



## Open Spaces and City Gardens

**Date:** MONDAY, 21 JULY 2014

**Time:** 11.30 am

**Venue:** COMMITTEE ROOM - 2ND FLOOR WEST WING, GUILDHALL

**Members:** Alderman Ian Luder (Chairman)  
Deputy Alex Deane (Deputy Chairman)  
George Abrahams  
Deputy Robert Howard  
Wendy Mead  
Barbara Newman  
Jeremy Simons  
Deputy Michael Welbank  
Alderman Gordon Haines (Ex-Officio Member)  
Virginia Rounding (Ex-Officio Member)  
Graeme Smith

**Enquiries:** **Natasha Dogra**  
[natasha.dogra@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:natasha.dogra@cityoflondon.gov.uk)

Lunch will be served in the Guildhall Club at 1pm

**John Barradell**  
Town Clerk and Chief Executive

# AGENDA

## Part 1 - Public Agenda

1. **APOLOGIES**
2. **DECLARATIONS BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA**
3. **MINUTES**  
To agree the minutes of the previous meeting.

**For Decision**  
(Pages 1 - 8)

## Open Spaces

4. **REVENUE OUTTURN 2013/14- OPEN SPACES AND CITY GARDENS**  
To receive the report of the Chamberlain and Director of Open Spaces.

**For Information**  
(Pages 9 - 12)

5. **CONSOLIDATED REVENUE OUTTURN 2013/14**  
To receive the report of the Chamberlain and Director of Open Spaces.

**For Information**  
(Pages 13 - 16)

6. **BUSINESS PLAN: QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE UPDATE**  
To receive the report of the Director of Open Spaces.

**For Information**  
(Pages 17 - 26)

7. **THE STATE OF UK PUBLIC PARKS 2014**  
To receive the report of the Director of Open Spaces.

**For Decision**  
(Pages 27 - 54)

8. **ANNUAL REVIEW OF VOLUNTEERING FOR 2013-14**  
To receive the report of the Director of Open Spaces.

**For Information**  
(Pages 55 - 60)

9. **OPEN SPACES TREE SAFETY POLICY AND BIOSECURITY GUIDANCE**

To receive the report of the Director of Open Spaces.

**For Decision**  
(Pages 61 - 76)

**City Gardens**

10. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

The Superintendent of West Ham Park & City Gardens to be heard.

**For Information**

11. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

12. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED**

**Part 2 - Non-Public Agenda**

13. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

MOTION: That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

**For Decision**

14. **DEBT ARREARS - INVOICED INCOME FOR PERIOD ENDING 31 MARCH 2014**

To receive the report of the Chamberlain and Director of Open Spaces.

**For Information**  
(Pages 77 - 82)

15. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

16. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**

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**OPEN SPACES AND CITY GARDENS**  
**Monday, 2 June 2014**

Minutes of the meeting of the Open Spaces and City Gardens held at Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 2 June 2014 at 2.30 pm

**Present**

**Members:**

Alderman Ian Luder (Chairman)  
Deputy Alex Deane (Deputy Chairman)  
Wendy Mead  
Barbara Newman  
Jeremy Simons  
Graeme Smith  
Deputy Michael Welbank  
Alderman Gordon Haines (Ex-Officio Member)  
Virginia Rounding (Ex-Officio Member)  
George Abrahams (Ex-Officio Member)

**Officers:**

Natasha Dogra	Town Clerk's Department
Sue Ireland	Director, Open Spaces
Alison Elam	Chamberlain's Department
Martin Rodman	Superintendent, West Ham Park & City Gardens
Iain Simmons	Built Environment
Edward Wood	Comptroller & City Solicitor's Department
Sam Cook	Remembrancer's Department.
Lisa Russell	Built Environment
Roger Adams	City Surveyor's Department
Gillian Robinson	Public Health, City & Hackney

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies had been received from Deputy Robert Howard.

2. **DECLARATIONS BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA**

There were no declarations.

3. **COURT ORDER**

The Committee received the Order of the Court of Common Council.

4. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

The Committee proceeded to elect a Chairman in accordance with Standing Order 29. The Town Clerk read out a list of Member's eligible to stand and Alderman Ian Luder, being the only Member to express his willingness to serve, was declared the duly elected Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing year.

5. **ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN**

The Committee proceeded to elect a Deputy Chairman in accordance with Standing Order 30. The Town Clerk read out a list of Member's eligible to stand and Deputy Alex Deane, being the only Member to express his willingness to serve, was declared the duly elected Deputy Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing year.

**Appointment of a Representative to the Streets and Walkways Sub Committee**

Jeremy Simons being the only Member indicating his interest in standing for this position was appointed as the representative to the Streets and Walkways Sub Committee for the ensuing year.

6. **MINUTES**

Resolved: The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record.

**Matters Arising:**

**St Olave's Churchyard, Hart Street, EC3**

The Director of Open Spaces informed the Committee that the Chairman and Deputy Chairman had signed off delegated authority for the City Solicitor to enter into an agreement with the Church authorities in order to carry out the improvement works on Church land.

**Senator House Garden, EC4**

The Director of Open Spaces informed the Committee that the Chairman and Deputy Chairman had signed off delegated authority to approve the terms of a transaction and the detailed re-landscaping proposals to undertake renovations to Senator House Garden at no cost to the City. Officers informed Members that a report would be submitted to the July Committee meeting on the potential to use £24,000 goodwill payment as seed funding for a City Gardens maintenance endowment fund.

Members noted that the landscaping around Fenchurch Street Plaza was now complete.

7. **THE CITY OF LONDON OPEN SPACE STRATEGY-DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT**

The Committee received the report of the Director of the Built Environment and noted the background and production of a draft City of London Open Space Strategy. Members noted ten key strategic objectives that addressed current and future open space provision and the proposed process for public provision and the timetable therein.

It was proposed that consultation took place over the summer, from June to

September 2014, with the aim of collating and incorporating comments and reporting back to the Open Spaces & City Gardens Committee and the Planning & Transportation Committee in October with a final draft for adoption.

Members discussed the possibility of better signage around the City pointing out green areas and roofs with public access. The Chairman of Planning and Transportation said this was an important part of the strategy and would he supported the suggestion.

Members noted that while some businesses were now able to provide green areas on top of their buildings this did not diminish the fact that there was still a large area of floor space being taken by the building. Therefore, being able to provide green roofs was not a substantial gain from a building, but simply a factor of the building. Members also noted that there was a difference between play areas and areas with the provision of soft equipment provided for children. Officers were asked to differentiate between the two in future reports.

**RESOLVED:** That Members approved the draft text of the City of London Open Space Strategy Supplementary Planning Document for public consultation.

#### 8. **ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR, CRIME AND POLICING ACT 2014**

The Committee received the report of the Remembrancer which informed the Committee of a legislative change which would allow the Common Council to exercise new powers to tackle anti-social behaviour (including powers relating to the control of dogs) in the City Corporation's open spaces.

The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 created the Public Spaces Protection Order, which could be used by local authorities to curtail activities which have a detrimental effect on public spaces in their areas. As a result of discussions with the Government, provision was included in the Act to enable the Secretary of State to designate the Common Council and other custodians of open spaces as bodies additionally entitled to make these Orders.

Members noted that use of this provision would enable the Common Council to make Public Spaces Protection Orders in the open spaces outside the City. Infringements of the Orders will be criminal offences punishable by a fixed penalty notice of £100, or a fine of £1,000 on summary conviction. The Common Council's power to make Dog Control Orders would cease after the changes come into effect, although existing Dog Control Orders would continue in force for a period of three years.

#### 9. **ALDGATE REPORT**

The Committee considered the report of the Director of the Built Environment. Members were informed that the aim of the project was to achieve complete transformational change in the Aldgate area through the removal of the existing gyratory system and the creation of new enlivened public spaces.

Members noted that CCTV equipment would be included in the design of the area and adequate coverage would be provided.

Members noted that the 'Middle Specification Option' would see the rill water channel and associated channel lighting removed from the water feature. Members noted that this option excluded some highly desirable features of the project. The Committee agreed that their preferred option of those proposed would be the 'Full Specification Option' which would deliver a total transformation of Aldgate and the creation of a new iconic public space.

**RESOLVED:** That the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee confirmed that it was only able to accept ongoing responsibility for this project subject to the following:

- That the revenue implications for the initial five years following construction be met through S106;
- That the future revenue budget increases for the following 15 years should be funded by draw down against future CIL; and
- That authority be given to the Director of the Department of the Built Environment to seek additional sources of funding for the project, including further Transport for London funding and utilise this funding provided this has no negative impact on the City Corporation resources.

## 10. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

The Committee received the following update from the Superintendent:

### **Finance**

The City Garden budget was in line with agreed budget profiles.

### **Awards**

At the 2014 LEAF Tree and Woodland Awards hosted by the Mayor of London at City Hall, the City in partnership with Trees for Cities was awarded the Creative Award for 'Blue Trees' a temporary art project that took place in Festival Gardens last summer. 'The Creative Award recognises and celebrates the most innovative and creative piece of work that evokes the value and beauty of trees in London.' A short film, produced by the City's media department, explaining the project and promoting City Gardens was shown to the audience.

### **Gardens**

The annual summer bedding was due to be planted over the coming weeks, nectar rich species have been selected where possible.

### **City, London and Britain in Bloom Campaign**

The City's in Bloom campaign was underway. The Friends had recruited twelve volunteers to judge entries for the City wide campaign. Details of how to enter or nominate a garden, project, window box etc. could be found on the City Gardens pages on the website.

### **Volunteering**



On the 22nd May, a group of ten volunteers from an international IT company based in the City paid for and planted 500 wildflower plugs and shrub plants at Bunhill Fields.

Roof Top Survey - 26 volunteers including three ecologists and the Director of the London Wildlife Trust took part in roof top bird surveys across seven buildings during April and May. 25 different species of birds were seen including breeding Black Redstarts and Peregrine Falcons. A report for publication was being prepared by the Friends to promote the value of green roofs for wildlife.

Open Squares Weekend 14/15 June – a plant stall, teas and coffees would be served by the Church and Friends in Postman’s Park. Volunteers would be conducting tours and a treasure hunt in Bunhill Fields.

### **Chelsea Flower Show**

The City Corporation sponsored a garden at the Chelsea show for the first time. This was designed by Helen Elks-Smith and aimed to raise awareness of Oak Processionary Moth (OPM). The City’s horticultural apprentices assisted with the garden build, whilst Arboriculture apprentices interpreted the stand during the opening days of the show. Very good media coverage was received, including the Telegraph, Sunday Telegraph, The Mail, BBC and various radio interviews. The display received a Silver Award.

Committee Members congratulated the Officers on their achievements and thanked them for their hard work.

## **11. SMOKEFREE PLAYGROUNDS COMMITTEE**

The Committee were informed of the proposal of implementing voluntary no smoking codes within children’s playgrounds, for a trial period of six months, in four identified areas in the City:

- Middlesex Street estate
- Tower Hill Gardens
- Portsoken Street
- West Smithfield Rotunda Garden

Officers informed Members that the key aim of smokefree children’s playgrounds was to deter children and young people from smoking. In response to a query, Members noted that the objectives included to:

- Reduce child exposure to smoking and help to decrease the number of young people starting to smoke.
- Decrease cigarette litter such as cigarette ends, empty packets and wrappers to playgrounds more pleasant and to protect wildlife.
- Reduce the risk of children putting toxic cigarette ends into their mouths
- A consultation exercise has been carried out with the public and Friends of City Gardens, which evidenced support for this initiative.

In response to a query regarding enforcement, Members were informed that this was a voluntary scheme, but the success would be measured through visits to the areas at the start, middle and end of the trial.

Members noted that the proposal was for a six month trial, after which the results would be reported back to the Committee. Members also noted that this was a voluntary scheme and the signs to be placed at playgrounds should not be misleading about the City's powers relating to this scheme. Members also noted that there were now a range of places where people were either not allowed to smoke or encouraged not to smoke; therefore the City Corporation should act responsibly sympathetic. It was also noted that there were now a number of smoking cessation groups available within the City.

A Member raised concerns regarding the six month trial. He noted that the displacement of smokers firstly out of indoor public spaces and now an outdoor space in rapid succession. He expressed concerns about those (business electors, residential electors and other users of City spaces) for whom smoking remained a cultural norm, whose interests he believed we should consider. For these reasons he said that we should monitor the results of the trial closely, with no presumption of it rolling out more widely before those results were analysed. The Member also stated that the City should not "overreach": he noted that the signage proposals currently indicated that the City Corporation had the powers to stop smoking in playgrounds, and as this is not the case the signage should clearly state that this was a voluntary scheme.

**RESOLVED:** That Members:

- Agreed the smokefree children's playgrounds' proposal in principle
- Agreed the three playgrounds under their remit where the proposal should be implemented for a trial period as below:
  - o Tower Hill Gardens
  - o Portsoken Street
  - o West Smithfield Rotunda Garden

## 12. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

A Members informed the Committee of the Grow London Event taking place in the East Heath Car Park on 19<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> June. Members also noted that a visit to the City Gardens would take place on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2014 following the Committee meeting.

## 13. **URGENT ITEMS**

The Director of Open Spaces informed Members that a visit to the Olympic Park had been arranged for 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2014, with the coach departing Guildhall at 09:30, and then leaving the Olympic Park at midday to return to Guildhall. Members who wished to travel by coach were advised to inform the Town Clerk.

## 14. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

MOTION: That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

15. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

Resolved: That the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed as an accurate record.

16. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

There were no questions.

17. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**

There was no urgent business.

**The meeting ended at 3.50 pm**

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Chairman

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# Agenda Item 4

<b>Committee(s):</b>	<b>Date(s):</b>	<b>Item no.</b>
Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee	21 July 2014	
<b>Subject:</b> Revenue Outturn 2013/14- Open Spaces and City Gardens		<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> The Chamberlain and the Director of Open Spaces		<b>For Information</b>

## Summary

This report compares the revenue outturn for the services overseen by your Committee in 2013/14 with the final agreed budget for the year. In total, there was a better than budget position of £88,000 for the services overseen by your Committee compared with the final agreed budget for the year as set out below.

	<b>Final Agreed Budget</b> £000	<b>Revenue Outturn</b> £000	<b>Increase/ (Decrease)</b> £000
<b>Local Risk</b>			
Director of Open Spaces	1,555	1,514	(41)
Director of the Built Environment (City Open Spaces)	140	131	(9)
City Surveyor	235	197	(38)
<b>Total Local Risk</b>	<b>1,930</b>	<b>1,842</b>	<b>(88)</b>
<b>Recharges</b>	<b>(126)</b>	<b>(126)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,804</b>	<b>1,716</b>	<b>(88)</b>

The Director's better than budget position of £41,000 has been aggregated with budget variations on services overseen by other committees, which produces an overall better than budget position of £232,000 (Local Risk) across all Open Spaces. It is proposed to carry forward £217,000 of this underspend. These requests will be considered by the Chamberlain in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Resource Allocation Sub Committee.

