



Natural Environment Board (For Information Items)

Part 1 - Public Agenda

3. ***ORDER OF THE COURT OF COMMON COUNCIL**

To receive the Order of the Court of Common Council dated 25 April 2024 appointing the Board and setting its Terms of Reference.

For Information
(Pages 3 - 4)

Environment Department

13. ***DRAFT HIGH-LEVEL BUSINESS PLAN 2024/25**

Report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment.

For Information
(Pages 5 - 18)

Natural Environment

16. ***COOL STREETS AND GREENING – PROGRAMME UPDATE**

Report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment.

For Information
(Pages 19 - 42)

17. ***LEARNING AND HERITAGE ANNUAL REVIEW, 2023 -24**

Report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment.

For Information
(Pages 43 - 54)

18. ***LEVELLING UP AND REGENERATION ACT 2003**

Report of the Remembrancer.

For Information
(Pages 55 - 58)

City Gardens

19. ***CITY GARDENS UPDATE**

Report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment.

For Information
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Part 2 - Non-Public Agenda

24. ***DEBT ARREARS - NATURAL ENVIRONMENT DIVISION PERIOD ENDING 31 MARCH 2023**

Joint report of the Chamberlain and Executive Director, Environment.

For Information
(Pages 65 - 78)

25. ***NATURAL ENVIRONMENT CHARITIES – INCOME ANALYSIS AND PRIORITIES**

Report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment.

For Information
(Pages 79 - 108)

Agenda Item 3

MAINELLI, Mayor	RESOLVED: That the Court of Common Council holden in the Guildhall of the City of London on Thursday 25 th April 2024, doth hereby appoint the following Committee until the first meeting of the Court in April, 2025
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NATURAL ENVIRONMENT BOARD

1. **Constitution**
A Non-Ward Committee consisting of,
 - eight Members elected by the Court of Common Council, at least one of whom shall have fewer than five years' service on the Court at the time of their appointment
 - the following ex-officio Members:-
 - the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Epping Forest & Commons Committee
 - the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee
 - up to four external non-voting representatives, appointed by the Natural Environment Board with appropriate expertise in the Natural Environment, including biodiversity & nature resilience, community engagement, access & recreation, culture, heritage & learning and income generation.
 - up to one observer nominated by the Epping Forest & Commons Committee, Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee and West Ham Park.
2. **Quorum**
The quorum consists of any five Members.
3. **Membership 2024/25**
 - 4 (4) Andrew Stratton McMurtrie, JP
 - 2 (2) Eamonn Mullally *for two years*
 - 2 (2) Alpa Raja *for two years*
 - 3 (3) Benjamin Murphy
 - 1 (1) Anne Corbett, Deputy *for two years*
 - 7 (2) Caroline Wilma Haines
 - 14 (2) Wendy Mead, OBE
 - 3 (1) James St John Davis

together with the ex-officio Members referred to in paragraph 1 above.

3. Terms of Reference

To be responsible for:-

- (a) the approval, monitoring, and regular review of the Natural Environment Board strategies overseeing the overall policy and performance framework for the Natural Environment Division of the Environment Department (where such matters are not the responsibility of another committee) and the City Gardens team which sit within the City Operations Division of the Environment Department.
- (b) overseeing the delivery of the Natural Environment Board's strategies (where such matters are not specifically the responsibility of another committee).
- (c) dealing with and making recommendations to the Court of Common Council where appropriate, all matters relating to the strategic management of the City of London Corporation's natural environment (where such matters are not specifically the responsibility of another committee).
- (d) the allocation of Enjoying Green Spaces and the Natural Environment Programme grants and the allocation of non-site specific grants related to the Natural Environment Board.
- (e) the management and day-to-day administration of the gardens, churchyards and open spaces in the City under the control of the Common Council, together with Bunhill Fields Burial Ground;
- (f) arrangements for the planting and maintenance of trees and other plants and shrubs in open spaces and in footpaths adjacent to highways in the City;
- (g) advising on applications for planning permission relating in whole or in part to the gardens, churchyards or open spaces in the City under the control of the Common Council; and
- (h) the functions of the Common Council under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 to make safe by felling, or otherwise, dangerous trees in the City generally on receipt of notices served on the City of London Corporation in the circumstances set out in Section 23 of the Act and where trees are in danger of damaging property.

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Committee: Natural Environment Board	Date: 16 May 2024
Subject: Draft High-Level Business Plan 2024/25 – Environment Department	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse engaged communities • Vibrant thriving destination • Providing excellent services • Flourishing public spaces • Leading sustainable environment
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
Report of: Bob Roberts, Interim Executive Director Environment	For Information
Report author: Joanne Hill, Business Planning and Compliance Manager	

Summary

In February 2024, the Natural Environment Board approved, in principle, the Environment Department’s high-level Business Plan 2024/25. This high-level Business plan provides a strategic overview of activity of the Natural Environment Division and City Gardens. Members asked that a revised version of the high-level Business Plan be brought back to the Board after the launch of the new Corporate Plan 2024-2029, with links to the new Corporate Plan outcomes shown.

This report presents, for your information, the revised version of the high-level Business Plan with the requested changes incorporated (Appendix A).

Detailed business plans for each of the Natural Environment charities are under development; these plans will set out the specific priorities and activities of each charity and will be subject to approval of the relevant Charity Management Committee in due course.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the revised version of the Environment Department’s high-level Business Plan 2024/25, for the Natural Environment Division and City Gardens. This version of the Business Plan incorporates changes requested by Members in February 2024.

Main Report

Background

1. In February 2024, your Board approved, in principle, the Environment Department's draft high-level Business Plan 2023/24 which covers the service areas within the remit of the Natural Environment Board and the three Natural Environment Charity Management Committees.
2. This high-level Business Plan sets out the key areas of work that will be undertaken during 2024/25, as identified by the Environment Department's Senior Leaders and their management teams, in consultation with other members of staff. The establishment of these core workstreams enables management teams to set appropriate objectives and action plans to achieve the top-level goals during the year ahead.
3. For the Natural Environment Division, the priority workstreams are to implement and begin to deliver the Division's core strategies. The performance measures shown in the high-level Business Plan are taken directly from the strategies.
4. The requirements of the corporate business planning cycle meant that the high-level Business Plan was written, and presented for approval, prior to the launch of the new Corporate Plan 2024-2029. Therefore, it did not detail how the work of the Natural Environment Division and City Gardens supports the new Corporate Plan outcomes. Members asked that a revised version of the high-level Business Plan be brought back to the Board after the launch of the new Corporate Plan 2024-29, with links to the new Corporate Plan outcomes shown.

Current position

5. This report presents, for information, the revised version of the high-level Business Plan with the changes requested by Members in February 2024 now incorporated (Appendix A).
6. Page 6 of Appendix A has been updated to show which of the Corporate Plan 2024-2029 outcomes are supported by the work of the Natural Environment Division and City Gardens. Five of the six outcomes are identified as follows:
 - Diverse engaged communities
 - Leading sustainable environment
 - Vibrant thriving destination
 - Providing excellent services
 - Flourishing public spaces

Work to align services with the new Corporate Plan will continue throughout 2024/25 and beyond.

7. Detailed business plans for each of the Natural Environment charities are under development: these plans will set out the charity-specific priorities, activities and associated performance measures and show how they support delivery of the

Natural Environment strategies and Corporate Plan outcomes. These business plans will be subject to the approval of the relevant Charity Management Committee.

Corporate and strategic implications – The Environment Department is working to align to the new Corporate Plan 2024-2029, through continued engagement and participation in the Strategy Forum, Strategic Planning Group and so on. It will shape its strategies and services appropriately to ensure they support achievement of the City Corporation's outcomes.

The Business Plan lists other key City of London strategies that the Natural Environment Division and the City Gardens team are helping to deliver. Any new strategies will be reviewed as they are approved and consideration given as to how the services can and will support their delivery. This will include the new Corporate Plan and the People Strategy.

Financial implications - The high-level Business Plan has been produced in liaison with Chamberlain's Department and takes into consideration opportunities to reduce expenditure and increase income in order to make necessary savings.

Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) - The Department has established an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Working Group. The Group is currently developing a Departmental EDI Plan which will align with the Corporate EDI Plan. Members of the group will lead on a range of EDI actions, including those set out in the Business Plan, to ensure compliance with the PSED across the department.

Resourcing implications - Any changes to resources will be brought to the relevant Committee(s).

Security implications - None

Conclusion

This report presents, for information, the revised version of the high-level Business Plan with the changes requested by your Committee in February 2024 now incorporated. Members are asked to note the Plan. Detailed business plans for each charity are under development and will be presented to the relevant Management Committee for approval in due course.

Appendices

Appendix A – Environment Department high-level Business Plan 2024/25: Natural Environment Division and City Gardens.

Joanne Hill

Business Planning and Compliance Manager
Environment Department

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Natural Environment Division and City Gardens

The Environment Department shapes future environments and protects current ones.

It is the largest department in the organisation and provides a diverse range of services to London and the South East.

Within the 'square mile' we deliver many local authority and regulatory functions including planning and development; building control; engineering; highways and transportation; cleansing and waste; environmental health, licensing and trading standards. The SME Delivery Team provides advice and guidance for start-ups and small businesses which are located in, or visit, the City.

Further afield, we manage over 11,000 acres of stunning open spaces worth billions of pounds which capture thousands of tonnes of carbon a year and attract an estimated 25 million visitors.

We run the City of London Cemetery and Crematorium; operate the Heathrow Animal Reception Centre; provide animal health services London-wide; and, as the London Port Health Authority, undertake controls on imported food and feed through London's ports.

Due to the complexity and scope of the department, three separate high-level Business Plans have been produced to reflect our three key Committee 'clusters'. This plan covers the Natural Environment Division and City Gardens.

What's changed since last year...

- Front line services continued to respond effectively to support the City's post-pandemic recovery.
- The Natural Environment Division's new organisational structure was implemented.
- A new Culture and Projects Section was established to deliver a joined-up approach to delivering projects, and our learning and heritage offers across the Natural Environment Division.

Major achievements 2023/24:

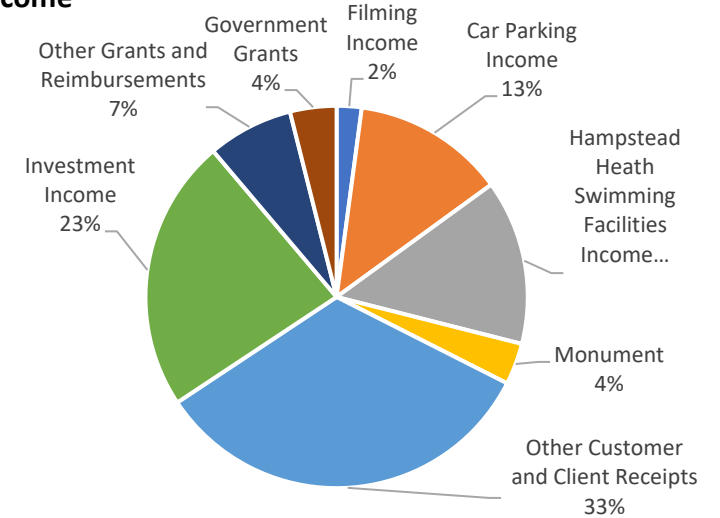
- City Gardens: Bunhill Fields Burial Ground, a Grade I listed landscape on the National Register of Parks, won a Green Flag Award. The prestigious scheme is an international benchmark, recognising some of the very best managed parks and green spaces in the world.
- All Natural Environment sites maintained their Green Heritage Accreditation and Green Flag awards and several won London In Bloom Awards.
- Epping Forest introduced pioneering invisible fencing technology to graze cows and received positive media coverage.
- The Commons' vehicle fleet was upgraded to be ULEZ compliant.
- The Learning Team provided case study for a Climate Action Pathways (CAPE) report, sharing the work of the team with educators and researchers across the UK.
- Keats House received funding from the Education Strategy Unit (ESU) to deliver the 'Culturally Speaking', 'Poetry Vs Colonialism' and 'Young Poet in the City' programmes in conjunction with other venues and partner organisations.

