

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee(s): Epping Forest and Commons Committee	Dated: 29/06/2026
Subject: Revenue Outturn 2025/26 – The Commons Charities	Public report: For Information
This proposal: • 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:	Executive Director Environment Chamberlain
Report author:	Clem Harcourt, Chamberlain's Department

Summary

This report compares the revenue outturn for the various Commons charities in 2025/26 with the final budget for the year.

The report is divided into three separate sections setting out the revenue outturn for the individual Commons charities for 2025/26 which is also summarised below:

- Section A – Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common (charity registration number: 232987) – net expenditure of £1.527m compared with budget of £1.561m – underspend of (£34k) (2.2%).
- Section B – West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood and Coulsdon and Other Commons (charity registration numbers: 232988 and 232988-1) – net expenditure of £2.168m compared with budget of £1.902m – overspend of £266k (14.0%).
- Section C – Ashtead Common (charity registration number: 1051510) – net expenditure of £872k compared with budget of £928k – underspend of (£56k) (6.0%).

Explanations for significant budget variances compared with the final budget for 2025/26 are detailed in paragraphs 9,10,15 and 19.

The Executive Director Environment had an overall underspend of (£5k) on her local risk budget (excluding City Surveyor) for activities relating to The Commons charities. The Executive Director Environment also had a net local risk underspend totalling (£1.681m) on other activities within her remit, primarily relating to City Fund

services. The Executive Director Environment is proposing that £66k of her maximum eligible local risk underspend be carried forward into 2026/27, none of which relates to The Commons charities.

Members may also wish to be aware that a designated reserve to fund the cost of future asset replacements at Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common has been established subject to the relevant approval being granted from your Committee. Surplus income of £62k primarily arising from income generated from filming projects during 2025/26 has been transferred into this designated reserve to fund future asset purchases that may be required by the charity in future.

Recommendation(s)

- Note the report.

Main Report

Introduction

1. This report sets out the revenue outturn for the individual Commons charities for 2025/26 and compares the outturn with the final budget for the year for each charity.
2. The report is also divided into the following sections setting out the final revenue outturn position for 2025/26 for the individual Commons charities:
 - Section A – Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common (charity registration number: 232987)
 - Section B – West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood and Coulsdon and Other Commons (charity registration numbers: 232988 and 232988-1)
 - Section C – Ashtead Common (charity registration number: 1051510).
3. Members should be aware that the report has been prepared using the City's standard financial reporting conventions. However, from the 2026/27 financial year, please note that each of The Commons charities will be moving to a charity-style format for financial reporting to your Committee.

Section A - Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common (charity registration number: 232987)

Budget Position for 2025/26

4. The 2025/26 original budget for Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common (received in January 2025) was £1.337m net expenditure. This budget was endorsed by the Court of Common Council in March 2025 and was subsequently updated for approved net increases of £224k, resulting in a final net expenditure budget of £1.561m. This is primarily explained by the following:
 - £116k re-phasing of projects falling under the Cyclical Works Programme (CWP) managed by the City Surveyor;
 - £47k contingency funding to cover centrally funded apprentices as well as the impact of the July 2024 pay award and increases in employer national insurance contributions; and
 - £26k additional recharges from the Natural Environment Directorate.
5. A reconciliation between the original budget and the final budget is shown in Appendix 1.

Revenue Outturn 2025/26

6. Actual net expenditure for Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common during 2025/26 totalled £1.527m, an underspend of (£34k) compared with the final net expenditure budget of £1.561m amounting to 2.2% of the total net expenditure budget for 2025/26.
7. A summary comparison with the final budget for the year is tabulated below. In the tables, brackets are used to denote income, decreases in expenditure, or increases in income. Please note that this is in line with the convention used in financial reporting across the organisation. Only significant variances (generally those greater than £30k) are commented on in this report.
8. A more detailed comparison with the final budget can be found in Appendix 2.

