

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee(s): Epping Forest and Commons	Dated: 26/01/2026
Subject: Operational Finance Progress Report - Quarter 2 (September 2025) 2025/26 – The Commons Charities	Public report: For Information
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes• provides statutory duties	Providing Excellent Services Flourishing Public Spaces
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	£0
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of:	Chamberlain
Report author:	Clem Harcourt, Chamberlain's Department

Summary

This report provides an update on the operational finance position for Quarter 2 for 2025/26 for the various Commons charities. This includes the revenue budget to date to the end of September 2025 and projected year-end outturn position, current live capital projects, outstanding debt position and reserve funds held for each of the individual charities.

Members should note that the report is divided into the following sections according to the individual Commons charities:

- Section A – Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common (charity registration no: 232987)
- Section B – West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood and Coulsdon and Other Commons (charity registration nos.: 232988 and 232988-1)
- Section C – Ashtead Common (charity registration no: 1051510).

As part of the ongoing Charity Review, future training sessions will also be designed for both Members and Officers on key aspects of charity finance.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the content of this report and its appendices.

Main Report

Background

1. For additional context, various financial appendices and commentary have been produced to enable greater clarity of revenue budgets and other financial information needed to allow greater scrutiny of the financial performance of the individual Commons charities as well as to provide assurance that the Executive Director Environment remains within her local risk resources for 2025/26.
2. To ensure your Committee is kept informed, an update on progress made against budgets as well as other financial matters will be reported to you on a periodic (quarterly) basis relating to each of the individual Commons charities. This approach will allow Members to ask questions and have a timely input into areas of particular importance to them.
3. Please be advised that in the report below, income and favourable budget variances are represented by brackets, whereas figures without brackets indicate expenditure or adverse budget variances in line with the convention used across the Financial Services Division. Members should also note that generally only budget variances above £30k have been commented on in the report and in Appendix 1, 2, 4 and 6.
4. The report has been separated into three separate sections as set out below with each section providing relevant financial information regarding the individual Commons charities:
 - Section A – Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common (charity registration no: 232987)
 - Section B – West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood and Coulsdon and Other Commons (charity registration nos.: 232988 and 232988-1)
 - Section C – Ashtead Common (charity registration no: 1051510).

Section A – Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common (charity registration no: 232987)

Revenue Operating Budget – 2025/26

5. The budget for Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common for 2025/26 amounts to £1.473m net expenditure. Actual net expenditure as at September 2025 amounted to £708k with a current forecast outturn for 2025/26 of £1.483m net expenditure. This amounts to a projected net overspend for 2025/26 of £10k, equivalent to 0.68% of the total net expenditure budget.
6. A summary of the revenue budget position for 2025/26 is shown in Table 1 below, with further detailed information provided in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2, including reasons for significant budget variances. Information has also been presented in a way that distinguishes between expenditure and income budgets in line with best practice for the financial reporting of charities. Please note that the information presented below comprises operating revenue budgets (local and central risk) as well as budgets for recharges and support services and repairs and maintenance budgets managed by the City Surveyor.

Table 1 – Revenue Operating Budget Summary – 2025/26 – Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common

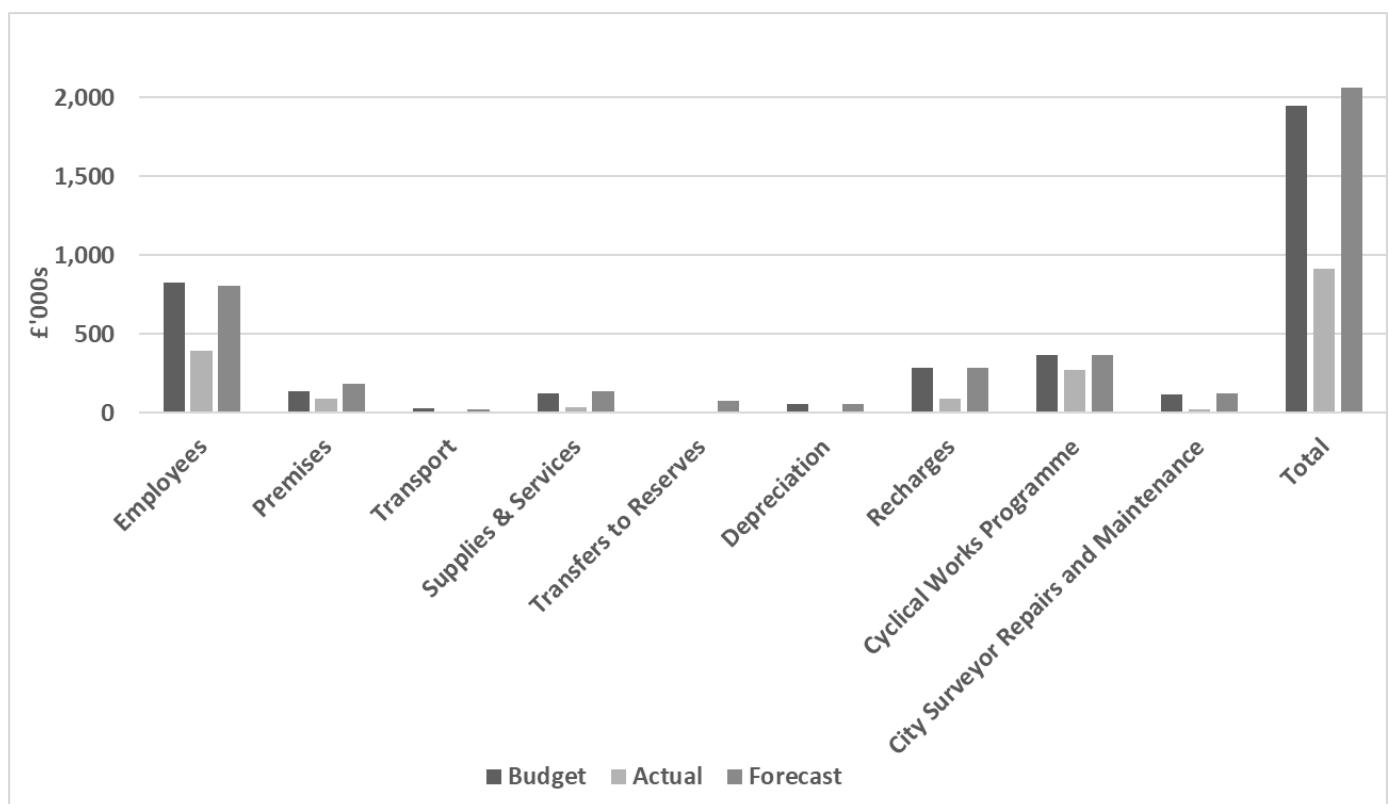
	Budget £'000s	Actual – Sep 2025 £'000s	Forecast Outturn £'000s	Budget Variance £'000s	Variance %
Gross Expenditure	1,947	913	2,067	120	6.16
Gross Income	(474)	(205)	(584)	(110)	(23.21)
Net Expenditure	1,473	708	1,483	10	0.68