Where our money comes from and what we spend it on

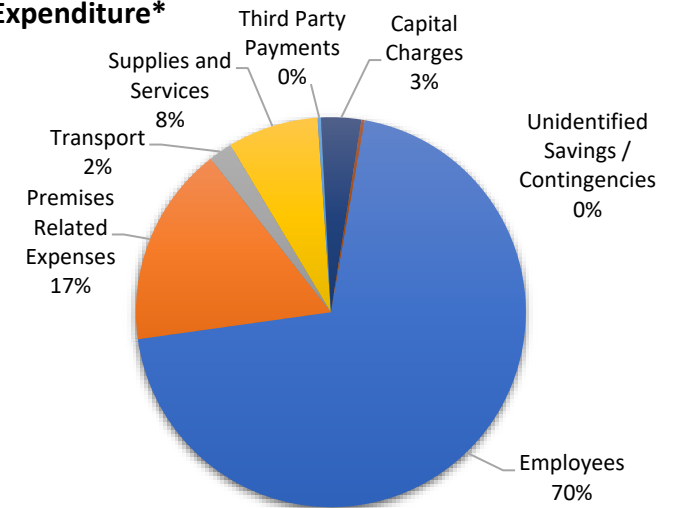
Total 2024-25 net expenditure is: £18.569m

Total FTE within scope of this Business Plan: 242 (28.09.2023)

Income*



Expenditure*



*N.B: The charts are based upon 2023/24 approved budgets as of Sept 2023.



Beyond 2024/25

Q1 2024/25

Q2 2024/25

Q3 2024/25

Q4 2024/25

Apr
May
Jun

Jul
Aug
Sep

Oct
Nov
Dec

Jan
Feb
Mar

2025/26

2026/27



City Gardens

Maintain City-owned green spaces in the Square Mile.

Complete Finsbury Circus re-landscaping (December 2024).

Nature conservation and resilience*

Protect and enhance biodiversity of the open spaces

Increase the resilience of our open spaces

Establish a natural capital-based management process.

Climate Action Strategy – Carbon Removals Project

Community engagement*

Create meaningful and lasting partnerships.

Cultivate a sense of deep pride in, and attachment to, our spaces.

Ensure continuous transfer of information between the Corporation and its customers.

Access and recreation*

Enable the best possible visitor journey.

Provide welcoming places that visitors from all backgrounds and abilities are comfortable to explore.

Build understanding and knowledge about our open spaces.

Culture, Heritage and Learning*

Develop communities of interest that participate in, advocate for, and support our Natural Environment and Heritage charities.

Develop a learning offer that builds nature connection and wellbeing.

Protect, enhance and promote our built heritage, landscape heritage and archaeological assets.

Income generation

Develop and start to implement an income generation plan for the Natural Environment Division.

Complete the Operational Property Review.

Conserve and improve built assets across the Natural Environment Division and City Gardens.

* N.B. The Natural Environment Division’s workstreams reflect the suite of core Natural Environment Strategies (referred to later in this Plan). The objectives and performance measures are taken from the strategies and will be developed and incorporated as appropriate in the Business Plans of each charity.

Our major workstreams 2024/25



Workstream Name	Funding allocation % (of 2023/24 revenue budget)	People resource % (of FTE)	Prioritisation category	Dependencies	Outcomes/ Impacts	KPI	Update Schedule	24/25 Target	22/23 Baseline
City Gardens <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain City-owned green spaces in the Square Mile. Complete Finsbury Circus re-landscaping (Nov 2023-Dec 2024). Effectively manage our spaces to ensure they are safe and pleasant and fit to provide the essential long-term benefits of green areas, including increasing biodiversity and adapting to become more climate resilient. 	11%	14%	2. Duty and Discretionary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared synergies and standards with similar Natural Environment spaces such as Hampstead Heath. Core strategies which can affect service requirements and delivery, including Destination City. Services are delivered out of operational facilities which are owned and maintained by City Surveyors. 	The Service will adapt to changing demands arising from expected increases in footfall resulting from implementation of the Destination City Strategy, climate change impact, and requirements of the Climate Action Strategy.	Achieve Green Flag Awards for Bunhill Fields and Finsbury Circus.	Annually	2	1 (Bunhill Fields)
						Meet Biodiversity Action Plan commitments by 2026.	Annually	14 actions by 2026	New KPI 2024/25
Nature conservation and resilience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect and enhance the biodiversity of our open spaces. Increase the resilience of our open spaces within a wider, interconnected natural landscape. Establish a natural capital-based management process across our open spaces. 	29%	41%	7. Climate action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Availability of specialist staff and financial resources. Access to planning system expertise for monitoring and responding to planning issues. Legal and financial support to facilitate land acquisition or partnership working agreements with neighbours. 	Protected habitats and species conserved in line with the UK Government's 25-year Environment Plan and legal obligations. Threats from damaging invasive species reduced or contained. Enhanced resilience to climate and other threats, ensuring continued delivery of natural capital benefits. Delivery of the Climate Action Strategy will ensure the Corporation meets its target of being Carbon neutral by 2027.	Biological survey records uploaded onto national recording databases within 12 months of collection.	Annually	100%	New KPI 2024/25
						Percentage of Local Authority plan consultations responded to.	Annually	100%	New KPI 2024/25
						Achieve annual carbon removal target.	Annually	-16.23 ktCO2e	-16.23 ktCO2e
Community engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership: create meaningful and lasting partnerships. Ownership: cultivate a sense of deep pride in, and attachment to, our spaces amongst users. Knowledge exchange: ensure continuous transfer of information between the Corporation and its customers. 	20%	19%	13. Other - supports delivery of charity objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Availability of staff and financial resources to deliver the Community Engagement Strategy's Action Plan. Engagement of customers, service users and partner organisations. 	Inclusive, accessible spaces which are physically and psychologically welcoming. Increased advocacy and volunteering to support the CoL and its green spaces. Greater customer participation and engagement will enable us to deliver services that better reflect the needs of the diverse communities we serve.	Number of partnership organisations that are delivering activities in our open spaces.	Annually	tbc	New KPI 2024/25
						Number of volunteer work hours.	Every six months	tbc based on 2023/24	Comparable data not available
						Visitors to Natural Environment Division web pages.	Every six months	1 million	921,079

Continued...

Workstream Name	Funding allocation % (of 2023/24 revenue budget)	People resource % (of FTE)	Prioritisation category	Dependencies	Outcomes/ Impacts	KPI	Update Schedule	24/25 Target	22/23 Baseline
Access and recreation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellence: Enable the best possible visitor journey, creating the right information from pre-visit to on-site experience in exemplar sites. • Equal access: Provide welcoming places that visitors from all backgrounds and abilities are comfortable to explore • Inform: Build understanding and knowledge about our open spaces. Visitors will respect one another and will care for and advocate for the sites. 	20%	17%	13. Other - supports delivery of charity objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of staff and financial resources. • Income from SAMMS realised to pursue capital works. • Successful Countryside Stewardship Scheme bids. 	Open spaces are preserved for recreational benefit whilst maintaining the highest level of environmental protection. We provide the best possible visitor journey. All visitors are equally welcomed. Our spaces are welcoming places that visitors from all backgrounds and abilities are comfortable to explore.	100% of Waymarked trails are audited annually to maintain standards.	Annually	100%	New KPI 2024/25
						Provide accessibility information for every public facility on website by 2025.	Annually	100%	New KPI 2024/25
						Seasonal engagement sessions provided on site (minimum one per season per site).	Annually	Four per site	New KPI 2024/25
Culture, Heritage and Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop communities of interest that participate in, advocate for, and support our Natural Environment and Heritage charities. • Develop a learning offer that builds nature connection and wellbeing. • Protect and enhance our built heritage, landscape heritage and archaeological assets and promote them as part of our visitor and learning offers. 	7%	8%	13. Other - supports delivery of charity objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant funding, recruitment and external partnerships. • Governance processes, operational property review, City Surveyor's expertise, funding to undertake repairs, maintenance and measures to protect built heritage assets. • Permissions from relevant local authorities and Historic England for assessment/works. 	Increased nature connection, pro-environmental behaviour and wellbeing of participants. More participants are from high pupil premium schools, are looked after children, young carers, young refugees and 13-25-year-olds who are struggling with education, employment or mental health. Built heritage, landscape heritage and archaeological assets are protected, meet statutory obligations, and are enhanced to support improved visitor and learning offer.	Number of participants per annum in our: School Learning programme: Play programme:	Annually	18,500 20,500	17,868 19,868
						Number of heritage assets on the 'Heritage at Risk' register.	Every six months	Three	Four
						Number of visitors per annum to our managed heritage attractions: Keats House: Monument:	Every six months	11,500 150,000	5,149 92,899
Income generation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and start to implement an income generation plan for the Natural Environment Division. • Complete the Operational Property Review. • Conserve and improve built assets across the Natural Environment Division and City Gardens, tackling the 'bow wave' of maintenance backlog works. 	6%	2%	9. Income generation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational Property Review and NE Charities Review (including the need for charities to restrict funds and carry funds forward). • Production of a comprehensive asset register. • The support of City Surveyor's Department with funding and delivery of the cyclical works programme. • Provision of adequate guidance, support and tools for staff to enable them to raise income. • Internal governance processes. 	Greater income will enable the charities to deliver more work to help achieve the vision and key priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan and the Natural Environment vision and strategies. It will also reduce dependence on City's cash and help us tackle some of the 'red' risks on the risk register, such as the maintenance backlog.	5% increase in income generation (on previous year).	Annually	tbc (awaiting 2023/24 figures)	(£,000's)
						Epping Forest & Buffer Lands:			2,835
						North London Open Spaces:			3,533
						The Commons:			1,416

Medium Term Plans under consideration (2025/26 and 2026/27)

Priority list (e.g. new legislation, services, projects, automation)	2025/2026	2026/2027	Funded or Unfunded
Build profile of completed Finsbury Circus	x		Funded
Secure Planning consent for redevelopment of West Ham Park nursery site	x	x	Part funded
Secure removal of Wanstead Grotto from Heritage At Risk Register	x		Part Funded
Establish a new landscape scale nature recovery working partnership.		x	Unfunded

Operational Property requirements

The Environment Department's staff are based across 25 sites throughout London and the south-east. We hold approximately 340 physical assets, almost 270 of which are at our Natural Environment sites.

As part of the Corporation's Operational Property Review Programme, the Environment Department is undertaking a critical review of all its physical assets, including operational property. A Departmental 'Task and Finish' group has been established and meetings are taking place to progress this project. The initial stage of the project will be to identify the resources required to undertake a full analysis and in-depth review of all physical assets held by the department, including baselining operational requirements, financial position and state of repair.

Following this, we will work with the City Surveyor's Department to establish a detailed project plan and realistic timeline. An update on the status of the assets relevant to this Committee will be reported, including any that are identified as surplus to requirements.

Operational Property Utilisation Assessment

Asset name	Assessment Complete?
Guildhall complex	Initial Workplace Survey completed June 2023. Detailed utilisation assessment to be considered as part of the OPR Programme.
Additional operational properties	No, utilisation assessments of these properties to be considered as part of the overall OPR Programme.

Key Risks

Details are accurate at January 2024 but are subject to continual review and change.

Our business risks are managed in accordance with the Corporate Risk Management Framework and, where applicable, the Charities Act 2011. Risks are regularly reviewed and updated by management teams in consultation with risk owners. Committees receive regular updates on the risks held by the charities/ services within their remit to provide them with necessary assurance that risks are being managed and mitigated effectively, and to enable Members to fulfil their oversight and scrutiny role.

Each of the Natural Environment charities holds its own risk register. The Natural Environment Cross-Divisional Risk Register includes risks which are managed by the Natural Environment Director at a higher, strategic, level. City Gardens is part of the City Operations Division, and its risks are held in a separate, non-charity, risk register.

Our highest risks fall within the subject areas listed below. The matrix shows the overall business risk profile for the Natural Environment Division and City Gardens Service.

