



Natural Environment Board

Date: MONDAY, 4 DECEMBER 2023

Time: 10.00 am

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

Members:

Caroline Haines (Chair)	Oliver Sells KC
Andrew McMurtrie (Deputy Chairman)	James St John Davis
Eamonn Mullally	William Upton KC (Ex-Officio Member)
Wendy Mead	Alderman Gregory Jones KC (Ex-Officio Member)
Benjamin Murphy	Deputy Alpa Raja
	Catherine Bickmore (Observer)
	Paul Morris (Observer)

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Ian Thomas CBE
Town Clerk and Chief Executive

AGENDA

NB: Certain items presented for information have been marked * and will be taken without discussion, unless the Committee Clerk has been informed that a Member has questions or comments prior to the start of the meeting.

Part 1 - Public Agenda

1. **APOLOGIES**

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

3. **MINUTES**

To agree the public and non-public summary minutes of the previous meeting held on 16 October 2023.

For Decision
(Pages 5 - 12)

4. **FORMAL THANKS TO SUPERINTENDENT/ASSISTANT DIRECTOR - EPPING FOREST**

Chair to be heard.

Governance

5. **REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment.

For Decision
(Pages 13 - 22)

6. ***REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN**

Report of the Town Clerk.

For Information

Operational Property & Budgets

7. **REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGETS 2024/25**

Joint report of the Chamberlain and Interim Executive Director, Environment.

For Decision
(Pages 23 - 34)

8. ***OPERATIONAL FINANCE PROGRESS REPORT (PERIOD 6 APRIL – SEPTEMBER 2023) 2023/24 – NATURAL ENVIRONMENT DIVISION**

Report of the Chamberlain.

For Information

9. ***MID-YEAR UPDATE ON THE MONUMENT – APRIL - SEPTEMBER 2023**

Report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment.

For Information

City Gardens

10. **DOGS ON LEAD**

Interim Executive Director, Environment to be heard.

For Discussion

Natural Environment

11. **SUMMARY OF NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AWAY DAY**

Report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment.

For Decision
(Pages 35 - 62)

12. ***BUSINESS PLAN 2023/24 – PROGRESS REPORT (MID-YEAR, APRIL-SEPTEMBER 2023)**

Report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment.

For Information

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

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

Part 2 - Non-Public Agenda

15. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

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

For Decision

16. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

To agree the non-public minutes of the previous meeting held on 16 October 2023.

For Decision
(Pages 63 - 64)

17. *DEBT ARREARS – NATURAL ENVIRONMENT DIVISION

Report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment.

For Information

18. * CARBON REMOVALS (CLIMATE ACTION) PROJECT RESCOPING REAPPROVAL (JANUARY 2024)

Report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment.

For Information

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

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

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT BOARD Monday, 16 October 2023

Minutes of the meeting of the Natural Environment Board held at Committee Room -
2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 16 October 2023 at 10.00 am

Present

Members:

Caroline Haines (Chairman)
Andrew McMurtrie (Deputy Chairman)
Wendy Mead

In Attendance:

William Upton
Benjamin Murphy
James St John Davis

Officers:

Emily Brennan	- Environment Department
Anna Cowperthwaite	- Comptroller and City Solicitor's
Simon Glynn	- Environment Department
Clem Harcourt	- Chamberlain's Department
Elisabeth Hannah	- Environment Department
Joe Kingston	- Environment Department
William LoSasso	- Environment Department
Jack Joslin	- Bridge House Estates
Ian Hughes	- Environment Department
Amba Nkundo	- Environment Department
Julia Pridham	- Bridge House Estates
Blair Stringman	- Town Clerk's Department
Jake Tibbets	- Environment Department
Edward Wood	- Comptroller and City Solicitor's

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received by Eamonn Mullally.

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

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED – That, the public and non-public summary of the minutes held on the 10 July 2023 be agreed as a correct record subject to urgency procedures.

MATTERS ARISING

The Chair provided a Vote of Thanks to Graham Doshi-Smith who had recently resigned from the Board.

I would like to extend, on behalf of Members our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to Graeme, a dedicated and passionate member of the Natural Environment Board, for his outstanding contributions during his tenure. As we bid farewell to Graeme, we cannot help but reflect on his remarkable efforts and commitment to the cause.

Throughout his time on the board, Graeme has been a tireless advocate for the importance of open spaces in promoting public health. He has consistently highlighted the critical role that these spaces play in our physical, emotional, and mental well-being. Graeme's unwavering dedication to this cause has not only raised awareness but also inspired all of us to recognise the significance of these natural environments in our lives.

As we bid farewell to Graeme, we wish him the very best for his future endeavours. His commitment to the cause of open spaces and their impact on public health has left an indelible mark, and we are confident that he will continue to make a positive difference in other matters.

Graeme, your contributions have been invaluable, and we thank you for your service. We extend our warmest wishes for your future, with the hope that you continue to champion the cause you hold dear. Thank you and best of luck in the future.

4. **WELCOME TO NEW MEMBER - EAMONN MULLALLY**

The Chair formally welcomed the new Member, Eamonn Mullally to the Natural Environment Board.

5. **INTRODUCTION TO ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF OPEN SPACES**

The Chair introduced and welcomed the new Assistant Director of Open Spaces, North London, William LoSasso to the Natural Environment Board.

The Assistant Director, North London Open Spaces expressed enthusiasm about joining the Corporation, highlighting experience in South London and the New York City Parks Department.

6. **INTRODUCTION TO ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, COMMERCIAL AND CHARITY GOVERNANCE AND FUNDRAISING**

The Chair introduced and welcomed the Assistant Director, Commercial and Charity Fundraising.

The Board welcomed the Assistant Director, Commercial and Charity Fundraising. It was noted that the Assistant Director would officially begin her role in mid-November. Members were informed that the Assistant Director had over 30 years of experience in the environmental and charity sector, nothing their work at Epping Forest, handling strategy, compliance, income generation, and financial management. The Assistant Director expressed excitement about working with the Board and looked forward to collaborating on charity reviews and various other projects benefiting open spaces.

MATTERS ARISING

The Chair introduced and welcomed the Head of Operations and Parks.

The Board noted the new Head of Operation and Parks began in early September and had over 20 years of experience in land management including at Richmond Park and the Woodland Trust.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE REPORT

The Board considered a report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment, concerning the Natural Environment Cross-Divisional Risk Register.

A Member raised a question on the corporate risk register. Officers noted that, many items were reflected in general language on the corporate risk register. However, there was an ongoing effort to ensure that direct risks to the Natural Environment Division were more explicit and clearly outlined when the register was brought back to the Board. Members acknowledged this and the plans to revisit the detailed risk register in the future to ensure alignment with ongoing developments.

A Member raised concerns that climate change only carried a risk score of 6, noting recent unusual weather patterns. Officers noted that the risk score reflected operational considerations and that the focus in future would be on identifying realistic measures to work towards reducing the associated risks rather than treating it as an unavoidable outcome.

RESOLVED – That,

- a) Natural Environment Division Risk Register: Members confirm, on behalf of the City Corporation as Trustee, that the Natural Environment Cross-Divisional Risk Register (Appendix 1) in the report, satisfactorily sets out the key top-level risks to the charities and that appropriate systems are in place to identify and mitigate risks across the charities.
- b) City Gardens Risk Register: Members note the content of this report, the City Gardens Risk Register (Appendix 2), and the action being taken to effectively manage these risks.
- c) Reporting format: Members agree to receive detailed risk registers every six months and summary risk registers in the two interim quarterly reports, with individual risks being reported in detail by exception.

8. *OPERATIONAL FINANCE PROGRESS REPORT (PERIOD 3 APRIL – JUNE 2023) 2023/24 – NATURAL ENVIRONMENT DIVISION

The Board received a report of the Chamberlain, concerning the operation finance progress as of 3 (April – June2023) 2023/24.

A Member raised concerns about the top-down approach in the deficit funding report, particularly in how increased income at Hampstead Heath is perceived as a general pool of money to offset losses elsewhere. The Member suggested that the report did not accurately represent the bottom-up approach and requested a clearer acknowledgment of how budgets work at the local level. Additionally, discussion was raised about how to handle increased local funds

and the need to consider retaining a substantial proportion of those funds locally rather than following a one-in-one-out model.

In response to a question raised by a Member, regarding the Monument, which currently sits within the Natural Environment Division the Member proposed a resolution to the Natural Environment Board, expressing concern about the Monument's placement and recommending that it be considered a legacy asset by the Finance Committee. Additionally, they suggested requesting the Chamberlain to consider a future business case and the Town Clerk to identify appropriate governance and oversight for the Monument. Members agreed to delegate the resolution to the Interim Executive Director of Environment, in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Board, to confirm the final wording.

RESOLVED – That,

- a) The report be noted.
- b) Members agree for the Board to send a resolution to the Finance Committee and the Policy & Resources Committee regarding the decision to move The Monument into the Natural Environment Division and authorised the Interim Executive Director of Environment, in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Board, to confirm the final wording.

9. **BARBERS SURGEONS HALL CONSULTATION**

The Board received a verbal update of the Interim Executive Director, Environment, concerning the Barbers Surgeons Hall Consultation.

Members noted that a six-week public consultation for Barber Surgeons had concluded. Officers noted that the executive report, received last week, would be distributed to board members. Of the 769 responses, people generally expressed satisfaction with the garden's current appearance. However, 17% of respondents did not use the garden, with 23% unsure how to access it and 21% unaware it was a public garden. Safety in the garden was generally perceived positively. Respondents favoured a new accessible entrance, with top priorities for additions being trees and planting (61%), more seating (53%), historic information (37%), better paths (36%), and improved access (34%). It was noted that the next steps involve the commissioner and architect using the survey information to develop a master plan, engaging key stakeholders, and presenting the final plan to the committee for approval.

RESOLVED – That, the verbal update be noted.

10. **FINSBURY CIRCUS**

The Board received a verbal update of the Interim Executive Director, Environment, concerning the Finsbury Circus Project.

Members were given an update on details on the Finsbury Circus project, with contractors expected to start on November 20th, pending final confirmation from TfL due to the underground running beneath the site. It was noted the

communication plan included engaging with stakeholders, refreshing the website, and providing visuals and progress updates through newsletters. Members were informed that the team was working with City Surveyors to ensure everything was in place and exploring additional elements within the scheme, such as wayfinding and educational elements. Officers noted the project aimed for joined-up thinking across various city areas.

RESOLVED – That, the verbal update be noted.

11. **COMMEMORATIVE BENCHES AND TREE POLICY**

The Board considered a verbal update of the Interim Executive Director, Environment, concerning an update on the position of the commemorative benches and tree policy.

RESOLVED – That, Members endorse the changes to the Commemorative Benches and Trees Policy as agreed at Streets and Walkways Sub-Committee subject to Town Clerk approval in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman.

12. **BUNHILL FIELDS COMBINED MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The Board considered a report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment, concerning the Bunhill Fields Combined Management Plan.

