

OPEN SPACES BUSINESS PLAN 2014-2017

Adopted by the Open Spaces Committee on the 8th April 2014

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1. Director's Introduction

2013/14 was a busy and successful year for the City of London's Open Spaces. The quality of the spaces we provide to London and beyond was once again confirmed by success in retaining our Green Flag and Green Heritage status at all sites.

At Hampstead Heath the Ponds Project was a challenging and significant piece of work. In the second half of the year local residents and visitors to the Heath were consulted on works to be done to ensure the dams meet safety standards.

At Epping Forest many elements of the Heritage Lottery Fund Branching Out Project were successfully delivered to time and on budget. Major improvements were completed at Jubilee Pond, which is now accessible to visitors in wheelchairs. Further work on the Grazing Strategy was also delivered with work beginning on an overwintering facility for cattle at Great Gregories. 2013/14 was also the first full year of operation for the new visitor centre 'The View', which was awarded a 'gold' accreditation by the Green Tourism Business Scheme (GTBS) for environmental design and visitor experience.

It is also good to celebrate many other notable achievements such as the awarding of £56,000 by the Heritage Lottery Fund to the Kenley Revival Project in October, the 'Blue Trees in London' installation by artist Konstantin Dimopoulos in the City Gardens, the completion of works to the traditional chapels at the Cemetery and Crematorium and the programme of innovative research carried out at Burnham Beeches and Stoke Commons in partnership with Natural England, the Environment Agency and South Buckinghamshire District Council to inform the Local Development Plan.

We also completed our City Bridge Trust funded programme 'Inspiring Londoners through Landscapes and Biodiversity'. The programme benefited around 10,000 school children each year who took part in a wide range of activities such as the 'Pond in your classroom' event and vegetable growing at West Ham Park. This was in addition to the significant work protecting landscapes and promoting biodiversity which was funded through this programme.

As a department a lot of creativity and energy was put in to a new visual identity which will be used across our sites to ensure visitors are aware of the City of London's role in managing green space in the Square Mile and well beyond.

Turning to 2014/15, there are three main priorities for our work. Two major hydrology projects – the Hampstead Heath Ponds project and the Highams Park Dam Project will be significant areas of work for the department. While the delivery of the projects will be carried out by engineers from the Built

Environment we will need to engage intensively with the local communities and manage the impact of works happening at our sites. This will require significant resources through the year.

A second priority is improving our use of resources. While in some cases our activities to achieve this goal will be achieved in a short time scale – such as merging the Superintendents' roles at Burnham Beeches and City Commons and the introduction of a Land Management Category Board - some projects are longer term in scope. The Shoot Project at the Cemetery and Crematorium is one such project, which through provision of further lawn graves will support the long term financial sustainability of the site.

The Departmental Business Plan provides details of our objectives for the forthcoming year and outlines how we will use our resources to deliver our objectives.

2. Departmental Strategic Objectives 2014/15

Our strategic objectives for the forthcoming financial year are:

- *Widening and developing what we offer to Londoners through education, biodiversity and volunteering*
- *Improving our use of resources through increased income generation and improved procurement*
- *Successfully developing and managing hydrology projects at Hampstead Heath and Epping Forest.*

The table below shows how our strategic objectives will be delivered through our departmental key objectives. It also shows how our objectives relate to the corporate objective of providing valued services to London and the nation.

Departmental Priority	14/15 Objective	Provide valued services to London and the nation	Improved use of resources	Hydrology projects	Widening offer to Londoners
1	Hampstead Heath Ponds Project	✓		✓	✓
2	Delivering savings	✓	✓		
3	Epping Forest Management Plan	✓			✓
4	Higham Park Dam Project	✓		✓	
5	Cemetery and Crematorium Shoot Project	✓	✓		
6	Formalise management of City churchyards	✓	✓		
7	Kenley Revival Project	✓			✓
8	West Ham Nursery feasibility study	✓	✓		
9	West Ham Park Café Development	✓	✓		
10	Queen's Park Playground	✓			✓
11	City Commons/Burnham Beeches shared management	✓	✓		
12	Grazing Strategy	✓	✓		✓
13	Introduction of Land Management Category Board	✓	✓		
14	Roll out of visual identity	✓			✓

3. Departmental values and delivering these through our activities in 2014/15

The department has five values: quality, inclusion, environment, promotion and people. This section of the business plan outlines how our activities in 2014/15 will reflect these values.

a. Quality

We will participate in schemes which measure and benchmark our quality, applying for Green Flag status and Green Heritage Awards, and entering relevant categories in the London in Bloom awards.

b. Inclusion

We will use a standard visitor survey to collect information relating to those visiting our sites. We will use this data to analyse whether our visitors reflect communities near to our sites. The Departmental management team will then agree follow up action to improve our levels of inclusion.