Top risk subject areas

Decline in condition of assets (physical and natural)	Budget pressures
Lack of an asset register (Natural Environment)	Extreme weather and climate change
Wildlife management	Pests and diseases
Recruitment of suitable staff	Tree failure
Public behaviour	Impacts of visitor pressure

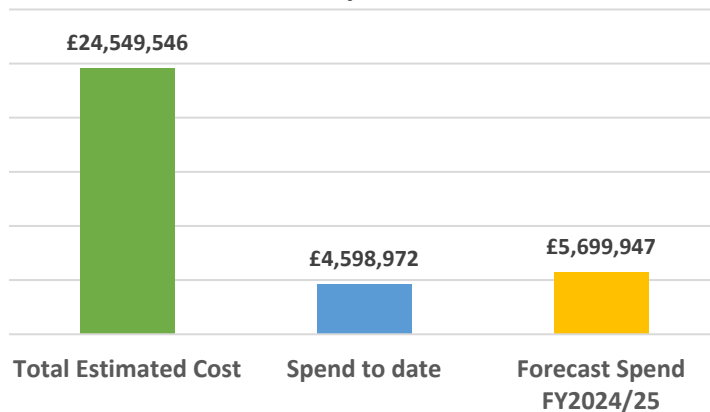
Risk profile

Likelihood	Impact			
	Minor	Serious	Major	Extreme
Likely		18	22	3
Possible		10	20	2
Unlikely		4	11	
Rare				

In-flight Capital Projects (Gateway 2-6)

Total no. of projects: 15

In flight G2-G6 projects committed spend and forecast



Corporate Plan 2024-2029

Our work supports the mission, aims and outcomes of the new Corporate Plan 2024-29. Throughout 2024/25 and beyond, we will shape our strategies and services appropriately to ensure they continue to support achievement of the City Corporation’s outcomes.

The Corporate Plan outcomes we support are:

- Diverse engaged communities
- Leading sustainable environment
- Vibrant thriving destination
- Providing excellent services
- Flourishing public spaces

Natural Environment Division Strategies

A new Natural Environment overarching vision and mission statement, and suite of core strategies were approved early in 2024. Delivery of these strategies will support the mission, aims and outcomes of the new Corporate Plan 2024-2029, other Corporate strategies and policies, as well as the Charity Objects and the Environment Department’s vision and aims.

The Natural Environment Division’s major workstreams for 2024/25 (set out earlier in this document) are to implement and begin to deliver these strategies.

Natural Environment vision

Open spaces: Rich in diversity, conserving nature, creating memories, enhancing lives.

Natural Environment mission statement

To protect and enhance our open spaces across London and the Home Counties, working in partnership to ensure they remain accessible, sustainable and preserved for the benefit of the public.

Core Natural Environment strategies

- Conservation and Nature Resilience Strategy
- Community Engagement Strategy
- Access and Recreation Strategy
- Culture, Heritage and Learning Strategy

The key Corporate strategies we support are...

Climate Action Strategy

- Enhance carbon removal in our open spaces.
- Advocate the importance of green spaces and urban greening as natural carbon sinks, and their contribution to biodiversity and overall wellbeing.
- Deliver further climate resilient planting schemes in City Gardens.

Cultural Strategy

- Develop, enhance and animate open and green spaces.
- Support initiatives that encourage London schools, especially in disadvantaged areas, to engage with the cultural life of the City.
- Support outdoor programmes to grow, and actively encourage sponsorship and participation from neighbouring commercial partners.

Destination City

- Improve the quality of green spaces in the City to create a more attractive and welcoming public realm.

Education Strategy

- Contribute to delivering the strategy actions, particularly under the aim to: *Ensure that the Square Mile’s outstanding cultural, historical and open spaces resources enrich the creative experience of London’s learners.*

Sport & Physical Activity Strategy

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

We will review any new corporate strategies and policies as they are approved and consider how our services can and will support their delivery during 2024/25 and in future years. This will include the new **Corporate Plan 2024-2029** and the **People Strategy**.

Our stakeholders and engagement

We have a wide range of stakeholders and delivery partners (including, but not limited to those shown here).



Our Impacts



Stakeholder engagement

We continue to communicate with our stakeholders appropriately. For example:

- **Learning Programme** - The Natural Environment Learning Team worked with academic partners at Derby University to create a bespoke evaluation toolkit to measure participants' wellbeing, nature connection, confidence, understanding and involvement. The young participants rate themselves before and after a learning session, using a scale of smiley / sad faces to respond to a set of key questions.
- **Heritage** – Keats House Charity partnered with Cardiff University to deliver the 'Young Romantics in the City' programme for 2023/24.
- **City Gardens** - We regularly consult on proposed changes to the City Gardens, such as the Brewers' Hall Gardens and Finsbury Circus.
- **North London Open Spaces** – Consultations were undertaken on the proposed Woodland Walk at Queen's Park, the potential improvement projects at Parliament Hill, and other projects.
- **Epping Forest** - A project board including Friends of Wanstead Park and the Heritage of London Trust was established to oversee the restoration and maintenance of Wanstead Park Grotto.

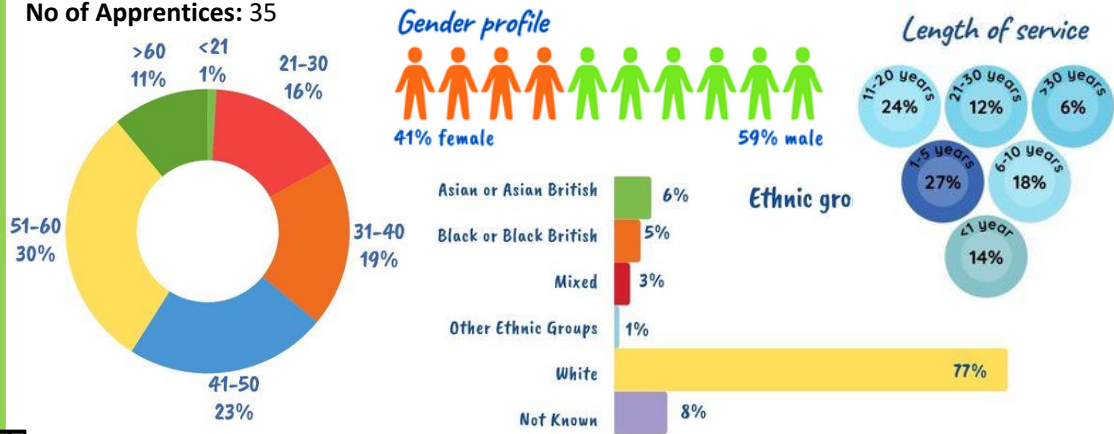
The data and information on this page relates to the whole of the Environment Department, not just to the services covered by this business plan. All data correct at 28/09/2023.

Environment Department Business Plan 2024/25

Workforce representation

Current staffing levels: 679.1 FTE (headcount: 714)

No of Apprentices: 35



Developing our people

The first three priorities of our Departmental Workforce Plan for 2024/25 are:

- Improve staff communication and engagement.
- Increase people management skills and team building.
- Undertake a skills mapping audit.



We are increasing staff engagement through:

- Collaboration with corporate working groups and staff networks.
- Hosting staff network visits to our sites.
- Publishing a monthly departmental newsletter.
- Maintaining and promoting our departmental SharePoint site
- Our Departmental Working Groups which comprise representatives from all divisions (Communications; EDI; Health & Safety; Workplace; IT).
- Celebrating success, e.g. many nominees for the Celebrating our People Awards 2023.

We are developing capability and managing our talent through offering:

- Departmental induction sessions for new joiners.
- ILM Talent Management Programme.
- Supervisory training for managers.
- Specific training, e.g. 'Investigation' training for managers and 'Finance for non-financial managers' courses, which support corporate financial and HR objectives.
- Mentoring of apprentices and ILM candidates (and training for mentors).

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- The Environment Department is committed to driving forward the City of London Corporation's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) agenda. The department's Senior Leadership Team, with the help of their Equalities Champions, seek to identify equality and inclusion priorities, develop appropriate actions to address inequalities and foster good relations between diverse groups.
- The Department's EDI Working Group consists of representatives (Champions) from across the department and is responsible for developing and ensuring compliance with the Departmental EDI Action Plan, and that actions support the Col's overall Equality duties.
- The Group is currently developing a Departmental EDI Plan which will align with the Corporate EDI Plan.

The first three priorities of our Departmental EDI Action Plan for 2024/25 are to ensure that:

1. Our staff have a clear understanding of the Equality Act 2010, particularly the PSED, and how it applies to them both in terms of service provision and working with colleagues. We will achieve this by ensuring staff undertake mandatory equality training and other relevant training, such as EQIAs and management skills.
2. Our Equality Champions actively support and advise managers and colleagues on EDI matters.
3. EQIAs are undertaken, recorded, and the results taken into consideration when making decisions on service delivery.

Health and Safety

The first three priorities of our Departmental Health and Safety Action Plan for 2024/25 are:

1. Mental Health – Stress Risk Assessments: Assess stress factors for all teams across the department, to determine the most effective actions to promote staff wellbeing.
2. Departmental Audit process: Implement a cross divisional Health and Safety compliance audit to share best practise and develop a departmental H&S culture.
3. Front line staff, including lone workers: Audit local processes, to ensure adequate controls are in place for vulnerable staff including lone workers.

Our work locations

Total Environment Department people resource: 679.1 FTE
(N.B. data is accurate at 28/09/2023 but is subject to continual change.)

Guildhall complex	268.2 FTE
Walbrook Wharf	13 FTE
London Gateway Port	55 FTE
River Division Office (Denton)	6 FTE
Heathrow Animal Reception Centre	47 FTE
Col Cemetery & Crematorium	53.9 FTE
Old Bailey (Coroner's service)	2 FTE
Epping Forest	52.8 FTE
Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, Queen's Park (Several different buildings across these sites.)	105.8 FTE
West Ham Park	12.5 FTE
Keats House	2.9 FTE
Ashted Common	6 FTE
Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common	14.2 FTE
West Wickham and Coulsdon Commons	11.8 FTE
City Gardens, Depot	28 FTE

The Environment Department

Shaping sustainable future environments

The Environment Department is the largest in the organisation and provides a diverse range of services to London and the South East.

Within the 'square mile' we deliver many local authority and regulatory functions including planning and development; building control; highways and transportation; cleansing and waste; environmental health, licensing and trading standards.

Further afield, we manage over 4,500 hectares of green spaces; run the City of London Cemetery and Crematorium; operate the Heathrow Animal Reception Centre; provide animal health services London-wide; and, as the London Port Health Authority, undertake controls on imported food and feed through London's ports. The Department's aims, activities and vision are presented in the diagram below.



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<p>Committee(s): Streets and Walkways Sub – For Decision Natural Environment Board – For Information Planning and Transportation – For Information Projects and Procurement Sub – For Information</p>	<p>Date(s): 14 May 2024 16 May 2024 16 May 2024 10 June 2024</p>
<p>Subject: Cool Streets and Greening – programme update</p> <p>Unique Project Identifier(s): Cool Streets and Greening (PV ID 12267) Phase 3 City Greening and Biodiversity (PV ID 12332) Phase 4 Sustainable Drainage (PV ID 12377)</p>	<p>Public</p>
<p>Report of: Interim Executive Director, Environment Department</p>	<p>For Decision</p>
<p>Report authors: Melanie Charalambous and Tim Munday, Environment Department</p>	

Summary

This report provides an update on the delivery of the Cool Streets and Greening programme (CSG), which is structured around four Phases. This programme is one of the ways that we are meeting the aim of the Climate Action Strategy to ensure that our public spaces and infrastructure are resilient to the impacts of climate change, as well as creating a greener and more pleasant City.

The four main phases of the programme are as follows:

- Phase One - Pilot projects to test the suitability of climate resilience measures in the City environment.
- Phase Two - Developed projects to adapt existing schemes to include climate resilience measures.
- Phase Three - City greening and biodiversity including re-landscaping of new sites, re-planting of existing gardens and street tree planting.
- Phase Four - Sustainable drainage projects.

The programme also contains a number of related workstreams including monitoring, mapping of infrastructure and catalogues and guidance for materials and planting. Since the programme inception in April 2021, the following progress has been made:

- 15 projects have been completed with 4 more currently under construction.
- A further 30 projects are planned to be implemented over the next 2 years, varying in scale from replanting of existing gardens with more climate resilient

plants to the complete re-landscaping of streets and spaces within the public realm.

- Around 10 related workstreams have been completed or are underway including a planting catalogue and a strategic flood risk assessment.

This report sets out the next steps in order to complete the programme by 2026 and includes recommendations to assist with this goal.

Recommendations

It is recommended that all Committees:

1. Note the content of this progress update.
2. Note the extension of the Cool Streets and Greening programme timeframes by 12 months to March 2026.

It is recommended that the Streets and Walkways Sub-Committee:

3. Agree to transfer the Cool Streets and Greening allocation of £350,000 from the Crescent project (which has been paused) to the next priority Cool Streets and Greening project which is Temple Avenue.
4. Agree to amend the funding allocations between the phases and projects and approve the required budget increases as set out in Appendix 1.
5. Agree the increase in the Cool Streets and Greening allocation for the Little Trinity Lane project of £150,000 to replace S106 funds that are no longer available and fund additional planting, utility works and the costed risk provision.
6. Delegate approval and drawdown of the Costed Risk Provision for the projects in the programme to the Chief Officer if one is sought at Gateway 5.