Underspend in the City Surveyor's Additional Works Programme will be available to spend in subsequent years of the scheme.

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that this revenue outturn report for 2013/14 and the consequential implications for the 2014/15 budget be noted.

## **Main Report**

### **Budget Position for 2013/14**

1. The 2013/14 Latest Approved Budgets for the services overseen by your Committee were £1.764m and were received by your Committee in November 2013, endorsed by the Court of Common Council in March 2014 and subsequently updated for approved adjustments.

### **Revenue Outturn 2012/13**

2. Actual net expenditure for your Committee's services during 2013/14 totalled £1.716m, an underspend of £88,000 compared with the final agreed budget.
3. A summary comparison with the final agreed budget for the year is tabulated below. In the tables, figures in brackets indicate income or in hand balances, increases in income or decreases in expenditure.

<b>Summary Comparison of 2013/14 Revenue Outturn with Final Agreed Budget</b>			
	<b>Final Agreed Budget</b>	<b>Revenue Outturn</b>	<b>Increase/ (Decrease)</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
<b>Local Risk</b>			
City Open Spaces	1,011	966	(45)
Open Spaces Directorate	437	439	2
Bunhill Fields	107	109	2
<b>Total Director of Open Spaces Local Risk</b>	<b>1,555</b>	<b>1,514</b>	<b>(41)</b>
Director of the Built Environment (City Open Spaces)	140	131	(9)
City Surveyor	30	13	(17)
Additional Works Programme	205	184	(21)
<b>Total Local Risk</b>	<b>1,930</b>	<b>1,842</b>	<b>(88)</b>
<b>Total Recharges</b>	<b>(126)</b>	<b>(126)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>NET EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>1,804</b>	<b>1,716</b>	<b>(88)</b>

#### **Local Risk Carry Forward to 2014/15**

4. Chief Officers can request underspends of up to 10% or £500,000 (whichever is the lesser) of the final agreed local risk budget to be carried forward, so long as the underspending is not fortuitous and the resources are required for a planned purpose. Such requests are subject to the approval of the Chamberlain in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Resource Allocation Sub Committee.
  
5. Underspend in the City Surveyor's Additional Works Programme will be available to spend in subsequent years of the scheme.
  
6. The Director of Open Spaces' better than budget position of £41,000 has been aggregated with budget variations on services overseen by other committees which produces an overall better than budget position of £232,000 (Local Risk) of which £217,000 has been submitted for a carry forward as outlined below.

- i) £44,000 towards refurbishment of St Brides, St Dunstan's in the East, & St Paul's Cathedral Garden.
- ii) £89,000 (£60,000 vehicle purchase & £29,000 photovoltaic installation) at the Cemetery.
- iii) £44,000 Great Gregories over-wintering facility at Epping Forest.
- iv) £10,000 West Ham Park Nursery Business Plan.
- v) £10,000 Feasibility Study – Parliament Hill.
- vi) £20,000 New Signage – Hampstead Heath

Dr Peter Kane  
Chamberlain

Sue Ireland  
Director of Open Spaces

**Contact:**  
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# Agenda Item 5

<b>Committee(s):</b>	<b>Date(s):</b>	<b>Item no.</b>
Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee	21 July 2014	
<b>Subject:</b>		<b>Public</b>
Consolidated Revenue Outturn 2013/14		
<b>Report of:</b>		<b>For Information</b>
The Chamberlain and the Director of Open Spaces		

### Summary

This report compares the revenue outturn for the services overseen by the Director of Open Spaces in 2013/14 with the final agreed budget for the year. In total, there was a better than budget position of £188,000 for the services overseen by your Committee compared with the final agreed budget for the year as set out below.

	<b>Final Agreed Budget £000</b>	<b>Revenue Outturn £000</b>	<b>Increase/ (Decrease) £000</b>
<b>Local Risk</b>			
Director of Open Spaces (excluding Nursery)	11,157	10,925	(232)
Nursery	(61)	(5)	56
City Surveyor	3,147	3,163	16
Director of the Built Environment (City Open Spaces)	140	131	(9)
<b>Total Local Risk</b>	<b>14,383</b>	<b>14,214</b>	<b>(169)</b>
<b>Central Risk</b>	<b>(2,168)</b>	<b>(2,233)</b>	<b>(65)</b>
<b>Recharges</b>	<b>3,971</b>	<b>4,017</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,186</b>	<b>15,998</b>	<b>(188)</b>

It is proposed to carry forward £217,000 from the Director's better than budget position of £232,000 (Local Risk) across all Open Spaces. These requests will be considered by the Chamberlain in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Resource Allocation Sub Committee.

The shortfall of £56,000 at the Nursery will be transferred to reserves.

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that this consolidated revenue outturn report for 2013/14 and the consequential implications for the 2014/15 budget are noted.

## **Main Report**

### **Budget Position for 2013/14**

1. The 2013/14 consolidated latest approved budgets for Open Spaces was £15.750m and were received by your Committee in February 2014 and endorsed by the Court of Common Council in March 2014 and subsequently updated for approved adjustments. For information, the Cemetery and Crematorium has also been included in this report, to show the overall position for the Department, although it is reported to Port Health & Environmental Services Committee.

### **Revenue Outturn 2013/14**

2. Actual net expenditure for your Committee's services during 2013/14 totalled £15.998m. A summary comparison with the final agreed budget for the year is tabulated below. In the tables, figures in brackets indicate income or in hand balances, increases in income or decreases in expenditure.

## Summary Comparison of 2013/14 Revenue Outturn with Final Agreed Budget

<b>Director of Open Spaces Local Risk</b>	<b>Final Agreed Budget £000</b>	<b>Revenue Outturn £000</b>	<b>Increase/ (Decrease) £000</b>
Open Spaces Directorate	437	439	2
City Open Spaces	1,011	967	(44)
Bunhill	107	109	2
West Ham Park	615	599	(16)
West Ham Park - CBT	75	75	0
The Nursery	(61)	(5)	56
Epping Forest	2,444	2,410	(34)
Epping - CBT	366	365	(1)
HLF – Branching Out	15	12	(3)
Chingford Golf Course	(95)	(52)	43
Wanstead	120	106	(14)
Woodredon & Warlies	(27)	(19)	8
Burnham Beeches	461	459	(2)
Stoke Common	19	14	(5)
City Commons	1,123	1,061	(62)
Hampstead Heath	4,548	4,547	(1)
Hampstead Heath – CBT	480	480	0
Queen’s Park	540	526	(14)
Queens Park - CBT	31	30	(1)
Highgate Wood	346	345	(1)
Highgate Wood - CBT	50	50	0
City Cemetery & Crematorium	(1,509)	(1,598)	(89)
<b>Total Director of Open Spaces Local Risk</b>	<b>11,096</b>	<b>10,920</b>	<b>(176)</b>
<i>City Surveyor Local Risk</i>	787	1,023	236
<i>Additional Works Programme</i>	2,360	2,140	(220)
<i>Director of the Built Environment (City Open Spaces) Local Risk</i>	140	131	(9)
<b>Total Local Risk</b>	<b>14,383</b>	<b>14,214</b>	<b>(169)</b>
<b>Central Risk</b>	<b>(2,168)</b>	<b>(2,233)</b>	<b>(65)</b>
<b>Recharges</b>	<b>3,971</b>	<b>4,017</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Overall Totals</b>	<b>16,186</b>	<b>15,998</b>	<b>(188)</b>

3. Each Open Spaces Committee (except Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park which will be reported on 15 September 2014) has previously received an outturn report relating to the services it oversees including explanations of the significant variations. Port Health & Environmental Services Committee has received a similar report in respect of the Cemetery & Crematorium.

### **Local Risk Carry Forward to 2014/15**

4. Chief Officers can request under spends of up to 10% or £500,000 (whichever is the lesser) of the final agreed local risk budget to be carried forward, so long as the under spending is not fortuitous and the resources are required for a planned purpose. Such requests are subject to the approval of the Chamberlain in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Resource Allocation Sub Committee.

### **Director of Open Spaces**

5. Of the Local Risk £232,000 better than budget position (£176,000 underspend + £56,000 Nursery shortfall being transferred to reserves), the Director of Open Spaces wishes to carry forward £217,000 as outlined below:
  - i) £44,000 towards refurbishment of St Brides, St Dunstan's in the East, & St Paul's Cathedral Garden.
  - ii) £89,000 (£60,000 vehicle purchase & £29,000 photovoltaic installation) at the Cemetery.
  - iii) £44,000 Great Gregories over-wintering facility at Epping Forest.
  - iv) £10,000 West Ham Park Nursery Business Plan.
  - v) £10,000 Feasibility Study – Parliament Hill.
  - vi) £20,000 New Signage – Hampstead Heath

### **City Surveyor**

6. Underspends in The City Surveyor's Additional Works Programme will be available to spend in subsequent years of the scheme.

**Dr Peter Kane**  
Chamberlain

**Sue Ireland**  
Director of Open Spaces

**Contact:**  
Derek Cobbing  
020 7332 3519  
derek.cobbing@cityoflondon.gov.uk

<b>Committee(s):</b>	<b>Date(s):</b>	<b>Item no.</b>
Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee	7 July 2014	
<b>Subject:</b> Business Plan: Quarterly Performance Update	<b>Public</b>	
<b>Report of:</b> Director of Open Spaces	<b>For Information</b>	
<p><b><u>Summary</u></b></p> <p>This report summarises departmental performance at the end of the fourth quarter of financial year 2013/14. In addition it provides early indications of performance in the current financial year. The report contains details of key projects delivered and achievement against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).</p> <p><b>Recommendation</b></p> <p>That this report is received for information.</p>		

## **Main Report**

### **Background**

1. The Open Spaces Department Business Plan is revised annually and agreed by this committee. The Business Plan details the aims and objectives of the department. This report considers progress made in the first quarter of the new financial year as well as summarising performance in 13/14, with a particular focus on the final quarter of the year.

### **Current Position**

#### **Delivery of Key Projects 2013/14**

2. The reporting year saw the delivery of a number of high profile projects including the completion of the final year of the City Bridge Trust funded project 'Inspiring Londoners through Landscapes and Biodiversity', Heritage Lottery Fund approval for stage one of the Kenley Revival Project and public consultation on the Hampstead Heath Project.
3. However, the timetables for a number of projects scheduled for delivery within the reporting year slipped. These projects included Introduction of Dog Control Orders at Burnham Beeches, the Epping Forest Management Plan, Golf Course Review at Epping Forest, the Grazing Strategy implementation, the Jubilee Pond relining project and the Land Registration Project.

4. There were a variety of causes for the slippages, although two factors were causal in a number of projects: lack of internal resource and unforeseen external factors. The business planning process for 2014/15 sought to improve performance through setting appropriate and achievable deadlines, with special attention being paid to sequencing activities so that appropriate resource is available. Deadlines were also challenged to ensure that they were appropriate. Consideration will also be given to improving project planning skills within the department to ensure all risks to projects are identified early in the planning process.

### **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) 2013/14**

5. A dashboard containing details of performance against each of the twenty one KPIs is available at Appendix 1.
6. Of the twenty one KPIs eight were not achieved in year. In the case of the three KPIs relating to the performance of the Cemetery and Crematorium this reflects the scale of ambition of the targets and specific operational circumstances, for example the withdrawal of cremators from service at a crucial point in the reporting year for the installation of solar panels on the modern crematorium.
7. A reduction in reported accidents was not achieved. This reflects a drive within the department to encourage reporting of all accidents and near misses.

### **Quarter 1 performance 2014/15**

8. Good progress was made towards achieving key objectives outlined in the Business Plan. Reported progress on all projects is summarised in the table below.

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Reported progress</b>
a. Hampstead Heath Ponds Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitation of ground investigations ongoing</li> <li>• Regular stakeholder meetings carried out</li> <li>• Ongoing work developing education programme</li> </ul>
b. Delivering Savings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff suggestions submitted and collated</li> <li>• Management planning meeting held</li> <li>• Planning regarding the exiting of grant funding from the City Bridge Trust</li> </ul>
c. Epping Forest Management Plan	No planned action in quarter one
d. Highams Park Dam Project	No planned action in quarter one

e. Shoot Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gateway 3/4 approval gained in April</li> </ul>
f. City Churchyards management arrangements	No planned action in quarter one
g. Queen's Park playground modernisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fundraising and landscaping activities</li> </ul>
h. Kenley Revival Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing preparation for Stage 2 application</li> </ul>
i. West Ham Nursery Business Plan	No planned action in quarter one
j. West Ham Park Café development	No planned action in quarter one
k. City Commons and Burnham Beeches management arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team meetings held</li> <li>• Recruitment of Support Services Manager initiated</li> </ul>
l. Grazing project	No planned action in quarter one
m. Introduction of Land Management Category Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First meeting of the Category board held.</li> </ul>
n. Roll out of the Open Spaces visual identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All new publications produced using the new identity</li> <li>• Toolkits provided to relevant staff</li> <li>• Initial staff training carried out</li> </ul>

9. Performance against the four key performance indicators is summarised in Appendix 2. At this stage in the reporting year data is limited, with the income measure particularly unreliable at this early stage.

### Data Quality Assurance

10. Following the adoption of the Corporate Data Quality Policy in April 2011, the Director of Open Spaces is required to provide assurance to the committee of departmental data quality. Limited assurance can be given for departmental data quality. For a number of performance indicators data is not currently verifiable or auditable.

11. Work is currently in progress to ensure full assurance can be given by to the committee for financial year 2014/15. The KPIs for 2014/15 are all verifiable and auditable. Additional datasets used within the department are being refined and developed to meet the standards of the policy. As an example, guidance has been developed by education officers to ensure that a standard methodology for measuring education sessions is introduced. Methodologies used at sites to measure visitor numbers are being documented and audited at sites.

### Financial and risk implications

12. At the end of 2013/14 the Open Spaces local risk budget was underspent by £232. Requests have been made to the Chamberlain to carry forward underspent budget to the current financial year to a total of £217,000.

13. The Risk Register agreed as part of the Business Plan is reviewed quarterly and individual risks are discussed at Senior Management Team meetings.

**Conclusion**

14. Progress in delivering the current year's business plan will continue to be monitored and the remedial action described above will be taken.

