



Highgate Wood Consultative Group

Date: WEDNESDAY, 6 OCTOBER 2021

Time: 11.15 am

Venue: VIRTUAL MEETING (ACCESSIBLE REMOTELY)

Members: Anne Fairweather (Chair)
William Upton QC (Deputy Chairman)
Deputy John Tomlinson

Co-Optees: Stephanie Beer (Muswell Hill & Fortis Green Association)
Peter Corley (Tree Trust for Haringey)
Therese Gray (Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee)
Councillor Bob Hare (London Borough of Haringey)
Councillor Julia Ogiehor (London Borough of Haringey)
Lucy Roots (Muswell Hill Friends of the Earth)
Alison Watson (Friends of Queen's Wood)
Michael Hammerson (Highgate Society)

Enquiries: Leanne Murphy
leanne.murphy@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Accessing the virtual public meeting

Members of the public can observe this virtual public meeting at the below link:

<https://youtu.be/KaYkhxkFGBg>

This meeting will be a virtual meeting and therefore will not take place in a physical location following regulations made under Section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020. A recording of the public meeting will be available via the above link following the end of the public meeting for up to one municipal year. Please note: Online meeting recordings do not constitute the formal minutes of the meeting; minutes are written and are available on the City of London Corporation's website. Recordings may be edited, at the discretion of the proper officer, to remove any inappropriate material.

John Barradell
Town Clerk and Chief Executive

AGENDA

Public Agenda

1. **APOLOGIES**
2. **DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**
3. **MINUTES**
To agree the public minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 April 2021.
For Decision
(Pages 3 - 8)
4. **HAMPSTEAD HEATH, HIGHGATE WOOD AND QUEEN'S PARK COMMITTEE MINUTES**
To receive the public minutes of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee meeting held on 26 May 2021.
For Information
(Pages 9 - 18)
5. **DRAFT MID TERM REPORT - HIGHGATE WOOD CHARITY (NO. 232986)**
Report of the Executive Director of Environment.
For Discussion
(Pages 19 - 32)
6. **TWO YEAR REVIEW OF THE OPEN SPACES DEPARTMENT'S LEARNING PROGRAMME 2019-21**
Report of the Director of Open Spaces.
For Information
(Pages 33 - 70)
7. **QUESTIONS**
8. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT**
9. **DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**
The next meetings will take place on 25 May and 5 October 2022.

HIGHGATE WOOD CONSULTATIVE GROUP **Wednesday, 21 April 2021**

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Highgate Wood Consultative Group held on
Wednesday, 21 April 2021 at 4.00 pm

Present

Members:

Anne Fairweather (Chair)
Deputy John Tomlinson
Stephanie Beer
Councillor Bob Hare
Michael Hammerson

Officers:

Jonathan Meares - Highgate Wood, Conservation & Trees Manager
Bob Warnock - Superintendent of Hampstead Heath
Leanne Murphy - Town Clerk's Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Karina Dostalova, Peter Corley, Therese Gray (represented by Louise Lewis), Lucy Roots, Councillor Julia Ogiehor and Alison Watson.

2. MEMBERS DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED, the public minutes of the previous meeting held on 7 October 2020.

4. HAMPSTEAD HEATH, HIGHGATE WOOD AND QUEEN'S PARK COMMITTEE MINUTES

4.1 25 November 2020

The public minutes of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee meeting held on 25 November 2020 were received.

4.2 7 January 2021

The public minutes of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee meeting held on 7 January 2021 were received.

4.3 24 February 2021

The public minutes of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee meeting held on 24 February 2021 were received.

5. **DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT - HIGHGATE WOOD CHARITY (NO. 232986)**

Members received a report of the Director of Open Spaces presenting the draft End of Year Annual Report for the Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Kilburn Charity (No. 232986).

During 2020/21 activities, events and income generation at Highgate Wood have been impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The Wood has remained open and has provided invaluable access to open space for the local community during the three National Lockdowns.

The achievement of the 2020/21 Key Priorities has been impacted by the ongoing pandemic and were set out along with proposed draft priorities for inclusion in the 'Plans for Future Periods 2021/22' for Members feedback, with a focus on ground restoration works. The draft Annual Work Programme Projects 2021/22 and draft Highgate Wood Divisional Plan 2021/24 are also presented for Members feedback.

The Highgate Wood, Conservation & Trees Manager provided Members with a full update on Highgate Wood matters since the last meeting. It was noted that there was notable compaction and erosion impacting the Woods, and staff were carrying out restoration work to allow areas to regenerate as part of the COVID-19 Recovery Programme, which would be the primary focus of work over the next 1-2 years. Heath Hands volunteers were also helping with work in woodland areas to block off desire lines which have been formed during the pandemic.

It was noted that efficiencies continued to be made following the budget reduction, and the staff compliment had been reduced from 6 to 5.

With regards to events, Members were advised that a Roman Kiln event would take place in July to promote the Kiln and Highgate Woods. Other upcoming events included the Great Big Pottery Throwdown which had a number of local celebrities involved.

Members were advised of a proposal to support 6 young people with a heritage focussed training programme and a request had been made to the City Corporation for funding for £20k.

In response to a query concerning the service accommodation of the sixth staff member, Officers confirmed this property had been converted into an office almost 10 years ago and will be the proposed home for the Kiln.

Members voiced concerns regarding the Conservation Area which had suffered during the pandemic and required drastic action. It was noted this would make a big difference to the area as it was heavily used by forest schools.

A Member (also the Trustee of the Friends of Highgate Roman Kiln Charity) implored Members to publicise the existence of it and assist drive to raise funding.

With regards to Oak Processionary Moths (OPM), a Member had been advised that Alexandra Park were leaving nests as long as they were not a danger to the public and queried if the initial feeling was over estimated as blue tits were assisting to eat the caterpillars. Officers were aware of a parasitic fly, which is established in Highgate Wood, and hoped this would help control the OPM population.

It was noted that an email had been received from the Forestry Commission asking if students could review this parasite at Highgate Wood. Members were keen that the new Conservation Area be used as an opportunity for students to do studies of the ground, flora, fungi and insect life as it recovers over time.

In response to a comment regarding the Friends of Highgate Wood Roman Kiln (FOHRK) proposal request for £20k funding, Officers noted that they had supported the Roman Kiln project since it started a decade ago, supported the original application and continued to support the new FOHRK charity. However, there were difficulties committing to £20k at this time due to budgetary constraints plus further Target Operating Model implications at the City Corporation. The Superintendent confirmed the need to stabilise the budget and prioritise COVID recovery plans.

Regards to café tendering, it was confirmed the process would restart in May and Officers anticipated having a new lease by October/November 2021.

Concerning Forest School licensing, it was noted that there were currently two commercial Forest Schools licensed, but this were under review. Officers agreed it was not possible to have more schools due to the impacts on soil compaction and understory regeneration.

With regards to local planning considerations, a Member enquired if Officers were aware of the Queens Wood scheme to open up a Thames water pipe and whether the London Borough of Haringey had taken account of Highgate Wood. Officers were concerned by the proposal and concerned and agreed to speak with Friends of Queens Wood members.

A Member noted that the Highgate Neighbourhood Forum had reconstituted its Green Spaces Group and were working on wildlife corridors. Officers confirmed wildlife corridors was an objective of the Management Plan, but the Team had struggled to realise some of the original aspirations. It was confirmed that TFL had been contacted with an expression of interest to take over the area and Officers awaited a response to discuss a possible land acquisition. A Member suggested involving local MP Catherine West.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- Provide feedback on the ‘Plans for Future Periods 2021/22’ and the draft Annual Trustees Report for 2020/21 (appendix 1);
- Provide feedback on the draft Annual Work Programme Projects for 2021/22, as set out in appendix 2;

- Provide feedback on the draft Highgate Wood Divisional Plan 2021/24, as set out in appendix 3.

6. **OPEN SPACES DEPARTMENT BUSINESS PLAN FOR 2021/22**

Members received a report of the Director of Open Spaces presenting the high-level Business Plan for the Open Spaces Department for 2021/22. This Plan identifies seven major workstreams for the whole Department together with the actions within various Corporate strategies that the Department is helping to deliver, sets out the current Departmental risks, provides financial information and identifies our performance measures. This report also identifies next year's key areas of work for Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park.

RECEIVED.

7. **CYCLICAL WORKS PROGRAMME (CWP) 2021/22 UPDATED BID REPORT**

Members received a report of the City Surveyor setting out the details of projects which will now be undertaken in 2021/22 and details of the projects that will be delivered within that year which form part of the previous year's programmes.

The Chair confirmed this work was part of a wider overview of the City's Open Spaces and was being shared to draw out relevant Highgate Wood bids as part of the ongoing CWP review of wear and tear. Officers confirmed the focus for Highgate Wood included security and the electric gates, keeping the timber building constructions in good condition and drainage issues at the pavilion café toilets.

RECEIVED.

8. **QUESTIONS**

A Member voiced huge concern over the impact of Forest Schools. If applications were not licenced at Highgate Wood this could impact on nearby Queen's Wood and possibly Hampstead Heath. The Chair stated that a licensing system had been put in place to provide more protection and Officers agreed to share the policy with other areas. It was acknowledged that the local areas were overwhelmed by Forest Schools, which had a significant impact on grounds, and that the Heath, Highgate Wood and Kenwood Estate had reached capacity for this commercial activity.

9. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT**

The Chair advised Members that this would be Karina Dostalova's last meeting as Deputy Chairman and gave thanks for her hard work and support during her time as Chairman and Deputy Chairman. These thanks were echoed by Members.

10. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting on 6 October 2021 was noted.

The meeting ended at 4.54 pm

Chairman

Contact Officer: Leanne Murphy
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HAMPSTEAD HEATH, HIGHGATE WOOD AND QUEEN'S PARK COMMITTEE **Wednesday, 26 May 2021**

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee held at <https://youtu.be/uDjY9dgsUBU> on Wednesday, 26 May 2021 at 4.00 pm

Present

Members:

Anne Fairweather (Chair)
William Upton QC (Deputy Chairman)
Deputy David Bradshaw
Karina Dostalova
Alderman Prem Goyal
Michael Hudson
Alderman Gregory Jones QC
Wendy Mead
Jason Pritchard
Deputy John Tomlinson
Oliver Sells QC (Ex-Officio Member)
Yianni Andrews (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds)
John Beyer (Heath & Hampstead Society)
Councillor Richard Cornelius (London Borough of Barnet)

Officers:

Colin Buttery	-	Director of Open Spaces
Bob Warnock	-	Superintendent of Hampstead Heath
Katherine Radusin	-	PA to Superintendent of Hampstead Heath
Richard Gentry	-	Constabulary and Queen's Park Manager
Jonathan Meares	-	Highgate Wood, Conservation & Trees Manager
Paul Maskell	-	Leisure and Events Manager, Hampstead Heath
Gerry Kiefer	-	Department Business Manager, Open Spaces Department
Declan Gallagher	-	Operational Service Manager
Kristina Drake	-	Media Officer, Town Clerk's Department
Mark Jarvis	-	Head of Finance - Citizen Services, Chamberlains
Andrew Cusack	-	Principal Lawyer, Comptroller & City Solicitors
Leanne Murphy	-	Town Clerk's Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Caroline Haines, Chris Byers and Pam Hampshire

2. MEMBERS DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

There were none.

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

Members received the Order of the Court of Common Council dated 15 April 2021 appointing the Committee and approving its terms of reference.

4. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

In accordance with Standing Order No.29, the Committee proceeded to elect a Chairman for the ensuing year. The Town Clerk stated the Members that had expressed an interest and Anne Fairweather, being the only Member expressing her willingness to serve, was duly elected as Chair.

The Chair thanked Members for their support and took the opportunity to welcome new Members Jason Pritchard and Pam Hampshire to the Committee and thanked Deputy Edward Lord and Ruby Sayed for their contributions.

5. **ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN**

The Committee proceeded to elect a Deputy Chairman in accordance with Standing Order No. 30. The Town Clerk stated the Members that had expressed an interest and William Upton, being the only Member expressing his willingness to serve, was duly elected as Deputy Chairman.

The Chair thanked the outgoing Deputy Chairman for her invaluable knowledge and experience that she provided to the role and these thanks were echoed by other Members.

6. **APPOINTMENT OF SUB COMMITTEES, CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES AND GROUPS AND REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER BODIES**

Members considered a report of the Town Clerk regarding appointments to Committees and Groups for 2021/22.

RESOLVED, that:-

- The terms of reference and composition of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee be noted;
- The terms of reference and composition of both the Highgate Wood Consultative Group and the Queen's Park Consultative Group be approved;
- The Chair and Deputy Chairman to be appointed to the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee.
- John Tomlinson be appointed to the Highgate Wood Consultative Group, and the further two vacancies be deferred until the next meeting of the Grand Committee for appointment;
- John Tomlinson and Karina Dostalova be appointed to the Queen's Park Consultative Group, and the further one vacancy be deferred until the next meeting of the Grand Committee for appointment;

- John Tomlinson be appointed to serve on the Keats House Consultative Committee with the Chair to also attend in an ex officio capacity;
- The Chair be appointed to attend to observe Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee meetings in an ex officio capacity.

7. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that the public minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2021 were approved as a correct record.

8. **OTHER MINUTES**

8.1 **Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee**

The draft public minutes of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee (HHCC) meeting held on 19 April 2021 were received.

8.2 **Highgate Wood Consultative Group**

The draft public minutes of the Highgate Wood Consultative Group (HWCG) meeting held on 21 April 2021 were received.

