

## City of London Corporation Committee Report

<b>Committee(s):</b> Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee	<b>Dated:</b> 14 January 2025
<b>Subject:</b> Five-year Business Plan (Hampstead Heath)	<b>Public report:</b> For Discussion
<b>This proposal:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes</li> <li>• provides statutory duties</li> <li>• provides business enabling functions</li> </ul>	
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	Spending is as per approved annual and supplemental budgets
<b>If so, how much?</b>	Spending is as per approved annual and supplemental budgets
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	<u>Multiple</u> -Local Risk -City Surveyor's Department -Capital Funding -Climate Action Strategy -External Funding -Charity income
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	Yes
<b>Report of:</b>	Katie Stewart, Executive Director Environment
<b>Report author:</b>	Bill LoSasso, Assistant Director (Superintendent), North London Open Spaces

### Summary

This report provides the a working draft of the first five-year business plan for Hampstead Heath, which is still under development. It also summarises the various documents and plans that guide the work of North London Open Spaces in managing the four spaces that it is responsible for, including Hampstead Heath.

## **Recommendation(s)**

Members are asked to:

- Review and discuss the report and provide any comments at the committee meeting on 14 January 2025.

## **Main Report**

### **Background**

1. North London Open Spaces (NLOS) 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) West Ham Park).
2. These four open spaces are organised into three charities: 1) Hampstead Heath Charity, 2) Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Charity, and 3) West Ham Park Charity.
3. NLOS operates pursuant to the oversight of two management committees of the City of London Corporation: 1) Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, and Queen's Park Committee, which governs the three named spaces, and 2) West Ham Park Committee, which governs West Ham Park.
4. A significant amount of strategy development has occurred at the City Corporation over the past 18 months, including development of a new Corporate Plan, development of four new Natural Environment Division Strategies, and the review and update of the Hampstead Heath Management Strategy. In addition, the City Corporation's open space charities are now developing rolling five-year business plans to further guide their work planning and delivery.

### **Management of Hampstead Heath**

5. The Hampstead Heath Management Strategy (2018-2028) provides the strategic direction for the management of Hampstead Heath, setting out four strategic outcomes and ten priorities for the charity. The planned mid-term review of the Strategy was approved by the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, and Queen's Park Committee on 3 December 2024.
6. The City Corporation is now developing five-year business plans at its open space charities on a rolling five-year basis. The Five-year Business Plan will state the charities' planned activities and outputs for Hampstead Heath over a five-year period, and will show how and when the various workstreams will be

resourced and met, and will include milestones, timescales and performance measures.

7. The Five-year Business Plan will be updated annually to reflect changes in priorities and resources and to rescope workstreams to reflect new pressures and changes if and when needed. This review will typically occur annually, but may occur by exception at other times to capitalise on new opportunities or respond to new constraints or arising circumstances.
8. The draft Five-year Business Plan for Hampstead Heath (Appendix 1) lists proposed prioritised workstreams to deliver on the charitable obligations and ten priorities of the Hampstead Heath Management Strategy. It also illustrates how these workstreams further relevant goals of the Corporate Plan and Natural Environment Strategies. The plan sets out the specific priorities and activities for the Heath, and progress against them will be reported.
9. The Hampstead Heath Five-year Business Plan is an important planning and communication tool. It allows the charity to articulate its priorities in a resource-constrained environment, and to plan with as much predictability as is feasible what workstreams it believes are reasonably achievable given these resource constraints. Workstreams tentatively planned for out years beyond the current year will necessarily be tentative and will be refined as clarity on out year resources becomes clearer.
10. In principle, once the workstreams for a given year are established, for any new area of potential work that is proposed, consideration will need to be given to how new resources can be secured or to which existing workstream(s) will need to be ceased or deferred to accommodate in order to include anything new in the plan.
11. The Five-year Business Plan is not an exhaustive list of workstreams. The day-to-day “business as usual” activities that take up the majority of Officers’ time are not reflected. This work is guided by an Annual Work Plan that guides the day-to-day activities of officers and sets out cyclical tasks that are planned and delivered on an annual or seasonal basis. This includes activities such as litter picking, cleansing, grass mowing, patrols, and the voluminous other critical tasks that are performed regularly as part of the day-to-day running of the Heath.
12. The draft Five-year Business Plan is still under development, and currently focusses on 2025-26 and 2026-27. The plan will be further developed as greater clarity on future years’ resources becomes available, Officers complete the project prioritisation process (the subject of a separate report to

this committee), and Officers develop estimates on the resourcing needed to deliver workstreams.

13. Estimating the resourcing devoted to workstreams, both at Hampstead Heath and across all four of NLOS's open spaces, is complex and will evolve and be refined over time. It is important to note that while many officers work exclusively for Hampstead Heath Charity (eg, Rangers working exclusively at Hampstead Heath), many Officers at NLOS work across multiple or all charities within NLOS's purview.
14. Officers plan to return to this committee on 29 April 2025 with a fully developed plan, and ask Members to provide any representations now for consideration in advance of decision by Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, and Queen's Park Committee.