We will deliver education and volunteering programme which seek to bring new and more diverse people to our sites. Our new application to the City Bridge Trust outlines our activities in these areas. Divisional plans outline local activities planned in these areas.

c. Environment

While this value underpins many of our key objectives outlined in Section 4 of this plan, two other areas of work will be continued during the year.

The grazing strategy will be progressed at two Divisions (Epping Forest and Burnham Beeches and City Commons). The year will see the completion of the overwintering facility at Great Gregories which will be used for the first time in the winter of 2014/15.

Sustainability Audits will also be completed during the year, as we continue to work to deliver our corporate carbon reduction target. An induction programme will also be provided for up to two other City of London departments.

d. Promotion

Two main areas of activity are planned in the area of marketing and communication.

- Roll out of the new visual identity
- Agreement of a social media strategy

A new visual identity was agreed for all Open Spaces sites in 2013/14. This identity will be used in all printed literature as well as on vehicles and uniform and in online communications.

Through 2014/15 the identity will be rolled out. This will be done in a low cost way – existing stocks of printed literature and uniform will be depleted, but any new communication materials will use the new visual identity. A project to update fixed signs at all sites will be scoped for delivery in subsequent financial years.

Use of social media to communicate the work of City London in maintaining Open Spaces has been piloted over the past two years. During 2014/15 we will develop and agree a strategy which lays out how we will develop this communication channel.

e. People

Training is essential to delivering a high quality and safe service. We will aim this year to spend 1.5% of direct staff costs on training. Our priorities for the year are training in:

- Personal Safety
- Health and Safety
- Management

The first area of priority reflects a newly identified departmental risk relating to anti-social behaviour in our Open Spaces. Many members of staff within Open Spaces regularly work alone and need training in technique to promote their personal safety. This training is one of our mitigating actions relating to the departmental risk.

Health and safety training remains a priority, given the risks inherent in many areas of operations. We will continue to encourage take up of appropriate health and safety training in the form of courses and informal learning such as 'tool box talks'.

In the area of management we have identified a need to ensure all managers are familiar with new procurement processes and the newly revised procurement regulations. In addition we will build our staff management skills, so that staff in Open Spaces are empowered and motivated, as we work towards Investors in People accreditation.

4. Key objectives 2014/15

a. Hampstead Heath Ponds Project

Objective	Working in partnership with the Director of the Built Environment and City Surveyors and delivering the following elements of the project: facilitate investigative and other works on site; provide specialist biodiversity and conservation expertise in planning; develop management and maintenance plans for the dam post project completion; community engagement and communication of project; delivery of linked education project.
Rationale	This is a high profile project, led by the Director of the Built Environment and overseen by a Project Board. Significant staff resources at Hampstead Heath will be committed to this objective throughout the reporting year.
Actions/Milestones	April 2014 – June 2014 Facilitation of ground investigations.
	April 2014 – March 2015 regular stakeholder meetings.
	January 2015 – March 2015 Mobilisation phase.
	March 2015 Scoping documents produced for management and maintenance plans.
	March 2015 Education programme developed.

b. Delivering Savings

Objective	To identify budget savings as agreed with the Chamberlain as part of the corporate Service Based Review process
Rationale	A corporate review of services has been initiated to make savings across the organisation over the next three financial years.
Actions/Milestones	June 2014 – Proposals produced for Finance Committee
	September 2014 – Agreement of Department Action Plan
	March 2015 – Delivery of any identified year one savings.

c. Epping Forest Management Plan

Objective	Development of a new management plan for Epping Forest
Rationale	The previous management plan ran from 2004-2010. A

	new management plan needs to be produced.
Actions/Milestones	December 2014 – Initiation of the consultation on the management plan
	March 2015 – Completion of consultation stage

d. Highams Park Dam Project

Objective	Manage community engagement in the Highams Park Dam Project
Rationale	The Environment Agency (EA) has instructed the City of London to carry out dam reinforcement, so that it continues to comply with the 1975 Reservoirs Act. A project is currently underway to re-design the dam at Highams Park by the City of London Corporation and external consultants. The project is led by the City Surveyors, but Open Spaces leads community engagement in the project.
Actions/Milestones	March 2015 – Completion of community engagement programme during works at the site

e. Shoot Project

Objective	Development of new lawn graves at the Cemetery to support the long term sustainability of the site
Rationale	
Actions/Milestones	April 2014 – Gateway 3/4 approval
	June 2014-September 2014 – Planning application
	September 2014 – Gateway 5 approval
	January 2015 – March 2015 – initiation of works