8.3 **Queen's Park Consultative Group**

The draft public minutes of the Queen's Park Consultative Group (QPCG) meeting held on 21 April 2021 were received.

9. **FRONT LINE WORK UPDATE**

Members were informed that the Senior Swimming Facilities Supervisor was unable to attend and would provide an update at a future meeting.

10. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

Members considered a report of the Superintendent providing an update on matters concerning Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park. The following points were made:

- The Superintendent advised that the main issue for staff was the coronavirus response, and they were currently planning for the 21 June lifting of restrictions. It was hoped that Government would provide further guidance ahead of the move to Step 4 of the Roadmap out of Lockdown.
- With regards to Annual Work Programme (AWP) project work, Members were advised that the Conservation and Ecology AWP presented at the last meeting had been reviewed with a focus on recovery and Officers sought support for three annual projects which were approved.
- A Member noted that the updated Drones Guidance did not contain wording which explicitly sets out that the use of drones is prohibited in most circumstances. Members asked if the updated Guidance could be reviewed further to clarify the City Corporation's position on drone usage on Hampstead Heath.
- Officers advised that the Comptroller plus legal Counsel were working

with the Epping Forest Division on prospective injunction orders following anti-social behaviour last summer. It was noted that the High Court was not prepared to grant injunctions against persons unknown without evidence of an imminent threat during summer 2021. Officers awaited feedback from the Epping Forest Court application.

- A Member was supportive of a Delegated Authority and enquired if rough sleeping and the use of drones could be included in the injunction.
- Most Members, particularly the Deputy Chairman, were not supportive of injunction orders against persons unknown. Members agreed they should only use powers in instances of genuine need and regarded the High Court's recent decision as a clear case against the decision.
- Members did not support the recommendation to grant Delegated Authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chairman of the Committee, to approve the application for the Interim Injunction Order.
- The Superintendent drew Members attention to the London Borough of Camden's consultation concerning proposals to install Dockless Bike Hire and Cycle Parking Bays on roads bordering Hampstead Heath. Members were supportive of the initiative.
- Officers confirmed they had been approached by Camden regarding an initiative for a caterpillar scheme in cycle bursts. This was discussed at the recent HHCC meeting who were cautious and requested further information about how the scheme would work.
- A Member noted that in other parts of London, Local Authorities had started closing streets to vehicle traffic during school hours and encouraged this method as an effective way to encourage people to take exercise to and from schools.
- A Member highlighted that there was a difference between cycling and walking, and that mass cycling was radical when the Heath did not have appropriate cycle routes.
- The Superintendent clarified that the proposal put forward by the London Borough of Camden related to primary school children only. The priority remains to support the provision of the highway network around the Heath. Discussions with Camden were in early stages and the proposals would need to be piloted in the first instance. Members were concerned the scheme would increase cycling on busy paths on the Heath.
- Members were updated on the proposal to develop the Sports Forum to form the new Hampstead Heath Sports and Wellbeing Forum and changes would include a larger membership with a focussed strategic agenda. The Hampstead Heath Sports and Wellbeing Forum would be launched in July 2021.

- The Chair felt the changes would make the Forum more productive and would enable strategic forward planning but highlighted that the changes would be kept under review. Members were supportive of the changes.
- With regards to the Professional Dog Walking Licence Scheme, it was noted that there was a typo and appendix 8 should say appendix 9. It was noted that the terms and conditions had been amended following feedback from Professional Dog Walkers.
- The Chair noted that she had received correspondence from members of the public and Professional Dog Walkers.
- A Member noted that Professional Dog Walking was a widespread issue with strongly held views on both sides. The Member felt the current number was the right balance. Members supported the recommendation.
- The Superintendent updated Members on the following planning application:
 - **Jack Straws Castle (2020/1828/P).** Members were supportive of the approach taken by Officers with regards to protecting the Heath from development encroachment.
 - **Murphy's Yard.** Officers were arranging for a workshop with the developers to look at the plans and confirmed local Stakeholders would also be invited.
 - **55 Fitzroy Park (2018/3672/P).** A decision had not been determined, and Officers remained concerned by the drainage.
- With regards to events, a Member noted that ParkRun had publicly criticised Local Authorities for being unduly bureaucratic and hoped the Corporation were assisting to get ParkRuns back up and running.
- The Chair explained that the sequencing of sports varied throughout the year and was hard to plan. In the case of the ParkRun, the organisers had proposed a start date which did not align with the Government's framework. It was agreed having safe events was the priority. Officers will continue to liaise with the event organisers regards a safe return of ParkRun events across the City Corporation's Open Spaces.
- The Queen's Park Manager provided an update on the Queen's Park Sandpit project. Members supported delegated authority to help progress the project through the Gateway process.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- Members approve the Hampstead Heath Annual Work Programme Projects for 2021/22 (appendix 1);

- Members approve the Highgate Wood Annual Work Programme Projects for 2021/22 (appendix 2) and the Highgate Wood Divisional Plan 2021/24, (appendix 10);
- Members agree the Queen's Park Annual Work Programme Projects for 2021/22, (appendix 3) and Queen's Park Divisional Plan 2021/24, (appendix 11);
- Members agree to retain the current four dog limit for Professional Dog Walkers and to support the implementation of the Licencing Scheme as set out in paragraphs 35-41;
- Grant Delegated Authority to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chairman of the Committee to approve the Queen's Park Sandpit Capital Project Gateway 2.

11. HAMPSTEAD HEATH BATHING POND AND LIDO ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

Members considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces concerning the Hampstead Heath Bathing Ponds and Lido Annual Report 2020-21.

Member noted the remarkable achievement to open up the ponds as soon as they could and implement necessary safety requirements.

The Chair highlighted that the 2020/21 fees and charges, agreed by the Committee on 11 March 2020, predated the National Lockdowns.

With regards to the legal challenge received by the City Corporation , a Member stated that the Corporation needed to make savings and would have to make concessions in other ways, e.g. closures, if charging was not an option.

The Corporation had tried hard to maintain the level of service, and the review of the 2019 season looked at safety and the whole operation. Only charging would allow for this ever-popular service to continue.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- Members approve the Hampstead Heath Bathing Pond and Lido Annual Report 2020-21 (appendix 1);
- Members agree the proposal to re-introduce swimming tests at the Bathing Ponds as set out in para 4;
- Members agree the proposals to retain the current Free Morning Swim arrangements, as set out in para 6;

- Members agree the proposals to retain the current Season Ticket arrangements and to undertake a further review as set out in paras 8 and 9;
- Members agree the proposal for free and discounted swimming opportunities as set out in para 11.

12. HAMPSTEAD HEATH, HIGHGATE WOOD AND QUEEN'S PARK RISK MANAGEMENT

Members considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces concerning Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park's Risk Management.

Officers noted an error in paragraph 11 which included a replication of risk 004 and instead of stating risk 002.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- Note the report;
- Approve the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Risk Register (Appendix 2).

13. HAMPSTEAD HEATH TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT AND CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

Members considered a joint report of the Chamberlain and Director of Open Spaces presenting the Hampstead Heath Trustee's Annual Report and Consolidated Financial Statements for the Year ended 31 March 2020 in the format required by the Charity Commission.

Officers confirmed over £6.2m of City's cash was used to support the Charity during this financial year. It was noted that in April, the Finance Committee approved changes to the financial regulations meaning charities were now able to ringfence funds for their own projects. The Chair was pleased as this would open up opportunities for the Heath.

RESOLVED – That the Trustee's Annual Report and Consolidated Financial Statements for 2019/20 be noted.

14. HIGHGATE WOOD & QUEEN'S PARK KILBURN TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

Members considered a joint report of the Chamberlain and Director of Open Spaces presenting the Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Kilburn Trustee's Annual Report and Consolidated Financial Statements for the Year ended 31 March 2020 in the format required by the Charity Commission.

Officers confirmed over £1.3m of City's cash was used to support the Charity during this financial year and that fundraising had already begun.

RESOLVED – That the Trustee's Annual Report and Consolidated Financial Statements for 2019/20 be noted.

15. REVENUE OUTTURN 2020/21 - HAMPSTEAD HEATH, HIGHGATE WOOD AND QUEEN'S PARK

Members considered a joint report of the Chamberlain and Director of Open Spaces comparing the revenue outturn for the services overseen by the Committee in 2020/21 with the final agreed budget for the year. In total, there was a better than expected budget position of £130,000 for the services compared with the final agreed budget for the year.

Officers confirmed there was a Directors local risk marginal overspend by £3k which would be subsumed in the overall underspend.

In response to a query concerning rents for cafés and whether support for them during the pandemic had an impact on the overall figures, Officers confirmed it did impact but it was a difficult situation. Support had also been given to the NHS via temporary additional parking arrangements at East Heath Car Park. The Superintendent acknowledged the huge amount of work undertaken by Managers and the North London Division Team to reduce spend and increase costs to achieve a budget almost on target.

Members commended the Superintendent and North London Division Team for their hard work throughout the year to maintain services, plus the support from the wider City Corporation.

RESOLVED – That this revenue outturn report for 2020/21 is noted.

16. REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN

Members received a report of the Town Clerk advising Members of action taken by the Town Clerk under urgency or delegated authority in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chair since the last meeting of the Committee, in accordance with Standing Orders No. 41 (a) and (b).

RECEIVED.

17. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

There were none.

18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

The Chair advised the Committee that after 30 years at the Corporation, the Superintendent was retiring and would be leaving in August 2021, ahead of the next meeting of the Committee. Members gave sincere thanks to the Superintendent for all the great work he had achieved during his tenure and stated he would be greatly missed.

The meeting ended at 5.35 pm

Chairman

Contact Officer: Leanne Murphy
leanne.murphy@cityoflondon.gov.uk

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Committee(s): Highgate Wood Consultative Group	Dated: 06/10/2021
Subject: Draft Mid Term Report – Highgate Wood Charity (No. 232986)	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	2, 3, 5, 10, 11 & 12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/A
Report of: Executive Director Environment	For Discussion
Report author: Richard Gentry, Acting Superintendent	

Summary

This report proposes a new approach to engaging with Members of the Highgate Wood Consultative Group on activities at the Wood since April 2021.

A 6-month Review of the Plans for Future Periods and Key Performance Measures for 2021-22 is presented for feedback (appendix 1).

Recommendations

It is recommended that Members:

- Provide feedback in relation to the 6-month Review of the Plans for Future Periods and Key Performance Measures for 2021-22 as set out in appendix 1.
- Provide feedback on the ‘Poetry Project’, as outlined by the Highgate Wood Manager.

Main Report

Background

1. Highgate Wood is a registered charity (No. 232986).
2. As a registered charity it is required to submit an annual report and financial statement, detailing its activities and to ensure compliance with the Charities Act 2011.

Current Position

3. The draft report included at Appendix 1 forms the basis of the report for 2021/22, with activities for April to August 2021.
4. From 19 July 2021, in-line with the Government's Roadmap out of Lockdown, Covid-19 signage has been removed from the Wood. A number of Covid-19 control measures remain in place across the staff facilities, in line with guidance.
5. The Highgate Wood Divisonal Plan 2021-24 sets out the current position in relation to project work being undertaken at the Wood and is attached for Members feedback (appendix 2).
6. The Highgate Wood Manager will provide a verbal update in relation to the sports pitches playing surface.

Events

7. Highgate Wood Community Heritage Day was cancelled again due to the ongoing public health concerns about Covid-19. Licenced Events and activities have recommenced over the spring summer period. A dog how was held on 12 September, to raise funds for the All Dogs Matter charity, which was well attended.

Up coming work

8. City Surveyors attended site in August to look at the long running drainage issue effecting the Pavilion toilets, caused by poorly constructed pipework. A contractor has been appointed to carry out a survey and provide estimates for alleviating the current drain blockages.

Planning

9. 37 Lanchester Road – Planning permission for a replacement dwelling was granted by the London Borough of Haringey under ref: HGY/2021/0814. Representations were submitted by the City Corporation in respect of the impact of the proposal on ancient trees within the site boundary. Although outside the boundary of Highgate Wood, these trees were formerly part of the same ancient woodland and are worthy of protection. There were no objections raised to the principal of development. Conditions have been attached to the permission to require on-site monitoring during construction and the imposition of suitable measures to ensure tree protection and the creation of an ecological corridor through the site.
10. In relation to Cranwood, 100 Woodside Avenue N10 3JA – A letter was received on 23 September 2021, setting out that an application has been received in respect of the proposed development described below (comments by 22/10/2021):
11. Proposal: Demolition of existing building and redevelopment of site to provide 41 new homes (Use Class C3) within 3 buildings ranging from 3 to 6 storeys in height, with associated vehicular access from Woodside Avenue, wheelchair

parking, landscaping, refuse/recycling and cycle storage facilities. New stepped access to Parkland Walk from Woodside Avenue.

Poetry in the Wood

12. A proposal has been received from 'the Poetry Project' regards the temporary installation of posters at Highgate Wood. Initially the following location are being considered:

- Information Hut
- Playground
- Café

13. The Highgate Wood Manager will provide a verbal update at the Meeting.

Fees & Charges

14. Members will be consulted on the draft fees & charges for Highgate Wood via email in Spring 2022.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

15. The activities and projects included within this report contribute to the three objectives and outcomes set out in the Open Spaces Business Plan 2020-21:
- (a) Open spaces and historic sites are thriving and accessible,
 - (b) Spaces enrich people's lives and
 - (c) Business practices are responsible and sustainable.
16. These activities and projects also contribute towards the achievement of the three aims set out in the City of London Corporation Corporate Plan 2018-23. Contribute to a flourishing society (1-4), Support a thriving economy (5) and Shape outstanding environments (9-12).