During the meeting, there was a discussion about dog control problems, and the Board expressed the need for specific options to address the issue. It was suggested that at the next Board meeting, there should be a presentation of different options to explore and consider implications. Additionally, there was a request for information on the opening hours and gates of the affected areas, with a focus on enforcement notices issued by Park guards and the need for their presence during specific times when people walk their dogs.

RESOLVED – That, Members endorse the Bunhill Fields Burial Ground Conservation Management Plan as a resource to guide management, and to enable the development of a City Gardens operational plan, subject to Town Clerk approval in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman.

13. **NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AWAYDAY UPDATE**

The Board received a verbal update of the Interim Executive Director, Environment, concerning the Natural Environment awayday.

During the meeting, it was discussed that workshops were conducted with Members and staff to develop a new vision and strategies for the division. Common themes included the importance of partnership, income generation, and the need to address conflicts between strategic priorities such as nature conservation and access for all. It was noted that the feedback from the workshops was being collected, and the next steps involve drafting mission and vision statements, as well as strategic priorities in the areas of nature conservation, community engagement, access and recreation, and culture, learning, and heritage. Members were informed that the draft strategies would be circulated for comments, with the goal of getting them approved for launch in

January. The timeline and next steps were outlined, and detailed comments are expected once the draft strategies are presented to the board.

RESOLVED – That, the verbal update be noted.

14. LEARNING TEAM UPDATE

The Board received a verbal update of the Interim Executive Director, Environment, concerning an update from the learning team.

Officers informed Members that looking ahead, key areas of focus include addressing the attainment gap, expanding initiatives around climate education, promoting well-being benefits of nature access, reaching out to more people, enhancing play centres, and supporting adult well-being through a volunteering program. Officers noted the importance of connecting with nature for pro-environmental attitudes and behaviours, and the need to provide opportunities for children to play freely outdoors. It was noted that the goal was also to raise awareness of career pathways through participation in careers fairs and weaving in more understanding of how learning relates to wider careers and the world.

RESOLVED – That, the verbal update be noted.

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

There were no questions.

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

There was no urgent business.

17. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

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

18. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

RESOLVED – That, the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2023 be agreed as a correct record.

19. HERITAGE UPDATE

The Board received a verbal update of the Interim Executive Director, Environment.

RESOLVED – That, the verbal update be noted.

20. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT CHARITY REVIEW

The Board received a verbal update of the Managing Director of Bridge House Estates.

RESOLVED – That, the verbal update be noted.

21. **NATURAL ENVIRONMENT BOARD DINNER**

The Board received a verbal update from the Chairman.

RESOLVED – That, the verbal update be noted.

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

There were no questions.

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

There was no urgent business.

24. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED – That, the confidential minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2023 be agreed as a correct record.

25. **TARGET OPERATING MODEL - PHASE TWO UPDATE**

The Board received a verbal update of the Interim Executive Director, Environment.

RESOLVED – That, the verbal update be noted.

The meeting ended at 11.30am.

Chairman

Contact Officer: Blair Stringman
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Agenda Item 5

Committee(s): Natural Environment Board (for decision) Policy and Resources Committee Court of Common Council (for decision)	Dated: 04/12/2023 14/12/2023
Subject: Revised Terms of Reference for Natural Environment Board	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	Y/N
If so, how much?	£
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	Y/N
Report of: Interim Executive Director of Environment	For Decision
Report author: Ken Dunbar	

Summary

The Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee, became the Natural Environment Board in April 2023. The proposals in this report are intended to strengthen the Natural Environment Board as a Strategic Committee co-ordinating the City of London Corporation's overarching approach to the natural environment, whilst recognising the unique and historic charity trustee role of the Corporation in the management of the natural environment.

The Natural Environment Board will operate in a similar manner to the Corporation's Education Board and, as such, will play a crucial role in developing, overseeing and monitoring delivery of the Natural Environment Strategy.

This report proposes to tap into a broader talent pool, attracting individuals with diverse skills and experiences that can enrich the Board's decision-making processes. There will be an open and transparent recruitment process to those external appointments.

The proposed, revised Terms of Reference for the Natural Environment Board will help to ensure oversight of the Natural Environment Strategy and alignment with the Corporate Strategy and the governing documents of the individual Natural Environment Charities.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- a) Approve the terms of reference of the Natural Environment Board, as set out in Option 1, subject to any comments, for submission to the Policy and Resources Committee and the Court of Common Council;
- b) Members consider whether any change is required to the frequency of the Committee's meetings.
- c) Delegate Authority to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen of the Natural Environment Board and Policy & Resources Committee, to consider any final changes to the Terms of Reference arising from discussion.

Main Report

Background

1. Members will be aware that, at the Meeting of the Court of Common Council on 27 April 2023, Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee was renamed the Natural Environment Board.
2. This change occurred at an important juncture for the Natural Environment Division as it neared completion of its Target Operating Model process and was embarking on a new strategic direction with a new Natural Environment Strategy in development. The proposed revised Natural Environment Board Terms of Reference (ToRs) are seen as a key step in ensuring a more strategic, performance focused and co-ordinated approach to the work Natural Environment as it embarks on a five-year strategy and delivery plan.
3. The proposed ToRs will help to differentiate the responsibilities of the Natural Environment Board from the Natural Environment Committees, namely Epping Forest and City Commons, West Ham Park and Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queens Park, which are each responsible for delivering the Management Plans and strategies for the Green Spaces under each Committee's purview. There is also a clear differentiation between the Natural Environment Board's strategic role and its operational role over City Gardens.
4. The role of the Natural Environment Board which oversees over 11,000 acres of green spaces throughout London and the South East, has never been more important. This infrastructure plays a key role in the Corporation's Climate Action Strategy and enables the Corporation to demonstrate leadership on environmental matters at a local, regional, national and international level.
5. Through its ownership and management of some of the most spectacular parks, natural landscapes and green spaces in London and the Southeast, the Corporation demonstrates its commitment to nature resilience, biodiversity, carbon reduction, conservation, and the consequent health benefits and public enjoyment that arise from use of the open spaces. The City of London Corporation can lay claim to owning over 14 times more green and blue infrastructure than its overall urban area within the Square Mile.

6. The Corporation has a unique leadership position in terms of its investment in the natural environment, and in light of the emerging evidence about the natural capital value of Corporation's green spaces, the need for a strategic and co-ordinated approach has never been greater. The emerging work on a Natural Capital Account for the Corporation and the emerging Natural Environment Strategy will underpin the Corporation's wider strategic goals, and this should be profiled, prominently, in the City of London Corporation's new Corporate Strategy.
7. The Natural Environment Board needs to play a greater role in oversight and scrutiny of the full range of the Natural Environment activities and programmes, developing policy and reviewing performance. This should ensure that its strategy and associated delivery plans align with, and underpin the Corporation's wider goals and aspirations, including advising on the design and use of green spaces. This should also enable it to take advantage of the opportunities for new policy initiatives, including extending its education and learning impact, and enhancing carbon sequestration and nature resilience, adopting a more commercial approach whilst at all times recognising the objects of the various charities, including conserving the natural aspect.
8. It is intended that the Natural Environment Board will operate in a similar manner to the Corporation's Education Board and, as such, given its crucial role in developing strategy, the need for the best possible expertise at Board level is vitally important. Accordingly, in addition to the expertise on the Board, it is proposed to augment the Board with up to four external representatives who, in addition to the expertise of Members, bring specific areas of expertise to the Board specifically, but not exclusively, addressing the following areas:
 - Biodiversity & nature resilience (including climate action)
 - Community engagement
 - Access & recreation
 - Culture, heritage & learning
 - Resourcing including income generation.

(It should be noted that external representatives are required to sign up to the Corporation's Code of Conduct, which should provide a level of assurance on governance and accountability.)

Current Position

9. The nomenclature change from Open Spaces and City Gardens to Natural Environment Board was agreed at a meeting of the Court of Common Council in April 2023, but the detail surrounding its roles and responsibilities were not amended.
10. Whilst the Natural Environment Board has assumed, as intended, a more strategic and oversight role, it continues to hold operational responsibility for the green spaces and city gardens within the Square Mile. It is intended that this will continue to be the case, with the functions relevant to city gardens, remaining unchanged.
11. The proposals set out in this report will help to better define the role, functions and membership of the Natural Environment Board and, in due course, better distinguish the Board's function as distinct from that of the various Natural Environment

Committees (and the individual charities), thereby reducing a tendency towards dual reporting. By defining the body as a Board, this will help to demonstrate a clear difference between the strategy and oversight role as distinct from the traditional Committee role where responsibilities and delegations are generally well understood. There will, of necessity, be an overlap on some matters.

12. As Members will be aware, the Natural Environment Charities Review scoping exercise is in progress. As part of this work Officers are reviewing the City Corporation's governance arrangements for those charities. Until this review has progressed the Natural Environment Charities Review will not be making any recommendations for amending ToRs.
13. It will be for Directors to determine how matters are reported to each of the Natural Environment Charity Committees and the flow of information between the Committees and the Board.

Options

- 14 Option 1 (This Option is recommendation)

The proposals in this report seek to better define the role of the Natural Environment Board as the vehicle to drive a cohesive Natural Environment Strategy whilst being cognisant of the unique and historic charity dimension to the work of the Corporation. It also aims to tap into a broader talent pool, attracting individuals with diverse skills and experiences that can enrich the Board's decision-making processes.

- 15 Option 2 (This option is not recommended)

Another option would be to do nothing, thereby retaining the existing arrangements whilst awaiting the completion of the Natural Environment Charity review. However, the review of the Natural Environment Charities is likely to take some time, due to the complexity and breadth of issues being considered and differences in the governance arrangements of the Natural Environment Charities. There is a clear need to drive the new overarching Natural Environment Strategy which will further support the Natural Environment Charities in delivering their objects and management plans.

Terms of Reference

16. Except where specific responsibilities are referred to it, the Board will not take over the role of Natural Environment Charity Committees, or indeed other City Corporation Committees. The Natural Environment Board will be a vehicle for taking a strategic approach, ensuring effective oversight and scrutiny and ensuring the Natural Environment Strategy complements and underpins the new Corporate Strategy.
17. It is proposed that the following terms of reference are adopted for the Natural Environment Board:

The Natural Environment Board to be responsible for:-

Natural Environment Strategy and Policy

- the approval, monitoring and regular review of the Natural Environment strategy, overseeing the overall policy and performance framework for Natural Environment and City Gardens;
- overseeing the delivery of the Natural Environment Strategy, ensuring policies, programmes and activities encompassing Nature Resilience and Biodiversity (including Climate Action), Access and Recreation, Community Engagement, Culture, Heritage, and Learning align with the City of London corporate strategy and wider Corporation strategies and plans, and the governing documents of the charities;
- dealing with, and making recommendations to the Court of Common Council where appropriate, all matters relating to the strategic management (e.g. policy, financial and staffing) of the City of London Corporation's natural environment where such matters are not specifically the responsibility of another Committee; and,
- The allocation of grants in relation to the Natural Environment taking account of any views or recommendations expressed by the Epping Forest and Commons Committee, West Ham Park Committee or Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee as relevant;
- the appointment of the Director of Natural Environment (in consultation with the Port Health and Environmental Services Committee);
- the management and day-to-day administration of the gardens, churchyards and open spaces in the City under the control of the Common Council, together with Bunhill Fields Burial Ground;
- arrangements for the planting and maintenance of trees and other plants and shrubs in green spaces and in footpaths adjacent to highways in the City;
- advising on applications for planning permission relating in whole or in part to the gardens, churchyards or green spaces in the City under the control of the Common Council; and,
- the functions of the Common Council under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 to make safe by felling, or otherwise, dangerous trees in the City generally on receipt of notices served on the City of London Corporation in the circumstances set out in Section 23 of the Act and where trees are in danger of damaging property.