7. As can be seen from the table above, the charity is currently forecasting a total net overspend of £10k compared with the total net expenditure budget for 2025/26. The projected overspend for 2025/26 is largely explained by a forecasted overspend on the charity's central risk budget.
8. The charity is currently projecting a surplus on its local risk budget for 2025/26 which can largely be explained by (£83k) in additional income being generated from filming projects at Burnham Beeches compared with budget.
9. Members should note that as a result of the projected local risk surplus for 2025/26, the charity is currently intending to transfer £78k to a designated reserve in order to fund the purchase of vehicles and boardwalk replacement works at Burnham Beeches subject to the relevant approval being obtained from the Assistant Director (Strategic Finance) and your Committee.
10. Further information regarding the budget position for 2025/26 and details of major budget variances can be found in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.

Expenditure

11. As at September 2025, total gross expenditure for the charity amounted to £913k. This represents 46.89% of the total gross expenditure budget for 2025/26 of £1.947m.
12. For 2025/26, the charity are currently forecasting total gross expenditure of £2.067m amounting to an overspend on expenditure of £120k, 6.16%, compared with the total gross expenditure budget for 2025/26 of £1.947m.
13. Graph 1 below provides a summary of the different categories of expenditure incurred to September 2025 along with current forecasts for 2025/26.

Graph 1 – Expenditure Categories – Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common – 2025/26

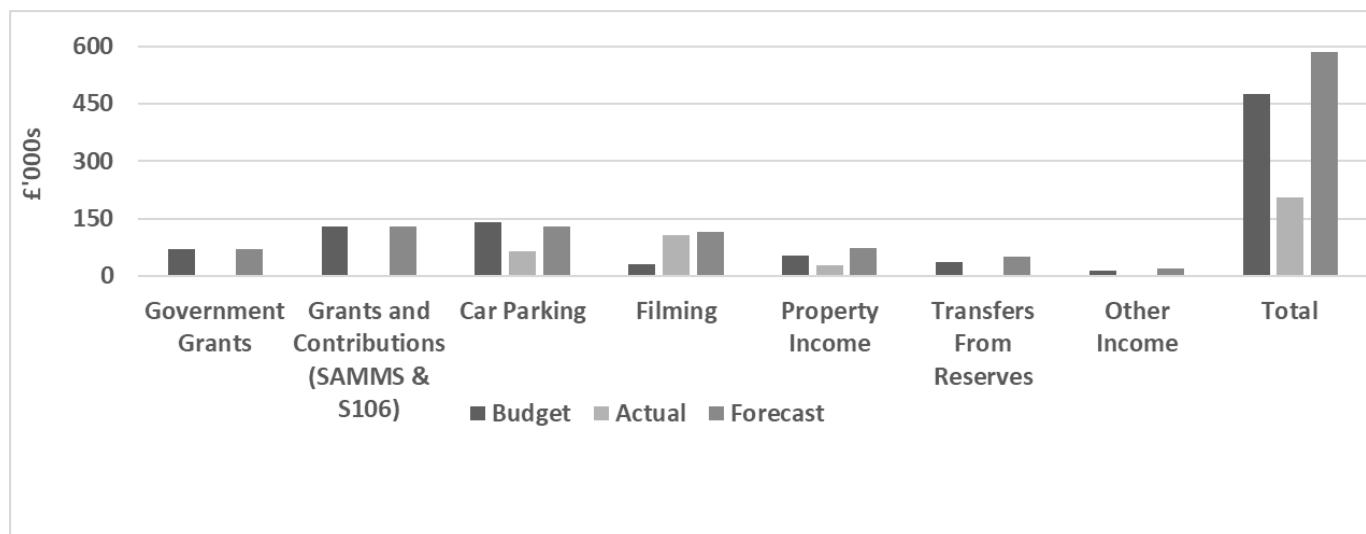


Income

14. As at September 2025, total gross income for Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common amounted to (£205k). This represents 43.25% of the charity's total gross income budget for 2025/26 of (£474k).
15. For 2025/26, the charity are currently forecasting total gross income of (£584k), amounting to an increase in gross income of (£110k), (23.21%), compared with the gross income budget of (£474k).

