

<b>Committee(s):</b> Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee	<b>Dated:</b> 16 September 2024
<b>Subject:</b> Assistant Director's Report	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	-Diverse engaged communities -Leading sustainable environment -Vibrant thriving destination -Providing excellent services -Flourishing public spaces
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>If so, how much?</b>	<b>£0</b>
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Katie Stewart, Executive Director of Environment	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Bill LoSasso, Superintendent, North London Open Spaces	

**Summary**

This report provides Members with an update on matters relating to Hampstead Heath since the last Hampstead Heath Consultative Meeting on 10 June 2024.

**Recommendation(s)**

Members are asked to:

- Note the report

**Main Report**

## **Flood Mitigation and Resilience for Hampstead Heath**

1. The Head of Conservation, Senior Ecologist, and officers from the City of London Corporation's Environmental Resilience Team have had several meetings with London Borough of Camden's 'Climate Mitigation and Resilience Team'. These meetings have focused on localised flooding events on the perimeter of the Heath, and proposals of how to reduce the scale of disruption and damage to property. One of the focus areas is the intersection next to the Hampstead Heath overground station, which has suffered severe flooding following heavy rainfall events, particularly on 12 July 2021.
2. In June, officers from London Borough of Camden were given a tour of the Hampstead and Highgate chains of ponds, highlighting the flood mitigation engineering works carried out in 2015-16 by the Head of Conservation and the Senior Ecologist. A second meeting was held in July to discuss what low-impact works could be carried out to divert surface water exiting Hampstead Heath away from areas prone to flooding such as South End Green and Parliament Hill, which runs parallel to South Hill Park. Among proposals being discussed is the installation of deflector structures on pathways to redirect surface water off into adjacent grassland where it will disperse and permeate into the ground. The City Corporation and the London Borough of Camden will put a draft report together outlining proposed low-impact flood mitigation measures which will be presented to both the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee and the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, and Queens Park Committee later this year.
3. Parallel discussions are underway with London Borough of Barnet following a meeting on the Hampstead Heath Extension in June, with Barnet's Flood Resilience Team. Barnet's team was taken around by officers and one of the City Corporation's Environmental Resilience Team. Following a series of discussions of Barnet's proposals, it was agreed that further consultation and a revised design was required before further discussions could take place. These revised proposals would also be presented as a report to both the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee and the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queens Park Committee.
4. As part of the Climate Action Strategy, works are already under way to increase the Heath's resilience to climate change. A report was presented to the two committees in 2022 proposing the expansion of meadow habitat by cessation of amenity cutting at several locations across the Heath. These areas will succeed to meadows, providing richer habitat, soil recovery and decompaction, thereby improving absorption of surface water in heavy rainfall events. Further works are planned in the next two years to create 10 new small ponds and twenty leaky dams, mostly located along the fleet stream sections. These features will help to

store water along the fleet stream system, increase areas of wet woodland and mitigate flooding downstream.

### **Tree Team**

5. The Tree Team has been busy since May, dealing with several tree failures on Hampstead Heath, including a limb failure on one of the old beech trees at Golders Hill Park on the southern fence line. The team has also installed a large timber prop to support a veteran Scot's pine at the northern end of Sandy Heath.
6. Oak processionary moth (OPM) nests numbers are low again this summer. Only a small number of nests have had to be removed for public safety reasons. The team continues with its study on OPM's various parasitoids, working collaboratively with Forest Research and other organisations who are using nature-based solutions to manage OPM in London and beyond.

### **Conservation Team**

7. The Conservation Team has been catching up with grassland management after several machinery breakdowns this summer. The annual contracted meadow cut and baling works for the Kenwood Estate commenced last week with the team making the most of the dry warm weather. We are hoping to use most of the bales to create wildlife habitat with the help of Heath Hands at various locations around the Heath.

### **Fauna on the Heath**

8. This topic is the subject of a separate report provided as part of this agenda pack, entitled "Hampstead Heath Fauna Update."

### **Parliament Hill / Leisure**

9. The athletics track continues to be well used, with lots of clubs, schools, colleges and universities having booked the track this season. The Highgate Harriers have been hosting monthly Quad Kids sessions from April through to October. These are advertised in schools through Camden Council, with the aim of encouraging non-members to try athletics as well as promoting fitness and health.

