



## Open Spaces and City Gardens

**Date:** MONDAY, 5 DECEMBER 2022  
**Time:** 10.00 am  
**Venue:** COMMITTEE ROOM - 2ND FLOOR WEST WING, GUILDHALL

## Information Pack

5. DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY OR URGENCY POWERS

**For Information**  
(Pages 3 - 4)

6. BUSINESS PLAN 6 MONTH PROGRESS REPORT

**For Information**  
(Pages 5 - 18)

**John Barradell**  
Town Clerk and Chief Executive

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<b>Committee(s)</b> Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee	<b>Date:</b> 02/12/2022
<b>Subject:</b> Decisions taken under delegated authority or urgency powers.	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	N/A
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	N/A
<b>If so, how much?</b>	N/A
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	N/A
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	N/A
<b>Report of:</b> Town Clerk and Chief Executive	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Chloe Ainsworth, Town Clerk's Department	

## Summary

This report advises Members of action taken by the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair, in accordance with Standing Order Nos. 41(a) and 41(b) since the last meeting.

## Recommendations

That Members note the action taken since the last meeting of the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee.

## Main Report

Since the last meeting of the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee, approval has been given under urgency procedures or delegated authority arrangements, pursuant to Standing Order No. 41, as follows:

1. **Urgent Decision:** To declare the Irish Chambers as surplus to the Environment Department's requirements under urgency procedure.

Employees based in Irish Chambers were relocated to Guildhall North Wing, leaving the Irish Chambers vacant. A report was brought to the Open Spaces & City Gardens Committee meeting on 6 October 2022 to request that the Committee declare the property as surplus to the Environment Department's requirements so that responsibility for the property could be transferred to the City Surveyor's Department for consideration on future usage. However, the meeting was not quorate and so the Committee was not able to approve the recommendation.

**REASON FOR URGENCY:** Innovation & Growth were considering utilising the Irish Chambers as insufficient desk space meant that four employees were working from home full time and the Destination City team were unable to work together. The approval was required so that the property could be declared as surplus to the Environment Department's operational

requirements and the City Surveyors could consider the reallocation of the property

The Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Open Spaces & City Gardens Committee, declared the property as surplus to the Environment Department's operational requirements.

**Chloe Ainsworth**

Town Clerk's Department

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<b>Committee(s)</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee West Ham Park Committee Epping Forest and Commons Committee Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queens Park Committee	5 December 2022 5 December 2022 21 November 2022 7 December 2022
<b>Subject:</b> Open Spaces Business Plan 2022/23 – Progress Report (mid-year, April-September 2022)	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	Outcomes: 2, 3, 5, 10, 11, 12
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	No
<b>Report of:</b> Juliemma McLoughlin, Executive Director, Environment	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Joanne Hill, Business Planning and Compliance Manager, Environment Department	

## Summary

This report provides Members with an update on progress made against the 2022/23 High-Level Business Plan of the Open Spaces Department which was approved by the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee in December 2021.

As the Business Plan was written prior to the formation of the new Environment Department, it refers to the ‘Open Spaces Department’ rather than the ‘Natural Environment Division’. New Business Plans for 2022/23 will reflect the new Department and Division names.

The report summarises the progress that has been made against major workstreams and performance measures during the first six months of 2022/23. An update on the financial position is provided in the separate Chamberlain’s report also presented to this Committee.

## Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the content of this report and its appendices.

## Main Report

### Background

1. The Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee approved the High-Level Departmental Business Plan 2022/23 (Appendix 1) on 7 December 2021.
2. Under the Corporation’s new Target Operating Model, with effect from 1 April 2022 the former Open Spaces Department became the Natural Environment Division of the new Environment Department. As the 2022/23 Business Plan was

written prior to the formation of the new Environment Department, it refers to the Natural Environment Division as the 'Open Spaces Department'. The new Business Plan for 2023/24 will reflect the new Department and Division name and structure.

3. The Business Plan sets out the major workstreams and key performance indicators (KPIs) for the year ahead.
4. To ensure your Committee is kept informed, progress made against the High-Level Business Plans is reported to you every six months. This approach allows Members to ask questions and have a timely input into areas of particular importance to them.

