

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee: Epping Forest and Commons Committee	Dated: 29/06/2026
Subject: Epping Forest Risk Management Update Report	Public report: For Information
This proposal: • delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes • provides business enabling functions	Corporate Plan Outcomes: Diverse engaged communities; Vibrant thriving destination; Providing excellent services; Flourishing public spaces; Leading sustainable environment Business enabling functions: Risk Management
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:	Katie Stewart, Executive Director Environment
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Summary

This report provides an overview of the risk management processes in place, including risk governance and the format and frequency of reporting, for the Epping Forest charity (charity number 232990) for which your Committee is responsible.

The report provides Members with assurance that these processes align with the Corporate Risk Management Framework and meet the requirements of the Charities Act 2011. A summary of the current Epping Forest risk register is included within the report, and at Appendix 1.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note:

- This report and the summary of the Epping Forest risk register provided within the report and at Appendix 1.
- The assurance of the Executive Director that all risks held by the Epping Forest charity continue to be managed in compliance with the Corporate Risk Management Framework and the Charities Act 2011.

Main Report

Background

Corporate Risk Management Framework

1. The City of London's Risk Management Framework incorporates the organisation's Risk Management Policy; the Risk Management Strategy 2024-29; and Risk Management Guidance and Training.
2. The Risk Management Policy outlines the City Corporation's overarching approach and requirements in risk management.
3. The Risk Management Strategy 2024-2029 articulates the City of London Corporation's approach to identifying, mitigating, and managing risk. It ensures that the City Corporation upholds duties, delivers priorities, and supports and aligns with organisational ambitions, including our Corporate Plan 2024-2029 strategic outcomes enabling delivery, continuous improvement and innovation.
4. To support delivery of the Risk Management Strategy 2024-2029, a Corporate Risk Appetite Statement was recently approved by Court of Common Council. This Statement details the City Corporation's approach to taking risk across nine themes and will be used to aid strategic decision making. Initially, this is being applied to Corporate-level risks only.
5. Risks and mitigating actions are regularly reviewed by risk owners, with updates recorded in the corporate risk management information system. Risks are assessed on a likelihood-impact basis, and the resultant score is associated with a traffic light colour. For reference, the City of London's Risk Matrix is provided at Appendix 2.
6. New and emerging risks are identified through several channels, including:
 - Directly by Senior Leadership Teams as part of the regular review process.
 - In response to ongoing review of progress made against Business Plan objectives and performance measures, e.g., slippage of target dates or changes to expected performance levels.
 - In response to emerging events and changing circumstances which have the potential to impact on the delivery of services. For example, changes to legislation, resource availability, severe weather events.

Risk governance and reporting

7. To ensure our risk management process is robust, the risks on our risk registers are regularly reviewed by, and reported to, a variety of internal stakeholders – both Officers and Members.
8. Officers (and our Town Clerk and Chief Executive) are responsible – and ultimately accountable - for identifying and managing risk within the City Corporation. This includes what risks should be put onto the risk register, updating these in timely and responsive manner and managing any mitigating actions.

9. Members monitor and oversee the City Corporation's Risk Management Strategy and arrangements. They play an essential role in scrutinising risk management and its effectiveness. This is distinct from operational decision-making on risks/officer actions to identify and manage risk but works in tandem with this to ensure sound and appropriate risk management.
10. For each natural environment charity, the responsible Management Committee retains oversight of risk, with officers under their relevant delegated authority in the operational management of the charity having day-to-day responsibility for managing and controlling risk.
11. The City of London's Risk Management Framework requires each Chief Officer to report regularly to Committees on the risks faced by their department.
12. The Charity Commission requires Trustees to confirm in a charity's annual report that any major risks to which the charity is exposed have been identified and reviewed and that systems are established to mitigate those risks. These risks are to be reviewed annually.
13. Your Committee, on behalf of the City Corporation as Trustee, reviews the risks faced by the Epping Forest charity on a quarterly basis to gain assurance that risks are being identified and managed effectively. This reporting frequency aligns with the City of London's Risk Management Framework and exceeds the requirements of the Charity Commission.
14. Detailed risk registers are presented every six months. The two interim quarterly reports present summary risk registers, with individual risks being reported in detail by exception.

Current Position

15. The Executive Director Environment assures your Committee that all risks held by the Epping Forest charity continue to be managed in compliance with the Corporate Risk Management Framework and the Charities Act 2011.
16. The Epping Forest Risk Register contains 15 risks (four RED and eleven AMBER), owned and managed by the Assistant Director, Epping Forest and her management team. Since the last report to your Committee, all risks have been reviewed and updated as necessary. None of the risk scores have changed, but one new risk has been added ('Negative impacts of visitor pressure'), as explained below:

New risk

17. **ENV-NE-EF 022: Negative impacts of visitor pressure**

(Current risk score: AMBER 8, Likely/Serious)

This new risk consolidates the various potential negative impacts of visitor pressure which were previously represented within several of the other existing risks.

Mitigating actions are being taken to prevent long-term environmental damage, particularly to the protected landscape areas of the Forest. These actions include development of a strategy to address the impact of visitor pressure; works to

improve visitor infrastructure; education of visitors to encourage responsible use of the sites; and monitoring impact of visitor pressure, commencing with baseline surveys every two years. As a new risk, it is reported in detail at Appendix 1.