Membership

18 As this is an extant body it is proposed that the Court appointed membership remains as existing, save for the appointment of up to four external representatives:

A Non-Ward Committee consisting of:

- eight Members elected by the Court of Common Council, at least one of whom shall have fewer than five years' service on the Court at the time of their appointment.
- the following ex-officio Members:-

- the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Epping Forest & Commons Committee
- the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee
- up to four external representatives, appointed by the Natural Environment Board, with appropriate expertise in the areas of strategic focus for Natural Environment (i.e. non-Members of the Court of Common Council, without voting rights)

Quorum

The quorum to consist of any five Common Council Members

Meetings

The Natural Environment Board will generally meet six times a year.

Terms

External representative appointments will be staggered over a period of 2-4 years.

Natural Environment Board support

- 19 There will be no material change to the existing level of officer support for the Board, however there will be a need to give careful consideration to the agenda and associated agenda planning to ensure the Board focuses on its strategy and oversight role in addition to its operational role on City Gardens. There will be a nominal resource requirement for the recruitment, induction and training of external appointments.
- 20 The proposed changes should reduce any perceived duplication in reporting and enable a clearer focus on developing strategy and in reviewing performance in the delivery of the new Natural Environment Strategy.

Recruitment of External representatives

- 21 Should the proposal for External Representatives be approved, there will be an open and transparent approach to the recruitment of external representatives, which will follow a similar approach to the recruitment of external representatives on other City of London Committees, such as the City Bridge Foundation Board, including advertising on the Corporation website and use of LinkedIn and other mechanisms to generate interest. All adverts will include a role profile which highlights the skills, expertise and unique perspectives the Natural Environment Board is seeking to achieve with these key external appointments.

Proposals

- 22 The proposed Terms of Reference for the Natural Environment Board will help to ensure strategic oversight of the Natural Environment Strategy and ensure alignment with the Corporate Strategy of the Corporation. It will have responsibility for developing, implementing and monitoring the Natural Environment strategy and for optimising its impact on the Corporation's broader objectives.

Conclusion

- 23 The City of London Corporation plays a unique role in the conservation and management of 11000 acres of green spaces. The integral relationship between its natural assets and its climate action and nature resilience and recovery programmes, together with its commitment to supporting learning, education and improved health and wellbeing, requires that this is managed in a strategic and co-ordinated manner.
- 24 The emerging Natural Environment Strategy sets the framework for effective scrutiny and oversight of Natural Environment programmes and activities at a strategic level. The Natural Environment Board, supported by external representatives who have specific expertise in the areas of focus, will play a key role in ensuring co-ordination and strategic alignment between the Natural Environment strategy and the Corporation's new Corporate Strategy, and, by necessity, the governing documents of the charities.

Key Data

N/A

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Financial implications - none

Resource implications - none

Legal implications – None

Risk implications- failure to define the role and function could result in dual reporting and extensive overlap

Equalities implications – The changes have neither a positive, nor negative impact on the Public Sector Equality Duty 2010

Climate implications – no direct impact

Security implications – no direct impact

Appendices

App 'A' Terms of Reference

Background Papers

N/A

Bob Roberts
Executive Director of Environment

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E: ken.dunbar@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Appendix A

LYONS, Mayor	RESOLVED: That the Court of Common Council holden in the Guildhall of the City of London on Thursday 27 th April 2023, doth hereby appoint the following Committee until the first meeting of the Court in April, 2024.
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NATURAL ENVIRONMENT BOARD

1. **Constitution**

A Non-Ward Committee consisting of,

- eight Members elected by the Court of Common Council, at least one of whom shall have fewer than five years' service on the Court at the time of their appointment
- the following ex-officio Members:-
 - the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Epping Forest & Commons Committee
 - the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee
- up to four external non-voting representatives, appointed by the Natural Environment Board with appropriate expertise in the Natural Environment, including biodiversity & nature resilience, community engagement, access & recreation, culture, heritage & learning and income generation
- up to one observer nominated by the Epping Forest & Commons Committee, Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee and West Ham Park Committee.

2. **Quorum**

The quorum consists of any five Members.

3. **Membership 2023/24**

- 7 (4) Oliver Sells, K.C.
- 3 (3) Andrew Stratton McMurtrie, J.P.
- ~~2 (2) Ian Luder, Alderman for three years~~
- ~~2 (2) Graeme Doshi-Smith, Deputy for three years~~
- 2 (2) Benjamin Murphy
- 2 (2) James Bromiley Davis for two years
- 6 (1) Caroline Wilma Haines
- 13 (1) Wendy Mead, O.B.E

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

~~together with one observer nominated by the Epping Forest & Commons Committee, Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee and West Ham Park Committee referred to in paragraph 1 above.~~

4. **Terms of Reference**

To be responsible for:-

- (a) the approval, monitoring and regular review of the Natural Environment strategy, overseeing the overall policy and performance framework for Natural Environment and City Gardens;
- (b) overseeing the delivery of the Natural Environment Strategy, ensuring policies, programmes and activities encompassing Nature Resilience and Biodiversity (including Climate Action), Access and Recreation, Community Engagement, Culture, Heritage, and Learning align with the City of London corporate strategy and wider Corporation strategies and plans, and the governing documents of the charities;
- (c) dealing with, and making recommendations to the Court of Common Council where appropriate, all matters relating to the strategic management (e.g. policy, financial and staffing) of the City of London Corporation's natural environment where such matters are not specifically the responsibility of another Committee;
- (a) The allocation of grants in relation to **Open Green** Spaces taking account of any views or recommendations expressed by the Epping Forest and Commons Committee, West Ham Park Committee or Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee as relevant;
- (d)

Open Spaces

- (b) ~~dealing with, or making recommendations to the Court of Common Council where appropriate, all matters relating to the strategic management (e.g. policy, financial and staffing) of the City of London Corporation's open spaces where such matters are not specifically the responsibility of another Committee; and~~

(e) the appointment of the Director of ~~Open Spaces~~ **Natural Environment** (in consultation with the Port Health and Environmental Services Committee);

City ~~Open Spaces~~ Gardens

(d) the management and day-to-day administration of the gardens, churchyards and ~~open green~~ spaces in the City under the control of the Common Council, together with Bunhill Fields Burial Ground;

(e) arrangements for the planting and maintenance of trees and other plants and shrubs in ~~open green~~ spaces and in footpaths adjacent to highways in the City;

(f) advising on applications for planning permission relating in whole or in part to the gardens, churchyards or ~~open green~~ spaces in the City under the control of the Common Council; and

(g) the functions of the Common Council under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 to make safe by felling, or otherwise, dangerous trees in the City generally on receipt of notices served on the City of London Corporation in the circumstances set out in Section 23 of the Act and where trees are in danger of damaging property.

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Agenda Item 7

Committee(s)	Dated:
Natural Environment Board	04/12/2023
Subject: Revenue and Capital Budgets 2024/25	Public
Which Outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	N/A
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 the funding source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: The Chamberlain Interim Executive Director Environment	For Decision
Report Author: Clem Harcourt, Chamberlain's Department	

Summary

This report presents for approval the revenue and capital budgets for the Natural Environment Board for 2024/25, for subsequent submission to Finance Committee. The Natural Environment Board is the strategic overarching committee for all of the Open Spaces and whilst this report details the 2024/25 budgets for the Natural Environment Directorate, Learning Team, City Gardens and Bunhill Fields, summary estimates for all of the other open spaces (excluding Keats House and The Monument which are reported to the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee) are also provided in Appendix 3.

Overall, the proposed revenue budget for 2024/25 totals (£2.487m) net expenditure, an increase of (£656k) compared to the 2023/24 original budget of (£1.831m) agreed by your Board on 05 December 2022.

The proposed budget for 2024/25 has been prepared within the resource envelope allocated to each Director by Resource Allocation Sub-Committee, including an inflation increase of 3% and the full year impact of pay increases to staff arising from the pay deal effective from July 2023. The proposed budget for your Board has also been adjusted to reflect the impact of the recently introduced Target Operating Model (TOM 2) staffing restructure within the Natural Environment Division.

The resource envelope must be adhered to, as failure to do so will impact Finance Committee's ability to set Council Tax rates for the year ahead and the requirement in law for the City to set a balanced budget.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- i) note the latest revenue budget for your Board for 2023/24;
- ii) review and approve the proposed revenue budget for 2024/25 for your Board for submission to Finance Committee;

- iii) review and approve the City Gardens capital and supplementary revenue budgets for 2024/25 for submission to Finance Committee;
- iv) agree that amendments for 2023/24 and 2024/25 budgets arising from changes to recharges or for any further implications arising from corporate contracts, energy price increases, changes to the Cyclical Works Programme (CWP) and capital charges during budget setting be delegated to the Chamberlain in consultation with the Interim Executive Director Environment; and
- v) note the provisional 2024/25 revenue budget estimates for the services overseen by the other Natural Environment Committees (Appendix 3).

Main Report

Introduction

1. The City of London Corporation owns and manages almost 11,000 acres of historic and natural Open Spaces for public recreation and enjoyment. This includes City Gardens which is funded from City Fund as part of the City's local authority functions. Bunhill Fields, the Learning Team and the Natural Environment Directorate which co-ordinates the management of the Natural Environment Division and works in co-operation with other Departments on cross service projects and corporate initiatives are funded through City's Cash.
2. This report sets out the proposed budgets for 2024/25 for these areas. The revenue budget management arrangements are to:
 - provide a clear distinction between local risk, central risk, and recharge budgets;
 - place responsibility for budgetary control on departmental Chief Officers; and
 - apply a cash limit policy to Chief Officers' budgets.
3. As the strategic lead Committee for Natural Environment, the proposed budgets for Epping Forest, The Commons, West Ham Park, Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queens Park are summarised in Appendix 3 for information so that this Board has an overview of the full financial position of the Natural Environment Division within the Environment Department.
4. The overall 2024/25 proposed budget for your Board which includes the Interim Executive Director Environment's local risk, central risk and recharges & support services budgets, plus the City Surveyor's CWP and Building Repairs & Maintenance (BRM) budget is (£2.487m) net expenditure, this is an increase of (£656k) when compared with the 2023/24 original budget agreed by your Board on 05 December 2022.
5. The latest budget for 2023/24 and the provisional original budget for 2024/25, is summarised in the table below and further analysed by risk and Chief Officer in Appendix 1.
6. Income, increases in income, and reductions in expenditure are shown as positive balances, whereas brackets are used to denote expenditure, increases in expenditure, or shortfalls in income. Only significant variances (generally those

greater than £30k) have been commented on and are referenced in the relevant table in Appendix 1.