## **Current Position**

### **Major workstreams**

5. Throughout the year, your Committee has been kept informed of progress made against major workstreams by way of regular Assistant Director Update reports and/or separate detailed reports. A summary of progress made to the end of September 2022 is presented below.
  - **Finalise the new open spaces vision and 5-year improvement plan and progress its implementation.**
    - The new vision and the 5-year Improvement Plan are under development and work on this will continue during the second half of the year.
    - The High-Level Business Plan for 2023/24 will be presented to Committees in early 2023 and include the priority strategies for the year ahead.
    - The Charity Strategy is being reviewed as part of the work to review all nine Natural Environment Charities. This major piece of work has commenced and includes the following elements:
      - a) Charity Governance
      - b) Charity Finance
      - c) Charity Resourcing (Phase 3 Target Operating Model)
      - d) Charity Strategy including the following strategies: Nature Resilience; Community Involvement; Charity Income; Culture & Heritage; Visitor; Sport and Leisure; and Education and Learning.
  - **Progress the landscaping of Finsbury Circus, the access and security improvements at the Heath's swimming facilities, and the replacement playground at West Ham Park.**
    - The project to redevelop the Finsbury Circus site is on hold and will progress once the Capital Review process has been completed and the scope of the project clarified.
    - The project to improve the safety, access and security across the three Bathing Ponds at Hampstead Heath has progressed and is expected to be delivered within planned timescales and budget. Detailed updates

on the progression of the project are presented to your committee on a regular basis.

- The new playground at West Ham Park opened on 5 August 2022.
  - **Progress the Carbon removal projects to deliver the open spaces element of the Climate Action Strategy.**
    - An update on the Carbon Removals Project is presented in a separate report to this Committee.
  - **Actively engage in the review of Chilterns and Surrey Hills Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) boundaries.**
    - A report was presented to the Epping Forest and Commons Committee in October 2023 seeking approval for further involvement in the AONB boundary revision consultation. The report provided a detailed update on the progression of the Surrey Hills AONB boundary review. It also confirmed that there has been no progress with the Chilterns AONB so far this year.
6. Alongside the major workstreams included in the High-Level Business Plan, additional priorities for each area of service were identified at the beginning of the year. An update on progress made to date against these additional priorities is provided at Appendix 2.

### **Performance Measures**

7. Most of the performance measures set out in the Business Plan are measured annually and will be reported to your Committee at year-end. However, where data is available at the mid-year point, it is presented at Appendix 3.

### **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

**Strategic implications** – The monitoring of key improvement objectives and performance measures links to the achievement of the aims and outcomes set out in the Corporate Plan 2018-23.

**Financial implications** – Financial implications are addressed in the separate Chamberlain's report presented to this Committee.

**Resource implications** – The Natural Environment Division continues to progress through the Target Operating Model (TOM) process.

**Risk implications** - Risks to achieving the objectives set out in the Business Plan of each service area are identified and managed in accordance with the City of London Risk Management Framework. Risk Registers are reported to this Committee quarterly.

**Climate implications** – An update on the Carbon Removals Project is presented in a separate report to your Committee.

**Charity implications** - Many of the Natural Environment sites are registered charities. Any decisions must be taken in the best interests of the relevant charity.

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Open Spaces Department High-Level Business Plan 2022/23
- Appendix 2 – Key achievements
- Appendix 3 - Performance measures

### **Background Reports**

‘Open Spaces Business Plan for 2022/23’

Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee, 7 December 2021

West Ham Park Committee, 7 December 2021

Epping Forest & Commons Committee, 17 January 2022

Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen’s Park Committee, 9 February 2022

### **Contact**

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### THE CURRENT OPEN SPACES VISION IS:

We enrich people's lives by enhancing and providing access to ecologically diverse open spaces and outstanding heritage assets across London and beyond.

#### Our overarching objectives are:

- Open spaces and historic sites are thriving and accessible.
- Spaces enrich people's lives.
- Business practices are responsible and sustainable.

### Our major workstreams this year will be...

- Implement the approved recommendations of the Target Operating Model report and embed the new Environment Department.
- Finalise the new open spaces vision and 5-year plan and progress its implementation.
- Progress the landscaping of Finsbury Circus, access and security improvements at the Heath's swimming facilities, the replacement playground at West Ham Park, and all other RASC approved capital projects.
- Progress the Carbon removal projects to deliver the open spaces element of the Climate Action Strategy.
- Actively engage in the review of Chilterns and Surrey Hills Areas Of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) boundaries with potential inclusion of Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common in the former, Ashted Common and South London Downs NNR in the latter.

