

<b>Committee(s):</b>	<b>Date(s):</b>
Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee	11 <sup>th</sup> March 2013
<b>Subject:</b> Update on Hampstead Heath – Public Sex Environment Outreach Work, 2012	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Simon Lee – Superintendent Hampstead Heath	<b>For Discussion</b>
<p><b>Summary</b></p> <p>This report provides an update on the partnership work, which has been undertaken by the City of London, Hampstead Heath Constabulary and Terrence Higgins Trust during 2012 in providing public sex environment outreach sessions on the West Heath, Hampstead Heath.</p> <p><b>Recommendation(s)</b></p> <p>Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note the partnership work that has been carried out by the Hampstead Heath Constabulary, Terrence Higgins Trust and other agencies, in promoting the safe and responsible use of Hampstead Heath during 2012.</li> <li>• Provide their views on continued partnership work between the Hampstead Heath Constabulary, Terrence Higgins Trust and other partners for 2013.</li> </ul>	

## **Main Report**

### **Background**

1. West Heath has a history of being a popular public sex environment (PSE), it is known locally, nationally and internationally as an area where sexual activity takes place, publicised through various media including the internet. The West Heath tends to be used by men who want to have sex with other men (MSM).
2. There are a number of issues associated with the PSE, these include, homophobic crime, sexual offences, offences against indecency and propriety and littering, including sexual detritus.
3. In 2002, Hampstead Heath Managers set up a Sexual Activity Working Group (SAWG), working in partnership with key stakeholders. These partners include the Metropolitan Police (MPS), Terrence Higgins Trust (THT), Camden Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) Forum, members from the local community, including the Heath & Hampstead Society and City of

London Corporation. The success of this group has been to provide a forum to raise awareness of the impact of PSEs between different parts of the community and seek positive action to try and resolve conflict. The group have advanced a number of initiatives to address the increasing concern about sexual activity and litter on Hampstead Heath in the areas, which are used as PSEs.

4. In 2011, THT representatives met with City of London Officers to discuss issues around disposal of sex litter by Heath users who frequent the PSE West Heath area. Patrols in previous years had focused on encouraging users to report crime but had failed to effectively deal with the concerns of local residents and Heath users indicating that whilst sexual activity, if discreet, is not necessarily an issue, the detritus they left behind was. THT were also keen to strengthen their relationship with the Hampstead Heath Constabulary (HHC).
5. The Superintendent of Hampstead Heath agreed to fund THT outreach sessions. These sessions would take place on a Friday evening over the summer months in 2011. To promote the new initiative THT produced new wallet cards (Appendix 1) with the central message of “Bin It” outlining their key deliverables. The message that both THT and the City of London wanted to deliver was for users to stay safe, dispose of litter responsibly and report crime.
6. It was resolved at the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen’s Park Management Committee meeting of 28 November 2011 that the City of London would continue to support the partnership between THT and the City of London in 2012.

## **Current Position**

7. The Hampstead Heath Management Plan ‘Towards a Plan for the Heath 2007 – 2017’ states;

### ***Informal Public Use – Sexual Activity***

7.6.16 No activity of a sexual nature will be tolerated on the Heath where it could cause public offence.

### ***Overriding Objective***

Recognise that the Heath’s main users are those who come for informal activity and manage informal recreational activities to ensure that as far as is reasonably practical they do not adversely affect others’ enjoyment of or the natural aspect of the Heath.

### ***Essential Action***

P9 - Work with members of the community, the Sexual Activity Working Group, the Metropolitan Police Service and others to reduce conflict between Heath users.

