

<b>Committee(s):</b> Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee	<b>Date(s):</b> 24 February 2021
<b>Subject:</b> Superintendents Update	<b>Public</b>
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	<b>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 11 &amp; 12</b>
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	<b>No</b>
If so, how much?	
What is the source of Funding?	
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	
<b>Report of:</b> Director of Open Spaces	<b>For Decision</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Bob Warnock, Superintendent	

### Summary

This report provides Members with an update on matters relating to Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park since November 2020.

### Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Agree in principle the Swimming arrangements for 2021 (appendix 1), as set out in para 17.

### Main Report

#### Coronavirus Emergency Response and Issues

1. On 4 January 2021, the Government announced a third National Lockdown for England commencing on 5 January 2021. Consequently, all sport facilities are closed. The public toilets, playgrounds and car parks remain open and the Cafés are providing a take-away only service.
2. The Superintendent will provide a further update at the meeting and will continue to monitor the Government Guidance.

#### Constabulary

3. City Corporation Officers worked with partners across the Borough of Camden to manage gatherings at the Parliament Hill viewpoint. Despite there being no central London New Year's Eve fireworks display, groups gathered with approximately 500 people at the viewpoint prior to midnight on New Year's Eve.

4. The Constabulary have continued to respond to COVID-19 guidance, prioritising their response to antisocial behaviour, cycling and dog control, using the 4 E's approach of Engage, Explain, Encourage and Escalate or Enforce.
5. An online pilot assessment through the Civil Aviation Authority is now required concerning the use of drones. The Hampstead Heath Drone Policy will be updated accordingly.
6. Officers are working collaboratively across the City Corporation to administer a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPNs) Scheme. This process will include the Constabulary updating their enforcement strategy and policy.
7. Officers are in the process of procuring a Divisional wide radio system, ensuring effective communications are maintained. This follows the notice to quit an aerial mast, leased by the City Corporation, located at the northern end of Hampstead Heath.

### **Divisional Plan & Annual Work Programme (AWP)**

8. The draft Hampstead Heath Divisional Plan 2021-24 and draft Hampstead Heath Ecology and Conservation AWP for 2021-22 are included within the Meeting Agenda Pack. The Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Divisional Plans for 2021-24 and AWP for 2021-22 will be presented to Members for consideration and approval in May 2021.

### **Contractors & Maintenance**

9. The Operational Services Manager will provide an update at the meeting regarding current works in relation to gas pipe replacement.
10. The East Heath Car Park will be resurfaced, in early April 2021. Works are due to be completed ahead of the Spring Bank Holiday. Jack Straw's Castle Car Park will be available for parking during these works.
11. The Operational Services Manager will provide and update on:
  - Traditional Playground toilet refurbishment project.
  - Lido drainage works at the back of the Lido.
12. The Leisure and Events Manager will provide an update on the Lido Leak repair project, which commenced on 18 January 2021.

### **Capital projects**

13. Funding has been agreed for the Swimming Capital Project. A Gateway 2 Report is being prepared. Email engagement will be necessary with the Hampstead Heath Swimming Forum, Hampstead Heath Sports Advisory Forum prior to presenting the Gateway Report to the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee in April 2021. The Gateway 2 report will be presented to Members of this Committee in May 2021.

## **Planning**

14. The Superintendent will provide an update on the following planning applications which are being monitored.
  - Cranwood Development (Haringey).

## **Hampstead Heath Events Programme 2021-22**

15. The Leisure and Events Manager will provide a verbal update at the meeting.

## **Swimming**

16. The Bathing Ponds and Lido re-opened on 2 December 2020 following the end of the second National Lockdown and closed on 5 January 2021, following the announcement of the third National Lockdown. Swimming remained popular throughout December and early January.
17. Draft proposals for the Summer Swimming Season have been prepared by Officers (appendix 1). A Test of Relevance: Equality Analysis has been undertaken and a full Equality Analysis is not recommended. The 2021 swimming proposals will need to be reviewed and amended following further Government Guidance ahead of implementation. Therefore, Members are asked to agree the 2021 swimming proposals in principle. The Superintendent will undertake a further Test of Relevance ahead of implementing the amended 2021 swimming arrangements.

## **Highgate Wood**

18. The Wood Manager will provide an update on the COVID emergency response and issues at the meeting and will continue to monitor the Government Guidance.
19. The Highgate Wood Pavilion toilets refurbishment works were completed in December 2020 and the facilities are already being well used, especially over the weekends when visitor number are at their highest.
20. Plans are underway to create the new 2021-22 Conservation Area, close to the play area where ground compaction and loss of ground flora has been an ongoing issue for a number of years.
21. The works will form a project in the 2021-22 Highgate Wood Annual Work Programme, which along with the draft Divisional Plan 2021-24 will be discussed with the Highgate Wood Consultative Group at their meeting in April 2021, before being presented to this Committee in May 2021. The project will be an excellent opportunity for Heath Hands Volunteers to get involved in conservation work within the Wood.
22. Across the site there has been significant loss of understorey within the woodland where visitors have been stepping off the busy pathways to social distance from other visitors. This has led to a widening of existing desire lines.

