

Committee(s): Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, and Queen's Park Committee	Date(s): 12 February 2024
Subject: Hampstead Heath Constabulary Update	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 11 & 12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Executive Director, Environment	For information
Report author: Assistant Director, North London Open Spaces	

Summary

This report provides Committee Members with an update on the Hampstead Heath Constabulary ("the Constabulary") operations since the previous report on 28 November 2023 and seeks to address queries raised at the previous meeting.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the content of the report.

Main Report

Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Management Committee approval

1. On the 27th November, the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Management Committee approved the proposal presented in the Constabulary Committee Report, to reconfigure the Constabulary team to a single team of six Ranger Constables managed by a Senior Ranger (Enforcement). The Constabulary management team can now move forward and start the process of recruiting new Ranger Constables in January 2024. In addition, we will be initiating a training programme to ensure that the new Constables and existing team are fully prepared for the Spring and Summer season. This training will include First Aid, Officer Safety Training, Customer Care, Diversity Awareness, and Safeguarding.

2. Sickness remains an issue for the team, with four members of the team now off work. We are continuing to use the Parkguard service while we recruit new Constables and train them up to a level where they can be fully operational.

Questions raised by the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Management Committee at the meeting on the 27th November relating to the Constabulary Report.

Role of the Hampstead Heath Constabulary

3. The Constabulary are not part of the Metropolitan Police or the City of London Police. They are not police officers and their authority as constables is limited to specific purposes; it does not extend to the enforcement of the general law. The overall objective of the Constabulary is to provide a professional, efficient and effective Constabulary service for Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, and Queen's Park, and to educate its visitors and users on appropriate and responsible behaviour, to engage with users and stakeholders, and to enforce byelaws, deter and prevent anti-social behaviour, and reduce the fear of crime through a range of tactics of which visible high-profile patrolling is the most prominent. The approach adopted in achieving this objective is through engagement, education and ultimately enforcement. The Constabulary provides a vital role in the safe management of large events across the open spaces and maintain an excellent relationship with the Metropolitan Police, London Ambulance Service, the Air Ambulance (HEMS), and London Fire Brigade enhancing the effectiveness of all those organisations when attending incidents across the open spaces.
4. Hampstead Heath was vested in the Corporation by the London Government Reorganisation (Hampstead Heath) Order 1989, which also conferred a number of statutory powers on the Corporation in relation to that open space. Under article 18 of the schedule to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government Provisional Order Confirmation (Greater London Parks and Open Spaces) Act 1967 ("the 1967 Act"), the Corporation:

"...may procure officers appointed by them for securing the observance of the provisions of all enactments relating to open spaces under their control or management and of the byelaws and regulations made thereunder to be sworn in as constables for that purpose but any such officer shall not act as a constable unless in uniform or provided with a warrant."
5. The Constabulary also patrol and carry out enforcement duties in relation to Queen's Park and Highgate Wood. In that case they are operating under the authority of section 16 of the Corporation of London (Open Spaces) Act 1878 ("the 1878 Act"). This section was applied to Queen's Park and Highgate Wood by section 9 of the Highgate and Kilburn Open Spaces Act 1886, and provides that:

"Every reeve, assistant reeve, bailiff, and keeper and other officer appointed by the Corporation from time to time for securing the better execution of their said

powers, regulations, and byelaws shall have all such powers and privileges and be liable to all such duties and responsibilities as any police constable has and is liable to within the police district in which the common, commonable land, or open space, in relation to all or any part whereof such reeve or other officer is appointed, is situate: Provided always, that no such officer shall act as a police constable unless he be in uniform, or, if in plain clothes, be provided with his warrant.”

