

Waltham Forest Town Hall, Forest Road, Walthamstow, E17 4JF

Ask for: Ian Rae
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29th September 2022

Dear Mrs S Housden & Mrs C Jack,

Letter of Intent between London Borough of Waltham Forest and City of London Corporation (Conservators of Epping Forest)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This letter of intent has been jointly prepared between the London Borough of Waltham Forest (LBWF) and the City of London Corporation, as the Conservators of Epping Forest to capture progress made in collaboration on the Waltham Forest Local Plan (Part 1), to recognise the strategic importance of the document to both authorities, and to express the intent to work collaboratively towards its adoption.
- 1.2 This letter complements the previous Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) between the City of London Corporation and the LBWF, which was signed in September 2021. A further update to that SoCG may be developed in due course.

2. Background

- 2.1 In their initial findings following the first stage of Examination in Public, the Inspectors were unable to conclude that the Waltham Forest Local Plan (Part 1) would not result in adverse effects on the integrity of the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC) as a result of recreational pressure and air pollution.
- 2.2 In order to fully address the Inspectors' concerns, LBWF has undertaken a review of its Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space Strategy (SANGS Strategy) and developed a new Green Infrastructure Strategy that demonstrates the capacity, quality and deliverability of SANGS in the borough. It is agreed that the investment opportunities identified in the Green Infrastructure Strategy to date contribute positively to the mitigation of recreational harm to the Epping Forest SAC, which the City of London Corporation and LBWF are committed to further developing.
- 2.3 LBWF has also prepared a new Air Quality Study, which it is agreed demonstrates a further positive step towards understanding the specific impact of planned growth in Waltham Forest in the Epping Forest SAC.

3. Agreed matters

- 3.1 LBWF, Natural England and the City of London Conservators of Epping Forest have worked together positively to progress both of these workstreams and to agree the measures that will be necessary to ensure that the Local Plan will have a positive impact on the Epping Forest SAC. This collaborative work has included developing a suite of investment opportunities for green infrastructure across Waltham Forest, including sites owned by the City of London Corporation, and a commitment for both parties to continue to work together to review and agree the details of these opportunities as they come forward over the life of the Plan.
- 3.2 LBWF has also worked proactively with the City of London Corporation and Natural England to secure Cabinet support for the Epping Forest SAC Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMM Strategy), which is recognised as necessary to protect the unique ecological value of Epping Forest.
- 3.3 Whilst the Green Infrastructure and SAMM Strategies have been developing, LBWF and the City of London Corporation have also worked positively together to agree interim SANGS and SAMM solutions that will bring investment to the forest and other green infrastructure in the borough and avoid any harm to the Special Area of Conservation. This includes a bespoke package proposed as part of the planning consent for the Whipps Cross Hospital site, which will see £4,000,000 invested in phased measures to be identified and agreed in an Epping Forest SAC Mitigation Strategy.
- 3.4 Whilst making this commitment to working together in this positive manner, both parties agree that the City of London Corporation reserves the right to make representations to LBWF, in response to consultation on any development management applications associated with the strategic development sites identified in the Local Plan, where the Corporation believes such applications impact the SAC.
- 3.5 In conclusion, the City of London Corporation and LBWF are committed to working together to protect the Epping Forest SAC from any harm that could be caused by planned growth in Waltham Forest. It is agreed that the growth strategy, policies and monitoring indicators proposed in in the Waltham Forest Local Plan (Part 1) contribute positively to protecting the special conservation value of the forest, and securing much needed future investment, however it is agreed that further detailed assessment will be required as new evidence is provided and draft policies are refined.
- 3.6 Both parties agree to continue working together towards adoption of the LBWF Local Plan and, following adoption, to ensure that the Plan is implemented and our shared objectives are realised.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Rae
Corporate Director – Regeneration, Planning & Delivery

Signatories:

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London Borough of Waltham Forest

Name: Ian Rae

Role: Corporate Director – Regeneration, Planning & Delivery

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Juliemma McLoughlin', with a stylized, cursive script.

City of London Corporation

Name: Juliemma McLoughlin

Role: Executive Director Environment