

Committee(s)	Dated:
Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee West Ham Park Committee Epping Forest and Commons Committee Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queens Park Committee	7 December 2021 7 December 2021 17 January 2021 9 February 2022
Subject: Open Spaces Business Plan 2021/22 – Six month performance update: April to Sept 2021	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	Outcomes: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/A
Report of: Juliemma McLoughlin – Executive Director, Environment	For Information
Report author: Gerry Kiefer, Open Spaces Directorate Business Manager, Environment Department.	

Summary

This report provides Members with an update on progress and performance against the 2021/22 Business Plan. The Plan was agreed by Members in December 2020 and this report identifies the progress that has been made against the seven major workstreams. Where performance measures can be measured at six months these are listed in appendix 2 and show that none of those measures are behind their six month target. Financially the Department is forecasting a close to budget net position at year end.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report

Main Report

Background

1. The Open Spaces & City Gardens Committee approved the Departmental Business Plan 2021/22 (Appendix 1) on 2 December 2020.
2. The Open Spaces Vision is; *we enrich people’s lives by enhancing and providing access to ecologically diverse open spaces and outstanding heritage assets across London and beyond.*

3. The Business Plan identified Open Space's three main objectives under which sit twelve outcomes which are set out on page one of the Business Plan. It also identified seven major workstreams to progress in 2021/22.

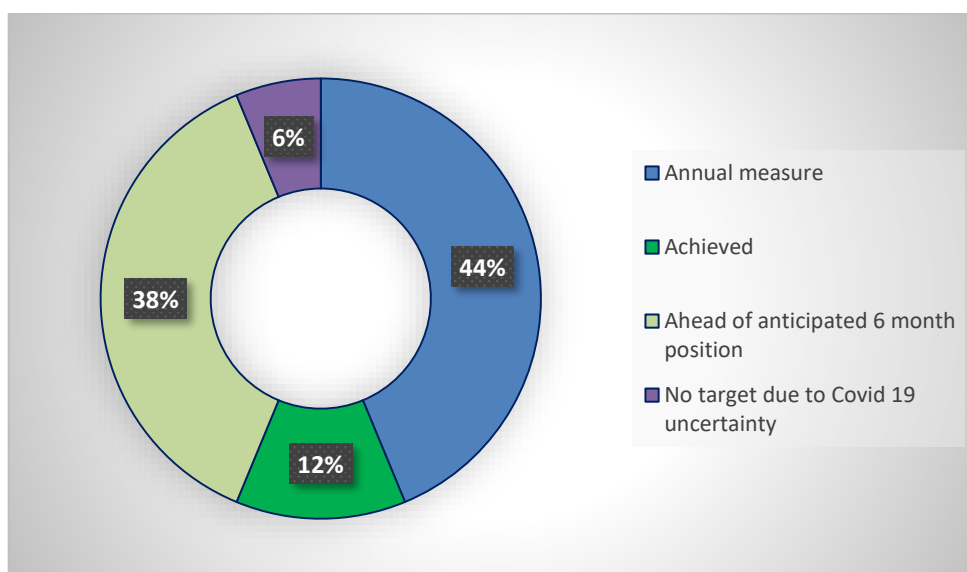
Current Position

4. Appendix 3 details the progress that has been made against the seven major workstreams of the Business Plan and identifies some areas of concern. The seven key workstreams are:
 - 1) Implement the required savings to deliver a balanced budget within the reduced core funding envelope through a combination of reducing expenditure, increasing income.
 - 2) Implement actions arising from the new Target Operating Model and provide open and early communication to all employees.
 - 3) Progress the landscaping of Finsbury Circus, the replacement playground at West Ham Park and all other RASC approved capital projects including the Climate Action Strategy.
 - 4) Work with other CoL Depts to commence the entire overhaul of Tower Bridge's High Voltage system, hydraulic pipework replacement and implementation of permanent solutions following the extensive Working at Heights review.
 - 5) Working with City Surveyors, progress future use of the nursery site at West Ham Park.
 - 6) Assess impact of expanded ULEZ on existing fleet, procurement and supplier capacity and available financial resources.
 - 7) Continue to cultivate the Burnham Beeches Gateway and biodiversity net gain project partnership with local landowners and make ready for grant/funding applications

Performance Measures

5. Open Spaces maintain sixteen performance measures. The majority of these are collated annually, but those where data is available at 6 months is attached as appendix 2.

