



## London Borough of Enfield

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<b>Report Title</b>	Cattle Grazing
<b>Report to</b>	Environment and Climate Action Scrutiny Panel
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> February 2024
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Chinelo Anyanwu, Cabinet Member for Public Spaces, Culture and Local Economy
<b>Executive Director / Director</b>	Cheryl Headon, Director of Leisure, Parks and Culture (Interim)
<b>Report Author</b>	Ian Russell <a href="mailto:ian.russell@enfield.gov.uk">ian.russell@enfield.gov.uk</a>
<b>Ward(s) affected</b>	Cockfosters, Whitewebbs
<b>Classification</b>	Part 1 Public

### **Purpose of Report**

1. To provide an update on the conservation grazing trial being carried out as part of the Enfield Chase Landscape Restoration project.

### **Background and Options**

#### Conservation Grazing

2. This report follows the Portfolio Report PL2223\_023 – Introduce Conservation Grazing to selected parks in Enfield which is being delivered at Forty Hall Park in partnership with Capel Manor college who manage Forty Hall farm within the estate.
3. The grassland management practice of conservation grazing is promoted by a wide range of national conservation organisations including Natural England, Wildlife Trusts, RSPB and the National Trust who view grazing as a fundamental approach to managing important habitats such as acid grasslands, wildflower meadows and heathlands. This particular type of grazing uses low stocking densities, as opposed to more intensive practices

that use high stocking densities which can lead to overgrazing. Conservation grazing reduces competition from faster growing vegetation and creates conditions for plants to set seed including less dominant grass species. This creates varied sward heights which cannot be achieved with mowing and helps to restore wildflower meadows that support a much wider variety of insects, birds and small mammals. Grasslands and ruminant animals have an interrelationship which has been adapted and built over millions of years, and conservation grazing helps restore these natural processes

4. Forty Hall and Trent Park are highlighted as parks with 'Heritage at risk' due to the incremental woodland encroachment threatening the character of the Grade II listed historic landscape, particularly compromising the condition of the nationally significant Elsyng Palace scheduled ancient monument. Historic England feel that conservation grazing will help to address management issues within the registered parks and gardens that have contributed to their 'Heritage at risk' status. The project also restores historical land management practices and reduces the use of heavy machinery which will mitigate the risk of damaging archaeological artefacts within the Forty Hall Scheduled Ancient Monument site.
5. The cattle are fitted with GPS collars which is a containment technology used to create virtual boundaries to keep animals in designated areas. It is a behavioural system that provides an audio melody that increases in pitch and volume as they approach the virtual boundary. If the animal attempts to cross the boundary after hearing the full audio melody, they will receive a small electric shock that is less than a standard electric fence used for containing livestock. GPS collar technology is now widely used across the UK and Europe and allows accurate monitoring of the animals. An added benefit of GPS technology is that it reduces the amount of physical fencing required which can be an access barrier to people, wildlife and allows the parks to remain open and fenceless for the public to continue their enjoyment.
6. A detailed Project Plan with associated risk assessments and key activities and milestones has been produced, which details the measures that will be implemented to ensure the project is conducted safely. This provides information regarding risk control measures and contingency plans. The key measures that will be in place to reduce the potential for negative interactions between livestock, people and dogs include:
  - Livestock selection – the cattle being utilised for the project are Red Polls which are known for their docile nature
  - Use of leads – it is not an essential requirement for dog owners to keep their dogs on leads within grazing areas, there are many examples of successful grazing projects that do not require this including the aforementioned projects at Epping Forest, Wanstead Park and in Cambridge city centre, nevertheless, dog owners will be encouraged to be responsible and keep their dogs on leads if they have any concerns regarding their dogs' behaviour when in close proximity to cattle
  - Retaining areas free from cattle – at each site the grazing area will be confined to ensure that there is ample space for dogs to run freely off the lead and stay well away from grazing animals if needed (grazing

areas will cover up to 40% of the available space at Forty Hall and just 15% at Trent Park)

- Low stocking densities – the number of cattle that would be introduced would be a maximum of 20 at Trent Park and 10 at Forty Hall
7. The first phase of the 12-month trial involved introducing the cattle in a small area at Forty Hall (4 ha) adjacent to the farm, this commenced in July 2023. Four of the older Red Poll cattle from the farm that had been trained on the GPS technology were introduced first. However, as these individuals were part of a larger herd, and Forty Hall Park is in close proximity to the farm, members of the herd were calling to each other, and the instinct of the four individuals to return to the wider herd was found to be stronger than the will to respond to the GPS collar system. Consequently, the cattle made several attempts to get back to the farm, during this time they were being supervised by the Grazing Management Team from the farm.
  8. Advice was sought from experts at NoFence, the company that supply and manage the GPS technology, and the Epping Forest grazing manager who has been using this technology successfully for several years. The following advice was received: separate the herd before cows are reintroduced to the park, using different sites and/or in different areas of the farm and using new, younger cattle that can be trained separately are not familiar with the herd on the farm. This advice was successfully implemented and the cattle at Forty Hall have now been grazing a small area for several weeks as part of Phase 1 of the 12-month trial. As this has gone well it is proposed to extend the grazing area across a larger region of the park in accordance with the project plan.

### **Relevance to Council Plans and Strategies**

9. These projects are closely aligned with Priority 1 of the Council Plan, which aims to enhance biodiversity and protect our parks, open spaces, woodlands, watercourses, wetlands, trees and shrubs. By improving biodiversity, reducing the impact of pollution and encouraging people to spend more time in Enfield's parks and open spaces they also contribute to measures in the Council's Climate Action Plan, and Blue and Green Strategy.

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**Report Author:** Ian Russell  
Principal Engineer, Watercourses  
[Ian.Russell@Enfield.gov.uk](mailto:Ian.Russell@Enfield.gov.uk)  
020 8132 0964

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 4: PL2223\_023 – Portfolio Report to Introduce Conservation Grazing to Selected Parks in Enfield