

<b>Committee(s):</b> <b>Natural Environment Board</b>	<b>Dated:</b> <b>04/12/2023</b>
<b>Subject: Summary of Natural Environment Away Day</b>	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	1.2.4.9.10.11.12
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>If so, how much?</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Report of: Bob Roberts - Interim Executive Director, Environment</b>	<b>For decision</b>
<b>Report author: Emily Brennan - Natural Environment Director</b>	

## Summary

The purpose of this report is to present options for the vision, mission and strategies for the Natural Environment Division for approval.

## Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

1. Consider and approve the Natural Environment Division's **vision**
2. Consider and approve the Natural Environment Division's **mission**
3. Note the contents of the information provided to support the vision and mission
4. Approve the four Natural Environment Division Strategies:
  - a) Conservation and Nature Resilience 🌳
  - b) Community Engagement 👤
  - c) Access and Recreation 💡
  - d) Culture, Heritage and Learning 🏛️

## Background

One of the key aims of the Natural Environment Board is to develop an overarching vision and mission for the Natural Environment Division, supported by a suite of strategies. These will be used to guide and prioritise the Corporation's work across the open spaces and will also enable a more joined-up and outward-looking approach. Ultimately, the vision, mission and strategies will help shape and deliver the Corporation's contribution to tackling the global biodiversity and climate crises

and will help conserve and enhance the benefits that the Corporation's open spaces provide for people.

Arising from the draft Natural Environment Division strategies produced in July 2022, there was a recognised need to focus on priorities and actions that would achieve strategic outcomes for both the Natural Environment Division and the wider Corporation, and to set clear timelines for the implementation of the strategic priorities and actions. This would enable clear prioritisation and regular progress reports to be brought back to this Board.

The Natural Environment Director was appointed in June 2023 and was tasked with enabling completion of the vision, mission and strategies for the Division with the deadline of launching them at the Natural Environment Board dinner on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024. A project timetable was drawn up to enable stakeholder engagement and the appropriate governance processes to be followed. A series of workshops were held with Natural Environment Board Members and staff in autumn 2023 and the feedback gathered from these workshops was used to shape a draft vision, mission and strategies for the Division. Staff and Members were given a further opportunity to comment on these in November 2023 and these comments have been used to shape the final vision, mission and strategies. This process has been closely aligned with the development of the new Corporate Plan for the Corporation to ensure that a 'golden thread' runs throughout, and that the value and importance of the open spaces is adequately recognised in the new Corporate Plan.

### **Current Position**

A vision, mission and four strategies have been developed for the Natural Environment Division following a comprehensive period of consultation with Members and staff. The four strategies focus on the thematic priorities for the Division's work, namely nature conservation and resilience (including climate change), community engagement, access and recreation, and learning, culture and heritage. Implementation of these strategies will be supported by a number of underpinning strategies and plans such as department business plans, an income generation strategy and plan, the Operational Property Review, updated ToRs for the Natural Environment Board, and the Natural Environment Charities Review.

### **Proposed Vision**

*Open spaces that are rich in diversity, conserving nature, creating memories, and enhancing lives.*

It is recommended that this vision is approved and adopted by the Natural Environment Board.

### **Proposed Mission**

*To achieve our vision by protecting and improving 11,000 acres of natural habitats in London and the Home Counties, working in partnership to ensure they are more accessible, sustainable, and preserved for the benefit of the public.*

It is recommended that this mission is approved and adopted by the Natural Environment Board.

### **Supporting Information**

These open spaces, spread across London and the Home Counties, are part of what makes London an attractive and healthy city.

They provide rare and ancient habitats for a range of endangered plants and animals and capture 16,400 thousand tonnes of carbon a year.

They attract 25 million visitors annually – almost double the number who go to Premiership football matches and five times the number of visitors to the Grand Canyon.

Our strategies set out how we build on 150 years of stewardship from the City Corporation to enhance and protect the green lungs of London.

Visit us. Support us. Create memories.

### **Our Strategies**

1. **Nature Conservation and Resilience:** We will conserve the special biodiversity and habitats of our open spaces and will manage them to secure their future.
2. **Community Engagement:** We will act as stewards of our public open spaces in partnership with communities to ensure their responsible use and conservation in perpetuity.
3. **Access and Recreation:** We will conserve, enhance and sustainably manage our open spaces' special natural environments and their heritage; and we will welcome, encourage and inspire our visitors to enjoy and protect these spaces for future generations.
4. **Culture, Heritage and Learning:** We will take care of our cultural assets, and our culture, heritage and learning offer will develop participation, confidence, connection, opportunity and well-being of, and support from, our priority audiences.

### **Key Facts**

- Our open spaces have more than 58,000 ancient trees
- Epping Forest has the largest collection of ancient beech trees in Europe
- Our sites are home to hundreds of endangered species
- They contain a rich collection of cultural heritage including hill forts and a royal hunting lodge
- They capture 16,400 tonnes of carbon every year
- They have over 25 million visitors annually
- They include numerous football pitches, tennis courts, an athletic track, a lido, bathing ponds, cricket pitches, golf courses, boating lakes, walking, cycling and horseriding trails, a visitor centre, two museums, listed heritage gardens and a zoo
- 38,000 education courses are run at our open spaces every year
- They are managed by nine charities
- They have won numerous green flags awards and London in Bloom awards
- Over 72,000 hours a year in volunteer time given at our open spaces.

Natural Environment Board Members are asked to note this supporting information.

## **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

- The vision, mission and strategies will help guide and support the delivery of the Natural Environment Division's priorities and business plans and the Corporation's new Corporate Plan.
- Financial implications: None.
- Resource implications: None at this stage (operational resourcing is being dealt with under the charity review)
- Legal implications: None.
- Risk implications: None.
- Equalities implications: None
- Equality Impact Assessment: N/A.
- Climate implications: The Natural Environment vision, mission and strategies will complement and help deliver the vision and objectives of the Corporation's Climate Action Strategy.
- Security implications: N/A

## **Conclusion**

The Natural Environment Board is asked to approve the vision, mission and strategies for the Natural Environment Division.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 Conservation and Nature Resilience Strategy  
Appendix 2 Community Engagement Strategy  
Appendix 3 Access and Recreation Strategy  
Appendix 4 Culture, Heritage and Learning Strategy

## **Background Papers**

None

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