

Committee(s): Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee	Date(s): 29/09/2021
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 Environment	For Decision
Report author: Richard Gentry, Acting Superintendent	

Summary

This report provides Members with an update on matters relating to Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park since May 2021.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Approve the Drone Guidance attached at appendix 1, as set out in paragraphs 4-8.
- Grant delegated authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chairman of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee and the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath, to finalise and implement the documentation in respect of the Professional Dog Walking Licencing Scheme ("the Licencing Scheme") which is required to commence the Licencing Scheme in October 2021, as set out in paragraphs 14-15.
- Approve the proposal to hold a Christmas Fayre on Hampstead Heath as set out in paragraphs 30-33.

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. The Acting Superintendent will provide a further update at the meeting.

Constabulary

3. A Byelaw review is being undertaken across the Open Spaces. The process will start with a review of the Epping Forest byelaws. Hampstead Heath byelaws are expected to be reviewed in 2022, and a review of the Highgate Wood & Queen's Park byelaws will follow.

Drone Guidance

4. The Drone Guidance for Hampstead Heath has been updated to reflect changes to the National laws (The Air Navigation Order 2016 as amended by the Air Navigation (Amendment Order) 2020 which has been in force since 31 December 2020. The Drone Guidance also reflects the Civil Aviation Authority's (CAA) Drone and Model Aircraft Code.
5. The Drone Guidance, once approved and implemented, will assist officers in dealing with drone flyers on Hampstead Heath. Officers will ensure that processes are put in place to enforce the legal requirements, for example, officers will monitor whether drone flyers are registered with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and have taken the relevant flying test, officers will also monitor the types of drones that are being flown on the Heath and in what areas. Drone flyers will be encouraged to fill out a "Drone Use Request Form" which will hopefully assist officers in managing the use of drones on the Heath. The law allows restrictions to be put in place in certain congested areas and officers will ensure that any restricted areas i.e. those around the ponds, are communicated and made known to drone flyers.
6. Officers will also refer to the Drone Guidance when communicating with and educating drone flyers with a view to promote safe flying of drones on the Heath (in accordance with the rules). Currently, enforcement action can only be taken through the CAA or the Metropolitan Police Service (as per the law) and officers will take necessary enforcement action against anyone caught breaching the law.
7. Going forward, officers will also be monitoring the number of drone incidents over a period of time, and if necessary will explore further enforcement routes in due course.
8. Members are asked to approve the updated Drone Guidance attached at appendix 1.

Divisional Plan

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

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

11. The seasonal biodiversity interpretation boards designed and installed as part of the #Heath150 celebrations have been well received. Working in partnership with the Heath & Hampstead Society, 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 2022-23 which will focus on the theme of biodiversity discovery, enjoyment and protection on the Heath.

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 on-going, with feedback and views on the Concept Design welcomed until 26 September 2021. Members views on the Concept Design (appendix 3) are welcomed.

Professional Dog Walking Licence Scheme (HH20)

14. Members have agreed in principle the Scheme. Dialogue continues with the Hampstead Professional Dog Walkers Association. Officers ran an expression of interest and a mapping exercise has been undertaken. Professional Dog Walkers using the Heath were asked to identify the areas of the Heath which they currently use. This information has informed a zoning approach. Officers have assessed that 70 licences can be issued without the commercial activity impacting on wildlife, the amenity of the Heath, and without causing disruption to recreational users. Advertisement of the Licencing Scheme will commence in early October 2021 to give notice to Professional Dog Walkers wishing to make a licence application.
15. In order to enable the Licencing Scheme to commence in October 2021, delegated authority is sought to allow the Town Clerk to finalise the documentation in respect of the Scheme, which are currently in draft form. The documentation includes the following:
 - Code of Conduct for Dog Walkers
 - Professional Dog Walking Licence Application Form
 - Professional Dog Walking Licencing Scheme Terms and Conditions

Planning (HH26)

16. 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.