6. For the purposes set out above (but not otherwise) the Constabulary have powers of summary arrest in accordance with section 24 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (“PACE”). However, these powers can only be exercised by constables in certain specified circumstances. In relation to Hampstead Heath, the Constabulary have additional powers to seize and detain any person committing a byelaw offence if the name or residence of an offender is unknown and cannot be reasonably ascertained by the constable (Article 19 of the 1967 Act). The Constabulary also have the same powers of arrest as any member of the public in the circumstances described in section 24A of PACE, or in relation to a breach of the peace. They may also use reasonable force in making an arrest or in the prevention of crime, in accordance with section 3 of the Criminal Law Act 1967.
7. In most cases the role of the Constabulary involves providing a visible presence and deterrent, offering advice, gathering evidence of byelaw offences, etc., taking details of suspected offenders so that they can be summonsed and issuing fixed penalty notices (“FPNs”) where authorised to do so under a statutory framework e.g. section 11 of the City of London Corporation (Open Spaces) Act 2018 (“the 2018 Act”).
8. The Constabulary work in close partnership with the Metropolitan Police, sharing information and passing on details of all suspected serious criminal offences for further investigation. Historically, the City of London Police provided uniform, equipment and training to the Constabulary, when needed, but that has not occurred recently and is not sought in the future.
9. Also attached with this report as Appendix 1 is the Hampstead Heath Constabulary Engagement, Education and Enforcement Plan 2015—2018 which now needs to be renewed, but provides useful sections on Vision, Values and Environment. The Plan was written at a time when the team comprised a Manager, two Sergeants and ten Constables, so any updated plan will need to give careful consideration to a much-reduced staff resource.

Relationship between the Hampstead Heath Constabulary and the City of London Police

10. Please refer to paragraph 8, above.

Relationship between the Hampstead Heath Constabulary and Ward Metropolitan Police Teams

11. The Acting Constabulary Sergeant confirmed that the Constabulary works collaboratively with Camden MPS Officers on a number of crime control initiatives, including improving CCTV coverage on the perimeter of the Heath.
12. The Sergeant also confirmed that the Constabulary have access to the Camden MPS' 'Airwave' to improve intelligence sharing, and the Constabulary Team are meeting with Camden's MPS Team twice weekly. In regard to the specific question raised by a Committee Member on patrolling at Highgate Wood and Queen's Park, the Constabulary Sergeant reported that patrols were still being deployed to Highgate Wood and Queen's Park, but with very limited staff resources the Team are unable to carry out daily patrolling.

Hampstead Heath Constabulary efforts to manage the situation on the West Heath

13. The previous Constabulary Manager established the Sexual Activity Working Group (SAWG) and this group comprised of Camden's MPS LGBT Team, a representative from the Heath and Hampstead Society, the Terence Higgins Trust, Camden's Outreach Team, and the NLOS Management Team. The SAWG met quarterly and were able to assist the Constabulary in engaging with and managing through collaboration with the Camden MPS LGBT team, the Public Sex Environment on the West Heath. The SAWG group meetings stopped during the pandemic and have not been reinstated. The Constabulary can consider reinstating the SAWG group.
14. The West Heath continues to be cleansed by the Heath Ranger Team, and there has been a marked increase in drug use evidenced of used syringes and other discarded drug packaging. Records of syringes found are kept by the Heath Ranger Team and found syringes are collected and disposed of through a specialist waste company. Rangers are trained in the safe handling of syringes.

Status of the Hampstead Heath Constabulary Annual Reports

15. While Constabulary Annual Reports have not been produced since 2017, the Constabulary will resume preparation of an annual report for the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee and Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, and Queen's Park Committee, providing a summary of operations and activities and any specific projects that the unit have been involved with over the course of the year. The last annual report was produced in 2017 and is attached as Appendix 2. These reports will be produced in the spring of each year. The Constabulary will continue to provide updates on progress by producing the dashboard reports going forward into 2024.

Constabulary digitised incident reporting

16. The Constabulary is exploring procurement of a new digital platform to capture and report on data. The current platform does not allow for the easy preparation of reports, and we are exploring options that will be a better fit for our operation and allow for us to provide details reports that allow for ease of analysis and presentation of trends. We will provide updates to this Committee in due course.

