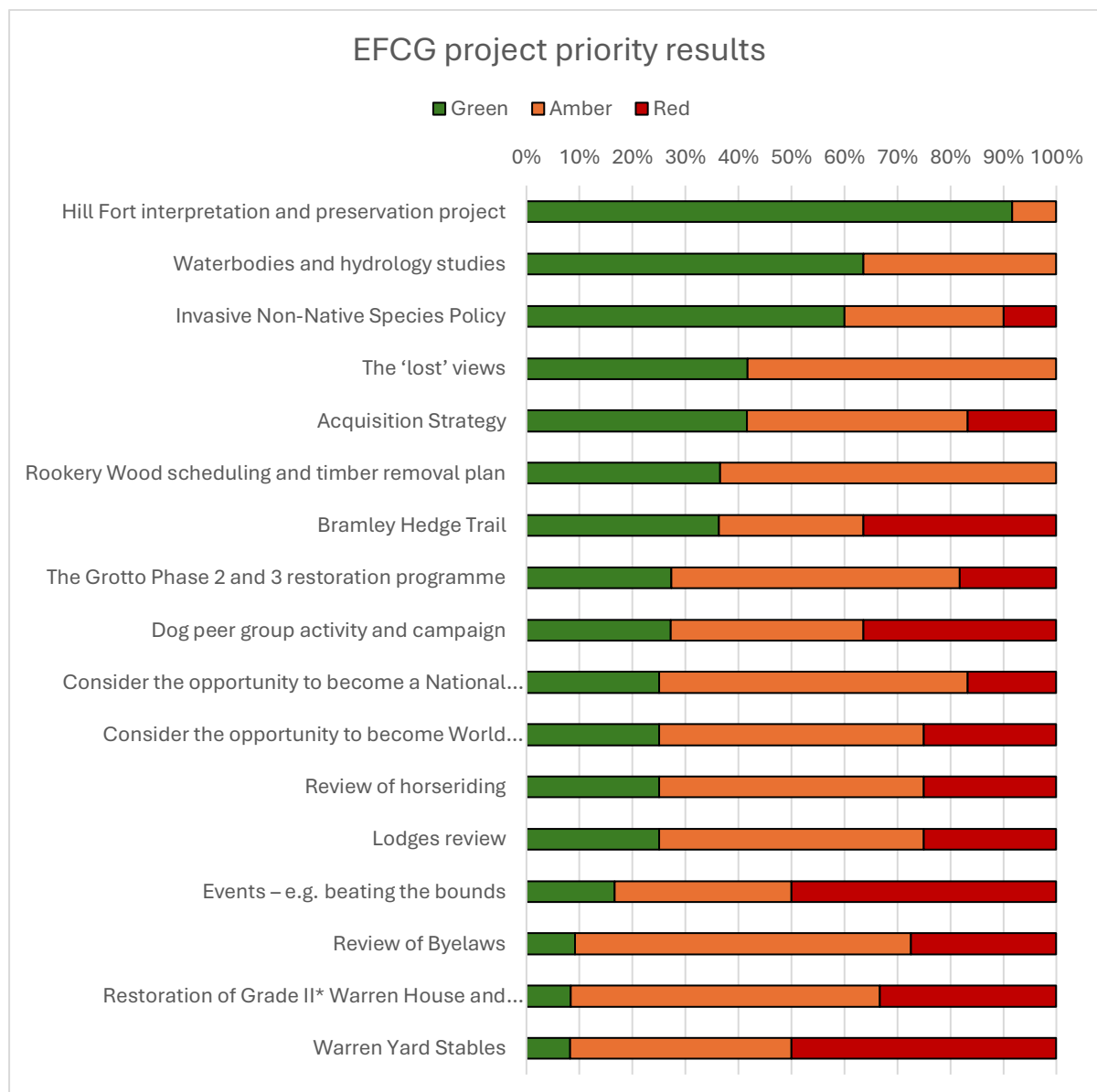


City of London Epping Forest Project Proposals Consultative Group Feedback

The table below displays the projects ranked in order of priority according to the consultative group survey results.

- Green represents projects which have been identified as a priority
- Amber represents projects which would benefit but not seen as a priority
- Red identified projects which the respondents do not see as a priority



Respondents' justification

1. Hill Fort Interpretation and preservation project

- These Hillforts are incredibly important to the Heritage of the forest and are visited by thousands every year. They are being ruined by dirt bikers and therefore need to be protected for the future. The ancient Pollards that keep the structure of the Hillforts together are just as important to the story of the area and should also therefore be noted.

- They are being damaged by cyclists.
- The sites are suffering from erosion and a lack of management. Once degraded they cannot be recovered. They are an important part of our heritage and should be well looked after.
- These ancient forts are a precious part of the forest that have been seriously damaged over recent would, especially since the advent of mountain bikes. They need protecting.

