

Committee(s): Epping Forest & Commons Committee	Dated: 19/09/2024
Subject: Assistant Director Epping Forest Update Report April – June 2024 (SEF 15/24)	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	Diverse engaged communities, flourishing public spaces, leading sustainable environment
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	£
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/A
Report of: Katie Stewart, Executive Director of Environment	For Information
Report author: Jacqueline Eggleston, Natural Environment	

Summary

The purpose of this report is to present key data for Epping Forest for the period April 2024 -June 2024. The report is in a revised format and is still being developed to more closely align reporting to Business Plan outcomes. Finance and Risk reporting is being undertaken through separate reports.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Current Position

This quarterly report format and content has been amended to align the reporting with the objectives of the Natural Environment Strategies and Business Plan currently being updated for the period 2025-2030. The revised reporting process is still being developed and further refinements will be forthcoming.

The revised report structure provides a breakdown of activity in Appendix 1 with summary details and key points highlighted in the following report.

Progress against Natural Environment Strategies and Business Plan objectives for the period April-June 2024

1. Environment / Conservation / Heritage (NEB Nature Conservation and Resilience Strategy)

1.1 Natural England Visit – The Natural England Officer responsible for the Epping Forest SSSI met with the new Head of Conservation in April. The new approach to monitoring the SSSI was discussed.

1.2 Air Quality Monitoring – With funding from Natural England through the Site Nitrogen Action Plans (SNAP) programme, and started in April 2024, nitrogen pollutants (nitrogen oxides, ammonia) in air are being monitored throughout the Forest for 12 months. This will provide valuable data on the air pollution experienced by habitats, which will feed into strategic feedback to external proposals.

1.3 The Longhorn herd passed its 18-month Red Tractor Accreditation inspection.

1.4 Since April, 62% of all existing tree safety works have been re-prioritisation. Outstanding tree safety works have been reduced by 21% in the month of July with 130 tree safety works being completed.

1.5 Oak processionary moth (OPM) has been effectively managed through co-operation with various stakeholders and undertaking the annual OPM survey inhouse. The continual partnership with sister site Hampstead Heath has removed high risk nests for monitoring purposes. Monitoring from 2023 has indicated up to 93% of OPM are being predated by specialist parasites. Parasites rely on healthy grasslands for a nectar source during the adult stages of life. These are a good indicator of a healthy woodland.

2. Education / Training (NEB Culture, Heritage and Learning Strategy)

2.1 1,740 school students participated in the Learning Programme at Epping Forest. The team have engaged with a new initiative called 'Hackney 10X10' to promote the EF learning programme to schools. Hackney Council is asking all primary schools to ensure that all their children to take part in ten activity types, including visiting the countryside, before they leave primary school.

2.2 The Learning Team also hosted sessions for young unaccompanied asylum seekers, working in partnership with CoL's Virtual School, and for young people from a pupil referral unit. The team have worked in partnership with Tindersticks (community interest company), working together to expand the programme for young people.

3. Recreation (NEB Access and Recreation Strategy)

3.1 Estate improvements have been made including picnic tables installed at Wanstead Park play area, a "no bird feeding" sign at Johnston's Pond and repair works to car parks.

4. Amateur Sport (NEB Access and Recreation Strategy)

4.1 Chingford Golf Course continues to be ranked 1st in the county with our booking agent GolfNow, out of 53 courses.

4.2 The 2023-24 football season at Wanstead Flats came to an end in April after hosting 2297 matches across Aldersbrook Road & Harrow Road and welcoming approximately 37,000 footballers.

4.3 Wanstead Flats hosted the Inner-City World Cup over the second weekend in June, an event that welcomes over 2000 visitors. Participants in the tournament represent their country of origin and reflect the huge diversity of multicultural inner-city communities from across London. The tournament saw Iraq beat Colombia in the men's final and Brazil beat Portugal in the women's final to be crowned 2024 Champions.

5. Arts / Culture / Heritage / Science (NEB Culture, Learning and Heritage Strategy)

5.1 The Learning Team have continued to facilitate heritage learning at Epping Forest, providing school workshops at the Tudor Hunting Lodge and an Orienteering Through History workshop.

6. Income Generation

6.1 Filming income this reporting period was £147,500 due to a feature film.

7. People Management

7.1 There have been six new starters during this reporting period: Head of Conservation; Arborist Manager; Wildlife Management Officer; Senior Grassland Conservation Officer; Community Engagement and Volunteering Officer and Sports and Premises Assistant.

Conclusion

8. A revised Assistant Director report has been presented that is under development and will focus on reporting on the Business Plan and Natural Environment Department Management Strategies outcomes.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Progress against key objectives / actions (categorised by Natural Environment Strategy).

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