16. Graph 2 below provides a summary of the different categories of income received to September 2025 along with current forecasts for 2025/26.

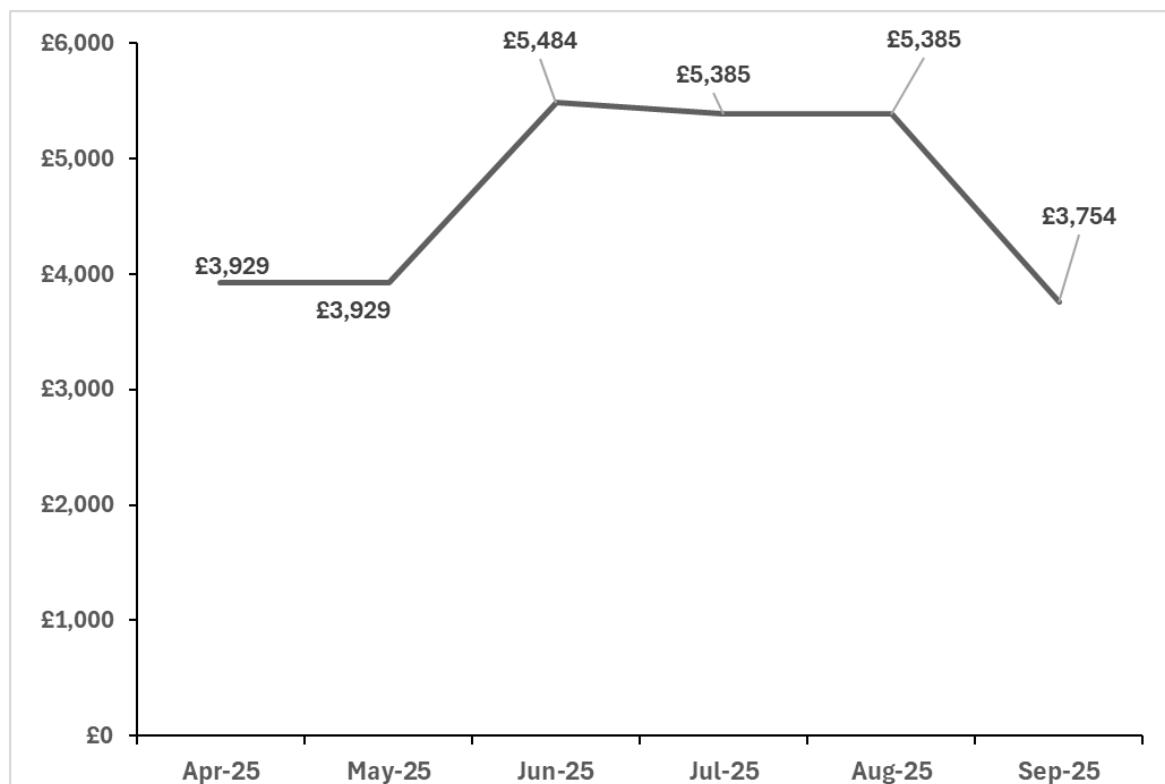
Graph 2 – Income Categories – Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common – 2025/26



Outstanding Debts

17. At the end of September 2025, total outstanding debts for Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common was £3,754. Please note that these all relate to debts outstanding for 120 days or more. As part of a previous best value review into outstanding debts, the maximum age of debt set by the Chamberlain to fully recover outstanding sums was set at 120 days. During this period, automatic debt reminder letters, physical debt chasing of customers and liaison with Comptrollers & City Solicitors takes place to ensure debts are resolved within the corporately agreed debt repayment terms. Graph 3 below sets out the trend of the charity's outstanding debts over 120 days over the previous six-month period. As can be seen from the graph, debts over 120 days amounted to £3,754 in September 2025, a reduction of £1,631 (30.29%) compared with August 2025 and a decrease of £175 (4.45%) over the previous six-month period.

Graph 3 – Outstanding Debts Over 120 Days – April to September 2025



18. Members should note that the outstanding debts largely consist of historical wayleave debts such as motorgates which are currently being reviewed. Please also note that provisions for these debts are currently held in the event that there is a requirement for such debts to be written off.

Charity Funds (Restricted, Unrestricted and Designated)

19. Appendix 3 lists the various restricted, unrestricted and designated funds held by the charity. It details the opening balance for 2025/26 and any movements in the current financial year to date. Appendix 3 also provides a definition for each type of charity reserve fund.
20. A summary of the current balances held by the charity for each type of reserve fund and movements in the reserves in 2025/26 is also shown below in Table 2:

Table 2 – Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common Funds Summary – September 2025

	Restricted	Unrestricted	Designated	Total
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
Opening Balance	1,569	3	953	2,525
Income	0	1	0	1
Expenditure	52	0	0	52
Current Balance	1,517	4	953	2,474

21. The main movement in the charity's reserve funds in 2025/26 to date relates to expenditure on the charity's restricted reserves for Section 106 and Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMMS) contributions. This expenditure primarily relates to staffing costs incurred for two Community Engagement Ranger posts which are being funded by the charity's Section 106 and SAMMS reserves.
22. The charity has also received income from donations in 2025/26 with this income now being able to be carried forward for use in future years.
23. Members may also wish to note that the charity's restricted reserve for pond maintenance is expected to be spent during 2025/26 with the activity taking place in the current financial year.

