



Open
Spaces

Registered Charity

Hampstead Heath Management Plan 2018 - 2028

DRAFT

Contents

Foreword.....	3
Hampstead Heath.....	4
Heath Vision.....	5
What we aim to achieve in ten years.....	6
Heath Vision (centre spread A3)	8
Our commitments.....	10
How this plan will be used.....	15
Learning and improving.....	16
List of appendices	17
Links	17
Resources.....	17

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Foreword

Managing the Heath is all about finding a balance. Balancing the impacts of visitors with conservation of the Heath's many values. As well as finding a balance between the varied, and sometimes contradictory, needs of different user groups, activities and experiences. This is not about changing everything we do. It is about building on the good work of the past ten years and about working together to achieve our goals.

This ten-year strategic management plan guides us in this important work.

The Heath Vision sets a clear course for this plan and for working with the community to realise our shared aspirations.

This plan provides a strategic framework for the Heath and takes an outcomes-based approach to clearly describe the future state we aspire to achieve. Identifying measures for success will ensure we monitor progress and stay on track to realise our long-term goals.

It has been a collaboration and thanks to the commitment and passion of the many people who shared their ideas, aspirations and love for the Heath, this plan will guide the Heath and its community safely into the future.

This plan is built on the foundation of the *Hampstead Heath Management Plan Part 1 – Towards a plan for the Heath 2007-2017* and supporting discussion papers and policy documents.

Rather than replace the 2007 management plan, it is intended to extend and complement the comprehensive narrative, objectives, actions and aspirational goals that are expressed in the 2007 Plan. The purpose of this plan is to capture these as outcomes that are measurable. And of course, and to reflect the aspirations of the Heath Vision in a new Management Framework to support effective prioritisation, implementation and learning.

Chairman of HHHWQP Committee

Hampstead Heath

Info about the Heath and its impact

Infographics as per the [Corporate Plan](#) pages 4-5 (in preparation for next draft)

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Heath Vision

The City of London Corporation (City Corporation) is the governing body of Hampstead Heath. We welcome our role as custodian of the Heath for current and future generations.

The Heath Vision sets out shared community aspirations for the Heath 50 years into the future, expressed in four broad themes:

- We protect and conserve the Heath
- The Heath enriches our lives
- The Heath is inclusive and welcoming
- Together we care for the Heath.

Everything we do contributes towards the achievement of the Heath Vision in the long term. The outcomes in this plan set out the focus for our efforts over the next ten years.

We protect and conserve the Heath

Our lives are enriched by this treasured and ancient landscape, a stretch of rolling countryside and wide vistas in this crowded city.

The Heath's varied landscape has been shaped by human hands over centuries and is carefully managed to conserve its unique mix of wild and natural spaces, rich mosaic of habitats, heritage gardens, sporting, play and visitor facilities.

Its magical ponds, trees and heathland that support diverse plants and wildlife thrive, flourish and remain resilient to changes over time.

The fringes of the Heath are protected from encroaching urbanisation with expanding green corridors linking to a wider network of green spaces to enhance biodiversity and improve the air we breathe.

The Heath is valued as a relaxing respite from urban life, a peaceful and tranquil refuge for reflection and recharging, where we can connect to nature and feel refreshed.

The Heath enriches our lives

The Heath contributes immensely to our mental, emotional and physical health and wellbeing, providing free access to roam in the outdoors, to pause and observe, to play, to explore, discover and learn about the natural world.

Connection with the Heath is life-enhancing and our lives are healthier and more active with opportunities for walking, informal recreation, active pursuits, swimming and sports.

Experiencing the Heath's rich natural, built and cultural heritage deepens our understanding of our connection with nature, place and the past.

The Heath remains constant through time, witnessing generations upon generations growing up and growing old, a place of cherished memories, rites of passage, the source of stories, the family friend.

The Heath is inclusive and welcoming

The Heath is an inclusive, open access space that brings people together and fosters social cohesion. It is a safe space with freedom for all to play, socialise, relax and keep active with minimal restrictions.

Diverse communities are reflected in our visitors, staff and volunteers. Engagement is ongoing and perspectives, both old and new, are welcomed, shared and respected.

A diversity of activities and interest groups is welcomed. A balance for all is achieved through a culture of mutual respect, compromise and individual responsibility.

Together we care for the Heath

We are all custodians of the Heath and we strive to 'tread lightly', mindful of the potential impact of our activities.

