



## Natural Environment Board

**Date:** THURSDAY, 3 JULY 2025

**Time:** 11.00 am – or at the rising of the West Ham Park Committee, whichever is later.

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

<b>Members:</b>	James St John Davis (Chair)	Deputy Benjamin Murphy
	Charles Edward Lord, OBE JP	William Upton KC
	(Deputy Chair)	Heather Barrett-Mold
	Deputy Anne Corbett	Vladislav Dobrokhoto
	Karina Dostalova	Tony Leach
	Deputy Caroline Haines	Dani Stephenson
	Alderman & Sheriff Gregory Jones	John Beyer (Observer)
	KC (Ex-Officio Member)	Catherine Bickmore (Observer)
	Wendy Mead OBE	Verderer Paul Morris (Observer)

**Enquiries:** Zoe Williams  
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**Ian Thomas CBE**  
Town Clerk and Chief Executive

# **AGENDA**

NB: Certain matters for information 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 minutes and non-public summary of the previous meeting held on Thursday 1 May 2025.

**For Decision**  
(Pages 5 - 14)

4. **RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE**

Report of the Executive Director, Environment.

**For Information**  
(Pages 15 - 26)

5. **CLIMATE ACTION STRATEGY UPDATE**

The Committee to receive a presentation by Officers of the Environment Department.

**For Information**  
(Pages 27 - 44)

6. **ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT HIGH-LEVEL BUSINESS PLAN 2024/25 – YEAR-END PROGRESS REPORT**

Report of the Executive Director, Environment.

**For Information**  
(Pages 45 - 58)

## **Open Spaces**

7. **NATURAL ENVIRONMENT CHARITY REVIEW – UPDATE ON FUNDRAISING WORKSTREAMS**

Report of the Chamberlain and Executive Director, Environment.

**For Information**  
(Pages 59 - 64)

**8. ASSETS UPDATE**

The Committee to receive a verbal update from Officers from the Environment Department.

**For Information**

**City Gardens**

**9. CITY GARDENS UPDATE**

The Committee to receive a verbal update from Officers from the Environment Department.

**For Information**

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

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

**12. 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**

**Part 2 - Non-Public Agenda**

**13. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

To agree the non-public minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 1 May 2025.

**For Decision**  
(Pages 65 - 66)

**14. CITY CORPORATION GOVERNANCE OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT  
CHARITIES – UPDATE ON PLANNED CHANGES**

Report of the Chamberlain and Executive Director, Environment.

**For Information**  
(Pages 67 - 158)

15. **COMPLEMENTARY LAND POLICY AND ASSETS APPRAISAL**

The Committee to receive a verbal update from Officers from the Environment Department.

**For Information**

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

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

## NATURAL ENVIRONMENT BOARD

Thursday, 1 May 2025

Minutes of the meeting of the Natural Environment Board held at Committee Rooms  
- 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Thursday, 1 May 2025 at 9.30 am

### Present

### Members:

James St John Davis (Chair)  
Charles Edward Lord, OBE JP (Deputy Chair)  
Deputy Caroline Haines  
Wendy Mead OBE  
William Upton KC  
Wendy Mead OBE  
William Upton KC  
Heather Barrett-Mold

### In attendance:

Deputy Benjamin Murphy  
Anne Corbett  
Tony Leach  
Alderman & Sheriff Gregory Jones KC (Ex-Officio Member)  
Catherine Bickmore (Observer)  
Verderer Paul Morris (Observer)

### Officers:

Jack Joslin	- City Bridge Foundation
Joseph Smith	- Corporate Strategy and Performance
Katie Stewart	- Executive Director, Environment
Emily Brennan	- Environment Department
Ian Hughes	- Environment Department
Andrew Impey	- Environment Department
Joe Kingston	- Environment Department
Jake Tibbetts	- Environment Department
Heinz Traut	- Environment Department
Kate Neale	- Innovation & Growth
Ben Dunleavy	- Town Clerks Department
Callum Southern	- Town Clerks Department
Zoe Williams	- Town Clerks Department

### Also in attendance:

Jacob Sprake, Youth Natural Environment Board  
Simon Lightman, Youth Natural Environment Board

1. **APOLOGIES**

At the outset of the meeting, Wendy Mead OBE, as senior Member present, was moved into the Chair.

Apologies were received from Vladislav Dobrokhoto.

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

There were no declarations.

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

**RESOLVED** – That, Members received the Order of the Court appointing the Committee.

4. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

The Committee proceeded to elect a Chair in accordance with Standing Order No. 28. James St John Davis, as the only Member expressing their willingness to serve, was duly elected as Chairman for the ensuing year and took the Chair.

**RESOLVED** – That, James St John Davis be elected Chair of the Natural Environment Board for the ensuing year.

The Chair thanked the Committee and made opening remarks about their upcoming tenure as Chair. The Chair also thanked the outgoing Chair and the Members that were no longer on the Committee.

5. **ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN**

The Committee proceeded to elect a Deputy Chair in accordance with Standing Order No. 29. Charles Edward Lord OBE JP, as the only Member expressing their willingness to serve, was duly elected as Deputy Chair for the ensuing year.

**RESOLVED** – That, Charles Edward Lord OBE JP be elected Deputy Chair of the Natural Environment Board for the ensuing year.

The Deputy Chair thanked the Committee and made opening about their upcoming tenure as Deputy Chair.

Wendy Mead OBE moved a vote of thanks to Deputy Caroline Haines, the outgoing Chair.

**RESOLVED** – That, Members of the Natural Environment Board wish to extend our deepest gratitude to

## CAROLINE HAINES

for her remarkable leadership and dedication during her tenure as Chair of the Natural Environment Board.

Caroline has been a driving force behind the establishment of the Natural Environment Board and the appointment of four influential external advisors. Her efforts in organising two high-profile dinners and creating a collective vision for the Natural Environment Division have been pivotal. Under her guidance, four comprehensive Natural Environment Strategies were developed, showcasing her commitment to positive change.

In 2023, Caroline championed the creation of the new Natural Environment Division, transforming it from the previous Open Spaces Department. This strategic move aimed to address major environmental issues such as climate change, biodiversity, and conservation more effectively.

Throughout her term, Caroline provided essential leadership and stability, drawing on her extensive experience and deep knowledge of the Corporation. She played a key role in the consultation of the Natural Environment Charities Review and the Natural Capital Audit of the Corporation's greenspaces. Her influence was instrumental in appointing new senior-level staff, including the Executive Director, Environment and the Natural Environment Director.

Caroline has been a staunch advocate for the City Gardens Team, promoting their work and ensuring the sustainability and accessibility of the Corporation's 200 gardens, churchyards, and plazas. Her efforts were crucial in the successful completion of projects like the redesigned Finsbury Circus and the transformation of Jubilee Gardens.

As a lifelong educator, Caroline passionately supported the Natural Environment Learning Team, which hosts 38,000 education courses annually. She also initiated the Youth Natural Environment Board, empowering young voices in sustainability discussions.

Caroline's visionary leadership and unwavering dedication have left an indelible mark on the Natural Environment Board. We are immensely grateful for her contributions and wish her continued success in her future endeavours.

Thank you Caroline, for your exceptional service!

### 6. **MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** – That, the public minutes and non-public summary of the previous meeting held on 6 February 2025 be agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

### 7. **APPOINTMENT OF A REPRESENTATIVE TO THE STREETS AND WALKWAYS SUB-COMMITTEE**

The Committee considered the appointment of a representative of the Natural Environment Board to attend the Streets and Walkways Sub Committee. Charles Edward Lord OBE JP, as the only Member expressing a willingness to serve, was duly appointed to the Streets and Walkways Sub Committee as a Natural Environment Board representative.

**RESOLVED** – That, Members appoint Charles Edward Lord OBE JP to the Streets and Walkways Sub Committee.

## **8. YOUTH NATURAL ENVIRONMENT BOARD - PROGRESS UPDATE**

The Committee received a progress update from Simon Lightman and Jacob Sprake on the Youth Natural Environment Board.

The Chair noted comments made at the Commonwealth gathering at Mansion House in 2024 which followed the theme of Youth Leadership. The Chair expressed enthusiasm for the continuity of youth advocacy within the Committee's work.

**RESOLVED** – That, Members received the report and noted its contents.

## **9. CLIMATE ACTION STRATEGY 2020 - 2040 - UPDATE**

The Committee received a presentation from the Innovation and Growth Department about the Climate Action Strategy.

The Chair requested an update from the Officers regarding their progress on communication and engagement outside of the local government network. Officers responded that while progress had been made, further work remained in this area. They noted that although most discussions had been met with a positive reception, there was still a need for more targeted engagement on specific matters of relevance to certain organisations.

A Member, also the Chair of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee asked why there was no forecast change to Carbon sequestration levels. Officers responded that they had taken a conservative approach to calculating the carbon sequestration, as they had a project underway this year to reassess the carbon sequestration baseline. Officers noted that once a tree had been planted, it took a long time for carbon sequestration to take effect. They explained that they believed sequestration may increase beyond the forecast 16.23 kilotons, but they did not yet have evidence to prove this. The Member requested that the chart be extended past 2027 to a suitable time when the sequestration may take effect. Officers agreed with this suggested approach.

The Member also asked Officers how they would ensure that they could afford the maintenance of the new fire fogging equipment. Officers explained that the new equipment was initially bought at the recommendation of a wildfire consultant following the heat wave in 2022. They noted that they had been able



to maintain this equipment themselves with in-house mechanics and workshops. Officers stated that the three additional Fire Foggers that had been purchased had equipped Hampstead Heath, Ashted Common, Burnham Beeches, and Wanstead Flat. The Member expressed concern that there was no maintenance fund for this equipment.