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## OPEN SPACES PERFORMANCE DASHBOARD – FULL YEAR 2013-14

Key Performance Indicators	Target 2013-14	Performance	Comment
Effective budget management and make efficiency savings	Ensure net expenditure is within local risk budgets	Green	Achieved
Increase departmental income	Raise by a further 2% compared to the original 2011/12 budget	Green	Achieved
Efficient receipting of invoices	Receipt 70% of SME invoices in 10 days	Green	70% of departmental invoices are receipted within 3 days
Respond to written complaints and general correspondence within 10 working days	Achieve all Corporate Service Response Standards	Green	Achieved
Respond to Freedom of Information Act and Environmental Information Regulation Requests within 20 working days	Meet target in 100% cases	Green	Achieved

## OPEN SPACES PERFORMANCE DASHBOARD – FULL YEAR 2013-14

Minimise working days lost through sickness	Below the average for the City Corporation of seven days per annum	Green	Achieved
Improve take up of training courses	Reduce the level of training days lost	Green	Achieved (following poor performance in the first quarter, training day lost fell to zero in the final two quarters of the year)
Achieve external accreditation (1)	Maintain or improve Green Flag passes	Green	Achieved
Achieve external accreditation (2)	Retain Green Heritage Award for nine sites	Green	Achieved
Deliver Sustainability Audits across the Open Spaces - year two of the Departmental Sustainability Improvement Plan (DSIP)	Complete year 2 of the current DSP, Develop SAS for two other departments	Red	Year 2 completed, promotion carried out with other departments but target of two other departments using SAS was unachieved.
Increase the accuracy of customer satisfaction measures	Implement a rolling programme of site surveys	Red	Not achieved – no surveys completed at North London Open Spaces in year
Expand volunteer working	Increase the level of volunteer hours worked	Green	Achieved

## OPEN SPACES PERFORMANCE DASHBOARD – FULL YEAR 2013-14

Improve Learning Services	Maintain the number of sessions held in 2012/13	Green	Increases recorded at all sites
Reduce Energy Consumption	Achieve corporate target of 2.5% reduction	Green	Corporate target exceeded Electricity - 27.1%. Gas – 9.4% compared to 2012/13
Reduce accidents reported	Reduce the number of reported accidents resulting in injuries (2012-50)	Amber	50 accidents reported during full year
Prepare strategic presentations for meeting of the Open Spaces, City Gardens and West Ham Park Committee	Make a presentation to each Committee meeting during the year and identify future projects	Red	Not achieved
Increase of Open Spaces websites	Increase traffic by 10% on previous year	Green	Achieved
Maintain our market share of burials	Achieve 8% market share of burials	Amber	7.4%
Maintain our market share of cremations	Achieve 23% market share of cremations	Amber	22.5% (This figure was affected by the withdrawal from service of Cremations for several weekends during the autumn and winter for a necessary

## OPEN SPACES PERFORMANCE DASHBOARD – FULL YEAR 2013-14

			cremator reline the installation of solar PV panels on the building)
Percentage of income for the Cemetery & Crematorium compared with the target income of £3.95m	Achieve an income target of £4.1m	Green	Achieved
Increase the number of cremations using the new fully abated cremator	Carry out 60% of cremations using the new cremator	Amber	56.4% (This figure is the mean of monthly share, if the share of total cremations is considered, this target was achieved, with 60.3% of all cremations taking place in the abated cremator)

# OS: Quarter 1 Key Performance Indicator Report

## KPI 1 Conservation

Current Management Plan in place

Red = No current Management Plan

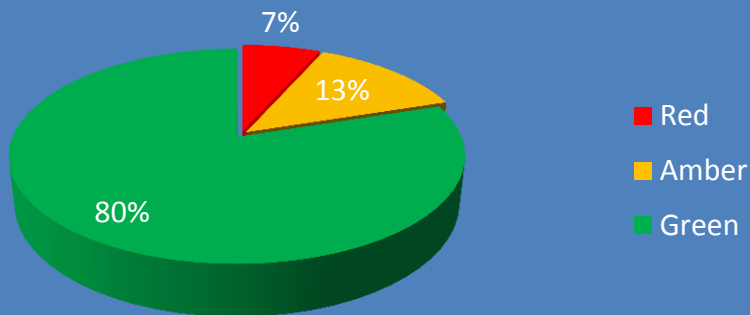
Amber = Management Plans are due to run out within two years

Green = plan in place

City Gardens expires 2016

Queen's Park expires 2014

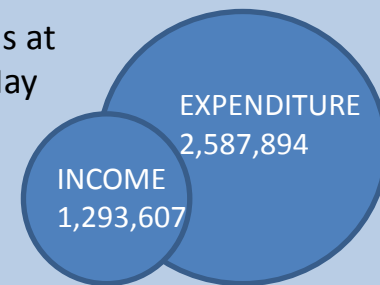
Epping Forest expired 2010



## KPI 3 Finance Management

Income is measured as a percentage of local expenditure.

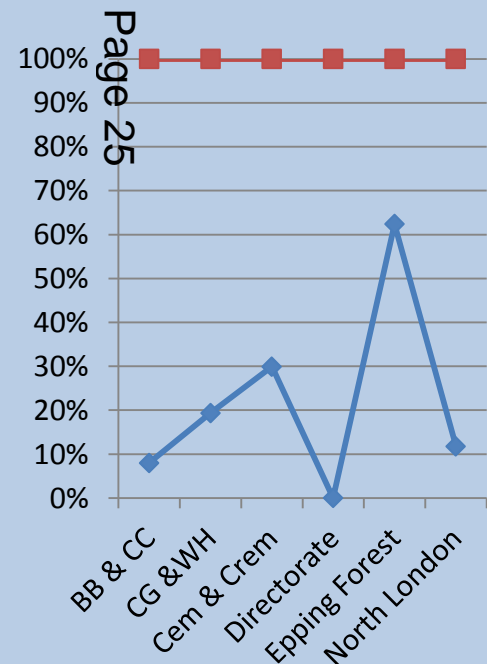
Data as at end May



## KPI 4 People Management

100% = Training spend equal to 1.5% of staff costs

Training costs represent **0.67%** of overall departmental staff costs



Target

Training spend as % staff costs

Data as at end May

## KPI 2 Customer Satisfaction

Division	Survey completed	Satisfaction rating
BB & SC	Planned	
City Commons	Planned	
Cem & Crem	Planned	
City Gardens	Planned	
West Ham	Planned	
Epping Forest	In progress	
North London	Planned	

Site	Q1 %	Q2 %	Q3 %	Q4 %
Stoke Common	0%			
Burnham Beeches	20%			
West Wickham	2%			
Ashtead	59%			
West Ham Park	19%			
Nursery	0			
City Gardens	11%			
H'stead Heath	25%			
Queens Park	17%			
Highgate Wood	22%			
Epping Forest	28%			
Chingford	65%			
Woodredon	58%			
Wanstead	65%			
Cem & Crem	166%			
DEPARTMENTAL	50%			

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<b>Committee(s):</b>	<b>Date(s):</b>
Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee	21 <sup>st</sup> July 2014
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Public</b>
The State of UK Public Parks 2014 – Renaissance to Risk?	
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>For Decision</b>
Director of Open Spaces	
<p><b>Summary</b></p> <p>The recent Heritage Lottery Fund report ‘The State of UK Public Parks 2014 – Renaissance to Risk?’ provides an important insight into the current state of Parks in the UK. This report summarises the key findings and considers the issues that are particular relevant to the City of London; both in managing green spaces across London and in supporting the wider green space agenda across London.</p> <p><b>Recommendation(s)</b></p> <p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider whether to appoint a Park Champion.</li> <li>• Note the report.</li> </ul>	

## Main Report

### Background

1. On June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2014, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) published a report entitled ‘The State of UK Public Parks 2014 – Renaissance to risk?’ a copy is attached at Appendix 1. HLF commissioned three surveys and compared results with pre-existing data to identify current issues and challenges.
2. The independent surveys sought views from:-
  - Local Authority Park Managers
  - Park Friends and User groups
  - Public Opinion by Ipsos MORI

### Current Position

3. The HLF report demonstrates that the condition of parks across the UK has improved significantly since 2001. However, the surveys show that the future for parks is very uncertain. With government funding reducing by 20% in real terms in the last four years and future reductions expected, parks as a non-statutory service are highly vulnerable. The decline in spending is likely to be greater than public parks faced in the 1970 and 1980’s; a period of chronic

decline for UK parks. Unlike built facilities where closure is immediately clear, the reduction in park maintenance may go unnoticed until neglect results in a spiral of decline and sites are abandoned by the public. The report suggests that by 2020, some local authority's Parks Services may no longer be viable.

4. The cost to users. Most local authorities have increased fees for the use of facilities in the last 3 years and expect to continue this trend. The report highlights that charges need to be balanced against the provision of accessible services, to as wide a range of people as possible. At the very time when the need to tackle obesity and poor health is essential, the cost of sports facilities and activity is increasing. Further, 19% of local authorities surveyed mentioned disposing of parks and 45% are considering the disposal of some open spaces.
5. Loss of staff and skills. The survey results identify that 77% of councils have reduced frontline staff and 81% park managers. The loss of skills and staff results in less ability to support community groups, innovate or share management skills. The report highlights the importance of volunteers receiving training from motivated, skilled staff.
6. Regional inequalities. The largest proportion of good parks is found in London and the East Midlands, with the parks currently most in decline in Scotland, Wales and the North West. Urban metropolitan and unitary authorities, where the use of parks is greatest, received a higher proportion of cuts and staff losses in the last three years.
7. Communities. The number of Friends and user groups has increased by 30% in the last three years and membership by 47%. There are some 5,000 groups across the UK raising a significant £30million each year.
8. Quality of Life. User's value parks with 68% considering them important or essential to their quality of life; in urban areas this increases to 71% for family's and over 81% for those with children under five years old. The report summarises why parks matter under the headings of:
  - Family life
  - Supporting health and happiness
  - Improving social cohesion
  - Promoting local economic development
  - Delivering environment services
9. Call to action. The HLF report concludes that the research provides an early warning of the potential risk facing the UK's parks and sets out five key challenges for the future, calling on government, local authorities, business, the voluntary sector, academic institutions and the public, to take urgent action.

In summary, the challenges include:-

  - Local authority commitment – ongoing and renewed commitment to fund staff and manage parks. Local authorities are asked to appoint an elected member as their Parks Champion, to report annually on the



spend per resident in caring for parks and to commit to the provision of good accessible parks and a green space strategy.

- New partnerships – opportunities to diversify resourcing and establish long term viable partnerships require skills, commitment and resources. Consider opportunities to create innovative new partnerships to fund and manage parks and develop business management skills for staff.
- Getting communities more involved – expand the use of volunteers, with training and motivation to encourage their work; consider using existing national campaigns to support this work
- Collecting and sharing data – comparable data is essential to ensure consistency in park provision. HLF will support a pilot project to help the UK's top 20 cities to compare the quantity, condition and funding of their parks. Government, the Local Government Association and academic organisations are asked to facilitate the collection of comparable data for local authorities.
- New finance models and rethinking delivery – the future of parks will depend on developing new business models. A mix of public and private resource and expertise need to stimulate innovation, develop skills and share ideas.

### **Considerations for the City of London's Open Spaces**

10. The Committee may consider the five HLF challenges from two perspectives; firstly, as the authority responsible for the green spaces in the Square Mile and secondly, as the provider of strategic green space across London. A commentary on some of the issues raised in the report is provided at Appendix 2.
11. Challenge one - Local authority commitment. The Corporation provides the core funding for both City Gardens and the strategic green spaces across London, demonstrating a substantial on-going commitment. The regular satisfaction survey undertaken for City Gardens and reported to your Committee, demonstrates a high level of public satisfaction. We do not receive information from London Borough satisfaction surveys; where our strategic green spaces are located within or adjacent to a Borough, for example West Ham Park and Newham, Queens Park and Brent. Each site does undertake a varying range of user and non-user surveys, as well as participating in Green Flag and Heritage Green Flag judging.
12. The Open Spaces Act of 1878 and the various site specific statutes, afford protection, preventing open spaces use other than specific, defined activities, which addresses the HLF concerns but is not afforded to all public parks. The Committee at its last meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> June, approved for public consultation, the City of London Open Spaces Strategy Supplementary Planning document. The HLF report calls for the appointment of Parks Champions and regular reporting of the spend per resident, used to care for parks. With Chairmen for each open space committee, Members views are sought on whether this

provides a suitable level of Champion. The current budget for each Committee is a public document but we do not provide a link between spend and users. For City Gardens, this would need to demonstrate the use by City workers, as well as residents. The cost per resident would not be readily identifiable for the strategic spaces.

13. Challenge two – New Partnerships. The charitable trust model used by the Corporation to manage the strategic green spaces is considered an exemplar within the sector. However, relatively few similar examples exist e.g. Milton Keynes, because of the inability of local authorities to resource core property based, ring-fenced investment funding. Many Leisure Trusts rely on annual revenue grants from their local authorities, which are at risk as and when local authority budgets are reduced. For our strategic spaces, the statutory protection of the sites has limited the opportunity to develop some new partnerships. It is hoped that this can be addressed in the coming years. The challenges of delivering the savings required by the service based review, will provide the opportunity to review our current service delivery and should create the incentive to consider innovative new partnerships, as well as renewing and reinvigorating existing partnerships.
14. Challenge three – Getting Communities more involved. The HLF report recognises the importance of training and motivating volunteers and the value of supporting them through skilled, experience staff. The City is able to exemplify the commitment it has to volunteering, a report on last year's achievements is included on the same agenda. City Gardens have supported the newly formed Friends of City Gardens, who are already achieving new sources of grant support; likewise the Friends of Kenley Common have been essential to achieving the HLF grant for Kenley Airfield. We support both existing and newly forming Friends groups and will need to decide how to support the National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces. In London, the London Parks and Green Spaces Forum (LPGSF), which has recently achieved independent charitable status, provides information, advice and training for Friends. The challenge for Open Spaces will be to ensure the support for volunteers and Friends groups remains an important priority following the outcomes of the service based review. The Love Parks Week, is included in events programmes; although not yet heavily promoted across the sector it is hoped in time can achieve the level of recognition of Green Flags.
15. Challenge four – Collecting and sharing data. The HLF demand for national recognition of the need for collection of consistent and comparable data is important. There will always be a challenge for us with both City Gardens and strategic green spaces, being different from other local authority provision; for example, within the City the use by City workers as well as residents and strategic green spaces, providing more nature conservation objectives than the norm. The HLF offer to develop a pilot project to help the UK's top 20 cities compare the quantity, condition and funding of city parks is welcome.
16. Challenge five - New Finance Models and rethinking delivery. As part of the service based review we will recognise the need to rethink some service delivery and the Committee will have the opportunity to consider this further

later this year. We also expect to need to develop new skills amongst our staff, as part of this work. With our links to LPGSF, the Parks Alliance and contacts with other key service providers, we are in a strong position to share ideas and innovation. It could be suggested that the biggest challenge facing all local authorities with responsibility for parks is, how to develop self help and support from communities to a substantial degree and continue to deliver the core funding needed to ensure parks have a sustainable future.

