

<b>Committees:</b>		<b>Dates:</b>
Queen's Park Joint Consultative Group	For Discussion	4 June 2014
Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee	For Decision	9 June 2014
<b>Subject:</b>		<b>Public</b>
Queen's Park Conservation Management Plan		
<b>Report of:</b>		<b>For Decision</b>
Superintendent of Hampstead Heath		
<b>Summary</b>		
<p>The Queen's Park Conservation Management Plan (CMP) is now presented to your Committees for consideration and approval, having been the subject of a number of public consultation exercises since it was last considered by the Committees in June 2013.</p> <p>The consultation found that people are very supportive of the Park. A number of issues were identified, principally the café, toilets and potentially conflicting views about dogs.</p> <p>The findings of this public consultation have now been incorporated into the draft CMP, which it is now proposed that you approve.</p>		
<b>Recommendation(s)</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That Queen's Park Joint Consultative Committee considers this Report and the appended Conservation Management Plan.</li> <li>• That the views and comments of the Queen's Park Joint Consultative Committee be conveyed to the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee at their June meeting.</li> <li>• That the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee approves the appended Queen's Park Conservation Management Plan for adoption.</li> </ul>		

## **Main Report**

### **Background**

1. Chris Blanford Associates were appointed in 2012 to prepare a Conservation Management Plan for Queen's Park, and the Superintendent established the Queen's Park CMP Working Group to support its production.

2. Since the first draft was considered by your Committee in June last year, a number of additional consultation exercises have been undertaken:
  - a. A presentation at Brent Connect in July 2013
  - b. A stall at Queen's Park Day on 15 September 2013
  - c. Stalls in Queen's Park on Saturday 12 April and Tuesday 15 April 2014
3. The feedback received from these has now been incorporated into the appended CMP, which is now considered to be ready for adoption.

### **Current Position**

4. The CMP identifies five key objectives:
  - a. Heritage: conserve and enhance the Park's historical values.
  - b. Managing Information about Heritage: ensure good understanding of the Park's significance through a systematic approach to managing information and high-quality interpretation.
  - c. Built environment and Infrastructure: conserve and enhance the Park's built environment and infrastructure, ensuring it is fit for purpose, in good condition, and in keeping with the character of the site.
  - d. Natural Environment: conserve and enhance the natural environment of the site.
  - e. Community and Recreation: conserve and enhance the site's community and recreational features, providing facilities and activities that meet visitor needs while conserving the site's other features.
5. Each objective includes an Action Plan, which prioritises each action on the basis of its importance and urgency.

### **Consultation Feedback**

6. Overall there was much positive feedback about the Park, its provision for children and families being particularly highly praised. A number of people said that the Park had been an important factor in their decision to move to the area. The Park was praised as being "wonderful", "lovely", "great" and "phenomenal". A number of people commented that they come to the Park, even though it is not their local park.
7. A number of people reported that they now brought their grandchildren to the Park, having visited it themselves as children. It was felt that the Park had a good atmosphere and there was a sense that the Park is well cared for. It was stressed that it is important within the local community.

## Heritage

Strengths	Weakness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Victorian bandstand</li> <li>• Original Victorian layout</li> <li>• Lynch Gate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low levels of awareness</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A number of people were keen to learn more about the heritage of the Park</li> </ul>	

## Information about Heritage

Strengths	Weakness
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some people felt that there was insufficient information about the Park's history available</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A number of people were keen to learn more about the heritage of the Park</li> </ul>	

## Buildings and Infrastructure

Strengths	Weakness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of a café was felt to be an important part of the Park and good for the local community</li> <li>• Perception that the Park is clean, well maintained and cared for</li> <li>• Park opens at 7am</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mixed comments about the café – criticism of high prices, poor coffee, poor service, poor quality of food</li> <li>• Criticism of the café's appearance (inside and out) and lighting</li> <li>• Toilets felt to be unclean, also long queues</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training for café staff</li> <li>• Provision of water fountain</li> <li>• Review of the café's menu</li> <li>• Provision of benches in areas where they are lacking – currently they are concentrated on one side</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complaints about café</li> <li>• Complaints about toilets</li> <li>• Waterlogging</li> </ul>

8. A substantial number of people commented about the Park's café, and fairly mixed views were expressed. The standard of coffee and service were particularly criticised. It was also suggested by a number of people that the café is too expensive. The food received mixed reviews, with some people describing it as "only average" while others suggested it was poor quality and badly prepared. It was suggested that the cafe should provide high quality snack food, and that particular consideration should be given to a children's menu. The physical infrastructure of the café was also criticised, with several people suggesting that it should be refurbished and enlarged due to the poor layout, lighting and frontage. The bars on the upstairs windows were also felt to be unwelcoming.

