

Committee(s):	Date(s):	Item no.
Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, and Queen's Park Management Committee	21 <sup>st</sup> May 2012	<b>17</b>
Subject: Update on draft Conservation Management Plan for Highgate Wood	Public	
Report of: Superintendent of Hampstead Heath	For Discussion	
<p><b><u>Summary</u></b></p> <p>This report provides an update to members of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, and Queen's Park Management Committee on progress creating the new Conservation Management Plan for Highgate Wood. A revised version of the draft Plan has been included with this report for the Committee's comments.</p> <p><b>Recommendation</b></p> <p>That the views of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, and Queen's Park Management Committee be received on the first draft of the Conservation Management Plan.</p>		

## **Main Report**

### **Background**

1. In January this year a report was submitted to the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, and Queen's Park Management Committee reporting progress on the Conservation Management Plan for Highgate Wood. The initial draft of the document was received on the 7<sup>th</sup> March, a little later than planned but still within acceptable timescales.
2. There has been a considerable amount of work carried out in the intervening weeks to scrutinise the first draft and make a number of changes and amendments, and following discussions with the Consultants a revised draft was received on the 11<sup>th</sup> April which is included with this report. As with all management plans there will no doubt be a need to make further alterations, before the final version is made available for public circulation.

### **Current Position**

3. Following a very productive meeting of Highgate Wood Joint Consultative Committee in early May 2012 work has already commenced on producing a third iteration of the document received in April, with focus on the

formatting of the chapters and topic area objectives. The new Conservation Management Plan will encapsulate the future strategic direction for management for the site, but it is also very important that the Plan is seen by the Highgate Wood Team as a document that they can identify with and feel part of. Several members of the team have assisted the Highgate Wood Manager in editing and amending the first draft that was received in March.

4. There still remains some work to do on the visual aspect of the document; most importantly to include a number of good quality photos, within the text. The current set of maps included within the draft also require refining to improve interpretation of the information, and the master plan map in the 'Vision and Policies' section, in particular requires a number of revisions.
5. The section concerning the Built Environment (section 7 on page 37) requires some additional updating following the current restructure changes within the City Surveyors Department, and there will be a need to include the relevant sections of the twenty year plan that involve planned long term maintenance of the buildings and infrastructure within the site.
6. The Vision and Policies in section 10 (page 55) will need to be carefully considered as these are the core components along with the Vision, of the management strategy for the site. The draft policies are derived from the Conservation Management Plan Workshop held in September last year, and would benefit from being reduced in number and structured in a more concise and shorter format. The Working Group made up of a number of local residents, specialists, Consultative Committee Members and City of London Staff made a major contribution in forming the central objectives and identifying the factors that make Highgate Wood such an important site.
7. The team have recently digitised and updated the five year work plan for the site and this will form an essential appended operational document supporting the strategic document when the Conservation Management Plan is approved for general circulation at the end of 2012.

## **Consultation**

8. A date and suitable location is being considered for carrying out a public consultation on the Plan following any further amendments identified by the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, and Queen's Park Management Committee. The most likely date for this will be the Heritage Day this coming autumn on the 2<sup>th</sup> September, as there will be a number of visitors and local residents visiting the event and arrangements can be made to set up a covered area where the plan can be viewed in a large display format and participants can be invited to complete a questionnaire. The results of this survey can then be included in a report which can be submitted for the Committee's opinion in November.

9. The advice of the Management team at Burnham Beeches is being sought to provide guidance on how best to capture visitor and local residents' views during a single events. Burnham produced their own 20 year Management Plan internally in 2010 and held a simple but effective consultation event which provided a representative sample of opinion. The intention is to replicate this process in Highgate Wood.
10. The Working Group who kindly attended the Workshop in September will also be invited to give their opinion of the Conservation Management Plan once the document has undergone any further iterations following Committee scrutiny.

### **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

11. The proposal contributes to producing a Clean, Pleasant and Attractive City (Objective CPAC4) and to Conserve and Protect Biodiversity (Goal 15) in the Community Strategy. It will help fulfil the Department's Strategic Goals and Objectives 2 (To adopt sustainable and sensitive working practices, promote biodiversity and protect the Open Spaces for the enjoyment of future generations) and 5 (To ensure that the profile of the Open Spaces is further recognised through working in partnership with others to promote our sites and through influencing policies at a local, regional and national level).

### **Implications**

#### Financial Risks

12. There are no immediate financial implications arising from this report, the operational requirements highlighted in the report to meet the on-going management of the site will be met from the Superintendents' local risk budget. Future aspirations will need to be carefully considered, but the Conservation Management Plan is an integral part of any future external funding bid, particularly for Heritage Lottery applications.

#### Key risks

13. The main risk to the Wood is understanding why the oak population is declining. In addition the future of the Pavilion building and the café premises present risks in terms of its capacity to meet increasing demand.

#### Legal implications

14. None.

## **Conclusion**

15. The Highgate Wood Conservation Management Plan will identify the strategic direction for management for the next ten years, addressing the major issues facing the site, and identifying potential improvements some of which may be aspirational. Care has been taken to involve both Members of the Consultative Committee, local residents involved with the site, and key City of London staff, in order to produce a meaningful inclusive strategic document. The next stage will involve a review process involving the same groups leading to a final draft to go out to wider consultation later this year.

## **Appendices**

Draft version of Conservation Management Plan for Highgate Wood

**Contact:**

*/ jonathan.meares@cityoflondon.gov.uk /*