### **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

17. The HLF report considers the future management of Parks. The City Together Strategy theme 'A World Class City which protects, promotes and enhances our environment, recognises the importance of Parks and green spaces. Likewise the Open Spaces Strategy aim is to 'Provide safe, secure and accessible Open Spaces and services for the benefit of London and the nation.

### **Implications**

18. **Financial, Legal and Property and HR**– there are no direct implications in considering and responding to this report. However, the department will be preparing budget proposals for the Committee's consideration as part of the service based review; this will provide an opportunity to address some of the issues e.g. new partnerships and innovation, mentioned in the report.

### **Conclusion**

19. The recently published Heritage Lottery Fund report 'The State of UK Public Parks 2014 – Renaissance to Risk?' provides an important insight into the current state of Parks in the UK. Although Parks have nationally improved since 2001, there are significant concerns about the next six years. This report has considered the issues that are particular relevant to the City of London; both in managing green spaces across London and in supporting the wider green space agenda across London; to ensure they will remain widely accessible and sustainable.

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Heritage Lottery Fund State of UK Public Parks 2014 Renaissance to risk?
- Appendix 2 – The State of UK Parks commentary.

### **Background Papers:**

Green Spaces: The Benefits for London by BOP Consulting, July 2013

### **Sue Ireland**

Director of Open Spaces

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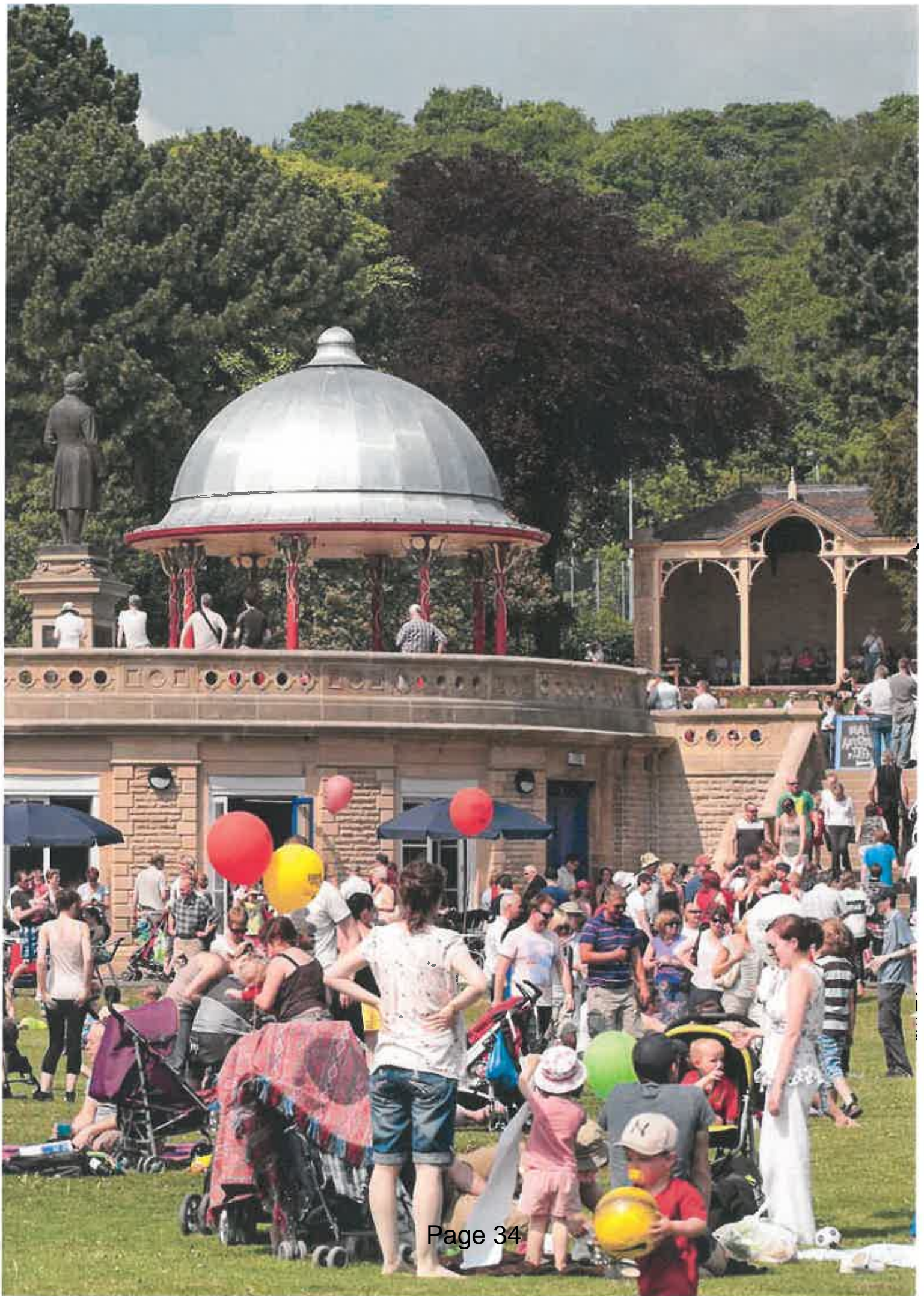
E: sue.ireland@cityoflondon.gov.uk

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# State of UK Public Parks 2014

Renaissance  
to risk?





# Renaissance to risk?

As a result of the philanthropy and vision of our Victorian forebears, the UK is fortunate to have some of the world's greatest public parks, which 34 million of us visit regularly each year. Some of our earliest childhood memories are of visits to a local park to feed the ducks, enjoy the playground or picnic with friends. For our increasingly urban population the park is often the only green space where people can meet, play, relax and come close to nature.

But all is not well with the UK's public parks. Most are owned and maintained by local authorities, and increasing competition for council funding means that many face an uncertain future.

Parks have always been a priority for the Heritage Lottery Fund. We first started to invest in them in 1996 and have awarded over £620million across the UK, with the Big Lottery Fund joining us to invest a further £80million in England. Our funding has been matched with time and money from councils and community groups, collectively delivering a renaissance in the fortune of many parks. But our research shows that this investment, as well as thousands of parks and green spaces, may now be at risk.

This study, based on new research, establishes a benchmark on the current condition of the UK's public parks whilst also looking at how the quality and nature of parks might change in the future. It makes suggestions for action and better ways of working, including commitments from us here at the Heritage Lottery Fund.

We care passionately that everyone should have access to good-quality and exciting parks. We want this report to inspire all those who own, manage and use public parks to appreciate their importance and the critical role they have in modern life. Parks are vital community assets, essential to the local economy, to public health and wellbeing, to tourism, to social cohesion and to nature. We must keep them in good heart.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jenny Abramsky', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Dame Jenny Abramsky**  
Chair of the Heritage Lottery Fund

# The state of parks at a glance

The UK invented the municipal park movement, an enduring legacy of the industrial revolution that has been admired and imitated across the world. Every park has its own story, from Birkenhead Park in the Wirral, which opened in 1847 and provided the model for New York's Central Park, to the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, created for the London 2012 Games.

We greatly value our public parks but as a national resource they are not represented by any national body, nor is there any statutory requirement governing their upkeep.

Since 1996, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has led a parks renaissance through its investment, and has developed knowledge and expertise through the projects that have been funded. This research report is in part prompted by the need to protect and sustain this investment in over 700 individual public parks. In addition, we are also keen to support everyone who uses and manages parks right across the UK, to ensure that every community has access to and can enjoy a good-quality local public park.

## Our research

To establish a national picture of the state of UK parks we commissioned three new UK-wide surveys: a survey of local authority park managers, a survey of park friends and user groups, and a public opinion survey undertaken by Ipsos MORI. We have also drawn on other pre-existing data to assess how the condition of parks has changed over time, and to cross-check our results. Here we present the key findings. A fuller research report is available on [www.hlf.org.uk/StateOfUKParks](http://www.hlf.org.uk/StateOfUKParks)

## Why we need to act now

After two decades of investment and improvement, the UK's parks are in a good state. However, they are at serious risk of slipping back into decline, as they did in the 1970s and 1980s. Without adequate maintenance, parks become underused, neglected and vandalised. Their immense social and environmental value is quickly eroded and they become a costly liability for those who manage them.

Our research shows that maintenance budgets are being reduced, capital will be less available for improvements, park facilities are becoming more expensive to use, management and maintenance skills are being lost, and some parks and green spaces may be sold or transferred to others to maintain.

However we know that people care passionately about their parks. We know that good parks are vital for our health and wellbeing, they support economic growth and tourism, and they play a significant part in addressing climate change in our cities.

At the end of this report you will find five key areas for action. For each we set out how HLF is intending to respond but we also call on others to work collaboratively to address this emerging risk. Our calls to action include:

- renewed local authority commitment;
- establishing new partnerships;
- getting communities more involved;
- collecting and sharing data; and
- developing new finance models and rethinking delivery.

Together we can avert this return to the past, but it will require the concerted effort of all those who use, own, manage, work in or have an interest in parks. We must also develop new ways of working, raise awareness of the hugely important role parks have, and continue to invest in their future.



**2.6bn**

estimated visits are made to the UK's parks each year

**£30m**

estimated to be raised each year by park friends and user groups

**83%**

of households with children aged five and under visit their local park at least once a month

**70%**

of park managers have recorded increased visitor numbers to their principal parks over the last year

**47%**

of park friends and user groups say membership numbers have increased over the last three years

**Parks are valued and in good heart...**

## Key findings

We predict that the quality and condition of many parks will dramatically decline if action is not taken now to address this emerging risk.

**86%**

of park managers report cuts to revenue budgets since 2010 and they expect the trend to continue for the next three years

**71%**

of households with children under 10 are concerned that reductions in council budgets could have a negative impact on the condition of their local park

**...but the future may not be so bright**

**81%**

of council parks departments have lost skilled management staff since 2010, and 77% have lost front-line staff.

**45%**

of local authorities are considering either selling parks and green spaces or transferring their management to others

Park managers report higher visitor satisfaction, but many people are concerned budget cuts could have a negative impact on their local park.



# What we found

## About this report

We commissioned three new surveys for this report:

- a survey of local authority park managers;
- a survey of park friends and user groups; and
- a public opinion survey from Ipsos MORI.

CFP Consultants undertook an online survey of park managers. This targeted all local authorities in Great Britain and Northern Ireland alongside trusts which manage green space. The survey ran from 29 August to 8 October 2013.

A total of 178 local authorities completed the survey, representing 47% of UK local authorities, along with six responses from other organisations. These authorities collectively manage parks and green spaces for more than 31 million people, almost half the UK population.

CFP also undertook an online survey of park friends and user groups, to which 436 groups responded, representing a membership of 27,802 people. The survey was conducted between

29 August and 27 September 2013. It was promoted by CFP regional forums, the National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces, and GreenSpace Scotland.

Ipsos MORI surveyed a representative sample of 1,037 adults aged 15 and over living in the UK. The survey ran between 11 and 17 October 2013. Interviews were conducted face-to-face in-home using the Ipsos MORI Capibus. Data has been weighted to the known population profile for the UK.

## The changing condition of parks

**Our surveys show that the condition of parks across the UK has improved significantly since 2001. However this picture is about to change.**

We found that 59% of park managers, as well as 50% of friends groups and the park-going public, considered their parks to be in good condition. In 2001 only 18% of park managers considered their parks to be in good condition. The improvement in parks is reflected in the number of Green Flag Awards (the voluntary, nationally recognised quality accreditation scheme for parks and green spaces). In 2001 Green Flags were awarded to only 81 parks in England. By 2010 this had risen to 905, and by 2013 there were 1,116 awards.

We also recorded increases in visitor satisfaction and numbers. 50% of managers said that visitor satisfaction had increased over the last three years, and 47% reported that visitor numbers had risen over the last year. For principal parks (the main parks a council manages) 70% of park managers said that visitor numbers had risen over the last year.

Turning to the condition of parks over the coming three years, we found that only 21% of managers and 32% of friends groups

anticipate that their parks will still be improving, while 37% of managers and 34% of friends groups anticipate that their parks will be declining.

Evidence suggests that the renaissance of our public parks that has been underway for the past 15 years is fast coming to an end. Our Ipsos MORI survey found that 63% of the park-going public are either 'fairly concerned' or 'very concerned' that reduced council budgets could have a negative impact on the condition of their local park. This level of concern increases to 74% for those who also say that their local park is currently in poor condition. And 71% of households with children under 10 are concerned that reductions in council budgets could have a negative impact on the condition of their local park.

***“Parks and open spaces have been an easy hit for council savings. The provision and maintenance of open space is not a statutory requirement.”***

**Park manager**

## Pressure on budgets

**The Audit Commission<sup>1</sup> reports that Government funding to local authorities reduced by an average of almost 20% in real terms between 2010-11 and 2013-14. Some of the poorest councils in the most deprived areas of England have experienced cumulative cuts that will average 25% by 2016<sup>2</sup>. Council budgets are expected to continue falling for the rest of the decade.**

As parks are a non-statutory service, their budgets are highly vulnerable. We found that:

- most parks budgets have been cut since 2010, many above the 20% average reported by the Audit Commission;
- 86% of park managers report that revenue budgets for day-to-day maintenance have been cut;
- over half of park managers report that capital budgets for investing in fabric and facilities, such as play areas, toilets and paths, have been cut.

This situation is likely to worsen. The Local Government Association<sup>3</sup> warns that, for England, funding for services other than social care and waste disposal will drop by 46% by 2020. Our survey shows that over the next three years:

- 87% of park managers expect further cuts to revenue budgets;
- 63% of managers also face further cuts to capital budgets.

***“Floral features removed, no budget for infrastructure maintenance. We have substantially increased park charges to compensate.”***

Park manager

This decline in spending is potentially greater and more rapid than that faced by public parks in the 1970s and 1980s, a time of chronic decline in the state of the UK's parks.

To give an example of the scale of cuts, Liverpool City Council's parks department budget of £10million will be cut by 50% over the next three years<sup>4</sup>.

Unlike some cuts to services, such as closing a leisure centre or library, reductions in park maintenance may go unnoticed before a tipping point is reached. The reduction of management tasks such as grass cutting, weeding beds or repairing seats may initially result in few complaints, but eventually the build-up of neglect may lead to the abandonment of the park by the public. A spiral of decline quickly follows.

Those working in parks voice concern that by 2020 some local authority park services will no longer be viable. A report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation<sup>5</sup> suggests that local government may cease to provide some services altogether, transferring responsibilities to other agencies, sectors and partnerships.