Contributions from City's Estate

24. For 2025/26, the current funding model for the charity is for its total net expenditure to be fully funded from City's Estate, including the cost of any capital expenditure incurred during the year as well any works managed by the City Surveyor under the Cyclical Works Programme (CWP) carried out over the year. Any changes to the amount of expenditure incurred or income generated over the course of the year will have an impact on the overall contribution required by the charity at year end. The total contribution is therefore calculated based on the **actual total net running costs for the year** in addition to any capital expenditure and CWP costs incurred.
25. Members should note that from 2026/27, Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common will be moving to a grant funded model on its operational (local risk) budget with other elements of the charity's budgets continuing to be deficit funded for the time being.
26. The table below details the actual level of contribution provided from City's Estate to Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common for the previous four financial years along with the current forecast projected for 2025/26. The table is broken down

according to the different elements comprising the charity's contribution from City's Estate.

Table 3 – Contributions from City's Estate – 2021/22 to 2025/26 – Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common

Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common	2021/22 £'000s	2022/23 £'000s	2023/24 £'000s	2024/25 £'000s	2025/26 (Est.) £'000s
Gross Expenditure (excluding Cyclical Works)	1,088	1,380	1,621	1,640	1,562
Cyclical Works Expenditure	131	134	87	68	370
Capital Expenditure	88	79	44	15	0
Gross Income	411	1,223	855	1,004	523
Total Contribution from City of London - Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common	896	1,051	949	1,138	1,409

27. As seen from the table above, there was an increase for 2024/25 in the total contribution from City's Estate to the charity of £189k (19.92%) compared with the previous financial year. This increase can be attributed to increased expenditure by the charity on premises related costs and staffing compared with the previous financial year which resulted in an increase in the contribution from City's Estate.

28. For 2025/26, the charity are currently forecasting a further increase in the contribution amounting to an increase of £271k (23.81%) compared with the contribution received in 2024/25. The increase is partly attributable to additional expenditure forecast to be incurred on CWP projects in 2025/26 as part of the backlog of works overseen by the City Surveyor.

Section B – West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood and Coulsdon and Other Commons (charity registration nos.: 232988 and 232988-1)

Revenue Operating Budget – 2025/26

29. The budget for West Wickham and Coulsdon Commons for 2025/26 amounts to £2.349m net expenditure. Actual net expenditure as at September 2025 amounted to £1.044m with a current forecast outturn for 2025/26 of £2.375m net expenditure. This amounts to a projected net overspend for 2025/26 of £26k, equivalent to 1.11% of the total net expenditure budget.

30. A summary of the revenue budget position for 2025/26 is shown in Table 4 below, with further detailed information provided in Appendix 4, including reasons for significant budget variances. Please note that the information presented below comprises operating revenue budgets (local and central risk) as well as budgets for recharges and support services and repairs and maintenance budgets managed by the City Surveyor.

Table 4 – Revenue Operating Budget Summary – 2025/26 – West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood and Coulsdon and Other Commons

	Budget £'000s	Actual – Sep 2025 £'000s	Forecast Outturn £'000s	Budget Variance £'000s	Variance %
Gross Expenditure	2,530	1,115	2,596	66	2.61
Gross Income	(181)	(71)	(221)	(40)	(22.10)
Net Expenditure	2,349	1,044	2,375	26	1.11

31. As can be seen from the table above, the charities are currently forecasting a total net overspend of £26k compared with the net expenditure budget for 2025/26. This is largely explained by a £12k overspend on the central risk budget and an overspend of £11k on repairs and maintenance budgets managed by the City Surveyor.

32. The major budget variances for 2025/26 comprise the following with further information also detailed in Appendix 4:

- £54k forecasted overspend on transport related expenditure with the purchase of an electric vehicle due to take place during 2025/26;
- £47k additional expenditure incurred on supplies and services relating to extra costs expected on equipment purchases and audit fees required for the charities accounts;
- (£50k) additional income projected from government grants in relation to the Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS); and
- (£49k) estimated savings in staffing costs as a result of vacant posts.