2. Waterbodies and hydrology studies

- With more stress on the forest than ever before due to climate change and higher pollution levels we need to protect the lifeline into the forest, its water. Without knowing this critical information, the forest might not be here for the future.
- Proper maintenance of the ponds, lakes and streams across the forest, many of which are now very silted up or degraded, is important to maintain biodiversity and varied habitat.
- Essential for future development of water bodies for wildlife.
- I have a concern that the ponds and lakes in the forest are in need of radical attention and in some cases, we may need to determine that we will not intervene. Decisions need to be made.

3. Invasive Non-Native Species Policy

- There is a lot of hands-on work to do in the forest to eradicate the non-native species that are damaging the local ecosystem and carrying disease. Having a clear and comprehensive policy on this would help all volunteer groups in the forest to stick to strict guidelines and timelines.
- Without action now problem could increase exponentially.
- It is important to protect the natural habitat and environment of the ancient forest from plants and creatures that may have no natural predators or environmental controlling factors
- As part of protecting Ancient Woodland restoration.

4. The 'lost' views

- Many of the views across the forest were stunning but have been lost over the last 50 years due to uncontrolled growth and reduced levels of grazing by cattle. Restoring these will also assist in creating a more diverse habitat across the forest.
- Restoration/opening of viewpoints is good for visitor enjoyment and open spaces for wildlife.

5. Acquisition Strategy

- The Acquisition Strategy is a very important opportunity, especially on opening up sustainable access to the Forest, and it's our highest priority.
- With increasing development pressures around the forest margins additional buffer lands around the forest are important both to provide the recreation space the growing population needs and to protect the ancient woodland from being overused.

6. Rookery Wood scheduling and timber removal plan

No comments

7. Brambly Hedge Trail

No comments

8. The Grotto Phase 2 and 3 restoration programme

- Because it is deteriorating, however, this should only be done if permanent security can be provided because vandalism is a considerable problem at this site.

9. Dog peer group activity and campaign

- Anything that could improve the present situation with out of control / untrained / badly handled dogs in the forest would be welcome. Many horse riders have had serious problems with off lead/no re call dogs in the forest and the situation is not improving.

10. Become a National Nature Reserve / World Heritage Site

- This will give us the opportunity to further protect the forest and set higher laws and protection including preventing development on the Buffer lands. Will also see to protect the rare species we have like the Skylarks and the fungi.
- The National Nature Reserve and World Heritage Site projects could galvanise local opinion and politicians in recognising community responsibility especially with respect to pollution, and this could be very important to protecting the Forest for future generations
- Once you have WHS status there will be more protection to the forest and put us on the international map.
- Opportunity for World Heritage status and an acquisition status would help prevent developers encroaching on Green Belt land.

11. Review of horse riding

- The license causes a lot of friction due to the number of horse riders that have to pay versus the massive number of cyclists who don't pay but cause tremendous damage to the forest. The bad state of the tracks is a great concern to horse riders as their horses can damage their legs on bad ground. Plus, with the big increase in visitor levels it's becoming increasingly difficult for riders to exercise their horses safely and in a relaxed manner, especially in the winter closed riding season. Anything that could assist horse riders to safely and enjoy the forest would be very welcome, we believe the presence of horses in the forest is an asset to the forest and a valuable part of the whole forest experience.
- Our members are very concerned by the damage and erosion to paths due to impact from cyclists and horse riders due to the concentration of their weight on a much smaller surface area of the path than that caused by walking boots. Horse riders are prohibited from using smaller tracks during the winter and are required to pay a license fee. There are no such arrangements for cyclists. We therefore believe there

needs to be a much wider scope to any review of horse-riding charges. Several members raised this damage/erosion issue when I consulted them about this survey.

12. Events

- Events introduce people to the forest, its history and the experience of its habitat and wildlife. Beating the bounds as an annual event would be a good traditional way to add to those experiences, and help people learn more about their forest and its history.
- Events help members of the public understand the forest better and assist with public engagement initiatives

13. Review of Bylaws

- Think the byelaws need bringing more up to date. There are many aspects of forest use that are 'new' and not covered when they should be or the 'old' laws have become obsolete or not quite covering certain aspects of forest use as they used to.
- Review of the bye laws is a good idea but low priority if they are not being enforced.

14. Warren House and Warren Yard Stables

- The Warren House and Stables projects are both exciting opportunities to bring more financial sustainability, but care must be taken with access, for example to promote cycling and public transport access ahead of attracting yet more drivers onto Forest roads.
- Unoccupied property deteriorates and tenants, just by living there, provide security for building and area.
- There is potential for Warren House to become flats for City of London to rent out for both staff and on the open market as need be.