Corporate & Strategic Implications

17. The projects and works outlined in this report contribute towards the achievement of the three aims set out in the City of London Corporate Plan 2018-23: Contribute to a flourishing society, Support a thriving economy and Shape outstanding environments.
18. The projects and works outlined in this report also contribute towards the three objectives and outcomes set out in the Open Spaces Business Plan 2020-21 (a) Open spaces and historic sites are thriving and accessible, (b) Spaces enrich people's lives and (c) Business practices are responsible and sustainable.

Financial Implications

19. No Impact.

Resource Implications

20. Staff resources are being prioritised to keep the Wood open, safe, accessible and secure.

Climate Implications

21. The City of London launched its Climate Action Strategy in October 2020 and the strategy is now in implementation stage. A key part of the strategy is conserving and enhancing biodiversity alongside reducing the City of London's carbon emissions.

Legal Implications

22. No Impact.

Risk Implications

23. No Impact.

Equality Implications

24. No Impact.

Security Implications

25. No Impact.

Conclusion

26. The Wood has remained busy throughout the spring and summer months with some signs of a return to the visitor numbers prior to the Pandemic. The summer break period has been noticeably quieter with many residents choosing to travel further afield for the holidays. This has been a welcome change, and the Team are looking forward to starting work on the new Conservation Area. The works will be an opportunity for the Heath's Tree and Conservation Teams to work alongside and offer support to the Highgate Wood Team.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – 6-month Review of the Plans for Future Periods and Key Performance Measures for 2021-22
- Appendix 2 – Highgate Wood Divisonal Plan 2021-24 (September update)

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Appendix 1 – (Draft) Annual Report for Highgate Wood Charity 2021/22

1. Objectives and Activities

The City of London protects and manages, by charitable trust, almost 11,000 acres of open spaces within and around the capital for the benefit of local communities and visitors.

Highgate Wood is a 28-hectare ancient woodland site opened to the public in 1887. Situated in north London between Highgate Village and Muswell Hill, it is bounded by Muswell Hill Road to the East and Transport for London land to the west and the north west. The site was once part of a 1,000-acre hunting estate belonging to the Bishop of London and is one of group of ancient woodland sites in the Highgate and Hornsey area.

Acquisition: Highgate Wood was acquired in 1886 by the City of London Corporation from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners under the provisions of the Highgate and Open Spaces Act 1886.

Administration: Formerly administered by the Corporation's Coal and Corn and Finance Committee 1886-1966, Highgate Wood is now managed by the City of London Corporation through the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee. There is also a Highgate Wood Consultative Group, which comprises Members from local community groups (including the Friends of Queen's Wood), local Ward Councillors and a schools liaison representative.

The purpose of the Highgate Wood Consultative Group is devising and implementing the City Corporation's policies and programmes of work in relation to Highgate Wood and Queen's Park in accordance with the provisions of the Highgate Wood and Kilburn Open Spaces Act 1886.

The purpose of the Charity is:

'the preservation in perpetuity by the City of London Corporation of the open spaces know as Highgate Wood, Highgate and Queen's Park Kilburn for the use by the public for exercise and recreation.'

Explanation of Aims and objectives for the year including the changes or differences it seeks to make through its activities

The activities of the Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Kilburn charity are guided by its Charitable Objective, as stated above, and are developed within the framework of the City Corporation's Corporate Plan 2018-23, the Open Spaces Business Plan 2021-22 and the Highgate Wood Divisional Plan 2021-24.

The contribution which Highgate Wood makes towards supporting the aims and objectives of these is set out in section 2.

2. Highgate Wood Achievements and Performance

Achievement to date (Update April – August 2021) against the key priorities for 2021/22:

- Continue the works for green recovery and restoration of woodland erosion and compaction, linked to the COVID-19 pandemic and increased visitor numbers.

Heath Hands Volunteer sessions at the Wood have been focused on closing off a number of desire lines within the woodland. The Highgate Wood Team have also used fallen timber to deter use of already compacted areas of woodland.

- The creation of the 2021/22 Conservation Area next to the Play Area will form a major area of recovery after many years of intensive usage. A review of the policy of conservation area creation and the timescales of enclosure will also be carried out.

The Highgate Wood Team have now established the boundary of the new conservation area and stock fencing is being ordered to enclose the area, and works to install the fencing will be undertaken in November. Coppicing will be kept to a minimum, as Staff will carry out work on the tree canopies to increase light levels.

- Increasing operational efficiencies and income generation as a response to budget cuts to be implemented in 2021/22.

Operational efficiencies have been made in relation to the Staffing provision. The Highgate Wood Team will reduce to four full time staff from March 2022, following the retirement of a member of the Highgate Wood Team.

- Deliver the tender for the Pavilion Café.

Due to Officer workload, the tender process for the Pavilion Café has been delayed and will now be undertaken during 2022/23. The Highgate Wood Café remains on a Tenancy-at-Will lease. Officers will carry forward this priority to 2022/23.

- Develop an ecological monitoring methodology to measure visitor pressure on sensitive areas within the woodland and build on the data provided by the oak decline survey which is now in its twelfth year. Progress on this proposal has been delayed due to resource issues and we plan to develop this in 2022/23

- Forest School activity review.

Short Term Licenses for two Forest Schools have been issued. The development of the Licencing scheme has continued to be impacted by the pandemic during 2021/22. Officers will carry forward this priority to 2022/23.

- Increase volunteering including ecological monitoring.

Due to the ongoing impacts of Covid-19 on Officer workload works to progress this project will be carried forward to 2022/23.

Other achievements during 2021/22 were:

- The Highgate Wood Team have ensured that the Wood has remained open and accessible throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. During the Spring, the Highgate Wood Team have worked to mitigate the impacts of increase visitor numbers by closing off a number of desire line pathways which have increased in size, due to social distancing and visitors attempting to find quieter, less busy areas, within the woodland.
- Pests and Diseases continue to be managed through planned inspections the Highgate Wood Team supported by the Arboricultural Team. In July 2021 sites visits and inspections were carried out for Oak Processionary Moth. A number of nests were found and removed by the Team. No biological spraying took place in 2021.

Performance Measures for 2021/22

- Achieve budgeted income and expenditure targets for Highgate Wood and Queens Park Kilburn Charity. Income from events and café rental is reduced this year. The café tenant is in discussion with the City Corporation regarding the current rental arrangement.

The Highgate Wood Café remains on a Tenancy-at-Will lease. The tendering for the new café lease will be undertaken during 2022/23.

Regular budget monitoring is on-going. A small number of licenced activities have been able to take place within the Wood since July 2021. Licenced activities, events and sports bookings is still below pre-pandemic numbers and this continued to impact on income generation.

- Maintain Green Flag Award and Green Heritage Accreditation for 2021.

Green Flag and Green Heritage judging has taken place. Green Flag results for 2021 will be released on 14 October 2021.

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Ref	Project Details	Key Dates	Corporate Plan Aims	Notes on progress (September 2021 updates in <i>italic text</i>)
HW1	<p>COVID-19 Impact Recovery Programme Continue to respond to Government Guidance and maintain COVID secure workplaces and facilities.</p> <p>Implement Annual Work Programme interventions to address erosion, compaction, path maintenance, waymarking and signage improvements.</p> <p>Prioritise enforcement taskings to support the protection of the Wood and to ensure people feel welcome and safe.</p>	On-going project subject to annual review.	<p>Shape outstanding environments.</p> <p>Contribute to a flourishing society.</p>	A new woodland Conservation Area to be established autumn 2021. The location is a 0.75-hectare area north of the Play Area.
HW2	<p>Deliver Efficiencies, Savings and Income Generation Projects Implement the approved budget for 2021/22.</p>	<p>Revised Estimates 1/10/2021.</p> <p>Deliver balanced budget by 31/3/2022.</p>	<p>Support a thriving economy.</p> <p>Shape outstanding environments.</p>	<p>As well as implementing efficiencies, additional income streams are being investigated.</p> <p>A revised roster for Highgate Wood is being considered.</p> <p>Regular monitoring of the 2021/22 Budget to take account of Covid-19 impacts.</p>
HW3	<p>Support Implementation of the Target Operating Model Review operational arrangements to align with the Target Operating Model.</p>	Project Launched 2020/21.	Contribute to a flourishing society.	<p>Town Clerk's briefings have been shared with staff and signposted to the Intranet page.</p> <p><i>The Executive Director of Environment is now in post..</i></p>

Ref	Project Details	Key Dates	Corporate Plan Aims	Notes on progress (September 2021 updates in <i>italic text</i>)
		Phased Implementation 2021/22.	Support a thriving economy. Shape outstanding environments.	
HW4	Develop our Workforce Deliver a range of initiatives to ensure the health, well-being, learning and development of our workforce.	Launch PDA's 31/3/2021. PDA Mid-Term Review 1/10/2021. PDA Year-End Review 31/3/2022.	Shape outstanding environments. Contribute to a flourishing society.	Performance Development Approach (PDA) continue to be used to discuss and plan staff development.
HW5	Divisional Radio System Procure an alternative Radio System.	31/11/2021.	Contribute to a flourishing society. Shape outstanding environments.	Due to a change of landlord, the City Corporation have been notified of a termination of their lease at the Aerial Mast, located at St Columba. <i>The Acting Superintendent is in discussions with a supplier regarding the use of an Aerial Mast located within the vicinity of the current</i>

Ref	Project Details	Key Dates	Corporate Plan Aims	Notes on progress (September 2021 updates in <i>italic text</i>)
				<i>St Columba mast, and in close proximity to Hampstead village.</i>
HW6	Roman Kiln Working with the Friends of Highgate Wood Roman Kiln (FOHRK), return the Roman Kiln artefact to Highgate Wood and rehouse in the repurposed Highgate Wood Office/visitor centre.	On-going project.	Shape outstanding environments. Contribute to a flourishing society.	FOHRK have submitted a proposal, regarding taking six young people between the ages of 16-24 through the Tier 1 schedule of the Historic England programme for developing young heritage professionals using the Department of Work and Pensions Kickstart fund. <i>FOHRK are continuing to fundraise and seek external funding opportunities.</i>
HW7	Monitoring Visitor Impact To monitor and assess the Visitor impact on the woodland and consider steps to mitigate the negative impacts.	On-going project.	Shape outstanding environments. Contribute to a flourishing society.	This will be led by Ecologist and HW Team working with Heath Hands volunteers.
HW8	Volunteering Opportunities Increase volunteering activities in Highgate Wood to support Highgate Wood's key objectives.	On-going project.	Shape outstanding environments. Contribute to a flourishing society.	This project is linked to HW7. Monitoring visitor impacts will create and inform volunteering opportunities moving forward.

Ref	Project Details	Key Dates	Corporate Plan Aims	Notes on progress (September 2021 updates in <i>italic text</i>)
HW9	Signage & Interpretation Complete the noticeboard replacement programme.	31/3/2022.	Shape outstanding environments. Contribute to a flourishing society.	Installation of 2 oak timber notice boards is outstanding.
HW10	Café Tendering Undertake a tender procurement for the Pavilion Café.	Implement Licence 2023.	Contribute to a flourishing society. Support a thriving economy.	<i>Consultation and Engagement to be undertaken during 2022 to inform the tendering of the licence.</i>
HW11	Dog walking code of conduct and the Professional Dog Walking Licencing Scheme Implement a licencing scheme for Professional Dog Walkers using the Wood.	Undertaken engagement & consultation 31/3/2022.	Contribute to a flourishing society. Support a thriving economy. Shape outstanding environments.	

Ref	Project Details	Key Dates	Corporate Plan Aims	Notes on progress (September 2021 updates in <i>italic text</i>)
HW12	Fitness training code of conduct and licencing scheme Undertake a consultation and engagement to inform the develop a licencing scheme for Fitness trainers.	Undertaken engagement & consultation 31/3/2023.	Contribute to a flourishing society. Support a thriving economy. Shape outstanding environments.	
HW13	Forest School Licencing Scheme Develop a long-term licencing scheme for Forest Schools.	Licence Scheme to commence September 2022.	Contribute to a flourishing society. Support a thriving economy. Shape outstanding environments.	Officers are engaging with Forest Schools and registering current groups using the Wood. Short Term Licencing arrangements are being implemented. Implementation of this project is being impacted by Covid.

Ref	Project Details	Key Dates	Corporate Plan Aims	Notes on progress (September 2021 updates in <i>italic text</i>)
HW14	Bio-Security Management Proactive management of threats, including pest and diseases which impact upon the condition of trees, plants and wildlife.	2021/22.	Support a thriving economy. Shape outstanding environments.	OPM population decreasing. Continuing Oak decline survey. Possible volunteer support
HW15	Planning Regular monitoring of development and planning applications which are in the environs of the Wood to ensure that the Wood is protected.	2021/22.	Support a thriving economy. Shape outstanding environments.	Reporting to HWCG and Quarterly reporting to HHHWQPC. Liaising with the Housing Department from Haringey, regarding Cranwood House & Lanchester Gardens.
HW16	Climate Action Strategy Open Spaces seek opportunities to enhance carbon capture while enhancing biodiversity and resilience. These actions will contribute towards CoLC's achieving Net 0 by 2027 in scope 1 & 2 emissions.	2027 Net 0 scope 1 & 2 2040 Net 0 Scope 1, 2 and 3.	Support a thriving economy. Shape outstanding environments.	Strategy adopted October 2020. Now in first phase of delivery. Quarterly reporting to HHHWQPC.

