hill roundabouts. Emergency Services attended the incident with support from two air ambulances. It has been reported that a local motorcyclist has been charged in relation to the incident.

### Operations

23. Work has been principally focused on tree safety and vegetation against property responsibilities, alongside contracted work on the hazardous trees and the Epping Forest Tree Inspection programme. The appointed contractors have identified a further 828 lines of additional work.

### Learning

24. The learning team are leading a new 'Climate Action Pathways in Education' (CAPE) alliance, bringing together teachers and researchers to develop best practice in climate education. The alliance will work together to change today's education for tomorrow's climate, equipping people with the knowledge and skills to take climate action and protect the environment.

25. The learning programme has engaged 678 school students at Epping Forest (April – May 2023). The programme has reached schools from some of London's most deprived boroughs, including Hackney, Waltham Forest and Haringey. Schools took part in facilitated workshops that support the National Curriculum and boost fusion skills, wellbeing and connection to nature. The team also engaged a group of young refugees who were able to explore the forest through guided walks and activities.

26. Epping Forest school visits:

	Number of Students	Borough
April	92	Camden
	61	Barnet
May	300	Waltham Forest
	120	Harrow
	40	Hertfordshire
	60	Redbridge
	30	City of London
	56	Haringey
	90	Hackney

## **Projects**

27. **Countryside Stewardship Grant Scheme** - An application to the government's Countryside Stewardship (CS) grant scheme is being prepared for the second half of the Forest, this follows on from the first CS agreement started in 2020. The works cover restoration of nationally important habitats, preservation of historic features and assisting visitors to navigate the Forest. Proposals have been updated following public consultation and these changes are presented to July Epping Forest & Commons Committee, as a separate report. The application will be completed by September.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Epping Forest Local Risk Financial Summary

Appendix 2 – Epping Forest Key Data

Appendix 3 – Epping Forest Project Gant chart

## **Paul Thomson**

T: 0208 532 1010

E: paul.thomson@cityoflondon.gov.uk