### The Corporate Plan outcomes we have a direct impact on are...

- Outcome 2 - People enjoy good health and wellbeing**
- Outcome 3 - People have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential**
- Outcome 5 - Businesses are trusted and socially and environmentally responsible**
- Outcome 10 - We inspire enterprise, excellence, creativity and collaboration**
- Outcome 11 - We have clean air, land and water and a thriving and sustainable natural environment.**
- Outcome 12 - Our spaces are secure, resilient and well-maintained.**

### What's changed during 2021

- Open Spaces are now part of the new Environment Department with a new Executive Director and the retirement of the Director of Open Spaces.*
- Significant long lasting 'wear and tear' on our sites due to increased visitor numbers during 2020.*
- More staff adopting a hybrid pattern of work.*
- Effectiveness of MS Teams has increased efficiency by reducing need for 'travel time' between sites for meetings.*
- More public realm enhancements installed to encourage workers back to the City with arising changes to working methods to maintain these scattered assets.*
- Progress of projects has been delayed due to the impacts of COVID and availability of materials.*
- Online booking and payment continues and reflected by improved visitor experience*
- Covid and long Covid continues to affect staffing levels*

Plans under consideration	Time Scale
<i>Offices unlikely to return to full capacity– long term use of office accommodation to be considered</i>	<i>2022/23</i>
<i>Visitor attractions, may require re-setting of business models</i>	<i>2021/23</i>
<i>Prioritising high priority select bids for Capital that meet the precise capital funding criteria</i>	<i>2021 onwards</i>

## Our Strategic Commitments

Below are some of the Corporate Strategy Actions we will help deliver

### Apprenticeship Strategy

- Deliver apprenticeships within the organisation from levels 2 to 7, in terms of placements and training, which generate positive feedback from those involved in completing and delivering them and achieve target retention rates

### Climate Action Strategy

- Introduce new land management practices across our open spaces aiming to maximise their ability to remove carbon, and optimise their biodiversity and resilience value
- Advocate the importance of green spaces and urban greening as natural carbon sinks, and their contribution to biodiversity and overall wellbeing

### Cultural Strategy

- Support cultural excellence in a range of fields and champion an ethos of innovation, creative risktaking and artistic citizenship
- Support the delivery of the City of London's Education Strategy by nurturing an exemplary Cultural Education Partnership .....

### Responsible Business Strategy

- Contribute to delivering the various strategy actions, particularly under the strategy outcome: *The planet is healthier*

### Social Mobility Strategy

- Remove barriers, overcome gaps and improve access and participation in order to improve attainment.

### Sport & Physical Activity Strategy

- Contribute to delivering the various strategy actions, particularly under the strategy outcome: *People enjoy good health and wellbeing and health inequalities are reduced*

### Volunteering Strategy

- Promote volunteering opportunities and benefits to drive more and better volunteering.

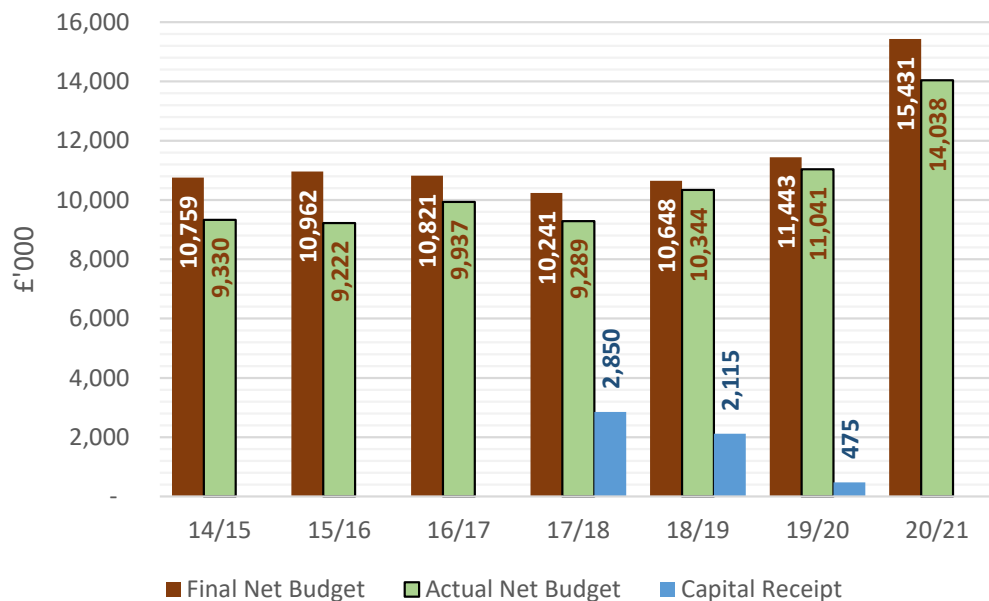
## Red & Amber Open Spaces Departmental and Corporate Risks