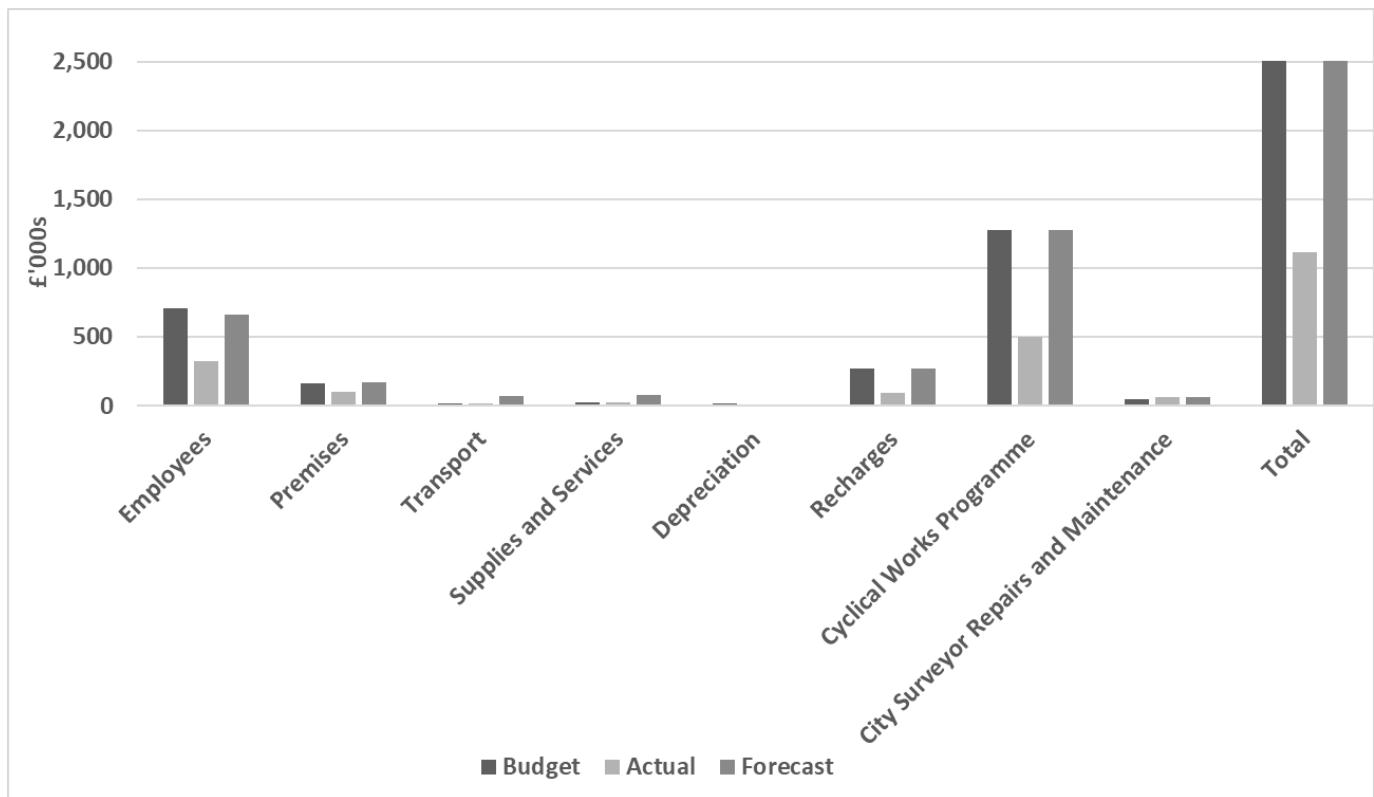
Expenditure

33. As at September 2025, total gross expenditure for the charities amounted to £1.115m. This represents 44.07% of the total gross expenditure budget for 2025/26 of £2.53m.

34. For 2025/26, the charities are currently forecasting total gross expenditure of £2.596m amounting to an overspend on expenditure of £66k, 2.61%, compared with the total gross expenditure budget for 2025/26 of £2.53m.

35. Graph 4 below provides a summary of the different categories of expenditure incurred to September 2025 along with current forecasts for 2025/26.

Graph 4 – Expenditure Categories – West Wickham and Coulsdon Commons – 2025/26



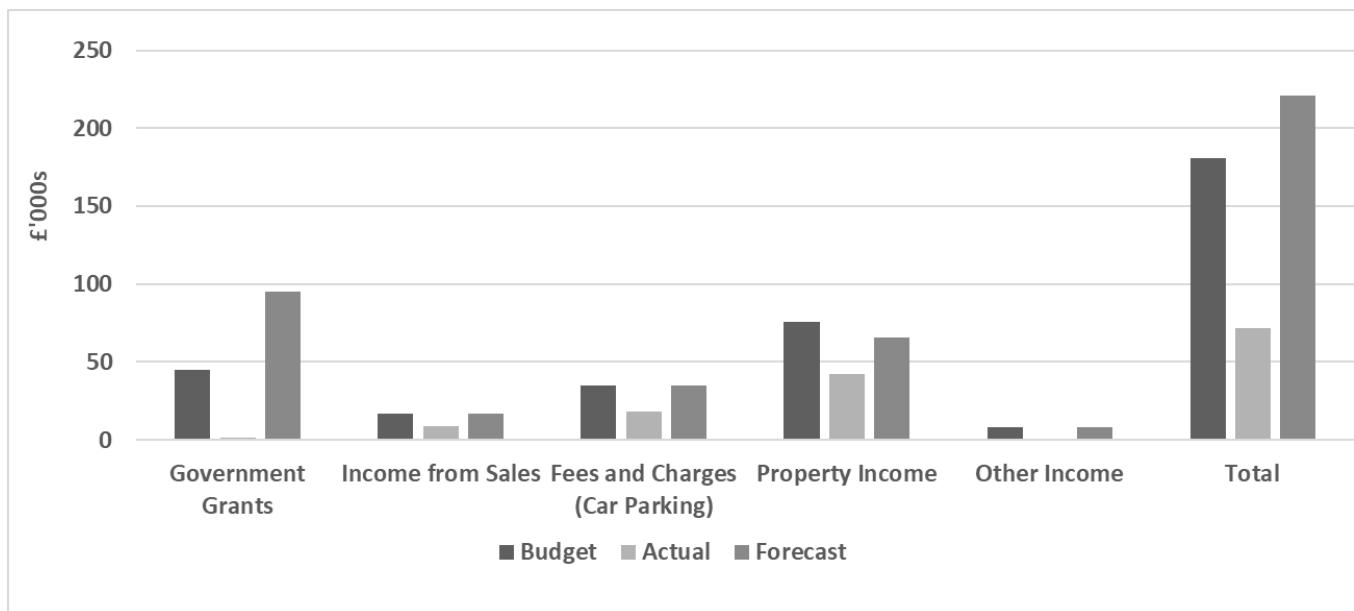
Income

36. As at September 2025, total gross income for the charities amounted to (£71k). This represents 39.22% of the charity's total gross income budget for 2025/26 of (£181k).

37. For 2025/26, the charities are currently forecasting total gross income of (£221k), amounting to an increase in gross income of (£40k), (22.40%), compared with the gross income budget of (£181k).

38. Graph 5 below provides a summary of the different categories of income received to September 2025 along with current forecasts for 2025/26.