Main report

Background

1. The Climate Action Strategy (CAS) was adopted by the Court of Common Council on 8th October 2020 and provides for nine actions under 'Resilient Streets and Greening' and one action under Resilience co-ordination and training. The Cool Streets and Greening programme which takes these forward was initially approved by committees in April 2021 with a total budget of £6.8 million funded through On Street Parking Reserve.

2. Officers have developed the projects within the programme in close collaboration through the CAS Square Mile Project Board and through further co-ordination from the Climate Resilience Steering Group.
3. The primary focus of the programme is the piloting of different climate resilient interventions within the public realm. With the intention that the lessons learnt from this process will be used in future programmes and business as usual approaches.
4. The works have been divided into four phases (1:Pilot, 2:Developed, 3:Greening and Biodiversity, and 4:Sustainable Drainage). Outside of these phases the programme has undertaken works to support the primary aim as part of a development phase.
5. The Cool Streets and Greening workstream was originally intended to be a four-year programme (March 2021-March 2025). As part of wider agreements on the CAS it has been agreed to extend the timeframe by 12 months up to March 2026. This is to enable a longer period for collecting monitoring data, deliver the construction programme and embed lessons learnt.

Progress to date

6. The delivery of the programme is divided into four phases as follows:

Phase One (Pilot projects) – to ensure momentum and to get results on the ground as soon as possible, initial pilot projects were developed and schemes already underway were amended to incorporate climate resilience measures. This included sites at Bevis Marks, Jubilee Gardens, Cheapside, Vine Street and the riverside.

Phase Two (Developed projects) – The second phase integrated resilience measures into existing schemes at an earlier stage of development. This was to ensure value for money by jointly funding projects. This includes sites at Bank, Little Trinity Lane, Finsbury Circus Garden, Moor Lane, Crescent, and monitoring at the Barbican Podium.

Phase Three (City greening and biodiversity) – The third phase included sites where climate resilience measures would be most beneficial and to test strategic measures including creating green corridors. This phase includes re-landscaping, climate resilient planting schemes and tree planting works. This includes sites at London Wall/Moorgate, Fann Street, and St Peter Westcheap as well as a City-wide tree planting programme.

Phase Four (Sustainable drainage) – The fourth phase identified sites specifically for incorporation of sustainable drainage, where rainwater from the immediate catchment could be redirected into newly created raingardens reducing and slowing the flow into the sewer system, whilst providing more greenery in the public realm. This includes sites at Ludgate Broadway, St Andrews Hill, Bread Street, Knightrider Court, and Lloyds Avenue.

7. Table 1 provides a brief update on all the current projects in the programme. Further details on proposed adjustments to projects are set out in the paragraphs below.

Table 1: Summary of project progress

Phase	Project and brief description	Update
1 (Pilot)	Climate resilient planting (Pedestrian Priority): Planting at several parklets – City-wide	Completed April 2021.
	Riverside Planters: An innovative ‘dry garden’ was planted requiring less watering	Completed April 2022.
	Vine Street: 5 street trees were selected for their resilience to trial their suitability for the City	Completed April 2022.
	Bevis Marks/Dukes Place: rain gardens and permeable paving with a climate resilient planting palette.	Completed May 2023.
	Jubilee Gardens: As part of the re-landscaping of this City Garden, increased greenery and a more diverse and resilient planting palette is being introduced.	Works commenced January 2024. Issues have occurred with underground structures and the UKPN asset that required additional waterproofing, an adjustment to planting design and resulting project delay. Main works are planned for completion in autumn 2024.
	Greening Cheapside: Sustainable drainage and resilient planting is being introduced to this public space	Works commenced January 2024. Completion in spring 2024.
2 (Developed)	Bank: As part of the wider junction works, trees, rain gardens and planters are being added to several arms of the junction	Works commenced in 2023. Most of the planting will be completed in autumn 2024.
	Little Trinity Lane: A re-landscaping scheme to introduce more greenery and a number of sustainable drainage measures.	Design complete, works due to commence September 2024, subject to approval of Gateway 5 report by Chief Officer.
	Moor Lane: various elements are to be introduced including trees and raingardens	Design in progress, works due to commence in 2025

		subject to approval of Gateway 5 report.
	Finsbury Circus Garden: a major relandscaping project that will include resilient planting and sustainable drainage	Works commenced November 2023, completion due Jan 2025.
	Barbican Podium: shallow planting beds with a climate resilient palette.	Monitoring commenced August 2022
	Crescent: landscaping, tree planting and rain gardens as part of the creation of a new public space	Proposed to remove from programme and reallocate funding as the project has been paused due to the sale of adjacent property.
	Temple Avenue: Trees and planters to be introduced as part of the enhancement of the southern end of the street.	Proposed replacement for Crescent scheme. To be initiated in July 2024.
3 (Relandscaping)	London Wall/ Moorgate: replacement of the lawn area that is in poor condition with a more climate resilient design along with additional tree planting and route through	Design complete, Gateway 5 approval planned in May. Works due to commence late September 2024
	Finsbury Circus Western Arm: Landscaping of the street to create a new public space.	Design complete, works due to commence July 2024
	Fann Street: extension of tree planting and introduction of new beds and climate resilience measures	Design in progress, works due to commence 2025 subject to approval of Gateway 5 report.
	St Peter Westcheap: relandscaping and measures to protect the existing tree	Design in progress, works due to commence 2025 subject to approval of Gateway 4 and 5 report.
3 (Tree planting)	Season 2022-23	Completed, 59 trial pits, 27 trees planted.
	Season 2023-24	Completed, 27 trial pits, 12 trees planted.
	Season 2024-25	Site identification underway.
	Season 2025-26	Not commenced – will include King William Street tree planting.

3 (Replanting)	John Carpenter Street	Completed February 2024.
	St Mary Aldermanbury	Completed September 2023.
	All Hallows on the Wall	Completed October 2023.
	Whittington Gardens	Completed December 2023.
	St Dunstan's on the Hill	Completed December 2023.
	Queen Street Place	Completed December 2023.
	Angel Lane	Completed December 2023.
	St Olave Silver Street	Design in progress.
	St Dunstan's in the East Churchyard	Site survey complete, design yet to commence
	Grants Quay	Design yet to commence
	Dark House Walk	Design yet to commence
	St Anne and St Agnes Churchyard	Surveys received
	St Mary Staining	Surveys commissioned
St Botolph's without Bishopsgate	Design yet to commence	
4 (Sustainable drainage)	Ludgate Broadway: raingarden, trees, seating and widened pavement alongside accessibility improvements	Design in progress, works due to commence late 2024 subject to approval of Gateway 4&5 report.
	Bread Street (South): raingarden and seating	Design in progress, works due to commence late 2024 subject to approval of Gateway 5 report by Chief Officer.
	Knight rider Court: raingarden, widened pavement and seating. Relocation of disabled parking bays	Design in progress, works due to commence late 2024 subject to approval of Gateway 5 report by Chief Officer.
	St Andrew Hill: raingarden, trees, and widened pavement	Design in progress, works due to commence early 2025 subject to approval of Gateway 5 report by Chief Officer.

	Lloyds Avenue: raingardens, trees, and seating	Design in progress, works due to commence early 2025 subject to approval of Gateway 4 & 5 report.
	St Andrew Undershaft Churchyard: Re-landscaping and sustainable drainage including capturing rainwater from church roof	Design in progress, works due to commence early 2025 subject to approval of Gateway 5 report, church and planning approvals.

8. The scheme at Finsbury Circus Garden was originally agreed as part of Phase 2 as a monitoring only project. Following this, a number of climate resilience measures have been identified including lawn drainage, soil remediation and smart irrigation. It has been agreed by the Climate Director and Square Mile Project Board to therefore provide additional funding for interventions (£157,000) at this site beyond monitoring (total £177,000).
9. The scheme at Crescent was originally agreed as part of Phase 2. However, due to the project being paused because of adjacent building ownership changes, it is highly unlikely that that project would be deliverable within the programme's timeframe. It is therefore proposed that this funding (£350,000) be reallocated to deliver greening and tree planting at Temple Avenue (south) which has been identified as a priority project as part of the approved Fleet Street Area Healthy Streets Plan. Temple Avenue is within one of the planned future 'green corridors' and in a location with currently limited greening. It is therefore the next priority site within the programme. An issues report on the Crescent project will be submitted to Committees later this year, after the adjacent property matter is clarified.
10. The scheme at Little Trinity Lane is approaching Gateway 5. It is proposed to increase the Cool Streets and Greening funding allocation for this project by £150,000 in order to fund additional utility costs to enable more sustainable drainage and trees to be introduced, as well as cover a shortfall of £15,000 due to S106 funds no longer being available due to a requirement to spend it on TfL bus stop works. Funding for a costed risk provision is also required.

Update on other workstreams:

11. The Cool Streets and Greening programme included from the onset a number of supplementary workstreams to enable the main aims of the programme and also provide strategic direction and policy guidance. This included the following:

- **Climate Sensors network** – A series of sensors have been installed across the Square Mile collecting data on temperature, pressure, humidity, and water entering gullies. This information will be used to monitor the success of interventions.
- **Strategic Flood Risk Assessment** – The 2023 review undertook an assessment of existing flood modelling. Whilst it was determined that no new modelling was needed at the time, the existing flood modelling has been used in the selection of sites.
- **Heat resistant materials review** – A desktop literature review was undertaken in to consider the options for making highway surfaces more resilient to heat. Given the balance of considerations in material selection it was determined that shading offered the best opportunity.
- **Square Mile water footprint** – The water footprint works in being undertaken in conjunction with region partners as part of the Subregional Integrated Water Management Strategy for East London.
- **Natural Flood Management (NFM) toolkit** – Whilst there will be limited opportunities from NFM in the Square Mile, a toolkit is being developed for use in the Natural Environments and learning used as appropriate.
- **Climate Resilient Measures Catalogue** – The first version of the catalogue was developed at the beginning of the programme, and it incorporates the interventions being piloted. An updated version was developed in April 2023.
- **Climate Resilient Planting Catalogue** – The first version of the catalogue was published in Spring 2024. It incorporates industry best practise and includes plants used in already completed replanting schemes. It will be updated before the end of the programme.
- **Materials Selection Catalogue** – The catalogue sets out how paving materials should be selected for climate resilience and fed into the development of the City Public Realm Toolkit which was approved in November 2023.
- **Cubic Mile Project** – Was a joint project (November 2021-22) between the City Corporation and the British Geological Survey. It sought to map underground assets to better identify locations for climate resilience interventions. This mapping has been used in site identification.
- **SuDS and Tree Opportunity Mapping** - The Cubic Mile mapping has been refined to focus on locating sustainable drainage and trees. These maps will continue to be updated throughout the programme.
- **External funding bids** – Three applications for external funding have been successful to supplement the work of the programme, this has enabled additional trees to be planted in Middlesex Street, biodiversity works to be undertaken at Noble Street and Whittington Gardens and an Arboricultural Project Officer has been appointed.

Programme development and management

12. From its initiation the programme has been developed with involvement from the CAS Square Mile Project Board, with guidance from the Climate Resilience Steering Group and has directly involved a cross Environment Department Officer Delivery group of staff from Environmental Resilience, Projects and Programmes, City Gardens and Cleansing, and Highways.
13. The CAS Square Mile Project Board has agreed to the extension of the programme by 12 months to March 2026. This has been done to enable a longer period for data collection and time to interpret this data into best practice. The extension will also enable the full delivery of the projects in the programme. Whilst the majority of works are still due to complete before March 2025, some projects including a number of Phase 3 sites, Phase 4 sites and Temple Avenue will need more time to be implemented.
14. The primary aim of the programme has been to trial different climate resilience measures to ascertain which could be most appropriate for us in the context of the Square Mile. At the end of the programme a number of design approaches will have been developed to enable lessons learnt to be incorporated as business as usual.
15. In view of the success of the programme and in order to continue to deliver on its objectives and achieve the strategic aims of a greener and more resilient City, it is likely that a future programme of similar interventions and workstreams will be advisable. Officers will set out options for future measures next year for Members' consideration.

Corporate & Strategic implications

16. The Cool Streets and Greening programme contributes to three outcomes identified in the Corporate Plan 2024 -29 (leading sustainable environments, flourishing public spaces, and vibrant thriving destination). The programme includes actions to create a climate resilient City by reducing the risk of overheating and flooding, ensuring our open spaces enrich people's lives, and making the City's streets more accessible.