Natural Environment Board	Original Budget (OR) 2023/24 £000	Latest Budget 2023/24 £000	Original Budget (OR) 2024/25 £000	Movement 2023/24 OR to 2024/25 OR £000
Net Local Risk	(2,475)	(2,457)	(3,447)	(972)
Net City Surveyor	(45)	(42)	(44)	1
Net Cyclical Works Programme	(40)	(40)	(262)	(222)
Net Central Risk	(20)	(104)	(20)	0
Recharges & Support Services	749	731	1,286	537
Total Net Expenditure	(1,831)	(1,912)	(2,487)	(656)

Latest Revenue Budget for 2023/24

7. Overall, the 2023/24 latest budget is net expenditure of (£1.912m), an increase in net expenditure of (£81k) compared to the 2023/24 original budget agreed by your Board on 05 December 2022. This increase is primarily explained by (£80k) central risk funding being provided from the Transformation Fund to support work to further the Operational Property review within the Environment Department. The remaining (£1k) net increase is explained by adjustments to your Board's local risk resource base following implementation of the TOM2 staffing structure, uplifts to staffing budgets following £1k payments made to staff in July 2023, a net reduction in costs recharged to other sections of the Natural Environment Division and approved carry forwards of underspends from 2022/23 budgets. These carry forwards comprised £60k from local risk underspends to support work around the City's Biodiversity Action Plan and a £4k central risk carry forward in relation to the IT transformation project at City Gardens. The increase in net expenditure is offset by funding provided from the Directorate's contingency budget to other areas of the Natural Environment Division as well as net savings in BRM costs managed by the City Surveyor.

Proposed Revenue Budget for 2024/25

8. This report presents at Appendix 1, the proposed budget estimates for 2024/25 for your Board analysed between:
- **Local Risk Budgets** – these are budgets deemed to be largely within the Chief Officer's control;
 - **Central Risk Budgets** – these are budgets comprising specific items where a Chief Officer manages the underlying service, but where the eventual financial outturn can be strongly influenced by external factors outside of his/her control

or are budgets of a corporate nature (e.g. interest on balances and rent incomes from investment properties); and

- **Recharges & Support Services (including capital charges)** – these cover budgets for services provided by one activity to another. The control of these costs is exercised at the point where the expenditure or income first arises as local or central risk.

9. The proposed 2024/25 original budget is net expenditure of (£2.487m), an increase of (£656k) compared to the 2023/24 original budget agreed by your Board on 05 December 2022. Further detail can be found in Appendix 1. The main variations relate to:

- (£1.317m) increase in local risk staffing costs attributable to the full year impact of the pay award effective from July 2023 as well as additional staffing resources being provided following implementation of the TOM2 staffing restructure within the Natural Environment Division. The increase can also be explained by administrative staff transferring to the Natural Environment Directorate from other teams within the division effective from April 2024;
- (£221k) net increase in budgets managed by the City Surveyor. This primarily relates to rephasing of projects under the CWP amounting to (£177k) at City Gardens and (£45k) at Bunhill Fields. This is partly offset by a £1k saving in BRM budgets;
- (£49k) additional costs relating to supplies and services. This is largely attributable to additional internal legal fees being required for the Natural Environment Directorate during 2024/25 to assist with the Natural Environment charities review;
- (£36k) extra premises related costs. This is largely explained by an increase in energy prices in relation to floodlighting for services managed by the Highways section at City Gardens;
- (£35k) decrease in unidentified savings explained by a (£41k) decrease for the Learning Team as a result of savings achieved across the division following implementation of the Natural Environment TOM2 restructure. This is partly offset by a £6k increase in unidentified savings at City Gardens due to increased energy costs expected to be incurred on floodlighting;
- £537k net change in recharges & support services largely as a result of increased recharges from the Natural Environment Directorate and Learning Team to other sections of the Natural Environment Division to account for increases in net expenditure running budgets;
- £313k increase in income budgets covering funding for self-funded posts included within the TOM2 structure;
- £88k reduction in the Directorate's contingency budget to fund additional legal fees (highlighted above) as well as budget being transferred from the Directorate to cover unidentified savings on Burnham Beeches' local risk budget for 2024/25; and
- £61k additional income from customer and client receipts largely due to additional income projected to be generated at City Gardens from rechargeable works and filming.

10. In light of recommendations from Resource Allocation Sub-Committee, the proposed 2024/25 budget includes a 3% uplift for inflation and the full year impact of pay increases to staff arising from the pay deal effective from July 2023. The local risk resource base for your Board has also been adjusted to take into account the recently implemented TOM2 restructure within the Natural Environment Division. Members

may also wish to note that the proposed budget for 2024/25 includes £30k in unidentified savings partly due to increased energy costs for floodlighting at City Gardens which are managed by the Highways section. If electricity prices are lower than expected in 2024/25, we can look to reduce this unidentified saving. A detailed breakdown of budget movements of the 2023/24 local risk original budget to the proposed 2024/25 local risk original budget can be found in Appendix 2.

11. Analysis of the movement in staff related costs are shown in the table below:

Staffing statement	Original Budget 2023/24		Latest Budget 2023/24		Original Budget 2024/25	
	Staffing Full-time equivalent	Estimated cost £000	Staffing Full-time equivalent	Estimated cost £000	Staffing Full-time equivalent	Estimated cost £000
Directorate/ Learning	12.00	(632)	15.90	(1,040)	28.40	(1,739)
City Gardens/ Bunhill Fields	32.00	(1,483)	34.00	(1,515)	34.00	(1,743)
TOTAL	44.00	(2,115)	49.90	(2,555)	62.40	(3,482)

12. Members should note that the CWP figures included in this report relate only to elements of previously agreed programmes, which will be completed in 2023/24 and 2024/25. The separate bid for CWP works for 2024/25 has not been included in this report. The report will be submitted to Projects and Procurement Sub-Committee in January 2024 and will then require approval from Resource Allocation Sub-Committee to agree the funding. Once both Sub-Committees have agreed the 2024/25 programme, Members will be advised of the outcome and Members are asked to authorise the Chamberlain to revise the budgets to allow for these approvals.

13. The table below details the budgets held for the City Surveyors CWP and BRM:

CWP & City Surveyor Local Risk	Original Budget 2023/24 £'000	Latest Budget 2023/24 £'000	Original Budget 2024/25 £'000
Repairs and Maintenance			
Cyclical Works Programme			
Bunhill Fields	0	0	(45)
City Gardens	(40)	(40)	(217)
	(40)	(40)	(262)
Planned & Reactive Works (Breakdown & Servicing)			
Bunhill Fields	(6)	(0)	0
City Gardens	(39)	(42)	(44)
	(45)	(42)	(44)
Total CWP & City Surveyor	(85)	(82)	(306)

Draft Capital and Supplementary Revenue Budgets

14. The latest estimated costs for your Board's current approved capital and supplementary revenue projects are summarised in the Table below:

Service	Project	Exp. Pre 01/04/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Later Years	Total
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
City Gardens	Finsbury Circus Reinstatement	632	1,908	2,859			5,399
City Gardens	St Botolph Ball Court Improvements	86	44				130
City Gardens	St Mary At Hill Churchyard	135	157	178			470
City Gardens	Tower Hill Play Area Replacement Project		16		-		16
Total Natural Environment Board		853	2,125	3,037	0	0	6,015

15. The latest Capital and Supplementary Revenue Project expenditure on approved schemes will be presented to the Court of Common Council for formal approval in March 2024.

Total Estimates Summary for Natural Environment Division

16. The table shown in Appendix 3 gives a summary overview of all the Natural Environment Division's budgets which have or will be reported to their respective committees excluding Keats House and The Monument which are reported to the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee.

Conclusion

17. This report presents the proposed Revenue and Capital budgets for 2024/25 for your Board for Members to consider and approve.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Committee Summary Budget – by Risk and Chief Officer
- Appendix 2 – Movement Between 2023/24 Original Local Risk Budget to 2024/25 Original Local Risk Budget
- Appendix 3 – Estimates Summary for Natural Environment Division

Clem Harcourt
Chamberlain's Department
E: Clem.Harcourt@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Committee Summary Budget – by Risk and Chief Officer

Analysis of Service Expenditure	Local or Central Risk	Actual 2022/23 £'000	Original Budget (OR) 2023/24 £'000	Latest Budget 2023/24 £'000	Original Budget (OR) 2024/25 £'000	Movement 23/24 OR to 24/25 OR £'000	Notes
EXPENDITURE							
Employees	L	(2,330)	(2,115)	(2,555)	(3,432)	(1,317)	1
Employees	C	(247)	0	0	(50)	(50)	2
Premises Related Expenses	L	(236)	(251)	(256)	(287)	(36)	3
Premises Related Expenses	C	(12)	0	0	0	0	
City Surveyor - All Services	L	(278)	(85)	(82)	(306)	(221)	4
Transport Related Expenses	L	(65)	(67)	(67)	(69)	(2)	
Supplies & Services	L	(337)	(290)	(387)	(339)	(49)	5
Supplies & Services	C	(1)	(20)	(104)	(20)	0	
Third Party Payments	L	(27)	(48)	(48)	(43)	5	
Contingencies	L	0	(333)	(57)	(245)	88	6
Unidentified Savings	L	0	65	12	30	(35)	7
Total Expenditure		(3,533)	(3,144)	(3,544)	(4,761)	(1,617)	
INCOME							
Government Grants	C	0	0	0	50	50	2
Other Grants, Reimbursements & Cont.	L	50	104	415	417	313	8
Customer, Client Receipts	L	513	460	486	521	61	9
Transfer from Reserves	L	40	0	0	0	0	
Transfer from Reserves	C	12	0	0	0	0	
Total Income		615	564	901	988	424	
TOTAL NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE) BEFORE SUPPORT SERVICES AND CAPITAL CHARGES		(2,918)	(2,580)	(2,643)	(3,773)	(1,193)	
SUPPORT SERVICES AND RECHARGES							
Central Support and Capital Charges		(806)	(653)	(629)	(772)	(119)	10
Recharges Within Fund		2,068	2,198	2,176	2,896	698	11
Recharges Across Funds		(683)	(796)	(816)	(838)	(42)	12
Total Support Services		579	749	731	1,286	537	
TOTAL NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		(2,339)	(1,831)	(1,912)	(2,487)	(656)	

Notes:

1. (£1.317m) increase in staffing costs due to the full year impact of the pay award effective from July 2023 as well as extra staffing resources being provided following implementation of the TOM2 staffing restructure within the Natural Environment Division. The increase is also attributable to administrative staff transferring to the Directorate from other teams within the Natural Environment Division effective from April 2024.
2. (£50k) staffing costs estimated on central risk at City Gardens for 2024/25 to cover the costs of a Arboricultural Projects Officer post. These costs are funded by grant monies from the Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund.
3. (£36k) increase in premises related costs largely related to additional energy costs projected to be incurred in relation to floodlighting at City Gardens.
4. (£221k) increase in budgets managed by the City Surveyor. This primarily relates to the rephasing of projects falling under the CWP amounting to (£177k) at City Gardens and (£45k) at Bunhill Fields. There is also a £1k saving in building repairs and maintenance costs managed by the City Surveyor at City Gardens.
5. (£49k) additional supplies and services costs largely attributable to an increase in internal legal fees required for the Directorate covering the whole Natural Environment Division. This is partly relating to additional legal fees being required in 2024/25 in relation to the review of Natural Environment charities.
6. £88k reduction in the Directorate's contingency budget for 2024/25 to fund increased legal fees as well as meeting the shortfall on the local risk budget at Burnham Beeches which has occurred as a result of reductions in income from government grants and filming.
7. (£35k) reduction in unidentified savings explained by a (£41k) decrease relating to the Learning Team which has been met from savings in the TOM2 restructure across the Natural Environment Division. This is partly offset by a £6k increase in unidentified savings at City Gardens which has arisen as a result of additional energy costs being incurred in relation to floodlighting.

