

Committees	Dated:
Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee	25 January 2016
Subject:	Public
Hampstead Heath Ponds Project – Update Report	
Report of:	For Information
Hampstead Heath Ponds Project Director Superintendent of Hampstead Heath	

Summary

The Ponds Project is now halfway through its 18 month programme and is scheduled to finish by the end of October 2016. There remains a twelve week delay at the Model Boating Pond, caused by an issue with the temporary sheet-pile dam, but this will not extend the overall programme.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that members:

- Note this report.

Main Report

Background

1. As previously reported, the Ponds Project was initiated following a series of hydrological studies which revealed that, in the event of a severe storm, there was a risk the reservoirs on Hampstead Heath could overtop, potentially leading to erosion and dam failure, putting lives, property and infrastructure at risk. A wide range of options was evaluated, and one selected and approved in June 2014 for each chain of Ponds, on the basis that it met the necessary legal, operation and design criteria. Planning consent was granted in January 2015 by the London Borough of Camden's Development Control Committee, subject to Conditions and a Section 106 agreement. Preparation works took place in February and March 2015, with the main works starting on 13 April.

Programme

2. The construction works have now almost reached their maximum intensity, with nearly 26 of the Heath's 679 acres now cordoned off for work sites. BAM Nuttall have a team of 50 staff on site, spread across seven separate sites across the Heath.
3. The scheme at Model Boating Pond is the largest scale works of the project and carried the most risk due to the necessity to de-water the pond and build upon the existing dam during the construction period. As a result these works were programmed to take place first so any time slippage would not impact the overall

programme finish date. The 12 week delay caused by issues with the temporary works, has resulted in the silt extraction and subsequent drying period taking place in the winter months where the cold and wet weather has had some impact. This inability to reduce the volume of silt extracted also means that the work compound to the west of Model Boating Pond has been extended for silt storage. This extra area will allow BAM Nuttall to move the silt and start extracting clay from the borrow pits for the construction of the dam. The ground will be returned to grass and wildflower mix upon completion of the project. The liability for the risk of the increased costs of the delay and additional works is still being considered, using the procedures contained in the contract.

4. Desilting work has finished as expected at two of the ponds (Stock Pond and Men's Bathing Pond) and is currently underway at Mixed Bathing Pond. A suction technique is being employed which has less environmental impact and generally causes less disruption to pond users as the ponds do not need to be drained. While this technique is working well, there have been some issues mainly due to large items such as metal railings and other debris getting caught in the machine, which has slowed progress. Due to our commitment to keep two of the ponds open for swimming, the timescale for desilting is tight. We will be monitoring progress closely over the coming weeks and we will continue to communicate with the swimming groups.
5. A value engineering process has taken place on the new prefabricated changing and lifeguard facility for the Kenwood Ladies Pond. This saved a total of £30k through a process of re-sourcing fixtures and fittings. This was done in consultation with the lifeguards and Kenwood Ladies Pond Association. However, the value engineering process also revealed that security shutters had been omitted from the design. The Project Team believes these to be essential on a remote building which has in the past been subject to severe vandalism. The final price for these is still to be agreed. We have agreed with BAM that they may work on Saturday mornings (as permitted by the planning permission) at the Ladies Pond so the construction programme can be met.
6. Construction work at all of the other ponds is currently running broadly to programme, and the major work on the Hampstead Chain at Catchpit, started earlier this month.

Planning Conditions and Section 106

7. City Officers are continuing to liaise with colleagues in Atkins and the London Borough of Camden to discharge the Planning Conditions associated with the approval, in line with the work programme. There are nineteen Conditions in total. Of these, seven require no further approval but need to be complied with, eight have been approved and one part-approved (further details to be submitted). The final three Conditions relate to the finishes of the new Kenwood Ladies' Pond changing rooms and are currently being submitted to Camden.
8. A separate planning application is due to be submitted to cover a revised design of a small section of the end of the new wall at Highgate 1. This section is to be constructed in private property and the design has been altered to meet the

requirements of the landowner and minimise impact on the trees. A separate application is required as the property is listed and in a Conservation area.

9. The Community Working Group established as part of the Conditions continues to meet monthly to monitor various aspects of the project including complaints, environmental data and the programme. Guided walks for this group and other stakeholders also take place regularly. The London Borough of Camden request that three apprentices be employed has now been fulfilled.

Budget

10. The project remains overall on budget and no variation to the budget is proposed in this update. Cash flow is down by approximately £1million due to the delays at the Model Boating Pond where a significant proportion of the project cost sits. It is expected that the cash flow will catch up with the original forecast over the next 3-4 months as the project hits peak activity in parallel with the bulk of the earthworks operation at Model Boating Pond.

Education

11. The Ponds Project Education Programme launched 10 months ago, with the aim to engage and educate children in a range of curriculum based topics, utilising opportunities provide by the Ponds Project. The main focus is on Secondary Schools and to date we have run 39 secondary sessions for 891 students, putting us behind schedule on this aspect of the project. The reason this figure is behind is due to lack of uptake from secondary schools. We have also run 19 primary sessions for 512 students, putting us ahead of schedule for Primary engagement. Our sessions have received excellent feedback from teachers.
12. There are currently seven education sessions on offer, as well as bespoke secondary sessions. The Ponds project education team is looking into developing and delivering a cross curricular event with the Museum of London, and British Science Week activities with BAM Nuttall. Over the winter a Writing Competition for Secondary school students has been offered. Their challenge is to write a short story, up to 1000 words long, describing how a Ford Cortina ended up in the Model Boating Pond.

Conclusion

13. Other than the previously reported delay, the project is broadly running to programme and on budget. Communications and consultation with stakeholders is working well and complaints continue to be low in number despite the project now being widely spread across the Heath. Due to ground conditions and bad weather, the winter period has brought challenges, but as we move towards spring and summer we expect progress to pick up speed.

Background papers are available at www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/pondsproject

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