We learn from each other and collaborate to find a balance, ensuring the needs of the Heath community are valued and reflected.

We entrust a skilled and committed City team to lead a collaborative partnership with dedicated and valued volunteers, working with an empowered and representative Heath community.

United in our passion and love for Hampstead Heath we work together to realise our shared aspirations.

What we aim to achieve in ten years

The Heath Vision expresses the community aspiration that the Heath will continue to be conserved in a way that enhances our lives, long into the future.

We are dedicated to supporting a flourishing green space and historic landscape which improves the quality of life for Heath visitors. We will achieve this by ensuring the Heath is inclusive and welcoming and by fostering a culture of collective care for the Heath, working together to achieve the Heath Vision.

Drawing on the Heath Vision, the benefits that arise from the Heath can be expressed as four key outcomes that will shape its management over the next ten years.

The City Corporation will plan our work to ensure it contributes to:

- Improved quality of life for Heath visitors
- Increased social inclusion
- More effective collective care for the Heath
- A flourishing green space and historic landscape.

Quality of life for people who visit the Heath is increased through improvements to physical health, mental wellbeing and reduced social isolation and these outcomes are mutually supportive. All aspects of wellbeing are achieved by maintaining a variety of experiences and activities, which appeal to a range of people and families, while the sense of space, “wildness” and heritage of the Heath encourages adventure, relaxation and interaction with other Heath visitors. The benefits of maintaining a variety of opportunities for physical activity need to be balanced with impacts on the ecology and heritage of the Heath. Subsequently, monitoring the level, type and impact of these activities is important.

Reducing social isolation is a key element of improving quality of life. It is also an important contributor to the second key outcome for achieving the Heath Vision—that the likelihood of **social inclusion** is increased by the Heath. Social inclusion depends, most importantly, on increasing the diversity of Heath visitors, but also on people interacting with each other. This is likely to flow from people feeling confident about visiting and participating in activities on the Heath, combined with a sense that the Heath is open and welcoming. Achieving a diversity of Heath visitors depends in part on ensuring activities appeal to a broad range of people. The Heath also needs to be physically and financially accessible for a range of visitors, and people need to feel safe and welcome on the Heath. Again, monitoring use and visitors’ needs is important to ensure this is achieved. In addition, a diverse range of people

need to know about the Heath and what's on offer. Communication, education and outreach, particularly working with a range of partners, schools and local organisations, will mean more people have the knowledge and confidence to visit the Heath and enjoy its unique mix of wild and natural spaces, heritage and sports facilities.

Increasing the diversity of Heath visitors needs to go hand in hand with visitors feeling both personal and collective responsibility, a sense of 'everyone's Heath'. The experiences already outlined, which help new and diverse visitors feel confident about visiting the Heath, will be enhanced by experienced visitors seeing themselves as Heath 'ambassadors' to create a welcoming atmosphere. Alongside this, ensuring clear communication and improved understanding of management of the Heath will help all visitors feel included and responsible for the Heath.

Complementing experiences that make the Heath feel welcoming and open with educational activities and resources that engage people about what makes the Heath a special place, the Heath environment and behaviours that protect it, will encourage visitors to adopt pro-environmental behaviours. Combined, this will not only increase the likelihood of social interaction and inclusion among visitors, but will help ensure that a greater number and diversity of people feel a sense of collective responsibility. This will support the achievement of the third key outcome— more **effective collective care** of the Heath.

Effective ecological management by staff, working with volunteers and partners will ensure habitats are biodiverse and their conservation value is sustained and enhanced. Looking beyond the Heath to enhance habitat connectivity and monitoring and proactively managing threatening processes will build resilience to change. Co-operation among the local community and partner organisations to protect fringes from encroaching urbanisation along with monitoring the level and impact of user activity, will mean that the Heath's mosaic of natural habitats and heritage is protected. With more diverse visitors treating the Heath with greater respect and sharing collective responsibility for care of the Heath, the final key outcome— maintaining **a flourishing natural space**—can be achieved.

