

<b>Committee(s):</b>	<b>Date(s):</b>
Ponds Project Stakeholder Group - For information	Issued by email
Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee - For information	Issued by email
Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee - For decision	15 September 2014
<b>Subject:</b> Ponds Project Stakeholder Group – update and way forward	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Superintendent of Hampstead Heath	<b>For Decision</b>
<b>Summary</b>	
<p>The role of the Ponds Project Stakeholder Group (PPSG) will change as detailed design is concluded on the Ponds Project. To date the PPSG has been a consultative group and in this role have shaped the design. However as the project moves to construction there will be less opportunity for consultation because detailed design will have been concluded, and therefore there will be a greater focus on information giving and the receiving of feedback. This is because the design will be locked by planning and a variety of issues such as the construction management plan and the materials pallet are likely to be conditions of planning and therefore cannot be subject to further amendment.</p> <p>Since the Committee last met, Ian Harrison, the Chairman of the PPSG has sadly passed away. The Committee is therefore asked to recognise the contribution that Ian has made not only to the Ponds Project but the Heath more widely through the Consultative Committee.</p> <p>It is also recommended that the Committee appoint the acting Chairman, Karen Beare as Chairman, thus formalising the role she has undertaken since Ian's illness.</p>	
<b>Recommendations</b>	
Members are asked to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note the contribution made by Ian Harrison to both the Ponds Project Stakeholder Group and the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee</li> <li>• Appoint Karen Beare as Chairman of the Ponds Project Stakeholder Group</li> <li>• Approve the shift in emphasis of the Ponds Project Stakeholder Group towards information sharing, including the introduction of hard hat tours, quarterly PPSG information meetings and increased use of the website and newsletters to engage wider Heath users.</li> </ul>	

## Main Report

### **Background**

1. Since its inception in July 2012, the Ponds Project Stakeholder Group has provided valuable input into the development of designs for the Ponds Project. The group started by considering the problem definition and by feeding into the development of the design principles and then moved to commenting on particular options and proposals.
2. While there has rarely been consensus amongst the different constituents, the design team have been able to listen the wide range of views emerging from the group and consider where these can be incorporated into the design. As the project has started to move from outline to detailed design on the chosen options, this dialogue between the stakeholders and the design team has been reflected in the "You said, we did" document which is attached at Appendix 1.

### **Current Position**

3. Now that detailed design is concluding in October and the project is moving (planning permission and legal proceedings permitting) into the implementation phase, continued engagement with stakeholders needs to be considered. Whilst previously the project has consulted the PPSG and the wider public on a range of issues as well as sharing information, it is now moving into an information giving phase.
4. Having engaged with the Ponds Project Stakeholder Group for two years, officers and the design team recognise the important of face-to-face interaction but also are cognisant of the need to ensure that information is distributed more widely into the local community and to heath users as the project starts on site.

### Chairmanship

5. As Members will be aware, Ian Harrison who was originally appointed Chairman by the Management Committee has sadly passed away. Ian contributed to the Consultative Committee for 25 years and guided the PPSG from its inception until his illness forced him to take a step back. The design team have been grateful for his knowledge of the Heath which enabled him to make considered, clear and specific comments on the design as well as representing the Vale of Heath. It is therefore recommended that Members acknowledge the outstandingly knowledgeable and helpful contributions that Ian Harrison made to both the Stakeholder Group and the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee.
6. It will also be necessary for a new Chairman to be formally appointed by the Management Committee. Since Ian's ill health, Karen Beare has been acting Chairman, and it is therefore recommended that this position be formalised and that Karen be appointed as Chairman.

## **Options and Proposals**

### Ponds Project Stakeholder Group

7. It had been originally intended that the Ponds Project Stakeholder Group meet early in September to round off the discussions about detailed design. However currently the outcome of both the planning application and the Heath & Hampstead Society's application for judicial review is still unknown. Officers are aware that some stakeholders have been frustrated by the fact the judicial review has not yet taken place and therefore its potential impact on the project is not clear. It was therefore thought that it would be more productive to circulate the remaining detailed design information by email and allow stakeholders to consult with their groups and respond on the remaining design issues. A further meeting of the group will be arranged when there is further information on the outcome of planning and the judicial review.
8. During the design phase, the PPSG met approximately monthly. As the project move towards construction it is proposed that the format of the meetings is changed so that the focus is on the hard hat tours as discussed below. However it is recognised that a regular formal face-to-face catch up is likely to be useful in terms of keeping stakeholders informed, answering questions and in receiving feedback about the project on site.
9. It is therefore proposed that the frequency of the formal meetings be reduced, and that Members note that this is likely to be approximately quarterly in the first instance. The frequency of the meetings can then be considered by the PPSG as the project moves forward.

