

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL  
CABINET – 4 MARCH 2025  
REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (RESIDENT SERVICES AND CLIMATE  
CHANGE)

**THE COMMONS LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT PLAN 2025-2035**

**1 Executive Summary**

- 1.1 It is a requirement for grant funding proposals and good practice to produce Landscape Management Plans for our nature reserves.
- 1.2 Each plan has a vision statement, outlining the overall goals and intentions of the site and its management.
- 1.3 The Commons Landscape Management Plan has been revised, and the proposed plan is in Appendix A.
- 1.4 A public consultation on the proposed plan was undertaken between 11 November and 30 December 2024. 100% of those who responded to the consultation agreed with the visions of the plan, and 83% agreed with the aims, objectives and proposals for the site. The survey results can be found in Appendix B.

**2 Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to consider and approve The Commons Landscape Management Plan for 2025-2035 in Appendix A.

**3 Explanation**

- 3.1 The Landscape Management Plan is produced to ensure the council's Nature Reserves are maintained in a strategic and planned way. The plans typically run for 10 years.
- 3.2 The previous management plan for The Commons is due to be renewed and has been revised (Appendix A).
- 3.3 The new plan has been produced by our contractor (Maydencroft) working closely with the Council's Landscape Conservation Officer.
- 3.4 The plan gives a background to the sites, policy context, an analysis and evaluation of the sites, aims and objectives, action plans and a monitoring/review process. Key features of the Plan are:
  - The context of the site both historically and within the current landscape
  - The current habitats and wildlife provided by the site.

- Policy context
- Current and proposed management
- Actions plan

3.5 Public consultation was undertaken on the proposed The Commons Landscape Management Plan between 11 November 2024 and 30 December 2024. There was an online survey on the Council's website and the consultation was promoted via a press release, the website, and it was sent to a list of stakeholders/interested parties. The draft plan was also presented at the Climate and Diversity Cabinet Panel.

3.6 There were 20 responses to the public consultation. 100% of those who responded to the consultation agreed with the visions of the plan, and 83% agreed with the aims, objectives and proposals for the site. The survey results can be found in Appendix B.

3.7 If The Commons Landscape Management Plan is approved, it will be available to Councillors, Officers, Volunteers and to the public on the Council's website.

#### **4 Legal Implication(s)**

4.1 No legal implications

#### **5 Financial Implication(s)**

5.1 The Commons Landscape Management Plan is managed through existing budgets, some grant funding and much work from volunteers.

#### **6 Risk Management Implications**

6.1 The main risks related to this the plan are: If some of the key actions are not undertaken there is a risk that some of the habitats may be affected which in turn could affect biodiversity on the site.

#### **7 Security & Terrorism Implication(s)**

7.1 There are no security and terrorism implications.

#### **8 Procurement Implication(s)**

8.1 There are no procurement implications arising from this Landscape Management Plan. The contractor who undertakes tree and landscape works was procured under contract through a tendering process in 2024/25.

#### **9 Climate Change Implication(s)**

9.1 The appropriate management of the vegetation on site is likely to positively contribute to climate change mitigation.

#### **10 Human Resources**

10.1 The landscape management plan is managed from existing resources in the landscape and ecology team, and any tree or landscape works is undertaken by contractors and also volunteers.

## **11 Health & Wellbeing Implications**

- 11.1 There is growing evidence to suggest that being in nature has positive effects on people's mental health. Studies have shown that green spaces can lower levels of stress and reduce rates of depression and anxiety, reduce cortisol levels and improve general well-being.
- 11.2 The proposed management plan looks to enhance access in and around the site and encourages use of the site by members of the public.

## **11 Communication and Engagement Implications**

- 11.1 Some of the proposed works within the action plan will be undertaken with the help of our established volunteer groups. The involvement of these groups means that there is good communication with these groups.
- 11.2 The management plan will be made available to everyone so those wishing to understand the proposed works and the reasons they are being undertaken.

## **12 Link to Corporate Priorities**

- 13.1 The subject of this report is linked to the Council's corporate priorities of a commitment towards, Attractive and Accessible Green Spaces.

## **14 Equality and Diversity**

- 14.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was not completed because this report does not propose changes to existing service-related policies or the development of new service-related policies.

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### Appendices

Appendix A – The Commons Landscape Management Plan 2025-2035

Appendix B – Public Consultation Summary