

Committee(s): Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee	Dated: 22 October 2024
Subject: Assistant Director's Update Report – Highgate Wood 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. As noted, 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, focussed on strategy themes of protecting and enhancing biodiversity, increasing resilience, and interconnected natural landscape, and establishing a natural capital-based management process.
3. These activities include initiation of the updated management plan for Highgate Wood, ecological monitoring, volunteer engagement, exploring wildlife corridors, balancing visitors and ecological protection, and application of nature-based solutions. Further detail is outlined in Appendix 1.

Community Engagement

4. Officers progressed a number of actions that furthered this Natural Environment strategy, focussed on strategy themes of creating meaningful and lasting partnerships, cultivating pride in and attachment to our open spaces, creating spaces that attract people and improve lives, and exchanging information between the City Corporation and open space users.
5. The activities include working with external stakeholders and partners, hosting the annual Highgate Community Heritage Day, attainment of another Green Flag, an audit of public-facing information to improve accessibility and customer experience. Further detail is outlined in Appendix 1.

Access and Recreation

6. Officers progressed a number of actions that furthered this Natural Environment strategy, focussed on strategy themes of balancing the needs of visitors with the park's natural and heritage assets, improving the customer

journey for visitors, providing a park that is welcoming to all, and cultivating visitors who care for the park through their own behaviours.

7. The activities include updating the park's management plan, auditing available public-facing information, continuing our successful partnership with the Natural Environment Learning Team and Friends of West Ham Park, and delivering the successful 150th anniversary celebration. Further detail is outlined in Appendix 1.

Learning and Heritage

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

Income Generation

9. Income generation at Highgate Wood remains aligned with past practice, relying primarily on user fees and charges for sports pitch hire, cafe lease, and small events.
10. 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 Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Charity is more responsible for generating income to fund its operation.
11. 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

12. 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

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

Bill LoSasso

Assistant Director (Superintendent)

North London Open Spaces

Environment Department (Natural Environment Division)

bill.losasso@cityoflondon.gov.uk