## **Queen's Park**

23. The Park Manager will provide an update on the COVID emergency response and issues at the meeting and will continue to monitor the Government Guidance.
24. The draft Divisional Plan 2021-24 will be discussed with Members of the Queen's Park Consultative Group at their meeting on 21 April 2021.

## **Toilets**

25. The funding for redevelopment of the Queen's Park Public Toilets has been deferred following a Resource Allocation Sub Committee decision on September 2020.
26. At the Projects Sub (Policy and Resources) Committee meeting, 20 February 2019 Members considered a Gateway 2 Project Proposal (Regular) report of the Director of Open Spaces regarding Queen's Park Sandpit Refurbishment and Public Toilet Rebuild and the following points were made.
27. At the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee 13 March 2019 Members considered and approved a Gateway 2 report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath concerning the Queen's Park Sandpit Refurbishment and Public Toilet Rebuild.
  - The Superintendent of Hampstead Heath confirmed that all options would remain under consideration if the report was approved that day.
  - Whilst it was important to proceed with an option that guaranteed value for money, Members were mindful of the benefit that an appropriate option could provide the local community in terms of health and wellbeing.
  - Safeguarding was a key element of the project design going forward.
28. For context, Members were advised that due to the significant capital expense from a number of key large projects currently coming through the City Corporation, all projects that were not yet at Gateway 5 would be reviewed under new criteria as part of a fundamental review of revenue and projects.
29. On 9 October 2019, the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath reported to the Queen's Park Consultative Group that the project for the redevelopment of the Playground Toilet and Sandpit was on hold. New central funding arrangements would be introduced in the autumn allowing Officers to bid for funding for the projects that are on hold, as well as new Projects.
30. The redevelopment of the sandpit was removed from the project, to be managed as a project in its own right.
31. In March 2020, in principle it was agreed that a budget of £380K would be available for the redevelopment of the Queen's Park Public Toilets.
32. At a Resource Allocation Sub (Policy and Resources) Committee (RASC) in September 2020 the Sub-Committee considered a report of the Chamberlain following a review of the reprioritisation of approved capital bids previously agreed by RASC in January 2020, to assess the impacts of COVID-19 against the original Business Case put forward and whether the schemes were still relevant in their current format and met the essential criteria.

33. It was resolved by Members that the project be rescoped, deferred and resubmitted as part of the 2021/22 annual capital bid round.
34. The City Surveyors Dept has a budget with the Cyclical Works Programme allocated for toilet refurbishments of £35K.
35. The City Surveyor will be attending Queen's Park to review with the Park Manager the Cyclical Works Programme (CWP) and agree a refurbishment of the facility within the £35K CWP budget. Surveyors are of the opinion that generally, the toilets are in a fair condition.
36. The Park Manager is seeking professional advice from a Landscape Architect to consider improvements to the exterior of the building. Any improvements to the external façade will be funded through the Park's Local Risk Budget.

#### Sandpit and Playground Improvements

37. A new page has been added to the Queen's Park pages on the website to seek donations towards funding this project. Projects across the Open Spaces are also part of this initiative.
38. Donations can be made at: <https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/green-spaces/queens-park/donate-to-us>

#### **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

39. The projects and works outlined in this report contribute towards the:
  - Achievement of the three aims set out in the City of London Corporate Plan 2018-23: Contribute to a flourishing society, Support a thriving economy and Shape outstanding environments.
  - Three objectives and outcomes set out in the Open Spaces Business Plan 2020-21 (a) Open spaces and historic sites are thriving and accessible, (b) Spaces enrich people's lives and (c) Business practices are responsible and sustainable.
  - Achievement of the Hampstead Heath Management Strategy 2018-2028 Strategic Outcomes A: The Heath is maintained as a flourishing green space and historic landscape, B: Improved quality of life for Heath visitors, C: The Heath is inclusive and welcoming to a diverse range of visitors and D: Greater number of and diversity of People taking care of the Heath.

#### Financial Implications

40. The Director and Superintendent will provide a verbal update on the in-year position budget position and the budget for 2021-22.
41. A report setting out the proposed fees and charges for 2021-22 is included within the Meeting Agenda Pack.

#### Resource Implications

42. At the time of writing, the Heath is currently operating only critical and essential services as a result of the third National Lockdown. Staff resources are being prioritised keeping the Heath open, safe, accessible and secure.

### Climate Implications

43. The City of London launched its Climate Action Strategy in October 2020 and the strategy is now in implementation stage. A key part of the strategy is conserving and enhancing biodiversity alongside reducing the City of London's carbon emissions. This will be the main objective at Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park in the short term, especially following the impact of exceptionally high number of visitors due to COVID-19.

### Legal Implications

44. No Impact.

### Risk Implications

45. Risks are recorded on the Departmental Risk Register.

### Equality Implications

46. No Impact.

### Security Implications

47. Security implications are addressed in the emergency response to COVID-19 and are being monitored and recorded through the Departmental Risk Register.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Draft 2021 Swimming Proposals.

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