9. Mixed views were expressed about bicycles. While some people were pleased that bikes are not permitted within the Park, others felt that cycling should be allowed on the edges of the Park. Several people noted that they had taught their children to cycle in the Park.
10. There were a number of other comments made: it was suggested that the Park shuts too early; that paid-for BBQs should be introduced (Norwegian model); and that local parking is costly and difficult – this is an issue, because a number of people travel some distance to visit the Park.

### Natural Environment

Strengths	Weakness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiet garden valued</li> <li>• Woodland walk valued</li> </ul>	
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased information about natural environment such as labelling of trees and more information in the woodland walk.</li> <li>• Request for a natural-looking water feature</li> </ul>	

### Community & Recreation

Strengths	Weakness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appreciation of a family-orientated park</li> <li>• Children’s playground very popular and felt to be improving</li> <li>• Farm popular – new giant rabbits well received</li> <li>• Provision of a variety of activities: tennis, Pitch &amp; Putt, football, nature areas</li> <li>• Events program very well-received</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of provision for under-5s</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater use of the Bandstand as part of the events program</li> <li>• Online booking system for sports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issue of dogs and the provision of a dogs “off leash” area</li> <li>• Perception that the Pitch &amp; Putt course is under-utilised</li> </ul>

11. A number of children were spoken to, who suggested a big piano in the Park, a play house and a deeper sandpit. They also suggested that people who smoke shouldn’t be allowed in the Park.
12. There was a lot of discussion about dogs, with some people commenting that they would like to see greater control of dogs, while others wanted an area where dogs could be allowed off leash. Some people suggested that part or all of the Pitch & Putt course should be given over as a dogs area. It was felt by both dog walkers and others that it was good to have separation of uses.

13. The provision of a variety of sports (football, Pitch & Putt, tennis) was well-liked overall. There was a perception that the Pitch & Putt course was under-utilised and that the space could be more effectively used, either as a dog area or for lawn bowls. However, others suggested that the Pitch & Putt could be open for longer. A number of people felt that the booking system for tennis could be improved by offering online booking or being able to phone ahead. One respondent felt that tennis should be free. It was suggested that the condition of the courts should be improved. It was noted that the Petanque playing area is under-utilised and that there is insufficient information about the ability to hire boules.
14. A lot of positive comments were made about the provision for children within the Park. The playground was praised and felt to be improving, and the paddling pool was popular. There was some criticism about a lack of provision for under-5s, and it was suggested that a slide and swings for younger children should be introduced. There was also a request for the log edging on the flower bed in the playground to be reinstated. It was also suggested that the Park should provide a safe and accessible hang-out space for teenagers. Conversely, there was some limited criticism that the Park was too child/family focused and that there should be more recreation provision for adults.
15. The event program was well received, but people suggested that more use could be made of the Bandstand, and jazz was particularly suggested. The cinema and Queen's Park Day were well received.
16. A number of people would like the opportunity to interact with the animals in the Farm. It was also suggested it should be open longer over the weekend. The addition of the giant rabbits has been well received, and is felt to provide an attraction that was previously lacking.
17. There were a couple of suggestions made by one individual: that the Park could host an exhibition space for local artists, and that a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) be installed.

#### Finalising the CMP

18. The findings of the consultation exercises have been incorporated into the appended CMP.

#### **Proposals**

19. It is proposed that the appended Queen's Park Conservation Management Plan be adopted.

## **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

20. The Queen's Park CMP supports the **Open Spaces Department strategic aim** of *"widening and developing what we offer to Londoners, through education, biodiversity and volunteering"* and the **City's strategic aim** *"To provide valued services to London and the nation."*

## **Implications**

21. The finalisation of the CMP has been delayed, due to the secondment of the Queen's Park Manager to West Ham Park on a part-time basis. This temporary arrangement has now come to an end.

## **Conclusion**

22. Queen's Park continues to be a popular Open Space, serving a wide and diverse audience. The CMP sets out a vision for the future management of Queen's Park, and will guide future project proposals, repairs, conservation and restoration works. It will also support any application for Green Heritage status.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Queen's Park Conservation Management Plan

## **Background Papers:**

A History of Queen's Park (LUC, March 2011)

## **Contact**

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