A Member, also the Chair of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee, noted that 'Carbon Removals' seemed like a narrow title, noting that it was partly about climate resilience. Officers acknowledged that it was a narrow title, noting that the projects that were under this fund encompassed both protection and creating additional sequestration. The Member also queried how much of the nature recovery budget would be left to fund matters such as climate resilience. Officers responded that the resilience of open spaces was partially picked up through the Cool Streets and Greening programme within the City, and partially through the project on Carbon Removals. However, Officers acknowledged that resilience was not addressed sufficiently when the strategy was set up, and there was the opportunity to change this moving forward. Officers clarified that climate resilience was part of this bid.

A Member sought clarification on the scope of carbon removals and net zero targets. Officers explained that the net zero target for March 2027 included all of the City Corporation's activities inside and outside of the Square Mile, encompassing all open spaces. They further noted that the 2040 target was for the jurisdiction of the Square Mile, separate from the City Corporation's operations.

**RESOLVED –** That, Members received the report and noted its contents.

#### 10. **RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE REPORT**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director of Environment which provided an update on risk management procedures in place within the Natural Environment Board.

The Chair noted that, moving forward it would be important for the Committee to consider where the risks had been accepted, and where mitigation action would need to be taken.

A Member asked about the role of staff in managing fire risk when a fire was identified, particularly in light of the recent acquisition of additional fire-response equipment. Officers acknowledged the question and advised that they would consider the matter and provide a response in due course.

**RESOLVED –** That, Members:

- Considered and noted the Natural Environment Cross-Divisional Risk Register as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

- Considered and noted the content of the report, the City Gardens Risk Register at set out in Appendix 2 of the report, and the action being taken to effectively manage those risks.

#### 11. **TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT COMPLEMENTARY LAND POLICY AND COMPLEMENTARY LAND USE APPRAISAL**

The Committee discussed a report of the Executive Director of Environment which Environment which proposed the scope and terms of reference for two specific pieces of work to review and improve management of the development of an updated Complementary Land Policy, and a Complementary Land Use Appraisal.

Officers clarified with Members that the report would be going to all of the Natural Environment Charities, and feedback would be gathered and analysed to inform any changes to the final terms of reference. The Chair noted that he was eager for the Natural Environment Charities to work together to form a narrative that informed the Policy and Resources Committee's decisions.

A Member requested that consideration be given to a proactive approach to managing open spaces owned by the City Corporation, such as Hampstead Heath and Epping Forest, to establish a forum in collaboration with local authorities and key stakeholders, to enable swift action if necessary, when opportunities to acquire land arose. Officers responded that the complementary land policy was intended to be applicable to future land purchases and existing land owned by the City Corporation. Officers noted that the policy should help to identify potential future acquisitions.

The Member clarified that they were asking about having a formal arrangement with the surrounding local authorities, noting that this would help in situations where the City Corporation wanted to purchase land near Hampstead Heath but faced uncooperative owners. The Member noted that having a formal agreement with the local authorities would allow the City Corporation to use the threat of compulsory land purchase and negotiate more effectively to avoid inflated prices. Officers responded that they held regular meetings with their local authority partners, and they would add this matter to the agenda for future meetings. Officers also noted they would liaise with the City Solicitor's Department to determine what options would be available in this regard. Another Member, also the Chairman of Epping Forest and the Commons, acknowledged the potential value of compulsory land purchase orders and other legal tools available.

The Member also emphasised that the majority of the complementary land, with the exception of Heathfield House, was under the jurisdiction of Epping Forest and the Commons. The Member expected that the proposal to shift the management of this land to a broader Natural Environment division may face resistance from the Epping Forest and the Commons Committee. They emphasised that the transition would need to be managed carefully.

The Member believed that these policies could make the City Corporation's governance structure more complicated as the complementary land policy would have to go to all the Natural Environment committees, including those that did

not have complementary land. The Member noted that they wished to empower the charities to focus on matters relevant to their responsibilities. Officers responded that they had taken the approach to ensure policies were consistent across the natural environment division and aligned with both the Environment Department and City Corporation policies. Officers acknowledged that specific circumstances applied to individual charities. They explained the aim was to have a core policy that could be applicable to a number of charities, with appendices that related to the special circumstances of individual charities, such as Epping Forest and the Commons. The Member urged caution with moving forward with this policy, noting that the Epping Forest Buffer Land was purchased for a specific reason and was not a corporate asset that would be directed elsewhere.

The Executive Director of Environment explained that they were approaching this project by taking the terms of reference to committees first, in order to gather feedback from Members that would inform the development of the policy. The Chair emphasised that they must be strategic in developing this policy and approach it with future generations in mind.

A Member commented that some of the policies could not be developed until they knew the outcome of the Natural Environment Charity Review. The Member noted that the Epping Forest Buffer Land had been managed by the Epping Forest Charity since it was purchased and expressed concern that the time and resources spent by Officers of one charity would be fulfilling the role of another. Officers responded that the Member's comments would be noted and would be checked with the City Solicitor's Department.

The Chair noted to Members that a Frequently Asked Questions information sheet was being prepared and would be circulated to Members in the next week.

A Member observed that the terms of reference did not explicitly acknowledge the national and international responsibilities associated with the Sites of Special Scientific Interest, or the conservation of ancient trees. Officers responded that this would be captured in the site-by-site assessment where it was applicable. They also confirmed that the overarching policy would incorporate non-monetary values, such as carbon storage and biodiversity.

A Member expressed concern about a potential conflict of interest between the City Corporation's objectives and the best interests of the charities. They noted that, at present, all stakeholder groups were receiving legal advice from a single source acting on behalf of the City Corporation. The Chair noted that this would be something that should be flagged to the Policy and Resources Committee, and all Members.

A Member thanked Officers and Chairs for the time spent on this project. They noted that their first high-level concern was that the Policy and Resources Committee and the Finance Committee would make the final decision on this policy. The Member highlighted a perceived lack of confidence among the Natural Environment Charities on whether these committees possess the knowledge and skill base to make informed decisions on a policy that would shape long-term direction. The Member cautioned that this could lead to challenges in the future.

The Member remarked that, politically, the issue was closely tied to the broader demand for housing. They expressed concern that this would likely influence the direction taken when the matter was considered by the Policy and Resources Committee. The Member cautioned that there must be greater clarity regarding the extent to which the Committee would be willing to go on this matter.

As a final comment, the Member noted that there was concern among Chairs regarding the external communications on this matter. They emphasised the urgent need for a proactive communication strategy that was ready to respond to the queries from the public and local authorities.

**RESOLVED** – That, Members received the report and noted its contents.

**12. TRANSFORMATION FOR THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT CHARITIES – PROJECT UPDATE AND GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION PHASE**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director of Environment which provided an update on project governance arrangements as the work transitioned to implementation phase.

A Member queried why the report was presented for information only. Officers clarified that the purpose of the report was to provide Members with an update on the anticipated timeline for key decisions coming before the Committee, and to outline the future presentation of the project. The Chair noted that he would be holding a separate meeting to review the intended purpose of reports and assured the Member that their feedback would be considered as part of that discussion.

**RESOLVED** – That, Members:

- Noted the work to date on implementation of improvements identified by the NECR across assets, grant funding, governance and income generation.
- Noted the upcoming reporting schedule to bring detailed updates on these four areas.

**13. CITY GARDENS UPDATE - VERBAL**

The Committee received a verbal update on City Gardens from Officers from the Environment Department which provided an update on City Gardens projects.

A Member queried whether the Committee would receive a Gateway 6 report on the Jubilee Gardens project. Officers responded that once the final Gateway report had been considered at the Streets and Walkways Sub Committee, it come to the Natural Environment Board for information. The Member requested that this report address the consideration that had been given to the lack of bins in the gardens.

The Member also queried when the Finsbury Circus Gardens would be opened. Officers responded that the gardens would be partially opened on Tuesday 6 May 2025, with the public opening taking place on Wednesday 4 June 2025.

**RESOLVED** – That, Members noted the verbal update.

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

There were no questions raised.

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

There was no urgent business.

**16. 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.

**17. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** – That, the non-public minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 February 2025 be agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

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

There were no questions raised in non-public.

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

There were no non-public items of urgent business.

**The meeting ended at 11.00am**

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Chairman

**Contact Officer: Zoe Williams**

**Zoe.Williams@cityoflondon.gov.uk**

## City of London Corporation Committee Report

<b>Committee(s):</b> Natural Environment Board	<b>Dated:</b> 03/07/2025
<b>Subject:</b> Risk Management Update Report	<b>Public report:</b> For Information
<b>This proposal:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes</b></li> <li>• <b>provides business enabling functions</b></li> </ul>	<b>Corporate Plan Outcomes:</b> Diverse engaged communities; Vibrant thriving destination; Providing excellent services; Flourishing public spaces; Leading sustainable environment <b>Business enabling functions:</b> Risk Management
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	No
<b>If so, how much?</b>	N/A
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	N/A
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	N/A
<b>Report of:</b>	Katie Stewart, Executive Director Environment
<b>Report author:</b>	Joanne Hill, Environment Department

### Summary

This report is presented to provide the Natural Environment Board with assurance that risk management procedures in place within the Environment Department are satisfactory and that they meet the requirements of the Corporate Risk Management Framework and, where applicable, the Charities Act 2011. Risk is reviewed regularly within the Department as part of the ongoing management of operations.

The Natural Environment Cross-Divisional Risk Register includes risks which are managed by the Natural Environment Director at a strategic level. The Cross-Divisional risks are summarised in this report and at Appendix 1. Each of the Natural Environment charities holds a separate risk register which is reported to its respective Management Committee.

City Gardens is part of the City Operations Division of the Environment Department, and its risks are held in a register which is summarised in this report and at Appendix 2.

## **Recommendations**

- A. **Natural Environment Division Risk Register:** Members are asked to consider and note the content of this report and the Natural Environment Cross-Divisional Summary Risk Register (Appendix 1).
- B. **City Gardens Risk Register:** Members are asked to consider and note the content of this report and the City Gardens Summary Risk Register (Appendix 2).

