

Environment Department

Katie Stewart – Executive Director Environment



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Date: 19/09/2024

Dear Epping Town Council,

EPPING TOWN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN Regulation 16 Submission Version August 2024 – consultation response

Epping Forest is owned by the City of London and comprises some 6000 acres (2,500 hectares). It is supported by a further 1,800 acres (730 hectares) of Buffer Lands, acquired by the City to protect the Forest from encroaching development and to maintain the links between the Forest and the wider countryside. The Epping Forest Act 1878 charged the City, as Conservators of Epping Forest, with a duty to conserve varied vegetation and preserve the Forest's *natural aspect*.

The Conservators wish to make the following observations and comments on the above EPPING TOWN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN Regulation 16 Submission Version August 2024, referred hereafter as The Plan.

Policy 1: Protection of the Forest and the Green Belt

The Conservators are pleased to see the high importance that the Forest has been considered within the plan. The Conservators agree with the statement in Policy 1 that the Forest should be visited in a more sustainable way and that current and future residents should be encouraged to utilise other green spaces and countryside around the town.

Policy 2: Protect and Enhance Open Space within the Parish

The Conservators believe that a crucial factor in achieving the ambitions of Policy 1 of the Plan is to protect and enhance the existing open spaces within the parish. However, the Conservators believe that enhancement of open spaces should focus more on improving biodiversity at the various recreation grounds, rather than town centre verges.

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The assumption of the plan that Forest Land could be utilised for 'access improvements' should not be considered as part of the plan and the plan should be amended to rectify this assumption.

Policy 5: South Epping

The Conservators submitted a statement listing concerns regarding the effect of the South Epping Masterplan as part of the recent consultation.

Accessibility and Connectivity

The Conservators are interested on how an extra lane will be possible at Bell Common traffic lights without use of Forest land, this leads back to the previous assumption of the plan that the Forest could be utilised for access improvements. This was a major focus of the Conservators response to the Epping South Masterplan, that traffic movements have been inadequately considered.

Policy 8: Paths to the Countryside

The plan gives very little detail on the routing of 'Greenway' paths to the wider countryside. The Conservators would encourage visitation to sites which are away from the Forest, specifically the Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI), but also wish to stress that a detailed maintenance program would be essential in the success of such a scheme.

The Conservators are grateful for the opportunity to comment on this consultation.

Yours sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Tristan Vetta.

Tristan Vetta
Land Agent & Planning Officer
Epping Forest
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