

Committee(s):	Date(s):	Item no.
Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Management Committee	23 rd July 2012	
Subject: Management Work Plan for Pryor's Field	Public	
Report of: Superintendent of Hampstead Heath	For Decision	
<u>Summary</u>		
<p>This report presents a detailed management work plan for Pryor's Field.</p> <p>Recommendation</p> <p>That the Management Committee approve the detailed management work plan for the Pryor's Field area of the Heath.</p>		

Main Report

Background

1. In order to manage the Heath, it is necessary to prepare detailed documents stating how each area will be managed, in line with established policies. Such documents will then feed into the annual work programme. Management work plans are being prepared for key areas of the Heath; they will last for ten years, and will be reviewed thereafter, although alterations may be necessary sooner if unforeseen events arise.
2. Plans for the Upper Vale of Heath, the Viaduct Pond, Seven Sisters ponds, Third Hedge, Springett's Wood, Orchard and South Meadow areas have previously been presented to the Management and Consultative Committees. Those for the Sandy Heath and Flagstaff Gorse Sites have been presented to the Hampstead Heath Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee. This report presents one more plan, for Pryor's Field.

Proposals

3. Pryor's Field is a relatively extensive (8.4 hectares) area north of East Heath car park. Predominantly grassland, it is surrounded by trees or shrubs. Large areas are dominated by creeping thistle or hogweed, and the Field also contains patches of white Michaelmas daisy and bramble.

4. The Field is an important portal to the Heath and is popular for dog walking and sitting. It is valuable for the natural landscape and its appreciation, and has a particular importance for birds, especially for whitethroats, which are uncommon in urban London and which breed in several of the bramble patches.
5. It is proposed to retain the current character of the Field.
6. The report contains information on the spread or otherwise of hogweed, bramble and white Michaelmas daisy. It would be ideal to reduce the areas dominated by creeping thistle and hogweed. Unfortunately these species are difficult to control, but it is proposed to continue curtailing their spread into the remaining grassland. Measures are also proposed to stop further spread of bramble, and to reduce its extent in certain places.
7. Work is proposed which will thicken the shrub barriers between the Field and East Heath Road and the Mixed Bathing Pond.
8. Detailed proposals are listed in Section 3 of the Work Plan, which is attached as Appendix 1.

Financial and Risk Implications

9. Activities included within the management work plan will be undertaken using the Heath local risk budgets. There is a reputational risk in not proactively managing the natural aspect of the Heath. Left unchecked the mosaic of diverse habitats for which the Heath is renowned would be lost to secondary woodland cover.

Legal Implications

10. The City has a legal duty under the Hampstead Heath Act 1871 to preserve, as far as may be, the natural aspect and state of the Heath.

Strategic Implications

11. The proposals link to the theme in the Community Strategy to protect, promote and enhance our environment.
12. They also link to the Open Spaces Department Business Plan through the Strategic Aim to 'deliver sustainable working practices to promote the variety of life and protect the Open Spaces for the enjoyment of future generations', and the Improvement Objective to 'ensure that measures to promote sustainability, biodiversity and heritage are embedded in the Department's work'.

13. These works also fulfil a number of Essential Actions in the Part 1 Management Plan, including:

Retain and enhance the Heath's habitats and natural resources to enable continued quiet enjoyment and appreciation of the natural world by its visitors.

Manage the Heath's grasslands to enhance their nature conservation and aesthetic value

Manage the Heath to protect and enhance populations of plants and animals protected by law, identified as being Priority Species in national and local Biodiversity Action Plans, or identified in subsequent management planning as being worthy of protection.

Manage the Heath's woodlands and scrub to enhance their nature conservation value and improve their distinctiveness

Consultation

14. At its meeting on the 9th July 2012 the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee was supportive of the detailed management work plan. It was considered that a site meeting might help aid understanding of the more sensitive habitat management proposals within this plan and this will be organised by Heath staff.

Conclusion

15. A Ten-year management work plan is presented for Pryor's Field.
16. The establishment of the aims and practices for managing this area will feed into the annual work programmes for the appropriate years. The management work plan is subject to review at the end of the 10-year period and sooner if unforeseen events occur.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Draft Management Work Plan for Pryor's Field

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