

EPSOM & EWELL BOROUGH COUNCIL

Service Level Agreement with – Lower Mole Partnership

Purpose

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council will work in partnership with and provide a financial contribution to the Lower Mole Partnership enabling it to provide a volunteer based service as set out in this Service Level Agreement.

Service to be provided

The Lower Mole Partnership (LMP) is to provide a high quality and efficient volunteer based service for local communities and public and private landowners across its project area (Appendix 1). By doing so it will help Epsom & Ewell Borough Council deliver its four priorities of Keeping our Borough Clean and Green, Supporting our Community, Managing our Resources and Supporting Local Businesses and the Local Economy by applying the following aims:

1. Environmental conservation

Conserve landscapes, the natural environment and character of the Partnership area so that access to green space, nature and the wider countryside is improved by:

- a) Conserving, enhancing and monitoring biodiversity (both habitats and species)
- b) Conserving the local distinctiveness of the countryside e.g. historic landscapes, hedgerows, veteran trees etc.
- c) Working with public and private landowners to promote best practice and ensure sympathetic land management
- d) Work to improve public understanding of countryside management issues e.g. the need to manage woodland, the value of biodiversity (Ecosystem Services), the value of priority habitats, the advantages of conservation grazing, awareness of the Epsom & Ewell Local Biodiversity Action Plan etc.

2. Public access

Ensure that public access to and between green spaces and the wider countryside for walkers, horse riders and cyclists is improved by:

- a) Working with landowners and site managers to improve public access across their green spaces and the wider countryside
- b) Developing and promoting opportunities for access between green spaces and to the wider countryside, via the rights of way network and permissive routes
- c) Developing, promoting and maintaining a broader range of recreational public access routes, including long distance paths and circular routes
- d) Producing signs, displays, literature and other media that will promote access to, encourage greater understanding and enjoyment of green spaces and the wider countryside

3. Community involvement

Engaging with local communities so that they become more actively involved in their green spaces and the wider countryside by:

- a) Encouraging local people to volunteer and become actively involved in sites in need of enhancement or management
- b) Maintain an active dialogue with local people especially with regard to consulting on forthcoming projects

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- c) Enabling local community groups to become self-sufficient so that they can carry out improvements in their local green spaces and the wider countryside
- d) Strengthening links with residents associations, parish councils, partner authorities, local community groups and user bodies
- e) Providing opportunities for people to learn about the countryside, develop skills in countryside management and gain appropriate work experience
- f) Providing opportunities for local people to become involved in healthy living with an annual programme of volunteer activities, health walks and recreational events
- g) Increasing understanding and enjoyment of green spaces and the wider countryside through an annual programme of talks, guided walks and publicity events
- h) Encourage schools and colleges to use their local green spaces and the wider countryside as an outdoor classroom
- i) Develop opportunities for those experiencing social exclusion e.g. through physical or mental health conditions, or those with learning difficulties

4. Strategy & planning

Work with partners to deliver this SLA using their strategic documents such as Biodiversity Action Plans, site management plans and local Community Plans by:

- a) Planning and prioritising an annual programme of work
- b) Seeking grant aid, income and other fund raising opportunities to help reduce the cost to the public purse of maintaining the countryside management service
- c) Providing representation on behalf of partners and involvement with planning bodies, working groups, Local Nature Partnerships and Local Strategic Partnerships
- d) Being actively involved with the development and planning of Green Infrastructure, including Green Grid, Green Arc and Nature Improvement Areas
- e) Assisting with the development of Biodiversity, Parish, Neighbourhood or Community Plans
- f) Developing opportunities and plans for strategic initiatives that will encourage landscape scale management and partnership work (Appendix 2)

5. Sustainability

Follow good working practice for countryside management in the urban fringe that seeks to protect the local environment, encourage social inclusion and maintain economic viability by:

- a. Carrying out work activities that enhance biodiversity and minimise pollution or other detrimental impact on the local environment and wider countryside
- b. Promoting the reuse, recycling or sale of products arising from conservation work and where appropriate contribute to local food/fuel production
- c. Helping improve the management of water resources (ponds and watercourses), mitigate for flooding and reducing flood risk as part of countryside projects
- d. Supervising activities for volunteers to become involved in all aspects of work, in particular helping to deliver the annual work programme
- e. Developing connections with local businesses and wherever possible, using local suppliers, contractors and services to deliver the annual work programme

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Other terms and conditions

All work to be carried out in a safe, secure and efficient manner, with significant hazards being identified, risks assessed and reasonable measures taken to put in place safe systems of work for employees, volunteers and contractors.