## **Main Report**

### **Background**

#### **Corporate Risk Management Process**

1. The City of London's Risk Management Framework incorporates the Risk Management Policy; the Risk Management Strategy 2024-29; and Risk Management Guidance and Training.
2. The Risk Management Policy outlines the City Corporation's overarching approach and requirements in risk management.
3. The Risk Management Strategy 2024-2029 articulates the City of London Corporation's approach to identifying, mitigating, and managing risk. It ensures that the City Corporation upholds duties, delivers priorities, and supports and aligns with organisational ambitions including our Corporate Plan 2024-2029 strategic outcomes enabling delivery, continuous improvement and innovation.

#### **Risk governance and reporting**

4. To ensure our risk management process is robust, the risks on our risk registers are regularly reviewed by, and reported to, a variety of internal stakeholders – both Officers and Members.
5. Officers (and our Town Clerk and Chief Executive) are responsible – and ultimately accountable - for identifying and managing risk within the City Corporation. This includes what risks should be put onto the risk register, updating these in timely and responsive manner and managing any mitigating actions.
6. Members monitor and oversee the City Corporation's Risk Management Strategy and arrangements. They play an essential role in scrutinising risk management and its effectiveness. This is distinct from operational decision-making on risks/officer actions to identify and manage risk but works in tandem with this to ensure sound and appropriate risk management.
7. The City of London's Risk Management Framework requires each Chief Officer to report regularly to Committees on the risks faced by their department.



### **Natural Environment charities**

8. The responsible Management Committee retains oversight of risk for their charity (or charities), with officers under their relevant delegated authority in the operational management of each charity having day-to-day responsibility for managing and controlling risk.
9. The Charity Commission requires Trustees to confirm in a charity's annual report that any major risks to which the charity is exposed have been identified and reviewed and that systems are established to mitigate those risks. These risks are to be reviewed annually.
10. Members of each Charity Management Committee, on behalf of the City Corporation as trustee, review risks on a quarterly basis to gain assurance that risks are being effectively identified and managed. This reporting frequency aligns with the City of London's Risk Management Framework and exceeds the requirements of the Charity Commission.

### **Current position**

11. The Executive Director Environment assures the Natural Environment Board that all risks held by the Natural Environment Division and the City Operations Division continue to be managed in compliance with the Corporate Risk Management Framework, and, in the case of the Natural Environment charities, the Charities Act 2011.
12. Risks are regularly reviewed by management teams, in consultation with risk owners, with updates recorded in the corporate risk management information system. Risks are assessed on a likelihood-impact basis, and the resultant score is associated with a traffic light colour. For reference, the City of London's Risk Matrix is provided at Appendix 3.
13. New and emerging risks are identified through several channels, including:
  - Directly by Senior Leadership Teams as part of the regular review process.
  - In response to ongoing review of progress made against Business Plan objectives and performance measures, e.g., slippage of target dates or changes to expected performance levels.
  - In response to emerging events and changing circumstances which have the potential to impact on the delivery of services. For example, changes to legislation, resource availability, severe weather events.

### **Natural Environment Cross-Divisional Risks**

14. The Natural Environment Director holds a Cross-Divisional Risk Register containing risks which are common to most or all Natural Environment charities: individual charities hold their own local risks on these matters, and the cross-divisional risk consolidates them for oversight by the Director.

15. The Natural Environment Director reviews the cross-divisional risks regularly in liaison with her Senior Leadership Team. The Register, summarised below and at Appendix 1, contains five RED risks, six AMBER risks and one GREEN risk.
16. The highest risk on the Cross-Divisional register remains 'Decline in condition of assets'. The risk is currently scored at Red 32 (likely to occur, with a serious impact) due to ongoing concerns about inadequate repair and maintenance of operational property across all Natural Environment sites. Additional funding to address the backlog of maintenance works across the Corporation has been approved and officers are working closely with colleagues in the City Surveyor's Department to formally assess, allocate and prioritise the funding allocated to the Environment Department to areas of most need. The completion of priority works, along with any alternative funding options identified through the Natural Environment Charity Review should help to reduce the risk.
17. The full list of current Natural Environment Cross-Divisional risks is as follows:
- **ENV-NE 003: Decline in condition of assets**  
(Current risk score: RED 32, increasing)
  - **ENV-NE 004: Negative impacts from pests and diseases**  
(Current risk score: RED 16, constant)
  - **ENV-NE 010: Budget pressures and uncertainty over future funding model**  
(Current risk score: RED 16, increasing)
  - **ENV-NE 015: Impacts of anti-social behaviour on staff and sites**  
(Current risk score: RED 16, constant)
  - **ENV-NE 016: Tree maintenance**  
(Current risk score: RED 16, decreasing)
  - **ENV-NE 001: Risks to health and safety**  
(Current risk score: AMBER 12, decreasing)
  - **ENV-NE 002: Adverse impacts of extreme weather and climate change**  
(Current risk score: AMBER 12, constant)
  - **ENV-NE 005: Negative impacts of development and encroachment**  
(Current risk score: AMBER 12, constant)
  - **ENV-NE 014: Lack of asset register**  
(Current risk score: AMBER 12, decreasing)
  - **ENV-NE 011: Recruitment of suitable staff**  
(Current risk score: AMBER 8, decreasing)
  - **ENV-NE 013: Negative impacts of visitor pressure**  
(Current risk score: AMBER 8, constant)
  - **ENV-NE 012: Negative impacts of carrying out wildlife management**  
(Current risk score: GREEN 2, decreasing)

### **City Gardens Risks**

18. City Gardens is part of the City Operations Division of the Environment Department, alongside Cleansing Services. The City Gardens Risk Register, summarised below and at Appendix 2, contains seven risks (five AMBER, and one

GREEN) which are owned and managed by the City Gardens Manager and his Management Team. Work to control the risks is ongoing.

19. The highest four risks on the register each have a score of Amber 12 (possible likelihood; major impact). Of these risks, 'Tree and plant diseases and other pests' has been accepted at its current score and is well controlled to maintain it at that level. The three other risks have decreased during the last year and actions are underway to reduce them to their target scores.

20. The full list of current City Gardens risks is as follows:

- **ENV-CO-GC 011: Tree and plant diseases and other pests**  
(Current risk score: AMBER 12, constant)
- **ENV-CO-GC 016: Insufficient staff resources**  
(Current risk score: AMBER 12, decreasing)
- **ENV-CO-GC 017: Decline in condition of assets**  
(Current risk score: AMBER 12, decreasing)
- **ENV-CO-GC 018: Negative impacts of public behaviour**  
(Current risk score: AMBER 12, decreasing)
- **ENV-CO-GC 009: Risk to health and safety**  
(Current risk score: AMBER 8, constant)
- **ENV-CO-GC 012: Climate and weather**  
(Current risk score: GREEN 3, decreasing)

### **Corporate and Strategic Implications**

21. Effective management of risk is at the heart of the City Corporation's approach to delivering cost effective and valued services to the public as well as being an important element within the corporate governance of the organisation.

22. The risk management processes in place in the Environment Department support the delivery of the Corporate Plan, our Departmental and Divisional Business Plans and relevant Corporate Strategies, such as the Climate Action; Cultural; Sport and Physical Activity; and Volunteering Strategies. Risks are also being considered as part of the Natural Environment and City Operations Divisions' strategies.

23. Risks which could have a serious impact on the achievement of business and strategic objectives are proactively identified, assessed and managed in order to minimise their likelihood and/or impact.

### **Conclusion**

24. The proactive management of risk, including the reporting process to Members, demonstrates that the Environment Department is adhering to the requirements of the City of London Corporation's Risk Management Framework and, where applicable, the Charities Act 2011.

**Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Natural Environment Cross-Divisional Risk Register
- Appendix 2 – City Gardens Risk Register
- Appendix 3 – City of London Corporation Risk Matrix

**Contact**

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# Natural Environment Cross-divisional Risk Register - summary







13 June 2025



Risk score indicator key.		
		
RED	AMBER	GREEN

Risk code	Risk title	Current risk score	Current risk score indicator	Risk Approach *	Target risk score	Target risk score indicator	Direction of travel (last 10 assessments)
ENV-NE 003	Decline in condition of assets	32		Reduce	24		Increasing
ENV-NE 004	Negative impacts from pests and diseases	16		Reduce	12		Constant
ENV-NE 010	Budget pressures and uncertainty over future funding model	16		Reduce	12		Increasing
ENV-NE 015	Impacts of anti-social behaviour on staff and sites	16		Reduce	12		Constant
ENV-NE 016	Tree Maintenance	16		Reduce	12		Decreasing
ENV-NE 001	Risks to health and safety	12		Reduce	8		Decreasing
ENV-NE 002	Adverse impacts of extreme weather and climate change	12		Reduce	8		Constant
ENV-NE 005	Negative impacts of development and encroachment	12		Accept	12		Constant
ENV-NE 014	Lack of asset register	12		Reduce	4		Decreasing

## Appendix 1




Risk code	Risk title	Current risk score	Current risk score indicator	Risk Approach *	Target risk score	Target risk score indicator	Direction of travel (last 10 assessments)
ENV-NE 011	Recruitment of suitable staff	8		Reduce	4		Decreasing
ENV-NE 013	Negative impacts of visitor pressure	8		Reduce	6		Constant
ENV-NE 012	Negative impacts of carrying out wildlife management	2		Accept	2		Decreasing













\* **N.B.** Risks which are accepted have an identical current and target score and have been mitigated to the lowest level possible at present. We continue to undertake a range of actions to maintain them at their current score and keep them under continual review.

## City Gardens Risk Register - summary

17 June 2025



Risk score indicator key.		
		