Financial implications

17. The entire programme is funded through the On-Street Parking Reserve (£6.8m). Several projects within the programme combine funding from other sources including S106s and S278s in order to deliver wider benefits.
18. As the programme has developed, the costs of individual projects within each phase have been refined. Whilst the overall programme budget remains unchanged, there is a need to transfer some funds between phases and projects as described earlier in this report and detailed in the finance tables in Appendix 1.

19. It has also been necessary to utilise a portion of the programme budget for costed risk provisions for the various individual projects. A further programme report in spring 2025 will provide an update on spend to date and remaining works.

Legal implications

20. There are no new legal implications arising from this update.

Climate implications

21. The Cool Streets and Greening programme is one of the ways that the City Corporation is meeting the aim of the Climate Action Strategy to ensure that our buildings, public spaces and infrastructure are resilient to the impacts of climate change.

Risk implications

22. The top five programme risks are set out below:

Risk	Response
Unknown below ground utilities and structures restricts ability to implement greening and sustainable drainage	Radar surveys are carried out which identify the majority of underground restrictions. Trial holes are also used to reduce this risk. Designs can often be adapted to avoid underground restrictions. This risk has had a significant impact on Phase 4 of the programme. This is also the main risk that requires a costed risk provision.
Project timescales are delayed by external factors	Nearby developments or other projects can sometimes restrict access to sites and delay projects. Project programmes can be adjusted to adapt to these occurrences. It is important to liaise with the highways team to coordinate the programming of works.
Design changes required following public consultation	Changes to designs are frequently required following consultation. The majority of these changes are minor, but some scope changes can be significant. Therefore, it is important to consult at an early stage to avoid significant scope changes and reduce costs.
Cost increases as a result of inflation	This is a high risk given the current rates of inflation, particularly in the construction industry. Delays to projects also increase costs. Cost estimates need to take account of inflation from the outset and delays are to be avoided where possible.

<p>Maintenance costs are not affordable within the budget available</p>	<p>Maintenance costs for planting have been higher than originally anticipated when the programme was first approved, partly as a result of inflation, which has put pressure on the programme budget. In several cases, other funding sources have been identified from joint-funded projects to cover these costs. In other cases, planting has had to be reduced, in order to remain affordable within the budget.</p>
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Conclusion

23. The Cool Streets and Greening Programme is a key deliverable of the Climate Action Strategy and includes a raft of projects and workstreams to help prepare the City to be resilient to the impacts of climate change. To date, several projects have been completed or are underway that make the City a greener, more pleasant and more resilient place for the benefit of residents, workers and visitors.

Appendix:

Appendix 1: Finance Tables

Appendix 2 : Selected Visuals/ maps

Other relevant documents:

London Wall /Moorgate relandscaping, Gateway 5 report (14 May 2024 Streets and Walkway Sub-Committee)

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Appendix One – Finance Tables

Table 1: Expenditure to Date			
Description	Approved Budget (£)	Expenditure (£)	Balance (£)
16800454: CAS - Cool Streets & Greening			
Env Servs Staff Costs	80,000	73,003	6,997
Open Spaces Staff Costs	15,000	10,964	4,036
P&T Staff Costs	115,000	86,028	28,972
P&T Fees	355,000	316,297	38,703
Smart Sensors	155,000	83,379	71,621
Total 16800454	720,000	569,671	150,329
16100454: CAS - Cool Streets & Greening			
P&T Fees	65,000	-	65,000
Total 16100454	65,000	-	65,000
GRAND TOTAL	785,000	569,671	215,329

Table 2: Adjustment Required to reach the next Gateway			
Description	Approved Budget (£)	Adjustment Resources Required (£)	Revised Budget (£)
16800454: CAS - Cool Streets & Greening			
Env Servs Staff Costs	80,000	21,000	101,000
Open Spaces Staff Costs	15,000	-	15,000
P&T Staff Costs	115,000	25,000	140,000
P&T Fees	355,000	24,000	379,000
Smart Sensors	155,000	10,000	165,000
Total 16800454	720,000	80,000	800,000
16100454: CAS - Cool Streets & Greening			
P&T Fees	65,000	(55,000)	10,000
Total 16100454	65,000	(55,000)	10,000
GRAND TOTAL	785,000	25,000	810,000

Table 3: Revised Funding Allocation			
Funding Source	Current Funding Allocation (£)	Funding Adjustments (£)	Revised Funding Allocation (£)
Climate Action Strategy - OSPR	785,000	25,000	810,000
TOTAL	785,000	25,000	810,000

Table 4: Expenditure to Date			
Description	Approved Budget (£)	Expenditure (£)	Balance (£)
16800467: City Greening & Biodiversity			
P&T Staff Costs	27,677	27,676	1
P&T Fees	30,000	28,974	1,026
Total 16800467	57,677	56,650	1,027
16100467: City Greening & Biodiversity			
P&T Fees	79,000	23,745	55,255
Env Servs Staff Costs	46,000	8,830	37,170
Open Spaces Staff Costs	28,000	13,013	14,987
P&T Staff Costs	84,323	83,916	407
Env Servs Works	170,000	98,771	71,229
Open Spaces Works	175,000	61,793	113,207
Costed Risk Provision	45,000	-	45,000
Total 16100467	627,323	290,068	337,255
16100502: Climate Resilient Replanting Sites			
Open Spaces Staff Costs	53,500	7,775	45,725
Open Spaces Works	300,000	73,848	226,152
Total 16100502	353,500	81,624	271,876
GRAND TOTAL	1,038,500	428,341	610,159

Table 5: Adjustment Required to reach the next Gateway			
Description	Approved Budget (£)	Adjustment Resources Required (£)	Revised Budget (£)
16800467: City Greening & Biodiversity			
P&T Staff Costs	27,677	-	27,677
P&T Fees	30,000	(1,025)	28,975
Total 16800467	57,677	(1,025)	56,652
16100467: City Greening & Biodiversity			
P&T Fees	79,000	-	79,000
Env Servs Staff Costs	46,000	-	46,000
Open Spaces Staff Costs	28,000	-	28,000
P&T Staff Costs	84,323	25,000	109,323
Env Servs Works	170,000	-	170,000
Open Spaces Works	175,000	-	175,000
Costed Risk Provision	45,000	-	45,000
Total 16100467	627,323	25,000	652,323
16100502: Climate Resilient Replanting Sites			
Open Spaces Staff Costs	53,500	-	53,500
Open Spaces Works	300,000	-	300,000
Total 16100502	353,500	-	353,500
GRAND TOTAL	1,038,500	23,975	1,062,475

Table 6: Revised Funding Allocation			
Funding Source	Current Funding Allocation (£)	Funding Adjustments (£)	Revised Funding Allocation (£)
Climate Action Strategy - OSPR	1,038,500	23,975	1,062,475
TOTAL	1,038,500	23,975	1,062,475

Table 7: Programme Summary

CAS: Cool Streets and Greening		Allocations		
		Approved	Earmarked	Total
Phase	Activity	£	£	£
Development	Framework development	50,000	-	50,000
	Resilience measures catalogue	10,000	-	10,000
	Smart sensors and monitoring	85,000	-	85,000
	Data collection and analysis	20,000	-	20,000
	Opportunity mapping and data gaps	75,000	-	75,000
	Site identification and prioritisation	30,000	-	30,000
	Staff costs (public realm/highways/CG)	50,000	-	50,000
Development Total		320,000	-	320,000
Phase 1	Bevis Marks	270,000	-	270,000
	Jubilee Gardens	165,000	-	165,000
	Greening Cheapside	180,000	-	180,000
	Riverside Planters	55,000	-	55,000
Phase 1 Total		670,000	-	670,000
Phase 2	Design to G5	120,000	-	120,000
	Little Trinity Lane	-	505,000	505,000
	Temple Avenue	-	350,000	350,000
	Bank	165,000	-	165,000
	Moor Lane	110,000	-	110,000
	Finsbury Circus	177,000	-	177,000
	Barbican Podium	20,000	-	20,000
Phase 2 Total		592,000	855,000	1,447,000
Phase 3	Design to G4	80,000	-	80,000
	Design to G5	95,000	-	95,000

	London Wall/ Moorgate	-	443,000	443,000
	Finsbury Circus Western Arm	438,178	-	438,178
	Fann Street	-	150,000	150,000
	St Peter Westcheap	-	180,000	180,000
	Treeplanting	800,000	23,975	823,975
	Replanting	400,000	-	400,000
Phase 3 Total		1,813,178	796,975	2,610,153
Phase 4	Design to G4	185,000	-	185,000
	Design to G5	140,000	25,000	165,000
	Ludgate Broadway	-	250,000	250,000
	St Andrew Undershaft Churchyard	-	250,000	250,000
	St Andrew Hill	-	200,000	200,000
	Bread Street (South)	-	120,000	120,000
	Knightrider Court	-	211,822	211,822
	Lloyds Avenue	-	371,025	371,025
Phase 4 Total		325,000	1,427,847	1,752,847
Grand Total		3,720,178	3,079,822	6,800,000

Phase one: Pilot

Pilot projects and schemes already underway amended to incorporate climate resilience measures.



'Xeriscape' (drought resistant) planting City of London Boys School.



Vine Street 'disease resistant' tree planting including species 1 and species 2.



Bevis Marks 'rain garden' a SUDs project planted in an engineered substrate.



Cheapside Sunken garden progress, due to be completed in May 2024.



Jubilee Gardens render, indicative visualisations of site, due to be completed Nov 2024.

All aspects of Phase 1 are due to be completed in 2024, this phase has been subject to delays, this is a result of multiple funding streams and stakeholders.

Phase two: Developed

Integration of resilience measures into existing schemes at an earlier stage of development.



Page 36
 Trinity Lane current (left) and render (right) indicative visualisations of site, subject to revisions.



Bank Junction 'rain gardens' completed Apr 2024, full greening due to be completed Sep 2024.



Barbican podium 'Micro-climate' monitoring undertaken by Atkins.

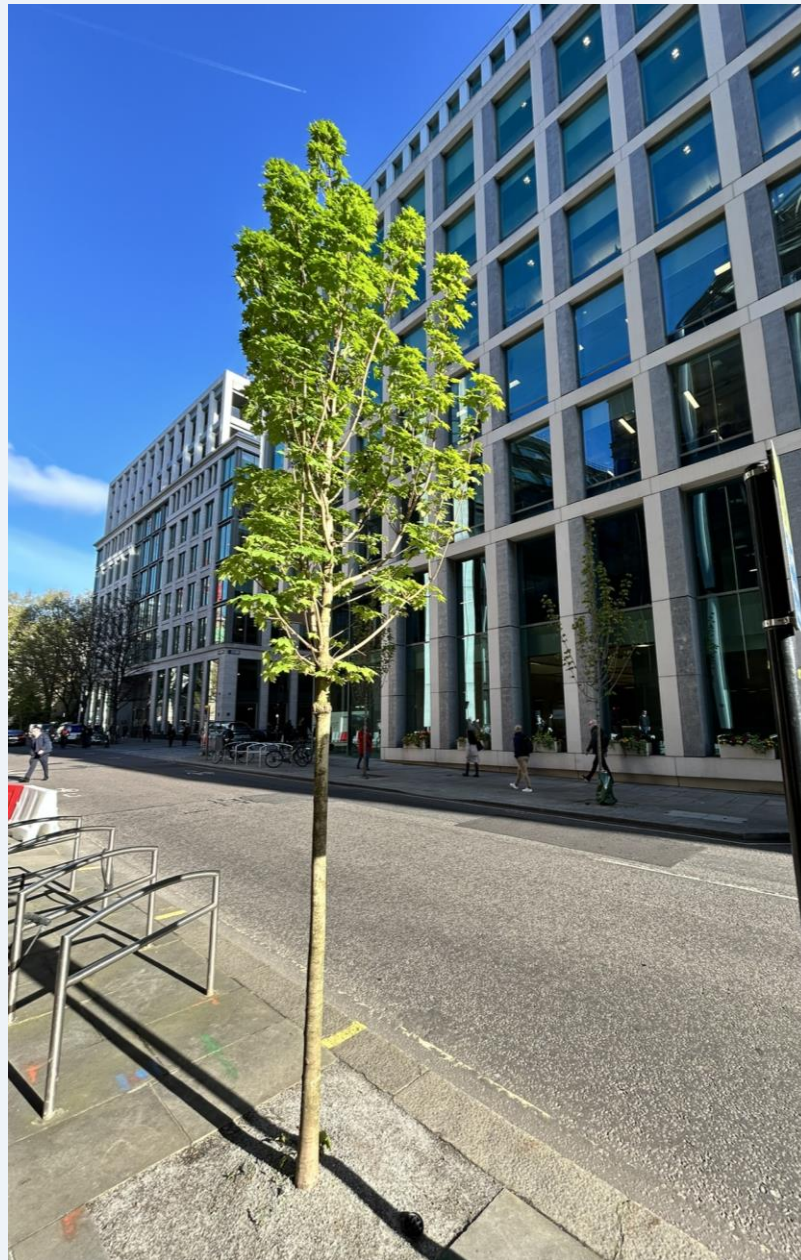
Phase 2 is progressing with all major project reaching Gateway 5. Alternative options are being reviewed for reallocation of funds from projects scoped out of phase 2.