## The cost to park users

**Over the last three years most local authorities have increased charges for facilities in parks.**

- 83% of managers reported increasing fees for facilities such as sports pitches, car parks, allotments and the hire of grounds or buildings for private events;
- 85% of managers intend to increase fees in the next three years.

While revenue generation needs to be part of the mixed economy that will support parks in future, charges need to be balanced against provision of accessible services to as wide a range of people as possible. The cost of hiring sports facilities is increasing at a time when there is urgent need to promote active lifestyles to tackle obesity and poor health.

## Sale of parks and green spaces

**A significant number of authorities are considering selling or transferring management of their parks and green spaces over the next three years.**

- 45% of local authorities are considering disposing of some green spaces;
- 19% of local authorities specifically mentioned disposing of parks as opposed to other green spaces.



Buildings in parks are at risk of being sold, and parks decline where there is a lack of investment.

***“Our park ranger service took a 50% cut – the rangers have gone from a team of 32 to 10 in the last three years.”***

**Park manager**

## Loss of staff and skills

**The staffing of parks has fallen in line with the decline in funding over the last three years.**

- 77% of councils have reduced frontline parks staff; and
- 81% of councils have cut park management staff.

The loss of park management staff means that local authorities will be much less able to support the work of community groups, promote innovation or assist the process of transferring or sharing management with local organisations and partners.

Evidence from Lottery-funded projects shows that volunteering plays a critical part in creating vibrant community parks. If, however, groups are not developed, trained and motivated by skilled staff, volunteer numbers quickly dwindle.

## Regional inequalities

**Our survey of park managers highlights that there are differences in the condition and funding of parks across the UK.**

- The largest proportion of good parks is in London and the East Midlands.
- The largest proportion of parks reported to have improved over the last three years is in London and the East of England.
- The largest proportion of parks declining is in Scotland, Wales and the North West of England.

In terms of funding and staffing, park managers in the North West of England are reporting the highest proportion of cuts to revenue over the last three years and are also expecting the highest cuts to both revenue and capital over the next three years. They also reported the highest loss of frontline and management staff over the last three years.

The North East and Yorkshire and the Humber expect high levels of budget cuts and staff loss over the next three years, but the limited number of survey returns from these particular regions precludes firm conclusions.

Our research suggests a proportionately higher level of budget cuts and staff losses in the north of England. Furthermore, the urban metropolitan and unitary authorities, where the use of parks is greatest, received a higher proportion of cuts and staff losses in the last three years. This trend is expected to continue.

## The power of communities

**Community groups have an increasing role in championing and supporting local parks. In the last three years:**

- managers have seen an increase of over 30% in the number of friends and user groups, and over half of managers expect this to continue;
- 47% of groups have seen an increase in membership.

There are an estimated 5,000 friends groups or park user groups across the UK. Each group raises on average £6,900 per year, representing over £30million raised for parks annually.

## Impact on quality of life

**Those who use parks value them highly. Some 68% of park users consider spending time in their local park important or essential to their quality of life. This rises to 71% for park users in urban areas, and over 81% for households with children under 10.**

The highest percentage of park users are those households with children. 83% of households with children aged five and under visit their local park at least once a month. In the UK it is astonishing that almost 600 million visits are estimated to be made by households with children under the age of 16 each year. In total 2.6 billion visits are estimated to be made to the UK's parks each year.



Parks provide a range of volunteering opportunities, and make a real difference to family life.

**Skilled staff are needed to maintain horticulture in historic parks.**



Local urban parks are often the only green spaces where people can meet, play and relax.





# Why parks matter

## Central to family life

Some of our earliest childhood memories include visits to local parks. Socially, parks offer opportunities to rest and meet friends, for children and young people to play, to hold events, to pass through on the way to work, to exercise and take time out from the pressures of everyday life.

Other reports also acknowledge the importance of parks to children. *Making Britain Great for Children and Families*<sup>6</sup> – a manifesto launched by 4Children, the national charity working towards a more integrated approach to children’s services – includes better provision of parks in its list of ways to create good places for children to grow up in.



## Supporting health and happiness

Parks have a positive effect on people’s wellbeing and the health of their neighbourhoods. Evidence from the University of Exeter’s European Centre for Environment and Human Health, published by the Association for Psychological Science<sup>7</sup>, reveals that people who live in greener urban areas report greater wellbeing and lower levels of mental stress than city dwellers without nearby parks and gardens.

An increase in visitor numbers, particularly in urban parks, was recorded by Natural England in their annual Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) surveys<sup>8</sup>. In 2012-13 there were fewer visits to the countryside and a significant increase in visits to green spaces in towns and cities. This points to the growing importance of parks as the only place some people encounter nature.

The *State of the Nation’s Waistline* report<sup>9</sup>, published by the National Obesity Forum, states that over 25% of adults in England are considered obese. By 2050 the figure is expected to rise to 50%. Parks provide vital health resources that help to support healthy populations. Their value to public health is emphasised in *Public Health and Landscape*, a recent position statement by the Landscape Institute<sup>10</sup>, which demonstrates parks are a key ingredient in creating healthy places.

**“Parks are particularly important as for many people they provide their back garden.”**

**HLF Parks for People programme evaluation<sup>11</sup>**



Parks are great biodiversity hotspots and a place where children can learn about nature. They also provide opportunities for local businesses such as cafés, and help to support local economies.



## Improving social cohesion

Recent research highlights that “there is good evidence suggesting that the natural environment contributes to social cohesion. This appears to be particularly the case for well-maintained green spaces”<sup>12</sup>. An example from Chicago suggests that parks can actively promote “inter-community relations in a way which is almost unique in urban life”<sup>13</sup>. A Joseph Rowntree report<sup>14</sup> notes that, as communities across the UK become increasingly mixed and diverse, local social amenities will become more and more important. Public parks offer one of the most important social spaces in a neighbourhood, but, as interviews in the research highlight, their condition is a key issue, as poor-quality parks can have a detrimental effect on cohesion.

## Promoting local economic development

Public parks have been used throughout history to promote investment and growth. Developers frequently use the proximity of parks to attract investors. A study on improving the competitiveness of England’s core cities<sup>15</sup> notes that “soft location factors are an increasingly important part of economic decision-making”. Good-quality parks and public spaces contribute to these factors, which help to attract and retain skilled workers and their families.

Forward-looking cities with a good environment and easy access to natural amenities are working at preserving and improving them. They know that for skilled employees “the quality of life for themselves and their families is an increasingly important factor”<sup>16</sup> of location. Recent research from Natural England<sup>17</sup> draws together a growing evidence base on ways the natural environment, including parks, can enhance the economic competitiveness of a particular region and increase employee productivity.

Good parks also boost the tourist economy. Visit Britain<sup>18</sup> has found that, of the 31 million tourists visiting Britain, over a third enjoy visiting a park or garden, making it one of the most popular activities (ranking above visiting a museum, castle, historic house or art gallery). Clissold Park, a local neighbourhood park in the London Borough of Hackney, receives the same number of annual visitors as London’s National Portrait Gallery, and more than St Paul’s Cathedral (2.1 million, 2.1 million and 1.8 million visitors respectively).

Investing in parks is a recognised way of helping to regenerate and re-vitalise an area. There are economic indicators to show this works, and strong evidence of the impact of parks in protecting and enhancing land and property values. The presence of a well-maintained park has been shown through research by CABE Space<sup>19</sup> to add on average a 5% to 7% premium on house prices. Equally, a declining park has the opposite effect.

***“Open space provides habitats and green corridors for safe species movement. (It) should be valued for its potential to mitigate climate change.”***

**Park manager**

## Delivering environmental services

Parks are a key component of the ‘green infrastructure’ of towns and cities, complementing the heavily engineered and costly ‘grey infrastructure’ of roads, utilities and sewerage systems. Properly planned, attractive green networks of parks, green spaces and river corridors provide natural systems and ecological services that collect and clean water, improve air quality and reduce peak summer temperatures. There is increasing interest in parks’ ability to improve the resilience of neighbourhoods to the impacts of climate change.

Parks also provide biodiversity hotspots. The qualities of an ecologically rich functional landscape were built into London’s Olympic Park at the outset. As the UK’s newest large public park, it not only provided an attractive and dramatic setting for the London 2012 Games but also continues to reduce flood risk, store surface water, and accommodate a rich diversity of plant and animal species.

# A call to action

Our research provides an early warning of the potential risk facing the UK's parks. It is a risk that can be averted if action is taken in time.

Here we set out five key challenges for the future. For each we state how HLF intends to respond, together with calls on Government, local authorities, business, the voluntary sector, academic institutions and the public to take urgent action.

## 1 Local authority commitment

Local authorities' ongoing and renewed commitment to fund, staff and manage parks is essential. There is a strong link between people's satisfaction with their local parks and their satisfaction with their neighbourhood and council. Parks are one of the most heavily used public services, particularly by families, and are therefore a priority for voters.

## 2 New partnerships

The transfer of park management from local authorities to other organisations is expected to almost double by 2016. Whilst this can help diversify funding and resourcing, establishing long-term, financially viable, locally based partnerships requires commitment and resources. Budget cuts and the loss of skilled senior managers are hindering and adding risk to this process.

## 3 Getting communities more involved

Park user groups contribute valuable volunteer time and funding to local parks. There are more than 5,000 such groups in the UK estimated to provide almost a million volunteer days and generating over £30million per year through fundraising. However, they need more support to expand this work. When groups are trained and motivated, they are better able to support park management, and their efforts will be sustained.

## 4 Collecting and sharing data

To ensure consistency in the provision of good parks across the UK it is essential to collect and compare data between individual cities and local authorities, as in the USA. Regular collection of comparable data between core cities, for example, would highlight poor provision and allow local authorities to benchmark standards and resources.

## 5 New finance models and rethinking delivery

The future of many parks depends on developing new business and finance models. Time, resources and skills are needed to develop new ideas, test and deliver them. Public and private resources and expertise need to be pooled to stimulate innovation, develop skills and share ideas.

## Action

HLF will actively monitor and champion parks projects we have funded to ensure standards are maintained, and will evaluate projects to demonstrate the value of investing in public parks.

HLF will invest up to £24million per annum in public parks and cemeteries until the end of our current strategic framework period in 2018, with the Big Lottery Fund investing an additional £10million per annum in England until the end of 2015.

We call on all local authorities to appoint an elected member to be their parks champion, to report annually how much they spend per resident in caring for their parks, and to commit to the provision of good, accessible parks by adopting an up-to-date parks, green space or green infrastructure strategy.

## Action

HLF will use our Parks for People, Start-Up Grants and Rethinking Parks programmes (see 5 below) to support a greater diversity of organisations in managing public parks.

We call on the public, private and voluntary sectors to create innovative new partnerships to fund and manage parks, and provide opportunities for park managers to develop new business skills. Good practice examples are needed to avoid duplicating effort and negotiating poor deals for the public.

We call on Government and local authorities to provide the support, resources and skills development needed by park friends and user groups who are considering entering into new partnerships to jointly manage parks.

## Action

HLF will support people to take a more active role in the parks projects we fund through investing in training, resources and activities to encourage and promote volunteering.

We invite the public and business to support Groundwork's X Marks The Spot campaign and Keep Britain Tidy's Love Parks Week to get more people actively involved through volunteering and fundraising, and making the case for parks in modern life.

We recommend that those using, managing and championing parks actively support the National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces, a national forum for park friends and user groups, to help them provide a central hub of information and advice for park groups.

## Action

HLF will encourage the development of a pilot project to help the UK's top 20 cities compare the quantity, condition and funding of their city parks.

HLF will commission and publish a second *State of UK Public Parks* study in 2016 to monitor changes in the condition, quality and resourcing of the UK's public parks.

We call on Government, the Local Government Association, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, the Northern Ireland Local Government Association and academic organisations to encourage and facilitate the central collection of consistent and comparable data on parks across all local authorities.

## Action

HLF, the Big Lottery Fund and Nesta will invest up to £1million through our Rethinking Parks programme to encourage innovation. The funding will support projects to develop creative new approaches to financing and managing parks.

We call on Government to focus their support for innovation and community rights on the delivery and funding of good quality public parks and green spaces.

We encourage innovators considering new ideas and solutions to evaluate and share their ideas so others can learn from their experiences.

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Keep Britain Tidy and the Green Flag Award Scheme

London Parks Benchmarking Group

London Parks and Green Spaces Forum

National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces

Natural England

Newcastle Parks Forum

West Midlands Parks Forum

## Heritage Lottery Fund

Using money raised through the National Lottery, HLF sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF was set up in 1994 and is the only heritage body that operates across the whole of the UK. It is administered by the trustees of the National Heritage Memorial Fund.

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www.hlf.org.uk/StateOfUKParks

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Topic	Remarks
Changing condition of parks	The HLF report provides evidence to support concerns being expressed within the sector.
Budget pressures	Both City Gardens and Open Spaces have been subject to financial pressures over the last five years; in line with other City of London services. However, during the last 15-20 years unlike local authorities, these spaces had not had to cope with sustained budget reductions. Currently, as part of the service based review, we will be considering proposals for some 15% reduction over the next four years. This is a significant challenge for all services, doing more with less and finding different ways to provide services.
Charges for services	Historically, local authority sport provision has been subsidised; including football, cricket, tennis, bowls and swimming. Any changes to charging policy have to take account of other local providers, as well as meeting the challenge of ensuring facilities are accessible. There are inconsistencies in our approach, for example, on car parking, where increased charges are warranted.
Staff and skills	We have evidence of the impact of reduced local authority management, having recently struggled to achieve strong short-lists for several middle management posts. Many of the potential middle managers have either moved into the consultancy field or left the sector. With changing requirements, new skills need to be developed. To provide appropriate support and development for volunteers, it is important to use the knowledge, skill, enthusiasm and experience of staff. We are developing volunteers who can supervise and/ or lead teams but the need for experience remains a key factor

	in ensuring volunteering is sustainable.
Community groups	Our City gardens and Open Spaces are supported by a wide ranging network of support from local communities; including Consultative Committees, user groups, volunteers and Friends. We can demonstrate that these are growing, for example the new Friends of City Gardens and Kenley Common.
Quality of Life	The City of London report published in July 2013 "Green Spaces: The Benefits for London" recognised the environmental, physical, mental health, social and economic benefits of green space in London.

