

Committee(s): Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, and Queen’s Park Committee	Date(s): 12 February 2024
Subject: Renewal of Partnership Agreement with Heath Hands	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 11 & 12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/A
Report of: Executive Director, Environment	For Discussion
Report author: Bill LoSasso, Assistant Director	

Summary

This report provides Members with an update on officers’ actions to renew the partnership agreement with Heath Hands.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the content of the report

Main Report

1. The Corporation has a clear commitment to volunteering and seeks to continue to engage volunteers from the communities surrounding its green spaces in their maintenance, conservation and care, both directly through Corporation-led activities and also through partnerships with external organisations.
2. Heath Hands is a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) that was established in 1999 to, among other aims, work with the Corporation and English Heritage to enhance the management of Hampstead Heath through the involvement of volunteers.
3. Heath Hands charitable objects are to “... (1) to help, engaging volunteers, to conserve, protect and enhance Hampstead Heath, the Kenwood Estate, Highgate

Wood, Keats House and such other areas as the charity trustees may determine from time to time (the “relevant open spaces”); (2) to advance education in conserving, protecting and enhancing the environment of the relevant open spaces for the benefit of the members of the CIO and for the benefit of the public at large, and (3) to help the bodies responsible for the relevant open spaces to provide facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation and leisure time occupation by the members of the CIO and the public at large with the object of improving their conditions of life”.

4. Heath Hands has delivered significant benefit for Hampstead Heath and Highgate Wood since its founding in 1999, has delivered over 210,000 volunteer hours since then, and has grown and further evolved in recent years, taking on new activities and expanding its reach and beneficial impact in Corporation green spaces. Each year, Heath Hands now engages over 1,500 volunteers, delivers over 15,000 volunteer hours, collaborates with numerous community partners, and leads over 600 volunteer sessions and activities each year across programmes covering conservation, volunteering, wildlife monitoring and interpretation, youth and school engagement and environmental projects, education and learning, nature-based wellness activities, work experience, events, walks and talks.
5. The Corporation and Heath Hands have previously entered into partnership agreements, including one that was entered into on 16 November 2016 and remains in effect until 31 March 2024.
6. The Corporation and Heath Hands seek to renew and strengthen their partnership through an updated agreement, and officers have begun conversations with Heath Hands to finalise an agreement.
7. The agreement is intended to strengthen the successful partnership that has grown between the Corporation and Heath Hands, ensure that Heath Hands’ activities in North London Open Spaces (NLOS) are in furtherance of the charitable objects of its charities, the charitable objects of Heath Hands, and other relevant strategic aims of the respective organisations, engage local communities in caring for the open spaces, clarify the activities that Heath Hands is permitted to undertake within NLOS open spaces, clarify the resources provided to Heath Hands by the Corporation in furtherance of their work, ensure appropriate oversight by the Corporation of the permitted activities, and develop and deliver a comprehensive offer of engagement and volunteering activities within NLOS. Heath Hands will provide annual reporting of its outputs and outcomes.
8. The Partnership Agreement is anticipated to be completed before 1 April 2024.

Financial Implications

9. The Corporation does not plan to provide any direct financial support through the Partnership Agreement. The Corporation is likely to continue providing the following support to Heath Hands, which has occurred for years in support of the delivery of

their activities in alignment with Corporation strategic objectives and the charitable objects of the charities under the purview of this Committee: 1) the secondment of one member of staff to Heath Hands, 2) provision of operational and material support, and 3) occupancy and use of a building in Parliament Hill.

Resource Implications

10. No implications.

Climate Implications

11. Included within the annual plan for 2023/24 are a series of projects which contribute towards achieving the City of London's Climate Action Strategy, which was launched in October 2020. A key part of the strategy is conserving and enhancing biodiversity alongside reducing carbon emissions. The Climate Action Strategy will be embedded into future strategies which are currently being drafted within the Natural Environment Division.

Legal Implications

12. No implications at this stage – the Comptroller and City Solicitor is providing input on the draft partnership agreement.

Risk Implications

13. Risks are monitored and recorded through the Departmental Risk Register.

Equality Implications

14. No impact.

Security Implications

15. Security implications are monitored and recorded through the Departmental Risk register.

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