### Hard Hat Tours

10. Officers and the design team have found site visits with the stakeholders invaluable in developing the design as the immediacy of the location prompts very practical considerations and circumvents any difficulties had in interpreting plans. Officers understand that stakeholders have also found site visits useful.
11. As the project moves on site, it is proposed that the site visits continue and become the main focus of the PPSG. It is anticipated that these will move to focus on one or two ponds with a visit before works start on site to explain what will be happening, potentially a visit during the construction phase (this may be more difficult on those ponds with a short programme) and another visit once reinstatement has been completed.

### Website

12. Officers have already conducted a review of the current project web pages and started to refocus the content so that it explains the scheme more clearly and succinctly to the wider public. This was necessary because parts of the web pages have been used to host very detailed information which has been requested by a number of enthusiastic individuals, and officers wanted to ensure that information was sufficiently clear and accessible for users less familiar with the project.
13. Information is available on the project's website which is hosted on the city's website – [www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/pondsproject](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/pondsproject) This has some limitations but can be provided at no cost to the project or North London Open Spaces

and retains the site within the 'corporate umbrella', which is a consideration for potentially controversial projects.

14. Consideration could also be given to the development of a specific project website, of the sort developed for :
  - Temple Bar in 2001 - <http://www.thetemplebar.info/>
  - Monument refurbishment project in 2007 - <http://www.themonument.info/>
  - Southwark Bridge in 2009 - <http://www.southwarkbridge.co.uk/>
  - St Lawrence Jury Fountain in 2009 - <http://www.stlawrencefountain.co.uk/>
15. These websites allowed the project team to provide high profile updates on progress including blogs, images and videos. Although these webpages are relatively simplistic in terms of today's possibilities, they are perhaps more user-friendly than the project's current website. A separate website could also be useful in supporting the Ponds Project education work. Consideration would need to be given to retaining a sense of City ownership of both the Pond Project and the education project if a separate website were established. It would also be necessary to consider the costs and benefits of such an approach.
16. The project board will be giving further consideration to how websites should be used in the new phase

#### Newsletters

17. It is proposed that a regular email be sent to the PPSG updating them on activities and project progress. This will be particularly important in the period up until works start on site when there will be fewer opportunities for face-to-face interaction as outlined above. Additionally, it is proposed that a regular e-news update be produced to chart the progress of the project, note any interesting activity and inform the public about work programme and alternative routes for the wider public. These will be made available on the website
18. A number of publications on the project, such as "Why work is needed" and "Keeping North London Safe" have been produced over the course of the project. These remain available online and as the project progresses, further consideration will be given to the production of additional information materials.

#### Broadening engagement

19. The Ponds Project Stakeholder Group includes representatives from local residents' associates, local amenity groups, the swimming ponds and the Hampstead Heath Angling Society. In considering the PPSG, officers note that representation on the group from youth and families, staff, specialists groups such as the RSPB, particular localities such as Gospel Oak and more casual users such as dog walkers and joggers could be improved.

#### Way finding and information during construction

20. Officers have started to consider information provision and signage during construction. Although the Open Spaces department has just launched a new

identity, it has been agreed that the Ponds Project should continue to utilise its established identity. A series of sign and information plaques will be developed to direct people away from the works and to keep them informed of progress.

21. Consideration is being given to the establishment of a information hub for the duration of the project which could become a focus for queries and more detailed information.
22. The project will continue to make use of social media such as twitter to keep people updated on the project. This will be particularly important when works at the ponds are relatively brief and so Heath users need to be kept apprised of a continually evolving position. Officers are also investigating the possibility of using QR codes to allow people to access a greater level of information via their smart phones.

### **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

23. The Ponds Project supports Key Policy Priority 5: Increasing the impact of the City's cultural and heritage offer on the life on London and the nation by supporting the provision of "safe, secure and accessible Open Spaces". The Ponds Project will ensure compliance with the current and anticipated requirements of the Reservoirs Act 1975 and deliver the concluding mitigation of Strategic Risk 11. The project also supports the City Together Strategy – "supports our communities", "protects, promotes and enhances our environment" and "is vibrant and culturally rich".

### **Conclusion**

24. Stakeholder engagement has shaped the project from its inception, and it is important as the project move to a delivery phase that engagement with Heath users continues. Stakeholders freely give up their time and so it important that the engagement with them is clear and honest about the influence they can have on the project going forward to ensure maximum impact for their efforts, and that design team are able to use the stakeholders and the groups they represent to both gain valuable feedback but also to effectively disseminate information.

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – You said, we did
- Appendix 2 – Terms of Reference for the Ponds Project Stakeholder Group

**Esther Sumner | Ponds Project & Management Support Officer**

T: 020 7332 3130

E: [esther.sumner@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:esther.sumner@cityoflondon.gov.uk)