

Committee(s): Natural Environment Board	Dated: 17 October 2024
Subject: Assistant Director Culture and Projects Update Report Q1: April - June 2024	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	<u>City's Corporate Plan</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse engaged communities • Vibrant thriving destination • Flourishing public spaces • Providing excellent services • Leading sustainable environment
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
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: Katie Stewart, Executive Director of Environment	For Information
Report author: Simon Glynn, Natural Environment Division, Environment Department	

Summary

This report provides an update against workstreams, outcomes and key performance indicators from the Natural Environment Division Business Plan and objectives from the Natural Environment Strategies that are applicable to staff in the Culture and Projects Section covering April-June 2024 (Q1).

The Culture and Projects Section comprises the Natural Environment Learning Team, Heritage and Museums Team and Carbon Removals Project Team.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Current Position

This quarterly report format and content has been amended to align the reporting with the objectives of the Natural Environment Strategies and Business Plan currently being updated for the period 2025-2030. The revised reporting process is still being developed and further refinements will be forthcoming.

The revised report structure provides a breakdown of activity in Appendix 1 with summary details and key points highlighted in the main report.

In the Natural Environment Division Business Plan for 2024/25, the priority workstreams for the Culture and Projects Section are:

- Establish a natural capital-based management process across our open spaces (Carbon Removals Project)
- Develop communities of interest that participate in, advocate for, and support our Natural Environment and Heritage charities
- Develop a learning offer that builds nature connection and well-being
- Protect and enhance our built heritage, landscape heritage and archaeological assets and promote them as part of our visitor and learning offers

The outcomes identified in the NE Business Plan relevant to the Culture and Projects Section are:

- Delivery of the Climate Action Strategy will ensure the Corporation meets its target of being carbon neutral by 2027.
- Increased nature connection, pro-environmental behaviour and well-being of participants. More participants are from high pupil premium schools, are looked after children, young carers, young refugees and 13–25-year-olds who are struggling with education, employment or mental health.
- Built heritage, landscape heritage and archaeological assets are protected, meet statutory obligations and are enhanced to support improved visitor and learning offer.

The performance measures associated with these outcomes and their reporting frequency are:

- Achieve annual carbon removal target/ Annually
- Number of participants per annum in our school learning and play programmes/ Annually
- Number of heritage assets on the Heritage at Risk Register/Every 6 months
- Number of visitors per annum to our managed heritage attractions/Every 6 months

Reporting on the relevant key performance indicators, therefore, will take place after Q2 and after Q4, once the data has been gathered and assessed. Reporting in Q1 will therefore focus on the outputs and activities relevant to the Culture and Projects Section during this period.

Progress against Natural Environment Strategies and Business Plan objectives for the period April-June 2024 (Q1)

1. Nature Conservation and Resilience

1.1 The Carbon Removals Project funding and the project plan for Year 4 (2024-25) was approved by Policy and Resources Committee and the Carbon Removals Project Board.

1.2 The project aims to maintain current carbon sequestration of 16.2kt, increase sequestration by 0.21kt and support biodiversity objectives through its activities.

2. Community Engagement

2.1 Any activities in support of the Community Engagement Strategy largely relate to learning and heritage activities and are therefore referenced in section 4 of this report.

3. Access and Recreation

3.1 Any activities in support of the Access and Recreation Strategy largely relate to learning and heritage activities and are therefore referenced in section 4 of this report.

4. Culture, Heritage and Learning

4.1 The Learning Team have continued to facilitate heritage learning at Epping Forest, providing school workshops at the Tudor Hunting Lodge and an Orienteering Through History workshop.

4.2 The Learning Team at Epping also hosted sessions for young unaccompanied asylum seekers, working in partnership with the Corporation's Virtual School, and for young people from a pupil referral unit. The team have worked in partnership with Tindersticks (community interest company), to expand the programme for young people.

4.3 In May, the Learning Team opened two new pond platforms at two teaching gardens in Hampstead Heath, welcoming learning participants from schools and local community groups. These new assets have been a positive addition in support of the successful schools learning programme.

4.4 Despite funding cuts in effect from April, the Learning Team was able to maintain its popular play offer at its two centres in Hampstead Heath during Q1, whilst undertaking an assessment of options to secure new income in support of maintaining the play offer in the longer-term.

4.5 In addition to delivering the ever-popular schools learning programme at West Ham Park, during Q1 the Learning Team expanded its learning provision for participants 13-25 with special educational needs and disabilities, funded through a grant from the Cultural and Creative Learning Fund.

4.6 In April, the Learning team in partnership with the Barbican Children's Library delivered a successful project entitled *New Leaf* project over the Easter school holidays. Targeting children facing challenges such as poverty, disability, or caring responsibilities, this programme operated in collaboration with 'Ambition

Aspire Achieve' and the City of London Early Help Team. The project had positive impact on participants, including a 17% increase in feelings of wellbeing and a 28% increase in feelings of confidence to explore our spaces

4.6 On 1 May, the Heritage team at Keats House launched a new exhibition showcasing the hidden histories of the house. The exhibition, which runs until 30 March 2025, provides a glimpse into the lives of some of the other people who called this house 'home' between 1816 and 1920.

4.7 In April, options for the repair of Wanstead Grotto and Landing Stage were produced by our appointed consultant, Alan Baxter Associates. The options were reviewed by Historic England and other key stakeholders and the level of repair necessary to remove the asset from the Heritage at Risk Register was confirmed. (This option was approved by Epping Forest and Commons Committee in July).

4.8 During Q1, the Heritage team led the research and design of an outdoor exhibition on the history of West Ham Park, ahead of its display at the West Ham Park 150 celebrations in July.

4.9 The Heritage team presented the financial and operational position of The Monument to the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee in May. In 2023/24 over 100,000 people visited the Monument; although an upward trend, this is still 60% of pre-pandemic visitor numbers. The Monument was closed on 88 of its normal opening days, resulting in c. £97k in lost income. Overall, the net cost of the Monument to the Corporation in 2023/24 was £105k.

4.10 During Q1, Culture and Projects Section led the delivery of community engagement activities at West Ham Park, seeking feedback on the future of the former nursery site. Activities delivered included 10 1-2-1s with local schools and groups, 5 pop-up events, 8 workshops with young people and an on-line survey.

5. Income Generation

5.1 Grants of a total value of £70k were secured from the Cultural and Creative Learning Fund in April for the delivery of projects in academic year 2024/25. These projects included *Green change-makers*, *Culturally Speaking* and *Change the Record*.

6. People Management

6.1 A successful round of recruitment took place in April, May and June for the roles of Carbon Removals Project Manager and Carbon Removals Project Officer.

Conclusion

This revised Assistant Director report being presented is under development and will focus on reporting on the Business Plan and Natural Environment Department Management Strategies outcomes.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Progress against key objectives / actions (categorised by Natural Environment Strategy).

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