

Epping Forest and Commons Committee Away Day

17 February 2023

Natural Environment Division Strategy

Natural Environment Strategy: Vision

Our vision is: *“The City of London Corporation’s open spaces are life-enhancing places where everyone is invited to spend time, enjoy and learn within a sustainable and resilient natural environment”*

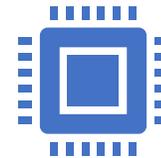
Work to date



- Strategies have been developed on the agreed key themes which are grounded in existing management plans and strategies



- There was a process of aligning with higher level strategies, such as the CoLC Corporate Strategy, The London Plan and some neighbouring Council plans and priorities, demonstrating a golden thread



- The strategies were tested against the founding objects (which themselves are under review), recognising the complexity of sites and land ownership arrangements



- Strategies then synthesised into a single coherent strategy, setting the guiding vision and key overall objectives

Integrating strategies into a single document

6 existing Strategies covering:

- Nature Recovery and Climate Resilience
- Community Engagement
- Learning
- Visitor and Destination
- Charity Income
- Culture and Heritage (Draft)



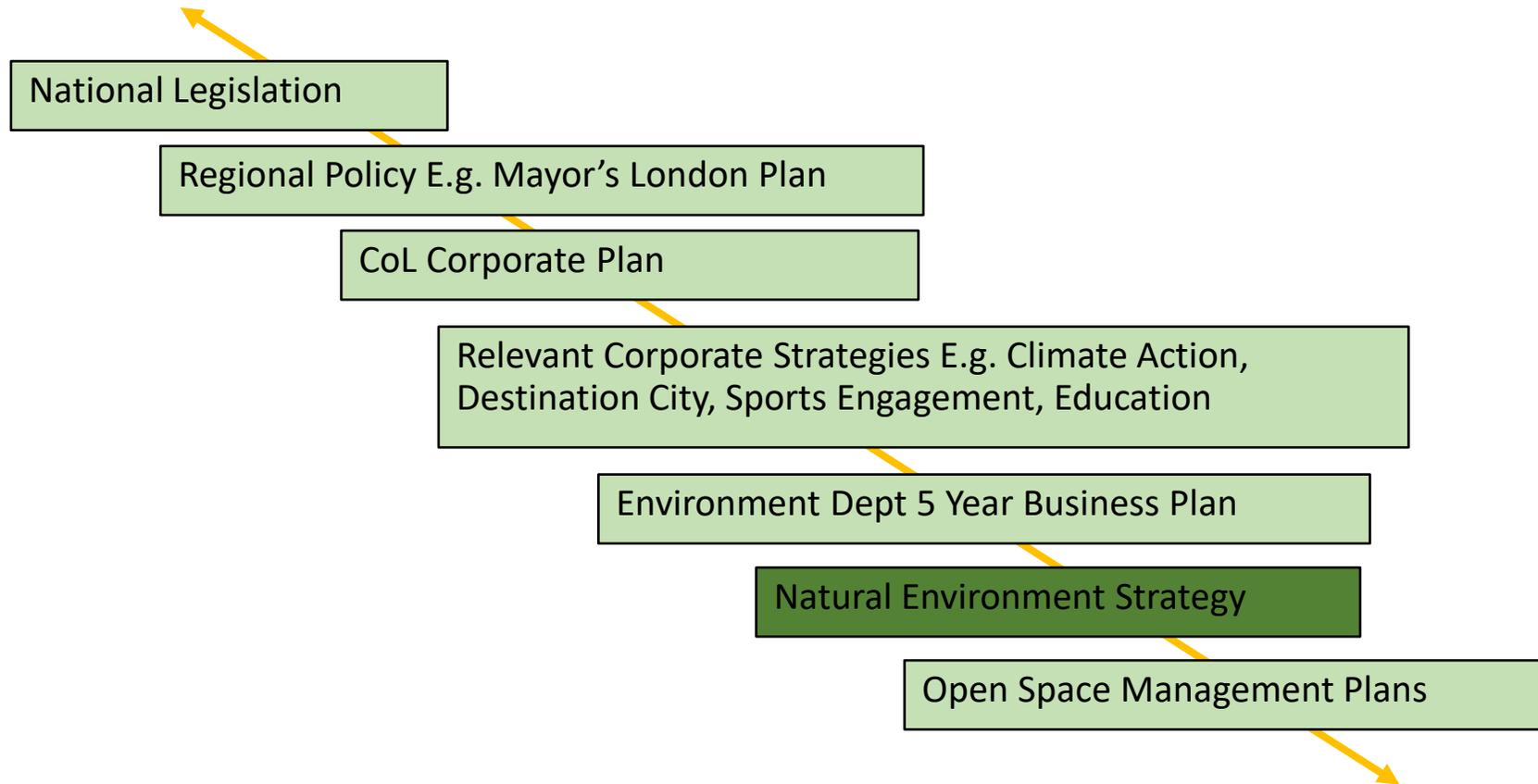
Reasons for combining into a single Strategy:

- Reduce repetition across the Strategies
- Resolve or directly address areas of conflict between Strategies
- Create clear and concise Vision, Aims and Outcomes for Natural Environment
- Create compelling 'story' of what Natural Environment is and what it can be in the future

Overview of combined document

- A single vision for the Natural Environment Division but flexible to meet the needs of each Charity
- 10 Strategic Aims covering the key aims of each of the 6 Strategies
- 14 Outcomes describing the future of our Open Spaces.
- A combined First Year Action Plan
- Reference to our responsibilities, our challenges over the coming five years, our resources and our performance
- Reference to our commitment to best practice behaviours and how we will use this Plan to guide our activities

The 'Golden Thread'



Ten Strategic Aims (Aims 1-5)

1. To protect and enhance, thriving urban, peri-urban and rural green spaces at the heart of wider, inter-connected natural landscapes.

2. To support the achievement of net zero carbon, bio-diversity improvement and build climate resilience across our open spaces.

3. To increase the involvement of local communities in contributing to the continued protection of our Open Spaces.

4. To describe the value, through data, of our activities and assets, including adoption of the Natural Capital approach

5. To develop strong partnerships with the public and private sector that influence issues and opportunities affecting our open spaces and land adjacent to our boundaries

Ten Strategic Aims (Aims 6-10)

6. To effectively promote our open spaces and their range of recreational activities and facilities, develop audiences and provide an inclusive welcome to all visitors

7. To provide opportunities for people to learn and benefit from our green spaces, delivering activities which improve wellbeing, build nature connection, and develop knowledge and skills.

8. To protect and enhance our built heritage, landscape heritage and archaeological assets and promote them as part of our visitor and learning offers.

9. To generate income, both revenue and capital, for reinvestment to support the long-term future of our Charities.

10. To establish and maintain modern charity structures and processes that enable implementation of this Strategy and deliver our Charities' objects.

14 Strategy Outcomes (1-8)

Climate Action/Conservation

1. Climate change adaptation and mitigation, and carbon sequestration within our open spaces is enhanced as a result of the techniques we adopt to manage land and resources
2. Biodiversity, natural and heritage assets within our ownership boundaries are conserved in perpetuity and, where appropriate, enhanced
3. Our buffer lands are actively managed to help to protect and enhance our open spaces, provide visitor gateways that reduce pressure on biodiversity, sequester carbon, generate income and support nature recovery.
4. Our visitor activities inspire but do not harm our ability to deliver bio-diversity improvement, heritage protection or nature recovery

Visitors and Volunteers

5. People enjoy a positive visitor experience which, in turn, secures income that supports the financial resilience of our open spaces
6. More people than ever before from traditionally under-represented or disadvantaged communities visit, and volunteer in, our open spaces
7. Our visitors and volunteers benefit from improved health and well-being
8. Our visitors help us to learn more about our open spaces through improved engagement and knowledge sharing

14 Strategy Outcomes (9-14)

Learning

9. Our learning programmes increase participants' wellbeing and their understanding, confidence and connection to nature.
10. Our learning offer reaches participants across Greater London including a greater proportion of all participants from the most deprived London boroughs and from people with special educational and physical needs

Financial Resilience

11. Our Charities are financially resilient and secure the income they need to reinvest in the on-going protection and enhancement of our open spaces.
12. The data we collect on our assets, activities and visitors, support service improvement, sound governance and prudent financial management of our Charities and open spaces

Promotion and understanding

13. Our open spaces, including natural and heritage assets, are well known and understood for the important role they play in the lives of the people who use them and; the Natural Environment Division is seen as thought leader in relation to open space management

Partnerships

14. Our partnerships with local authorities, statutory agencies and a wide array of local communities support good decision-making, mitigate the impact of development affecting our open spaces, secure funding (or land) and support the implementation of our Strategy

Information gaps and questions for the group

Information gaps include:

- Further data from across Natural Environment to highlight the range of activities, assets and impact of our open spaces
- Collation of a full five-year action plan in tabular form

Questions for this group include:

- Do you agree with the direction of travel expressed within the Strategy?
- Are there particular gaps or points of emphasis that you would like the Strategy to include?

Next Steps



Further Feedback received
on draft Strategy (Feb '23)



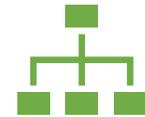
Resolution of remaining
information gaps (Feb '23)



Creation of a high quality
presentation and format for
the combined Strategy using
images, info-graphics and
colour (March '23)



Further briefing to Members
(April '23)



Adoption of Strategy via
Committees (May '23)