RED	AMBER	GREEN

Risk code	Risk title	Current risk score	Current risk score indicator	Risk Approach *	Target risk score	Target risk score indicator	Direction of travel (last 10 assessments)
ENV-CO-GC 011	Tree and plant diseases and other pests	12		Accept	12		Constant
ENV-CO-GC 016	Staff resources	12		Reduce	8		Decreasing
ENV-CO-GC 017	Decline in condition of assets	12		Reduce	8		Decreasing
ENV-CO-GC 018	Negative impacts of public behaviour	12		Reduce	6		Decreasing
ENV-CO-GC 009	Risk to health and safety	8		Accept	8		Constant
ENV-CO-GC 012	Climate and weather	3		Accept	3		Decreasing

\* **N.B.** Risks which are accepted have an identical current and target score and have been mitigated to the lowest level possible at present. We continue to undertake a range of actions to maintain them at their current score and keep them under continual review.

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## City of London Corporation Risk Matrix (Black and white version)

Note: A risk score is calculated by assessing the risk in terms of likelihood and impact. By using the likelihood and impact criteria below (top left (A) and bottom right (B) respectively) it is possible to calculate a risk score. For example a risk assessed as Unlikely (2) and with an impact of Serious (2) can be plotted on the risk scoring grid, top right (C) to give an overall risk score of a green (4). Using the risk score definitions bottom right (D) below, a green risk is one that just requires actions to maintain that rating.

### (A) Likelihood criteria

	Rare (1)	Unlikely (2)	Possible (3)	Likely (4)
Criteria	Less than 10%	10 – 40%	40 – 75%	More than 75%
Probability	Has happened rarely/never before	Unlikely to occur	Fairly likely to occur	More likely to occur than not
Time period	Unlikely to occur in a 10 year period	Likely to occur within a 10 year period	Likely to occur once within a one year period	Likely to occur once within three months
Numerical	Less than one chance in a hundred thousand (<10-5)	Less than one chance in ten thousand (<10-4)	Less than one chance in a thousand (<10-3)	Less than one chance in a hundred (<10-2)

### (B) Impact criteria

Impact title	Definitions
Minor (1)	<b>Service delivery/performance:</b> Minor impact on service, typically up to one day. <b>Financial:</b> financial loss up to 5% of budget. <b>Reputation:</b> Isolated service user/stakeholder complaints contained within business unit/division. <b>Legal/statutory:</b> Litigation claim or find less than £5000. <b>Safety/health:</b> Minor incident including injury to one or more individuals. <b>Objectives:</b> Failure to achieve team plan objectives.
Serious (2)	<b>Service delivery/performance:</b> Service disruption 2 to 5 days. <b>Financial:</b> Financial loss up to 10% of budget. <b>Reputation:</b> Adverse local media coverage/multiple service user/stakeholder complaints. <b>Legal/statutory:</b> Litigation claimable fine between £5000 and £50,000. <b>Safety/health:</b> Significant injury or illness causing short-term disability to one or more persons. <b>Objectives:</b> Failure to achieve one or more service plan objectives.
Major (4)	<b>Service delivery/performance:</b> Service disruption > 1 - 4 weeks. <b>Financial:</b> Financial loss up to 20% of budget. <b>Reputation:</b> Adverse national media coverage 1 to 3 days. <b>Legal/statutory:</b> Litigation claimable fine between £50,000 and £500,000. <b>Safety/health:</b> Major injury or illness/disease causing long-term disability to one or more people <b>Objectives:</b> Failure to achieve a strategic plan objective.
Extreme (8)	<b>Service delivery/performance:</b> Service disruption > 4 weeks. <b>Financial:</b> Financial loss up to 35% of budget. <b>Reputation:</b> National publicity more than three days. Possible resignation leading member or chief officer. <b>Legal/statutory:</b> Multiple civil or criminal suits. Litigation claim or find in excess of £500,000. <b>Safety/health:</b> Fatality or life-threatening illness/disease (e.g. mesothelioma) to one or more persons. <b>Objectives:</b> Failure to achieve a major corporate objective.

### (C) Risk scoring grid

Likelihood	Impact				
	X	Minor (1)	Serious (2)	Major (4)	Extreme (8)
	Likely (4)	4 Green	8 Amber	16 Red	32 Red
	Possible (3)	3 Green	6 Amber	12 Amber	24 Red
	Unlikely (2)	2 Green	4 Green	8 Amber	16 Red
	Rare (1)	1 Green	2 Green	4 Green	8 Amber

### (D) Risk score definitions

RED	Urgent action required to reduce rating
AMBER	Action required to maintain or reduce rating
GREEN	Action required to maintain rating

This is an extract from the City of London Corporate Risk Management Strategy, published in May 2014.

Contact the Corporate Risk Advisor for further information. Ext 1297

October 2015

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# Climate Action Strategy

## Carbon Removals Spotlight

### Natural Environment Board

July 2025



# 🍁 Carbon Removals Programme 2024 - 2027

City Corporation green spaces sequester **16,230 tCO<sub>2</sub>e/year**. The Carbon Removals programme aims to:

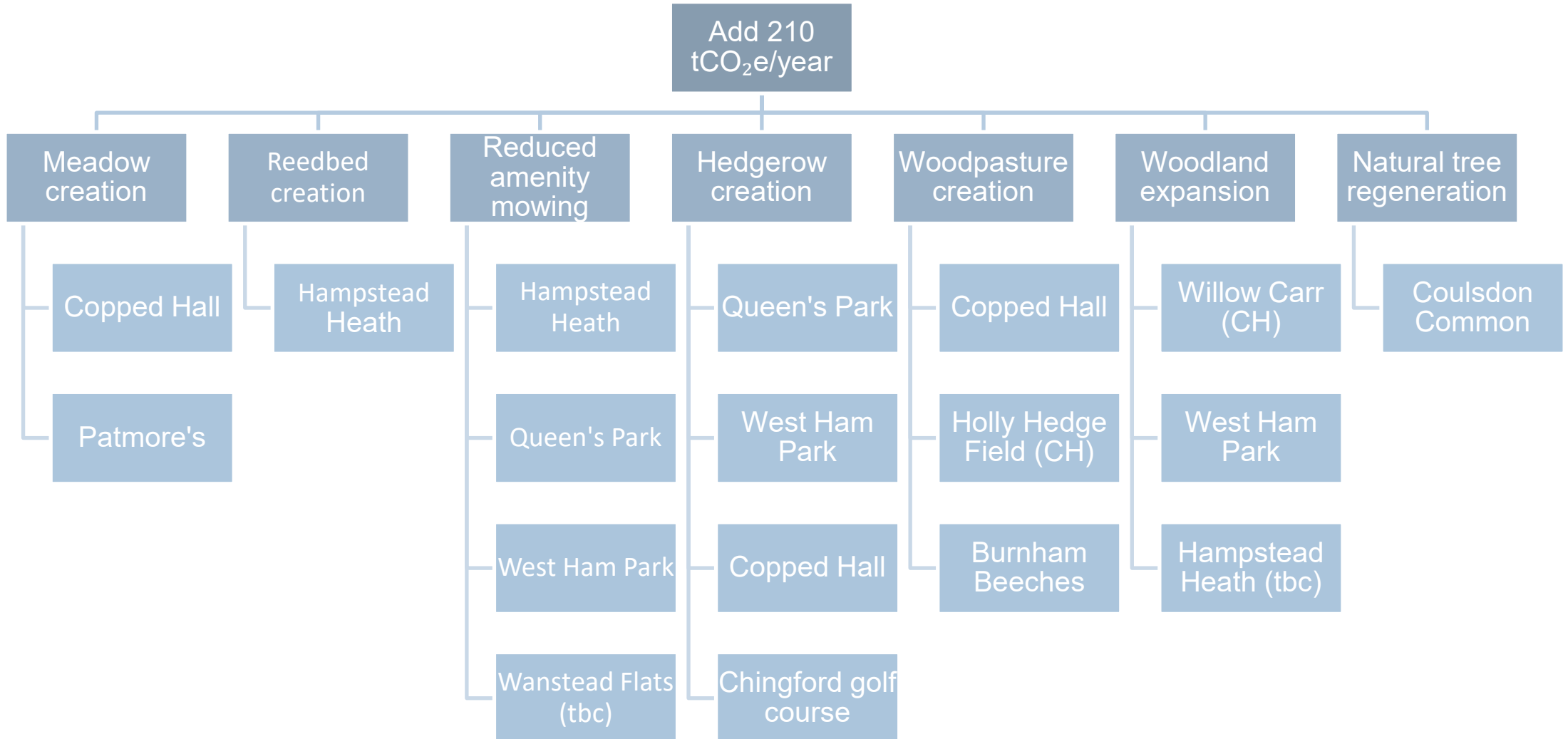
- **protect** existing sequestration from climate change,
- create 210 tCO<sub>2</sub>e **additional sequestration** by 2027
- increase biodiversity