17. 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.
18. 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.
19. 37 Lanchester Road – Planning permission for a replacement dwelling was granted by the London Borough of Haringey under ref: HGY/2021/0814. Representations were submitted by the City Corporation in respect of the impact of the proposal on ancient trees within the site boundary. Although outside the boundary of Highgate Wood, these trees were formerly part of the same ancient woodland and are worthy of protection. There were no objections raised to the principal of development. Conditions have been attached to the permission to require on-site monitoring during construction and the imposition of suitable measures to ensure tree protection and the creation of an ecological corridor through the site.
20. Cranwood House – A public consultation on the Cranwood House Development took place in January 2021. Over 200 residents submitted comments to the consultation the vast majority of whom were objecting to the development as proposed at that time. Subsequently the Council advised that the proposals would be amended in light of the comments received, including amendments to the boundary treatments adjacent to Highgate Wood to take account of the City Corporation's comments. No revised proposals have as yet been produced or presented, and there has been no update on the public consultation website in respect of any changes to the development. No application has been submitted for redevelopment of the site for housing. It should be noted that there is a temporary permission in place which allows for the temporary use of the building as a homeless shelter which expires in November 2021. It is therefore reasonable to expect that revised proposals will be produced before the expiry of that permission.

Annual Work Programme (AWP)

Branch Hill Pond (C&E-CW218)

21. A revised planning application is being submitted to Camden Council, subject to planning permission works will commence during late 2021/early 2022.

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

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

Dams & Spillway Maintenance (C&E-CW1)

23. Works have been undertaken by Heath Ranger Team and Heath Hands Volunteers to remove and replace the dressing of the Hampstead No.1 Pond dam, following incidents of anti-social behaviour in this area.

24. An update will be given on the weather event of the 12 July 2021.

Cyclical Work Programme (CWP)

25. Upcoming CWP works include:

- Drain down and desilting of the Lily Pond and Swan and Water Garden Ponds at Golders Hill Park. Drain down of the ponds is being undertaken to enable desilting works to commence on 27 September 2021.
- Replacement of the Parliament Hill vehicle barrier with sunken rising bollards. Works will be undertaken during autumn 2021.
- Internal and external decoration and replacement of white goods at the Queen's Park public toilets. Works will be undertaken during autumn/winter 2021.
- Queen's Park tennis court surface repairs. Works will be undertaken during autumn/winter 2021.

Capital Projects

26. Capital Funding Bids have been submitted for the following Projects:

- Pergola – Timber structure replacement.
- Parliament Hill Athletics Track – Reconstruction of the Track Surface and associated works.
- Queen's Park Sandpit – Redevelopment of the sandpit.

27. 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 and a project timeline will be drafted during the autumn.

Events

28. The following events have recently taken place:

- Zippos Circus, 12-18 July 2021 (Hampstead Heath)
- Duathlon, 4 September 2021 (Hampstead Heath)
- Hideaway Cinema, 8-12 September 2021 (Hampstead Heath)
- (Jubilee Hall Trust) Run for your Life, 11 September 2021 (Hampstead Heath)
- Queen's Park book festival, 18-19 September 2021 (Queen's Park)

29. Unfortunately the Circus Berlin visit to Hampstead Heath, scheduled for 22-29 September 2021, has been cancelled.

30. The Leisure and Events Manager has received an application for a small scale Christmas Fayre on Hampstead Heath. It is proposed that the fayre would run from late November 2021 until early January 2022 at the South Fairground site, and is therefore classed as a Major Event due to duration.

31. The fayre would include:
- Children's rides
 - Stall selling seasonal food and drinks
 - Christmas tree vendor (until Christmas eve).
32. The Leisure & Events Manager will provide an update at the meeting in relation to the proposed daily opening times of the fayre. The East Heath Car Park will remain open as usual for Heath visitors throughout the duration of the Fayre.
33. Members views and feedback on the proposal to hold a Christmas Fayre on Hampstead Heath are sought.
34. 17 Weddings and Civil ceremonies have taken place during 2021, with 5 more planned during 2021. Due to the on-going impacts of Covid-19 a number of couples have postponed their ceremonies to 2022.
35. The Queen's Park Bandstand has hosted 2 Weddings and Civil ceremonies during 2021 and remains popular with children's parties through the year.
36. Children's entertainment and brass band performances at Queen's Park have been provided during summer 2021 following the receipt of a donation to the Charity from a local business.

Swimming

37. 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. The winter Swimming Season commenced on 20 September and the Bathing Ponds and Lido are operating with Free Flow. The 2021-22 winter swimming season arrangements and opening times are set out in appendix 4.

Learning Team

38. 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.
39. 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

40. 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.
41. 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.
42. 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

43. 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)
44. Donations can be made via the City of London website: <https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/green-spaces/hampstead-heath/donate-to-hampstead-heath>

Resource Implications

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

Climate Implications

46. 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

47. No Impact.

Risk Implications

48. No Impact.

Equality Implications

49. No Impact.

Security Implications

50. 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
- Appendix 4 – 2021-22 winter swimming season – opening arrangements.

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