Graph 5 – Income Categories – West Wickham and Coulsdon Commons – 2025/26



Outstanding Debts

39. Please note that there were no outstanding debts due to the charities as at the end of September 2025.

Charity Funds (Restricted, Unrestricted and Designated)

40. Appendix 5 lists the restricted, unrestricted and designated funds held by the charities. It details the opening balance for 2025/26 and any movements in the current financial year to date. Appendix 5 also provides a definition for each type of charity reserve fund.
41. A summary of the current balances held by the charities for each type of reserve fund and movements in the reserves in 2025/26 is also shown below in Table 5:

Table 5 – West Wickham and Coulsdon Commons Funds Summary – September 2025

	Restricted	Unrestricted	Designated	Total
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
Opening Balance	54	3	672	729
Income	0	1	0	1
Expenditure	0	0	0	0
Current Balance	54	4	672	730

42. The only movement in the charities reserve funds in 2025/26 to date relates to general donations income received which has been credited to the charities unrestricted (free) reserves and may now be carried forward by the charities to future years.

Contributions from City's Estate

43. The current funding model for the charities is for the total net expenditure to be fully funded from City's Estate, including the cost of any capital expenditure incurred during the year as well any works managed by the City Surveyor under the Cyclical Works Programme (CWP). Any changes to the amount of expenditure incurred or income generated over the course of the year will have an impact on the overall contribution required by the charities at year end. The total contribution is therefore calculated based on the actual total net running costs for the year in addition to any capital expenditure and CWP costs incurred.

44. Members should note that from 2026/27, the charities will be moving to a grant funded model on its operational (local risk) budget with other elements of the charities budgets continuing to be deficit funded for the time being.

45. The table below details the actual level of contribution provided from City's Estate for the previous four financial years along with the current forecast projected for 2025/26. The table is broken down according to the different elements comprising the charities contribution from City's Estate.

Table 6 – Contributions from City’s Estate – 2021/22 to 2025/26 – West Wickham and Coulsdon Commons

West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood, Coulsdon and Other Commons	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26 (Est.)
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
Gross Expenditure	1,113	1,209	1,182	1,411	1,313
Cyclical Works Expenditure	14	198	(37)	516	1,274
Capital Expenditure	158	0	77	34	0
Gross Income	239	158	213	234	215
Total Contribution from City of London - West Wickham and Coulsdon Commons	1,046	1,249	1,010	1,770	2,372

46. As seen from the table above, there was an increase for 2024/25 in the total contribution from City’s Estate to the charity of £760k (75.25%) compared with the previous financial year. This increase can largely be explained by additional expenditure on CWP projects at Farthing Downs and Riddlesdown Common relating to the backlog of works managed by the City Surveyor. The increased contribution for 2024/25 can also be explained by an increase in other areas of expenditure such as salary payments to staff and recharges from corporate departments.

47. For 2025/26, the charities are currently forecasting a further increase in the contribution amounting to an increase of £602k (34.01%) compared with the contribution received in 2024/25. The increase can largely be explained by a further increase in expenditure on CWP projects planned for the current financial year which include works around car park resurfacing and rainwater goods replacement at the Merlewood Estate Office.

Section C – Ashtead Common (charity registration no: 1051510)

Revenue Operating Budget – 2025/26

48. The budget for Ashtead Common for 2025/26 amounts to £1.019m net expenditure. Actual net expenditure as at September 2025 amounted to £470k with a current forecast outturn for 2025/26 of £1.025m net expenditure. This amounts to a projected net overspend for 2025/26 of £6k, equivalent to 0.59% of the total net expenditure budget.

49. A summary of the revenue budget position for 2025/26 is shown in Table 7 below, with further detailed information provided in Appendix 6, including reasons for significant budget variances. Please note that the information presented below comprises operating revenue budgets (local and central risk) as well as budgets for recharges and support services and repairs and maintenance budgets managed by the City Surveyor.

Table 7 – Revenue Operating Budget Summary – 2025/26 – Ashtead Common

	Budget £'000s	Actual – Sep 2025 £'000s	Forecast Outturn £'000s	Budget Variance £'000s	Variance %
Gross Expenditure	1,082	474	1,067	(15)	(1.39)
Gross Income	(63)	(4)	(42)	21	33.33
Net Expenditure	1,019	470	1,025	6	0.59

50. As can be seen from the table above, the charity is currently forecasting a total net overspend of £6k compared with the total net expenditure budget for 2025/26. The projected overspend is largely explained by reduced income from government grants of £23k due to the charity not being able to claim for the cutting of ancient trees as a result of drought earlier in the year. The projected net overspend is partly offset by savings in employment costs of (£17k) as a result of staffing vacancies. Further information regarding the charity's revenue budget for 2025/26 can be found in Appendix 6.

