

<b>Committees:</b> Epping Forest and Commons – For Decision	<b>Dated:</b> 28/11/2024
<b>Subject:</b> Epping Forest and Commons Project Prioritisation (SEF19/24)	<b>Public</b>
<b>This proposal:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes</li> <li>· provides statutory duties</li> <li>· provides business enabling functions</li> </ul>	Flourishing Public Space Providing excellent services Leading sustainable environment Diverse engaged communities
<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>Local Risk / CWP</b>
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?</b>	<b>Y</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Katie Stewart, Executive Director, Environment	<b>For Decision</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Jacqueline Eggleston, Superintendent, Natural Environment Geoff Sinclair, Superintendent, Natural Environment Department	

### **Summary**

This report provides a summary of proposed projects and workstreams for Epping Forest and The Commons’ respective business plans with the results of a prioritisation exercise to determine which projects should be prioritised above others. Projects and workstreams previously agreed, such as through the respective management plans for the Commons have not been included in the prioritisation but are given separately.

Decisions will need to be made by each of the charities concerned: i.e. by the Mayor and Commonalty and Citizens of the City of London, acting by its Court of Common Council, in its separate capacity as Trustee of the following charities: Epping Forest, Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common, Ashtead Common, Coulsdon and other Commons, and West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood. The Trustee must be satisfied that the action proposed is in the best interests of each particular charity.

### **Recommendation**

Members are asked, acting for and on behalf of the City Corporation in its capacity as Conservators of Epping Forest and Trustee of the Epping Forest Charity, to:

- Approve the prioritisation exercise and recommendations for workstreams set out in Appendix 1a, with the outcomes to be taken forward in the business plan for Epping Forest.

- Note the Epping Forest Consultative Group prioritisation polling results included in Appendix 2.

Members are asked, acting for and on behalf of the City Corporation in its separate capacity as Trustee for each of the Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common Charity, the Ashtead Common Charity, the Coulsdon and other Commons Charity, and the West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood Charity, to:

- Approve the prioritisation exercise and recommendations for workstreams set out in Appendix 2a as relevant to each individual Charity, with the outcomes to be taken forward in their respective business plans.
- Note the existing workstreams for the Commons set out in Appendix 3, which have not been included within the project prioritisation process.

## **Main Report**

### **Background**

1. Your Committee approved in September 2024 a prioritisation matrix for the Epping Forest charity to help determine need, desirability and order of workstreams before adding these to the new 5-year business plans being developed for Epping Forest. In November 2024, a Decision under urgency procedures was approved by the Town Clerk that approved a prioritisation matrix for the other charities managed by the Epping Forest & Commons Committee: Ashtead Common, Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common, Coulsdon and Other Commons, and West Wickham and Spring Park.
2. Appendices 1a and 1b contain this prioritisation exercise as applied to new and potential workstreams.
3. Appendix 3 contains previously agreed workstreams for The Commons.

## **Current Position**

4. Both Epping Forest and The Commons have multiple areas of work that are involved in operating each of the sites.
5. Additional workstreams and demands on resources are received throughout the year from internal corporate initiatives, local developments and national or international factors.
6. Some flexibility in resource needs to be allowed to be able to respond to necessary new workstreams.
7. At the same time, there is too much work already programmed to be achieved within the annual business plan. The prioritisation informs decision making as to which projects should happen sooner and which can be delayed to later in the 5-year business plan or not progressed at all.

## **Proposals**

8. The projects in Appendix 1a/b are arranged in priority order with those achieving the highest score at the top. Members wishing to review the detail behind the total scores can access this data on the Epping Forest Committee Members SharePoint page covering the current committee meeting.
9. This is the first time that the prioritisation matrix has been applied and initial feedback is that it may not adequately prioritise some valuable projects such as income generation or some conservation-based projects. It is proposed that this be accounted for when planning projects to include in the new five-year business plans, which will also prioritise core charitable objectives contained in the respective Acts of Parliament.
10. Appendix 2 shows the priorities as determined by the Epping Forest Consultative Group who were polled as to which, of a similar list of projects, they felt were priority (not using the prioritisation matrix). Appendix 1a includes only those workstreams scoring over 25 plus any additional workstreams highlighted as a priority by EFCG so that the actual score for these can be seen.
11. The projects under consideration are all considered to be in furtherance of the objects of the relevant charities, and to deliver outcomes that are in addition to previously agreed work programmes, such as through approved management plans or Countryside Stewardship Schemes.
12. Proposed works are all considered to have a positive impact on the operations of the charities, and the prioritisation is an aid in determine scheduling and priority for resourcing.

## **Key Data**

13. The top priority projects (scoring over 25) from a longer list are shown in Appendix 1a, and top 5 shown in Appendix 1b.

## **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

### **Strategic implications**

14. Projects listed meet a range of corporate and natural environment strategic aims.

### **Financial implications**

15. Indication of whether or not projects are funded is included as a criterion within the matrix.

### **Resource implications**

16. This prioritisation exercise addresses the limited resources available to deliver projects and workstreams by providing a mechanism to prioritise work that has the highest need to be resourced.

### **Legal implications**

17. Legal implications will be addressed for each project individually.

### **Risk implications**

18. All project risks are considered under the local risk register for Epping Forest and the four Commons Charities.

### **Equalities implications**

19. Access implications for projects will be addressed for each project individually.

### **Climate implications**

20. Climate implications will be addressed for each project individually.

### **Security implications**

21. Security implications will be addressed for each project individually.

## **Charity Implications**

22. Epping Forest is a registered charity (number 232990) as are Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common (number 232987) Ashtead Common Charity (Number 1051510), Coulsdon Commons Charity (number 232989), West Wickham Commons (number 232989). Charity Law obliges Members to ensure that the decisions they take in relation to each Charity must be taken in the best interests of the Charity.

## **Conclusion**

23. New and potential workstreams at Epping Forest and The Commons were reviewed using the prioritisation matrix agreed by your Committee to help determine need, desirability and order of workstreams.

24. The 5 year business plan, being developed for Epping Forest and The Commons, will be informed by the prioritisation projects.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1a –Epping Forest Prioritisation matrix

Appendix 1b The Commons Prioritisation matrix

Appendix 2 - EFCG Prioritisation Poll results

Appendix 3 – The Commons: Existing agreed workstreams

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