Open Spaces Risk Title	Score
Wanstead Park reservoirs	24
Repair and maintenance of buildings and structural assets	16
Maintaining the City's water bodies	16
Accelerated Long-term Damage to Open Spaces Sites	16
Budget reduction and Income Loss	16
Impact of development	12
The effect of a major event in central London on the tourism business at Tower Bridge and Monument	12
Pests and diseases	12
Health and safety	8
Extreme weather and climate change	6
These are reported Departmentally apart from Wanstead Park Reservoirs which is a Corporate risk	

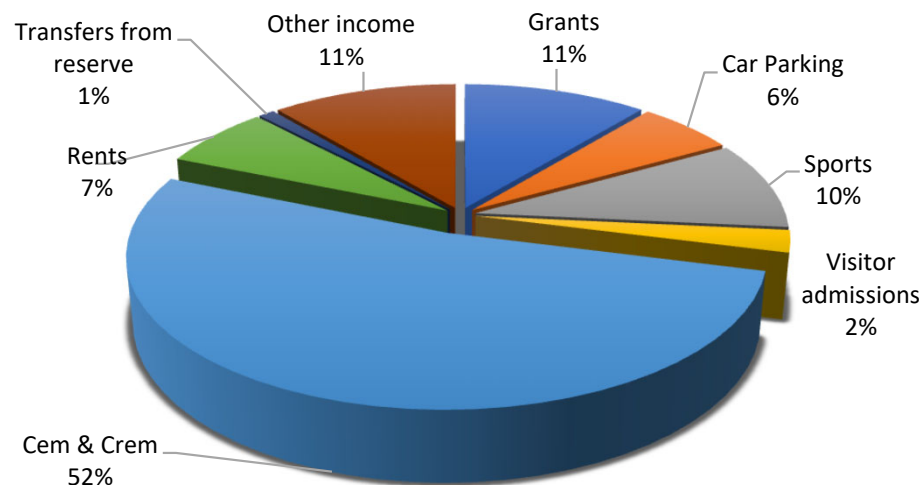
	0	4	5	Total = 9
Likely (4)			2	
Possible (3)		1	2	1
Unlikely (2)			1	2
Rare (1)				
	Minor (1)	Serious (2)	Major (4)	Extreme (8)
	Impact			

Performance Measures include	2021/22 Performance	2022/23 direction of travel or target
Green Heritage Accreditation	14 Awards	14 Awards
Green Flag Awards	15 Awards	15 Awards
Visits to Departments webpages	698,512 (at end Sept)	Increase above 2021/22 actual
Tennis court usage	42,368 (at end Sept)	Increase above 2021/22 actual
Our environmental footprint	Annual Measure	Reduce below 2021/22 actual
Department Net expenditure	£5.271M At end Sept	Achieve budget
Short term sickness	to date	Maintain
H&S accident investigations	91% to date	Achieve corporate target

## 2020/21 Directors local risk Net budget, outturn net position and capital receipts



## Where our income came from in 2020/21



### CoL Funded Capital Projects

#### Completed in 2020/21:

- Cremator replacement project

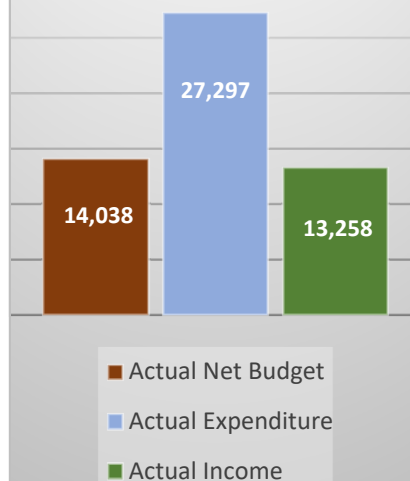
#### Live in 2021/22:

- Finsbury Circus
- West Ham Park playground
- Hampstead Heath ponds and lido
- Tower Hill playground
- East Heath car park
- ParkLife
- Carbon Removal (Climate Action Strategy)

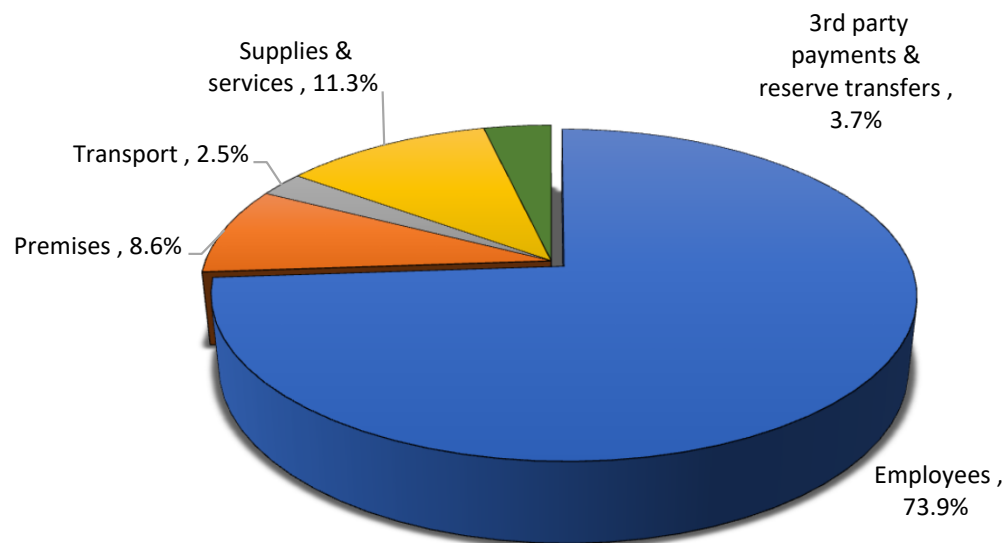
#### Requested in Nov 2021/22

- Hampstead Heath athletics track resurfacing
- Epping Forest path restoration
- Queens Park playground and sandpit refurbishment

## Outturn local risk 2020/21



## How we spent our local risk budget in 2020/21



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## Progress against additional priorities 1 April - 30 September 2022

### City Gardens

- **Implementation of new structure** – City Gardens is now part of the Gardens and Cleansing Service within the City Operations Division. Officers have been developing new ways of working within the new team. They have completed the post-TOM recruitment that was required and have relocated from the Irish Chamber to the Guildhall.
- **Climate Action** – The City Gardens Team is working with ‘Policy and Projects’ to plant up to 100 new street trees, implement a number of climate action schemes within gardens, and develop a climate resilient planting catalogue.
- **London in Bloom Award** – City Gardens won a Gold award in the Town category of the London in Bloom Awards and retained the Green Flag Award for Bunhill Fields.
- **Electric Fleet** – City Gardens took receipt of its first electric vehicle: a Goupil G4 utility vehicle.

### West Ham Park

- **Joint working** – The team is working with colleagues at Hampstead Heath to implement ‘TreePlotter’ software to manage tree inspections and works.
- **Biodiversity status** - The London Wildlife Trust has recommended that West Ham Park’s SINC (Site of Importance for Nature Conservation) status is elevated from a Site of Local Importance to a Site of Borough Importance. The recommendation is currently with Newham Council and the full SINC review will be published for public consultation later this year.
- **Playground** – The refurbished playground opened in August 2022.
- **Awards** – The park won a Gold award and was named as the overall winner in the Large Park Category of the London in Bloom Awards. It was also voted ‘Local Favourite Park’ in the UK Fields in Trust awards.
- **Climate Action** - New planting is being considered to help reduce the carbon footprint. Funding opportunities are being explored.
- **Nursery Site development** – major redevelopment of the old Nursery Site is progressing through the development stages. The aim is to provide housing and additional open space for park users.

### Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen’s Park

- **Covid-19 Restoration Programme** – A new Conservation Area has been created at Highgate Wood to address compaction issues.
- **Licensing Schemes** – The Hampstead Heath Dog Licensing Scheme was launched on 1 April 2022.
- **Playground Improvements** – Construction works at the Heath Extension Playground began at the end of September, with the playground on schedule to reopen in November 2022.

- **London in Bloom Award** – Queen’s Park and Golders Hill Park both won a Gold award in the Large Park Category. The Hill Garden Pergola won Gold in the Walled Garden category.
- **Queen’s Green Canopy** – An Alder Tree was presented to the Heath as part of the Queen’s Green Canopy initiative.

### Epping Forest

- **Car Parking** – Charges are now in place in all car parks with an average of 15,000 parking sessions per month (booked via RingGo).
- **Lodges** – Refurbishment of a second holiday let has been completed and is now open for bookings.
- **Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM)** – A SAMM agreement is now in place to manage and monitor the impacts of visitors to the Forest.
- **New Cattle Grazing System (GPS-driven invisible fencing)** – More than 60 animals have been using GPS collars, enabling grazing management on two new sites which have not been grazed in recent history.
- **ULEZ compliance** – Three tractors are in the process of being replaced with more efficient models. Further opportunities for replacements within the 2022/23 financial year are being identified.
- **Queen’s Green Canopy** – The Forest was dedicated as an Ancient Woodland by the Queen’s Green Canopy initiative.

### The Commons

- **Management Plans** – Management Plans and associated consultation reports for the four Coulsdon Commons, i.e. Farthing Downs, Riddlesdown, Kenley Common, and Coulsdon Common, were approved by the Epping Forest and Commons Committee in May 2022.
- **Kenley Revival Project** – The project has been fully completed.
- **Queen’s Green Canopy** – Ashted Common was dedicated as an Ancient Woodland by the Queen’s Green Canopy initiative
- **Invisible fencing** - The use of invisible fencing has been implemented at Burnham Beeches this summer using both ‘Boviguard’ and ‘Nofence’ systems.
- **Burnham Beeches landscape project** – The project is making good progress: biodiversity surveys and plans have been completed and a consultant is about to be engaged to provide costs and look at funding options.
- **Income generation** – The Eco Cafe at Burnham Beeches is on track to exceed its income target. The Riddlesdown café concession offer was advertised but the successful applicant withdrew prior to the contract being signed. A case will be made for the café to be reviewed/remarketed in 2023.

### Learning and Development

- **School Programme** – The programme continues to engage high pupil premium schools and is working in partnership with Culture Mile Learning to expand this reach.
- **Post-Covid recovery** - The school service has continued to grow, with numbers now exceeding the pre-pandemic levels.

- **Bespoke learning programmes** - Learning officers have continued to work with community groups during the summer holidays. A new Youth Officer was recruited in August and new youth programmes are booked in for October, including activities for young carers and a pre-apprenticeship work experience programme for school students at risk of exclusion.
- **Learning volunteers** - The team has continued to support the learning volunteers to develop their skills, networks, confidence and wellbeing.

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# Performance Measures : 1 April - 30 September 2022



Green Heritage Site  
Accreditation

**13**

2022/23 target: retain 13 awards

Green Flag Awards

**14**

2022/23 target: retain 14 awards



**90%**

of participants in learning  
and volunteering programmes  
reported that they felt 'connected' or 'very  
connected' to nature' as a result.

2022/23 Target: >92%

Directly supervised volunteer work hours:  
Progress towards annual target

**71%**

2022/23 Target: >15,161 hours



Number of visitors to open spaces webpages



Number of visits to Queen's  
Hunting Lodge & The Temple

22/23 Mid-year total: **23,555**

22/23 Target: >17,737



Health and safety  
accident investigations

**95%**

2022/23 Target: 85% of all accident  
investigations completed within 28 days



Hours of tennis court usage:  
Progress towards annual target

**43%**

West Ham Park

Mid-year: 10,215 hours  
Target: >23,610 hours

**55%**

Parliament Hill

Mid-year: 12,062 hours  
Target: >22,075 hours

**48%**

Golders Hill Park

Mid-year: 3934 hours  
Target: >8,131 hours

**60%**

Queen's Park

Mid-year: 7,712 hours  
Target: >12,881 hours



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