Page 28

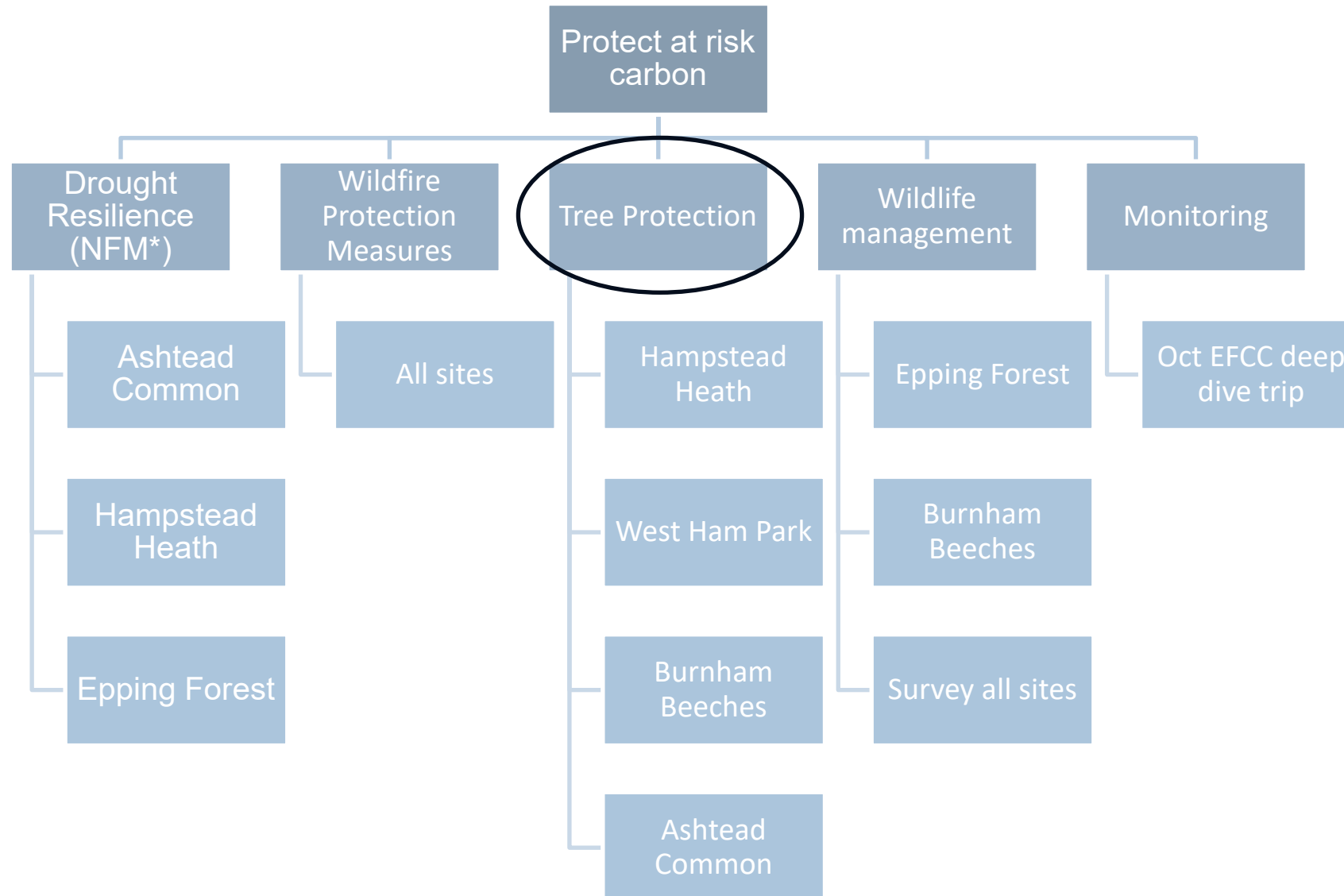


Propped tree: Burnham Beeches

# Carbon Removals: Additionality



# Carbon Removals: Baseline Protection



\*NFM: leaky dams



# Tree Protection

## The problem

High footfall and a changing climate leads to **soil compaction and poor structure**, severely limiting **microbial biodiversity**. These conditions **restrict oxygen flow, water infiltration, and root penetration**.

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Note: Arcadis reported that 10% of CoL's tree sequestration capacity is at risk from climate related impacts.

Tree dieback (soil compaction - lack of water, poor soil health): Hampstead Heath





# Tree Protection

## The solution

Improving **soil structure and alleviating compaction**, through excluding footfall and aerating soil, are key to fostering healthy **microbe biodiversity** and accumulating **soil organic carbon**.

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**Looser, well-aerated soils** support diverse microbial communities.

**Better pore connectivity** enhances nutrient cycling and microbial activity.

**Reduced compaction** allows for deeper root growth and organic matter input.



Soil decompaction: West Ham Park



# Tree Protection

## The solution: part 2 Boosting Microbial Life

To further enhance microbial diversity, amendments are being added.

- **Compost teas** introduce beneficial microbes.
- **Zeolite** improves nutrient retention and porosity.
- **Biochar** enhances soil structure, water retention, and microbial colonisation, carbon storage and root system development.
- **Woodchip mulch** protects the soil surface, moderates temperature, and slowly releases carbon-rich compounds.



Compost tea application: West Ham Park



# Tree Protection

## The solution: part 2 Boosting Microbial Life

To further enhance microbial diversity, amendments are being added.

- **Compost teas** introduce beneficial microbes.
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- **Woodchip mulch** protects the soil surface, moderates temperature, and slowly releases carbon-rich compounds.

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Mulch application: Hampstead Heath



# Tree Protection

## Monitoring parameters

- **Carbon:** organic, inorganic, total
- **Nitrogen:** total nitrogen, C:N ratio
- **Bulk density** (for carbon stock and organic matter calculation)
- **pH, available phosphorus, potassium, magnesium**
- **eDNA:** total counts of bacteria, fungi, protozoa, nematodes; fungal:bacterial ratio
- **Soil moisture** at 90cm depth (canopy dripline)
- **Soil compaction** (penetrometer)
- **Tree moisture stress** using TreeSense sensors

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Surveying soil compaction: Golders Hill Park



# Tree Protection

## Monitoring parameters

- **Carbon:** organic, inorganic, total
- **Nitrogen:** total nitrogen, C:N ratio
- **Bulk density** (for carbon stock and organic matter calculation)
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- **Tree moisture stress** using TreeSense sensors



Soil core sampling: WHP



# Tree Protection

## Monitoring parameters

- **Carbon:** organic, inorganic, total
- **Nitrogen:** total nitrogen, C:N ratio
- **Bulk density** (for carbon stock and organic matter calculation)
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- **Tree moisture stress** using TreeSense sensors

Page 37



Tree moisture monitoring: West Ham Park



# Tree Protection

The solution- excluding footfall





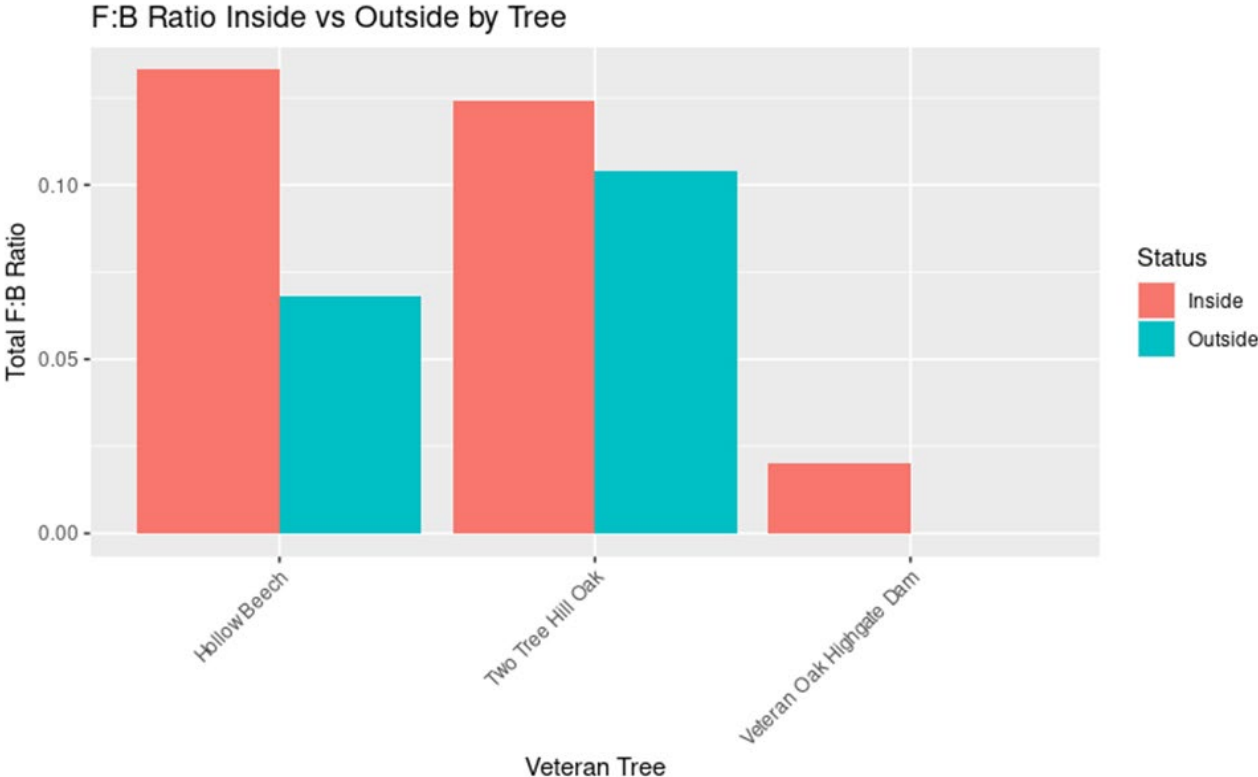
# Tree Protection

## Monitoring

Fungi-to-bacteria ratio in soils inside and outside fenced areas surrounding veteran beech and oak trees at Hampstead Heath (NLOS, May 2025).

Soils outside the fenced areas are subject to greater disturbance from recreational activity, including compaction.

**The fungi-to-bacteria (F:B) ratio** serves as a useful bioindicator of soil degradation, with higher ratios typically found in undisturbed or mature forest soils.



# Tree Protection

## Tree propping

The Druid's Oak, a veteran tree of high ecological, cultural value and carbon protection value, was recently supported with two custom-designed A-frame props.

Page 40 By physically supporting the tree and preventing premature loss, the intervention:

- **Preserves existing carbon stocks** in both above- and below-ground biomass (~14 tCO<sub>2</sub>e).
- **Avoids emissions** that would result from decay or removal.
- **Supports continued sequestration.**



Tree propping: Burnham Beeches



# Tree Protection

## Tree propping

The Druid's Oak, a veteran tree of high ecological, cultural value and supported with two custom-designed A-frame props.