10. The tennis courts continue to be very busy and are fully booked most evenings and weekends, with a spike around Wimbledon in June and July. Meetings continue to be held with the LTA and the tennis coaches at Parliament Hill and Golders Hill Park to ensure the City Corporation is maximising income and that tennis provision is accessible to everyone. A new licence for the tennis coaches has now been drafted to ensure consistency across the North London Open Spaces, and the tennis bookings remain with ClubSpark.
11. The Bowling Green and Croquet season runs through to 29 September. Both the Bowling and Croquet clubs participated in 'Give it a Go' on 14 July this year and are making the most of the good weather after an unsettling start to the season due to the inclement weather of spring. Preparations are now being made for end-of-season renovations at the end of September/beginning of October.
12. The cricket squares at Parliament Hill and on the Heath Extension were prepared in April and the cricket season is now well underway, with regular maintenance being carried out on the squares. Preparations are being made for end-of-season renovations with colleagues from Queen's Park, Golders Hill Park, West Ham Park and Highgate Wood. The renovations will commence on the cricket tables in the autumn. The Non-Turf Pitch strips require some further work. This includes permanently marking the wicket crease lines, which will be carried out at the end of the cricket season.
13. Meetings have been held with the City Surveyor's Department regarding the cricket nets on the Heath Extension. A contractor has been appointed to refurbish one single lane. This will include removing the cricket net structure and taking the old facilities to landfill and installing one new practice pitch and cage.
14. The football pitches, rounders and sports grids at Parliament Hill Fields continue to be popular and used by clubs, the public and groups for football training and general fitness. Works will be carried out at the end of August to set out the four football pitches and three rugby pitches on the Heath Extension in preparation for the start of the season. All the lines will be marked out to create the pitches for the season ahead, which commences in September.
15. The Heath Extension changing rooms have been disinfected and further resampling for Legionnaires', which was present in the water pipes inside the changing rooms, has been carried out. Additional bypass valves have been fitted to aid the flushing system, and weekly flushing must occur to prevent any contamination build-up. Regular disinfection and resampling are taking place, so

the changing rooms can be opened for the start of the rugby and football season. The Legionnaires' levels need to be eliminated or maintained at tolerable, very low levels by the beginning of September.

16. Despite the poor summer, the Lido and three bathing ponds continue to be busy. The bather numbers and income are slightly higher than the same period as last year (from April to the end of July). The hottest and busiest day of the year was Monday 12 August: the Lido attracted over 3,000 swimmers, and the three bathing ponds attracted over 4,000 swimmers, generating much social media interest.
17. Repairs and maintenance to the Lido and Parliament Hill paddling pools began mid-May, which included new filter media and dosing units for both paddling pools and a new pump for the Lido paddling pool. Both pools were opened for half-term on Saturday 25 May and continue to be very busy daily.
18. All the works at the Ladies, Mixed and Men's Ponds, as part of the Ponds Access Project, have been completed. The extra grating to fill the void in the Men's Pond is still outstanding and the sliding door to the changing rooms still needs to be constructed and installed. Funding is being sought to install roller shutters to protect the windows of the observation huts at the Mixed and Men's Ponds.
19. The procurement of a new Leisure Management System has now been completed and the contract with XN Leisure is now ready to be signed. This new leisure management system will provide a more user-friendly, affordable and flexible ticketing and booking system for swimmers. The new system also promises excellent data collecting and reporting functions enabling data-driven decision making. The plan is to build and test the new system over the next six to nine months, in preparation for the 2025 summer season.

## **Golders Hill Park**

20. The vacant Ranger position was advertised and filled by an external candidate who comes with a wealth of grounds and horticultural knowledge and experience. He will be a welcome addition to the team, as the staff are relying heavily on casuals to cover the busy summer months whilst positions are being recruited.
21. The Park continues to be popular and very busy during the summer. The main tasks are grass cutting, with areas of long grass being left where possible to

create more wildlife friendly areas within Golders Hill Park, hedge cutting and other grounds maintenance tasks. A lot of identified works such as repairs to pathways, the water fountains, electric gates and toilet refurbishments are scheduled in the Cyclical Work Programme, and will be completed late autumn or in the winter. Repairs to the Bandstand floor have now been completed. Drainage works have also been carried out in the middle of the park, to address the very wet areas and poor drainage. Minor re-seeding of the drain line will be undertaken in the autumn.