8. £313k increase in income from contributions explained by income budgets being added for the Directorate and Learning Team to cover the costs of self-funded posts included with the Natural Environment TOM2 staffing restructure.
9. £61k increase explained by £54k increase in income at City Gardens as a result of additional income from rechargeable works and filming. This is in addition to a £7k increase in income from tuition fees generated by the Learning Team.
10. (£119k) in additional central support recharges attributable to an increase in the cost of corporate departments being recharged.
11. £698k increase in Recharges Within Fund explained by £904k in increased costs of the Directorate and Learning Team being recharged to other divisions within Natural Environment. This is partly offset by a (£206k) increase in recharges from the Environment Department Directorate and Cleansing section to City Gardens.
12. (£42k) increase in recharges from the Environment Department's Directorate to the Natural Environment Division.

Appendix 2

Movement between the 2023/24 Original Local Risk Budget and 2024/25 Original Local Risk Budget

Natural Environment Board	£000
Original Net Local Risk Budget (Interim Executive Director Environment & City Surveyor)	(2,560)
Interim Executive Director Environment	
Transfer of administrative staff budgets to Natural Environment Directorate effective from April 2024	(568)
Pay award	(183)
Net adjustments to local risk resource base following implementation of TOM2 restructure within Natural Environment Division	(173)
3% uplift for inflation	(82)
Unidentified savings for Burnham Beeches met through additional funding from Natural Environment Directorate	34
City Surveyor	
Rephasing of cyclical works projects at City Gardens and Bunhill Fields	(222)
Planned & Reactive Works	1
Original Net Local Risk Budget (Interim Executive Director Environment & City Surveyor)	(3,753)

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Estimates Summary for Natural Environment Division

Summary of Natural Environment Division	Original Budget (OR) 2023/24 £000	Latest Budget 2023/24 £000	Original Budget (OR) 2024/25 £000	Movement 2023/24 OR to 2024/25 OR £000
Expenditure				
Natural Environment Board	(3,144)	(3,544)	(4,761)	(1,617)
West Ham Park	(1,002)	(1,021)	(1,072)	(70)
Epping Forest	(5,588)	(6,976)	(6,665)	(1,077)
The Commons	(2,251)	(2,399)	(2,847)	(596)
Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queens Park	(8,567)	(8,500)	(8,950)	(383)
	(20,552)	(22,440)	(24,295)	(3,743)
Income				
Natural Environment Board	564	901	988	424
West Ham Park	289	239	311	22
Epping Forest	2,116	2,116	2,212	96
The Commons	575	614	623	48
Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queens Park	4,895	5,429	5,934	1,039
	8,439	9,299	10,068	1,629
Total Net Expenditure before Support Services & Recharges	(12,113)	(13,141)	(14,227)	(2,114)
Support Services & Recharges				
Natural Environment Board	749	731	1,286	537
West Ham Park	(397)	(424)	(421)	(24)
Epping Forest	(1,055)	(1,448)	(1,411)	(356)
The Commons	(325)	(480)	(483)	(158)
Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queens Park	(1,961)	(1,982)	(2,340)	(379)
	(2,989)	(3,603)	(3,369)	(380)
Total Net Expenditure	(15,102)	(16,744)	(17,596)	(2,494)

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Committee(s): Natural Environment Board	Dated: 04/12/2023
Subject: Summary of Natural Environment Away Day	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1.2.4.9.10.11.12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	£
What is the source of Funding?	
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/A
Report of: Bob Roberts - Interim Executive Director, Environment	For decision
Report author: Emily Brennan - Natural Environment Director	

Summary

The purpose of this report is to present options for the vision, mission and strategies for the Natural Environment Division for approval.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

1. Consider and approve the Natural Environment Division’s **vision**
2. Consider and approve the Natural Environment Division’s **mission**
3. Note the contents of the information provided to support the vision and mission
4. Approve the four Natural Environment Division Strategies:
 - a) Conservation and Nature Resilience 
 - b) Community Engagement 
 - c) Access and Recreation 
 - d) Culture, Heritage and Learning 

Background

One of the key aims of the Natural Environment Board is to develop an overarching vision and mission for the Natural Environment Division, supported by a suite of strategies. These will be used to guide and prioritise the Corporation’s work across the open spaces and will also enable a more joined-up and outward-looking approach. Ultimately, the vision, mission and strategies will help shape and deliver the Corporation’s contribution to tackling the global biodiversity and climate crises

and will help conserve and enhance the benefits that the Corporation's open spaces provide for people.

Arising from the draft Natural Environment Division strategies produced in July 2022, there was a recognised need to focus on priorities and actions that would achieve strategic outcomes for both the Natural Environment Division and the wider Corporation, and to set clear timelines for the implementation of the strategic priorities and actions. This would enable clear prioritisation and regular progress reports to be brought back to this Board.

The Natural Environment Director was appointed in June 2023 and was tasked with enabling completion of the vision, mission and strategies for the Division with the deadline of launching them at the Natural Environment Board dinner on 29th January 2024. A project timetable was drawn up to enable stakeholder engagement and the appropriate governance processes to be followed. A series of workshops were held with Natural Environment Board Members and staff in autumn 2023 and the feedback gathered from these workshops was used to shape a draft vision, mission and strategies for the Division. Staff and Members were given a further opportunity to comment on these in November 2023 and these comments have been used to shape the final vision, mission and strategies. This process has been closely aligned with the development of the new Corporate Plan for the Corporation to ensure that a 'golden thread' runs throughout, and that the value and importance of the open spaces is adequately recognised in the new Corporate Plan.

Current Position

A vision, mission and four strategies have been developed for the Natural Environment Division following a comprehensive period of consultation with Members and staff. The four strategies focus on the thematic priorities for the Division's work, namely nature conservation and resilience (including climate change), community engagement, access and recreation, and learning, culture and heritage. Implementation of these strategies will be supported by a number of underpinning strategies and plans such as department business plans, an income generation strategy and plan, the Operational Property Review, updated ToRs for the Natural Environment Board, and the Natural Environment Charities Review.

Proposed Vision

Open spaces that are rich in diversity, conserving nature, creating memories, and enhancing lives.

It is recommended that this vision is approved and adopted by the Natural Environment Board.

Proposed Mission

To achieve our vision by protecting and improving 11,000 acres of natural habitats in London and the Home Counties, working in partnership to ensure they are more accessible, sustainable, and preserved for the benefit of the public.

It is recommended that this mission is approved and adopted by the Natural Environment Board.

Supporting Information

These open spaces, spread across London and the Home Counties, are part of what makes London an attractive and healthy city.

They provide rare and ancient habitats for a range of endangered plants and animals and capture 16,400 thousand tonnes of carbon a year.

They attract 25 million visitors annually – almost double the number who go to Premiership football matches and five times the number of visitors to the Grand Canyon.

Our strategies set out how we build on 150 years of stewardship from the City Corporation to enhance and protect the green lungs of London.

Visit us. Support us. Create memories.

Our Strategies

1. **Nature Conservation and Resilience:** We will conserve the special biodiversity and habitats of our open spaces and will manage them to secure their future.
2. **Community Engagement:** We will act as stewards of our public open spaces in partnership with communities to ensure their responsible use and conservation in perpetuity.
3. **Access and Recreation:** We will conserve, enhance and sustainably manage our open spaces' special natural environments and their heritage; and we will welcome, encourage and inspire our visitors to enjoy and protect these spaces for future generations.
4. **Culture, Heritage and Learning:** We will take care of our cultural assets, and our culture, heritage and learning offer will develop participation, confidence, connection, opportunity and well-being of, and support from, our priority audiences.

Key Facts

- Our open spaces have more than 58,000 ancient trees
- Epping Forest has the largest collection of ancient beech trees in Europe
- Our sites are home to hundreds of endangered species
- They contain a rich collection of cultural heritage including hill forts and a royal hunting lodge
- They capture 16,400 tonnes of carbon every year
- They have over 25 million visitors annually
- They include numerous football pitches, tennis courts, an athletic track, a lido, bathing ponds, cricket pitches, golf courses, boating lakes, walking, cycling and horseriding trails, a visitor centre, two museums, listed heritage gardens and a zoo
- 38,000 education courses are run at our open spaces every year
- They are managed by nine charities
- They have won numerous green flags awards and London in Bloom awards
- Over 72,000 hours a year in volunteer time given at our open spaces.

Natural Environment Board Members are asked to note this supporting information.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

- The vision, mission and strategies will help guide and support the delivery of the Natural Environment Division's priorities and business plans and the Corporation's new Corporate Plan.
- Financial implications: None.
- Resource implications: None at this stage (operational resourcing is being dealt with under the charity review)
- Legal implications: None.
- Risk implications: None.
- Equalities implications: None
- Equality Impact Assessment: N/A.
- Climate implications: The Natural Environment vision, mission and strategies will complement and help deliver the vision and objectives of the Corporation's Climate Action Strategy.
- Security implications: N/A

Conclusion

The Natural Environment Board is asked to approve the vision, mission and strategies for the Natural Environment Division.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 Conservation and Nature Resilience Strategy
- Appendix 2 Community Engagement Strategy
- Appendix 3 Access and Recreation Strategy
- Appendix 4 Culture, Heritage and Learning Strategy

Background Papers

None

Emily Brennan

Natural Environment Director.