Phase three: City Greening & Biodiversity

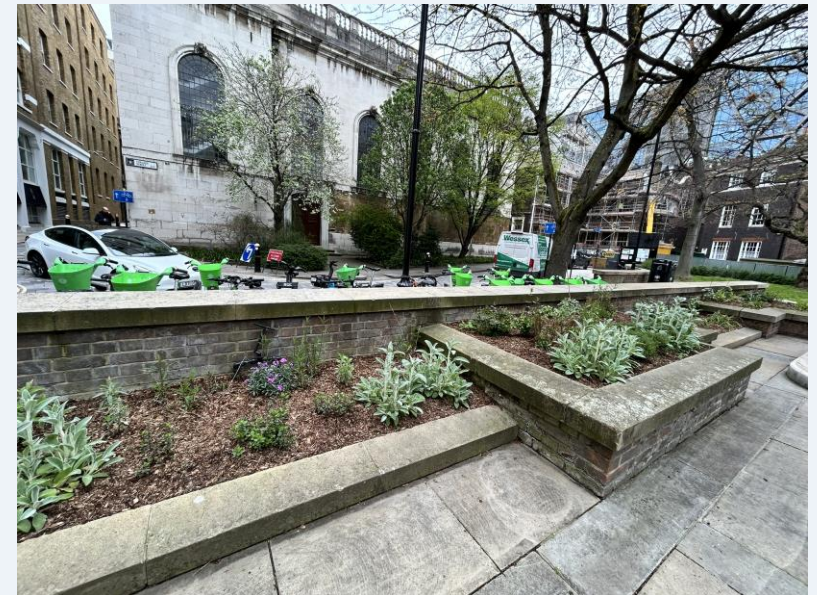
Sites identified where climate resilience measures would be most beneficial and to test strategic measures including creation of green corridors.



All Hallows by the wall sand beds completed in Spring 2023.



Street tree planting across the City, a total of 43 were delivered in 23/24.



Whittington Garden completed Nov 2023, aim to increase plant diversity, supported by Rewild London fund



Replanting site St Mary Aldermanbury completed Oct 2023, aim to increase biodiversity.

Phase 3 consists of three key elements, 're-landscaping', 're-planting' and tree planting. There are four major 're-landscaping' projects and 14 're-planting' sites.

Phase four: Sustainable Drainage

Sites identified for incorporation of sustainable drainage, to redirect rainwater from the catchment reducing and slowing the flow into the sewer system.



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Bread street infiltration 'rain garden' along cycle route.



Ludgate Broadway infiltration 'rain garden' along highway.



Knight Rider Court infiltration 'rain garden' in re-allocated parking bay.

Phase 4 is progressing through the design phase and includes five sites. Detailed designs are to be supplied for Gateway 5 and construction packs, to be programmed in 2025.

Cool Streets and Greening Impacts

- 4291m² of publicly accessible open space improved sustainably
- Delivery of two additional grant projects to enhance environmental greenspace
- Three strategic green corridors identified



4291m² of open space improvement



15 completed pilot projects

- Completion of 7/9 'Phase 1' projects
- Completion of 2/6 'Phase 2' projects
- Completion of 7/19 'Phase 3' projects
- Progression of six 'Phase 4' projects

- Implementation of 'Climate Resilient' planting at nine sites
- Seven sites improved along green corridors for biodiversity
- Two 'Sustainable Drainage' schemes



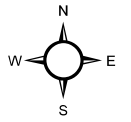
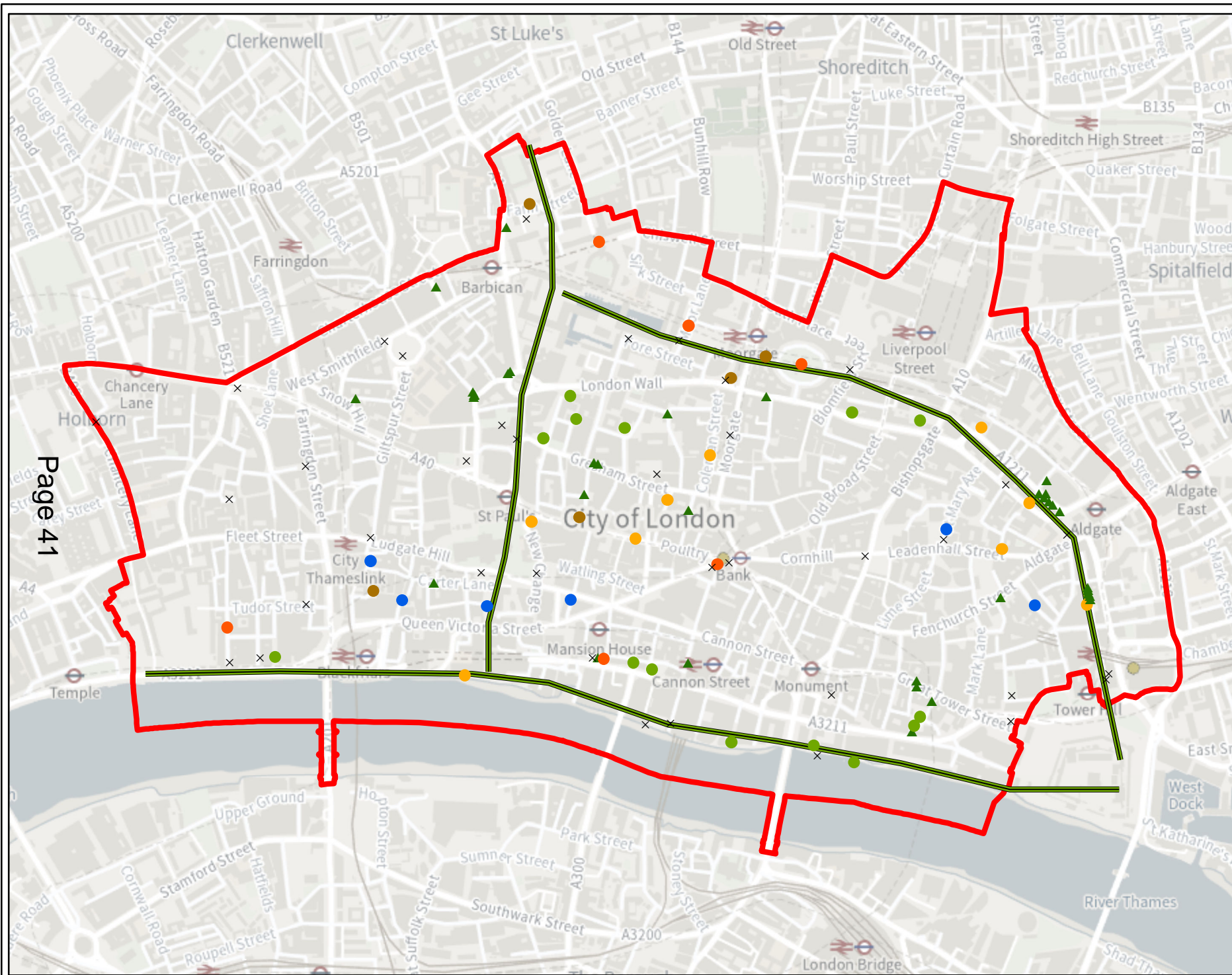
12 resilience measures trialled



64 trees planted throughout the City

- 43 trees planted in streets for connectivity, shading and cooling
- Two tree avenues created (Vine Street and Houndsditch)
- Incorporation of 'resilient' tree species

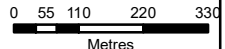
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Cool Streets & Greening Projects

- City of London Boundary
- Green Corridors Routes
- x Sensors
- CSG_Projects**
- Phase 1 (Pilot)
- Phase 2 (Developed)
- Phase 3 (Relandscaping)
- Phase 3 (Replanting)
- Phase 4 (Sustainable Drainage)
- ▲ Tree

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Agenda Item 17

Committee(s): Natural Environment Board	Date(s): 16/05/2024
Subject: Learning and Heritage Annual Review, 2023 -24	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	Diverse Engaged Communities Leading Sustainable Environment Providing Excellent Services Vibrant Thriving Destination Flourishing Public Spaces
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	n/a
What is the source of Funding?	n/a
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	n/a
Report of: Bob Roberts, Interim Executive Director, Environment Department	For Information
Report author: Abigail Tinkler, Head of Learning, and Rob Shakespeare, Head of Heritage & Museums, Environment Department	

Summary

This report summarises the key activities undertaken by the Learning and Heritage teams in 2023-24. It details progress and performance against these key activities and highlights successes and challenges.

The activities of the Learning and Heritage teams support all our recently adopted Natural Environment strategies, particularly the Culture, Heritage and Learning strategy.

Main Report

Background

1. Following the implementation of TOM2 in the Environment Department from May 2023, a new Culture & Projects Section was established to provide cross-divisional advice, support and services for learning, heritage and special projects across the Natural Environment Division. The section is headed by an Assistant Director, who reports directly to the Natural Environment Director, supported by a Head of Learning and Head of Heritage & Museums, with their respective teams.
2. The heritage team aims to conserve and provide access to our shared culture and heritage, which includes built and natural assets and intangible cultural heritage, providing a consistent and collaborative approach to managing our unique and iconic cultural offer. They do this through Keats House, The Epping Forest Visitor Centre and Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge, and The Temple, as well as acting as the client team for the Monument, and an inclusive and engaging programme of exhibitions, events and special projects, and supporting activities.
3. The learning team provide opportunities to learn within our unique and inspiring green spaces. At a time of increasing disconnection from nature, a need to tackle the climate crisis, and a drive to tackle inequalities and enrich people's lives, our Learning Programme provides a key method for the City of London to contribute to the health and wellbeing of residents of some of London's most deprived communities through connecting them more powerfully to their local green spaces.
4. Benefits include increases in wellbeing, connection to nature, confidence and understanding.

Current Position

Heritage Programme 2023/24

5. The first added value project to be supported by the new Heritage team was the 'Firing London's Imagination' project. Officers had previously worked with Friends of Highgate Roman Kiln to secure funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to reinstate the Roman kiln which was excavated from Highgate Wood in 1968. A Heritage Officer was appointed with 50% of their costs supported by the project grant, to support the community and formal learning outputs of the project. In February 2024, the kiln itself was successfully removed from storage in Bruce Castle Museum, Haringey and sent for conservation. The Culture & Projects team are working with City Surveyor's and external consultants to repurpose the Information Hut in Highgate Wood to display and interpret the kiln for its return, scheduled for autumn '24. We are also working with the Highgate Wood team, heritage consultants and local creatives to build and fire a replica kiln for Highgate Wood Community Day in September 2024.