Page 41 By physically supporting the tree and preventing premature loss, the intervention:

- **Preserves existing carbon stocks** in both above- and below-ground biomass (~14 tCO<sub>2</sub>e).
- **Avoids emissions** that would result from decay or removal.
- **Supports continued sequestration.**



e.g. in-house propping at BB



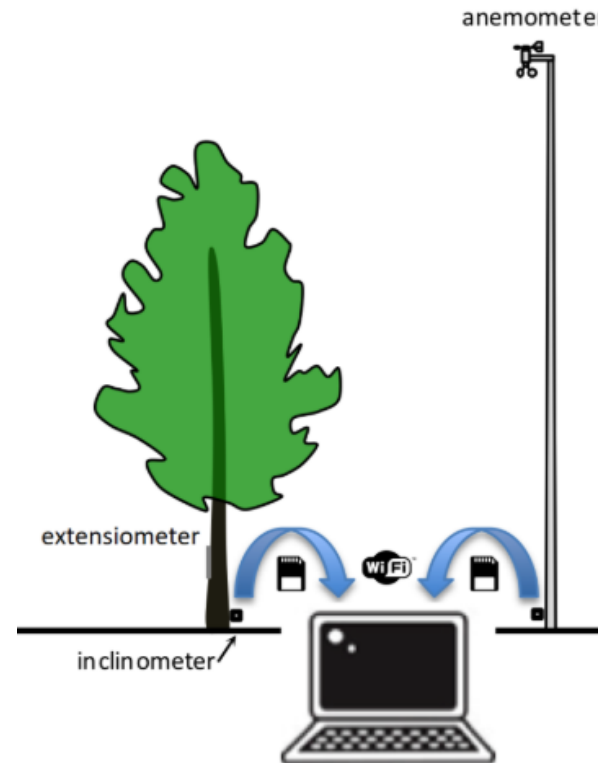
# Tree Protection

## Enhancing Tree Management

Evaluate the root and stem stability of trees in extreme weather conditions.

With DynaRoot sensors and software measure the mechanical stability of tree roots.

Tree management teams can make **more informed decisions** about whether a tree requires pruning or not, ultimately aiding in tree survival (and safety) and ensuring the continued sequestration of carbon.



# Tree Protection

## Future pathway?

- Research collaboration – to inform effective soil and tree management
- Investment post 2027 - to scale up protection interventions



Compacted bare soil: Hollow Beech, Hampstead Heath

Biodiversity



# Questions?

Below ground alone can sequester 3.3 - 4.8 tCO<sub>2</sub>e/ha/yr\* if managed sustainably.



Compacted bare soil: Hollow Beech, Hampstead Heath

## City of London Corporation Committee Report

<b>Committee:</b> Natural Environment Board	<b>Dated:</b> 3/7/2025
<b>Subject:</b> Environment Department high-level Business Plan 2024/25 – Year-End Progress Report	<b>Public report:</b> For Information
<b>This proposal:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes</li><li>• provides business enabling functions</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Diverse engaged communities</li><li>• Vibrant thriving destination</li><li>• Providing excellent services</li><li>• Flourishing public spaces</li><li>• Leading sustainable environment</li></ul>
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	No
<b>If so, how much?</b>	N/A
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	N/A
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	N/A
<b>Report of:</b>	Katie Stewart, Executive Director Environment
<b>Report author:</b>	Joanne Hill, Environment Department

### Summary

This report provides an update on progress made by the Natural Environment Division and the City Gardens Team towards delivery of the Environment Department's high-level Business Plan 2024/25.

The report summarises the progress that has been made against major workstreams and performance measures during the last year. Overall, the majority of workstreams have remained on track and all have supported the delivery of the Corporate Plan outcomes and other cross-cutting strategies and programmes.

### Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the content of this report and its appendices.

### Main Report

#### Background

1. The Environment Department's high-level Business Plan provided a strategic overview of the key areas of work that would be undertaken across the whole

department during 2024/25. On 19 February 2024, the Natural Environment Board approved the content of the Business Plan that related to the service areas within its remit, i.e. the Natural Environment Division and City Gardens.

2. Detailed business plans for each of the Natural Environment charities are now in place; these plans set out the specific priorities and activities of each charity and progress against them is reported regularly to the Charity Management Committees.
3. To ensure the Natural Environment Board is kept informed, progress made against the high-level Business Plan is reported every six months. This approach allows Members to ask questions and have an input into areas of particular importance to them.

## **Current Position**

### **Major workstreams**

4. The high-level Business Plan set out the Natural Environment Division and City Gardens priority workstreams for 2024/25. For the Natural Environment Division, the workstreams aligned with the Natural Environment Strategies.
5. Throughout the year, Members were kept informed of the progress of specific workstreams by way of regular Assistant Director update reports and/or separate detailed reports. Overall, teams made good progress against delivery of the workstreams: a detailed update is provided at Appendix 1.

### **Performance Measures**

6. Each of the priority workstreams had one or more associated Key Performance Indicators to measure progress against the target. These measures were monitored throughout the year and details of performance is provided at Appendix 2. For any indicator which slipped or did not meet its target by the end of the year, an explanation is given.

## **Corporate and Strategic Implications**

**Strategic implications** – The monitoring of key workstreams and performance measures links to the achievement of the aims and outcomes set out in the Corporate Plan 2024-29.

**Financial Implications** – Financial implications will be addressed in a separate Chamberlain's Revenue Outturn report.

**Resource implications** – Recruitment to vacant posts across the service areas continued throughout the year and is now progressing well.

**Risk implications** - Risks to achieving the objectives set out in the Business Plan are identified and managed in accordance with the City of London Risk Management

Framework. Risk Registers are reported to the Natural Environment Board and the Charity Management Committees quarterly.

**Climate implications** – The Climate Action Strategy is supported by a range of workstreams being undertaken by the Natural Environment Division and City Gardens. Progress against these is regularly reported to Members.

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

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Progress against key workstreams

Appendix 2 – Progress against key performance indicators

## **Background Papers**

- Draft High-Level Business Plan 2024/25 – Environment Department' (Natural Environment Board, 19 February 2024)

## **Contact**

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T: 020 7332 1301

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**Progress against key workstreams 2024-25**  
**1 October 2024 – 31 March 2025**

Ref:	Workstream	Progress October-March 2024-25
1.	<b>City Gardens</b> Maintain City-owned green spaces in the Square Mile. Complete Finsbury Circus re-landscaping (Nov2023-Dec 2024). Effectively manage our spaces to ensure they are safe and pleasant and fit to provide the essential long-term benefits of green areas, including increasing biodiversity and adapting to become more climate resilient.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Finsbury Circus</b> opening has been delayed slightly due to issues with preserving tree roots and the establishment of the lawn. It is due to be partially open in April/May and then officially opened in June 2025. The new events policy for Finsbury Gardens has been completed, approved and adopted.</li> <li>• The <b>Biodiversity Action Plan</b> remains on track.</li> <li>• The <b>new keeper</b> role at Bunhill fields has been very successful and is having a positive impact in promoting responsible dog ownership in the area.</li> <li>• <b>Climate resilient biodiverse schemes delivered at:</b>              St Anne St Agnes              St Olaves Silver Street              Little Trinity              Finsbury Circus western Arm &amp; Jubilee Gardens</li> </ul>
2.	<b>Nature conservation and resilience</b> Protect and enhance the biodiversity of our open spaces. Increase the resilience of our open spaces within a wider, interconnected natural landscape. Establish a natural capital-based management process across our open spaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>NLOS</b>              Head of Conservation and Ecologist have been working with Carbon Removals Team, mapping sites on Hampstead Heath for leaky dams and new small ponds. Works starting later in 2025 through to 2027. NLOS Tree Team have also been working with Carbon Removals Team to fund additional veteran tree enclosures on Hampstead Heath to improve resilience against visitor pressure issues. CAS funding has also purchased new soil compaction monitoring equipment along with specialist unit to decompact and inject nutrients into tree rooting zones. This equipment will be shared with Arboricultural Team at Epping Forest. Ecologist is working with local stakeholder group to open up wildlife corridors south of Hampstead Heath creating links between SINC in London Borough of Camden</li> <li>• <b>Epping Forest:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deer Management Programme: 2024-2025 season completed successfully. ADMP target met and</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Ref:	Workstream	Progress October-March 2024-25
		<p>exceeded using updated data from deer drone census. 30 deer exclusion plots installed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bell heather reintroduction</li> <li>• BNG Assessment Opportunities: EF Head of Conservation providing technical support on CoL Natural Environment Divisions Open Spaces BNG Assessment. Draft reports submitted by consultants and in review.</li> <li>• Built asset management programme: In progress: Residential Property Renovation and Letting Prioritisation work with CSD. Management of built asset portfolio. City Surveyor appointed to support progressing empty property projects.</li> <li>• Carbon Removals Programme - Copped Hall Arable Reversion to Meadow Project: Copped Hall video recorded with EF employees</li> <li>• Tree Safety Works: As of Feb 2025, 133 jobs complete. Completed works: A/B Safety works along Epping New Road including Veteran tree reductions and habitat works, Warners Path, collecting of beech Slab and Pick Hill Triangle</li> <li>• EF provided input and comment on the draft London LNRS in March25</li> <li>• CSS Forest 1: The 2024-5 season for veteran tree management by contractors was completed in February - across the whole season 114 veteran hornbeam trees were managed. This is on top of the 17 beech trees that host the nationally rare Zygodon forsteri moss</li> <li>• CSS Forest 2: The tender for the second part of the major habitat restoration for "Forest 2" was opened. In all, 5 contractors submitted tenders. These were evaluated by the middle of March.</li> <li>• Epping Forest - Sports Consultation on changes to the Greenkeeping &amp; Grounds Team underway.</li> <li>• Great Gregories Solar PV scheme: In progress: 25% funding from RPA grant secured. 75% confirmed funding from CAS as part of wider infrastructure project</li> <li>• LIDAR Project (heritage): In progress: Historic England completed lidar analysis, site visits, recording form developed. Training session held with external groups</li> <li>• Safety 365: 66% audit score achieved March25</li> <li>• Wanstead Park Programme - Temple CMP completed: Wanstead Park Project Officer now in post</li> <li>• Wanstead Park floating reedbed</li> <li>• Wildfire preparedness training included: Vegetation Fire Foundation and Wildfire Management Planning - WMP (Lantra accredited).</li> <li>• Wildfire equipment: one new fire fogger arrived, to be kept at Wanstead. Trailer for it to be mounted on has been ordered. John is due to order a new 4.6m flail for creating fire breaks (and other flailing work)</li> <li>• Chingford Golf Course: 2024/25 irrigation work complete. Increased income generated from hire of</li> </ul>