8. In 2012, the City of London continued to work in partnership with the THT. As in previous years, this has taken the form of volunteers and sessional workers from THT co-patrolling the West Heath in the evenings with the HHC. The method of approach used by THT staff was an initial introduction to PSE users and explain the 'Bin It' campaign which encourages people to take their sex litter with them or to find a bin and dispose of their litter responsibly. The PSE users are also offered men condoms and lube in order to encourage the safe sex messages that THT promote and information about how to report crime.
9. For 2012, THT appointed a lead outreach worker to become the familiar face of the team attending as many of the outreach sessions as possible and offering a consistency of service. The lead outreach worker had also supported the THT Community Engagement Manager in co-ordinating and training the volunteer team, around such areas as health and safety, communication skills as best applied to PSE users and appropriate responses to questions, comments or criticism to the service.
10. The goal for THT and the HHC was to empower PSE users to make the best possible choices for themselves, in terms of their health, their safety and well-being, and their use of the Heath as a place that all visitors can enjoy without conflict. The key message delivered was to 'Bin it'. The continuity of having the same faces patrolling the Heath meant that users were more willing to trust the service and more able to advise on and report anti-social behaviour. This latter point proved particularly important with MSM who often did not access services due to the fear of being 'outed' because of their sexual activities.
11. The HHC has a constable who is a dedicated LGBT liaison officer as well as carrying out his constabulary duties on the Heath on a day-to-day basis. This constable became the designated point of contact for education, enforcement, guidance and outreach operations on the Heath. The presence and availability of the constable improved the overall running of the outreach sessions by forward planning and improving the safety risk assessments for THT workers and the Constabulary, effectively formalising the relationship between the two partners.
12. Whilst on patrol outreach workers had access to a Heath radio for improved communication, their own safety and to ensure they have direct contact with the Constabulary officers at all times. There has also been a plain-clothed presence of Constabulary officers to accompany the outreach workers for the outreach sessions. Having the support of the constables has resulted in a sense of reassurance and safety for the THT staff and volunteers and wherever possible a dedicated officer has been able to stay with THT for the whole patrol. This maintains safety and ensures workers have the local knowledge of the area to guide them into the main areas of activity. This has allowed the HHC to give out advice on the byelaws and criminal law that apply to the area. The aim has been to make the Constabulary more accessible to a diverse group of people who have a history of ambiguity towards police and its working partners

13. The outreach sessions took place mostly on Friday evenings, and continued from May to October.

### **Feedback from PSE Users**

14. The following feedback has been received from PSE users:

*Two men stated they have 'never experienced crime' on the Heath. Two separate people stated that Clapham Junction is not a safe place for cruising, which we can assume, is the reason they were on the Heath. On the same date, a male stated that there used to be a lot of trouble with youths on the Heath who would stand at the bottom of Jack Straws Car Park and shout abuse, however this has not happened for a while and the constabulary have had no reports of this type of occurrence for some time. One male stated he was punched in the face whilst cruising in Hyde Park so he does not go there anymore. He was handed a 'Bin it' card to ensure his safety on the Heath.*

*One man said, "It was scary seeing a police officer". However, he appreciated the outreach work that is carried out after dark. On the same day one male was given a business card and said sarcastically "Does anything really get done". He was advised on our policies and policing plan. Another male said that he had posted comments on the cruising site Squirt.com regarding the police presence to discourage bad behaviour during the day.*

### **Demographics of PSE users**

15. To try and better understand the demographics of PSE users, THT requested some basic information from users as part of their outreach sessions. The age of men ranged from 19 to 70. The age of men tended to range from 30 upwards in the earlier part of the evening, as numbers of men increased, so did the age range of users. No one under the age of 18 were ever observed to be on the Heath, although there were a significant proportion of university students who stated that other public sex environments/venues such as saunas were 'too expensive'. There appeared to be no set areas for the diversity of men using the Heath i.e. no particular straight or gay exclusive areas. It was noted, during the hours of darkness, the wooded area adjacent to Jack Straws Car Park tended to be a popular area for visitors to the PSE. This area, for the first 50 metres from the road, is reasonably flat and may be popular due to users, who are under the influence of alcohol, not wishing to enter further in to the West Heath through fear of physical injury i.e. tripping over roots.
16. Escorting (sex working) was sometimes identified on the Heath and appropriate information was delivered for these men often involving signposting to THT's SWISH project (managed by the THT Community Engagement Manager) offering support and advice to people working in the sex industry.