6. Keats House was open to the public on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays & Sundays, delivering a learning and events programme to support the 'Young Romantics in the City' exhibition in partnership with Cardiff University. Special projects, including 'The Wild Escape', supported by Art Fund, Keats House Summer School, and 'Poetry Versus Colonialism' and 'Culturally Speaking', funded by the Education Strategy Unit, engaged young people with nature, heritage and cultural venues. Over 7,300 people visited the house (+ c.42% on 2022/23) with a further c.1,000 students engaged through formal learning sessions and special projects and a similar number attending events and conferences hosted at the house.
7. The Epping Forest Visitor Centre and Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge at Chingford and The Temple at Wanstead Park, continued to welcome visitors, with over 42k in person visits in person to these sites. The Visitor Centre hosted exhibitions including 'Radical Landscapes' along with displays of local artists' work.
8. The Head of Heritage & Museums continues to work closely with Natural Environment and other cultural partner venues to deliver and develop projects funded by the Education Strategy Unit. In 2023/24, these included London Metropolitan Archives (LMA), Guildhall Art Gallery, Museum of London Docklands and the Museum of the Order of St John, supporting the achievement of cross-cutting creative learning and social outcomes. LMA's 'Unforgotten Lives' exhibition was also hosted at East Heath in August and September and was seen by over ten thousand people during its three-week run.
9. The Culture & Projects section worked with City Surveyor's and other Natural Environment sections to ensure that our heritage assets are maintained and preserved for future generations. A Conservation Management Plan for The Temple was finalised in March 2024 following stakeholder engagement and the project to remove The Grotto from the Heritage at Risk Register has been progressed through the appointment of consultants to advise, consult on and determine the preferred scope of preservation works to this Grade II listed ruin.
10. Acting as the client team for the Monument, the Culture & Projects team continued to work with officers from Tower Bridge / City Bridge Foundation, who operate the Monument on a day-to-day basis, and City Surveyor's to provide public access to, maintain and preserve, and develop future plans for this Grade I listed, scheduled monument. In 2023/24, over 100K people visited the Monument (+ c.8% on 2022/23) achieving income of £363k (+ 6%).

Learning Programme 2023-24

11. The Learning Programme for 2023-24 has engaged audiences across Hampstead Heath (including Parliament Hill Fields and Golders Hill Park), Highgate Wood, Epping Forest (including Barn Hoppitt and Wanstead Flats), and West Ham Park.

Schools Service

12. Engaging 18,431 students, the school programme offered active learning experiences in nature and heritage, aligning with the National Curriculum while fostering skill development, wellbeing, and nature connection. It provided rich opportunities for first-hand observation of habitats, imaginative storytelling inspired by nature, active participation in activities like pond dipping and orienteering, and the development of teamwork skills through den building and orienteering.

Reaching Disadvantaged Students

13. With school workshops offered at Hampstead Heath, Epping Forest and West Ham Park the programme targeted schools in London's most deprived boroughs, including Tower Hamlets, Newham, Hackney, Haringey, Camden, Islington, and Waltham Forest. Additionally, bespoke offerings were tailored for children with special educational needs, those at risk of exclusion, and those in pupil referral units, with significant participation in nature learning and youth programmes.

Play Activities

14. At Hampstead Heath, two play centres provided indoor and outdoor facilities, nurturing children's mental health, wellbeing, social skills, and creativity. Notably, the centres catered to children from areas with high levels of child poverty, providing essential enrichment opportunities during school holidays. The centres are staffed by skilled playworkers who provide a safe and welcoming environment.

15. Despite these achievements, funding constraints post-TOM pose a significant risk to the sustainability of play centres. Growing our Divisional capability in fund-raising and, specifically, identifying a sustainable funding model for our play offer will be a major challenge for 2024-25 and beyond.

Youth Programmes

16. Bespoke programmes targeted at 13–25-year-olds engaged 758 participants struggling with education, employment, or mental health challenges. Collaborations with various organizations across London facilitated diverse activities aimed at empowering young people and fostering wellbeing, nature connection, confidence and involvement. Participating groups included pupil referral units, special needs schools, family support organisations, young carers, social prescribing practices and refugee/asylum seekers.

Climate Education Initiatives

17. Recognising the crucial link between nature connection and pro-environmental attitudes, the Learning Team has intensified efforts to incorporate nature connection across its programmes. It actively participates in initiatives and alliances like the Climate Action Pathways in Education (CAPE), aiming to equip individuals with the knowledge and skills to address climate change. It collaborates with Col Climate Action, Environmental Resilience and Education Strategy teams to develop a shared, strategic approach to climate education.

Collaboration

18. The programme has collaborated with a variety of internal and external groups to create and deliver bespoke programmes, share ideas and improve practice, including:

19. Internal: Education Strategy Unit, Tower Bridge Learning Team, Climate Resilience Team, Climate Action Strategy Team, Barbican Children's Library, DCCS Early Help Team, Virtual School Team.

20. External: RSPB, Wanderers of Colour, London Wildlife Trust, Transition Kentish Town, Queen's Crescent Community Association, Ambition Aspire Achieve (Newham), Family Action UK, Enfield Young Carers, Newham Young Carers, Tindersticks, Camden Early Help Team.

Grant Funded Projects

21. The Learning Team has achieved a significant milestone by securing funding from the City of London's Cultural and Creative Learning Fund for two impactful projects.

22. New Leaf: A grant of £1,920 has been awarded for a holiday programme designed to cater to children facing various challenges, such as poverty, disability, or caring responsibilities. This collaborative effort involves Barbican Libraries, 'Ambition Aspire Achieve' (a Newham-based charity for families), and the City of London Early Help Team. The project aims to expand the accessibility of City of London cultural opportunities while boosting confidence levels and enhancing wellbeing among participants. Activities include shared lunches around the campfire, mindful movement sessions, and crafting stories inspired by nature.

23. Nature Learning: The team has secured £18,500 for an outdoor learning initiative catering to children with autism and other additional needs, taking place at West Ham Park. This programme, which includes funding for a part-time position, is already engaging five schools per week, with an additional three schools on a waiting list. Through tailored, long-term nature-based learning experiences for students across Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), Key Stage 1 (KS1), and Key Stage 2 (KS2), the project aims to

provide SEND children with increased opportunities to explore, play, and learn in natural environments, reaping the associated wellbeing benefits.

24. A dedicated outdoor facilitator collaborates closely with schoolteachers to design learning experiences that cater to the specific needs of their students. These experiences encompass a wide range of objectives, including fostering teamwork, encouraging exploration in nature, building confidence, applying classroom learning in a new context, enhancing language skills, promoting decision-making abilities, fostering a connection with nature, and facilitating emotional regulation.
25. Given the significant concern surrounding the attainment gap between disadvantaged students and their peers, these targeted programmes serve as invaluable tools in addressing and ultimately bridging this divide.

Staff resources

Heritage

26. From May 2023, a new heritage team was formed within the Culture & Projects Section, comprised of 2.33fte officers based at Keats House, 1fte officer based at Epping Forest and self / project funded heritage officer roles (initially vacant) all reporting to Head of Heritage & Museums (1fte).
27. In 2024-25, a review of the impact of TOM2 will be conducted, including a review of capacity within the Heritage teams to operate visitor attractions and manage projects across the Division, led by the Director of Natural Environment and reported to Committees in due course.

Learning

28. Due to the recruitment moratorium, the Learning Team started the year with two vacant posts, and the majority of staff on short-term contracts. This year, we have been able to give all core staff permanent contracts and fill our vacancies. In addition, a grant from the City of London's Cultural and Creative Learning Fund is funding a new part time Learning Officer to expand our learning offer for children with additional needs.
29. Due to a reallocation of Divisional resources from financial year 2024-25, the £29,000 previously allocated annually for casual play staff for the delivery of its school holiday play offer at the Parliament Hill play centres is no longer available. This change has prompted the Learning team to explore alternative fundraising avenues.
30. Currently, the Natural Environment Division is actively developing a comprehensive fundraising framework, an ethics policy, and due diligence guidance to ensure transparent and responsible practices. Without these protocols in place, the Learning team cannot actively seek funding from certain sources, such as affluent individuals who frequent the play centres with their children. However, once these protocols are established, the Learning team anticipates a broader spectrum of fundraising options

becoming available. Another challenge is the lack of an established process to prioritise funding requests across different teams in the name of Hampstead Heath charity. In the interim, officers are actively pursuing funding opportunities for which learning activities are eligible, to sustain the play offer at Parliament Hill. If further funding is not secured by July 2024, the Corporation's play provision at Parliament Hill during the school summer

31. holiday period (and, on which, the local community has come to rely) may be cancelled.

Governance and operations

32. Heritage: Key activities this year were:

- Supporting the charity review of Keats House and recommendations to Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee
- Developing a new agreement for Keats Community Library to operate from Ten Keats Grove and review of fees and charges for Keats House, both of which were approved by Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee.

33. Learning: Key activities this year were:

- Drafting Service Level Agreements between Learning and NLOS
- Investigating accident at play centre, resulting in the development of new safety checks and training.
- Installation of two new pond decks in the Hampstead Heath teaching gardens to provide an enhanced learning experience.

Finance

34. The end of year financial position for both the Heritage and Learning teams is not yet available but will be reported to the relevant Committees by the Chamberlains Department in due course.

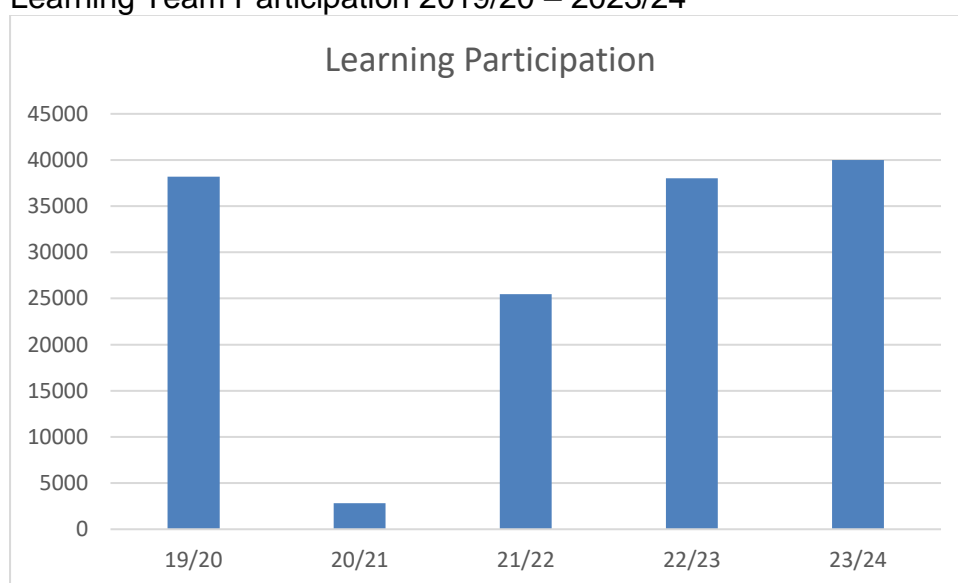
Key Data

Number of in person visits to heritage buildings / visitor attractions	2022/23	2023/24* (* provisional figures, subject to checking)
Keats House	5,149	7,338
The Monument	92,899	100,123
Epping Forest Visitor Centre ('The View')	N/A	30,731
Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge	N/A	10,572
The Temple	N/A	930
TOTAL	N/A	149,694

Learning Programme Engagement 2023-24	
---------------------------------------	--

Hampstead Heath Schools	10796
Epping Forest Schools	4065
West Ham Park Schools	3570
West Ham Park SEND	257
Hampstead Heath Play	20345
Youth Programme (cross-site)	758
Family Programme (cross-site)	132
New volunteers	1
TOTAL	40004

Learning Team Participation 2019/20 – 2023/24



(Note Covid dip and rebuild following the pandemic.)

Evaluation

35. The Learning Programme has had a positive impact on participants' sense of wellbeing and nature connection.

Schools programme

Wellbeing:

- 10% increase in feelings of wellbeing
- 88% participants felt happy or very happy after taking part.

Nature Connection:

- 7% increase in feelings of nature connection
- 88% felt connected or very connected to nature after taking part

Play programme

Wellbeing:

- 100% participants felt happy or very happy after taking part.

Summary of successes in 2023-24

36. The learning programme engaged 40,000 participants and reached people in London's most deprived boroughs.
37. The learning programme has increased participants' feelings of nature connection, which correlates with pro-environmental behaviours and attitudes later in life.
38. The learning team are leading a UK network of researchers and educators to develop best practices in climate education. They are collaborating with Col Climate Action, Environmental Resilience and Education Strategy teams to develop a shared, strategic approach to climate education.
39. In its first year, the new heritage team has focussed on maintaining and rebuilding its core offer of opening visitor attractions and delivering exhibitions, events learning and special projects, underpinned by best-practice buildings and collections management processes.
40. The 'Firing London's Imagination' project is underway, supporting local community outcomes and engagement and, with external funding, providing a model for how the heritage team can expand its scope and support for priority projects in future.