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Natural Environment Division Strategy

Strategy Name: Nature Conservation and Resilience	Date: 20/11/2023
Lead authors: Geoff Sinclair and Paul Thomson	Final Version
<p>Introduction and context</p> <p>The Corporation of London manages over 11,000 acres of stunning open spaces including 58,000 ancient trees, six Sites of Special Scientific Interest and three National Nature Reserves. These irreplaceable open spaces deliver a wide range of ‘ecosystem services’ such as timber, food, biodiversity, carbon capture and storage, flood mitigation, air purification, and health and wellbeing benefits. The total economic value of these benefits is estimated at £30-£40 million per year. The sites capture thousands of tonnes of carbon and attract an estimated 25 million visitors annually.</p> <p>The Natural Environment Division forms part of the City of London Corporation’s Environment Department. We manage nine Charities, through which our open spaces are governed and whose objects reflect our vision. Our management of open spaces and assets supports the role of London as a world-class city. We work with local authorities, statutory and government agencies, special interest groups, schools, businesses, community groups, residents and people who are not typically represented. By reaching out to these wider communities, we seek to ensure our long-term relevance.</p> <p>The Natural Environment Strategies set out the City of London Corporation’s strategic approach to our managed open spaces, assets, and activities. They build upon over 150 years of stewardship of open spaces across London and the South-East. They explain the importance of the natural environment to the achievement of economic, societal, and environmental outcomes described in our Corporate Plan 2024-29. They describe why we all need to act now and our proposed approach during the next five years. The Strategies describe our objectives for the natural environment and the measures by which we will assess our performance against objectives. The Strategies will inform our business plans and management plans and set out how our activities will align with corporate and regional priorities and policies.</p> <p>Purpose</p> <p>We will protect and enhance the special biodiversity and habitats of our open spaces, securing their resilience through a time of significant change and providing the evidence of the impact of the actions we take.</p> <p>Key Themes</p> <p>The Nature Conservation and Resilience Strategy has three key themes informing our work to deliver the City of London Corporation’s response to the biodiversity and climate crises through its open spaces:</p> <p>Biodiversity: To protect and enhance the biodiversity of our open spaces</p>	

Resilience and Adaptation: To increase the resilience of our open spaces within a wider, interconnected natural landscape

Evidence: To establish a natural capital based management approach across our open spaces

Links to Corporate Plan

The Nature Conservation and Resilience Strategy support three of the six outcomes in the Corporate Plan 2024-29 (Draft). These are:

- People of all ages and backgrounds are proud of their city and feel they belong. Communities are involved co-creating fair and innovative outcomes and we show our appreciation for their contributions.
- The City of London Corporation is a leader in driving the success of London as a whole, through our stewardship of public goods, through our major capital investment into the capital’s civic fabric, and through our protection and enhancement of 11,000 acres of amazing open spaces and our unique and iconic assets.
- People and businesses understand and follow our example as leaders in striving for equity, focussing on economic, social and environmental principles in our operations and protecting our environment for future generations.

Key themes	Measures
Theme 1: To protect and enhance the biodiversity of our open spaces	Measure 1: Management plans in

<p>Theme 1, Objective 1: Management plans are in place to ensure that their biodiversity and natural assets are conserved, engaged with stakeholders, and are implemented</p> <p>Theme 1, Objective 2: SSSI condition improvement and Species Recovery plans are in place for all our sites</p> <p>Theme 1, Objective 3: Species records and other biological data are regularly gathered and professionally managed</p> <p>Theme 1, Objective 4: Community support and engagement in the conservation of our open spaces is increased</p>	<p>place for all sites with annual reporting on progress</p> <p>Measure 2: SSSI improvement and species recovery plans in place for key habitats and species</p> <p>Measure 3: A central NED repository for biological reports is established</p> <p>Measure 4: Biological survey records uploaded onto national recording databases within 12 months of collection.</p> <p>Measure 5: Volunteer involvement in biodiversity monitoring and habitat restoration</p>
<p>Theme 2: To increase the resilience of our open spaces within a wider, interconnected natural landscape</p> <p>Theme 2, Objective 1: Greater and more effective engagement with the planning system to influence the protection of our open spaces in the most relevant way</p> <p>Theme 2, Objective 2: Landscape connectivity around our open spaces is enhanced through collaboration with other organisations and stakeholders</p> <p>Theme 2, Objective 3: Reduced visitor impact on priority habitats and other important sites through sustainable visitor and mitigation strategies being in place and implemented</p> <p>Theme 2, Objective 4: Damaging introduced species monitored and kept under control</p> <p>Theme 2, Objective 5: Climate resilience plans prepared for each open space</p>	<p>Measure 1: Percentage of Local Authority plan consultations responded to</p> <p>Measure 2: Participation in landscape partnership initiatives</p> <p>Measure 3: Ecological monitoring of visitor impact (various measures)</p> <p>Measure 4: Damaging Introduced Species policy prepared and implemented</p> <p>Measure 5: Climate resilience plans completed</p>
<p>Theme 3: Establish a natural capital based management process across our open spaces.</p> <p>Theme 3, Objective 1: Baseline natural capital valuation for NED undertaken</p>	<p>Measure 1: Natural capital assessment completed for the open spaces</p> <p>Measure 2: TBC- Monitoring measure</p>

<p>Theme 3, Objective 2: <i>Natural capital monitoring and reporting system established</i></p>	<p>will be developed from the baseline assessment</p>
<p>Theme 3, Objective 3: <i>The City of London Corporation's Climate Action Strategy goals are met for the open spaces</i></p>	<p>Measure 3: ktCO₂e removed each year from NE open spaces</p>

How will the strategy be implemented?
 This strategy will be implemented via Divisional business plans and through other relevant Corporation strategies and plans e.g. the Climate Action Strategy. New income generation opportunities will be developed, and external grants will be sought to contribute to the resourcing of activity.

Cross-cutting themes
 Working in partnership with external organisations and landowners, encouraging visitors to give back through well planned campaigns, climate action, tackling the biodiversity crisis, income generation.

Natural Environment Division Strategy

Strategy Name: Community Engagement	Date: 20 Nov 2023
Lead author: Bill LoSasso	Final version
Introduction and context <p>The City of London Corporation manages over 11,000 acres of stunning open spaces including 58,000 ancient trees, six Sites of Special Scientific Interest and three National Nature Reserves. These open spaces deliver a wide range of 'ecosystem services' such as timber, food, biodiversity, carbon capture and storage, flood mitigation, air purification, and health and wellbeing benefits. The total economic value of these benefits is estimated to be £30-£40 million per year. The sites capture thousands of tonnes of carbon and attract an estimated 25 million visitors annually.</p> <p>The Natural Environment Division forms part of the City of London Corporation's Environment Department. We manage nine Charities, through which our open spaces are governed and whose objects reflect our vision. Our management of open spaces and assets supports the role of London as a world-class city. We work with local authorities, statutory and Government agencies, special interest groups, schools, businesses, community groups, residents and people who are not typically represented. By reaching out to these wider communities, we seek to ensure our long-term relevance.</p> <p>The Natural Environment Strategies set out the City of London Corporation's strategic approach to our managed open spaces, assets and activities. They build upon over 150 years of stewardship of open spaces across London and the South-East. They explain the importance of the natural environment to the achievement of economic, societal and environmental outcomes described in our Corporate Plan 2024-29. They describe why we all need to act now and our proposed approach during the next five years. The Strategies describe our objectives for the natural environment and the measures by which we will assess our performance against those objectives. The Strategies will inform our business plans and management plans and set out how our activities will align with corporate and regional priorities and policies.</p> Purpose <p>As stewards of the environment and public open spaces, our success in community engagement is a measurement of our success in our public service, charitable, and stewardship obligations. We define our obligation as 'active participation of residents and communities in decisions that affect their lives.' The purpose of this strategy is to ensure that those we serve are actively and appropriately welcomed into our work and public spaces, leading to improved ways of working and service delivery.</p> <p>Importantly, community engagement is both an end and a means to an end. It is something we do in furtherance of our commitment to good governance, but also is a means to succeeding in delivering our other strategies and achieving our other goals.</p> Key Themes <p>Five identified strategic themes are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Partnership: Creating meaningful and lasting partnerships	

2. Removing barriers: Identifying and removing barriers to participation in our spaces and work
3. Ownership: Cultivating a sense of deep pride in and attachment to our spaces amongst users
4. Thriving spaces: Creating spaces that attract people and improve their lives
5. Knowledge exchange: Continuous transfer of information between the Corporation and its customers

Links to Corporate Plan

Community engagement is a prevailing concept in the new 2024-29 Corporate Plan. The Community Engagement Strategy furthers all four themes in this Corporate Plan, which are shared below:

- **Your City:** If you call the city home, your place of work, where you learn, or the place to visit, we provide you with outstanding public services. We are focused on meeting your needs with services that are accessible and deliver value through health and wellbeing, education, social mobility and inclusion. We are a world class organisation, ensuring all who work for the City Corporation are capable, efficient, and meeting customer needs.
- **Competitive City:** We are the leading global centre of choice for financial and professional services, and the home of innovation, skills, and green finance, sustaining the UK's dominance in the global market.
- **Vibrant City:** We are the best cultural hub in London for welcoming and nurturing innovative and creative talent. We inspire pride in our heritage and respect for our traditions. Our Vibrant City is a place where people want to spend time, enjoy, value and remember.
- **Sustainable City:** We are a leader in Net Zero, acting on climate change and protecting our city for generations to come. We maintain beautiful parks, green spaces, streets and riversides, enabling our natural environment and all who use it to thrive.

Specifically, the themes in the proposed community engagement strategy further all four themes in the new Corporate Plan, with commonalities and interdependency of stated themes, as summarised in the table below:

	Your City	Competitive City	Vibrant City	Sustainable City
Partnership	Commitment to “engagement” and “meeting needs”			Furthering ambitious environmental policy and maintaining natural assets through commitment to partnership building
Removing barriers	Value through “social mobility, accessibility and inclusion”	Being a global “centre of choice”	“Welcoming and nurturing” talent	Furthering ambitious environmental policy and maintaining natural assets through commitment to expanding participation in delivery
Ownership	“Your” city as a home, literally and figuratively	Being the “home” of innovation, green finance, etc	Inspiring pride and respect for tradition	Furthering ambitious environmental policy and maintaining natural assets through commitment to fostering pride in success
Thriving spaces		Market “dominance”	Being a “hub” and place where people “want to spent time”	Furthering ambitious environmental policy and maintaining natural assets through commitment to delivering related societal benefits
Knowledge transfer	“Accessible” services	Extending dominance into “global market”		Furthering ambitious environmental policy and maintaining natural assets through commitment to sharing what we learn and do

Community engagement will indeed be both an **end** and a **means to an end** in the Corporation’s future success.