f. City Churchyards management arrangements

Objective	Review management arrangements at City churchyards
Rationale	There are many different agreements and arrangements relating to the City churchyards. These require review to ensure that we are fulfilling our obligations relating to maintenance of the churchyards and also to ensure clarity around the provision of refreshment concessions in churchyards. This project will need to be completed in partnership with the Diocesan Advisory Committee, City churches, the Comptrollers department and others within the City of London.
Actions/Milestones	March 2015 – Completion of review

g. Queen's Park playground modernisation

Objective	Completion of Phase 3 of the playground
Rationale	Following successful completion of the first two parts of the project; the final elements of the new equipment will be installed in 14/15. Resources will be spent paying for installation of equipment and staff time in project management activities and implementation including landscaping works.
Actions/Milestones	September 2014 Initiation of Phase 3 including fundraising activities
	March 2015 Completion of the installation

h. Kenley Revival Project

Objective	Develop the Kenley Revival Project and submit detailed proposals for a Stage 2 Heritage Lottery Fund bid
Rationale	Conserve and communicate the second world war heritage features of Kenly Airfield fighter base
Actions/Milestones	June 2014 - Develop Activity Plan
	September 2014 - Develop Conservation Plan
	December 2014 - Develop Management and Maintenance plan – Physical and Digital
	December 2014 -Develop Learning Plan
	December 2014 - Submit HLF bid

i. West Ham Park Nursery feasibility study

Objective	Assess of the Nursery business plan performance
Rationale	A business plan for the nursery was developed for the period of 2010-2015. As the end of this period approaches an assessment of the performance of the nursery during this time needs to be completed, and an evaluation of future options undertaken.
Actions/Milestones	March 2015 – Completion of assessment and medium/long term plans for the nursery produced.

j. West Ham Park Café feasibility study

Objective	Develop a café in West Ham Park
Rationale	There is unmet demand for a café in West Ham Park and an opportunity to develop an income stream
Actions/Milestones	September 2014 – Completion of initial scoping,

	including discussion with City Surveyors
	April 2015 – Development of project plan

k. City Commons and Burnham Beeches management arrangements

Objective	Develop and Deliver the new Structure at City Commons and integrate management with Burnham Beeches & Stoke Common under a single Superintendent
Rationale	Accommodate recent changes to the Department's Senior Management team and to deliver efficiencies
Actions/Milestones	March 2015 - Deliver new structure at City Commons
	March 2015 - Identify and deliver new ways of 'collegiate' working across the 3 City Commons' sections whilst ensuring their status as separate Charities.
	March 2015 - Identify development/training needs to support the above
	March 2015 - Integrate communications across the City Commons and Burnham Beeches teams

l. Grazing project

Objective	Completion of infrastructure and first year of free range grazing at Epping Forest; expansion of grazing at Burnham Beeches
Rationale	This is the completion of a long-term project to re-introduce grazing at the Forest
Actions/Milestones	September 2014 – Full completion of over-wintering facilities at Great Gregories (Epping Forest)
	December 2014 – installation of hard and invisible fencing at the grazing zone (Epping Forest and Burnham Beeches)
	March 2014 – Completion of full year of free range grazing (Epping Forest)

m. Introduction of Land Management Category Board

Objective	Establish and develop programme of work for the Land Management Category Board
Rationale	Achieve improvements and efficiencies in departmental procurement through use of a category management approach to purchasing and the creation of a Land Management Category Board.
Actions/Milestones	April 2014 – Establishment of the board
	June 2015 – Agreement of priorities for year's work
	March 2015 – Reporting of savings achieved.

n. Roll out of the Open Spaces visual identity

Objective	Roll out of the new identity to all new publications, publicity materials newly purchased vehicles, infrastructure and uniforms
Rationale	Open Space sites, and the role of the City of London in managing and funding these sites, will be more effectively promoted through the use of a single identity for all publically available information
Actions/Milestones	April 2014 – Presentation of identity 'tool-kits' to staff
	September 2014 – Completion of initial training of staff in use of the toolkits
	March 2015 – Completion of roll out for all annually renewed publications and publicity materials.

5. Medium and long term priorities and projects

We have a priority this year to improve our use of resources. This has led us to focus on longer term projects which we will need to develop to ensure that we can create new income streams and maximise existing income streams.

Many of our longer term projects require significant input from other departments of the City of London Corporation, in particular the City Surveyor's Department, and this list is provided to help their longer term business and resource planning. The list of projects identified below show areas where we are beginning to scope work, identify resource requirements and business plan for future years.

The City Surveyor's Department provides property asset management and facilities (including heritage) management service to Open Spaces through a dedicated team and a project management team.