#### Project Prioritization Process

15. Some workstreams and projects are essential to the running of the Heath, including those that relate to compliance and health and safety; others are not. There is currently no clear way of assessing and deciding which activities can be delivered within the existing resource envelope (including budget, Officer capacity, and availability of equipment, materials, and supplies), and what activities will either require additional resource to proceed or will need to be ceased or deferred to later years due to being beyond the available resource envelope.
16. Officers seek to address this by including an estimation of the resources required to deliver the various workstreams in the new Five-year Business Plan. This exercise is still a work in progress, and will evolve and be refined in the coming months and years.
17. Given the reality of officers not having sufficient resources to deliver everything on everyone's "wish list", a prioritisation process is needed to help prioritise those workstreams that are critical to the management of the Heath, the achievement of its charitable goals, and which further improve the Heath and what it offers.
18. Accordingly, a Project Prioritisation Process has been created by officers, which is the subject of a separate report to this committee. This process will enable production of a prioritised list of projects and workstreams for the Heath, and for NLOS more broadly, by applying a set of agreed prioritisation criteria to projects and workstreams being considered for inclusion in the Five-year Business Plan. The output of that process, which can then be assessed

against available resources to decide which activities will be included in the business plan, will also inform any subsequent updates to the Five-year Business Plan.

### **Other documents informing management of Hampstead Heath**

19. There are numerous other strategies, plans, programmes, projects, and initiatives at the City Corporation that inform and provide guidance to North London Open Spaces' management of Hampstead Heath, and with which the Hampstead Heath Management Strategy is aligned. These include:
- a. City of London Corporation Corporate Plan (2024-2029), which guides planning and decision-making for the City Corporation through six strategic outcomes.
  - b. Natural Environment Strategies (2024-29), which sets out the City Corporation's strategic approach to its managed open spaces, assets and activities and aligns the Corporate Plan strategic objectives with site-specific management plans (eg, Hampstead Heath Management Strategy)
  - c. Environment Department's High-Level Business Plan (2025-26), a department annual plan which provides a strategic overview of the key areas of work that will be undertaken across the whole Environment Department during 2024-25.
  - d. Climate Action Strategy (2020-2027), which sets out climate action commitments across all the City Corporation's assets, including its open spaces.

### **External support and deliverables**

20. Included within the Five-Year Business Plan are works being delivered and funded via the following programmes, whose budgets exist outside of and independent from Hampstead Heath's local risk budget. There include:
- a. Cyclical Work Plan: repairs and maintenance projects that are required on a cyclical / life cycle basis is provided by the City Surveyor's Department.
  - b. Building Repairs and Reactive Maintenance Programme: building repairs and maintenance delivered via a planned preventative maintenance programme, that also includes reactive repairs and is provided by the City Surveyor's Department.
  - c. Climate Action Strategy: a programme to implement various carbon reduction and resilience projects at open spaces, including Hampstead Heath

## **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

### **Strategic implications**

21. The Hampstead Heath Five-year Business Plan will further the Hampstead Heath Management Strategy Outcomes and Priorities, the Corporate Plan's strategic outcomes, and the four Natural Environment Strategies, as further detailed in this report

### **Financial implications**

22. Activities in the Five-year Business Plan will be planned to meet the existing local risk of Hampstead Heath.

### **Resource implications**

23. Officers managing Hampstead Heath are operating in a resource-constrained environment. As noted in this report, the Five-year Business Plan will support better alignment of workstreams within available resourcing to better articulate what is and is not possible to be delivered by Officers in any given year.

### **Legal implications**

24. The City Corporation is responsible for ensuring that the Hampstead Heath charity fulfils its charitable purpose, which is the "preservation of Hampstead Heath for the recreation and enjoyment of the public". The Five-year Business Plan will assist the delivery of the Hampstead Heath Management Strategy and assist the City Corporation as trustee in discharging this duty in accordance with the charity's objectives.

### **Risk implications**

25. Activities within the business plan are assessed within the Hampstead Heath Risk Register

### **Equalities implications**

26. The Heath Vision describes an inclusive and safe space that brings people together, where a diversity of people, activities and perspectives are welcomed and respected. The Strategic Outcomes that "The Heath is inclusive and welcoming to a diverse range of visitors" will be furthered by the Five-year Business Plan.
27. Activities within the business plan have or will have equalities impact assessments where relevant and appropriate.

### **Climate implications**

28. Several of the activities with the Five-year Business Plan are specifically to address climate-related issues.

### **Security implications**

29. Relevant security risks are assessed with the Hampstead Heath Risk Register

## **Conclusion**

30. A draft Five-year Business Plan is being developed to prioritise workstreams at Hampstead Heath. This Plan will be further developed by Officers. The plan lists proposed prioritised workstreams to deliver on the charitable obligations and ten priorities of the Hampstead Heath Management Strategy, and illustrates how these workstreams further relevant goals of the Corporate Plan and Natural Environment Strategies. The plan allows the charity to articulate its priorities in a resource-constrained environment and agree with confidence the activities that will occur on the Heath in any given year with as much predictability and forward planning as is feasible. In principle, if any new areas of potential work are identified throughout the lifespan of the Five-year Business Plan that are not already included in the plan, consideration will need to be given to how new resources can be secured or to which existing workstream(s) will need to be ceased or postponed to accommodate any new work.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix1: Draft Five-year Business Plan for Hampstead Heath

## **Background Papers**

- None

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