Key themes	Measures
Theme 1: Partnership Theme 1, Objective 1: <i>Build and sustain meaningful and lasting partnerships with the communities we serve</i>	Measures 1 and 2: Community Engagement Toolkit. Development of a Community Engagement Toolkit that

<p>Theme 1, Objective 2: <i>Implement a holistic approach to community engagement that encourages active participation</i></p> <p>Theme 1, Objective 3: <i>Cultivate and support successful partner organisations that support us in mission delivery</i></p>	<p>provides guidance on best practice engagement in a variety of circumstances and contexts. (Complete by 31 March 2025.)</p> <p>Measure 2: Delivery of value-added activities in NE spaces Number of partnership organisations that are delivering approved value-added activities in NE spaces.</p>
<p>Theme 2: Removing barriers</p> <p>Theme 2, Objective 1: <i>Ensure diverse and representative participation in our work and spaces</i></p> <p>Theme 2, Objective 2: <i>Create physical spaces that are as accessible as possible to as many people as possible</i></p> <p>Theme 2, Objective 3: Engage in continuous self-reflection to identify opportunities for continuous improvement</p>	<p>Measure 1: Community Engagement Toolkit. Development of a Community Engagement Toolkit that provides guidance on best practice engagement in a variety of circumstances and contexts. (Complete by 31 March 2025.)</p> <p>Measure 2: Self audit Initial self-audit of access challenges and opportunities at each NE space, with relevant participating partners, updated annually.</p> <p>Measure 3: Self audit Initial self-audit of access challenges and opportunities at each NE space, with relevant participating partners, updated annually.</p>
<p>Theme 3: Ownership</p> <p>Theme 3, Objective 1: <i>Facilitate a deep sense of pride in and attachment to our open spaces among user groups and communities</i></p>	<p>Measure 1: Volunteer programme Participation in, as measured by hours given, number of participants, and funds secured</p> <p>Fundraising programme</p>

<p>Theme 3, Objective 2: <i>Create opportunities for user groups and communities to provide additional resource to the Corporation to support mission delivery</i></p>	<p>Donations across NE and at each space</p> <p>Measure 2: Volunteer programme Participation in, as measured by hours given, number of participants, and funds secured</p> <p>Fundraising programme Donations across NE and at each space</p>
<p>Theme 4: Thriving spaces</p> <p>Theme 4, Objective 1: <i>Improve health and wellbeing through our open spaces through successful and effective community engagement</i></p> <p>Theme 4, Objective 2: <i>Deliver well-managed spaces that are widely understood as destinations for improved health and wellbeing</i></p> <p>Theme 4, Objective 3 : <i>Provide a diverse mix of opportunities for enrichment at our open spaces</i></p> <p>Theme 4, Objective 4: <i>Create spaces where formative experiences occur</i></p>	<p>Measures 1 and 2: Communications Create a communications plan that promotes the health and wellbeing improvement opportunities at City of London Corporation open spaces.</p> <p>Measure 3: Portfolio of enrichment opportunities available at each space Agree and track categories of enrichment opportunities available at each space, eg, active recreation, passive recreation, forest bathing learning, etc.</p> <p>Measure 4: Number of activities intended to engage people in experiences for the first time</p>
<p>Theme 5: Knowledge transfer</p> <p>Theme 5, Objective 1: <i>Ensure easy access to information about the Corporation, its open spaces, and our management practices</i></p> <p>Theme 5, Objective 2: <i>Catalyse improved behaviours in our spaces where needed</i></p>	<p>Measure 1: Information audit Audit availability of digital and physical information from COL-managed information resources.</p> <p>Measures 2 and 3: Communications</p>

Theme 5, Objective 3:

Ensure greater understanding among members of the public of the Corporation's efforts to preserve and care for our spaces

Theme 5, Objective 4

Improve service delivery by the Corporation at its open spaces through information exchange

Create a communications plan that promotes positive and encouraged behaviours in City of London Corporation open spaces, and provides clear information on the resources the Corporation commits to its open spaces.

How will the strategy be implemented?

The Natural Environment Division will implement the Community Engagement Strategy through:

- High-level Departmental Business Plans
- Divisional Business Plans
- Sub-divisional business plans
- Environment Board strategies
- Space-specific management strategies (eg, Hampstead Heath Management Strategy)
- Other relevant plans and strategies across the Corporation
- Day-to-day practices and culture of our organisation
- The communities we engage, since if we are successful we will be cultivating new relationships and partnerships.

With a strong mandate from the Corporate Plan, we will have clear direction and a solid foundation of support – and expectation – upon which success will be built.

Community engagement will indeed be both an **end** and a **means to an end** in the Corporation's future success across the full universe of communities with which we engage – public, private, professional, voluntary, residential, business, etc.

Cross-cutting themes

- Community engagement: All strategies rely upon some sort of community engagement to success
- Partnership: Working with others in meaningful ways to maximise results
- Balance: Striking a balance between engagement of people and protection of sensitive spaces
- Resourcing: To succeed, all strategies must have sufficient resourcing.

Strategy Name: Access and Recreation	Date: 20/11/2023
Lead author: Jacqueline Eggleston	Final version
<p>Introduction and context</p> <p>The Corporation of London manages over 11,000 acres of stunning open spaces including 58,000 ancient trees, six Sites of Special Scientific Interest and three National Nature Reserves. These open spaces deliver a wide range of ‘ecosystem services’ such as timber, food, biodiversity, carbon capture and storage, flood mitigation, air purification, and health and wellbeing benefits. The total economic value of these benefits is estimated to be £30-£40 million per year. The sites capture thousands of tonnes of carbon and attract an estimated 25 million visitors annually.</p> <p>The Natural Environment Division forms part of the City of London Corporation’s Environment Department. We manage nine Charities, through which our open spaces are governed and whose objects reflect our vision. Our management of open spaces and assets supports the role of London as a world-class city. We work with local authorities, statutory and Government agencies, special interest groups, schools, businesses, community groups, residents and people who are not typically represented. By reaching out to these wider communities, we seek to ensure our long-term relevance.</p> <p>The Natural Environment Strategies set out the City of London Corporation’s strategic approach to our managed open spaces, assets and activities. They build upon over 150 years of stewardship of open spaces across London and the South-East. They explain the importance of the natural environment to the achievement of economic, societal and environmental outcomes described in our Corporate Plan 2024-29. They describe why we all need to act now and our proposed approach during the next five years. The Strategies describe our objectives for the natural environment and the measures by which we will assess our performance against those objectives. The Strategies will inform our business plans and management plans and set out how our activities will align with corporate and regional priorities and policies.</p> <p>Purpose</p> <p>Our iconic and exemplary open spaces and heritage assets have provided enjoyment, recreation and well-being to millions of visitors for nearly 150 years. As visitor numbers continue to grow, preserving the fundamental benefits these spaces provide to our communities, alongside protecting and enhancing their environment and biodiversity, is increasingly a challenging balance. This strategy provides key objectives to direct how we can both welcome visitors and continue to protect our special, historic. and biodiverse sites and assets for the future.</p> <p>Key Themes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Balance the needs of visitors with the requirements of protecting the natural and heritage assets of the open spaces 2. Enable the best possible visitor journey, creating the right information from pre -visit to a stress-free and enjoyable on-site experience 3. Provide welcoming places that visitors from all backgrounds and abilities are comfortable to explore 	

4. Build understanding and knowledge about the open spaces. Visitors will respect one another and will care for and advocate for the sites.

Links to Corporate Plan

Outcome 2: The City of London is a **vibrant destination** that attracts international and domestic visitors. Our world leading culture offer means people want to spend time here.

Outcome 3: People are proud of their city and feel like they belong. **Our communities are involved** in co-creating fair and innovative outcomes and we show our appreciation for their contributions.

Outcome 4: People receive good services, live in good quality housing, **can live independent and healthy lives**, and can access life-long learning and jobs.

Outcome 5: The City of London Corporation is a leader in driving the success of London as a whole, through our stewardship of public goods, through our major capital investment into the capital’s civic fabric, **and through our protection and enhancement of 11,000 acres of amazing open spaces and our unique and iconic assets.**

Outcome 6: People and businesses understand and follow our example as **leaders in striving for equity**, focusing on economic, social, and **environmental issues in our operations, and protecting our environment for future generations.**

Key themes	Measures
<p>Theme 1: Balance Balance the needs of visitors with the requirements of protecting the natural and heritage assets of the open spaces</p> <p>Theme 1, Objective 1 <i>Manage visitors to protect vulnerable areas</i></p> <p>Theme 1, Objective 2 <i>Plan for increased visitor numbers and improve durability of honeypot locations</i></p>	<p>Measure 1: Spatial masterplans created by 2025 to map wayfinding and visitor facilities to encourage use of most sustainable areas and away from ecologically sensitive locations.</p> <p>Measure 2: Site management plans developed by 2026,</p>

<p>Theme 1, Objective 3 <i>Reduced visitor impact on priority habitats and other important sites through sustainable visitor and mitigation strategies being in place and implemented.</i></p>	<p>and a site-wide approach to physically managing the wear and tear on tracks and paths is articulated in annual site management plans.</p> <p>Measure 3: Annual visitor footfall survey conducted to monitor increase in numbers.</p> <p>Measure 4: Ecological monitoring of visitor impact (various measures)</p>
<p>Theme 2: Excellence Enable the best possible visitor journey, creating the right information from pre-visit to on-site experience in exemplar sites</p> <p>Theme 2, Objective 1 <i>Provide clearly branded and accessible on- site wayfinding, interpretation and information</i></p> <p>Theme 2, Objective 2 <i>Provide easily accessible, clear and exemplary pre visit information through digital platforms</i></p> <p>Theme 2, Objective 3 <i>Provide on site infrastructure and welcome facilities to create exempt class sites that are renowned for the highest quality visitor experience</i></p> <p>Theme 2, Objective 4 <i>Make improvements to both informal and formal recreational facilities</i></p>	<p>Measure 1: On site signage audited annually</p> <p>Measure 2: Standalone website created for each site by 2025</p> <p>Measure 3 Quality Accreditation is achieved</p> <p>Measure 4: 100% of Waymarked trails are audited annually to maintain standards</p>

<p>Theme 3: Equal access Provide welcoming places that visitors from all backgrounds and abilities are comfortable to explore</p> <p>Theme 3, Objective 1 <i>Understand gaps in visitor profile</i></p> <p>Theme 3, Objective 2 <i>Work with partners to develop outreach to ensure wider audiences or are aware of and able to access sites</i></p> <p>Theme 3, Objective 3 <i>Ensure that sites have least restrictive access</i></p> <p>Theme 3, Objective 4 <i>Work towards excellence for physical access</i></p>	<p>Measure 1: Visitor profile survey undertaken by 2026</p> <p>Measure 2: Minimum of six outreach activities provided through partnership annually</p> <p>Measure 3: Least restrictive access achieved across whole landholding by 2026</p> <p>Measure 4: Accessibility information provided for every public facility on website by 2025</p>
<p>Theme 4: Inform Build understanding and knowledge about the open spaces. Visitors will respect one another and will care for and advocate for the sites.</p> <p>Theme 4, Objective 1 <i>Information and education about the open spaces' culture, heritage and ecology will be provided through on site interpretation at visitor centres and through all marketing channels to increase understanding</i></p> <p>Theme 4, Objective 2 <i>Respectful use of facilities and sites will be encouraged through engagement and instruction</i></p> <p>Theme 4, Objective 3: <i>Key messages are delivered through layered and targeted campaigns</i></p>	<p>Measure 1: New interpretation panels created each year and websites updated monthly. Newsletters issued monthly.</p> <p>Measure 2: Codes of conduct are promoted on every site</p> <p>Measure 3: Seasonal engagement sessions provided on site (minimum one per season per site)</p>

How will the strategy be implemented?

