

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Epping Forest & Commons - For decision	7 September 2015
Subject: Epping Forest & Commons Committee Reporting	Public
Report of: Director of Open Spaces	For Decision
Summary	
<p>There was significant discussion at the last Committee in relation to proposed changes to the agenda and how to ensure that best use is made of the Committee's time. This report follows from that discussion, and responds in particular to Members' desire to receive pictorial presentations and to contribute in detail to strategic matters.</p>	
Recommendations	
<p>It is recommended that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor, non-controversial or procedural items be marked with a star to indicate that discussion is not anticipated, inviting the Committee to agree or receive the item without discussion if no Members wish to raise any issues. 	

Main Report

Background

1. Some alterations to the way in which information is presented to Members were discussed at the June meeting of your Committee. At that time, some Members were concerned that more fundamental changes were not considered while others were keen to see the continuation of traditional practices, such as the pictorial presentations from the Superintendents. Officers have now given further consideration to the feedback from Members.

Proposals

Superintendent's Updates

2. As Members were particularly supportive of the use of images by the Superintendents, it is now proposed that where appropriate, the Superintendents supplement elements of their written reports as appropriate with projected images. It is hoped that this will strike an appropriate balance between providing Members (and others who access committee papers) with sufficient detailed written information and some additional helpful illustration and additional verbal comment by the Superintendent at the meeting.

Use of starred items

3. Members will recall that the number of “for information” reports will be kept under careful review to ensure that best use is made of the Committee’s time in considering these items and the substantial amount of officer time that goes into preparing such reports. In particular, greater use will be made of the Superintendent’s update and other communication mediums to keep Members up to date with issues.
4. Additionally, a new structure for the agenda will be introduced which will include “starred items”. These items will cover issues that require a report to Members, but where the matter is relatively minor, non-controversial or procedural. A starred item will indicate that discussion is not anticipated, inviting the Committee to agree or receive the item without discussion. The marking of an item with a star will not however preclude discussion, and any Member will be able to propose discussion of a particular item or raise questions within the Committee.
5. It is hoped that this approach will help guide Members towards the most important items on the agenda and ensure that the Committee has sufficient time to provide guidance on strategic and significant matters. This approach is already utilised by the Board of Governors of the Guildhall School of Music & Drama and is commonly used within the private sector.

Introduction of strategic items

6. Officers noted the value placed by Members on their ability to discuss issues of detail as well as the desire to ensure the Committee provided strategic direction for Epping Forest, Burnham Beeches and City Commons. It is therefore proposed that one key issue per agenda is highlighted more fully to Members through a detailed presentation in advance of the report. Officers anticipate that such issues may include Kenley HLF bid and the strategic review of wayleaves.

Implications

7. The changes proposed in this report should result in better use of Member and officer time which will enable the Epping Forest, Burnham Beeches and various City Commons charities to operate more effectively.

Conclusion

8. It is anticipated that these small changes in the presentation of information to the Committee should substantially enhance the amount of time that Members are able to devote to considering key strategic matters. It is also anticipated that more regular communication outside of the Committee process will ensure that Members are kept better informed of activities and issues.

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