

Committee(s): Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee	Date(s): 06/09/2021
Subject: Superintendent's Update	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 11 & 12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	
What is the source of Funding?	
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	
Report of: Director of Open Spaces	For Discussion
Report author: Richard Gentry, Acting Superintendent	

Summary

This report provides Members with an update on matters relating to Hampstead Heath since April 2021.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Provide feedback in relation to the proposals to manage drone usage via a drone use request form, as set out in paragraph 6.
- Provide feedback in relation to the proposal to continue the biodiversity interpretation boards for the further year, as set out in paragraphs 9-11.
- Provide feedback in relation to the Heath Extension Concept Design (appendix 3) as set out in paragraphs 12-14.

Main Report

Coronavirus Emergency Response and Issues

1. From 19 July 2021, in-line with the Government's Roadmap out of Lockdown, Covid-19 signage has been removed from site. A number of Covid-19 control measures remain in place across public and staff facilities, in line with guidance.
2. Pre-booking for the Athletics Track has been relaxed. The Bathing Ponds and Lido are currently operating with a mix of free flow and pre-booked sessions.
3. The Acting Superintendent will provide a further update at the meeting.

Constabulary

4. A verbal update will be given by the Acting Superintendent in relation to recent activities undertaken by the Constabulary.
5. A Byelaw review is being undertaken across the Open Spaces Department. The process will start with a review of the Epping Forest byelaws. Hampstead Heath byelaws are expected to be reviewed in 2022.

Drone Guidance

6. The Drone Guidance for Hampstead Heath has been updated following changes to the National laws governing drone use. The updated draft Drone Guidance is attached at appendix 1. Moving forward, it is proposed to manage drone usage via a Drone Use Request Form. Members views on this approach are welcome.

Divisional Plan

7. The Hampstead Heath Divisional Plan 2021-24 (appendix 2) sets out the current position in relation to project work being undertaken across the Division.
8. Officers would like to draw Members attention to the following Divisional Plan projects:

Celebrate 150th Anniversary of the Hampstead Heath Act (HH5)

9. The seasonal biodiversity interpretation boards designed and installed as part of the #Heath150 celebrations have been well received. The interpretation boards were due to be removed at the end of March 2022.
10. The Heath & Hampstead Society have proposed that the biodiversity boards be retained for a further year between April 2022-March 2023, with updated interpretation to be produced and installed on a quarterly basis. The Society has agreed to support the costs of producing new boards for 2022 and propose to develop new boards on the theme of biodiversity discovery, enjoyment and protection on the Heath.
11. Members views of the continuation of the biodiversity boards for a further year are sought.

Playgrounds (HH9)

12. Working in conjunction with the local community, the Concept Design for the Heath Extension Playground has been produced. The Project, which was initiated by a local Stakeholder, aims to broaden the age range of the play equipment, introduce natural play features and ensure the playground is accessible for all.
13. A public engagement is currently on-going, with feedback and views on the Concept Design welcomed until 12 September 2021.
14. Members views on the Concept Design (appendix 3) are sought.

Planning (HH26)

15. Jack Straws Castle - Planning permission was granted at appeal for two dwellings on the car park site to the north of Jack Straws Castle. The western elevation of the approved scheme immediately abuts the boundary of the Heath. The design of the northern most dwelling as approved had a pitched roof and the eaves of this roof over-sailed the Heath. This matter has been raised with both the applicant and Camden Council. Additionally, two submissions have now been made by the applicant to discharge pre-commencement conditions pursuant to the appeal scheme. These relate to the approval of materials and the landscaping scheme for the car park. These applications were submitted on 13 August 2021.
16. Murphy's Yard - Community Consultation has taken place and final revisions to the Murphy's Yard redevelopment scheme are currently being worked on. The Project Team has offered to meet with Officers and local Stakeholders to discuss the proposal and any potential impact on the Heath. This meeting is to be arranged.
17. 55 Fitzroy Park – Application 2018/3672/P remains undetermined. The drainage issues remain unresolved and no further update to the application has been made since April 2021.

Annual Work Programme (AWP)

Branch Hill Pond (C&E-CW218)

18. The Highgate Wood, Trees & Conservation Manager will provide an update at the meeting.

Tree planting on Parliament Hill Broad Walk (CE-PR 3)

19. Planting of approx. 20 trees will be undertaken during the Autumn. A mix of oak, hornbeam, field maple and small leafed lime trees will be planted to create a small woodland copse.