17. Following interventions with PSE users between July and October 2012 the age ranges of users were recorded as;

Age Group	20 - 30	31 - 40	41 - 50	51 - 60	61+
No.	38	65	42	67	6

Users were asked what their place of origin and their ethnic origin was:

Place of origin:

- **Inner London 29%**
- **Tourist 37%**
- **Outer London 23%**
- **Other 11%**

Ethnic Origin:

- **White 49%**
- **Black African 6%**
- **Latin American 21%**
- **Asian 5%**
- **Other 19%**

18. When asked , barriers for many service users for not reporting crime included:
- **Poor awareness of legal stance on PSEs**
  - **‘Outing’ behaviour conducted on the Heath to the public**
  - **Historical experiences of adverse police attitude and behaviour**

## **Events**

19. On Saturday 20 October 2012, a ‘Clean up West Heath’ event was supported with volunteers from THT, Camden LGBT Forum and Hampstead Heath Constabulary. Despite inclement weather contributing to low attendance at the exhibition trailer, the resulting litter pick was very successful. There was with positive feedback from users on the West Heath. Between the ten staff and volunteers, the team provided ten hours of litter picking in the West Heath area.



Volunteers at the Clean Up Event - Oct 2012

### Other Joint Outreach Work

20. On two occasions, the THT Community Engagement Manager invited outreach workers from GMI Partnership (Gay Mans Interaction Partnership) to attend the Heath on a joint patrol with the HHC. The GMI Partnership is made up of Positive East, the Metro Centre and West London Gay Men's Project..
21. Comments made by those completing the GMI questionnaire included:  
*One Gentleman said that he was glad of police presence in the PSE part of The Heath as it made him feel safer. He had himself been physically attacked a few years ago at Clapham Common - he didn't report this. He consequently has never been back there since. He purposely cruises on the Heath because he knows that there is police presence and it makes him feel safer. He has spoken to other users of the Heath who say the same thing; Been attacked at Clapham Common, so use The Heath as police presence makes it safer.'*
22. Some positive comments have been made and show the good results that the outreach work is getting from interacting with the regular Heath visitors. One comment makes mention of how two males who had previously been stopped by Constables from the Heath Constabulary. The males did not have a negative perception of the police which in turn reinforces the fact that they were stopped for their behaviour for good reasons and were dealt with professionally.
23. Recently the Constabulary has made contact with the new outreach worker for Camden LGBT Forum (Hannah Connelly). Going forward the Forum will have some input into the outreach programme also. Camden LGBT Forum hopes to work with the GMI Partnership next year to offer a more static service to promote their specific messages about reporting homophobic crime. On Thursday 25th October 2012, an event was held in partnership with

the Constabulary, Camden LGBT Forum and GMI on the Heath to promote their separate messages. A stall was set up on a main path at the foot of Jack Straws Car Park. It was lined with tea-lights and a rainbow flag which made it stand out. There were a handful of visitors to the stall who stayed for a discussion and were interested in the fact the various organisations were in the area. Only a few passers-by wished not to engage.

### **Proposals for 2013**

24. The continuation in 2013 of a partnership approach with THT will support the City of London in maintaining a safe and appealing Open Space. It will continue to develop relationships with Heath users and stakeholders delivering a message of commitment to maintaining a high quality open space.
25. A limited constabulary resource, without the support of key stakeholders, may see a decline in the PSE area environmentally and an increase in crime and anti-social behaviour.
26. A continued consistent approach by the City of London, utilising constabulary officers and a dedicated Constabulary LGBT Liaison Officer who can assist in the co-ordination and delivery of the 'Bin it' message as part of the outreach work with the support of the THT outreach workers.
27. With the support of THT, the 'Bin it' message will continue to be delivered to users, thus reducing impact to the environment by littering and waste.
28. Further 'clean up' litter pick events are proposed in the spring and late summer of 2013 to promote the work that is being carried out by THT, volunteers, the City of London and the HHC.
29. THT workers to wear T-shirts promoting the 'Bin it' the campaign whilst carrying out their work on the West Heath
30. Develop further, the educational message to users when engaging with them especially around the environmental impact of not disposing of litter and waste responsibly.
31. Extend the work to other areas of the Heath where there is an identified PSE and an opportunity to promote areas to all users for their enjoyment.
32. Seek further opportunities for volunteering work, engaging with a hard to reach group of users who may have an interest in carrying out some type of conservation or maintenance work on the Heath.
33. It is suggested that further diversity training will be delivered for staff at some of the Hampstead Heath facilities, including the men's and ladies bathing ponds.
34. Hampstead Heath Rangers will lead a short walk on the West Heath as part of the Camden LGBT History month in February 2013. This walk will provide information on the environment and biodiversity on the West Heath.