<b>Committee(s):</b>	<b>Date(s):</b>
Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee	21 July 2014
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Public</b>
Annual Review of volunteering for 2013-14	
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>For Information</b>
Director of Open Spaces	
<p><b>Summary</b></p> <p>49,816 hours of volunteering were achieved across the Open Spaces during 2013-14, an increase of 4,397 hours on the 2012-13 figure and the highest ever amount.</p> <p>Volunteers continue to be involved in a variety of roles and undertake a diverse range of activities that offer them the opportunity to engage with the management of their Open Space.</p> <p>The Volunteer Improvement Group aims to maintain consistency and improve quality and opportunity through the development of volunteer improvement plans that set 12 aims for continued development.</p> <p><b>Recommendation(s)</b></p> <p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• note the report and commend volunteers for the work they have achieved.</li> </ul>	

## Main Report

### **Background**

1. Volunteers play a vital role in many areas of work in the City of London Open Spaces. Each division, apart from the Cemetery and Crematorium has well-developed volunteering schemes and opportunities.
2. The Volunteer Improvement Group, which comprises representatives of all divisions, works to maintain consistency and improve the quality of volunteering opportunities across the department.

### **Current Position**

3. In 2013-14 the Volunteering Improvement Group focussed on implementing the improvement plans that were developed the previous year.

## Measuring volunteering

4. Overall a 9.7% increase on the 2012-13 total of volunteer hours was reported for 2013-14. The 2012-13 figure was 1% down on the 2011-12 total of 46,055 hours.
5. Nearly all divisions reported an increase in volunteer hours. Of particular note is the City Gardens division which enjoyed an increase of over 2000 hours and Burnham Beeches where the figure was increased by over 1000 hours on the year before.

**Table One: total hours volunteered by division during 2012-13 and 2013-14**

Site	2012-13	2013-14
Burnham Beeches & Stoke Common	5092	6191
City Commons	10,770	11,402
City Gardens	1127	3207
Epping Forest	21,730	21,186
North London Open Spaces	5182	5831
West Ham Park	1518	1999
<b>Total</b>	<b>45,419</b>	<b>49,816 (up 9.68%)</b>

## Volunteer contribution to conservation and site management activities

6. Volunteers continued to provide a key role in carrying out fieldwork, particularly surveys. This work has been vital to conservation projects at all Open Spaces.
7. A whole site reptile survey was undertaken at Stoke Common with the Friends of Stoke Common and Burnham Beeches volunteers. This involved making up 220-250 reptile refuge sheets in eight survey areas. Volunteer surveyors visited each area and checked the sheets a minimum of seven times from early April to the end of May. This project involved volunteers at every stage from making the sheets to inputting data. In total around 200 volunteer hours were committed to this project.
8. At Ashted Common volunteers undertook a project to redesign the site map, rationalise entrances and improve the information given to cyclists and horse riders. This involved surveying all the entrances to ensure the appropriate welcome message was displayed and that layouts were uncluttered and rational. The volunteers wrote-up their findings in a report with a schedule of proposed works. They contributed to the design and installation of the new maps, and re-modelled gates, entrances and signboards to achieve the desired outcome.

9. Resident and community groups including Friends of City Gardens, Barbican Wildlife Group and Petticoat Square Gardening Club are regularly involved in site management and improvement activities including weekly volunteer sessions at Fann Street Wildlife Garden, taking part in gardening days at Christchurch Greyfriars Garden and carrying out plant and wildlife surveys across the City. Corporate volunteers have made a significant contribution to biodiversity enhancements through volunteer days which have included the planting of bulbs, native hedges, wildflower plugs and the creation of log piles for stag beetles and other invertebrates. All these activities make a significant contribution towards the aims and objectives of the City of London Biodiversity Action Plan.
10. At Epping Forest a task run in partnership with The Challenge Network involved 110 people in a conservation task over two days.
11. Southern Forest Keepers at Epping Forest have been working with volunteers at Bush Wood and have helped form a new group called Bush Wood Conservation Volunteers. At the moment they are being led by Forest Keepers, but it is hoped that some of them will attend volunteer task leader training to enable them to take on this responsibility.
12. At North London Open Spaces Heath Hands continue to provide a valuable contribution to habitat management. For example Heath Hands have worked closely with the conservation staff and ecologists to manage the regeneration of Sandy Heath Ride. This project is a great example of integrating volunteer work into the management plan for an area. Further, the volunteers continue to make a significant contribution to the Heath's overall gorse management programme.
13. A public planting day was held at West Ham Park to mark the second anniversary of the formation of the Gardening Club, which aims to show people how to grow vegetables in limited space. Approximately 30 people of all ages got involved. In addition a total of 16 gardening club sessions were held between May and October 2013, compared with seven sessions the previous year.

#### **Volunteer contribution to education and events**

14. Volunteers have been engaged in many activities that involved educating people about the Open Spaces.
15. At Burnham Beeches volunteers manned the information point at busy times of the year, providing basic site information and helping with events to encourage greater understanding of the site and its wildlife or just to ensure younger visitors had a specific activity available to get involved with. These have included bird and bug box making days/ witches broomsticks event during week of Halloween themed events. Volunteers also supported family wildlife walks and have led and back-marked numerous guided walks and health walks throughout the last year.
16. At City Commons volunteers were engaged as Volunteer Ambassadors to facilitate an event connected with a project to restore a stand of Small Leaved Lime at Spring Park. The project involved using a heavy horse to extract timber and an event was held to demonstrate this to the public. The

volunteers helped interpret this activity to visitors and explain the City Corporations stewardship of Spring Park.

17. The Friends of City Gardens have continued to help develop learning opportunities for both children and adults by engaging with schools, residents and workers. This has included hosting outdoor learning sessions on tree growth and historic artefacts at Bunhill Fields with over 80 children from The Lyceum School. The Friends and other community volunteers have organised and contributed towards a number of events including the RSPB Big Garden Bird Watch, Open Garden Squares Weekend, and the City in Bloom campaign.
18. At Epping Forest the Junior Angling Days, which are run between July and September, have been supported by the Volunteer Fishing Bailiffs. These events have always been well attended by the public. In 2013 the Fishing Bailiffs helped to organise and run three Junior Angling Days.
19. At North London Open Spaces, volunteers helped to develop a new education garden on the North side of Hampstead Heath. The Kenwood Eco-Field was landscaped to include a brand new pond, a story-telling circle for inspiring young minds, a willow maze for getting lost in, a bug hunting area complete with mushroom sculptures for discovering new creatures, magnifying stations to get a closer look and a composting toilet.
20. Hampstead Heath has also seen the start of a new volunteer interpretation programme run by the RSPB as part of the 'Wild About Hampstead Heath' project. Interpretation volunteers have run 305 hours of 'guerrilla' interpretation events on the Heath since this spring and have engaged with 1050 members of the public so far.
21. At West Ham Park approximately 180 primary school children from two local schools helped to sow wildflower seeds to create 1,820 m<sup>2</sup> of new native wildflower meadow. The Park now has over 7,470 m<sup>2</sup> of native wildflower meadow, over twice the original amount. In addition, the Friends of West Ham Park have continued to hold their popular annual events and activities; ranging from bat walks in September, biggest leaf pile event in November, the festive Park in the Dark in December, nature guided walks for The RSPB Big Garden Bird Watch in January, and a new event for 2014 - a fully booked stargazing walk in February.

### **Ensuring the quality of volunteer experience**

22. The Volunteer Improvement Plans set objectives for each division under 12 aims:
  - a. Involve volunteers in the management sites
  - b. Dedicate appropriate resources to volunteering
  - c. Develop roles for volunteers
  - d. Recruit volunteers who reflect the diversity of our communities
  - e. Use clear induction procedures
  - f. Provide appropriate training and support
  - g. Reduce risk
  - h. Supervise appropriate to need, experience and ability
  - i. Show appreciation to volunteers
  - j. Monitor performance

- k. Record the impact of volunteering
  - l. Adopt policies and procedures to reflect local need
23. At Burnham Beeches a new job description has been devised for Information Volunteers and a new induction leaflet has been developed. Volunteer leader training has been facilitated and a satisfaction survey for volunteers has been devised.
  24. At City Commons additional volunteer leader training has been provided and the Volunteer Tree Warden scheme has been rolled-out across the division. The number of consultation events at which volunteers are represented has been increased.
  25. Feedback is gathered from volunteer days to help City Gardens develop and improve the quality of the volunteering activities on offer. To enhance and reward the experience volunteers can join the 'Time Credits' scheme where volunteers can claim credits for each hour they contribute and in return can enjoy various activities across London for free such as rock climbing, swimming and visiting the cinema.
  26. At Epping Forest the Volunteer Awards Party in February 2014 celebrated volunteer achievements. Nine gold (for 600 hours), seven silver (300 hours) and seven bronze medals (150 hours) were awarded. Volunteer leadership training has been provided for 12 volunteers, who have now started to lead tasks.
  27. At North London Open Spaces the partnership between Hampstead Heath, the RSPB and English Heritage has resulted in a greater variety of volunteer projects. The RSPB has developed robust processes for engaging under-represented groups. Over 20 volunteers have received training.
  28. At West Ham Park work has been undertaken on the systems and processes surrounding volunteering, with updates to registration forms, induction procedures and feedback forms.

### **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

29. Encouraging volunteering contributes to the City Together Strategy to build a strong third sector to meet the needs of our communities.
30. The programme also contributes to KPP4 of the Corporate Plan: maximise the opportunities and benefits afforded by our role in supporting London's Communities (support the charitable and voluntary sector).
31. Widening and developing volunteering, together with education & biodiversity, is one of the department's three strategic objectives in the Business Plan.

### **Conclusion**

32. The introduction of Volunteer Improvement Plans and the oversight of the Volunteer Improvement Group have encouraged the development and expansion of the departments volunteering programme.
33. Volunteer contributions increased significantly in 2013-14 to an all time high of 49,800 hours.

34. Volunteering enables members of the local community the opportunity to engage positively with their Open Space, and the department continues to develop new ways to encourage people to volunteer.

#### **Appendices**

- None

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<b>Committee(s):</b>	<b>Date(s):</b>
Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee	21 July 2014
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Public</b>
Open Spaces Tree Safety Policy and Biosecurity Guidance	
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>For Decision</b>
Director of Open Spaces	

### Summary

Approximately 64% of the City Corporation's Open Spaces are comprised of woodland or wood pasture. Although each Open Spaces division manages its tree stock in a safe way through local procedures, there is currently no overarching departmental policy to ensure consistency of approach.

In addition, there are an increasing number of harmful pests and diseases affecting trees in the UK, and there is the potential for these to harm both our users and the composition and character of our tree stock if left unchecked. It is important that staff, contractors and visitors to our sites are made aware of these pathogens and that there is guidance in place to minimise the risk of their spreading.

Policies have been written to address both of the above issues and this report seeks your approval for these documents attached at Appendices 1 & 2.

### Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Approve the Tree Safety Policy, Biosecurity Policy and Biosecurity Protocol for immediate adoption by the Open Spaces Department;
- Agree that the Tree Safety Policy be shared with other relevant departments in order to ensure a consistent approach to tree safety management across the City Corporation.

## Main Report

### Background

1. The City of London owns and manages approximately 11,000 acres of green space, managed by its Open Spaces Department. This includes approximately 7,080 acres of trees (64% of total open space), ranging from stands of historic woodland and wood pasture, to garden and street trees.
2. Trees are living organisms which, by their nature, pose certain risks such as natural shedding of limbs, and the potential to topple in extreme weather conditions. Whilst it is accepted that the overall risk to human health and

property is extremely low, as tree owners the City Corporation has a duty of care to monitor and manage that level of risk in order to protect its users and its staff from potential harm.

3. In addition, Members will be aware of the increasing number of pests and diseases threatening our tree stock, some of which have the potential to impact on human health (e.g. Oak Processionary Moth), whilst others have the potential to impact substantially on certain tree species and, ultimately, the character of our landscapes (e.g. Ash Dieback, Acute Oak Decline and *Massaria*). In order to better protect our trees and our landscapes, it is important that we do all we can to prevent the spread of these pests and diseases into our open spaces.

### **Current Position**

4. Whilst each of the Open Spaces' divisions currently has local policies for managing their tree stock and guidance has been available for managers through our departmental Health & Safety Framework, procedures need updating in line with National guidance and a formal adoption process followed. The current lack of an overarching policy could be seen as a weakness in our Health and Safety systems.
5. In 2013, a working group was set up to monitor, and seek solutions to, some of the challenges shared by all divisions regarding the management of our tree stock. The Tree Management Improvement Group consists of representatives from each of the divisions within the Open Spaces Department, and has drafted the following documents:
  - Tree Safety Policy: this document provides overarching strategic guidance on the safe management of trees across the department. It is based on guidance drawn up by the National Tree Safety Group whose work is in turn endorsed by the Health and Safety Executive. The Policy takes a common-sense approach to the management of trees, recognising that they are living organisms that provide a great many benefits to man and the environment.
  - Biosecurity Policy: this good practice document focuses on the importance of protecting our trees from harmful pests and diseases, and the potential impact that these can have if left to spread unchecked. It recognises that 'wrapping our trees in cotton wool' is not practical, but provides guidance to staff, contractors and users on how to minimise the risk of spreading harmful pathogens. It also recognises that this will not always be possible where there is free access to roam, but stresses the importance of providing information to all visitor groups in order to raise awareness of the issues.
  - Biosecurity Protocol: this accompanies the Biosecurity Policy as a practical guide for staff on the issues covered by the Policy. It takes the form of a template that can be adapted by each open space to fit their particular local needs.

## **Proposals**

6. Subject to your Committee's approval, it is proposed that the Open Spaces Department adopt the documents listed at paragraph 5 immediately, and implement the actions outlined within.
7. Furthermore, it is proposed to share these documents with other relevant departments that also have a responsibility for managing trees on City Corporation land, for example Community & Children's Services, City Surveyors, and the City of London Freeman's School.

## **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

8. This report supports key strategic aims within the Open Spaces Departmental Business Plan 2014-17, notably to:
  - Provide safe, secure and accessible Open Spaces and services for the benefit of London and the Nation;
  - Deliver sustainable working practices to promote the variety of life and protect the Open Spaces for the enjoyment of future generations;
  - Promote opportunities to value and enjoy the outdoors for recreation, learning and healthy living.

