

Committee(s): Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee	Dated: 22 October 2024
Subject: Assistant Director's Update Report – Hampstead Heath Q2 2024-25 (July – September)	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	-Diverse engaged communities -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: Katie Stewart, Executive Director of Environment	For Information
Report author: Bill LoSasso, Assistant Director (Superintendent), North London Open Spaces	

Summary

This new report format has been developed in agreement with the Committee Chairman. It reports on key accomplishments against the four strategies of the Natural Environment Division, which were released in January 2024. This is a new reporting format that is likely to evolve.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Current Position

1. This quarterly report format and content has been amended to align reporting with the objectives of the Natural Environment Strategies, and the forthcoming Business Plan currently being created for the period 2025-2030. The revised reporting process is still being developed and further refinements will occur. The revised report structure provides a more detailed breakdown of activities in Appendix 1, with summary details and key points highlighted in the following report.

Nature Conservation and Resilience

2. Officers progressed a number of actions that furthered this Natural Environment strategy, focused on strategy themes of enhancing biodiversity and establishing a natural capital-based management process.
3. These activities include initiating the mid-term review of and update to the 10-year management strategy for Hampstead Heath, working with partners to assess data collected from the Heath from hedgehog surveys, continuance of the successful nature-based solution for the management of oak processionary moth (OPM), and review of the natural capital audit that was completed earlier this year to explore continuous improvement opportunities.
4. Further detail is outlined in Appendix 1.

Community Engagement

5. Officers progressed a number of actions that furthered this Natural Environment strategy, focused on strategy themes of creating meaningful and lasting partnerships, removing barriers to participation at Hampstead Heath, cultivating a sense of pride and attachment to the Heath among users, and exchanging information between the City Corporation and open space users.
6. The activities include working with external stakeholders and partners to continually improve the services and benefits of the Heath, retention of a Green Flag Award, an audit of public-facing information to improve accessibility and customer experience, and engagement and communication with stakeholders to

seek to reinforce positive behaviours due to an increase in anti-social behaviour on the Heath during the summer months.

7. Further detail is outlined in Appendix 1.

Access and Recreation

8. Officers progressed a number of actions that furthered this Natural Environment strategy, focused on strategy themes of balancing the needs of visitors with the Heath's natural and heritage assets, improving the customer journey for visitors, providing an open space that is welcoming to all, and cultivating visitors who care for the Heath through their own behaviours.

9. The activities include the successful completion of the Ponds Access Project and working with consultants on the delivery of the mid-term review of the Heath's management strategy.

10. Further detail is outlined in Appendix 1.

Learning and Heritage

11. Progress against this strategy will be reported by the Learning Team in their separate report.

Income Generation

12. Income generation on Hampstead Heath remains aligned with past practice, relying primarily on user fees and charges for sports facility hire, cafe leases, car parking, events, and filming.

13. As previously reported to this committee, a new Head of Development & Partnerships role was created during TOM2 to support NLOS's income generation and fundraising activities. This role is critical given the current fiscal constraints of the City Corporation, the projected loss in real spending in FY'2025-26 due to the local risk budget uplift being less than inflation, and the post-TOM direction that Hampstead Heath Charity be more responsible for generating income to fund its operation.

14. The role has been vacant for more than one year, and a recruitment was unsuccessful earlier this year. Officers have sought to amend the grading of the

role following the unsuccessful recruitment, and another recruitment will occur once the HR process has concluded.

Conclusion

15. Officers have made progress against numerous objectives of the Natural Environment strategies, as outlined above. Not all objectives will be furthered in each quarter / reporting cycle, and officers will report continued progress in future reports.

Appendices

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

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