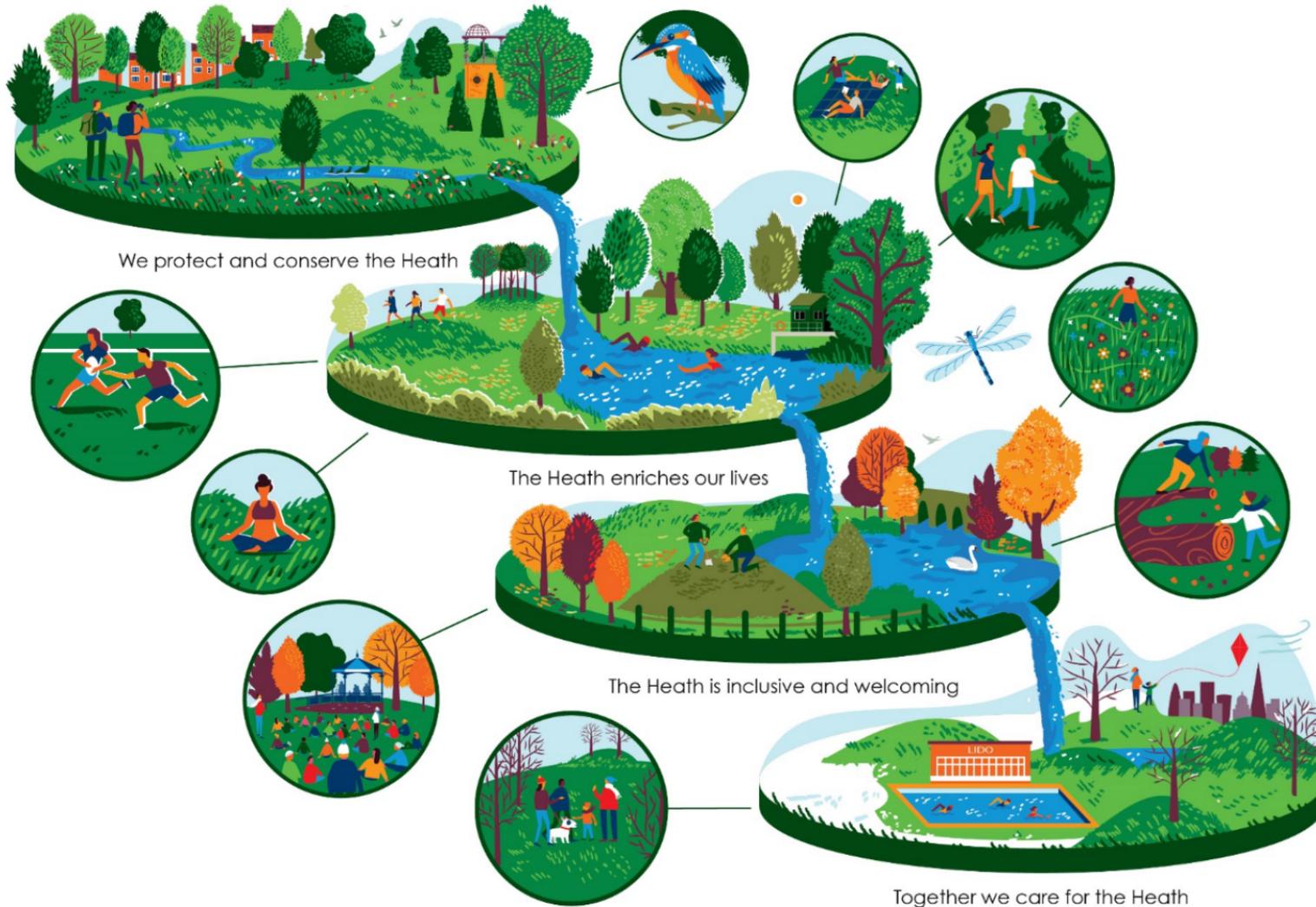
Outcomes all depend on a range of enabling factors being in place including engagement of staff, volunteers and visitors of the Heath, as well as sufficient resources to deliver activities and projects.

This plan sets out 10 key outcomes that we will aim to achieve during the coming ten years and beyond.

Heath Vision (centre spread A3)

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We protect and conserve the Heath

The Heath enriches our lives

The Heath is inclusive and welcoming

Together we care for the Heath

Our commitments

Aim: Improved quality of life for visitors

Outcome	Commitment
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Improved physical health

Increased participation in outdoors recreation activities and sports on the Heath.

Work with partners to maintain a range of experiences and activities that offer broad appeal and are accessible to diverse users.

Embed and promote physical activity and active lifestyles in the design of facilities, management activities and service delivery.

Improved mental health & emotional wellbeing

Increased connection to nature & seasonality, heritage and place.