Highest risks

18. The four highest risks on the register (rated Red) are well-controlled with actions in place to reduce the scores over time. They are receiving the close attention of the Assistant Director and her management team, and are as follows:

a. **ENV-NE-EF 018 Deterioration of Wanstead Park Reservoirs**

(Current risk score: Red 24, Possible/Extreme).

This risk is actively managed by colleagues in the Environment Department's Engineering Team and in liaison with City Surveyor's Department. Detailed designs for dam strengthening works and the reinstatement of the up-cascade pumping system are being progressed. However, procurement for the project is on hold pending the outcome of the Panel Engineer inspection which was undertaken in March 2026: no immediate concerns were raised but the full report is not expected for 3-6 months. The target date to reduce the risk remains November 2026. Further updates will be reported to this Committee as they become available.

b. **ENV-NE-EF 006 Failure of raised reservoirs**

(Current risk score: Red 16, Unlikely/Extreme).

This risk is scored as unlikely to occur, with an extreme impact. Officers are liaising closely with the Environment Department's Engineering Team. Local officers inspect all reservoirs/dams on a weekly basis, and the Reservoir Engineer carries out six-monthly inspections, which control the likelihood of the risk occurring. As works on dams and reservoirs are completed, the risk score will be reviewed with the aim of reducing the likelihood rating to 'rare', however, the impact will remain 'extreme'.

c. **ENV-NE-EF 008 Negative impacts from pests or diseases**

(Current risk score: Red 16, Likely/Major).

This risk is rated as 'likely' to occur with a 'major' impact. The risk is managed effectively by experienced officers as part of their day-to-day duties. Monitoring is undertaken on an ongoing basis and each new pest or disease identified is dealt with according to the guidance of the appropriate lead body. Officers are working with colleagues in the Environment Department's Environmental Resilience Team and the other Natural Environment sites, to develop a division-wide approach to INNS, pests and pathogens. The aim is to reduce the likelihood of the risk to 'possible' but this is a long-term target due to the ongoing presence of pests and diseases.

d. **ENV-NE-EF 021: Readiness for Natural Environment Charities Review (NECR) implementation**

(Current risk score: RED 16, Likely/Major)

This risk addresses the potential implications should unrealistic, near-time, income targets be set for the charity following the move to a grant funding model. This could result in an inability to fully implement the NECR recommendations;

take advantage of new funding model imperatives and opportunities of the NECR; and/or to build sufficient fundraising capacity, expertise and resources.

Actions to mitigate this risk include implementation of the recommendations of a Fundraising Consultant which identify capacity needs and fundraising priorities for the charity; and an independent options assessment of complementary land assets, the results of which have been used to identify some areas for additional assessment.

19. All Amber-rated risks are being managed effectively as part of day-to-day operations. Risk owners monitor each risk, remaining aware of any changes or factors that could affect it, either positively or negatively, and identify any new opportunities to better control each one.

20. Five of the Amber risks are being managed with the aim of reducing the likelihood or impact ratings, and officers are undertaking a range of appropriate actions to achieve the target scores. Full details of mitigating actions are presented to your Committee every six months in detailed risk management update reports.

- **ENV-NE-EF 004: Decline in condition of built assets**
Current risk score: Amber 12 (Possible/Major)
- **ENV-NE-EF 016: Budget pressures**
Current risk score: Amber 12 (Possible/Major)
- **ENV-NE-EF 017: Tree event or failure**
Current risk score: Amber 12 (Possible/Major)
- **ENV-NE-EF 019: Decline in condition of heritage assets**
Current risk score: Amber 12 (Possible/Major)
- **ENV-NE-EF 022: Negative impacts of visitor pressure**
Current risk score: Amber 12 (Likely/Serious)

21. The remaining six Amber risks, listed below, are 'accepted' with actions in place to maintain them at their current score. These risks have been reduced to the lowest level possible at present, but officers remain aware of changes and opportunities which could enable a further reduction.

- **ENV-NE-EF 010: Negative impacts of development and encroachment**
Current risk score: Amber 12 (Possible/Major)
- **ENV-NE-EF 015: Impacts of anti-social behaviour on staff and site**
Current risk score: Amber 12 (Possible/Major)
- **ENV-NE-EF 003: Risks to health and safety**
Current risk score: Amber 8 (Unlikely/Major)
- **ENV-NE-EF 005: Declining Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)/Special Area of Conservation (SAC) condition**
Current risk score: Amber 8 (Unlikely/Major)
- **ENV-NE-EF 009: Adverse impacts of extreme weather and climate change**
Current risk score: Amber 8 (Likely/Serious)
- **ENV-NE-EF 020: Security of site**
Current risk score: Amber 8 (Unlikely/Major)

Corporate and Strategic Implications

22. Effective management of risk is at the heart of the City Corporation's approach to delivering cost effective and valued services to the public as well as being an important element within the corporate governance of the organisation.
23. The risk management processes in place in the Environment Department support the delivery of the Corporate Plan 2024-29, our Departmental high-level Business Plan, charity business plans, the Natural Environment Division's core strategies, and relevant corporate strategies, including, but not limited to, the Climate Action; Cultural; Sport; and Volunteering Strategies.
24. Risks which could have a serious impact on the achievement of business and strategic objectives are proactively identified, assessed and managed in order to minimise their likelihood and/or impact.

Conclusion

25. The proactive management of risk, including the reporting process to Members, demonstrates that the Natural Environment Division of the Environment Department is adhering to the requirements of the City of London Corporation's Risk Management Framework and the Charities Act 2011.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Epping Forest Risk Register
- Appendix 2 - City of London Corporation Risk Matrix

Contact

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