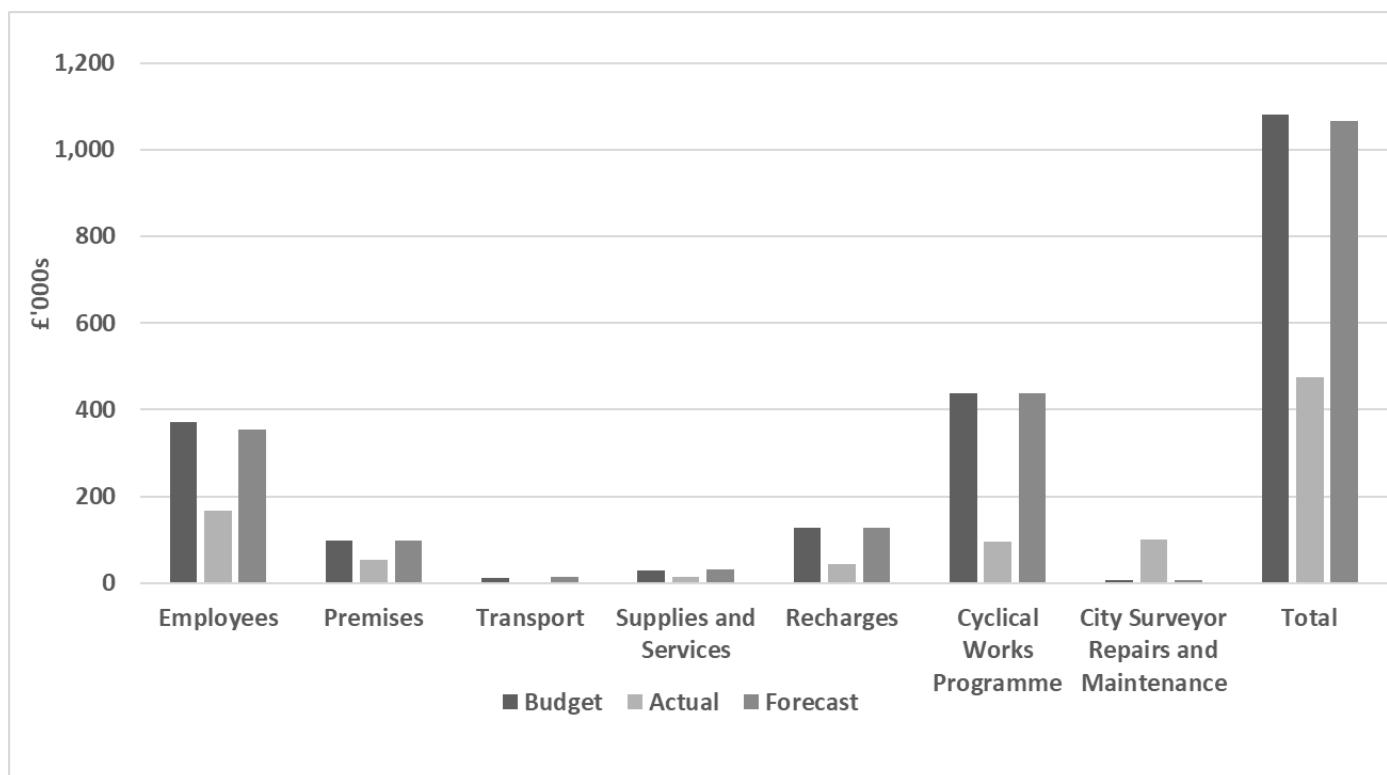
Expenditure

51. As at September 2025, total gross expenditure for the charity amounted to £474k. This represents 43.81% of the total gross expenditure budget for 2025/26 of £1.082m.

52. For 2025/26, the charity are currently forecasting total gross expenditure of £1.067m amounting to an underspend on expenditure of (£15k), 1.39%, compared with the total gross expenditure budget for 2025/26 of £1.082m.

53. Graph 6 below provides a summary of the different categories of expenditure incurred to September 2025 along with current forecasts for 2025/26.

Graph 6 – Expenditure Categories – Ashtead Common – 2025/26



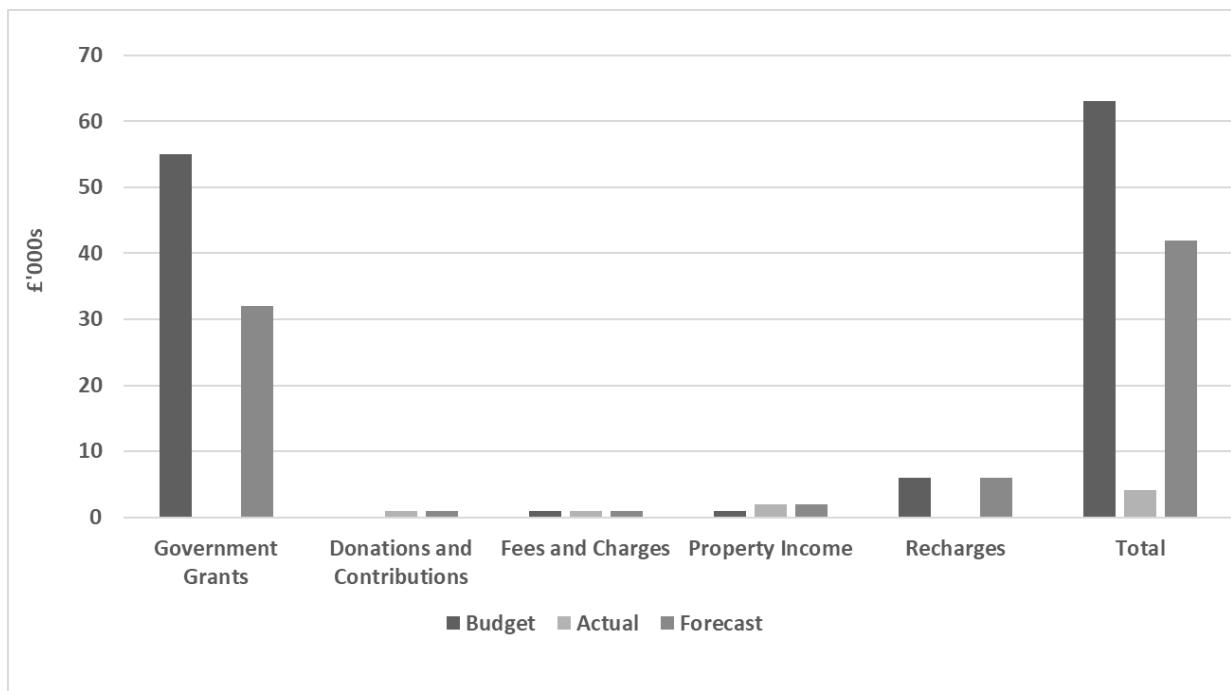
Income

54. As at September 2025, total gross income for Ashtead Common amounted to (£4k). This represents 6.35% of the charity's total gross income budget for 2025/26 of (£63k).