Optimise the range of experiences for informal and passive recreation, as well as more active pursuits.

Sustain access for diverse users to peaceful and tranquil experiences on the Heath.

Reduced social isolation through shared experiences and activities.

Maintain inclusive access for informal socialising and connecting to others, as well as organised activities, volunteering and formal events.

Reducing social isolation is addressed in the design of facilities, engagement, volunteering and management activities and service delivery.

Aim: The Heath contributes to increased social inclusion

Outcome	Commitment
Increased social interaction amongst Heath visitors	
People know about the Heath & what's on offer and how to take part.	Develop information, communication and engagement activities to optimise accessibility for people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds.
Increased interaction between Heath user groups and visitors.	Collaborate with partners to build opportunities for social interaction and connecting to others into design of services and activities.
Increased diversity of Heath visitors	
Greater range of people feel confident about visiting the Heath.	Collaborate with partners to ensure visitor information addresses perceived barriers to visiting the Heath. Ensure visitor facilities and the range of Heath experiences are accessible and relevant to more diverse users and people of all abilities.
The Heath is financially accessible.	Monitor visitor needs and design services and activities to be financially inclusive.
People feel welcomed and safe.	Staff, volunteers and people who value the Heath see themselves as ambassadors and are visible, ready to assist and share.

Aim: More effective collective care of the Heath

Outcome	Commitment
Increased sense of collective ownership and personal responsibility	
Inclusive decision-making.	Embed transparency and effective engagement into the Management Framework and consultative processes to optimise participation by a diverse range of users.
Shared responsibility.	Share the complexity of finding a balance and seek to collaborate to develop solutions to issues affecting the Heath.
Visitor behaviour is pro-environmental	
Improved understanding of management activities and decisions.	Effective communication & engagement that ensures information is readily accessible and responsive and enables learning and understanding.
Improved users' knowledge of the Heath's environment and how to conserve it.	Build awareness and education about caring for the Heath into all communications and activities. Foster a 'tread-lightly' ethos and partner with user groups and local organisations to develop a culture of shared custodianship.
People treat the Heath and other visitors with greater respect	
Greater range of people feel a sense of 'everyone's Heath' – (individuals and groups)	Model and share the aspirations of the Heath Vision for a 'Heath community' that is respectful, tolerant and responsible, to diverse visitors, interest groups and partners.

Aim: A flourishing green space and historic landscape

Outcome	Commitment
A balance between visitor activities and conservation of natural, built and heritage values is maintained	
Sensitive areas and values are protected.	Establish a system of management zones across the Heath that sets out areas of high conservation value and clear conservation objectives.
Levels of organised activity are controlled.	Develop and implement policies to guide effective management of organised activities.
Visitor impacts are mitigated.	Proactively engage with visitors and interest groups to foster a culture of collective care for the Heath. Embed continuous improvement into design and delivery of visitor services.
A mosaic of natural habitats is maintained and flourishes	
The extent of each broad habitat type is maintained at current levels.	Proactive intervention and management of natural habitats to maintain the distribution and proportion of the range of habitat types across the Heath.
Nature conservation and biodiversity value are enhanced.	Proactive management of habitats to enhance biodiversity, connectivity and capacity to support diverse plants and wildlife.
Habitats are thriving and resilient to change	Proactive monitoring and management to mitigate threatening processes including invasive species, pests and disease, impacts of climate change.
Heritage aspects and landscape character are maintained	
Sensitive areas and historic assets are protected and conserved	Protect areas of high conservation value and develop clear conservation objectives for historic features.
Landscape character is maintained	Views and vistas of historic and cultural value are maintained.

Working together

To achieve our aims, we must be open to trying new things and learning as we go; to working together as custodians of the Heath in order to pass it on to the next generation in as good, or better condition.

We must put people at the heart of the Heath – staff, Members, volunteers, interest groups, community organisations, visitors, neighbours, local communities, local schools, businesses and service providers – and to unlock the full potential of the Heath community to achieve the aspirations of the Heath Vision.

This section is in preparation and will be further developed in subsequent drafts.

Outcome	Commitment
Future-ready	Build resilience to natural and man-made threats by strengthening, protecting and adapting our infrastructure, directly and by influencing others.
Effective partnerships & collaboration.	Provide environmental stewardship and advocacy, in use of resources, emissions, conservation, greening, biodiversity and access to nature.
Environmental, financial & social sustainability.	Provide a clean environment and drive down the negative effects of our own activities.