Committee(s): Open Spaces and City Gardens West Ham Park Education Board Epping Forest and Commons Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queens Park Queen's Park Consultative Group Highgate Wood Consultative Group	Dated: 13 July 2021 13 July 2021 9 September 2021 13 September 2021 29 September 2021 6 October 2021 6 October 2021
Subject: Two year review of the Open Spaces Department's learning programme 2019-21	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 10
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Director, Open Spaces Department	For Information
Report author: Abigail Tinkler, Head of Learning	

Summary

This report and appendices provide Members with an overview of the Open Spaces learning programme from 2019 to 2021. The programme has received core funding since April 2019 and delivers school, youth, play, community and volunteering opportunities to children and adults at Hampstead Heath, West Ham Park and Epping Forest. Key highlights include:

- The programme engaged over 44,000 participants in facilitated learning activities over the two years.
- The programme continued to reach audiences in need during the Covid pandemic, producing an innovative programme in line with each stage of restrictions.
- Programme evaluation showed a positive change across five impact areas: connection, understanding, wellbeing, confidence and involvement.

Recommendation

Members are asked to: Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. In 2016 the Open Spaces Department launched a new centrally co-ordinated learning programme. Following a successful three years, the Open Spaces Department's resource base was increased to provide core funding for the learning programme from April 2019.
2. The programme was developed in response to concern over health and wellbeing inequalities as people in deprived areas face barriers to accessing nature and

associated health and wellbeing benefits. The programme has the following aims and outputs:

- Engage urban and deprived communities close to three open spaces: Hampstead Heath, Epping Forest (including Wanstead Flats) and West Ham Park
- Deliver five learning impact areas: understanding, confidence, involvement, wellbeing, and connection
- Schools service operating out of Hampstead Heath, Epping Forest, West Ham Park
- Green Talent programme working with young people struggling in education and/or furthest from the job market
- Play activities at Hampstead Heath
- Volunteer development and community engagement.

Current Position

3. This report provides, as Appendix 1, a detailed two year review of the Open Spaces learning programme from 2019 to 2021.
4. The review outlines the successful school, play, youth, community and volunteering programme delivered in 2019-20, including:
 - Schools service operating from Hampstead Heath, Epping Forest and West Ham Park, reaching students in London's most deprived boroughs including Tower Hamlets, Newham, Hackney, Islington, Haringey, Brent and Camden.
 - Green Talent programme working with young people struggling in education and/or furthest from the job market, including pupil referral units, young carers and young refugees.
 - Play activities at Hampstead Heath, reaching children and families from some of the most deprived wards to the south of the Heath, including Gospel Oak Ward where there is 39% child poverty.
 - Volunteer development and community outreach work, including a successful partnership with 'Ambition, Aspire, Achieve', an organisation that works and supports families from very deprived areas in Newham.
 - The 2019-20 programme reached over 40,000 participants and exceeded its participation target by 7%.
5. The review outlines the innovative approach taken in response to the Covid pandemic and associated restrictions, including:
 - A series of nature-focused activities which schools and families could do themselves – for example, showing children how to create eco art or make a bird feeder. Activities were designed to include children at home with only limited resources by using simple items such as old cereal packets and milk cartons. Printed activity sheets were shared via food banks, community centres and hostels, reaching families who may not have access to a computer.

- Reaching out to groups in need, including a hostel for homeless families, young people who had been suffering from anxiety and depression over lockdown, and unaccompanied refugee minors, offering bespoke programmes including a virtual tour of Epping Forest.
 - Responding to concerns over the impact of the pandemic on mental health with new sessions designed to improve wellbeing, including an in-school sessions for schools who were unable to visit our Open Spaces, and outdoor facilitated sessions for groups of five (plus one facilitator) to coincide with the 'rule of six' outdoors.
 - An adapted school programme to engage the vulnerable children, children with special educational needs and disabilities, and key worker children who were attending schools (which were otherwise closed) within walking distance of West Ham Park and Hampstead Heath.
 - Regular in-school nature sessions for autistic children, bringing nature learning to the school whilst they were unable to travel to West Ham Park due to staff shortages during lockdown.
6. The programme's innovative approach to engagement through the Covid pandemic was featured in the Evening Standard, City Matters, Ham and High, Pro Landscaper and Epping Forest Guardian.

Key Data

7. The programme engaged 44,487 participants in facilitated learning activities over the two years. Of these, 40,369 participated in 2019 – 20, and 4,118 participated in 2020-21 when Covid restrictions limited face-to-face participation.
8. The school programme engaged schools in 15 London boroughs, including the seven London boroughs with the highest levels of poverty: Tower Hamlets, Newham, Hackney, Islington, Haringey, Brent and Camden.
9. The programme made a positive difference across the five learning impact areas, including:
- 107% increase in learning volunteers' feelings of confidence to explore our Open Spaces
 - 22% increase in family participants' sense of wellbeing
 - 15% increase in school programme participants' feelings of connection to our Open Spaces
 - 74% increase in Green Talent participants' feelings of involvement
 - 47% increase in Green Talent participant's understanding of the importance of green spaces.

(School and family programmes are one-off engagements, whereas Green Talent and volunteer engagement are longer term and have a greater impact. Evaluation toolkits developed by University College London and University of Derby.)

Corporate & Strategic Implications

10. The OS learning programme contributes to the delivery of all three of the CoL Corporate Plan's overarching aims and seven of the twelve outcomes:

- **Contribute to a flourishing society:**
People are safe and feel safe; People enjoy good health and wellbeing; People have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential; Communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need.
- **Support a thriving economy:**
We have access to the skills and talent we need.
- **Shape outstanding environments:**
We inspire enterprise, excellence, creativity and collaboration; Our spaces are secure, resilient and well-maintained.

11. The OS Learning Programme delivers aspects of the CoL Social Mobility Strategy, CoL Education Strategy, and OS Business Plan. See appendix two for details.

Financial summary

Year	Actual Exp £	Actual Inc £	Actual Net Income/Expenditure £	Budgeted Net Income/Expenditure £
2019/20	357,655	39,654	318,000	395,000
2020/21	336,019	6,784	329,235	312,000

12. The 2019/20 budget was underspent due to vacant posts within the team. The 2020/21 budget was overspent due to reduced school income following school closures and restrictions (COVID-19).

Conclusion

13. The Open Spaces Learning Programme was successful in engaging 44,487 participants in facilitated activities from 2019 to 2021. The programme adapted to the restrictions and impacts of the Covid pandemic and continued to reach Londoners living in areas of poverty and deprivation, young people struggling with mental health, children with special educational needs and disabilities, and vulnerable children. Evaluation also showed that the programme had a positive impact on participants' understanding, wellbeing, confidence, connection and involvement with nature.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 Review of the Open Spaces Learning Programme 2019-21
- Appendix 2 Strategic Value
- Appendix 2 Learning Principles
- Appendix 3 Maps showing school programme reach and areas of deprivation

Background Papers

Three year review of the Open Spaces Learning Places' programme 2016 – 19

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Appendix One

Open Spaces Learning Programme Review

2019 - 2021

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Executive Summary

The Open Spaces Department's innovative learning programme facilitates change across five impact areas: understanding, confidence, involvement, wellbeing, and nature connection.

The learning programme was developed in response to a growing consensus that spending time in nature is beneficial to health and wellbeing, and a concern over health and wellbeing inequalities as people in deprived areas of London face more barriers than most to accessing nature. The programme provides a key method for the City of London to contribute to the health and wellbeing of residents of some of London's most deprived communities through connecting them more powerfully to their local green spaces. Audiences include school children growing up in poverty, young people excluded from mainstream schooling, and local people from communities that are under-represented in our green spaces. Delivery is focused on spaces located near areas of high deprivation, with programmes operating from West Ham Park, Hampstead Heath and Epping Forest.

During the last two years the core programme was delivered and then adapted to continue to provide a service during the Covid-19 pandemic.

- In 2019 – 20 the learning team delivered a successful face-to-face activity programme for schools, play, youth, community groups and volunteers
- In 2020-21 the learning team delivered an innovative, adapted programme in order to reach audiences with limited access to resources and outdoor space during the Covid pandemic.
- The programme exceeded its 2019-20 participation targets; however, face-to-face engagement was restricted in 2020-21 due to the Covid pandemic.

As 2019-20 and 2020-21 were very different years, rather than directly comparing outputs this report describes the approaches and outputs for each phase of the programme.

Key achievements

- The programme engaged over 44,000 participants in facilitated learning activities 2019-21.
1. The school service reached students in London's most deprived boroughs including Tower Hamlets, Newham, Hackney, Islington, Haringey, Brent and Camden.
 2. The Green Talent programme worked with young people struggling in education and/or furthest from the job market, including pupil referral units, young carers and young refugees.
 3. Play activities at Hampstead Heath reached children and families from some of the most deprived wards to the south of the Heath, including Gospel Oak Ward where there is 39% child poverty.
 4. The programme adapted in 2020-21 with targeted initiatives in-line with each stage of the Covid restrictions, including printed activity sheets delivered via food banks, activity

videos for use in school playgrounds, in-school nature wellbeing workshops, outdoor wellbeing programme for groups of six, an adapted Covid-safe school programme and Covid-safe play programme.

5. The programme made a positive difference across the five learning impact areas:

Connection:

15% increase in participants' feelings of connection to the Open Spaces after taking part in the school programme 2019-21

Confidence:

107% increase in participants' feelings of confidence to explore Open Spaces after taking part in the learning volunteer programme 2019-20

Wellbeing:

29% increase in participants' feelings of wellbeing after taking part in the learning volunteer programme 2019-20

Involvement:

74% increase in participants' feelings of involvement after taking part in the Green Talent programme 2019-21

Understanding:

47% increase in participants' understanding of the importance of green spaces after taking part in the Green Talen programme 2019-21

- The programme's innovative approach to engagement through the Covid pandemic was featured in the Evening Standard, City Matters, Hampstead and Highgate Express, Pro Landscaper and Epping Forest Guardian.
- The programme has delivered vital aspects of the City of London Corporation's Corporate Plan, Social Mobility Strategy and Education Strategy.

Feedback

"It was fantastic to get outside, to a different – and very special space – and to do something real, hands on and outdoors... The learning ... was fantastic. No screens, no walls... Magic." Headteacher, Eleanor Palmer Primary School, Camden (Hampstead Heath)

"The session gave us a chance to see the children use collaboration skills, as well as concentration and resilience - all key values at Park Primary School. We would fully recommend this experience..." Teacher, Park Primary School, Newham (West Ham Park)

"Lockdown has been so tough on me and my son as he is only 13 months, so getting able to come here and see other children really makes me happy and seeing how happy he is in his face, thank you so much! We would be truly lost without this place." Participant, One O'clock Club (Hampstead Heath)

"As a busy family, it was fantastic to spend time outdoors together, work as a team and join in the fun and creative activities while learning new skills. The session was professionally organised, led by a very friendly and welcoming team member who put us at ease straight from the beginning." Participant, family workshop (Epping Forest)

Introduction

Background

The Open Spaces learning programme engages urban and deprived communities close to three open spaces: Hampstead Heath, Epping Forest (including Wanstead Flats) and West Ham Park.

The programme delivers five learning impact areas; understanding, confidence, involvement, wellbeing, and connection.

The programme consists of the following workstreams:

- a) Schools service operating out of Hampstead Heath, Epping Forest, West Ham Park
- b) Green Talent programme working with young people struggling in education and/or furthest from the job market
- c) Play activities at Hampstead Heath
- d) Volunteer development and community outreach work

The OS learning team brings together expertise in outdoor learning, schools, play, volunteering and youth work. Eight full time officers and one part time officer are located at the key delivery sites (Hampstead Heath, Epping Forest and West Ham Park), and an additional pool of casual educators and play workers support programme delivery.

Rationale

The learning programme was developed in response to:

- a growing consensus that spending time in nature is beneficial to health and wellbeing, whilst contact with nature is becoming more infrequent
- an understanding that access to green space is not equal, with people in deprived areas of London facing more barriers than most to accessing nature, which can impact on physical activity levels and mental health
- a concern that visitors to our Open Spaces are not always representative of the local communities, with Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups (BAME) and deprived communities under-represented
- a recognition that barriers to accessing green spaces exist for local communities, including fear of getting lost, a lack of confidence in the outdoors, a lack of understanding of the activities available, and a feeling that our spaces are 'not for them' (highlighted through consultation with communities adjacent to our Open Spaces)
- a concern about the attainment gap between disadvantaged school students and their peers
- a recognition of the value of play in young people's development, with natural play having a lasting impact on the development of children's connection, understanding and appreciation for the natural environment.

Strategic value

The programme contributes to the delivery of all three of the Corporate Plan's overarching aims and seven of the 12 outcomes. See appendix two for more information.

Impact areas

To tackle the challenge of a growing disconnect with nature and green spaces, the learning team design programmes to deliver change across five impact areas:

<i>Understanding</i>	<i>Confidence</i>	<i>Nature connection</i>	<i>Wellbeing</i>	<i>Involvement</i>
People understand the value and importance of green space	People are confident to use green spaces, as part of our activities or independently	People develop a sense of place with green spaces	People have restorative and meaningful experiences in green spaces	People take positive action for, and get involved with, green spaces

To maximise impact, the learning team target programmes to reach those who could benefit the most, including school children growing up in poverty, young people excluded from mainstream schooling, and local people from communities that were under-represented in our green spaces. A bespoke evaluation toolkit, developed in collaboration with academic partners at Derby University in 2018, has been used to measure impact across the five areas (information regarding this evaluation methodology is available on request), as well as a wellbeing evaluation toolkit developed by University College London.