Ref:	Workstream	Progress October-March 2024-25
		<p>buggies, trolleys, clubs by £8K</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water bowser purchased using CSS funding to improve wood pasture grazing and accessibility to support long-term water supply for cattle</li> <li>• Recruitment of new Conservation Herd Manager</li> <li>• Carbon Removals Programme - Reassessment of Open Spaces sequestration (ground-up): In progress. Supporting Carbon Removals team only. Consulted appointed</li> </ul> <p><b>The Commons</b></p> <p><b>Carbon Removal project:</b> Projects are progressing as planned with two leaky dams installed and permission for further leaky dams pending EA permit process. Planning for the 2025/26 squirrel control program has been undertaken along with CAS supported training on wildfire management for most ranger staff.</p> <p><b>Research:</b> At Ashted Common, researchers from Cardiff University were supported as part of works to sample veteranized trees for fungi while staff have liaised with a Swedish researcher wishing to study the veteranized trees at AC.</p> <p><b>Habitat management:</b> Management of veteran trees and over 300 new pollard trees completed as per program at AC and Burnham Beeches. The first phase of capital program funded livestock fencing replacement works were completed at West Wickham and Coulsdon Commons. The annual habitat management program has been completed as proposed in the different site management plans including sky lark protections area at WWCC and AC</p>
3.	<p><b>Community engagement</b></p> <p>Partnership: create meaningful and lasting partnerships.</p> <p>Ownership: cultivate a sense of deep pride in, and attachment to, our spaces amongst users.</p> <p>Knowledge exchange: ensure continuous transfer of information between the Corporation and its customers.</p>	<p><b>Epping Forest:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brambly Hedge Trail: Trail now installed (awaiting braille and sensory panels on 12 x figures at Connaught Water. 3 x figures to be relocated slightly at Connaught Water. Path improvements at Connaught Water completed.</li> <li>• New EF education partnership forum.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Commons</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over the period we had 4573 hours of volunteer support across the Common sites.</li> <li>• We are working regularly with the Ancient Tree Forum, Arboricultural association and SGI (UK) on hosting an international conference on veteran trees. We worked with Burnham Parish Council on revising their guided walks booklet for the Parish.</li> <li>• 31 events were held across the commons sites during the period including talks, guided walks and open days eg Meet the Calves at WWCC with 650 attendees. Community engagement week held at BB by the Community</li> </ul>

Ref:	Workstream	Progress October-March 2024-25
		<p>Engagement Rangers</p> <p><b>NLOS</b></p> <p>Deliverables were added to NLOS 2024-25 business plan and will be progressed as part of the delivery of the Natural Environment Division's 'Community Engagement Strategy'.</p> <p>Large public event 'Night of the 10k PBs' was held on 18 May at the recently refurbished Athletics Track.</p> <p>Heath Hands – our valued partners on the Heath and in Highgate Wood – celebrated their 25th anniversary on 6 June at a well-attended event on the grounds of Kenwood House. The event was a celebration of Heath Hands' achievements in support of green spaces the past quarter century, and was attended by numerous volunteers, elected officials, this committee's Chairman, Director of Natural Environment, Superintendent and numerous other Heath officers. A new five-year agreement was signed with Heath Hands to extend and strengthen the partnership.</p> <p>The charities continued to benefit from the extraordinary efforts of local volunteers, including Friends of West Ham Park.</p>
4.	<p><b>Access and recreation</b></p> <p>Excellence: Enable the best possible visitor journey, creating the right information from pre-visit to on-site experience in exemplar sites.</p> <p>Equal access: Provide welcoming places that visitors from all backgrounds and abilities are comfortable to explore.</p> <p>Inform: Build understanding and knowledge about our open spaces.</p> <p>Visitors will respect one another and will care for and advocate for the sites.</p>	<p><b>Epping Forest:</b></p> <p>Q2 - Countryside Manager, Recycling and Waste Manager, Estates Manager, Q3 - Forest Keeper, Q4 - Forest Keeper x 2 &amp; Apprentice Craftsperson.</p> <p><b>The Commons</b></p> <p>A £50,000 revamp of the information point was completed at BB. The funding was all site generated from film income</p> <p>Community engagement week held at BB in Feb half term. See also above.</p> <p><b>NLOS</b></p> <p>a website audit was completed to ensure the information online is up to date and accurate. The signage audit across NLOS was completed and signage is now being updated where needed to ensure accuracy and clarity. Multiple improvements to facilities are being made in coordination with City Surveyor's Dept.</p>

Ref:	Workstream	Progress October-March 2024-25
5.	<p><b>Culture, Heritage and Learning</b></p> <p>Develop communities of interest that participate in, advocate for, and support our Natural Environment and Heritage charities.</p> <p>Develop a learning offer that builds nature connection and wellbeing.</p> <p>Protect and enhance our built heritage landscape heritage and archaeological assets and promote them as part of our visitor and learning offers.</p>	<p>The 'Firing London's Imagination' education programme has continued to engage young people with the history of the Roman kiln. A total of 529 students from Haringey schools and neighbouring boroughs with high pupil premium rates participated in our KS2 programme between September 2024 and March 2025. Earlier this year, two local schools participated in our new workshop – KS2 Hands on Archaeology and local Roman history workshop – where students handled Roman artefacts and visited the Roman kiln exhibition in Highgate Wood. In the summer term of 2025, we will continue our KS1 Roman woodland adventure session, facilitated by local Forest School practitioner.</p> <p>New Effing Forest education partnership forum the team have exceeded their participation targets, engaging 42,798 Learning Participants in school, play, youth and community activities. The programme engaged participants across 17 London boroughs, reaching children and young people in high areas of child poverty including Tower Hamlets and Newham. The team also launched a Youth Board, empowering young people to engage with and influence the CoL Natural Environment Board. The team received funding from the City of London Cultural and Creative Learning Fund to run nature-based learning projects for children who miss out on holiday enrichment; to engage young people environmental stewardship and active hope; and to engage children with profound additional needs. Programme evaluation includes: 17% increase in feelings of wellbeing and 28% increase in feelings of confidence to explore our spaces.</p>
6.	<p><b>Income generation</b></p> <p>Develop and start to implement an income generation plan for the Natural Environment Division. Complete the Operational Property Review.</p> <p>Conserve and improve built assets across the Natural Environment Division and City Gardens, tackling the 'bow wave' of maintenance backlog works.</p>	<p><b>The Commons</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site staff attended and supported BNG workshops run by consultants to assess income potential on our sites.</li> <li>• Tender was developed for the establishment of a new mobile café unit at Kenley Common. A Paw Wash franchise facility is being investigated for Farthing Downs Car Park.</li> </ul> <p><b>NLOS</b></p> <p>Recruitment for Head of Development &amp; Partnerships is live. Income generation is continuing as per usual, inclusion of user fees (eg swimming), sport pitch hire, cafe leases, filming, etc, and appreciable increases in fees have been negotiated with several existing events, and filming opportunities have been capitalised upon to generate additional income. A full cost recovery model has been instituted in 2024-25 for events. We will hire in (Self-funded) Business Development Officer once the 'Head of.' position is filled.</p>



**Progress against Key Performance Indicators  
1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025**

Performance Measure Description	Target 2024/25	Performance 2024/25 (Mid-Year Result)	Performance 2024/25 (End of Year Result)
Number of volunteer work hours.	>42,500	19,244	44,775
Number of participants per annum in our School Learning Programme and our Play Programme.	Schools: 18,500 Play: 20,500	Schools: 10,000 Play: 14,000	Schools: 20,075 Play: 20,582
Number of heritage assets on the 'Heritage at the Risk' register.	4	4	4
Number of visitors to Keats House and The Monument.	11,500 150,000	Keats House: 4,200 The Monument: 51,778	Keats House: 7,664 <sup>*1</sup> The Monument: 102,966
Visitors to Natural Environment Division web pages.	1 million	938,508	1,329,543
City Gardens - Achieve Green Flag Awards for Bunhill Fields and Finsbury Circus.	2	1 (Bunhill Fields)	1 <sup>*2</sup> (Bunhill Fields)
<sup>*1</sup> Reason for missed target for Keats House? <sup>*2</sup> Finsbury Circus was not reopened in time to be judged for a Green Flag Award in 2024/25.			

## Appendix 1

Performance Measure Description	Target 2024/25	Performance 2024/25 (Mid-Year Result)	Performance 2024/25 (End of Year Result)
City Gardens - Meet Biodiversity Action Plan commitments by 2026.	14 actions by 2026	Annual Measure	The Biodiversity Action plan is on course for completion in 2026.
Nature conservation and resilience - Biological survey records uploaded onto national recording databases within 12 months of collection.	100%	Annual Measure	*3
Nature conservation and resilience - Percentage of Local Authority Plan consultations responded to.	100%	Annual Measure	100%
Nature conservation and resilience - Achieve annual carbon removal target.	-16.23 ktCO2e	Annual Measure	-16.23 ktCO2e
Community engagement - Number of partnership organisations that are delivering activities in our open spaces.		Annual Measure	*4
<p>*3 Data not available due to Staff training on the Biodiversity Management System began in 2024/25 and will continue as we move into 2025/26. Once complete, survey records will begin to be uploaded onto national recording databases.</p> <p>*4 KPI was not able to be measured - the 2024/25 data will be collated and used to baseline this measure for future years.</p>			



## Appendix 1

Performance Measure Description	Target 2024/25	Performance 2024/25 (Mid-Year Result)	Performance 2024/25 (End of Year Result)
Community engagement - Visitors to Natural Environment Division web pages.	1 Million	938,508	1,329,543
Access and recreation - 100% of waymarked trails are audited annually to maintain standards.	100%	Annual Measure	100%
Access and recreation - Provide accessibility information for every public facility on website by 2025.	100%	Annual Measure	*5
Access and recreation - Seasonal engagement sessions provided on site (minimum one per season per site).	4 per site	Annual Measure	100%
Income Generation - 5% increase in income generation (on previous year): Epping Forest & Buffer Lands: North London Open Spaces: The Commons:	5% increase	Annual Measure	Epping Forest & Buffer Lands: North London Open Spaces: The Commons:?
*5 Not possible to complete in 24/25, work is underway to develop and improve our Natural Environments websites. This will be looked at in future years.			