Summary of challenges

41. Identifying a sustainable funding model to continue to operate the popular play offer and dedicated play centres at Hampstead Heath.
42. Identifying a sustainable funding model for the Heritage and Museums team to enable the team to provide the necessary expertise and support across the Natural Environment Division.
43. Strengthening relationships with partners and stakeholders across our learning venues and heritage sites, clarifying roles and responsibilities with partners, working in a complementary manner with third party learning and heritage providers across our open spaces in support of improved operations.
44. Corporate and Strategic Implications: The Learning and Heritage programmes contribute to the delivery Corporate Plan's outcomes:
 - Diverse engaged communities
 - Leading Sustainable Environment
 - Providing Excellent Services
 - Vibrant Thriving Destination

- Flourishing Public Spaces

45. Financial implications: The challenges identified include the need for a sustainable funding model for the play centres at Hampstead Heath.
46. Resource implications: The challenges identified include how to provide the necessary heritage expertise across the Division under the current model.
47. Legal implications: None
48. Risk implications: If the challenges identified are not met, the risk increases in delivering expected services.
49. Equalities implications: None
50. Climate implications: The learning team are leading a UK network of researchers and educators to develop best practice in climate education. They are collaborating with CoL Climate Action and Education Strategy teams to develop a shared, strategic approach to climate education, recognising the role of education as a driver for sustainability.
51. Security implications: None

Conclusion

This report summarises the key activities undertaken by the Learning and Heritage teams in 2023-24. It details progress and performance against these key activities and highlights successes and challenges.

The learning and heritage teams have delivered a successful year with an increase in visitors and participants compared with 2022-23. Qualitative evaluation has also shown an increase in the well-being and nature connection experienced by participants. Challenges have been identified and these will inform future activities, including business planning and operational changes in 2024-25 and beyond.

Appendices

None

Background Papers

None

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Committee(s):- Culture Heritage and Libraries Natural Environment Board	Dated:
Subject: Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	6 9 11 12
Report of: Remembrancer	For Information
Report author: Philip Saunders, Parliamentary Affairs Counsel	

Summary

This Report provides an overview of the provisions of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 (“the Act”) that are relevant to the City’s cultural, heritage and environmental interests. The legislation is in the form of a framework, mostly containing little detail. The Government’s intention is that rules and guidance will be grafted on in the future.

Briefings and engagement took place throughout the prior consultation period and during the progress of the Bill through Parliament.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The White Paper published ahead of the Act proposed new categories of land for planning purposes, which in some instances appeared to reduce protections for some green and open spaces. Working with colleagues in the City’s open spaces and more widely in the Environment Department, the Remembrancer made representations in support of continued strong protections for the environment and open spaces.

Environment

2. The Act replaces existing environmental assessment processes (Strategic Environmental Assessment, Sustainability Appraisal and Environmental Impact Assessment) with a requirement for 'Environmental Outcome Reports'. Whilst many of the elements of this new regime are similar to the current arrangements, the Government described EORs as a way to simplify the process of deciding when an environmental assessment is required, strengthen the role of mitigation in the context of environmental assessments, and create a more robust approach to monitoring outcomes. Consent will not be granted for a development unless an EOR has been prepared and taken into account.
3. The Act describes what an EOR should be - a written report which assesses the impact on the delivery of specified environmental outcomes (for example outcomes relating to heritage protection or the natural environment) – but does not provide detail of the regime. Whilst the regulation-making power came into force on 26 December 2023, no regulations have as yet been made and the details will only be known once these are put in place at a future date. EORs will cover, as a minimum, biodiversity and environmental quality (including visual impacts).
4. Under the Act, the concept of environmental protection will encompass the effects of human activity on the natural environment, cultural heritage and landscape, as well as the protection of people from those activities. It also extends to issues relating to maintenance, restoration and enhancement of the environment. For example, in a provision not yet in force, registered parks and gardens (such as Wanstead Park) a planning authority will have a duty to have 'special regard' to the desirability of preserving or enhancing designated heritage assets.
5. The Government will produce a series of National Development Management Policies, which will build on and replace the current National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The provisions are not yet in force, but the Government intends that these national policies will provide a consistent approach across England on issues which apply in most areas such as Green Belt and heritage policies. The national policies will, if there are points of conflict, trump local plans.
6. Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) currently have the highest status of protection under NPPF and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. The Act (section 245, not yet in force) strengthens protection for AONBs, so that authorities "must seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty". Regulations under this provision will be made at a future date. Separately to the Act, the Government has indicated that further guidance on biodiversity and environmental protection will be developed by summer 2024.
7. The Act places a greater emphasis on community engagement, for example through enhanced pre-application consultation. When the measures come into force, in a City Corporation context, this move will be embedded in a new

version of the City's 'Statement of Community Involvement'. The concept of 'street votes' on planning matters received media coverage and the Government has begun to consider proposals, including through consultation, for how such votes might be implemented.

Design

8. Reflecting the Government's stated desire to promote high quality of design in buildings and spaces, the current National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) guidance on the need for each local authority to have a design guide or design codes in place will become a statutory requirement. Local authority-wide design codes will have full weight in making decisions on development. These codes will either be set out within the local plan or in a supplementary plan. The national 'Office for Place' will support local authorities to turn design visions into local standards, deliver design codes and design better outcomes. The Office has already published guidance in support of this aim.

Heritage

9. The Act gives designated heritage assets, including scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens, World Heritage Sites and registered battlefields the same statutory protection as listed buildings and conservation areas. The overall level of protection has been strengthened from 'preserving' to 'preserving and enhancing'.
10. When considering whether to grant planning permission for a development which affects a relevant asset or its setting, planning authorities and the Secretary of State will be obliged to have 'special regard' to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the asset or its setting, a change which requires that significant weight is given to the protection and improvement of heritage assets. This provision is not yet in force.
11. Planning authorities will also have a new statutory duty, not yet in force, to maintain an Historic Environment Record. Officers in the City's Planning Department welcome this move as a way of increasing the level of information available on local heritage assets. Central government funding and details are not yet clear, however.
12. The Act introduces a new temporary stop notice which will be available, when the provision is brought into force at a date to be appointed, where it appears unauthorised works are being undertaken to a listed building. This would require all specified works to cease for a maximum of 56 days from the date of the notice.

Conclusion

13. Culture, Heritage and Libraries, and Open Spaces officers have been consulted in the preparation of this Report.
14. Planning matters have been separately reported to the Planning and Transportation Committee.
15. While not part of the Act, in a linked subject the Government has indicated that the implementation of mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain in England will start in 2024 with application to most conventional planning applications and will expand following further consultation. Draft regulations have been published¹ and a considerable volume of further regulations are anticipated.
16. During the Bill's parliamentary passage, briefings were provided on the Corporation's support for financial services innovation across the UK and the City's stated aim to ensure that no area is left behind, including relevant areas of the Capital. Engagement underlined the contribution to levelling up made by City Corporation projects and the importance of environmental and heritage protections.

Philip Saunders
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¹ [Draft regulations](#)

Committee:	Date:
Natural Environment Board	16 May 2024
Subject: City Gardens Update	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1)Diverse Engaged Communities 2)Leading Sustainable Environment 3)Providing Excellent services 5)Vibrant Thriving Destination 6)Flourishing Public Spaces
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N/A
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Bob Roberts, Interim Executive Director Environment	For Information
Report author: Jake Tibbetts, City Gardens Manager	

Summary

This report provides an update to Members of the Open Spaces & City Gardens Committee on current management and operational activities across the City Gardens section.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report

Main Report

Current position

Personnel

1. The recruitment process has started for two city Gardeners, and are awaiting job evaluations for two more positions, including the Keeper at Bunhill which will be considered by the evaluation panel on 16 May.
2. A new assistant Gardener will be starting 3rd June, who will be based at the Barbican Team.
3. The four apprentice Gardeners have settled in well and started their college courses at the end of April.

Procurement

4. The first of the electric vehicles has been delivered and is now in use, there has been a delay with the build of the remaining electric vehicles but are anticipated to be delivered in the next two months.

Operational Activities

5. **Biodiversity Action Plan:** The Biodiversity Partnership Group has formed three subgroups made up of internal officers and external organisations, to focus on three different BAP actions:
 - **Communications**
Identify opportunities to engage with City community to raise awareness of the BAP and support biodiversity in the Square Mile. (Education, Comms, community, businesses)
 - **Pollinators in the City**
Develop guidance on supporting pollinators in the built environment by enabling biodiversity partnership working group
 - **Biological Recording in City**
Increase understanding of biodiversity in the Square Mile through systematic surveys and species recording
6. City Gardens have purchased 25 agrisound monitors which will be placed in gardens across the city on a trial basis. These monitor use sound sensors to identify and count the numbers of nearby bees, this information is then sent back via the mobile phone to enable monitoring of bee activity bee across the city. If this proves successful the next stage will be to expand the network and will encourage private land owners to introduce them into their sites.
7. **Pollinating London Together** - City Gardens continue to work closely with Pollinating London Together who have recently published the annual report of pollinator and habitat surveys for 2023. The report details data gathered during field surveys on the diversity and abundance of pollinators and pollinator-friendly plants in the City of London.

8. The survey involved four rounds of surveys between early spring and late summer across 63 sites including 58 ground level gardens and five roof gardens. A total of 9,606 insect pollinators were recorded with pollinators recorded on 72% of flowering plants in the City of London. The report highlights the importance of increasing the diversity of pollinator-friendly planting and increase nesting resources for both cavity and ground nesting bees which can be delivered as part of climate-resilient planting schemes.
9. **Tower Hill Gardens:** A public consultation exercise on the new playground will take place over the summer, which will then feed into the design. Members will have a chance to comment on the design at a later committee. The existing playground will be removed shortly.
10. **Aldgate Live:** City Gardens are working with Aldgate Connect, Portsoaken Activities Group and Destination City are working together to deliver live music events in Aldgate square throughout. These will be open sessions to musicians who can book slots in advance to play.
11. **Friends of City Gardens:** The FoCG have secured funding from the GLA to carry out rewilding works at Bunhill Fields, this includes the establishment of new shade beds, enhanced woodland habitat through planting native plants and ferns, improving habitat for ground nesting bees, improved grass areas through introducing wildflower species, planting new trees, increased biodiversity of planting across the site and delivering outdoor learning sessions for young adults, local children, residents and workers in ecology, integration boards and guided walks.
12. **Corporate volunteering:** With the new staff that have been identified within this report, Gardens and Cleansing are looking to work with Friends of City Gardens and existing corporate volunteers to deliver an enhanced programme of corporate volunteer days that organisations can sign up to. These events will where possible include other services such as cleansing and heritage to widen the offer. Work is also being done within the wider Natural Environment team to look at volunteering synergies and potential collaborations across the department.

Project Updates

13. Current projects
 - 1 Cheapside/ Sunken Gardens; a sustainable urban drainage scheme that is will be retrofitted around the existing trees and deliver new sustainable planting beds, is on site and nearing completion.
 - Jubilee Gardens – A climate resilient scheme that will feature a relative high volume of new trees for the size of the site. This scheme is on site and it is intended that planting will take place in October.
14. The following projects have been completed since the last City Gardens Update report
 - Moor Lane Eastern Side –new planters and trees.

- Middlesex Street - six new street trees
 - Bank Junction phase 1 three new street trees and new Suds planter.
 - Aldermanbury Square – rejuvenating the planting beds and planting of three new trees
 - Replacement of box hedge at Carter Lane and Coleman Street Garden
15. **Finsbury Circus:** Maylim, the main contractor, took occupation of the site 20th November 2023.
16. Physical works Completed since last update:
- Tree pruning and felling works
 - Drainage runs (manholes and attenuation tanks)
 - Sub-base installation (north and south)
 - Works to demolish parks office and Bandstand plinth.
17. Works panned for coming month:
- Digging out planters
 - Soil for lawn area
 - Commencement of paving around perimeter path
 - Foundations for parks office
18. The programme is still on track for the garden to open late 2024. A site visit for NEB members around Finsbury Circus is being planned for September.
19. City Gardens are developing the Finsbury Circus Events Policy, this will be completed by the time the gardens open, the first draft will be presented to committee at a future meeting.

Events

20. The Chair for the Natural Environment Board is hosting a walk for members on the 12th June. This will led by the City Gardens Manager, attendees will visit a number of sites to hear about the City Gardens innovative work and to meet members of the team.
21. The first “Meet the Gardeners” event took place on the 15th of April in the Guildhall. This was a joint event involving the Natural Environment Board, the Worshipful Company of Gardeners and the charitable veteran organisations who organise the Big Curry Lunch. It was a very well attended event despite the unexpected rain and hail, bringing together people across the City who have an interest in horticulture.

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City Gardens Manager

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