

Committee:	Date:
Open Spaces Committee – For decision	13 February 2023
West Ham Park Committee – For information	13 February 2023
Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen’s Park Committee – For information	8 February 2023
Epping Forest and Commons Committee – For information	16 March 2023
Subject: Draft High-Level Business Plan 2023/24 – Environment Department	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 11, 12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
Report of: Juliemma McLoughlin, Executive Director Environment	For decision
Report author: Joanne Hill, Environment Department	

Summary

This report presents for approval the high-level Business Plan for the Environment Department for 2023/24. Due to the complexity and scope of the department, three separate High-Level Business Plans have been produced to reflect our three key Committee ‘clusters’. The plan presented in this report covers the Natural Environment Division and City Gardens.

Recommendation

Members of the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee are asked to:

- Note the factors taken into consideration in compiling the Environment Department Business Plan; and
- Approve, subject to the incorporation of any changes sought by this Committee, the departmental high-level Business Plan 2023/24.

Members of the West Ham Park Committee; the Epping Forest and Commons Committee; and the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen’s Park Committee are asked to:

- Note this report

Main Report

Background

1. As part of the new framework for corporate and business planning, departments were asked to produce standardised high-level, two-side Business Plans for the first time in 2017 for the 2018/19 year. Members generally welcomed these high-level plans as being brief, concise, focused and consistent statements of the key ambitions and objectives for each department.
2. For 2023/24, the high-level Business Plan has further evolved to add more narrative and improve readability. The Business Plan now incorporates TOM departmental structure changes. As a high-level plan, this document does not capture the granularity of departmental work but gives the strategic overview of departmental activity, trends where applicable and direction of travel.

Draft final high-level Business Plan for 2023/24

3. This report presents, at Appendix 1, the draft final high-level Business Plan for 2023/24 for the Natural Environment Division and the City Gardens Service of the Environment Department.
4. This high-level plan includes the key areas of work that will be undertaken during 2023/24, all of which are focused on the need to continue to deliver our services in an efficient and compliant manner, while maximising opportunities to reduce expenditure and generate income.
5. The plan was developed through consultation with the department's Senior Leadership Team, Assistant Directors and colleagues from across the wider City Corporation. The involvement of colleagues from Town Clerk's Department, and the Chamberlain's Department has been instrumental in refining deliverables and priorities.
6. Throughout the year, the Environment Department reports to Committees on progress made against the workstreams and performance indicators set out in its Business Plan. Updates on key business risks are also reported on a regular basis. This gives Members the opportunity to scrutinise the department's progress towards achieving its objectives.
7. Members have further opportunity to scrutinise departmental performance through the Bilateral process, which most recently occurred in autumn 2022. In addition, the Audit and Risk Management Committee scrutinise the risk management process and ensure top risks are reviewed through regular risk updates and deep dives of corporate risks.

Standing Order 56: Property assets

8. The Environment Department's 850 staff are based across 25 sites throughout London and the south-east. We hold approximately 400 physical assets, almost 300 of which are at our Natural Environment sites.
9. The Executive Director is represented by the City Operations Director and the Interim Natural Environment Director on the Board for the Corporation's Operational Property Review Programme. As part of this Programme, the Department is undertaking a critical review of all its physical assets, including operational property. A Departmental 'Task and Finish' group will be established early in 2023/24 to undertake this project. The initial stage of the project will be to identify the resources required to undertake a full analysis and in-depth review of all physical assets held by the department, including baselining operational requirements, financial position and state of repair.
10. Following this, we will work with the City Surveyor's Department to establish a detailed project plan and realistic timeline. An update on the status of the assets relevant to this Committee will be reported, including any that are identified as surplus to requirements.

Corporate & Strategic Implications - The Corporate Plan outcomes we have a direct impact upon are listed in the Business Plan. The Plan also shows other key City of London strategies we are helping to deliver. Officers will actively engage with colleagues in the Corporate Strategy and Performance Team as they develop the new Corporate Plan.

Financial implications - The high-level Business Plan has been produced in liaison with Chamberlain's Department and takes into consideration opportunities to reduce expenditure and increase income in order to make necessary savings.

Public sector equality duty (PSED) - The Department has established an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Working Group which is working on an EDI Action Plan. Members of the group will lead on a range of EDI actions, including those set out in the Business Plan, to ensure compliance with the PSED across the department.

Resourcing implications - Any changes to resources will be brought to the relevant Committee(s).

Security implications - None

Conclusion

This report presents the draft high-level Business Plan for 2023/24 for the Environment Department's Natural Environment Division and City Gardens Service for Members to consider, approve or note, as indicated.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Draft Environment Department high-level Business Plan 2023/24

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