

Progress against additional priorities 1 April - 30 September 2022

City Gardens

- **Implementation of new structure** – City Gardens is now part of the Gardens and Cleansing Service within the City Operations Division. Officers have been developing new ways of working within the new team. They have completed the post-TOM recruitment that was required and have relocated from the Irish Chamber to the Guildhall.
- **Climate Action** – The City Gardens Team is working with ‘Policy and Projects’ to plant up to 100 new street trees, implement a number of climate action schemes within gardens, and develop a climate resilient planting catalogue.
- **London in Bloom Award** – City Gardens won a Gold award in the Town category of the London in Bloom Awards and retained the Green Flag Award for Bunhill Fields.
- **Electric Fleet** – City Gardens took receipt of its first electric vehicle: a Goupil G4 utility vehicle.

West Ham Park

- **Joint working** – The team is working with colleagues at Hampstead Heath to implement ‘TreePlotter’ software to manage tree inspections and works.
- **Biodiversity status** - The London Wildlife Trust has recommended that West Ham Park’s SINC (Site of Importance for Nature Conservation) status is elevated from a Site of Local Importance to a Site of Borough Importance. The recommendation is currently with Newham Council and the full SINC review will be published for public consultation later this year.
- **Playground** – The refurbished playground opened in August 2022.
- **Awards** – The park won a Gold award and was named as the overall winner in the Large Park Category of the London in Bloom Awards. It was also voted ‘Local Favourite Park’ in the UK Fields in Trust awards.
- **Climate Action** - New planting is being considered to help reduce the carbon footprint. Funding opportunities are being explored.
- **Nursery Site development** – major redevelopment of the old Nursery Site is progressing through the development stages. The aim is to provide housing and additional open space for park users.

Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen’s Park

- **Covid-19 Restoration Programme** – A new Conservation Area has been created at Highgate Wood to address compaction issues.
- **Licensing Schemes** – The Hampstead Heath Dog Licensing Scheme was launched on 1 April 2022.
- **Playground Improvements** – Construction works at the Heath Extension Playground began at the end of September, with the playground on schedule to reopen in November 2022.

- **London in Bloom Award** – Queen’s Park and Golders Hill Park both won a Gold award in the Large Park Category. The Hill Garden Pergola won Gold in the Walled Garden category.
- **Queen’s Green Canopy** – An Alder Tree was presented to the Heath as part of the Queen’s Green Canopy initiative.

Epping Forest

- **Car Parking** – Charges are now in place in all car parks with an average of 15,000 parking sessions per month (booked via RingGo).
- **Lodges** – Refurbishment of a second holiday let has been completed and is now open for bookings.
- **Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM)** – A SAMM agreement is now in place to manage and monitor the impacts of visitors to the Forest.
- **New Cattle Grazing System (GPS-driven invisible fencing)** – More than 60 animals have been using GPS collars, enabling grazing management on two new sites which have not been grazed in recent history.
- **ULEZ compliance** – Three tractors are in the process of being replaced with more efficient models. Further opportunities for replacements within the 2022/23 financial year are being identified.
- **Queen’s Green Canopy** – The Forest was dedicated as an Ancient Woodland by the Queen’s Green Canopy initiative.

The Commons

- **Management Plans** – Management Plans and associated consultation reports for the four Coulsdon Commons, i.e. Farthing Downs, Riddlesdown, Kenley Common, and Coulsdon Common, were approved by the Epping Forest and Commons Committee in May 2022.
- **Kenley Revival Project** – The project has been fully completed.
- **Queen’s Green Canopy** – Ashtead Common was dedicated as an Ancient Woodland by the Queen’s Green Canopy initiative
- **Invisible fencing** - The use of invisible fencing has been implemented at Burnham Beeches this summer using both ‘Boviguard’ and ‘Nofence’ systems.
- **Burnham Beeches landscape project** – The project is making good progress: biodiversity surveys and plans have been completed and a consultant is about to be engaged to provide costs and look at funding options.
- **Income generation** – The Eco Cafe at Burnham Beeches is on track to exceed its income target. The Riddlesdown café concession offer was advertised but the successful applicant withdrew prior to the contract being signed. A case will be made for the café to be reviewed/remarketed in 2023.

Learning and Development

- **School Programme** – The programme continues to engage high pupil premium schools and is working in partnership with Culture Mile Learning to expand this reach.
- **Post-Covid recovery** - The school service has continued to grow, with numbers now exceeding the pre-pandemic levels.

- **Bespoke learning programmes** - Learning officers have continued to work with community groups during the summer holidays. A new Youth Officer was recruited in August and new youth programmes are booked in for October, including activities for young carers and a pre-apprenticeship work experience programme for school students at risk of exclusion.
- **Learning volunteers** - The team has continued to support the learning volunteers to develop their skills, networks, confidence and wellbeing.