

# City of London Corporation Committee Report

<b>Committees:</b> Epping Forest and Commons	<b>Dated:</b> 27/11/2025
<b>Subject:</b> Assistant Director Epping Forest Update Report July – September 2025 (SEF 19/25)	<b>Public</b> For Information
<b>This proposal:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes</b></li> <li>• <b>provides statutory duties</b></li> <li>• <b>provides business enabling functions</b></li> </ul>	Diverse Engaged Communities  Leading Sustainable Environment  Vibrant Thriving Destination  Flourishing Public Spaces
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	No
<b>If so, how much?</b>	N/A
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	N/A
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	N/A
<b>Report of:</b>	Katie Stewart, Environment Executive Director
<b>Report author:</b>	Jacqueline Eggleston, Assistant Director, Epping Forest

## Summary

This report presents updates on business activity delivered in Epping Forest for the period July to September 2025. The activities are delivered against the objectives outlined in the Epping Forest Management Strategy (charitable objectives), Epping Forest Business Plan and the Natural Environment Strategies.

## Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

## **Main Report**

### **Current Position**

1. Appendix A provides updates on service delivery in Epping Forest and its buffer lands in the period July to September 2025. Information for this period should be read in conjunction with separate reports on financial activity, risk management and high-level business planning to provide an overview of progress made against Charity, Corporate and Natural Environment objectives.

Of particular note;

2. The Ranger's Ride extension and Wanstead Play area were completed.
3. 81 fires were tackled during the summer with the largest damaging 4 acres.
4. Large scale habitat restoration works have been progressed alongside extensive public engagement and education programme.
5. The boathouse at Higham's Park was destroyed by fire.
6. Phase 2 works have commenced on the Grotto, anticipating that these will be sufficient to secure the building's future and remove from the Heritage At Risk Register.
7. A large programme to replace asbestos roofs at Great Gregories has been completed.
8. 11 new members of staff were recruited.

### **Proposals**

9. Over the next quarter key projects will include the extension of the Countryside Stewardship funded habitat restoration programme, commencement of hedge and tree planting at Copped Hall, commencement of leaky dams construction and letting of several lodges that have been changed from staff accommodation to tenanted properties to achieve additional income.

### **Key Data**

10. July-September 2025 (figures in brackets for equivalent period July-September 2024 for comparison)
  - Total fly tips: 213 (179). This may reflect additional booking processes implemented in local councils.
  - Total fires/barbeques: 81 / 16 (12 / 15) – the leap is due to improved recording now that we have an increased keeper team.
  - Grazing days: 2180 Forest / 10368 Buffer (4269 / 10501)
  - 11 filming licences: Total of £22,494 (15 / £10,287).
  - 9 fitness licences: Total of £503.50 (18 / £305.20).
  - 11 utilities licences: Total of £13,237 (19 / £4,459).

- External volunteer hours: 3,517 (2,873).
- Internal volunteer hours: 1,394 (645) – this increase reflects the extension of volunteer programmes now being delivered in house
- The Epping Forest Facebook page received 681,247 views and 8,414 interactions throughout July to September 2025 and Instagram received 173,065 views. The highest engagements were seen on posts around the wildfires on Wanstead Flats.
- 11,511 visitors were welcomed at the Epping Forest Visitor Centre at Chingford, with 4156 visitors received at Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge and 331 at The Temple.
- Over 1180 attendees enjoyed the Open-Air Theatre season in Wanstead Park this summer.

## **Conclusion**

11. Considerable progress against Natural Environment Strategy objectives and Epping Forest management plan objectives has been delivered during the reporting period.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A – Progress against key objectives / actions (categorised by Natural Environment Strategy). Further detail of how the activities align to these objectives is shown in the Epping Forest Business Plan.

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