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## City of London Corporation Committee Report

<b>Committee(s):</b> Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee – For Information Natural Environment Board – For Information West Ham Park Committee – For Information Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee – For Information Epping Forest & Commons Committee – For Information	<b>Dated:</b> 16/06/2025  03/07/2025 03/07/2025 17/06/2025 17/07/2025
<b>Subject:</b> Natural Environment Charity Review – Update on Fundraising Workstreams	<b>Public report:</b> For Information
<b>This proposal:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes</b></li> <li>• <b>provides business enabling functions</b></li> </ul>	Leading Sustainable Environment
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	No
<b>If so, how much?</b>	£
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	
<b>Report of:</b> The Executive Director of Environment and the Chamberlain	Katie Stewart Caroline Al-Beyerty
<b>Report author:</b>	Jo Hurst Assistant Director Charity Development

### Summary

A key deliverable of the Natural Environment Charity Review (NECR) is the enabling of enhanced income generation and fundraising across the eight Natural Environment Charities, in order to grow and support the delivery of their objectives.

During 2024 reports were brought to Management Committees which provided analysis of existing income types at these charities and identified potential for growth. This report details progress since then and next stages of this workplan and is being brought for information as part of the commitment to keep Members up to date on the work of the Review.

## **Recommendation(s)**

Having regard to the CoLC's trustee responsibilities for the eight Natural Environment charities and in that case being satisfied that it is in the best interests of each relevant charity and its beneficiaries, Members are asked to:

- Note the report.
- Note the two planned briefing sessions for all interested Members on Biodiversity Net Gain potential at Natural Environment sites, and fundraising opportunities and resourcing for the NE Charities.

## **Main Report**

### **Background**

1. The NECR is a wide-ranging review of the eight Natural Environment Charities across four main themes: Governance, Funding Model, Assets and Income Generation. This report summarises and updates on recent work exploring the fundraising element of the Income Generation workstream.
2. The eight Natural Environment Charities and their registered charity numbers are:
  - a) Ashtead Common (1051510)
  - b) Burnham Beeches & Stoke Common (232987)
  - c) Coulsdon and Other Commons (232988-1)
  - d) Epping Forest (232990)
  - e) Hampstead Heath (803392)
  - f) Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Kilburn (232986)
  - g) West Ham Park (206948)
  - h) West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood (232988)
3. During 2024 reports were brought to the Management Committees of these charities with details of existing income streams including the amounts of deficit funding provided to each by the City of London Corporation (CoLC), based on Local Risk elements only of each charities' accounts. "Local Risk" is the term used internally for budget under direct management of Superintendents, spent on local staff and the site. Other corporate costs of supporting the charities, central risk and capital funding were excluded for this exercise. A high-level commentary on each existing funding stream was provided and potential for additional fundraising / income generation was estimated, including identifying likely opportunities for growth, resource required and perceived risks.
4. On 13<sup>th</sup> February 2025, Policy and Resources Committee approved a change in the funding model for these charities, moving from deficit funding to a grant funding model. This decision is considered a key step to enabling some of these income streams and supporting corresponding growth of these charities.

5. Previous reports have acknowledged that the CoLC has not previously had the necessary internal expertise to further develop and realise fundraising potential and to properly assess likely growth and timescales. The Natural Environment Charity Review has therefore utilised some of its funding to engage external consultants to further develop this work.

## **Current Position**

### **Fundraising**

6. In April 2025 fundraising consultants 'The Transform Partnership' were engaged. Further details of the scope of their work follows in this report.

### **Biodiversity Net Gain**

7. Recent changes to national planning regulations require developers to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) as part of their development in certain circumstances. BNG is a mechanism for funding the creation and improvement of natural habitats and aims to ensure that development has a measurably positive impact ('net gain') on biodiversity, compared to what was there before development. Where enhancements cannot be achieved on site, or nearby, there is the possibility of developers purchasing units from land managers to provide such improvements on their behalf.
8. Many sites that are assets of the NE Charities (owned by the CoLC in its charity capacity), or are owned by the CoLC in its corporate capacity but managed in complement to the activities of those Charities (some of which was previously referred to as 'buffer land' or 'pink land' but which is now collectively referred to as 'complementary land') have significant potential to provide such biodiversity enhancement schemes and therefore may have value for marketing and management of BNG units.
9. BNG processes and markets are emergent across the UK, and this is currently a highly specialised area. Following a competitive tender exercise Mott MacDonald was engaged to provide analysis for BNG potential across all NE Charity and complementary land parcels, and that survey was completed in May 2025.

## **Proposals**

### **Fundraising**

10. The Transform Partnership will be meeting with key officers and members over the coming weeks in order to complete their research and provide a report covering:
  - a) Advice on fundraising team development and strategy;
  - b) Fundraising potential analysis across all sites, identifying viable income streams and estimating financial targets;

- c) Identifying how to allocate fundraising efforts strategically, given some charities have greater income generation potential than others;
- d) Defining the structure, roles, salaries, and responsibilities for a permanent fundraising team within the Natural Environment Division;
- e) Creating a headline income generation plan across key income streams for each Charity to support sustainable, long-term fundraising operations beyond the consultancy period;
- f) Developing a fundraising policy framework to underpin fundraising efforts;
- g) Ensuring that fundraising aligns with CoLC's financial and operational goals;
- h) Further analysis of the NE Charities and their current and future fundraising and commercial income generation work;
- i) Development of written content to support fundraising bids for each charity, including history, USP, ambitions and donor opportunities;
- j) Testing of case statement narratives with key senior stakeholders and funding prospects
- k) Recommendations including resource and policy needs, roadmaps and timelines and tried and tested cases for support, establishing useful content for fundraising pitches and proposals.

11. It is expected that this report will be presented by The Transform Partnership to all Members in a recorded session by end October 2025 allowing discussion and questions on their findings.

## **Biodiversity Net Gain**

12. Mott MacDonald have completed their research into BNG potential and have presented draft findings to key officers involved with their research. Notes and observations have been made back to them for incorporation into their finalised report.

13. It is proposed that Mott MacDonald team are invited to present their findings to all interested Members in a recorded session on the background and potential for BNG income generation at NE sites. Officers are working with Mott MacDonald to schedule this session ahead of the summer recess.

14. It is important to note that there may be many potential uses for complementary land parcels, some of which may be conflicting and some of which may be synergic. This prioritisation of these options is out of the scope of this report but is being addressed through other workstreams, including but not limited to development of a Complementary Land Policy and a Complementary Land Use Assessment.

## **Key Data**

15. Financial data informing the fundraising analysis was previously provided to Members in a report entitled 'Natural Environment Charities – Income Analysis and Priorities' which went to the NE Committees in summer 2024.

## Corporate & Strategic Implications

**Strategic implications** – These workstreams support Corporate Plan 2024-2029 outcomes particularly in Leading Sustainable Environment and Dynamic Economic Growth.

**Financial implications** – Costs for fundraising consultants and Biodiversity Net Gain analysis have been met by the Natural Environment Charity Review budget. The fundraising report will make recommendations for investment in skilled resource to support further fundraising efforts at the charities in the future but that is not included in this report.

**Resource implications** - The fundraising report will make recommendations for investment in skilled resource to support further fundraising efforts at the charities in the future but that is not included in this report.

**Legal implications** - As described in paragraph 2 of this report, the eight Natural Environment charities in scope of the matters contained in this report are all registered charities. The CoLC has various duties and obligations as a charity trustee including to only act in the best interests of the charity concerned.

Charity trustees have a duty to act reasonably and safeguard the resources of a charity, and would be expected to maximise opportunities to generate income by seeking funding from a variety of appropriate sources where possible. The CoLC may, therefore, explore fundraising opportunities (either from third parties or from income generating opportunities on the open spaces themselves), within the parameters of the respective governing documents of each of the NE Charities. As particular fundraising or BNG projects are developed in greater detail, they will need to be assessed against the governing documents and objects of the relevant charities. For all sites, including complementary land, relevant projects will need to be assessed against the capacity in which the land is held, any restrictions on land use that may operate on those sites due to, for example, restrictive covenants on their titles, and broader relevant considerations such as conservation designations.

**Risk implications** – Risks are captured and monitored as part of the wider NECR and within the risk registers maintained by department. This project is not considered to present further risks not already considered.

**Equalities implications** – Equalities implications will be assessed, as appropriate, in relation to any proposed actions and projects arising out of the income generation workstream.

**Climate implications** – The Natural Environment Charities and their associated complementary land and assets are essential to achieving corporate Carbon Action Strategy goals and other environmental objectives.

Security implications - None

## Conclusion

16. Work on the fundraising workstream of the NECR continues. Assessment of potential for income through Biodiversity Net Gain across the charities and their associated complementary land has been assessed and will be presented to interested members at a dedicated session soon. Fundraising consultants have

been engaged and will present to members on their conclusions and recommendations in October 2025.

## **Appendices**

- None

## **Background Papers**

17. "Natural Environment Charities – Income Analysis and Priorities" received by Natural Environment Management Committees from May to July 2024.

### **Jo Hurst**

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