

Committee(s): Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee	Date(s): 15 June 2022
Subject: Assistant Directors 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?	N
If so, how much?	
What is the source of Funding?	Local Risk
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	
Report of: Executive Director, Environment	For Decision
Report author: Stefania Horne, Assistant Director	

Summary

This report provides Members with an update on matters relating to Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park since May 2022.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the content of the report
- Agree the content of the Swimming Annual Review 2021/22 (appendix 2).

Main Report

Biodiversity and Climate Action Strategy

1. The work the Tree Team have completed on veteran tree protection over the last 12 months has been a great success, with the stock fence enclosures now verdant with new ground cover. This new growth demonstrates that the soil is recovering from the effects of intense visitor pressure over the pandemic, and in turn allows the rooting zones of the veteran trees to regenerate. The new enclosures also provide excellent habitat for nesting birds and other wildlife.
2. As part of the work supporting the objectives of the City of London's Climate Action Strategy the Conservation and Trees Manager and Ecologist are preparing a plan for the conversion of areas of amenity grassland into meadows, where grassland will be allowed to revert back to a more floristically diverse state and cut annually. The change of management will mean less compaction from regular cutting machinery, significant fuel and emissions reductions, and

improved soil condition. These new meadow areas will provide important new habitat for wildlife species and add biodiversity value to ponds and wetland habitats nearby. As part of this, a small scale pilot will be undertaken in summer 2022 and a report will be prepared for member's discussion in Autumn 2022.

Cycling

3. Officers from London Borough of Camden have consulted with 'Green School Runs', a Camden based group promoting cycling to and from local schools. Green School Runs' have collated data to support future proposals for possible new cycle routes for school children on Hampstead Heath. The data was captured by the HomeRun App from the schools listed below and captured journeys within 3 miles of Hampstead Heath:
 - UCS junior branch
 - South Hampstead High School
 - Hampstead Hill school
 - UCS Pre-prep
 - The Mulberry House School
 - St Christopher's school
 - Fitzjohn's Primary School
 - St Anthony's preparatory school
4. London Borough of Camden have provided data sample, from 1,500 children attending the schools set out above. The data recorded over 400 car journeys made around the Heath. Members of the Consultative Committee requested additional data be provided from public schools.
5. Heath Officers will continue to engage with Officers from Camden to see further data.

Capital Projects

6. A "project on a page" summary (appendix 1) has been prepared in relation to the Swimming – Safety, Access and Security Capital Project. An online surveys seeking feedback from swimmers on the proposals ran between 1-25 April 2022. Feedback from the survey is included in the Swimming Annual Review 2021-22 (appendix 2).
7. Key project milestones:
 - Planning submission - 27 May 2022 (outcome of planning expected end of August 2022)
 - RIBA Stage 3 development - June 2022
 - Works commence on site - October/November 2022

Murphy's Yard

8. Folgate Estate Ltd formally withdrew planning application ref 2021/3225/P for the redevelopment of the Murphy's Yard site on 18 May 2022. The developer has announced that they are likely to review the application and re-apply.

Events

9. Recent events include:

- Night of 10,000m Personal Bests (Hampstead Heath, 14 May 2022)
- Jubilee Fun Day (Golders Hill Park, 2 June 2022)
- John Parnum Children's Fun Fair (Queen's Park. 28 May - 7 June)

10. Upcoming events:

- Race for Life (Hampstead Heath, 18 June 2022)
- Shakespeare in the Square performing The Tempest in the Quiet Garden (Queen's Park, 18 June 2022)
- Open Garden/Studios on the Bandstand, organised by Queen's Park Area Resident Association (Queen's Park, 19 June 2022)
- Kite display at Parliament hill (Hampstead Heath, 26 June 2022)
- Give it a Go (Hampstead Heath, 16 July 2022)
- Community Heritage Fun Day (Highgate Wood, 4 September 2022)
- Bat Walk (Highgate Wood, 10 August, 7 & 14 September 2022)
- Queen's Park Day, organised by Queen's Park Area Resident Association (Queen's Park, 11 September 2022)
- Queen's Park Book Festival organised by NW6 Arts (Queen's Park, 17-18 September 2022)

Constabulary Update

11. During the COVID Pandemic there has been an increase in visits and the use of green spaces, this has brought with it challenging behaviours and anti-social behaviour, with instances of criminal damage and increased litter. A series of workshops with staff took place to discuss strengths, weaknesses and opportunities in line with this change of use and useful discussions took place with constables to develop ideas for an improved service which will continue to meet the needs of our users and the aims and objectives of the Charity.
12. Moving forward there will be an emphasis on engagement and education as a preventative tool, use of data for proactive and targeted interventions and a consistent uniformed presence that will continue to provide reassurance for the visitors of the Heath.

Good News

13. Planning approval has been granted for the Heath Extension Playground. Tendering for the works is being undertaken.
14. Highgate Wood and Queen's Park have received Green flag commemorative plaques from Keep Britain Tidy, who manages the Green Flag Award scheme. In 2021, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park became two of only four sites who have retained the award every year since its launch 25 years before.

15. Woodland management continues in Highgate Wood and a new conservation area is being created. These are areas that are fenced off to stop access so that the woodland has the opportunity to regenerate itself, and this is supplemented by new planting and tree management. The previous areas where this has occurred are signposted on the Highgate Wood map.
16. Post card project. A large collection of historic postcards of the Heath from the late 1800s and early 1900s gave us a fascinating insight into the history of the Heath. Selected postcard images have been plotted on an interactive map to show how the heath has changed over the years. [Historic Postcard Project - City of London](#). Particular thanks go to Mr Michael Hammerson, a member of the Heath and Hampstead society and historian, for access to his postcard collection..

Corporate & Strategic Implications

17. 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.
18. 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

19. Donations are currently being sought for the following projects:
 - Hampstead Heath Extension Playground (£40,000).
 - Model Boating Pond Island - wildlife sanctuary (£50,000). The Trees and Conservation Officer and Heath Ecologist are also drafting an application to the London Wildlife Trust's Rewilding London Fund for works to install additional reed beds and protect the island at the Model Boating Pond.
 - Bird and mammal shelters (£5,000).
 - Queen's Park Sandpit and Playground Improvements (£100,000).
20. 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> & <https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/green-spaces/queens-park/donate-to-us>

Resource Implications

21. Staff resources are being prioritised to keep the sites open, safe, accessible and secure.

Climate Implications

22. Included within the Divisional Plan 2022-25 is series of projects which contribute towards achieving the City of London's Climate Action Strategy, which was launched in October 2020. A key part of the strategy is conserving and enhancing biodiversity alongside reducing carbon emissions.

Legal Implications

23. We are awaiting the result of the High Court hearing (Efthimiou v Mayor and Commonalty and Citizens of the City of London) which took place on 23-24 February 2022.

24. There are no other impacts to raise at the moment.

Risk Implications

25. Risks are monitored and recorded through the Hampstead Heath Charity and Queen's Park and Highgate Wood Charity Risk Registers, and will form part of the next Committee meeting agenda pack.

Equality Implications

26. No impact.

Security Implications

27. Security implications are monitored and recorded through the Hampstead Heath Charity and Queen's Park and Highgate Wood Charity Risk Registers.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Project on a Page (Swimming Capital Project)
- Appendix 2 – Swimming Annual Review 2021/22

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