Table 1: Comparison between 2025/26 Revenue Outturn and Final Budget – Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common

	Original Budget	Final Budget	Outturn	Variation (Better)/ Worse	Para Ref
	£000	£000	£000	£000	
Local Risk					
Executive Director Environment	635	698	696	(2)	9
City Surveyor	373	489	449	(40)	10
Total Local Risk	1,008	1,187	1,145	(42)	
Central Risk	57	76	92	16	
Recharges	272	298	290	(8)	
Total	1,337	1,561	1,527	(34)	

9. The charity had a (£2k) net underspend on the local risk budget within the control of the Executive Director Environment for 2025/26. Members should also note that following the creation of a newly designated reserve to fund the future purchase of assets at Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common, £62k was transferred into this reserve in 2025/26 funded from surplus income generated from filming projects and other income sources. This resulted in an overall local risk net underspend of (£2k) for the charity once the transfer had taken place. Further information regarding the charity's local risk variances for 2025/26 can be found in Appendix 2.
10. The (£40k) underspend on budgets managed by the City Surveyor is largely explained by (£54k) reduced expenditure incurred on the CWP compared to budget. This is attributable to the rephasing of a range of CWP projects during 2025/26 as part of the backlog of works managed by the City Surveyor. Please note that the CWP does not form part of the City Surveyor's local risk budget, and any variances will be carried over to 2026/27. Under the governance of the programme, variances on budgets are adjusted for the life of the programme to allow for the completion of works which can span multiple financial years. The overall net underspend for the City Surveyor included £14k additional costs on the corporate Integrated Facilities Management contract largely explained by additional cleaning contract costs being incurred in 2025/26.

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

Budget Position for 2025/26

11. The 2025/26 original budget for West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood and Coulsdon and Other Commons (received in January 2025) was £2.052m net expenditure. This budget was endorsed by the Court of Common Council in March 2025 and was subsequently updated for approved net decreases of (£150k), resulting in a final net expenditure budget of £1.902m. This was primarily explained by a (£228k) re-phasing of projects falling under the CWP managed by City Surveyors which was partly offset by £57k in central contingency funding to cover the cost of apprenticeships as well as the impact of the July 2024 pay award and increases in employer national insurance contributions.
12. A reconciliation between the original budget and the final budget for 2025/26 is shown in Appendix 3.

Revenue Outturn 2025/26

13. Actual net expenditure for the charities during 2025/26 totalled £2.168m, an overspend of £266k compared with the final net expenditure budget of £1.902m, amounting to 14.0% of the budget for 2025/26.
14. A summary comparison with the final budget for the year is tabulated below. A more detailed comparison with the final budget can be found in Appendix 4.

Table 2: Comparison between 2025/26 Revenue Outturn and Final Budget – West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood and Coulsdon and Other Commons

	Original Budget £000	Final Budget £000	Outturn £000	Variation (Better)/ Worse £000	Para Ref
Local Risk					15
Executive Director Environment	725	781	780	(1)	
City Surveyor	1,041	813	1,079	266	
Total Local Risk	1,766	1,594	1,859	265	
Central Risk	20	20	26	6	
Recharges	266	288	283	(5)	
Total	2,052	1,902	2,168	266	

Reasons for Significant Variations

15. The £266k overspend on budgets managed by the City Surveyor is partly explained by £151k additional costs relating to the corporate Integrated Facilities Management contract. This comprised £128k incurred on planned and reactive works as well as an extra £23k required in relation to the corporate contract for cleaning. The overall net overspend for the City Surveyor is also explained by £115k additional expenditure incurred on the CWP compared to budget. This is attributable to the rephasing of a range of CWP projects during 2025/26 as part of the backlog of works managed by the City Surveyor. Expenditure on CWP projects in 2025/26 included costs incurred on redecoration works to various properties, car park resurfacing works and drainage works at the Merlewood Estate.