Learning principles

A set of learning principles for schools and play inform programme development and delivery. The principles:

- map across the five impact areas
- bring together the expertise of the team and relevant research
- enable shared reflective practice and a shared vision for quality learning
- increase the level of active engagement of participants
- provide a tool for effective decision making and peer review

See appendix three for more information.

Evaluation toolkits

A bespoke evaluation toolkit developed by Derby University in 2018 was used to measure change across the five impact areas. An additional wellbeing evaluation toolkit from University College London was used to provide a more nuanced measure of psychological wellbeing. More details are available on request.

Programme review 2019-20

The 2019-20 programme delivered:

- a) Schools service operating out of Hampstead Heath, Epping Forest, West Ham Park
- b) Green Talent programme working with young people struggling in education and/or furthest from the job market
- c) Play activities at Hampstead Heath
- d) Volunteer development and community outreach work

The 2019-20 programme reached over 40,000 participants and exceeded its participation targets by 7%.

School services

Overview

High quality booked sessions were delivered to a wide range of schools at Epping Forest, Hampstead Heath and West Ham Park.

Sessions were delivered to support the National Curriculum and promote awe, wonder and inspiration as children learned through active engagement with the open spaces. Based on the unique features of the sites and the needs of schools, the programme provided rich opportunities to:

- Learn through first hand observation (e.g. exploring habitats, life cycles, seasons)
- Stimulate the imagination (e.g. creating stories inspired by nature, creating art work using natural materials)
- Give children an active role (e.g. pond dipping, orienteering, field work)
- Enable children to see the relevance and application of their knowledge and skills beyond the classroom (e.g. solving a real-life practical challenge such as assessing pond health or testing materials to build a dam)
- Uncover evidence of local history (e.g. finding bomb craters in the Epping Forest site)
- Develop team working skills (e.g. team den building).

The Epping Forest programme was based at The View visitor centre near Chingford, with sessions delivered in the adjacent forest and Tudor hunting lodge. The Hampstead Heath Programme operated from the Education Centre building in Parliament Hill Fields and the 'Glassroom Classroom' in Golders Hill Park, with sessions delivered in bespoke teaching gardens as well as the wider Heath. Both sites provided a variety of habitats for exploration. The Epping Forest and Hampstead Heath programmes have charges / income targets, and reach schools across multiple London boroughs, including Hackney, Waltham Forest, Harringay, Tower Hamlets, Islington and Camden. Programmes were offered from nursery to A level, with most visits coming from primary schools.

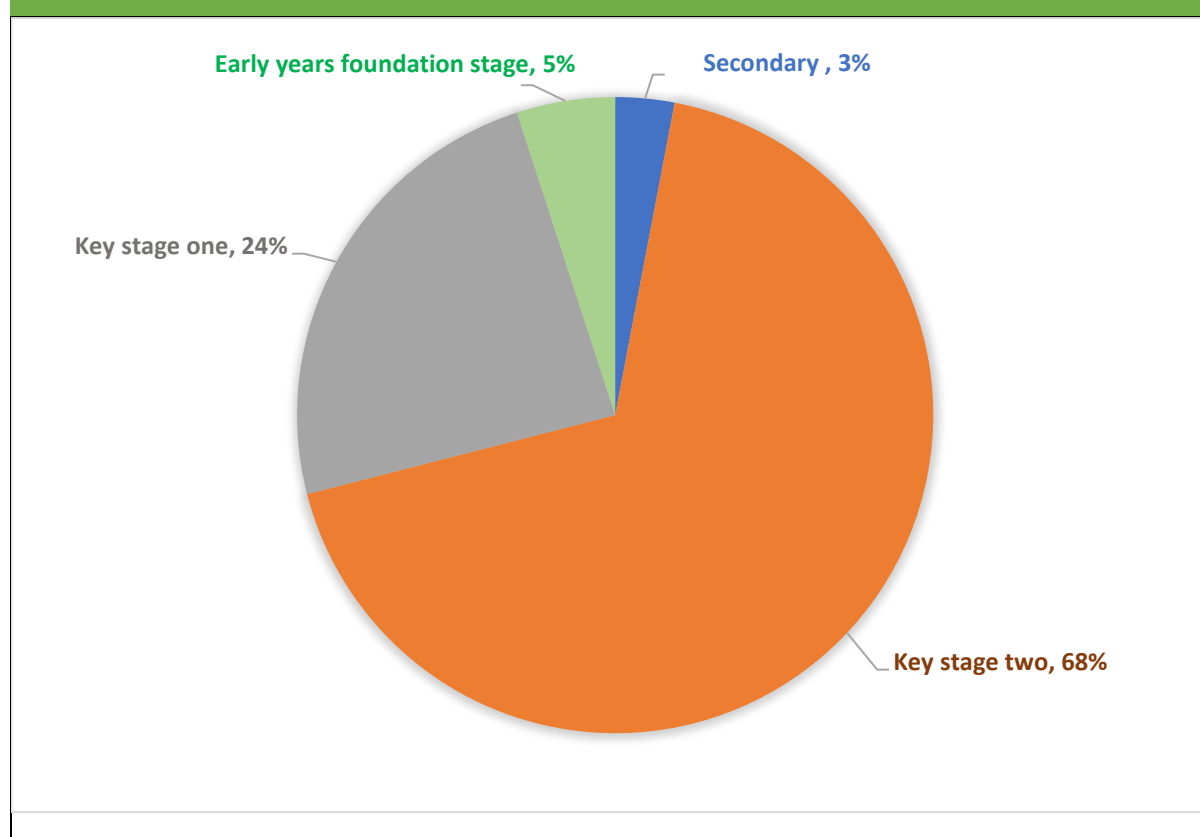
The programme at West Ham Park offers a free programme to primary schools in Newham, which is ranked in the worst four London boroughs for child poverty (Trust for London). The programme builds relationships with a small number of local schools, enabling repeat visits from multiple year groups, and works collaboratively with teachers to produce relevant outdoor learning sessions.

Participation

School programmes	Target 2019-20	Actual 2019-20
Number of school participants at Epping Forest	2,640	2,589
Number of school participants at Hampstead Heath	8,360	8,554
Number of school participants at West Ham Park	3,200	5,033
Total number of school participants	14,200	16,176

The majority of participating students were primary school children from key stage two (7 to 11 year olds):

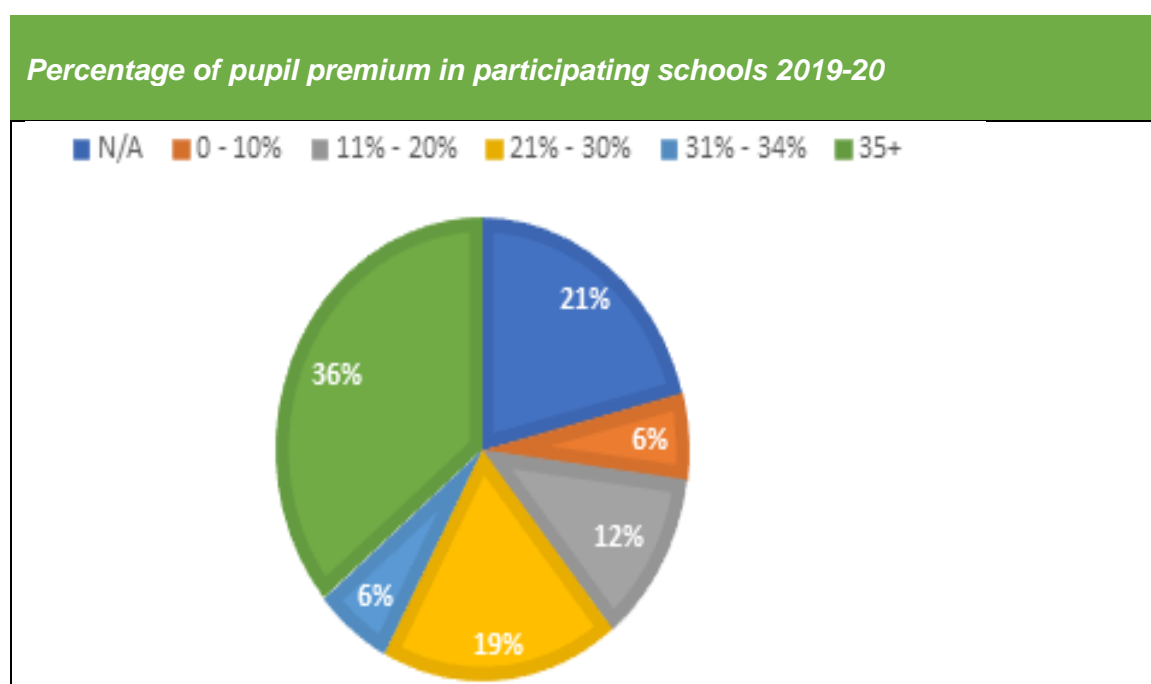
Percentage of secondary, key stage two, key stage one and early years foundation stage students, 2019-20



Reaching disadvantaged school students

There is a wide recognition and concern over the attainment gap between disadvantaged school students and their peers, and the OS learning programme has engaged schools in some of London's most deprived boroughs, including Tower Hamlets, Newman, Hackney, Islington and Haringey (see appendix 3 for maps illustrating the programme reach within areas of deprivation).

Pupil premium is an indicator of disadvantage as it is allocated to children who have been in receipt of free school meals, looked after or adopted from care. The average pupil premium level for primary schools in England is 21%, and 35% is high. Through monitoring school pupil premium as an indicator of disadvantage, we know that the school services have reached a significant number of these students; 36% of participating schools had a pupil premium level of 35% and above:



Evaluation

Connection:

- 81% of participants felt connected or very connected to our Open Spaces after taking part in a school workshop.
- 19% increase in feelings of connection to Open Spaces, compared to a 5% increase in 2018-19.

Confidence:

- 88% of participants felt confident or very confident to 'explore places like this' after taking part in a school workshop.
- 13% increase in feelings of confidence to explore Open Spaces, compared to an 8% increase in 2018-19.

Feedback

"Investigation with a practical application and context!" Teacher, Kentish Town Primary School ('Soil Scientists' workshop, Hampstead Heath)

"Children were able to experience aspects of Stone Age living as they were immersed into the forest environment. The session was great and nicely fitted into our work on the Stone Age to Iron Age. The objectives were met. Building the shelters was raw fun and the fire making was brilliant too." Teacher, Mandeville Primary School, Hackney ('Stone Age Survival' workshop, Epping Forest).



School students participating in an orienteering workshop on Hampstead Heath.

School workshops

All school workshops support the delivery of the National Curriculum. The school workshops offered at the different sites can be viewed on our website:

<https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/green-spaces/hampstead-heath/learning-at-hampstead-heath>

<https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/green-spaces/epping-forest/learning-in-epping-forest>

<https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/green-spaces/west-ham-park/learning-in-west-ham-park>

Increasing participation

During 2019-20 the school team created plans to increase the number of school students engaged in 2020-21, with an emphasis on schools with high pupil premium. The plans included new models of staffing and delivery, marketing, and increased income targets. These plans were put on hold due to the pandemic and associated school closures.

Green Talent

Overview

Green Talent worked with young people struggling in education and/or furthest from the job market, providing opportunities to explore careers in the environmental and green spaces sector. Targeting 13 – 18 year olds, as well as 19 - 25 year olds with additional support needs, the programme provided facilitated opportunities for young people to recognise and develop their individual talents and skills. For example, completing outdoor conservation tasks boosted resilience, confidence and self-esteem through the achievement of purposeful goals, and activities such as sharing food around a fire helped to build peer relationships by opening dialogues around a shared new experience. Case studies are available on request. Outputs included:

- Scoping study for the Green Talent project moving forward, including identifying target boroughs and youth provisions in boroughs adjacent to our Open Spaces sites.
- Respite session for Brent Young Carers - fire lighting, hot chocolates, and team shelter building challenge. An opportunity to pause responsibilities and enjoy spending time in nature.
- Culture Mile Work Experience programme - practical conservation and learning activities on Hampstead Heath (as part of a wider work experience programme led by Culture Mile Learning)
- Team building sessions for Wormwood Scrubs summer youth programme
- 12-week programme of outdoor learning and skill building at Meadway Pavilion Pupil Referral Unit, Barnet
- Horticulture hands-on learning sessions for Meadway Pavilion Pupil Referral Unit horticulture students, Golders Hill Park
- 10-week practical conservation programme for young people at Hampstead Heath
- Practical outdoor skill-building session for unaccompanied young refugees with the Refugee Council at West Ham Park .