55. For 2025/26, the charity are currently forecasting total gross income of (£42k), amounting to a reduction in gross income of £21k, 33.33%, compared with the gross income budget of (£63k).

56. Graph 7 below provides a summary of the different categories of income received to September 2025 along with current forecasts for 2025/26.

Graph 7 – Income Categories – Ashtead Common – 2025/26



Outstanding Debts

57. Please note that there were no outstanding debts due to the charity as at the end of September 2025.

Charity Funds (Restricted, Unrestricted and Designated)

58. Appendix 7 lists the restricted and designated funds held by Ashtead Common. It details the opening balance for 2025/26 and any movements in the current financial year to date. Appendix 7 also provides a definition for each type of charity reserve fund.

59. A summary of the current balances held by the charity for each type of reserve fund and movements in the reserves in 2025/26 is also shown below in Table 8:

Table 8 – Ashtead Commons Funds Summary – September 2025

	Restricted	Designated	Total
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
Opening Balance	411	22	433
Income	0	1	1
Expenditure	0	0	0
Current Balance	411	23	434

60. The only movement in the reserve funds in 2025/26 to date relates to donations income being received for one of the charity's designated funds which will be used to fund work on ancient trees at Ashtead Common.

Contributions from City's Estate

61. The current funding model for Ashtead Common is for its total net expenditure to be fully funded from City's Estate, including the cost of any capital expenditure incurred during the year as well any works managed by the City Surveyor under the Cyclical Works Programme (CWP). Any changes to the amount of expenditure incurred or income generated over the course of the year will have an impact on the overall contribution required by the charity at year end. The total contribution is therefore calculated based on the **actual total net running costs for the year** in addition to any capital expenditure and CWP costs incurred.

62. Members should note that from 2026/27, the charity will be moving to a grant funded model on its operational (local risk) budget with other elements of the charity's budgets continuing to be deficit funded for the time being.

63. The table below details the actual level of contribution provided from City's Estate for the previous four financial years along with the current forecast projected for 2025/26. The table is broken down according to the different elements comprising the charity's contribution from City's Estate.

Table 9 – Contributions from City's Estate – 2021/22 to 2025/26 – Ashtead Common

Ashtead Common	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26 (Est.)
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
Gross Expenditure (excluding Cyclical Works)	491	542	685	666	627
Cyclical Works Expenditure	8	17	7	105	439
Capital Expenditure	0	0	0	18	0
Gross Income	12	35	84	472	36
Total Contribution from City of London - Ashtead Common	471	524	609	730	1,030

64. As seen from the table above, there was an increase for 2024/25 in the total contribution from City's Estate to the charity of £121k (19.87%) compared with the previous financial year. This increase can largely be explained by additional expenditure on CWP projects largely relating to works at the Ashtead Common Estate Office as part of the backlog of works managed by the City Surveyor.

65. For 2025/26, the charity are currently forecasting a further increase in the contribution amounting to an increase of £300k (29.13%) compared with the contribution received in 2024/25. The increase is largely be explained by a further increase in expenditure on CWP projects planned for the current financial year which include landlord lighting and power rewiring works at Ashtead Common.

Capital Projects

66. Table 10 outlines the current list of live capital projects in progress against their currently approved budget which cover the various Commons charities. It should be noted that the “current approved budget” is the amount currently agreed by Committee to progress the project to either the next project gateway or until Officers request further release of capital funds to progress the scheme and may not equal the total estimated cost of the project to finalisation.

Table 10 – The Commons Live Capital Projects

	Total Estimated Cost of Project	Current Approved Budget	Prior Year Actual Spend	In Year Actual Expenditure	In Year Committed Expenditure	Current Approved Budget Unspent
	£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s
The Commons						
City Commons - Entry Board Replacement	142,517	160,000	10,300	4,000	128,217	17,483
City Commons - Livestock Fencing Replacement	92,000	92,000	34,146	0	18,925	38,929
The Commons Total	234,517	252,000	44,446	4,000	147,142	56,412

67. Out of a current approved budget of £252k, £196k has been spent or committed to date, leaving a remaining budget of £56k to progress the various projects to the next project gateway, release of further capital funds or completion.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications – none

Financial implications – none

Resource implications – none

Legal implications – none

Risk implications – none

Equalities implications – none

Climate implications – none

Security implications – none

Conclusion

68. This report provides an update on the operational finance position for Quarter 2 for 2025/26 for each of The Commons charities on a range of financial related matters to the end of September 2025.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Burnham Beeches Revenue Budget Summary – 2025/26

Appendix 2 – Stoke Common Revenue Budget Summary – 2025/26

Appendix 3 – Charity Funds (Restricted, Unrestricted and Designated) – Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common

Appendix 4 – West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood and Coulsdon and Other Commons Revenue Budget Summary – 2025/26

Appendix 5 – Charity Funds (Restricted, Unrestricted and Designated) – West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood and Coulsdon and Other Commons

Appendix 6 – Ashtead Common Revenue Budget Summary – 2025/26

Appendix 7 – Charity Funds (Restricted and Designated) – Ashtead Common

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