## **Conclusion**

9. A consistent, co-ordinated approach to tree safety management across all City open spaces is important in order to protect staff and visitors from harm, and to protect the City Corporation's reputation. It is also important that staff and visitors are aware of the need to minimise the risk of spreading harmful pests and diseases into, and between, our open spaces. The documents appended to this report, if adopted and diligently implemented, will help in minimising these risks.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Tree Safety Policy
- Appendix 2 – Open Spaces Biosecurity Policy and Biosecurity Protocol

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# CoL OPEN SPACES DEPARTMENT POLICY: MANAGING TREE SAFETY

## 1. Policy Introduction and Context:

1.1 Each Division, for its geographic area of responsibility where it would be deemed as the occupier as defined by the Occupiers' Liabilities Acts, must have a risk limitation strategy for trees based upon the 5 key principles identified by the National Tree Safety Group in *Common Sense Management of Trees* (NTSG 2011) endorsed by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

### The 5 key principles

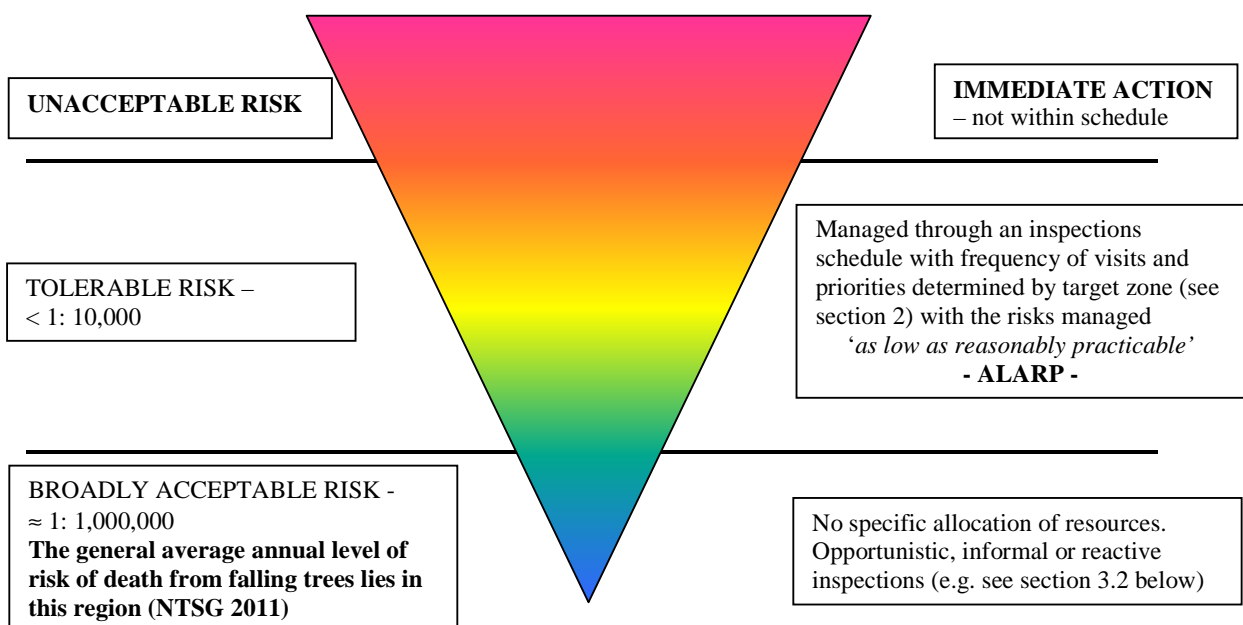
- trees provide a wide variety of benefits to society (including supporting significant biodiversity)
- trees are living organisms that naturally lose branches or fall
- the overall risk to human safety is extremely low
- tree owners have a legal duty of care
- tree safety management should be balanced & proportionate to risk/benefit.

1.2 As part of each Divisional Strategy there must be a:

- clear zoning system
- verifiable tree hazard inspection regime
- balanced, proportionate risk assessment
- clear risk management process.

1.3 The Tolerability of Risk (ToR) Framework set out in Figure 1 below will be the basis for each Divisional strategy. Therefore, in deciding upon actions, the evaluation of what is reasonable and proportionate intervention must be based upon a balance between the benefits and potential for harm. The risk of being killed by a falling branch or tree is extremely low according to the HSE (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Tolerability of Risk Framework**



**1.4** In general, NTSG 2011 states that “*the courts appear to indicate that the standard of inspection is proportional to the size of and resources available (in terms of expertise) to the landowner*”. In determining the resources the level of risk, which is very low (Fig. 1), is also key and a “*reasonable and prudent*” approach is required in this context.

**1.5** The risk management process and tree hazard inspections should not lead to a loss of character or species diversity within Open Spaces. It should ensure that a balance is maintained between nature and landscape conservation, public access, recreation and enjoyment, and risks to safety posed by trees.

**1.6** Except where there is an imminent danger to life, before work is undertaken on any tree an assessment of its use by bats (and other protected species) as well as of the general requirements of any statutory wildlife protection of the site (e.g. SSSI/SAC) must be undertaken and advice sought from relevant authorities to prevent damage to those species or habitats. For bats a Bat Risk Assessment form should be completed to provide written evidence of procedure and to record the rationale for subsequent actions.

**1.7** In order to undertake a tree risk assessment the two separate factors of *Risk* and *Hazard* must be addressed:

- **Risk** is an estimate of the likelihood and severity of an adverse event occurring. The NTSG (2011) principles upon which this policy is based recognise that overall the risk to human safety from trees is extremely low (see Figure 1 above). Risk is related to the location of the tree. It reflects the intensity of use of the immediate surroundings of the tree and the proximity of the tree to buildings or other structures. The intensity of use by the public, staff, volunteers and contractors within Open Spaces is not evenly distributed and, therefore, levels of risk may vary across a site. This fact must be recognised in an appropriate, site-specific tree inspection zoning system.

- **Hazard:** Trees are subject to decline, physical damage and infection. As trees deteriorate they are increasingly likely to shed limbs or fall in strong winds and the potential to cause harm increases. Remedial action is only necessary when there is clearly a significant risk to life or property. This might mean either removing part of the tree that is creating the hazard or reducing the level of public access in the vicinity or both.

## **2. Divisional Zoning System**

**2.1** The zone designation below will determine the priority and regularity of proactive inspections.

**2.2** Divisional resources must be directed to the areas in proportion to the potential for harm to people and property. As such, zones must be related to identifiable, potential “targets”, both physical targets such as property and targets based on level of usage of an area by people. Both the nature and frequency of use of the “target” by people need to be taken into account. Where no data on levels or patterns of use are directly available for an area, the level of use by people should be a reasonable estimate based on local knowledge of the area and its particular features. A reasonable outcome of the zoning process may be the decision that some areas require no proactive inspections.

**2.3** Decisions on zones and the definition of each zone need to be recorded and be accessible for inspection. Zoning systems at each Divisional area of responsibility should be reviewed periodically in order to take account of significant changes to site use, the uses of adjoining land or modifications to site boundaries.

**2.4** Zoning will be achieved by each Division by designating each area of land under its responsibility into a minimum of three *Use Levels* requiring some level of proactive inspections based on the concepts of risk and hazard outlined above.

- **High Use targets** - coloured **red** on the tree inspection map.
- **Medium Use targets** - coloured **amber** on the tree inspection map.
- **Low Use targets** - coloured **green** on the tree inspection map.

**2.5** Within the Open Spaces the variety of sites and situations, rural and urban, is very large and zoning needs to reflect local knowledge and divisional differences. It should be recognised that within each of the target zones, there may be a need to prioritize further based on availability of resources.

**2.6** Areas deemed as of *broadly acceptable risk* (see Figure 1 above) because of low use and low target levels would require zoning so that the demarcation is clear but may not require proactive inspections. These will be demarcated but left **uncoloured** on the zone map.

### **3. Inspection regimes**

#### **3.1 Proactive Inspection Regime and Competence Level for Inspectors**

3.1.1 The identified coloured zones above must each have a proactive, formal inspection regime defined and carried out at a frequency based on the level of use of the target. A competent Inspector will assess the tree. For all Open Spaces Department formal inspections, tree inspectors will be trained to LANTRA Professional Level, have passed the Professional Tree Inspection (PTI) course and possess demonstrable, recent experience of tree risk assessment work.

3.1.2 Defects on the trees will be recorded in order to assess the potential hazard and consider the risk posed by the defect. Given that the risk to human safety from trees is, in general, very low the assessment of defects needs to bear this in mind. However, where i) the risk to a target is considered high (see Figure 1 above); ii) the tree is of importance for nature conservation or has landscape value and iii) the nature of the hazard posed by the defect is uncertain (e.g. level of internal decay) more detailed assessments may be carried out before a decision on the type of action required is taken.

3.1.3 During walk-by inspections within a surveyed zone, trees with no obvious defects, that appeared sound and that required no further level of inspection would not need to be recorded. A record of the visit to that zone by the inspector would be all that would be required. However, any trees subject to more detailed individual inspection, whether requiring subsequent action or not, would require a record. Once the work has been completed on these recorded trees, if they are retained rather than felled they do not necessarily require future recording unless a subsequent survey flags them up again as having obvious new defects requiring another inspection. However, in High Use Target zones, should time and resources allow, site managers may wish to continue individual inspection regimes once started. However, this is not a requirement of this policy and will be dependent on the characteristics of the trees involved and the nature of the site and its zones. The purpose of the annual inspection is to pick out obvious problems and prioritize them, not to repeat recording.

3.1.4 All records must be readily accessible to relevant staff and will be kept indefinitely. This will be especially important for those trees located next to Highways and other high use target zones.

3.1.5 Any tree works that are required must be prioritized according to risk, taking account of location (target level) and hazard, and there must be a recommended period for the work to be carried out. The range of this period might be from immediate action up to a recommendation for work within 12 months.

#### **3.2 Reactive Inspections**

3.2.1 Sites must have a local emergency plan that details the actions to be taken in the event of severe weather conditions or events, such as storms, flooding, drought and fire. This emergency plan would be additional to, over and above, the regular proactive inspection regime. There also may be the need for other reactive inspections over and above the proactive inspection regime where a new target is created or develops rapidly (e.g. an unplanned public event).

3.2.2 Therefore, in either enacting an emergency plan or responding to a new and changing situation, reactive inspections of trees should be focused on identifying *serious and present dangers* (NTSG 2011). Such inspections may be carried out by any person able to identify such threats and with a good local knowledge of the site. Such persons do not need to be qualified specifically for tree inspections. These reactive inspections do not constitute detailed inspections, as defined by NTSG 2011. However, follow-up detailed inspections of identified trees by PTI-qualified inspectors may be required in order to prioritize remedial action if large amounts of work are involved.

3.2.3 For reactive inspections following weather events, including drive-by checks, the top priority is to identify the areas of worst damage and then to prioritize the inspections in order of zonal priority but this may include areas not normally proactively inspected, if deemed necessary, because of new *serious and present dangers* created by the event or reported by others on the site.

#### 4. Risk assessments and determining priorities

4.1 Risk assessments may be qualitative or quantitative to suit the needs and resources of each Division and each site. For larger, more complex sites with many targets and many trees, quantitative assessments, such as provided by a Target Risk Index (TRI), should be considered as an option to help stratify priorities and determine the order and speed with which remedial action is taken.

4.2 If a quantitative system is chosen it should be based on target sequencing to generate a Target Risk Index (TRI). Resource allocation should take an As-Low-As-Reasonably-Practicable (ALARP) approach as described in the NTSG guidance (2011 and see Figure 1 above).

4.3 A priority matrix should be formulated based on the hazard rating: - Tolerability of Risk (ToR) (see Figure 1 above) and the Target Risk Index (TRI). This matrix would then enable cost-effective decisions to be made with clear justifications.

### What Documentation Should be Kept?

- Up-to-date tree zoning maps, zoning rationale and reviews
- Records of tree inspection visits/timesheets – signed and dated by inspector.
- Individual tree management recommendations and actions, preferably also on a computer GIS database (e.g. *Arbortrack*, *EzyTreev*) for larger sites
- Records of more detailed individual tree investigations if undertaken – (e.g. *Picus* tomography records of internal decay)
- Records and details of reactive inspections following severe weather events and any site closure programme.
- Records of any tree disease survey or other tree health monitoring activities.
- Records of training and copies of certificates for all relevant members of staff.
- Records of contractors and their competency checks.

### Summary of Open Spaces Policy for Managing Trees

- Each Division must have tree safety management guidelines comprising of tree zone map(s), tree inspection regime, and tree risk assessment & management procedure.
- Deal with immediate threats to public safety as a priority.
- Keep records of the assessment of trees and the remedial actions taken.
- A competent person will undertake inspections of trees to assess the risks they pose. Keep records of tree safety training and monitor these to ensure training and certificates renewed.
- Inspect areas of high use levels as soon as is reasonably practicable and within five days of any storm event, and record the appropriate measures taken to make the site safe.
- Monitor the weather forecasts and print off the relevant information and display appropriately.
- Monitor the near miss records as per the tree safety management system and transfer records to tree safety recording forms/database.
- Undertake appropriate surveys of trees for environmental factors that are hazardous to human health e.g. Oak Processionary Moth. Take appropriate action and record the activity.

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## **City of London Open Spaces Biosecurity Policy for the Protection of Tree Health**

### **Introduction**

This policy sets out the broad principles for biosecurity with specific regard to tree health within the City of London Open Spaces Department. The tree resource managed by The City is extremely diverse and this presents a particular challenge in setting out such a policy. This overarching Departmental policy is therefore aimed at setting down the broad principles that all Divisions are expected to adhere to. The separate Divisions are encouraged to produce their own site-specific protocols that extend the broad guidance further as appropriate to their situation.

### **What is biosecurity?**

Biosecurity is a set of precautions that aim to prevent the introduction and spread of harmful organisms. These may be pests, pathogens or invasive species. Biosecurity measures are the practical steps designed to minimise the risk of introducing or spreading these pests and diseases.

### **Why biosecurity is important**

The threat to trees and woodland has never been greater. Increased global trade and movement of goods between countries means there is an increased risk of spreading undesirable pests and diseases. In addition, our changing climate is making conditions more suitable to species that colonise, enabling some to spread more easily and to which our own native flora have no natural defence. Trees and plants in Britain are now vulnerable to a range of new pests and diseases and outbreaks can seriously threaten sustainable tree and woodland management. Outbreaks can result in economic losses both financial and in terms of staff time, as well as having consequences for visitors and tourism.

### **Why biosecurity is important to the City of London**

Trees are of great importance to the City of London. The City of London Open Spaces Department provides publically accessible open space for the people of London and beyond; in total 4,500ha are owned and managed by the City Corporation. Trees and woodland are a particularly notable part of the resource with approximately 2,865ha (64%) considered to be woodland or wood pasture. This does not include the many thousands of trees in parks and urban areas.

Open Spaces owned by the City are extremely diverse in nature, ranging from urban parks such as West Ham Park and Queen's Park to Nature reserves of European Importance such as Epping Forest and Burnham Beeches. Many of the sites have some form of nature conservation status. The City encourages public access to as much of its land as possible and in many cases this is a legal obligation.

The City of London has a legal obligation to manage land owned under its various Acts of Parliament for the benefit of the people of London and these all include some component of custodianship of the land as a 'natural' open space or an attractive park. Many also have other designations (conservation or historical) that include obligations to manage in specific ways which involves the retention of trees and woodland. The City is unusual in owning and

managing some extremely important sites with old trees, such as Epping Forest, Ashted Common, Burnham Beeches and Spring Park. These areas are very important for nature conservation because of the organisms associated with these types of trees.