Six month progress against annual performance measures



6. Of note is that Coulsdon Common achieved Green Heritage Site Accreditation for the first time this year on first submission, taking the total number of accreditations to 14 and also retaining 15 Green Flag Awards. Both are the benchmark international standard for publicly accessible parks and green spaces in the United Kingdom and around the world

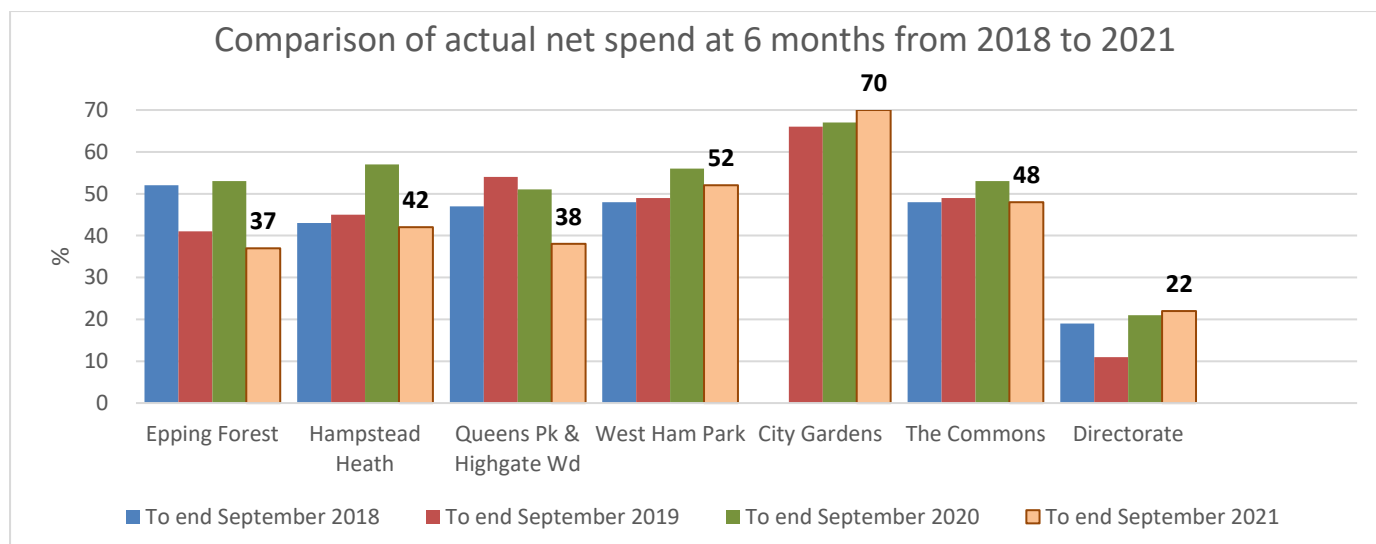
Corporate & Strategic Implications

The Corporate Plan

7. The Open Spaces Department actively contributes to all the Corporate Plan aims:
 - Contribute to a flourishing society
 - Support a thriving economy
 - Shape outstanding environments

Financial Implications – Financial Performance

8. Six months into the financial year and across the Divisions that report to the Open Spaces Committees, the full year outturn position is estimated to be broadly on budget.
9. The graph below compares the current 6 month percentage net spend position with the similar period over the last three years. The position is comparable with other years although 2020 shows as a slight anomaly for some sites due to different patterns of income and expenditure during Covid lockdowns.
10. The 70% net expenditure for City Gardens is comparable to previous years and recognises that a fair proportion of their income is from S106 contributions and rechargeable works which are applied towards the end of the financial year



Capital Funding Requests

11. The Chairs and Deputies of the various Open Spaces Committees prioritised three proposals for consideration by RASC and Policy & Resources Committee for capital funding. These are:

- i. Hampstead Heath Athletics Track
- ii. Epping Forest Path Restoration
- iii. Queens Park Playground and Sandpit.

Final approval for the 2022/23 allocation of funding to capital projects has not yet been made, but all three projects are listed as 'green' and recommended by officers for approval.

12. **Resource implications** – The Environment Department is progressing through the TOM.
13. **Legal implications** – None
14. **Risk implications** - Concerns associated with achieving the main workstreams are referenced in Appendix 3.
15. **Equalities implications** – None
16. **Climate implications** - A very brief update on the Carbon Removals project is included in Appendix 3.
17. **Security implications** - None

Open Space Charities

18. Many of the Open Spaces sites are registered charities. Officers have been asked to remind Members that decisions they take in relation to the relevant charity must be taken in the best interests of the charity.

Conclusion

19. The Open Spaces has progressed well in delivering its 2021/22 Business Plan. It is forecasting a close to budget year end position and many of the performance measures that can be measured at 6 months are on track.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 - High-level Business Plan 2021 -22
- Appendix 2 - Performance measures – position at 6 months, where available
- Appendix 3 - 21/22 Business Plan seven major workstreams: Progress and concerns

Background Reports

Final Departmental Business Plan 2021/22 – Open Spaces, December 2020.

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