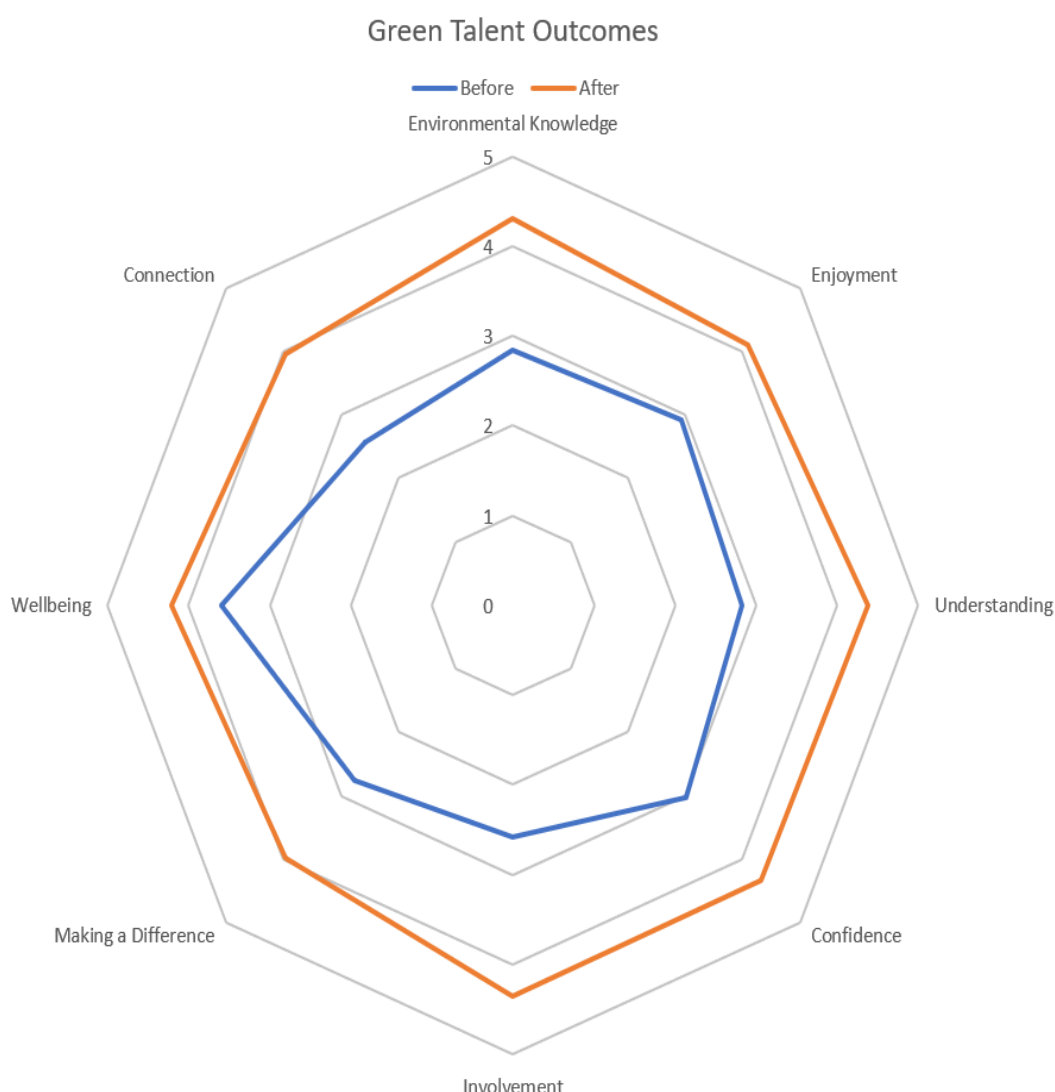
Participation

Green Talent 2019-20	Target	Actual
Total number of young people participating in the programme	85	90

Evaluation

Combining the evaluation toolkit developed in collaboration with Derby University together with some bespoke evaluation questions developed in collaboration with Green Talent Participants, the programme demonstrated a positive difference across the five learning impact areas as well as environmental knowledge, making a difference, and enjoyment.

The following 'outcomes star' shows participants' perceptions before and after taking part in Green Talent sessions.



Feedback

"It was great to see how the young people took to learning all the different skills you showed them... this was such a valuable experience for them all. From what the young people said afterwards they got a lot out of accomplishing the tasks and working together – making new friends, as some of them wrote on our feedback forms. You may also have heard them say that if they hadn't come they would just have been staying at home in their rooms, which is the worst thing for them in their situations." London Manager and Senior Children's Psychotherapist, Refugee Council

“I’ve really enjoyed being involved in this programme, it has given me the chance to take a much needed break from caring, meet other young carers and learn new skills. We’ve all really enjoyed this opportunity more than we thought we would. It has also been a great boost for our mental well-being”. Participant, Brent Young Carers



Respite session for Brent Young Carers, Hampstead Heath

Play Programmes (Hampstead Heath):

Overview

Two play centres at Hampstead Heath provide both indoor and outdoor play facilities, with an Adventure Clubhouse providing play facilities for under-16s, and a One O'clock Club providing play facilities for under-fives and their parents/carers. The centres are located in the south of the Heath, adjacent to the borough of Camden, which is ranked in the worst four London boroughs for income inequality (Trust for London), and close to areas of deprivation such as Gospel Oak ward where there is 39% child poverty (Open Data, Camden Council).

The play centres bring individuals and communities together to share experiences and promote mutual respect and tolerance. Analysis of postcode data from participants shows that the centres are engaging people from wards where poverty is high, such as Gospel Oak and Haverstock, as well as wards in which most areas are affluent, such as Hampstead Town. The play facility provides an open, welcoming space in which communities can meet and engage in a shared interest regardless of background and circumstance, thus supporting community cohesion.

The play centres were staffed by playworkers who were able to support young people's play and learning. The Adventure Clubhouse was open from April to October, offering a school

holiday programme and after school provision. The One O'clock Club was open all year round, offering afternoon sessions every weekday.

Both provisions were free to access and provided a space where children could play and engage in activities that they had freely chosen, including both facilitated play and free play. Outdoor play included den building, sand, mud and water play, obstacle courses and circus skills. Indoor activities included mask making, leaf printing and badge making. At the Adventure Clubhouse, outdoor adventure play structures were also provided.

Children over the age of eight were able to visit without an accompanying adult, which enabled children whose parents/carers are not able to take them to activities outside school to participate.

Participation

The 2019-20 play programme exceeded its targets and exceeded 2018-19 participation:

Play Programme 2019-20	Target 2019-20	Actual 2019-20
Number of young people attending the Clubhouse	8,000	8,035
Number of under-5s attending the One O'clock Club	8,500	9,208
Number of adults attending the One O'clock Club	6,500	6,709
<i>Total number of participants</i>	23,000	23,952



Nature craft activity at the Adventure Clubhouse



Sensory activity at the One O'Clock Club

Community engagement and volunteering

Overview

The learning team inspire and enable under-represented local communities to access and enjoy our open spaces. The provide targeted programmes including family learning and play sessions and volunteering opportunities.

The team facilitate volunteering experiences which enhance well-being and build connection to the green spaces and provide training and development opportunities.

The team provide training and volunteer management resources for staff across the Open Spaces department.

Outputs

- Partnership with 'Ambition, Aspire, Achieve', an organisation that works and supports families from very deprived areas in Newham, one of London's most deprived boroughs, supporting their audiences to engage with our learning programme and Open Spaces
- Social action project with a secondary school; the project developed activities and resources to engage residents in care homes in Waltham Forest, bringing aspects of Epping Forest to them (e.g. forest sounds, leaves, images, stories).
- Partnership with Newham Dementia group, looking at how a group of people with early dementia could access West Ham Park and what the Learning team could develop to engage with this group. Due to Covid restrictions this project was put on hold
- Development of new volunteer roles within the learning team – Epping Forest Schools Volunteer and Hampstead Heath Play Volunteer
- Partnership with UCL Art and Science faculty, supporting an undergraduate student to carry out a research project for our Learning Team. The project looked at how the Learning Team could make some activities more accessible to children with learning disabilities (case study available on request)
- Nature play programme on Hampstead Heath, designed to help families explore the natural world, understand the risks and benefits of natural play, and increase their confidence to play in natural settings. (Working in partnership with a range of local nurseries, play groups and family centres in Camden.).

Participation

Programme strands	Target 2019-20	Actual 2019-20
Number of learning volunteers engaged with the programme	20	16
Number of community engagement participants	500	572

Evaluation

Confidence: 107% increase in confidence to explore our Open Spaces after taking part in the 2019-20 learning volunteer programme.

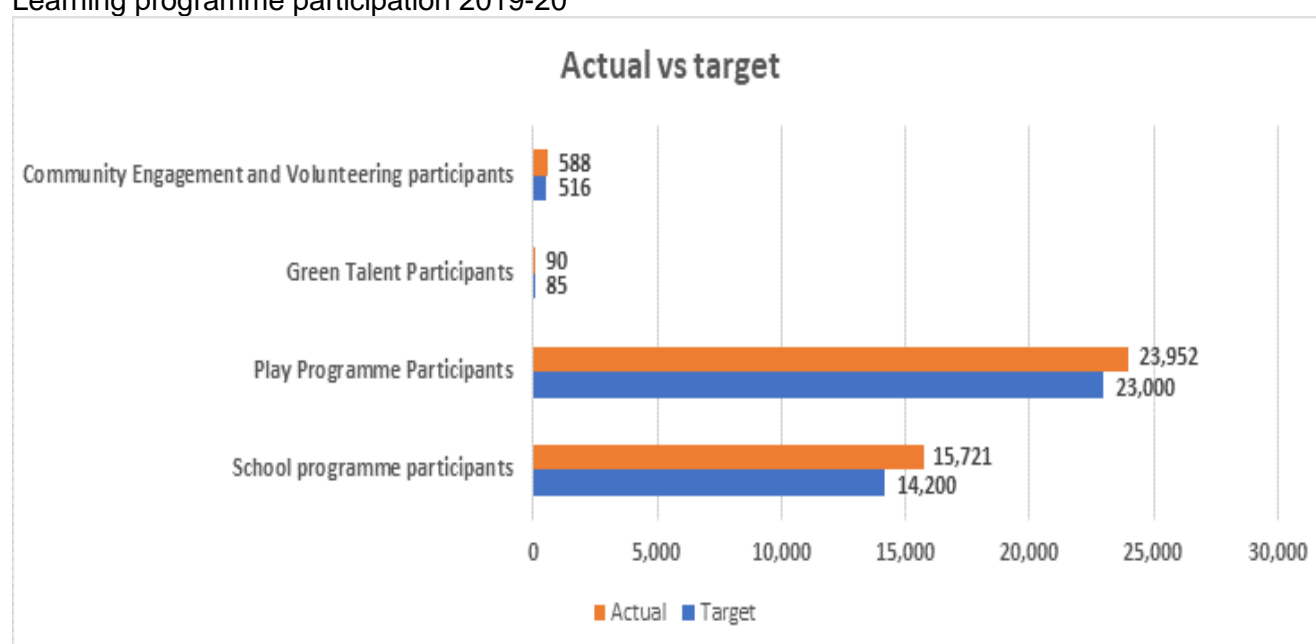
Wellbeing: 29% increase in feelings of wellbeing after taking part in the 2019-20 learning volunteer programme.

2019-20 Participation summary

The learning programme engaged 40,351 participants in 2019-20

Participants	Target	Actual
School programme participants	14,200	15,721
Play programme participants	23,000	23,952
Green Talent participants	85	90
Community engagement and volunteering participants	516	588
Total	37,801	40,351

Learning programme participation 2019-20



2019 – 20 Highlights summary

- Over 40,000 participants engaged in school, play, youth, volunteer and community engagement programmes.
- Programme evaluation demonstrated a positive change across the five learning impact areas.
- Schools in London's most deprived boroughs, including Tower Hamlets, Newham and Hackney, participated in the programme.
- Partnership with 'Ambition, Aspire, Achieve' facilitated programme participation for families from very deprived areas in Newham.
- Social action project for young volunteers helped to bring memories of Epping Forest to Waltham Forest care home residents.
- Bespoke respite session provided for young carers.
- Long term programmes for pupil referral units enabled young people to build confidence and skills.

Programme Review 2020-21

The learning team had prepared for 2020 – 21 with plans and resources in place to increase school engagement and associated income targets at Hampstead Heath and Epping Forest, deliver a targeted programmes for youth, community and volunteer engagement and continue the successful play programmes. However, the restrictions imposed by the Covid pandemic posed challenges, including school closures. Whilst this impacted on the number of people the learning team could engage face-to-face, the team continued their focus on reaching people living in deprived areas of London, and developed programmes to support children, families and communities living with limited access to outdoor space and resources.

Rather than working within distinct project areas, the learning staff worked flexibly as a team to produce resources and activities. Staff adapted to new ways of working, moving from face-to-face engagement with people and the outdoors to home-based desk working, and learning new skills such as film editing and digital design. The team innovated and adapted the learning programme to accommodate each phase of the pandemic.

March – July 2020

Key restrictions introduced: UK in lockdown and schools closed (although vulnerable and key worker children could attend).

During the first lockdown, the team created a brand-new series of nature-focused learning resources. Whilst there were already online resources available (e.g. National Trust and RSPB websites), the team sought to reach families who may have limited IT access, little/no outdoor space, and limited resources (e.g. crafting materials, science equipment). Activities were designed to use simple resources, such as old cereal packets and milk cartons. See www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/learningprogrammeresources

The team's nature-focused activities included both activity sheets and videos which schools and families could then do themselves, e.g. videos teaching children how to do a bug hunt and create eco art, and worksheets demonstrating how to make a bird feeder or sun catcher. The learning materials were sent to over 800 London schools, with teachers sharing the activities with the children at school and those at home, and printed activity sheets were shared via food banks, community centres and hostels, reaching families who may not have access to a computer or printer. The resources were also shared via local authority newsletters and websites (City of London, Camden, Islington, Newham, Brent, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest), and activity sheets were included in packs curated by Culture Mile Learning and A New Direction, reaching families in need across London.