Implementation of the Recommendations of the Ponds and Wetlands Conservation Plan (CE-PR 5)

20. The Highgate Wood, Trees & Conservation Manager will provide an update at the meeting in relation to the progress made towards implementing the recommendations for the of the Ponds and Wetland Conservation Plan.

Dams & Spillway Maintenance (C&E-CW1)

21. Works are also planned for September with regards to replacing the dressing of the Hampstead No.1 Pond dam, following incidents of anti-social behaviour in this area. Works will be undertaken by the Heath Ranger Team and Heath Hands.
22. An update will be given on the weather event of the 12 July 2021.

Cyclical Work Programme (CWP)

23. The Operational Services Manager will provide and update on upcoming CWP works, including scheduled works to drain down and desilt the Lily Pond and Swan and Water Garden Ponds.

Capital Projects

24. Capital Bid Gateway 1 reports are being submitted to seek funding for the following Projects:
 - Pergola – Timber structure replacement.
 - Parliament Hill Athletics Track – Reconstruction of the Track Surface and associated works.
25. With regard to the Capital Bid Project for the Swimming Safety, Security and Access Improvement. A tender process to appoint a Project Architect has been undertaken during August and a project timeline will be drafted during the autumn.

Events

26. The Leisure and Events Manager will provide an update on past and upcoming events, including:
 - Zippos Circus, 12-18 July 2021
 - Duathlon, 4 September 2021.
 - Hideaway Cinema, 8-12 September 2021.
 - (Jubilee Hall Trust) Run for your Life, 11 September 2021.
 - Circus Berlin, 22-29 September 2021.
27. 15 Weddings and Civil ceremonies have taken place to date, with 7 more planned during 2021. Due to the on-going impacts of Covid-19 a number of couples have postponed their ceremonies to 2022.

Swimming

28. Following a storm on 12 July, the Bathing Ponds were closed for swimming due to the impacts of heavy rainfall on water levels and bathing water quality. The Men's and Ladies' Bathing Ponds re-opened on 20 July and the Mixed Bathing Pond re-opened on 21 July.
29. The Leisure and Events Manager will provide an update in relation to proposals for the 2021/22 Winter Swimming Season, which commences on 20 September 2021.

Learning Team

30. It has been a busy period for learning at Hampstead Heath. Over 2,500 school students participated in the learning programme over the school summer term, and opportunities to spend time in nature and develop team working skills have

been appreciated following the winter lockdown. The Learning Team are continuing to work with family and community Officers at Camden Council, engaging local families identified as having been struggling over lockdown, as well as children and their mentors from the charity Chance UK.

31. In July the Learning Team began a bespoke programme for Young Carers from Hackney. Recent studies have revealed a worrying decline in the mental health and wellbeing of Young Carers due to the Covid-19 pandemic, with the lockdown restrictions increasing the burden on young carers, increasing isolation and making it harder to access support. In response to these findings, the Learning Team have provided a series of respite sessions at Hampstead Heath, providing Young Carers with an opportunity to take a break and spend time in nature. The team will lead more of these vital respite sessions over the autumn.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

32. 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.
33. The projects and works outlined in this report also contribute towards the three objectives and outcomes set out in the Open Spaces Business Plan 2020-21 (a) Open spaces and historic sites are thriving and accessible, (b) Spaces enrich people's lives and (c) Business practices are responsible and sustainable.
34. The projects and works outlined in this report contribute towards the 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

35. A new page is being added to the Open Spaces pages on the website to seek donations for the Hampstead Heath Extension Playground Project. Donations are currently being sought for the following projects:
 - Hampstead Heath Extension Playground (£40,000)
 - Model Boating Pond Island - wildlife sanctuary (£50,000)
 - Bird and mammal shelters (£5,000)

Resource Implications

36. Staff resources are being prioritised keeping the Heath open, safe, accessible and secure.

Climate Implications

37. 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 in the short term,

especially following the impact of exceptionally high number of visitors due to COVID-19.

Legal Implications

38. No Impact.

Risk Implications

39. There is a risk that works and staff resources could be further impacted by COVID-19. Risks are monitored and recorded through the Departmental Risk Register

Equality Implications

40. No Impact.

Security Implications

41. 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 – Drone Guidance
- Appendix 2 – Divisional Plan 2021-24
- Appendix 3 – Heath Extension Playground Concept Design & Engagement

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