

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee(s): Epping Forest and Commons Committee	Dated: 26 January 2026
Subject: Cyclical Works Programme (CWP) Update – Epping Forest and Commons	Public report: For Information
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes• provides statutory duties• provides business enabling functions	All Corporate Plan outcomes
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Executive Director, Environment Dept	Katie Stewart
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Summary

Following a request by the Committee at the last meeting, to establish a better understanding of the work that has progressed to reset the relationship between the Epping Forest and Commons teams and City Surveyors' Department, this report highlights the improvements that have been achieved to date, in respect of the assets and estates managed by the team and for which the Committee is responsible. This report specifically provides an overview of the work in progress through the Cyclical Works Programme (CWP) a five-year property asset repairs and maintenance programme, and within that, the work that commenced in April 2024 across Epping Forest and the Commons, in collaboration between the Environment Department and City Surveyors' Department. This deployment of funds and progression of property asset refurbishments through the CWP, is supporting a wider asset optimisation and income generation initiative, aimed at improving all operational property across Epping Forest and the Commons and transforming underutilised assets, including Project Lodges – Epping Forest, comprising a total of 10 lodges (7 Stage 1 lodges for refurbishment and 3 Stage 2 lodges for further due diligence).

This is an example of the way in which the Division and Environment Department are improving their oversight and approach to driving the necessary investment in and management of the Department's assets.

Recommendation(s)

Note this report and the ongoing progress of property asset optimisation initiatives supported by the CWP, including Project Lodges – Epping Forest.

Main Report

Background

1. The Environment Department is currently delivering a transformation in its approach to and capacity for managing its assets and estates across all services, including the Natural Environment Division and the open spaces that the Division manages on behalf of the Charities. In the last year, the Department was successful in securing transformation funding to recruit a Head of Estates to allow the Department to review these assets and put in place the information, systems and governance to enable senior management to provide better oversight, and by extension provide improved information and assurance to Committees in respect of the assets for which their Committees are responsible.
2. This report provides an update to Committee, specifically on the five-year Cyclical Works Programme (CWP), which is a critical element of the wider programme of the Department's asset management programme. The work undertaken on the CWP with the City Surveyors' Department, has enabled the Department to develop new ways of working, which is feeding into the Department's Estates Board. This critical piece of internal governance has now been established and is a regular meeting between senior officers within the Environment Department and the City Surveyors' Department, to oversee CWP, other works and maintenance across the estate. This has also provided a forum to escalate issues of concern across the estate and a plan to resolve these at a strategic level. Further consideration will also be given to the way in which information is reported, and assurance is provided to Committees on a regular basis.

Cyclical Works Programme – Current Position

3. The CWP has successfully deployed circa 33% of budgeted funds, across Epping Forest and Commons real estate assets, since the programme commenced in April 2024, totalling £5.32 million. This has included a number of essential asset upgrades, including Project Lodges – Epping Forest : the deployment of funds to refurbish underutilised housing stock into income generating assets for the charity (10 lodges in total, comprising 7 lodges in project stage 1 for refurbishment, with 6 of these lodges going to market for rent in the first half of 2026 and 3 lodges in project stage 2 that are undergoing further due diligence).
4. As of 5th January 2026, the five-year CWP has deployed a total of £5.32 Million since April 2024, through the delivery of strategic upgrade projects across real

estate assets at Epping Forest and Commons, with itemised progress by estate, noted below.

Estate	CWP Budget(£)	CWP Deployed(£)	Deployed%
Epping Forest	£11,168,105	£3,538,285	32%
Ashted Common	£557,500	£383,624	69%
Burnham Beeches	£1,529,500	£330,931	22%
Coulsdon Common	£169,500	£84,700	50%
Riddlesdown	£239,942	£71,798	30%
West Wickham Common	£175,500	£16,398	9%
Farthing Downs & New Hill	£501,412	£172,406	34%
Spring Park	£218,985	£114,374	52%
Merlewood	£1,199,000	£517,812	43%
Commons General*	£137,000	£92,763	68%
TOTAL	£15,896,444	£5,323,091	33%

*Commons General includes essential estate items, for example: drainage, retaining.

Project Lodges – Epping Forest

- Project Lodges Epping Forest (comprising 10 lodges in total – Stage 1: 7 lodges, Stage 2: 3 lodges) will see the letting of two stage one lodges by the end of quarter one 2026, generating a projected combined gross rental income of £54,000 per annum. The remaining stage one lodge refurbishments through the CWP are on track for completion in quarter two 2026 and are expected to generate a further gross rental of £108,000 per annum to the charity.

Stage 1 (Refurbishment)		Stage 2 (Due Diligence)
Lodge	Gross Rent/Year Estimate	Lodge
Garden Cottage	£24,000	Old Keepers Lodge
North Lodge	£30,000	44 The Plain
Caddie House	£18,000	Southern Cottage
Keepers Lodge	£30,000	
2 Paul's Nursery	N/A (Staff Lodge)	
1 Paul's Nursery	£30,000	
Dairy Farm	£30,000	
TOTAL	£162,000	

Corporate and Strategic Implications

- The proposed actions will support delivery of the Corporate Property Asset Management Strategy and the Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes. Efficient asset management will ensure our operational assets are fit for purpose and enable us to continue to deliver high-quality services.

Financial Implications

- Asset optimisation aligns with the Charities' objectives, ensuring that resources are used to enhance asset performance and contribute to the Charities' wider objectives.

Risk Implications

8. Real estate assets are within the scope of the Natural Environment Charities Review. The review aims to support the future financial sustainability of each of the Natural Environment Charities, thereby mitigating a potential financial risk. All real estate assets within the CWP are being considered in line with this review.

Climate implications

9. Asset refurbishments, where appropriate, are key to meeting Net Zero Carbon targets under the Climate Action Strategy. Furthermore, Epping Forest and Commons assets are part of the solution to deliver net zero Carbon targets.

Conclusion

10. As part of the wider programme of work, to enable the Environment Department and the Natural Environment Division to establish a better oversight of, and deploy a more strategic management approach in respect of the estate and assets that the services manage on behalf of the Corporation's Committees, this report provides a brief overview of the work being undertaken and specifically an update on the progress that has been achieved to date in the delivery of the Cyclical Works Programme (CWP) as an example of the outcomes coming out of that programme.
11. The Cyclical Works Programme (CWP), delivered by the City Surveyor Department, in collaboration with the Environment Department, has successfully progressed optimisation and income generation opportunities across the portfolio, including Project Lodges – Epping Forest and continues to demonstrate how targeted investment can unlock value: by refurbishing seven properties now and progressing due diligence on a further three, the charity can convert underutilised assets into income producing homes, supporting both service delivery and charitable objectives.
12. Looking ahead, 2026 will bring a number of updates and new projects to Members, as further optimisation opportunities are identified.

Appendices

- N/A

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