Trees are hugely beneficial and contribute to the well-being of people and environments and they are an integral part of our green spaces in towns and cities. Studies have shown that they improve health and recovery after illness as part of a green environment; they clean and cool urban areas; produce oxygen for us to breathe; reduce pressure on drainage systems and lower the risk of surface water flooding. Many of the City's trees are also habitats for rare and threatened organisms and are the reason for the conservation designations for some sites. Loss of trees would have a huge impact on the appearance and workings of our City and surrounding countryside.

### **The role of the City of London as landowners**

The City of London takes its duties as a land owner seriously. This includes good practice in management of its land holding and in the relationship between visitors, employees and the land. As well as guidance within the Acts under which our spaces are managed, each division of the Open Spaces Department has a site-specific management plan that sets out the principles in relation to specific management issues.

### **Why have a biosecurity policy?**

Other organisations managing large numbers of trees have produced position statements regarding their organisation and specific tree diseases and/or tree health in general. The Forestry Commission has produced a simple fact sheet 'Biosecurity: Good working practice for those involved in forestry' and also a public information sheet aimed at visitors to the countryside promoting simple biosecurity measures.

Trees are of such importance to the City and to the Nation within the urban environment, and through the ownership of some very special sites with large numbers of old trees, that a biosecurity policy is deemed appropriate.

The City also has a leadership role within the Greater London area and liaises closely with other policy and Government bodies through the hosting of conferences and representation at forums and meetings. Demonstrating best practice is therefore desirable where possible.

### **Policy principles**

The City of London Open Spaces Department undertakes to:

- Keep abreast of issues, developments and other policies related to pests and diseases of trees found within its land holdings
- Continue to monitor biosecurity policies and protocols developed by other organisations, especially those promoted by the Forestry Commission and other Government agencies and adapt this policy to take account of these as necessary
- Comply with any legal obligations regarding tree pests or diseases
- Raise awareness of tree pests and biosecurity with staff via cascading of information from the senior management team and representatives attending departmental meetings concerning trees and biodiversity

- Raise awareness of biosecurity to contactors working on trees on City land - especially those visiting multiple sites as part of their work and/or cutting the trees and disposing of waste - encouraging them to take measures to reduce the risk of moving pests and disease around as far as possible
- Raise awareness of tree pests and biosecurity to members of the public visiting open spaces via the usual channels for each specific open space, for example through noticeboards on site, newsletters or website updates. This should include simple messages such as cleaning boots, shoes and tyres regularly to prevent mud from spreading pests and diseases, avoid dumping garden rubbish and planting garden plants in the countryside.
- Raise awareness to members of the public and colleagues via internet web pages and the staff intranet, as well as other media.
- Continue to support London and countrywide initiatives, campaigns and research related to tree pests and diseases
- Encourage the use of volunteers to survey and monitor for specific tree diseases, both within the City Corporation's Open Spaces and also in the wider population
- Develop local biosecurity policies or statements for individual sites that go beyond this general policy, especially for sites with large areas of woodland or with important populations of old trees. Attached at Appendix 1 is a protocol template that can be adapted for use by individual Divisions.
- Provide resources (including staff time) to carry out the above

#### References and further reading

National Tree Safety Group (2011). Common sense risk management of trees. The Forestry Commission. See Appendix 2 for information about the benefits of trees.

Forestry Commission (2012). Biosecurity. Fact sheet about good working practice for those involved in forestry. [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCMS028-guidance.pdf/\\$FILE/FCMS028-guidance.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCMS028-guidance.pdf/$FILE/FCMS028-guidance.pdf)

Forestry Commission. Turn over a clean leaf today. Single page sheet aimed at members of the public when exploring the outdoors. [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/Poster\\_countrysidebiosecurity2012.pdf/\\$file/Poster\\_countrysidebiosecurity2012.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/Poster_countrysidebiosecurity2012.pdf/$file/Poster_countrysidebiosecurity2012.pdf)

#### Appendix 1

Tree diseases of concern or potential concern to City of London sites (see [www.forestry.gov.uk/pestsanddiseases](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pestsanddiseases) for more details)

Disease	Tree species infected	Principal area of concern/impact on trees	Comments
Acute oak decline (AOD)	Oak	Causes slow death of trees	
Ash die back (Chalara)	Ash	Kills trees	
<i>Massaria</i>	Plane	Does not kill trees but	Of particular concern

		large limb failure has safety implications	to more urban open spaces
Oak Processionary moth (OPM)	Oak	Weakens trees making then susceptible to other diseases. Caterpillar hairs are a severe human health issue	
<i>Phytophthora alni</i>	Alder	Kills trees	Only a small amount of alder on CoL land holdings
<i>Phytophthora austrocedrae</i>	Juniper	Causes partial death of bushes and eventual total death	Burnham Beeches only
<i>Phytophthora kernoviae</i>	Oak, Beech, Rhododendron & bilberry	Kills trees quickly	
<i>Phytophthora ramorum</i>	Larch, beech, sweet chestnut and non-native oaks	Kills trees quickly	
Horse chestnut leaf minor/bleeding canker	Horse chestnuts	One pest and one disease. Bleeding canker can kill trees.	
Sweet chestnut blight	Sweet chestnut	Causes the death of trees	Only a small amount of sweet chestnut in CoL land holdings

## Open Spaces Department Biosecurity Protocol

Site: .....

### **Where this protocol applies:**

All City of London Open Spaces, or distinct areas within an open space, where biosecurity is in the interest of protecting sensitive flora populations and where it is practically enforceable (from here on referred to as 'The Site'). This would exclude areas where there is no practical way of controlling the flow of visitor access, e.g. City Gardens.

### **Who this applies to:**

**Contractors** – All contractors that are likely to access any areas of the Site (unless access is limited to hard surface roads, car parks, yards, office area and lodges) should disinfect when they sign in at the office. Any equipment should also be disinfected.

**Site visitors** – All professionals and volunteers from other countryside sites, colleges on guided walks, training groups, general guided walks including those for members of the public (unless access is limited to hard surface roads, etc – as above), should disinfect prior to their walk or when they leave the office for their site visit. For groups meeting at any other location away from the office, disinfecting should be done at the meeting point.

**Staff and volunteers** – All staff and volunteers should be encouraged to disinfect their boots after visiting other green spaces or to have foot wear that they use for the Site alone. At the least they should ensure that foot wear and clothing is clean. It may not be practical to disinfect when transferring between the Site and areas immediately adjacent, however cleaning footwear between the two is desirable.

### **What to clean/disinfect**

**Boots and clothing** – ensure all clothing and boots are clear of mud, leaves and pine needles before arriving at the Site and boots disinfected as below.

**Equipment** – to include all equipment and vehicles to be in contact with the soil or vegetation whether hired, borrowed or used by contractors or visitors– digging equipment, chippers, vehicles, hand tools, chainsaws, surveying equipment (e.g. tape measures) that will be in contact with trees or vegetation

All are to be clear of mud, leaves and pine needles before arriving at the Site and disinfected as below.

**Clothes, Boots or equipment/vehicles soiled with mud leaves or pine needles should be refused access and sent away to be cleaned before returning for disinfection**

### **When?**

**Every time** – staff, contractors, volunteers and visitors that are likely to have visited other sites between their visits to the Site may cause cross contamination – it is unlikely you can ever be sure that anyone returning to the Site over a period of days will not be contaminated from other locations – if in doubt insist on disinfection each time the person or equipment arrives at the Site

### **Process for implementing biosecurity to contractors, guided walks and site visits**

When the contract is issued or the arrangements made for the work/visit to be made the following information should be included:

*“This Site operates an active biosecurity policy. When you arrive, your footwear will be disinfected. For this reason please ensure that your boots are clean and free from mud or vegetation.*

*If you will be using vehicles off tarmac roads or any equipment this will also need to be disinfected and so should be clean when you arrive.*

*Please co-operate with staff requests and be aware that if you do not have clean footwear, vehicles or equipment you may not be allowed to continue your work."*

#### **Staff protocol for dealing with contractors**

- Where possible limit their access, e.g. to hard surfaced areas only
- Avoid driving vehicles off hard surfaced roads
- Advise contractors of requirements before they arrive at the Site
- Disinfectant and equipment required is stored in the chemical safe [Location:.....] and is marked as TREE BIO in 5ltr or 1ltr pump sprayers.
- Disinfectant should be applied to run off point

#### **Staff protocol for dealing with visitors on guided walks and volunteers**

- As a general principle, try to raise the issue of biosecurity with visitors and especially regular attendees and volunteers.
- Ideally encourage attendees to wear clean footwear by telling them before a guided walk or event if possible (e.g. via booking system).
- Try to find an opportunity within the event to explain to attendees about the biosecurity protocol and what they can do to help (in general).
- If possible disinfect boots of volunteers before they start work. If they regularly work on other conservation sites this should be actively encouraged. Apply disinfectant to run off point, this may mean taking the smaller pump spray to the starting point of the walk/event. (Try to avoid taking all sprays so that there is always one left for contractors if needed).
- Volunteers' vehicles should not normally need to go off tarmac roads. If they are needed off road they should be disinfected beforehand as for contractors vehicles.

#### **Staff protocol for staff**

Staff should be encouraged to think about their clothing and especially footwear. If possible:

- Clean footwear between using it in different locations
- Disinfect footwear when arriving at work when it has been worn elsewhere
- Try to have separate footwear for work and leisure
- Ensure the clothes you wear to work are not dirty from other sites.
- It is not realistic to disinfect between the Site and those immediately adjacent, but be aware of the possibility of carrying diseases between the two. Ideally clean foot wear between sites, especially if it gets particularly muddy. Clean vehicles if they go between sites and have been off road and are muddy.

Opportunities should be taken to discuss this policy with members of the public, volunteers etc. and to explain why it is important and to encourage acceptance and buy in. This should be done verbally and in relevant site literature (volunteer hand-outs, site noticeboards, etc).

While it is not possible for us to disinfect all visitors to the Site, it would be advantageous if as many as possible operated their own biosecurity policy (cleaning boots between sites for example).

### **Further guidance on biosecurity**

For staff use and for circulation to anyone who requests further information.

### **Background**

In recent years there have been increasing numbers of tree diseases found in the UK and some of these have the capability to kill large numbers of trees. The need to disinfect boots and clothing is well established for those people moving between farms on a regular basis and we are relatively familiar with the sight of foot washes to control animal diseases. For some time now, tree focussed organisations (such as the Royal Forestry Society and the Ancient Tree Forum) have operated a biosecurity system for field visits in order to try and prevent the spread of tree and plant diseases. This is likely to become more evident in the future as the horticultural industry picks up on the issue. Although biosecurity may be seen as something exceptional at the moment, in the future it will become main stream. The relatively recent discovery of the disease that kills ash trees in the UK has brought some of these issues higher up the agenda of land managers and nature reserves. However this is just one of many different diseases that have the potential to infect and kill trees as well as other flora and fauna and they are spread by different agents. Disinfecting footwear and cleaning clothes will not stop the spread of some diseases but for others it may be a significant deterrent.

***The main precaution is for visitors, contractors and staff to have footwear, clothing, tools, equipment and vehicles clear of mud, leaves and needles before arriving at the Site and then to spray or dip with disinfectant on arrival.***

***It is not realistic to disinfect every single visitor but widespread take up should be encouraged.***

This protocol does not include visitors/contractors to the yard area, office and lodges only.

### **Footwear**

#### **Before arriving at the Site**

Footwear must be clean and free from soil and plant debris before arrival, if footwear is dirty on arrival the following process must be applied.

- Footwear must be washed off using a stiff brush and water. It is essential that all traces of soil be removed.
- The brush for this must be kept on site in a bucket of disinfectant.
- After cleaning, footwear must be sprayed with Propeller or Vikon and left until it has evaporated.
- Care must be taken to ensure that any water run-off does not enter watercourses

### **Clothing**

**Needles and leaves can get stuck in and on clothing.**

#### **Before arriving at the Site**

- Needles and debris on clothing must be shaken out or brushed off before leaving the site or getting into a vehicle.
- Check inside footwear, hoods, outer pockets and collars. Remember to check any protective equipment such as helmets, ear-defenders, felling gloves and protective over-trousers.
- Wet clothing **MUST** be changed before moving between sites. Wet clothing must be bagged and laundered before re-use, or washed down and disinfected. The use of waterproof outer clothing and leggings will help with this precaution.

## Tools

**Hand tools and motorised tools used for cutting and digging must be cleaned of mud and debris before arriving at the Site and will then be disinfected on arrival**

- If any work (e.g. pruning) is to be carried out on a tree or shrub, tools must be 'flamed or disinfected **before** being used - Propeller or Vikon disinfectant may be applied and left to evaporate.
- Chainsaw bars, chains and side covers must be removed and cleaned as thoroughly as possible to remove debris. Where it is appropriate and safe to do so, Propeller or Vikon disinfectant may be applied and left to evaporate.
- Other hand tools and equipment such as tapes, cant hooks, wedges, fuel cans, tools and toolboxes must be cleaned off and surfaces brushed with disinfectant before being moved onto site

## Vehicles, lorries and machines

**Special care should be taken to ensure that vehicle and machinery tyres and lorry beds are free of loose soil, mud and debris before arriving at the Site.**

### **Before entering any part of the Site**

- Consider whether the vehicle needs to enter the site at all. If you can, park off site and walk in
- Share vehicles wherever possible to reduce the number of vehicles that need to enter the site.
- When on site, vehicles should stay on Tarmac surfaced roads wherever possible

### **Before arriving at the Site**

- Machines, plant and any road vehicles must be cleaned. A pressure washer should be used, preferably one that uses hot water or steam.
- This cleaning should focus on removing as much mud and needle debris as possible focusing on tyres, wheels, mud flaps, sills, wheel arches, guarded areas and anywhere else where mud and needle debris may have accumulated. Cab floors and pedals should also be checked and cleaned.
- On arrival at the Site, tyres, blades, buckets etc. should be disinfected with Propeller or Vikon disinfectant

## **Disinfectants**

- Disinfectants used should be either Propeller or Vikon. **Note that disinfectants are NOT effective on soiled surfaces and that broad-spectrum farm disinfectants are not effective against *Phytophthora*.**
- Disinfectants can be applied from a spraying bottle or from a purpose made spray. They can also be used in a mat form (sponge in a tray impregnated with disinfectant) which people walk through and this may be the easiest for large groups. Disinfectants should be stored in the chemical store at the agreed location.
- Note that there should always be a 5L spray bottle with chemical in and at least two 1L bottles. Should you empty a bottle it is your responsibility to make up more, order more or tell your line manager. It is also your responsibility to ensure that bottles are clearly marked, and to reinforce any labelling that is getting too faint to see.



By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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