22. The sandpit area remains closed to the public. Due to the machinery required and technical complexity to renovate this area and meet play safety standards, external contractors will be appointed to complete the work. Quotes are being gathered from contractors and discussions are being held to explore external funding opportunities. The other half of the sandpit area is open after some renovation and repair works were carried out by the local team. Following a ROSPA inspection of the playground, the X-Roll play item has been removed and some play equipment will need to be replaced. Regular playground inspections are carried out by the staff to ensure the equipment is safe to use.

23. The Heath Extension playground, which was completed in January, is very well used by the local community. The grass inside and outside the play area is being regularly maintained during the summer months to ensure it is safe and accessible for all users. Regular playground inspections are carried out by the staff to ensure the equipment is safe to use.

### **Hill Garden Pergola**

24. This topic is the subject of a separate report provided as part of this agenda pack, entitled "Hill Garden Pergola update."

25. Heath Hands volunteer sessions are continuing in both the Park and Hill Garden, with three sessions a week being hosted by the Gardening Team.

### **Golders Hill Park Zoo**

26. The vacant part-time Zookeeper position was successfully filled by an external candidate. The new Zookeeper is very experienced and comes with a wealth of knowledge, especially with visitors' experiences, which we hope to launch this calendar year. One apprenticeship position remains to fill.

27. The animal adoption page on the website has recently been updated, and it will go live by the end of August. Members of the public will now be able to adopt all the species held at Golders Hill Park Zoo. Those adopting an animal will receive a photo of their chosen species and a certificate, and they will also receive the new Zoo newsletter which will be emailed out to individuals every quarter.
28. New signage with the new branding and Zoo logo is now being put up around the Zoo and has been well received. Newly designed interpretation boards have also been ordered and will be installed as soon as they arrive.
29. With the help of our Marketing and Communication Team, a poll was run on the Zoo social media channels to help us choose names for the red deer. A selection of names was chosen by the Zoo team and put to a vote. The winning names were Roman, Maple, Willow and Aspen. This poll was a good opportunity to engage and liaise with members of the public and visitors and gain more social media interest.
30. At the beginning of August, the Zoo underwent its first BIAZA (British & Irish Association of Zoos & Aquariums) accreditation screening. This is a new process, which will enable members to become accredited members. The outcome of the accreditation screening will be known in November.

## **Constabulary**

31. The Hampstead Heath Professional Dog Walking Permit opened for applications on 24 June 2024. This year the application window was set for two months, closing on 26 August, with the permits valid until 31 July 2025. 22 permits have been issued this year, compared to 17 permits in 2023. Officers and the Constabulary have been raising awareness of the permit scheme via posters, flyers and direct engagement. Engagement will continue throughout the year. This year, an ID card will be issued to all permit holders so they can be easily identified by Constabulary and Heath staff as being properly licensed.

## **Events**

32. 'Run for Your Life' took place for the ninth year on 8 June. This timed run is one of our most popular fun runs on Hampstead Heath in partnership with the Armory, Jubilee Hall Trust. A total of 300 people aged between one and 72 years, took part across the three distances (2k, 5k and 10k). The event promotes wellness and highlights the positive impact of fun runs on the wellbeing of the

community, with the draw of a shorter distance making the event accessible, and this year saw a rise in numbers of participants.