How this plan will be used

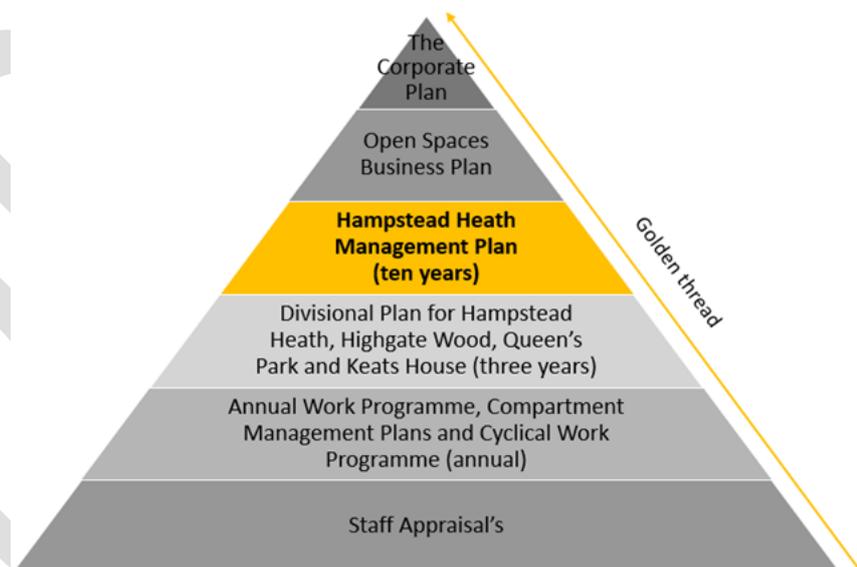
This plan is designed to be used as a strategic framework to guide our thinking and decision-making and help ensure that everything we do takes us closer to achieving our vision.

It sets out our vision, the aims and outcomes that drive us, and the high-level actions we'll take to focus our efforts to optimise the difference we make. The high-level actions will guide the setting of priorities for the allocation of resources to the right activities and projects at the operational level.

Over the plan's ten-year term, there is likely to be much change, and so we will seek to learn what works, what our best contribution can be, who we can collaborate with and how we should adapt.

Whilst the overarching strategic direction may not change, embedding this plan at the top of the Management Framework will enable implementation to vary in response to the changing context. The detailed information about how each part of this plan will be implemented, including priority projects, work streams, policies and guidelines, is contained in the Divisional Plan and associated work programmes.

The 'golden thread' directly links the outcomes in this plan to corporate strategies, business plans, annual and cyclical programmes and staff appraisal forms.



Learning and improving

Implementation

The Management Framework enables a seamless transition from the 2007 Plan to the adoption of this plan, with priority projects identified in the Divisional Plan (commencing in 2018) and cyclical activities implemented via the Annual Work Programme.

An annual review and update of the Divisional Plan will be undertaken, and an annual report prepared. Resources will be allocated to priority projects on a three-year rolling basis, informed by the outcomes and commitments in this plan and aligned with the corporate business planning cycle.

A mid-term review of the outcomes and high-level actions in this plan will be undertaken in 2024.

A full review of this plan will occur in 2028.

Monitoring

Monitoring and tracking progress towards achieving the outcomes will help us to understand the impact of our work and to share and celebrate success.

The measurement table (Appendix XX – *in preparation for inclusion in subsequent draft*) lists information that is currently measured and that can be used to establish a baseline for monitoring future changes or trends.

Learning and improving

Monitoring the changes or benefits that result from our activities provides insight and understanding of how what we did was effective and where we can develop our work in order to make the biggest difference.

Evaluating effectiveness enables us to check our course and to make corrections in a timely manner and to capture learning and build in improvements as we go.

List of appendices

1. Outcomes Map

Appendices to be included in subsequent draft

2. Measurement Framework – understanding impact
3. Map of the Heath
4. Developing this Plan – including a summary of stages and consultation
5. Governance framework including a summary of legislative framework
6. Management Framework - overview

Links

Divisional Plan and Annual Work Programmes

Corporate Plan

Open Spaces Department Business Plan

2007 Hampstead Heath Management Plan

Resources

Community Consultation for the Heath Vision Report

Outcomes framework and measurement table Report

Legislative framework and governance