The Countryside Partnerships Operations Manager and LMP Senior Project Officer will develop an annual work programme with the Countryside Manager for Epsom & Ewell BC.

The Manager will review progress on the annual work programme with the Countryside Manager from Epsom & Ewell BC and report annually to the Board about the achievement of the objectives, delivery of targets and outcomes of work.

Financial arrangements

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council will provide an annual contribution of **£22,000** to the Lower Mole Countryside Partnership for a five-year period from 1st April 2019 until 31st March 2024.

The payment will be made in accordance with Epsom & Ewell BC regulations through issuing a purchase order and receiving an invoice from the LMP. This payment is subject to compliance with the terms of this Service Level Agreement.

This funding will support the core cost of running the Service i.e. employee's salaries.

Additional charges will be made for each practical task carried out on site to cover the volunteer charge and cost of vehicles, materials, equipment, tools, PPE and machinery hire at the schedule of rates shown in Appendix 3. Any additional charges will be agreed prior to the commencement of a task and will be commissioned through a purchase order issued.

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council will also continue to provide office and workshop accommodation via an arrangement (separate lease) where an agreed annual total of volunteer days valued at £55 per day (Heritage Lottery) is accepted in lieu of rent. As a guide the annual rent in 2012 was £11,000 which equates to 200 volunteer days. If the total annual volunteer days worked in Epsom & Ewell falls below 200 then the shortfall would be covered by a payment of £55 to EEBC for each day below the agreed figure of 200. Additional volunteers days beyond 200 will be paid by EEBC at the scheduled rate as outlined in Appendix 3.

This agreement will be reviewed in June 2023, ten months prior to the end of term in order to allow time to draw up a further five-year agreement and for both the LMP and the Council to consider whether they wish to renew it and on what terms. If either party wish to withdraw from this agreement they must give one year's notice in writing.

Signed on behalf of Epsom & Ewell Borough Council:

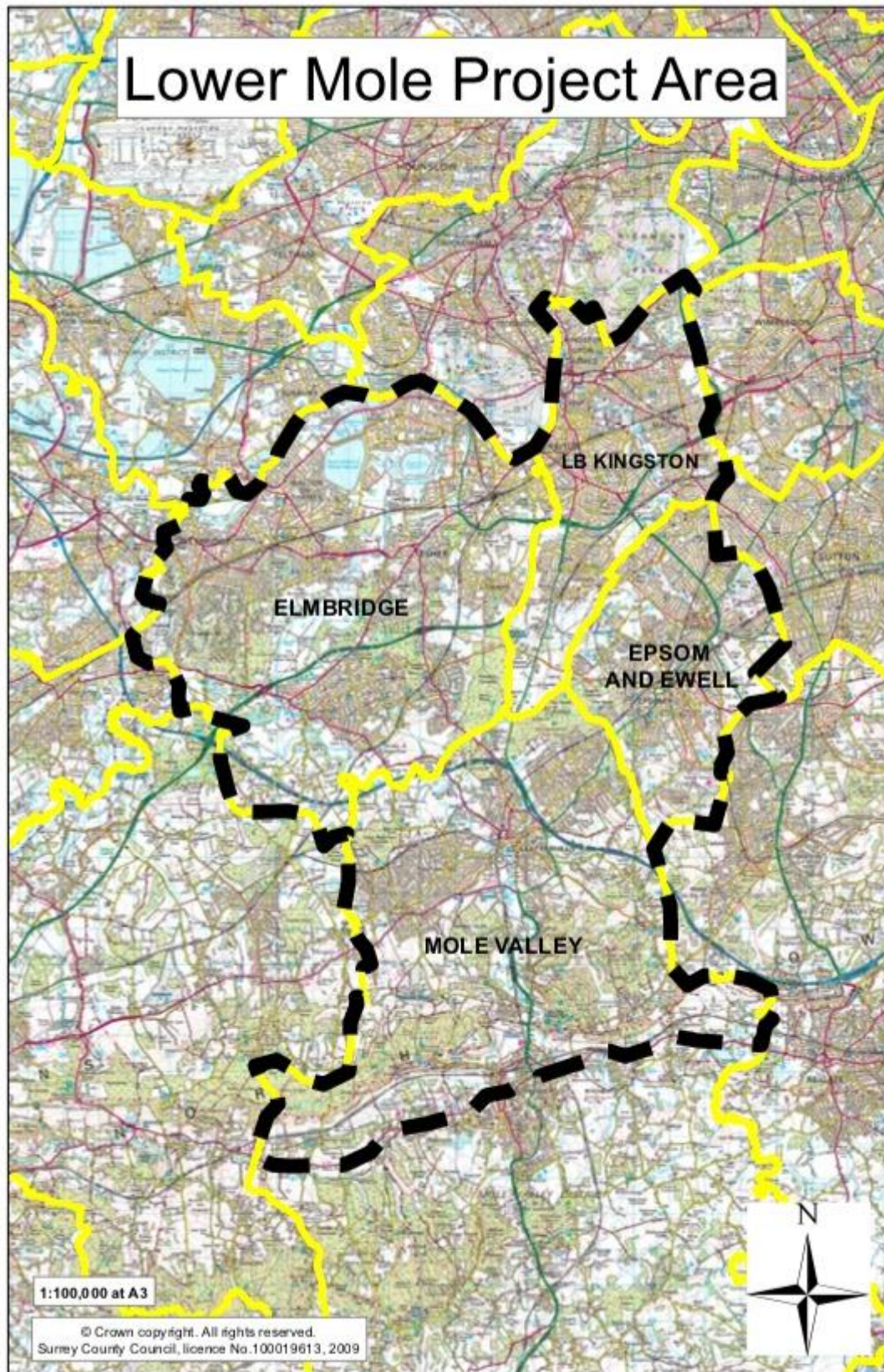
Signed on behalf of Lower Mole Partnership:

Dated:

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Appendix 1: Map of the Partnership Area



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Appendix 2: List of strategic projects & initiatives

Strategic opportunities and projects to be undertaken by the Lower Mole Partnership to be incorporated into this SLA and the work planning process:

1. **Biodiversity Opportunity Areas** – Work with partners to protect and enhance the Biodiversity Opportunity Areas within the Partnership area and Epsom and Ewell
2. **Living Woodlands** – Continue to develop the *Living Woodlands* theme promoting sustainable timber and wood production, with the purpose of restoring a productive landscape within the Partnership area.
3. **Thames Down Link and Round the Borough Hike & Bike** – Continue to support, promote and assist in maintaining access to the countryside throughout the Partnership area and within Epsom & Ewell.
4. **Surrey Nature Partnership & Surrey Biodiversity Working group** – Develop and maintain close links and assist in implementing county wide action plans involving Epsom & Ewell and the linked Epsom & Ewell Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

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Appendix 3: Schedule of rates for additional charges

Surrey Countryside Partnerships Team

Charging rates for work 2018-19 From 1 September 2018

Service	Fee, Core funding partners and charities	Fee, Companies and non-core funding organisations
Chainsaw/brush cutter/BCS work levy	£75 / day	£75 / day plus staff time
Herbicide work contribution	£50 / day	£50 / day plus staff time
Waymark post / fingerpost construction and installation	Price range £40 - £110 (supply and install) £35 - £98 (supply only)	Prices vary according to specification
Bench construction	Without back £150 With back £250	Prices vary according to specification
Corporate volunteering days	No charge, donations invited (including school groups)	£20 per person (if more than 8 participants, donations invited for groups of less than 8)
Talks, walks organised for external groups	No charge, donations invited	£40 plus expenses
Machine hire	At cost	Cost plus 25%
Machinery operator (Dumper, excavator, roller)	£40 per day	£40 per day
Materials	At cost	At cost plus 25% for orders over £500
Task Running Cost	£6 per volunteer per day	£10 per volunteer per day
Staff task leader	No charge to core funders, £100 per day to others	£100 per day
Consultancy	No charge (unless beyond normal remit of SPO)	£350 per day or 10% of contract price (20% for fencing contracts)

September 2018