

<b>Committee(s):</b> Epping Forest and Commons Committee	<b>Dated:</b> 23/01/2025
<b>Subject:</b> Epping Forest Five Year Business Plan 2025-30 (SEF 06/25)	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diverse engaged communities</li> <li>• Dynamic economic growth</li> <li>• Vibrant thriving destination</li> <li>• Flourishing public spaces</li> <li>• Providing excellent services</li> <li>• Leading sustainable environment</li> </ul>
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>If so, how much?</b>	<b>£tbc</b>
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	<b>Local Risk / External</b>
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	<b>Y</b>
<b>Report of: Katie Stewart, Executive Director, Environment</b>	<b>For Decision</b>
<b>Report author: Jacqueline Eggleston, Natural Environment</b>	

### Summary

This report provides an introduction to a five- year business plan for Epping Forest. The business plan is attached in Appendix A and outlines high level projects and core business plans indicatively for the next five years. The business plan incorporates routine work necessary to deliver the core objectives of the Epping Forest charity (as set out in the Epping Forest Act 1878 ("1878 Act"), but also to deliver projects and workstreams that enhance delivery of these core objectives.

### Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Approve, in principle, the Five-Year Business Plan contained in Appendix A for Epping Forest and delegate authority to the Assistant Director, Epping Forest to make amendments and carry out annual reviews as necessary to re-

prioritise or re- scope workstreams to accommodate new pressures or change.

## **Main Report**

### **Background**

1. A Management Strategy 2020-2030 was agreed at your Committee on 18 November 2019. This set out strategic priorities and outcomes over a ten- year period for Epping Forest.
2. This Management Strategy reflects the obligations of the 1878 Act, as well as other relevant legislative requirements.
3. A three-year business plan was agreed for 2020-2023 but no formal update to this has been since agreed.
4. Subsequently, a suite of four Natural Environment Strategies has been developed and a Corporate Plan for 2024 – 29 has been launched.

### **Current Position**

5. The five-year business plan in Appendix A lists the workstreams planned to deliver on the core objectives of the Epping Forest Charity (which are as set out in the Charity's governing documents, primarily the 1878 Act), along with the relevant Corporate Plan outcomes and Natural Environment Strategies.
6. In addition to delivering the core objectives of the 1878 Act, staff and financial resources are also required to deliver on further legislative requirements and corporate agendas that are relevant to the Epping Forest Charity, such as the City of London Corporate Strategy, Climate Action Strategy and Natural Environment Charity Review.
7. The Natural Environment Strategies also strive for new areas of development and improvement in provision.
8. There are also additional pressures on resources as a result of dealing with increased visitor numbers, impacts of climate change and impacts of externally led projects such as road schemes and housing developments.
9. The five -year business plan focuses more heavily on the next 2- 3 years as more detail for this is available, but with many projects being delivered over the full five years.

### **Proposals**

10. Appendix A presents a summary of a much larger spreadsheet document that is the working business plan which has additional columns for detail of objectives met, resourcing, lead and support officers, dependencies and detailed alignment with specific objectives.

11. The business plan has almost 130 workstreams listed and so has been supported by a prioritisation matrix, presented to your Committee in November 2024. This tool has highlighted areas of work to focus on first and this has been reflected as far as possible in the business plan.
12. The business plan is not an exhaustive list of work streams within Epping Forest. Routine service delivery is not captured, such as sports ground/ golf maintenance, bookings and administrative duties and 'front of house' roles that focus on keeping facilities open. Routine litter picking/ assistant keeper roles are not covered, animal husbandry, grasslands, estate and tree maintenance are also not covered in the business plan other than by exceptional work.
13. Resourcing has been identified as far as possible at this stage but there is more work to complete on this as workstreams are planned in more detail. However, in principle, for any new areas of work identified throughout the lifespan of the business plan that are not already specified, consideration will need to be given to which workstream will need to be ceased or postponed in order to accommodate the new work. Again, the prioritisation matrix can be used to assist with this.

### **Key Data**

14. There are almost 130 workstreams contained within the business plan with around 90 already being delivered or commenced in 2025/6.

### **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

#### **Strategic implications**

15. The EF Business Plan delivers on all of the Corporate Plan objectives, Natural Environment Strategy Objectives and Epping Forest Management Strategy objectives as detailed in the report

#### **Financial implications**

16. The Business Plan indicates whether workstreams can be met within local risk budget or whether additional resources are required. In some cases, where a suitable source of funding has not been identified this is flagged under dependencies as the project cannot be delivered without external funding.

#### **Resource implications**

17. Resources are identified in the main spreadsheet with projects that cannot be met within the allocated staff resource identified under dependencies as requiring additional funding/ contractors or other external resources.

#### **Legal implications**

18. The 1878 Act requires the City of London Corporation (as Conservators of Epping Forest) to regulate and manage Epping Forest under and in accordance with the provisions of that Act.
19. The 1878 Act places obligations on the Conservators to keep Epping Forest unenclosed and unbuilt on as an open space for the recreation and enjoyment of the public and to, for example, preserve the Forest's natural aspect and protect the timber and other trees etc growing on the Forest (see section 7). The 1878 Act also includes responsibilities in relation to, for example: deer; rights of common; inclosure; and the preservation of the Queen Elizabeth Hunting Lodge. These obligations need to be balanced alongside the requirements of subsequent, modern legislation.
20. Parts of Epping Forest are also designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and as a Special Area of Conservation under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. These obligations and designations will be taken into account, as appropriate, in the implementation of projects identified in the business plan.

### **Risk implications**

21. Activities within the business plan are assessed within the Epping Forest Risk registers.

### **Equalities implications**

22. Activities within the business plan have equalities impact assessments where relevant and the range of activities address a wide scope of equality considerations as captured within the corporate and local objectives.

### **Climate implications**

23. Several of the activities with the business plan are specifically to address climate issues.

### **Security implications**

24. None

### **Charity Implications**

25. Epping Forest is a registered charity (number 232990). Charity Law obliges Members to ensure that the decisions they take in relation to the Charity are taken in the best interests of the Charity.

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Epping Forest Five-year Business Plan

### **Report Author**

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