This strategy will be implemented via Divisional business plans and through other relevant Corporation strategies and plans such as the Sports Strategy. New income generation opportunities will be developed, and external grants will be sought to contribute to the resourcing of activity.

Cross-cutting themes

Income generation and financial sustainability, encouraging visitors to give back through well planned campaigns and fit for purpose mechanisms. Working towards cost neutral recreational provision. Creating new areas of income generation and maximising current income streams. Working in partnership, community engagement and volunteering.

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Natural Environment Division Strategy

Strategy Name: Culture, Heritage and Learning	Date: 20.11.23
Lead authors: Simon Glynn, Rob Shakespeare and Abigail Tinkler	Final version
<p>Introduction and context</p> <p>The Corporation of London manages over 11,000 acres of stunning open spaces including 58,000 ancient trees, six Sites of Special Scientific Interest and three National Nature Reserves. These open spaces deliver a wide range of ‘ecosystem services’ such as timber, food, biodiversity, carbon capture and storage, flood mitigation, air purification, and health and wellbeing benefits. The total economic value of these benefits is estimated to be £30-£40 million per year. The sites capture thousands of tonnes of carbon and attract an estimated 25 million visitors annually.</p> <p>The Natural Environment Division forms part of the City of London Corporation’s Environment Department. We manage nine Charities, through which our open spaces are governed and whose objects reflect our vision. Our management of open spaces and assets supports the role of London as a world-class city. We work with local authorities, statutory and Government agencies, special interest groups, schools, businesses, community groups, residents and people who are not typically represented. By reaching out to these wider communities, we seek to ensure our long-term relevance.</p> <p>The Natural Environment Strategies set out the City of London Corporation’s strategic approach to our managed open spaces, assets and activities. They build upon over 150 years of stewardship of open spaces across London and the South-East. They explain the importance of the natural environment to the achievement of economic, societal and environmental outcomes described in our Corporate Plan 2024-29. They describe why we all need to act now and our proposed approach during the next five years. The Strategies describe our objectives for the natural environment and the measures by which we will assess our performance against those objectives. The Strategies will inform our business plans and management plans and set out how our activities will align with corporate and regional priorities and policies.</p> <p>Purpose</p> <p>The culture, heritage and learning offer within the Natural Environment Division will develop the participation, confidence, connection, opportunity and well-being of, and support from, our priority audiences. We will take care of our assets and ensure that our work is environmentally sustainable.</p> <p>Learning</p> <p>At a time of increasing disconnection from nature, a need to tackle the climate crisis, and a drive to tackle inequalities and enrich people’s lives, our open spaces provide a unique opportunity to enhance peoples’ wellbeing, connect them to nature, develop pro-environmental values, and inspire learning.</p> <p>The Natural Environment Learning Programme develops communities of interest who support our work by providing the following:</p>	

- Opportunities to learn within unique and inspiring open spaces which are accessible to people across and beyond London
- Staff expertise in learning and engagement, with a passion for nature
- A programme of activities which deliver wide-ranging benefits for people including wellbeing, nature connection, confidence, understanding and involvement.

Culture and Heritage

The care, management and promotion of our cultural and heritage offer, including sites, buildings and attractions, requires specific expertise and attention to ensure we fully meet our statutory and legal obligations and follow best practice. In a natural environment setting, this best practice approach needs to be balanced with environmental and ecological best practice.

Many people care deeply about the environment, culture and heritage. We want to utilise this passion through growing opportunities for volunteering, employment and participation in nature, culture and heritage programmes and through visits to our sites and attractions.

We will create a consistent approach to the care, management and promotion of this offer. We will strengthen our communities of interest and support the financial sustainability of our respective Charities and assets.

Key Themes

The themes of this Strategy are:

1. Developing nature connection and pro-environmental behaviours
2. Developing well-being through spending time in nature or through our heritage
3. Providing more opportunities through education and employment
4. Developing greater engagement, confidence and enjoyment
5. Ensuring the effective care, management and promotion of our offer.

Links to Corporate Plan

The Culture, Heritage and Learning Strategy supports 5 of the 6 outcomes in the Corporate Plan 2024-29 (Draft). These are:

- Outcome 1: The City of London is a **vibrant destination that attracts international and domestic visitors. Our world leading culture offer** means people want to spend time here.
- Outcome 2: People are proud of their city and feel like they belong. **Our communities are involved in co-creating fair and innovative outcomes** and we show our appreciation for their contributions.
- Outcome 3: People receive good services, live in good quality housing, **can live independent and healthy lives, and can access outstanding education, life-long learning and jobs.**
- Outcome 4: The City of London Corporation is a leader in driving the success of London as a whole, through our stewardship of public goods, through our major capital investment into the capital's civic fabric, **and through our protection and enhancement of 11,000 acres of amazing open spaces and our unique and iconic assets.**
- Outcome 5: People and businesses understand and follow our example **as leaders in striving for equity, focusing on economic, social, and environmental issues** in our operations, **and protecting our environment for future generations.**

Key themes

Theme 1: Nature connection and pro-environmental behaviours

Research has shown that the first step in building pro-environmental attitudes and behaviours is to develop nature connection. This connection is developed through participation in memorable experiences outdoors. The implementation of this new strategy will enable us to expand our 'nature connection' activities and reach at a time of increasing concern over climate change and biodiversity loss, develop expertise in climate education, and create new opportunities for people to get involved and make a difference.

Theme 1, Objective 1

Deliver learning activities which incorporate the 'pathways to nature connection' and which facilitate an increase in participants' feelings of nature connection.

Theme 1, Objective 2

Develop synergies between NE Learning, CoL Environmental Resilience and CoL Climate Action, and provide opportunities for children and young people to get involved and make a positive contribution to biodiversity and environmental resilience.

Measures

Measure 1:

Percentage of participants' feeling connected to nature after taking part in a learning session.

Measure 2: Number of environmental resilience projects for children/young people delivered each year

<p>Theme 1, Objective 3 Collaborate with educators and researchers to develop an evidence-informed model of best practice in climate education and apply best practice to the NE learning programme.</p> <p>Theme 1, Objective 4 Adopt sustainable practices, including an aim to achieve net zero, in accordance with Corporation policy and strategies e.g. the Climate Action Strategy.</p>	<p>Measure 3: Number of climate education themes integrated in NE Learning Programmes per year</p> <p>Measure 4: Percentage of our assets and programmes that have an up-to-date audit of their scope 1 and scope 2 emissions</p>
<p>Theme 2: Wellbeing Spending time in nature is beneficial to health and wellbeing, however, there are concerns over inequalities as people in deprived areas face more barriers to accessing nature and heritage. Also, opportunities for children to play in nature are becoming limited, impacting on child development and wellbeing.</p> <p>Theme 2, Objective 1 Engage participants in activities which increase feelings of wellbeing.</p> <p>Theme 2, Objective 2 Provide more opportunities for children to engage in outdoor play.</p> <p>Theme 2, Objective 3 Provide opportunities for adult volunteering as a means to increase wellbeing.</p>	<p>Measure 1: Percentage of participants feel happy or very happy after taking part in our activities</p> <p>Measure 2: Number of children and young people taking part in our play programme.</p> <p>Measure 3: Percentage of our volunteers who rate their experience as positive or very positive</p>
<p>Theme 3: Opportunities in education and employment There is an increasing attainment gap between disadvantaged school students and their peers. Adversely affected groups include children living in poverty, children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), young carers and young refugees.</p> <p>Theme 3, Objective 1 Engage participants from London boroughs with high levels of deprivation and child poverty.</p>	<p>Measure 1: Number of learning programme participants from the 15 London boroughs rated highest for child poverty.</p>

<p>Theme 3, Objective 2 Provide bespoke learning opportunities for young people struggling with education, employment or mental health.</p> <p>Theme 3, Objective 3 Provide bespoke learning sessions for children and young people with additional needs.</p> <p>Theme 3, Objective 4 Provide opportunities for apprenticeships and traineeships leading to skills and career development.</p>	<p>Measure 2: Number of participants taking part in bespoke learning programmes for young people struggling with education, employment or mental health</p> <p>Measure 3: Number of bespoke programmes for children and young people with additional needs each year.</p> <p>Measure 4: Percentage of our culture, heritage and learning workforce who are apprentices or trainees.</p>
<p>Theme 4: Engagement, confidence and enjoyment Many of our sites, attractions and programmes can only be delivered in partnership with others. Partnerships also improve our outcomes and help develop our communities of interest. Through engaging people in our activities which build confidence through supported challenges in a safe environment, we can help participants feel confident to explore and enjoy our spaces.</p> <p>Theme 4, Objective 1 Engage participants in our learning, heritage and cultural activities which provide opportunities to explore, enjoy and feel safe in our spaces.</p> <p>Theme 4, Objective 2 Provide activities which enable participants to build confidence to explore green spaces.</p> <p>Theme 4, Objective 3 Develop strategic partnerships with organisations that help to deliver our culture, heritage and learning offer.</p>	<p>Measure 1: Number of people who participate in our programmes.</p> <p>Measure 2: Percentage of participants who feel confident or very confident to explore our spaces and sites after taking part.</p> <p>Measure 3: Number of annual programmes delivered in partnership with others.</p>

<p>Theme 4, Objective 4 Ensure that our programming to build participants’ fusion skills and confidence is informed by our communities of interest.</p> <p>Theme 4, Objective 5 Develop our communities of interest that participate in, advocate for, and support, our natural environment and heritage charities and assets.</p>	<p>Measure 4: Number of annual programmes co-created with the community with a focus on skills development/ Adherence to community engagement toolkit.</p> <p>Measure 5: Percentage of our heritage assets with an active social media account, website and supporter list.</p>
<p>Theme 5: Care, management and promotion We are responsible for the stewardship of our heritage buildings and attractions, landscape heritage and archaeological assets and will create a consistent approach to the care, management and promotion of these assets.</p> <p>Theme 5, Objective 1 Conserve and enhance our heritage assets in accordance with statutory requirements, sector guidance and best practice.</p> <p>Theme 5, Objective 2 Ensure a consistent approach to the management and promotion of our heritage assets.</p> <p>Theme 5, Objective 3 Ensure our cultural programming is both informed by, and representative of, our diverse communities of interest.</p>	<p>Measure 1: Percentage of our heritage assets with an up-to-date inspection regime and management plan in place.</p> <p>Measure 2: Percentage of our heritage assets with a business and marketing plan in place.</p> <p>Measure 3: Number of annual programmes with a focus on engaging under-represented communities/ adherence to community engagement toolkit.</p>

How will the strategy be implemented?

Through business and activity plans, marketing plans, conservation management plans and associated programmes of work.

Cross-cutting themes

- Across the Natural Environment Strategies: Community engagement, nature resilience, access and recreation, culture, heritage and learning.
- Within this Culture, Heritage and Learning Strategy: Nature connection and pro-environmental behaviour, wellbeing, opportunities in education and employment, engagement, confidence and enjoyment, care, management and promotion.

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

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