Hampstead Heath dog licensing update

17. In April 2022, the Hampstead Heath dog licensing scheme was launched using the new powers in section 10 and the Schedule to the 2018 Act. Applications were available online through the Corporation's website. Between April and May 2022, there were a total of 136 applications for licences. Thirty-one twelve-month licences were purchased and issued. The following April and May of 2023 saw a further fifty-five applications, resulting in the issue of fifteen licences. It should be noted that the administration and monitoring of the current licences has been subject to some disruption due to staffing constraints at the Constabulary, which we expect to improve with the addition of new Constables.

Emergency out of hours procedure and contact numbers in the event of an emergency.

18. The Constabulary is currently only working one shift. We are providing the following information to ensure that the public and stakeholders understand how to contact the Constabulary.

- Phone number: 0208 340 5260
- Shifts: The Constabulary operates a winter shift for the months of December and January, starting at 11:00am and finishing at 7:00pm. Please contact the Constabulary at the number above during these times.
- For any emergencies outside of these hours, please call 999 and seek assistance from the Camden Metropolitan Police Services (MPS).
- Emergency calls to the 0208 340 5260 line outside of the 11:00am to 7:00pm shift will receive a recorded message providing instructions what to do in the case of an emergency.

Parkguard support

19. As previously reported to this Committee, we have used the services of Parkguard - a National Police Chief's Council-approved company operating in and around London and operating at a number of other City of London sites – to provide supplemental support to the Constabulary while we have vacancies and multiple staff on sick leave. Parkguard has been successfully deployed since early July 2023. They provide two levels of staff: a police-accredited officer and a community engagement officer. Once we have the full complement of Ranger Constables in post, we can phase out the Parkguard support. We anticipate using Parkguard episodically in 2024 to support the Constabulary at busy periods during the summer

and other periods if needed.

Dashboard reports for October and November

20. The dashboard reports for October and November are attached as Appendices four and five with this report. November has proved a quieter month generally compared with October, with a reduced number of incidents and fifty percent less calls for assistance from members of staff. Anti-social behaviour by young people after school at Parliament Hill Café continues to be an issue requiring interventions by the Constabulary and Parkguard. There have been a small number of bicycle and mobile phone thefts around the Lido and Parliament Hill Fields as well, and there have also been a significant number of indecent exposure incidents at the Vale of Health, West Heath and Golders Hill Park.
21. The Constabulary continue to build a strong collaborative relationship with Camden MPS team as referenced in paragraph nine, and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) warning notice training is planned for the end of January as a joint initiative between the Constabulary and the Camden MPS team.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

22. The projects and works outlined in this report contribute towards the achievement of the three aims set out in the City of London Corporate Plan: Contribute to a flourishing society, Support a thriving economy and Shape outstanding environment.
23. The projects and works outlined in this report contribute towards the achievement of the Hampstead Heath Management Strategy 2018-2028 Strategic Outcomes A: The Heath is maintained as a flourishing green space and historic landscape, B: Improved quality of life for Heath visitors, C: The Heath is inclusive and welcoming to a diverse range of visitors and D: Greater number of and diversity of People taking care of the Heath.

Financial Implications

24. Procurement of a new digital platform as noted in paragraph 16 may lead to additional costs which will need to be met from your Committee's local risk budget. Costs will be incurred for the use of Parkguard when needed.

Resource Implications

25. No impact foreseen.

Climate Implications

26. Included within the annual plan for 2023/24 are a series of projects which contribute towards achieving the City of London's Climate Action Strategy, which was launched in October 2020. A key part of the strategy is conserving and enhancing biodiversity alongside reducing carbon emissions. The Climate Action Strategy will be embedded into future strategies which are currently being drafted

within the Natural Environment Division.

Legal Implications

27. Legal comments are contained within the body of the Report.

Risk Implications

28. Risks are monitored and recorded through the Departmental Risk Register.

Equality Implications

29. No impact.

Security Implications

30. Security implications are monitored and recorded through the Departmental Risk register.

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Hampstead Heath Constabulary Engagement, Education and Enforcement Plan 2015—2018
- Appendix 2: Constabulary Annual Report 2017
- Appendix 3: Constabulary Dashboard November 2023
- Appendix 4: Constabulary Dashboard December 2023

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