A number of management documents outline how we will manage our assets in partnership with the City Surveyors. This document outlines our planned business requirements and plans for property assets. The Corporate Asset Management Strategy, written by the City Surveyors sets out how the City manages its operational property assets effectively, efficiently and sustainably, to deliver the strategic priorities and service needs.

Asset Management Plans for core Open Spaces sites are being devised to address the short, medium and long term requirements, ensuring that the portfolio is fit for purpose and that there is a plan of action to meet any changes in operational demand and to support the Open Spaces longer term aspirations for the sites.

Opportunities will be taken to achieve efficiencies in utilising or sharing accommodation and to grow potential income from services that complement the Open Spaces, whilst reducing revenue expenditure.

Grant funding to support a variety of public causes could also benefit the City's Open Spaces. These will continue to be explored in partnership with the City Surveyors to help drive proposals here and in Asset Management Plans forward.

a. Short term projects

These are projects due for delivery in the next two years for which funding has been secured and plans developed.

Project	Timescale	Partners/contributors	Estimated costs
The Roman Kiln Project, Highgate Wood	2015/16 (Project Initiation Document in development)	Potential HLF funding	c. £100,000
Improvements to Queen's Park and Parliament Hill Cafes to increase income generation	2015/16 (Project Initiation Document in development)	For discussion with City Surveyors	£50,000-£150,000
The Shoot Project	2014/15	Cemetery and Crematorium Reserve Fund	£528,000
Great Gregories – overwintering facility	2014/15	Local Risk and HLF funded	£135,000-£220,000
Kenley Revival	2014/15	Stage One funding secured from HLF	£320,000-£500,000
Seething Lane Garden	2014/15	S106 Funding	£800,000
Senator House Garden	2014/15	S106 Funding	£500,000-£1,000,000
St Botolph's Bishopgate	2014/15	S106 Funding	£92,000
St Olave's Churchyard	2014/15	S106 Funding	£500,000-£1,000,000

b. Medium term projects

These are projects due for delivery in the three to five years time. While the projects have been scoped, detailed plans and budgets may not have been established for each project.

Project	Timescale	Partners/contributors	Estimated costs
Parliament Hill and Queen's Park Paddling Pools; these	2017/18	City Surveyors	Tbc

facilities will be reaching the end of their expected lives and steps will need to be taken to replace/remodel facilities			
Education facilities at Hampstead Heath – change of use of buildings to align with the Corporate Education Strategy	2017/18	City Surveyors	Tbc
Bunhill Fields – restoration of memorials	Tbc	Possible HLF bid	Tbc
Wanstead Park	Tbc	Possible HLF bid	Tbc
Wanstead Flats – changing room renovation	Tbc	Possible Football Foundation bid	Tbc
Development of West Ham Park Café	2016/17	City Surveyor/disposal of asset	Tbc
Burnham Beeches Pond Embankments	Tbc	City Surveyors	£180,000

c. Long term projects

These are projects where scoping has just been initiated. Plans are in development and budget yet to be defined. These projects will be delivered in five years' time or beyond.

Project	Timescale	Partners/contributors	Estimated costs
Hampstead Heath – Operational Buildings – (project to look at a range of buildings consolidate/improve/income generate)	Tbc	City Surveyors	Tbc
Hampstead Heath – Lido –	Tbc	City Surveyors	Tbc

project to improve infrastructure and maximise income potential of site			
Open Space Signs – replacement of signs at all sites using new visual identity	Tbc	City Surveyors	Tbc
Replacement of the Cremators – both Cremators at the Cemetery and Crematorium will reach the end of their working life	2020/1	City Surveyors	£1.5million

6. Key performance indicators

Four KPIs have been developed to assess the performance of the department through the year. In addition each division will measure their own indicators to reflect performance of the particular elements of their business. Appendix E lists additional performance indicators and information which will be monitored by managers within Open Spaces. A dashboard containing information on performance indicators will be presented to the Departmental Management Team on a monthly basis and to the Open Spaces Committee on a quarterly basis.

KPI	Description and target
Conservation	Number of sites (out of 15) with current management plan. Traffic light measure (Red= no current management plan; Amber= work on next plan to be initiated; Green= no action required) Target – no red sites by the end of the reporting year; action taken for all amber sites.
Customer satisfaction	Introduction of 60 second survey at all sites; 14/15 to serve as baseline data; Target: completion of 100 60 second surveys for each division.
Finance	Income as a percentage of local expenditure (actuals) (Goal of increase percentage for 14/15 compared to 13/14)
People management	Training costs as a percentage of total direct employee costs (goal of trainings costs of 1.5% of direct employee costs)

7. Supporting Information

- A. Business Plan Summary
- B. Departmental Risk Register Summary
- C. Establishment chart/ Workforce information
- D. Financial information
- E. Performance Indicators.