Section C – Ashtead Common (charity registration number: 1051510)

Budget Position for 2025/26

16. The 2025/26 original budget for Ashtead Common (received in January 2025) was £929k net expenditure. This budget was endorsed by the Court of Common Council in March 2025 and was subsequently updated for approved net decreases of (£1k), resulting in a final net expenditure budget of £928k. A reconciliation between the original budget and the final budget is shown in Appendix 5.

Revenue Outturn 2025/26

17. Actual net expenditure for Ashtead Common during 2025/26 totalled £872k, an underspend of (£56k) compared with the final net expenditure budget of £928k, amounting to 6.0% of the budget for 2025/26.
18. A summary comparison with the final budget for the year is tabulated below. A more detailed comparison with the final budget can be found in Appendix 6.

Table 3: Comparison between 2025/26 Revenue Outturn and Final Budget – Ashtead Common

	Original Budget	Final Budget	Outturn	Variation (Better)/ Worse	Para Ref
	£000	£000	£000	£000	
Local Risk					
Executive Director Environment	443	451	449	(2)	19
City Surveyor	365	346	283	(63)	
Total Local Risk	808	797	732	(65)	
Central Risk	0	0	12	12	
Recharges	121	131	128	(3)	
Total	929	928	872	(56)	

Reasons for Significant Variations

19. The (£63k) underspend on budgets managed by the City Surveyor is largely explained by (£88k) reduced expenditure incurred on the CWP compared to budget. This is attributable to the rephasing of a range of CWP projects during 2025/26 as part of the backlog of works managed by the City Surveyor. The overall net underspend for the City Surveyor included £25k extra expenditure on the corporate Integrated Facilities Management contract which was largely

attributable to additional costs being incurred on the corporate cleaning contract at Ashted Common.

Local Risk and Central Risk Carry Forward to 2026/27

20. Chief Officers can generally request underspends of up to 10% or £500k (whichever is the lesser) of the final local risk budget to be carried forward, so long as the underspending is not fortuitous and the resources were for a planned purpose that was prevented from happening during the year. Such requests are subject to the approval of the Chamberlain in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of Resources Allocation Sub Committee. In accordance with Financial Regulations, any overspends are currently carried forward in full and are met from the agreed 2026/27 budgets.
21. The Executive Director Environment had a total local risk underspend of (£5k) on activities relating to the Commons charities. The Executive Director Environment also had a net local risk underspend totalling (£1.681m) on activities relating to other services within her remit. Members should note that this underspend primarily relates to the Executive Director Environment's City Fund services. The Executive Director Environment is proposing that £66k of her maximum eligible local risk underspend of £500k be carried forward, none of which relates to activities at The Commons.
22. Members should also note that from 2026/27, there will be a change to the funding model for each of The Commons charities with any underspend on the charity's operational (local risk) grant being able to be carried forward to the relevant charity's unrestricted reserves for use in future years.

Charity Reserve Funds

23. Members may wish to be aware that details of 2025/26 closing balances for the various reserve funds held by the individual Commons charities may be found in the separate 'Charity Funds and Reserves Summary & 'Reserves Policy Proposal – The Commons' report being presented to your Committee.

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

24. This report presents the revenue outturn position for 2025/26 for the individual Commons charities for Members to note.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Movement between 2025/26 Original Budget and 2025/26 Final Budget – Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common
- Appendix 2 – Comparison between 2025/26 Revenue Outturn and Budget – Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common
- Appendix 3 – Movement between 2025/26 Original Budget and 2025/26 Final Budget – West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood and Coulsdon and Other Commons
- Appendix 4 – Comparison between 2025/26 Revenue Outturn and Budget – West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood and Coulsdon and Other Commons
- Appendix 5 – Movement between 2025/26 Original Budget and 2025/26 Final Budget – Ashted Common
- Appendix 6 – Comparison between 2025/26 Revenue Outturn and Budget – Ashted Common

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