33. 'Race for Life' was held on 15 June at East Heath next to the car park. The Cancer Research United Kingdom team have been holding events on the Heath for over 30 years. This year's attendance was disappointing, with footfall slightly down on last year, with the inclement weather likely to have deterred runners. Race for Life is committed to their 30-year legacy of holding the event on the Heath and we hope that numbers will be more substantial for 2025 to fund their life-saving research into the causes, prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of all types of cancer.
34. The Heath's Leisure & Events Manager worked in partnership with the Heath & Hampstead Society to deliver two summer events: a Kite-Flying Festival at Parliament Hill on Sunday 30 June, attended by over 2,000 people and showcasing professional stunt kites; and the Natural Aspects community concert on Sunday 21 July at Parliament Hill bandstand, attending by around 1,500 people. This free concert was a musical celebration of culture and musical styles from around the Heath. It was very well attended and a lovely family day, with plenty of positive feedback received. There have been various other bandstand music events throughout the summer at both Parliament Hill and Golders Hill Park.
35. The annual 'Give it a Go' event was held on Sunday 14 July, which was a collaborative event with partners from Camden Council, local sports clubs and leisure centres. It was less busy than previous years, possibly due to a clash with other major sporting events such as England playing in the final of the UEFA European Football Championship. It was, however, still a successful event, which promoted health and wellbeing and gave visitors the opportunity to try out a new sport including tennis, fencing, bowling and boxing. The event attracted over 6,000 people and was attended by the Deputy Mayor of Camden. There was positive media coverage in local papers and lots of positive comments from attendees.
36. There will be a Duathlon on 1 September involving 400 competitors. They will be swimming in the Lido and the three bathing ponds and running the distances in-between.



37. We look forward to the annual Conker Championships on 6 October held at the Parliament Hill bandstand. On 24 October there will be the annual return of Zippos Circus at the special big top tent at East Heath Car Park.

### **Hampstead Heath Management Strategy**

38. As previously reported to this Committee, officers are updating all four management plans for the four open spaces that NLOS is responsible for – Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, Queen’s Park, and West Ham Park.

39. As part of that effort, we are completing the planned mid-term review of the Hampstead Heath Management Strategy (2018-2028) and have retained a consultant - Land Management Services - to support us in that effort. The review will state the findings and recommendations from the Working Group, which will be included within and inform development of the updated Management Strategy.

40. The update to the existing Management Strategy must 1) Align with the City Corporation’s new Corporate Plan (2024-2029), 2) Align with the new Natural Environment Strategies (2024-2029) (Nature Conservation and Resilience, Access and Recreation, Culture Heritage and Learning, Community Engagement), and 3) Reflect world events, newly developed best practice, and experience gained in managing Hampstead Heath under the existing Management Strategy since it was completed in 2018.

41. The ‘Hampstead Heath Management Strategy Working Group’ has been formed from Members of those respective committees who have generously volunteered their time to represent the Consultative Committee and the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, and Queen’s Park Committee in that endeavour.

42. In addition, Officers seek to engage the Consultative Committee as a body as well. Land Management Services will provide a presentation on its work at this meeting of this Committee as part of a separate agenda item. Appendices 1, 2, and 3 provide the existing City of London Corporation Corporate Plan, Natural Environment strategies, and Hampstead Heath Management Strategy, respectively.

### **Natural Environment Learning Team**

43. April to July has been a busy period, with 8,000 play participants and over 4,600 school participants. The team has also facilitated sessions for pupil referral units, children's centres, and schools for children with additional needs.

44. With funding from City Corporation's 'Cultural and Creative Learning Fund', the team was able to run an additional holiday programme for children facing challenges such as poverty, disability, or caring responsibilities, which received positive feedback. The Learning Team worked with our Heritage Team on another successful bid to the 'Cultural and Creative Learning Fund'. Funding is now secured for a youth-led environmental resilience project at the Adventure Clubhouse and Keats House. Project planning and recruitment is underway.

### **Financial implications**

45. No implications.

### **Resource implications**

46. No implications.

### **Legal implications**

47. No implications.

### **Risk implications**

48. Risks are monitored and recorded through the various risk registers, including the Division and Departmental Risk Registers.

### **Equalities implications**

49. No implications.

### **Climate implications**

50. Included within the business plan for 2024-25 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.

## **Security implications**

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

## **Conclusion**

52. This report provides Members with an update on matters relating to Hampstead Heath since the last Hampstead Heath Consultative Meeting on 10 June 2024.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 (via hyperlink): City of London Corporate Plan (2024-2029)
  - [Our Corporate Plan 2024-29 - City of London](#)
- Appendix 2 (via hyperlink): Natural Environment Division key strategies (2024-2029)
  - [Natural Environment - City of London](#)
- Appendix 3 (via hyperlink): Hampstead Heath Management Strategy (2018-2028)
  - [Hampstead Heath Management Strategy \(cityoflondon.gov.uk\)](#)

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