## Corporate & Strategic Implications

35. This partnership approach meets with The City Together Strategy themes of *“protecting, promoting and enhancing our environment and is safer and stronger”*. It links to the Department’s Improvement Plan objective of *achieving high quality and accessible open spaces and involving communities in the care and management of our sites*.
36. The outreach work meets with the Departmental Strategic Aim for Inclusion - *Involve communities and partners in developing a sense of place through the care and management of our sites and Quality to provide safe, secure and accessible Open Spaces and services for the benefit of London and the Nation*.
37. Two of the three strategic aims in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan also apply to the outreach work, namely:
  - **Provide modern, efficient and high quality local services and policing within the Square Mile for workers, residents and visitors with a view to delivering sustainable outcomes.**
  - **Provide valued services to London and the nation.**

## Implications

38. The Division currently employ two members of staff to work in the West Heath, primarily their function is to keep the area clean. There are further financial implications, which would be met from the Hampstead Heath Local Risk Budget. The costs for THT to produce information material that has been handed out, undertaking outreach works and delivering diversity training costs just in excess of £5,000.
39. The City also has byelaws for its open spaces that are relevant to the issues of managing a PSE. The byelaws for Hampstead Heath prohibit any nuisance contrary to public decency or propriety as well as designedly doing any act which outrages public decency. A person in breach of any byelaw is liable to a fine. The byelaws at Hampstead Heath are enforced by attested constables from the HHC.
40. PSEs have no legal designation. People that use them do not as a matter of course commit a criminal offence by being there. It is an individual’s behaviour that may constitute a criminal offence dependent on the circumstances and any complaint that may have been made.

## Conclusion

41. Litter and waste collection takes up a considerable resource within the Division, the continuation of the outreach work along with the support from



other stakeholders will continue to deliver the 'Bin it' message, along with the City of London providing a safe environment for visitors.

42. The outreach work has gone from strength to strength. Continuing interest and enthusiasm from THT volunteers and Hampstead Heath Constables has ensured the projects successes, receiving positive feedback, visitors feeling safe and reassured and the Heath being used responsibly.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – 'Bin it' Campaign Leaflet

## **Background Papers:**

Hampstead Heath – Public Sex Environment Outreach Work – November 2011

## **Contact:**

### **Richard Gentry**

Constabulary and Queen's Park Manager

T: 020 8969 5661

E: [richard.gentry@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:richard.gentry@cityoflondon.gov.uk)

### **Ian McGowan**

Constabulary Officer (LGBT Liaison Officer)

T: 020 8340 5260

E: [ian.mcgowan@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:ian.mcgowan@cityoflondon.gov.uk)

## Appendix 1

Supported by



THT's Outreach Team can be contacted on 020 7812 1809. If you are involved in escorting please call the SWISH team on the same number. If you have any concerns about HIV or your sexual health call our THT Direct helpline on 0845 12 21 200. We can also refer you to a free Fastest testing clinic.

Terrence Higgins Trust is a registered charity in England and Wales (no. 288527) and Scotland (no. SC022940). Design: Feltan Communication 020 7405 9900 Ref: 12163



Terrence Higgins Trust's Outreach Team will be here from May to July on Friday nights to give out free advice, condoms and lube.

We are working with the Hampstead Heath Constabulary and MPS to ensure that you look after yourself. If you are having sex on the Heath always use a condom. **Stay Safe. Be Careful.** If you are attacked. **REPORT IT.**

If you would like to report a crime, contact us on the following numbers, we will support you in doing so;

**Hampstead Constabulary:** 020 8340 5260

**Police:** (in emergency) 999 (non emergency) 0300 123 1212

**We are now providing bins for you to dispose of your sex litter.**

The Heath is a place for everyone to enjoy. Put your used condoms and lube wrappings in the bin and help ensure that it remains a safe place for everybody.

Be responsible. **Bin it.**