The team also produced a learning pack of narrative based activities inspired by Epping Forest, history and time travel. A time travelling character, letters and clues engaged children in solving a mystery whilst exploring the history and heritage of Epping Forest from the home or classroom.

The team also developed guidance for managing volunteers during the pandemic for the Open Spaces Department. The guidance was regularly updated in accordance to changes within the Governmental guidance.

Outputs

- 1 heritage learning pack
- 30 activity sheets
- 7 activity videos
- Vounteering guidance for the Open Spaces Department

(See www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/learningprogrammeresources)

Reach

- 800 schools via OS Learning newsletters
- 74 community groups across Camden, Waltham Forest, Newham and Hackney
- 7 local authority newsletters/websites: City of London, Camden, Islington, Newham, Brent, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest
- 300 families via food bank deliveries from Aishah Help (Newham, Hackney and Tower Hamlets)
- 150 families via 'Food for London Project' (Waltham Forest)
- 13,500 families via Culture Mile Learning Play Packs
- 6,800 London families via A New Direction 'Let's Create Packs'
- A new webpage was created to host the activities, and links were regularly shared via Open Spaces divisional facebook/twitter, City Corporation social media feed, the Lord Mayor's feed and the Policy Chair's feed.

Evaluation

Evaluating the impact of the activity sheets and videos produced in the first few months of the pandemic was challenging. Initially the team focused on producing the resources and reaching children and families in need as a priority and did not develop an evaluation methodology prior to sharing these resources. Later in the year, they worked in partnership with UCL, supporting an undergraduate student to carry out a research study on the impact of these resources. Unfortunately, the data gathering phase of this project coincided with lockdown three where many staff in the community groups and charities (where the resources had been shared) were on furlough, making it very difficult to gather feedback. However, the surveys produced can be used again.

Feedback

"Thank you very much for the ideas during lockdown. I will be setting these as tasks for pupils via google classroom." Teacher, Curwen Primary School, Newham

"The learning resources and activity sheets provided by the City of London Open Spaces Team have been greatly appreciated by the families, children and young people we have been supporting during these challenging and unprecedented times. We have shared them as part of the weekly food and activity packs we have been delivering to the doorsteps of some of our most vulnerable children and young people during lockdown. Many of those we support do not have a garden or easy access to green spaces and have really been struggling during this period. The nature themed activity sheets and resources have been a really great way to promote positive activities and a great addition to the packs we've been delivering." CEO, Ambition, Aspire, Achieve (Newham)



Printed activity sheets delivered to England's Lane Hostel for homeless families in Camden, where families are living with limited space and resources.



Shelter created by Capel Manor Primary in Enfield, using one of our activity videos to engage the vulnerable and key worker children who were in school during lockdown one.



OS Learning resources included in Culture Mile Play Packs

August 2020

Key restriction eased: Groups of six allowed to meet outdoors

The team were able to work face-to-face with groups of up to five participants outdoors, and facilitated sessions at Epping Forest, Hampstead Heath and West Ham Park. In response to concerns over the impact of the pandemic on mental health, the sessions were designed to promote wellbeing by spending time in nature, learning new skills, discovering something new, being creative, and working together as a group. An evaluation toolkit developed by UCL was used to measure wellbeing before and after the sessions and results show that participants' wellbeing increased by an average of 22% after taking part in the session.

Activities included eco art, pond dipping, shelter building and nature crafts, and included both family learning sessions for all ages and nature-play sessions for children under 5 and their parents/carers.

The sessions were designed to keep people safe during the Covid-19 pandemic – the max group size was 6 (including the facilitator), and they took place exclusively outside with social distancing, hand washing stations or hand sanitizer are available, and all equipment cleaned before use.

The summer programme prioritized sessions for groups who may have struggled during lockdown, working with 'Ambition, Aspire, Achieve' in Newham to run a series of sessions for young people who have been struggling with anxiety and depression over lockdown, as well as other children and families local to its green spaces. The programme delivered a range of outdoor activities such as clearing leaves and watering plants, which boosted self-esteem and confidence.

Outputs

- 56 Family Nature Wellbeing sessions at Hampstead Heath, Epping Forest and West Ham Park
- 35 Nature Play sessions for under-5s and parents/carers at Hampstead Heath
- 6 Nature Wellbeing sessions for young people suffering from anxiety and depression at West Ham Park

Reach

- 232 family learning participants
- 144 nature play participants
- 33 young participants suffering from anxiety and depression

Sessions were fully booked at Epping Forest, West Ham Park and Hampstead Heath, although there were some cancellations due to bad weather.

Evaluation

- 22% increase participants' sense of wellbeing after taking part in a family Nature Wellbeing Workshop.

Feedback

"We had a brilliant outdoor session in Epping Forest... Our 9 year old daughter had so much fun building a shelter in the forest and engaging in eco art activities such as leaf bashing and stick spider webs. As a busy family, it was fantastic to spend time outdoors together, work as a team and join in the fun and creative activities while learning new skills. The session was professionally organised, led by a very friendly and welcoming team member who put us at ease straight from the beginning." Participants, Family Nature Wellbeing workshop, Epping Forest.



Children from the 'Ambition, Aspire, Achieve' project helping to clear leaves and water plants in West Ham Park, boosting confidence and self-esteem.



Mini clay models created at a Hampstead Heath Nature Play session

September – December 2020

Key restriction eased: Schools and indoor play provision reopen.

The learning team launched a Covid-safe programme for schools and play, reorganising the school programme to take place entirely outdoors, and opening the two play centres with new safety measures in place. Covid-safe changes included school groups working in their bubbles, OS Learning staff maintaining social distancing, enhanced cleaning, advanced booking for play programmes, and limits on the number of participants.

The team developed two new programmes for delivery in schools – a ‘Nature and Wellbeing’ workshop designed in response to concerns over the impact of Covid on mental health, and a ‘Habitats and Minibeasts’ session designed to help students to discover more within the school grounds. These programmes aimed to accommodate schools who were unable to travel due to the pandemic.

The team provided a weekly ‘Nature School’ at an inner-city school in Newham for a group of children with autism. The school were unable to visit our sites due to Covid restrictions. The team worked with the school to enrich their outside space with logs and natural materials, and delivered a variety of activities to encourage social interaction, hands-on exploration and connection with nature, such as making pine cone bird feeders and observing bird life together. The school were so delighted with the positive impact the sessions are having on the children that they created a ‘nature school hub’ within their school so that all classes can benefit, and plan to visit West Ham Park as soon as it is safe for them to do so.

The team ran regular weekly sessions for students from White Trees School – a specialist school for looked-after young people who experience behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The young people benefitted from a varied programme designed to build confidence and connection with nature. The group spent time in Epping Forest, learnt new skills such as orienteering and wood carving, and contributed through activities such as litter picking.

The team ran Family Nature Wellbeing sessions at Epping Forest and Hampstead Heath over the autumn half term holiday.

The team continued to share activity sheets and videos, working with CoL’s ‘Our City Together’ team to include content within their newsletter and website.

Outputs

- 2 new ‘in-school’ sessions developed
- 1 new ‘in-school’ weekly programme for children with autism
- New Covid-safe play programme and working practices for 2 play centres (Hampstead Heath)
- New Covid-safe school programme and working practices (Hampstead Heath, Epping Forest, West Ham Park)
- New weekly programme for looked-after young people with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (Epping Forest)
- 24 Family Nature Wellbeing sessions at Hampstead Heath and Epping Forest
- 2 facilitated sessions for young people suffering from anxiety and depression (West Ham Park, partnership with ‘Ambition, Aspire, Achieve, Newham’)

Reach

- 1,192 on-site school participants (Hampstead Heath, Epping Forest, West Ham Park, 42 sessions)

- 102 in-school workshop participants (2 sessions)
- 36 in-school autism programme participants (5 weekly sessions)
- 447 participants at the One O’Clock Club
- 100 participants at the Adventure Clubhouse
- 116 family learning participants
- 13 young people suffering from anxiety and depression (partnership with ‘Ambition, Aspire, Achieve, Newham)

Evaluation

Participants in bespoke sessions for young people suffering from anxiety and depression reported improvement across all five impact areas: connection, involvement, confidence, understanding and wellbeing.

Feedback

“In these challenging times, the staff at Hampstead Heath made our first school trip since March one to remember. With clear risk assessments, excellent pre and post visit communication and an amazing days worth of survival activities, it was a joy to see another side of our students beyond the gates of the school.” Teacher, Carlton Primary School, Camden

“The One o’clock club is a great place for young children, the two staff are wonderful and make us feel comfortable and make the children so happy, they always have time to talk and always there to help! Activities are fantastic and the resources are always so clean and tidy all the time. So happy when we come here!!” Participant, One O’Clock Club



Primary school programme at West Ham Park – the students enjoyed festive wreath making.

January – February 2021:

Key restrictions introduced: UK in lockdown and schools closed (although vulnerable and key worker children could attend).

Some learning team members were furloughed part time during the winter 2021 lockdown; however, when working, they continued to engage learners, and developed a flexible learning programme of activities for the key worker, SEND and vulnerable children who were attending school, which was offered to schools within walking distance of West Ham Park, Hampstead Heath and Epping Forest. For many schools it was challenging to come out on a trip at this time (reduced staffing due to illness or staff self-isolating and additional workload for teachers as they adapt to changes) however, a small number of local schools close to Hampstead Heath and West Ham Park were able to visit, often for regular weekly sessions. The outdoor learning sessions provided a great opportunity for the children in school to work together as a team, build wellbeing, and apply their classroom learning in a new context.

The team continued to run weekly in-school sessions for children with autism and worked with an evaluator to better understand the impact of the programme and the aspects of the development and delivery that enabled these outcomes.

The team continued to share nature-focused activity sheets and videos. The resources were shared with teachers across the UK via the Learning Outside the Classroom website and the UK School Trips newsletter, which has a search reach of over 400,000 educators, and via 'Find Fusion' - the CoL Education Strategy Unit's new digital platform for learning.

The team collaborated with the Refugee Council to provide a virtual exploration of Epping Forest for young unaccompanied refugee minors. The group of young people had experienced serious and often multi-layered trauma and took part in the session as part of a wider programme to help improve their wellbeing. Participants were shown an aerial video of drone footage over the Epping Forest area to give them a sense of the scale of the area, as well as being shown different areas in the forest by a learning officer using a live video link. The focus of the session was looking at the birds of Epping Forest, and the birds that the participants would be able to see in their local area.

Whilst the team was unable to work face-to-face with pupil referral units and looked-after children over January and February, they delivered a series of virtual sessions to New Rivers College (a pupil referral unit in Islington) based around skills and careers in the outdoors.

Outputs

- 29 school sessions for vulnerable and key worker school children at Hampstead Heath and West Ham Park
- 2 virtual careers sessions for PRU participants
- 1 virtual tour of Epping Forest for young refugees
- 1 new play programme for Camden families developed
- 5 sessions 'in-school' weekly programme for children with autism

Reach

- 350 on-site school participants (Hampstead Heath and West Ham Park)
- 36 in-school autism programme participants
- 9 young unaccompanied refugee participants (virtual session)
- 8 participants from Pupil Referral Units (virtual sessions)
- 1 evaluation report for in-school nature programme for children with autism produced by professional researcher

Evaluation

An evaluation report on the in-school nature learning programme for autistic children is available on request. The report highlights key strengths of the programme, including a child-centred teaching approach, time to explore, within a natural environment, creative, playful and purposeful activities, and providing supported risks and appropriate challenges. The report findings will be used to inform future practice and will be shared with the environmental education community.

Feedback

"The children in my group are all from the local area and yet they were talking about how the activity helped them see the park in a whole different way. After several lockdowns, it was lovely to see the children enjoying themselves in their local green spaces while learning key skills and working together as a team." Teacher, Park Primary School, Newham.

"It was such a special session, many of the children got to try fire lighting for the first time in their lives. In addition, many had been stuck indoors for longer than anyone would want because of lockdown! I really liked how you gave them just the right amount of guidance but then let them experiment in a safe way. Flint striking was a real lesson in perseverance. The children all asked when we could return and I promptly booked the Soil Science session." Teacher, Eleanor Palmer Primary School, Camden



School children taking part in a survival skills and team building workshop on Hampstead Heath

March 2021

Key restriction eased: Schools reopen March 8th; 6 people allowed to meet outdoors from March 29th.

Having worked with a small number of schools within walking distance of the Heath and West Ham Park (supporting key worker and vulnerable children), many of the teachers involved were keen to bring those who missed out whilst home-schooling. The team were ready to welcome schools back to our sites with a Covid-safe outdoor programme.

The team continued to collaborate with Camden Council to identify families who had struggled during lockdown, and began working with Chance UK, a charity that supports children with behavioral and emotional difficulties through a mentorship scheme. Targeted marketing and a priority booking system for a series of Nature Wellbeing sessions was created in advance of a series of sessions running over April. This was successful in engaging a total of 111 participants from these target groups (72% of all participants).

The team developed an outdoor nature-play programme aimed at children and parents/carers who would normally visit the One O'clock Club on Hampstead Heath and developed marketing materials and Covid-safe play activities for the reopening of the One O'clock Club in mid-April.

The team supported a school in Newham to develop their school grounds into a sensory garden and relaxation zone for children with special educational needs and children who need some space away from a traditional classroom environment. The team were able to give advice on planting and will follow this up with a facilitated session for students to prepare and plant the area in May.

The team worked with five CoL employee volunteers, who supported learning officers in delivering outdoor learning sessions for schools.

The team collaborated with the CoL Learning and Development team to design and deliver volunteer management training for staff across CoL.

