

Committee(s) Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, and Queen’s Park Committee	Dated 21 May 2024
Subject: Highgate Wood Management Priorities for FY’2024-25 (Business Plan)	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s “Corporate Plan (2024-2029)” does this proposal aim to impact directly?	Engage diverse communities Dynamic economic growth Leading sustainable environment Vibrant thriving destination Providing excellent services Flourishing public spaces
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: Bob Roberts Interim Executive Director, Environment	For Decision
Report Author: Bill LoSasso Assistant Director (Superintendent) North London Open Spaces	

Summary

This report presents an overview of the planned key management activities and initiatives at Highgate Wood for financial year 2024-25 (1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025).

These proposals draw upon previously agreed strategies and guiding documents of the City Corporation, such as the Corporate Plan, Natural Environment Division strategies, and Highgate Wood Management Plan(s), as well as wider projects such as the Carbon Removals Project. This is an interim measure pending the preparation of a multi-year Business Plan that will be developed this year for North London Open Spaces.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Approve the FY’2024-25 business plan for Highgate Wood
- Note the development of a longer-term business plan as described in this report

Main Report

Background

1. North London Open Spaces is the sub-division of the City of London Corporation that is responsible for the day-to-day management of four public open spaces: 1) Hampstead Heath, 2) Highgate Wood, 3) Queen's Park, and 4) Highgate Wood.
2. The City Corporation has numerous strategies, plans, programmes, projects, and initiatives that inform North London Open Spaces' management of Highgate Wood.
3. These guiding documents and initiatives include the following:
 - a. The City of London Corporation Corporate Plan (2024-2029), which was released on 25 March 2024.
 - b. The Environment Department's High-Level Business Plan (FY'2024-25).
 - c. The Natural Environment Division Strategies (2024-2029), which were launched on 4 December 2023, consisting of:
 - i. Vision: "Open Spaces that are rich in diversity, conserve nature, create memories, and enhance lives".
 - ii. Mission: "To protect and enhance our open spaces across London and the Home Counties, working in partnership to ensure they remain accessible, sustainable and preserved for the benefit of the public."
 - iii. Four key strategies to deliver the vision:
 1. Nature Conservation and Resilience: Conserve the special biodiversity and habitats or open spaces and manage them to secure their future.
 2. Access and Recreation: 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.
 3. Community Engagement: Act as stewards of our public open spaces in partnership with communities to ensure their responsible use and conservation in perpetuity.
 4. Culture, Heritage and Learning: 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 audience.
 - d. Highgate Wood Conservation Plan (2013-2023) - which will be updated during FY'2024-25 - and Highgate Wood Woodland Management Plan (2018-2028).

Other supportive and guiding documents and initiatives

4. Other extant corporate strategies, plans and projects that guide the Natural Environment Division and North London Open Spaces, and thus help guide our activities at Highgate Wood, include:
 - a. Climate Action Strategy
 - b. Carbon Removals Project
 - c. Cultural Strategy
 - d. Destination City
 - e. Education Strategy
 - f. Sport & Physical Activity Strategy

5. Other initiatives that are still underway and will inform our management of open spaces, inclusive of Highgate Wood, include:
 - a. Natural Environment Division 'Income Generation Strategy'
 - b. Operational Property Review
 - c. Natural Environment Division 'Charity Review'

6. Additional documents and initiatives that guide and inform the management of Highgate Wood and its work programme, include:
 - a. North London Open Space business plan
 - b. Individual site management plans
 - c. Events policies for each of the open spaces
 - d. Annual work plans
 - e. Cyclical Work Programme (led by City Surveyor's Department)

Current Position and planned work for FY'2024-25

7. Given the recent completion of the Corporate Plan and Natural Environment Division Strategies, and the important work that is still underway and nearing completion that will guide activities across NLOS's four spaces, a detailed business plan does not currently exist for NLOS or the other sub-divisions of the Natural Environment Division.

8. A multi-year business plan for North London Open Spaces is being developed during FY'2024-25, however, and will be in place by 1 April 2025. The business plan will align with the governing documents for the Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Kilburn Charity, the relevant strategies

and guiding documents outlined above, draw together the operational priorities across the Environment Department High-Level Business Plan, and will further plan and guide delivery of the updated Highgate Wood management plan.

9. As an interim measure, this report outlines key management activities at Highgate Wood for financial year 2024-25 that will guide our activities as a multi-year business plan is developed.
10. North London Open Spaces will also be updating all site management strategies/plans in FY'2024-25.

Proposals and Actions

11. Appendix 1 provides key outputs at Highgate Wood for North London Open Spaces for FY'2024-25. These also identify the team at (or partner of) North London Open Spaces that is the primary lead, as well as applicability to other documents mentioned herein.

Financial Implications

12. Actions will have either been met through the local risk budget or from external grants and income generation.

Resource Implications

13. Actions will be implemented using existing staffing resources, supplemented by contractors where required.

Legal Implications

14. The City Corporation as trustee of the charities, Hampstead Heath (803392) and Highgate Wood and Queens Park Kilburn (232986) must act in the best interests of these charities, and ensure that all management activities and initiatives align with the charities' objects (as set out in their respective governing documents), the Charities Act 2011 (as amended) and the requirements under the Equality Act 2010 (to not discriminate against people with protected characteristics).

Equalities Implications

15. A number of access improvements are proposed in the report along with accessibility audit across Hampstead Heath.

Climate Implications

16. Actions in the report form part of the City's Carbon Removals Project which is seeking to address climate change issues. Other actions are also seeking to improve the resilience of species and habitats across Hampstead Heath.

Conclusion

17. This report has provided an outline of the planned key management activities at Hampstead Heath for FY'2024-25.

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Highgate Wood Business Plan (FY 2024-25)
- Appendix 2 (via hyperlink): City of London Corporate Plan (2024-2029):
 - [Our Corporate Plan 2024-29 - City of London](#)
- Appendix 3 (via hyperlink): Natural Environment Division key strategies (2024 – 2029)
 - [Natural Environment - City of London](#)
- Appendix 4 (via hyperlink): Environment Department FY'2024-25 High-Level Business Plan (p. 13-28)
 - [\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Natural Environment Board, 19/02/2024 11:00 \(cityoflondon.gov.uk\)](#)
- Appendix 5: Highgate Wood Conservation Plan (2013-2023)
- Appendix 6: Highgate Wood Woodland Management Plan (2018-2028)

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