

Committee(s): Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queens Park Education Board Open Spaces and City Gardens West Ham Park Committee Epping Forest and Commons	Date(s): 11 September 2019 12 September 2019 14 October 2019 14 October 2019 18 November 2019
Subject: Three year review of the Open Spaces Department's 'Green Spaces, Learning Places' programme	Public
Report of: Colin Buttery, Director Open Spaces Department	For Information
Report author: Abigail Tinkler, Head of Learning, Open Spaces Department	

Summary

This report and appendix provides Members with a review of the Open Spaces Department's three year (2016 to 2019) learning programme which delivered learning, play and volunteering opportunities to local children and adults at Hampstead Heath, West Ham Park, Epping Forest and Queens Park. The review provides a measure of success against the original ambitions of the programme and the lessons that have been learnt that will inform the future programme.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The charity arm of the Open Spaces Department received three year tapering funding from City Bridge Trust (CBT) in 2016 to deliver a new centrally co-ordinated outdoor Learning Programme: 'Green Spaces, Learning Places', focused on delivering to urban and deprived communities close to our open spaces.
2. This approach was centred around five impact areas; understanding, confidence, involvement, wellbeing, and connection. Using this approach, the learning team designed learning projects and services that deliver impact in our local communities.
3. The programme was predominantly delivered at Hampstead Heath, Epping Forest (including Wanstead Flats) and West Ham Park.

Current Position

4. This report provides, as Appendix 1, a review of the three years of the grant funded 'Green Spaces, Learning Places' programme.
5. The review outlines the different programmes that were offered and delivered including programmes for schools, sessions for Pupil Referral Units and young carers (Green Talent), open access play provision at Hampstead Heath, community engagement and volunteering development as well as the creation of a wildlife garden in West Ham Park. It provides details on participation numbers, achievement against targets and a summary of results of the programme's 'impact areas' evaluation that was undertaken jointly with the University of Derby.
6. The Programme exceeded its participation target and reached over 120,000 participants. The two areas which overachieved their targets to the greatest extent were the School service programme overachieving the three year target by 56% and the Green Talent programme by 78%. More information on participation levels is detailed in the review in Appendix 1.
7. CBT funding for the programme ceased on 31 March 2019. Based on the success of the Learning Programme and its delivery of many of the Corporate Plan outcomes, Education Strategy aims and Social Mobility Strategy outcomes, Members supported a request for an increase in the Open Spaces Department's resource base thus mainstreaming the Learning Programme within the core service of the Department. This additional funding is subject to the Fundamental Review.
8. The core learning programme from 2019 is listed below and opportunities for expansion and new initiatives will seek external funding for delivery.
 - Schools service operating out of Hampstead Heath, Epping Forest, West Ham Park
 - Green Talent programme working with young people struggling in education and/or furthest from the job market
 - Play activities at Hampstead Heath
 - Volunteer development and community outreach work

Corporate & Strategic Implications

9. **The Corporate Plan 2018 – 2023** - The 'Green Spaces, Learning Places' programme is contributing to the delivery of all three of the Corporate Plan's overarching aims and seven of the twelve outcomes:
 - **Contribute to a flourishing society:**
 1. People are safe and feel safe.
 2. People enjoy good health and wellbeing.
 3. People have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential.
 4. Communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need.
 - **Support a thriving economy:**
 8. We have access to the skills and talent we need.
 - **Shape outstanding environments:**
 10. We inspire enterprise, excellence, creativity and collaboration
 12. Our spaces are secure, resilient and well-maintained

10. **Social Mobility Strategy 2018 – 2028: Potential today, success tomorrow.** The learning programme supports this CoL strategy, particularly in respect of achieving the outcomes:
 - Everyone can develop the skills and talent they need to thrive
 - We role model and enable social mobility in the way we operate as an organisation and employer
11. **Education Strategy 2019-23** - the programme supports the CoL's Education Strategy 2019-2023, particularly in respect of strategic aims:
 - Provide an educational experience that enriches and inspires through access to the learning opportunities that the City's cultural, heritage and environmental assets offer, combining creativity, innovation and enterprise alongside tradition and continuity;
 - Provide high quality exposure to the world of work at all stages of education to enable pupils to make informed career choices
12. **Open Spaces Department Business Plan** - The Learning programme makes an outstanding contribution to the delivery of our Departmental top line objective: '*Spaces enrich people's lives*' and its four underlying outcomes:
 - People enjoy good health and wellbeing
 - Nature, heritage and place are valued and understood
 - People feel welcome and included
 - People discover, learn and develop

Implications

Financial

13. The programme was funded by the CBT to the sum of £400,000 over three years as a tapering grant (£220k, £130k, £50k).
14. Efforts to raise additional external funds were not successful for two key reasons:
 - most funders do not fund existing projects
 - the reputation of the City as a wealthy organisation hindered fundraising efforts, particularly when the number of funding bids outstrip the funds available.

These factors are unlikely to change in the future, but the Learning Programme will pursue external funding options for new and additional learning initiatives.
15. As the programme was not able to secure significant external funding it was agreed that Open Spaces Department underspend and/or a City Cash contribution up to £200k would provide the shortfall in 2017/18 and 2018/19. A Priority Investment Pot bid was successful in May 2018 and £87k was awarded to cover the additional shortfall in 2018/19.

Learning programme outturn position 2016-19

	2016/17 £'000	2017/18 £'000	2018/19 £'000
Total Expenditure	-356	-329	-288
Income:			
School fees	27	41	42
Grants & CBT funding	220	140	55
Total Income	247	181	80
Net Expenditure	-109	-148	-208
Shortfall funded by:	Open Spaces Department underspend	City Cash contribution	Priority Investment Pot City Cash contribution

Conclusion

16. The 'Green Spaces, Learning Places' Programme delivered a successful three year programme reaching 120,00 participants, including over 42,000 school pupils, many from the more deprived communities that surround West Ham Park, Hampstead Heath and Epping Forest.
17. Evaluation of the experiences of attendees on the programme concluded that participants have significantly improved their understanding, wellbeing, confidence, connection and involvement with nature and the outdoors.
18. On 7 March 2019 the Court of Common Council approved a £395,000 increase in the Open Spaces Department's resource base which embeds the Learning Programme as a core service within the Department, subject to the Fundamental Review. .

Appendices

- Appendix 1 Three Year Review of the Green Spaces, Learning Places Programme
- Appendix 2 Learning Principles
- Appendix 3 Maps showing school programme reach and areas of deprivation in London

Abigail Tinkler

Head of Learning, Open Spaces Department

T: 020 7332 3523

E: Abigail.Tinkler@cityoflondon.gov.uk