

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	5 December 2022 5 December 2022 21 November 2022 7 December 2022
Subject: Open Spaces Business Plan 2022/23 – Progress Report (mid-year, April-September 2022)	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	Outcomes: 2, 3, 5, 10, 11, 12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
Report of: Juliemma McLoughlin, Executive Director, Environment	For Information
Report author: Joanne Hill, Business Planning and Compliance Manager, Environment Department	

Summary

This report provides Members with an update on progress made against the 2022/23 High-Level Business Plan of the Open Spaces Department which was approved by the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee in December 2021.

As the Business Plan was written prior to the formation of the new Environment Department, it refers to the ‘Open Spaces Department’ rather than the ‘Natural Environment Division’. New Business Plans for 2022/23 will reflect the new Department and Division names.

The report summarises the progress that has been made against major workstreams and performance measures during the first six months of 2022/23. An update on the financial position is provided in the separate Chamberlain’s report also presented to this Committee.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the content of this report and its appendices.

Main Report

Background

1. The Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee approved the High-Level Departmental Business Plan 2022/23 (Appendix 1) on 7 December 2021.
2. Under the Corporation’s new Target Operating Model, with effect from 1 April 2022 the former Open Spaces Department became the Natural Environment Division of the new Environment Department. As the 2022/23 Business Plan was

written prior to the formation of the new Environment Department, it refers to the Natural Environment Division as the 'Open Spaces Department'. The new Business Plan for 2023/24 will reflect the new Department and Division name and structure.

3. The Business Plan sets out the major workstreams and key performance indicators (KPIs) for the year ahead.
4. To ensure your Committee is kept informed, progress made against the High-Level Business Plans is reported to you every six months. This approach allows Members to ask questions and have a timely input into areas of particular importance to them.

Current Position

Major workstreams

5. Throughout the year, your Committee has been kept informed of progress made against major workstreams by way of regular Assistant Director Update reports and/or separate detailed reports. A summary of progress made to the end of September 2022 is presented below.
 - **Finalise the new open spaces vision and 5-year improvement plan and progress its implementation.**
 - The new vision and the 5-year Improvement Plan are under development and work on this will continue during the second half of the year.
 - The High-Level Business Plan for 2023/24 will be presented to Committees in early 2023 and include the priority strategies for the year ahead.
 - The Charity Strategy is being reviewed as part of the work to review all nine Natural Environment Charities. This major piece of work has commenced and includes the following elements:
 - a) Charity Governance
 - b) Charity Finance
 - c) Charity Resourcing (Phase 3 Target Operating Model)
 - d) Charity Strategy including the following strategies: Nature Resilience; Community Involvement; Charity Income; Culture & Heritage; Visitor; Sport and Leisure; and Education and Learning.
 - **Progress the landscaping of Finsbury Circus, the access and security improvements at the Heath's swimming facilities, and the replacement playground at West Ham Park.**
 - The project to redevelop the Finsbury Circus site is on hold and will progress once the Capital Review process has been completed and the scope of the project clarified.
 - The project to improve the safety, access and security across the three Bathing Ponds at Hampstead Heath has progressed and is expected to be delivered within planned timescales and budget. Detailed updates

on the progression of the project are presented to your committee on a regular basis.

- The new playground at West Ham Park opened on 5 August 2022.
 - **Progress the Carbon removal projects to deliver the open spaces element of the Climate Action Strategy.**
 - An update on the Carbon Removals Project is presented in a separate report to this Committee.
 - **Actively engage in the review of Chilterns and Surrey Hills Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) boundaries.**
 - A report was presented to the Epping Forest and Commons Committee in October 2023 seeking approval for further involvement in the AONB boundary revision consultation. The report provided a detailed update on the progression of the Surrey Hills AONB boundary review. It also confirmed that there has been no progress with the Chilterns AONB so far this year.
6. Alongside the major workstreams included in the High-Level Business Plan, additional priorities for each area of service were identified at the beginning of the year. An update on progress made to date against these additional priorities is provided at Appendix 2.

Performance Measures

7. Most of the performance measures set out in the Business Plan are measured annually and will be reported to your Committee at year-end. However, where data is available at the mid-year point, it is presented at Appendix 3.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications – The monitoring of key improvement objectives and performance measures links to the achievement of the aims and outcomes set out in the Corporate Plan 2018-23.

Financial implications – Financial implications are addressed in the separate Chamberlain’s report presented to this Committee.

Resource implications – The Natural Environment Division continues to progress through the Target Operating Model (TOM) process.

Risk implications - Risks to achieving the objectives set out in the Business Plan of each service area are identified and managed in accordance with the City of London Risk Management Framework. Risk Registers are reported to this Committee quarterly.

Climate implications – An update on the Carbon Removals Project is presented in a separate report to your Committee.

Charity implications - Many of the Natural Environment sites are registered charities. Any decisions must be taken in the best interests of the relevant charity.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Open Spaces Department High-Level Business Plan 2022/23
- Appendix 2 – Key achievements
- Appendix 3 - Performance measures

Background Reports

'Open Spaces Business Plan for 2022/23'

Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee, 7 December 2021

West Ham Park Committee, 7 December 2021

Epping Forest & Commons Committee, 17 January 2022

Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee, 9 February 2022

Contact

Joanne Hill, Business Planning and Compliance Manager, Environment Department

T: 020 7332 1301

E: Joanne.Hill@cityoflondon.gov.uk