Outputs

- 37 school sessions at Hampstead Heath, Epping Forest and West Ham Park
- 1 new play programme for Camden families developed
- 4 'in-school' sessions for children with autism
- 1 bespoke plan for an in-school sensory garden
- New training programme in volunteer management developed

Reach

- 945 on-site school participants
- 51 in-school autism programme participants
- 45 Nature Play participants

Evaluation

- 84% of participants felt connected or very connected to our Open Spaces after taking part in a school workshop.
- 84% of participants felt a strong sense of wellbeing in nature after taking part in a school workshop.

Feedback

"Year 6s really enjoyed the WW2 session at the park. As well as consolidating their knowledge of the topic, they were really stuck by how the park they know so well was impacted by the war - particularly seeing the bomb crater and allotment images and plot. The activities were all very hands on and having artifacts (and replicas) to physically interact with supported their engagement and understanding. All the sessions were carried out in a very safe way. We will definitely book this activity again next year." Teacher, Park Primary, Newham

"It's really nice to see them happy. They have smiles on their faces when they go there [to Nature School]. They really enjoy it. It makes me happy." (Teaching Assistant, Nature School for children with autism, Newham).



Nature learning resources developed for the 'in-school' nature programme for children with autism

2020-21 Participation summary

The 2020-21 learning programme engaged 4,017 participants in learning activities facilitated by a learning officer. These numbers are significantly lower than the target due to the restrictions of the Covid pandemic, which limited both opportunities to safely engage with audiences and the numbers that could be safely accommodated.

The figures below do not include self-led learning, e.g. using activity sheets and videos created by the learning team.

Participants	Target	Actual
School programme participants	18,350	2,722
Play programme participants	23,000	736
Green Talent participants	150	85
Community, family and volunteering participants	600	474
Total	42,100	4,017

2020-21 Highlights summary

- Activity sheets designed for families with limited resources or access to outside space shared with over 20,000 London families during the Covid pandemic.
- Bespoke school programme for vulnerable children, children with special educational needs and disabilities, and key worker children, engaging 1,257 participants during Covid lockdown 3.
- Two new 'nature wellbeing' workshops developed in response to the impact of the Covid pandemic on mental health, engaging 400 participants.
- Bespoke activities and virtual tour of Epping Forest delivered for unaccompanied refugee minors.
- Bespoke outdoor sessions for young people in Newham suffering from anxiety and depression.
- New 'in-school' nature programme for school children with autism, delivering 14 weekly sessions.
- New covid-safe play programme engaging 736 participants, engaging children and families with limited play space at home.

Summary 2019 - 21

- The Open Spaces Learning Programme delivered a successful two years, engaging 44,487 participants.
- Evaluation showed that the programme had a positive impact on participants' understanding, wellbeing, confidence, connection and involvement with nature.

Due to the Covid pandemic, the two years were very different:

- In 2019-20 the programme delivered a 'business as usual' programme of school, play, youth, community and volunteer engagement.
- In 2020-21 the learning team delivered an innovative, adapted programme in order to reach audiences with limited access to resources and outdoor space during the Covid pandemic and associated restrictions.

Appendix two

Strategic Value

Corporate Plan

The Learning programme contributes to the delivery of all three of the 2018 – 2023 Corporate Plan's overarching aims and seven of the 12 outcomes:

- ***Contribute to a flourishing society:***
 - 1. People are safe and feel safe.
 - 2. People enjoy good health and wellbeing.
 - 3. People have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential.
 - 4. Communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need.
- ***Support a thriving economy:***
 - 8. We have access to the skills and talent we need.
- ***Shape outstanding environments:***
 - 10. We inspire enterprise, excellence, creativity and collaboration.
 - 12. Our spaces are secure, resilient and well-maintained.

The learning programme also supports delivery of the following corporate strategies:

Social Mobility Strategy: Potential today, success tomorrow:

- Everyone can develop the skills and talent they need to thrive
- Opportunity is accessed more evenly and equally across society

Education Strategy:

- Provide an educational experience that enriches and inspires through access to the learning opportunities that the City's cultural, heritage and environmental assets offer, combining creativity, innovation and enterprise alongside tradition and continuity
- Provide high quality exposure to the world of work at all stages of education to enable pupils to make informed career choices

Open Spaces Department Business Plan:

- People enjoy good health and wellbeing
- Nature, heritage and place are valued and understood
- People feel welcome and included
- People discover, learn and develop

Appendix three

Learning principles

A set of learning principles for schools and play inform programme development and delivery. The development of the principles involved combining relevant research with the professional expertise of learning team members to create a shared approach to learning programme development and delivery.

Team members' professional expertise (accumulated over time through reflection on experience of learning programme development, delivery and evaluation) was valued from the start and cross-referenced with academic research.

Recognising the importance of children having time to explore green spaces to build connection and confidence, and emphasising doing and discovering to support participants as active learners, are just some highlights from these principles.

The principles:

- map across the five impact areas
- bring together the expertise of the team and relevant research
- enable shared reflective practice and a shared vision for quality learning
- increase the level of active engagement of participants
- provide a tool for effective decision making and peer review

The learning principles are available on request.

Appendix four

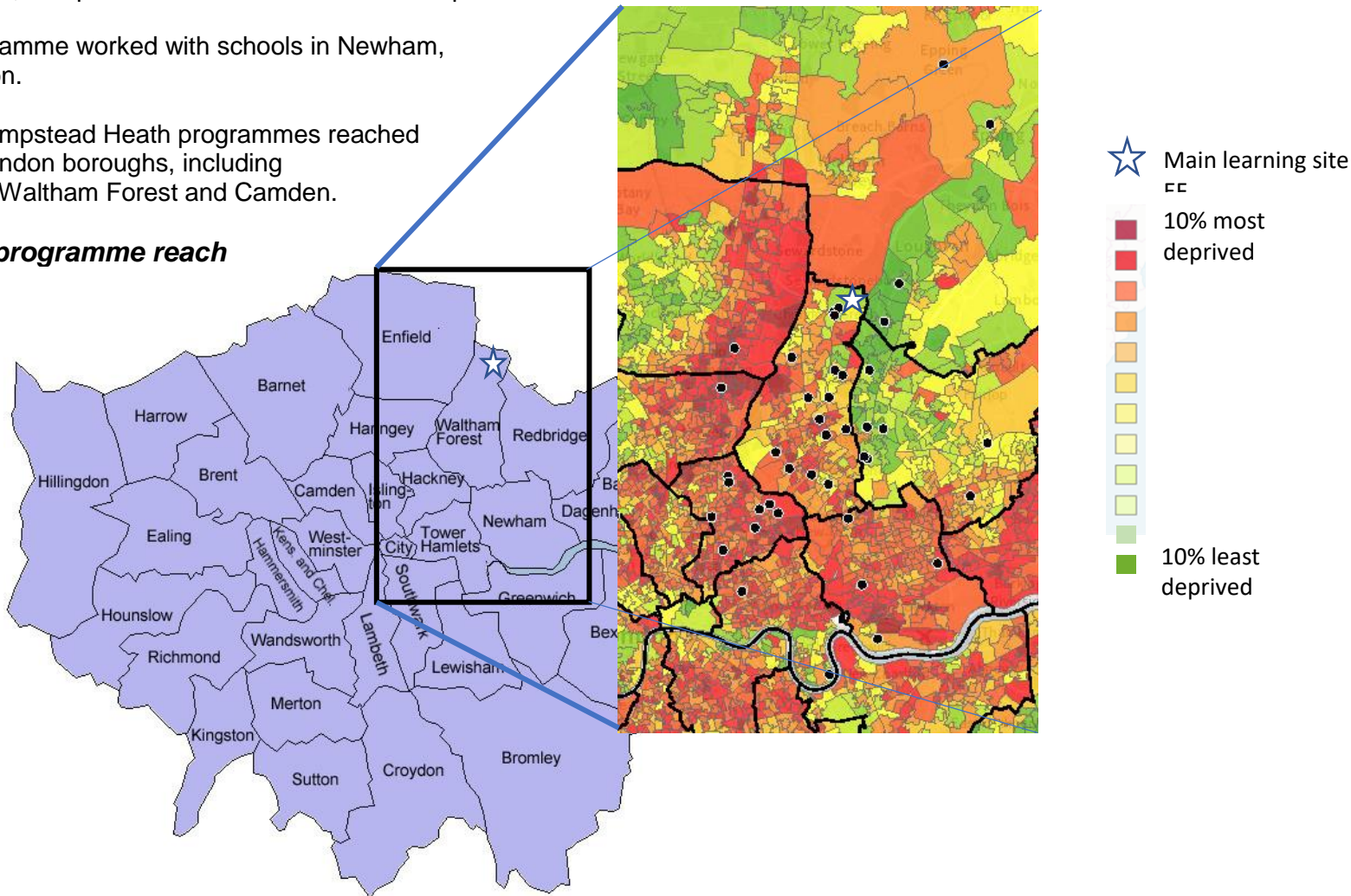
Maps showing school programme reach and areas of deprivation in London

Data from the Government Index of Multiple Deprivation for England is shown on the maps using a coloured scale. Schools participating in the Open Spaces Learning Programme (2019 – 2021) have been overlaid on the map, showing programme reach. The Index of Multiple Deprivation was created using indicators across seven domains: income, employment, education, health, crime, barriers to housing and services, living environment, and provides a measure of relative deprivation.

The West Ham Park Programme worked with schools in Newham, and area of high deprivation.

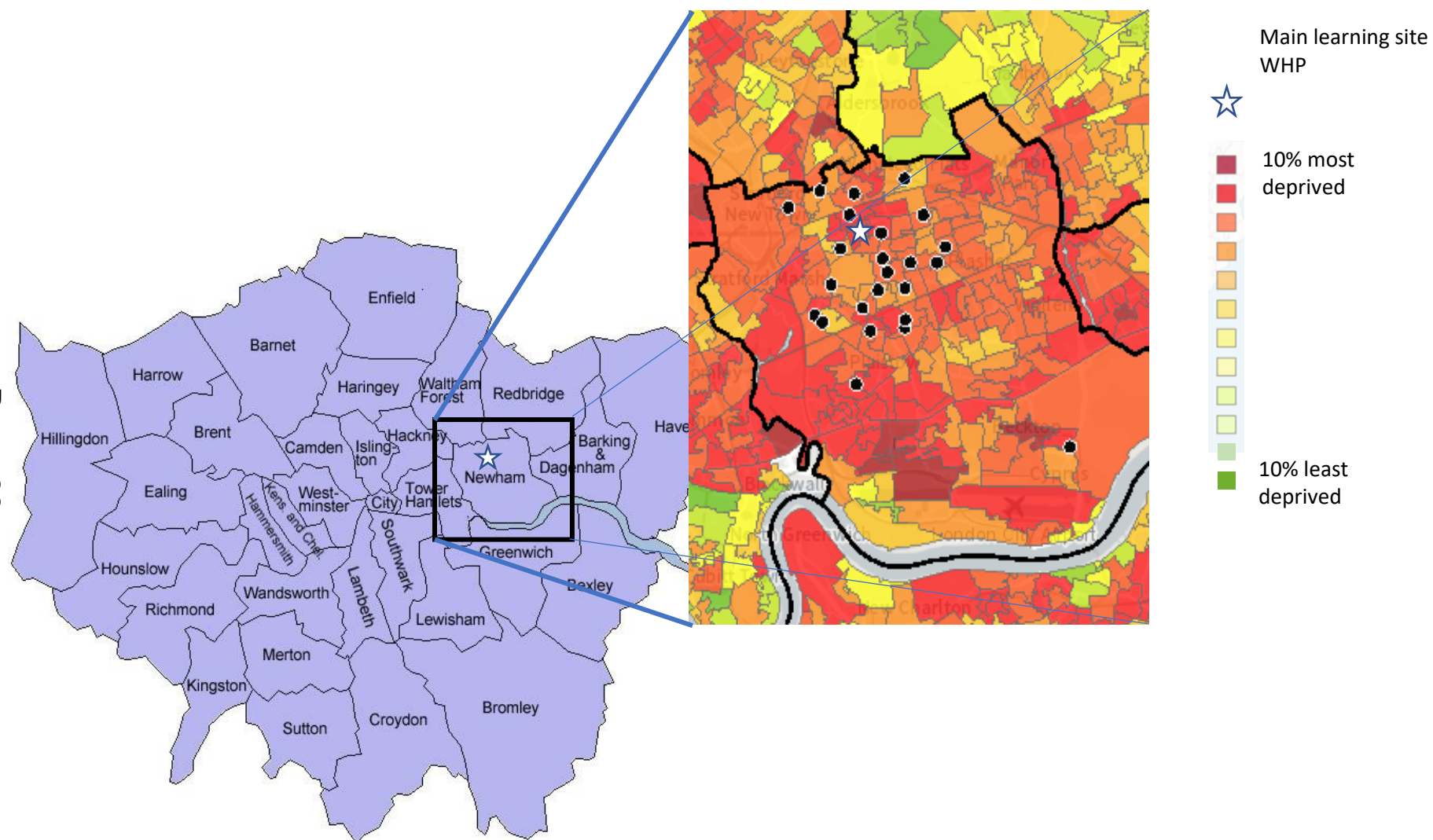
The Epping Forest and Hampstead Heath programmes reached schools across multiple London boroughs, including Tower Hamlets, Hackney, Waltham Forest and Camden.

Epping Forest school programme reach



West Ham Park school programme reach

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Hampstead Heath school programme reach

