

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee(s): Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee	Dated: 16/07/2025
Subject: Risk Management Update Report	Public report: For Decision
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes • provides business enabling functions 	Corporate Plan Outcomes: Diverse engaged communities; Vibrant thriving destination; Providing excellent services; Flourishing public spaces; Leading sustainable environment Business enabling functions: Risk Management
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 Environment
Report author:	Joanne Hill, Environment Department

Summary

This report is presented to provide the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee with assurance that risk management procedures in place within the Environment Department and its Natural Environment Division are satisfactory and meet the requirements of the Corporate Risk Management Framework and the Charities Act 2011. Risk is reviewed regularly within the Department as part of the ongoing management of the operations.

Your Committee is responsible for two Registered Charities: Hampstead Heath (charity number 803392) and Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Kilburn (charity number 232986). In accordance with the Charity Commission's Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP), Trustees are required to confirm in the charity's annual report that any major risks to which the charity is exposed have been identified and reviewed and that systems are established to mitigate those risks. By following the processes defined in the Corporate Risk Management Framework, the management of these risks meets the requirements of the Charity Commission.

Each of the charities holds a risk register which is summarised in the main body of this report and at Appendices 1 and 2. One risk for each charity is

reported in detail, by exception, to keep Members informed of recent updates (Appendices 1a and 2a).

Recommendation

Members are asked to confirm, on behalf of the City Corporation as Trustee, that the Summary Risk Registers appended to this report satisfactorily identify the key risks to each of the charities and that appropriate risk management processes are in place.

Main Report

Background

Corporate Risk Management Process

1. The City of London's Risk Management Framework incorporates the Risk Management Policy; the Risk Management Strategy 2024-29; and Risk Management Guidance and Training.
2. The Risk Management Policy outlines the City Corporation's overarching approach and requirements in risk management.
3. The Risk Management Strategy 2024-2029 articulates the City of London Corporation's approach to identifying, mitigating, and managing risk. It ensures that the City Corporation upholds duties, delivers priorities, and supports and aligns with organisational ambitions including our Corporate Plan 2024-2029 strategic outcomes enabling delivery, continuous improvement and innovation.

Risk governance and reporting

4. For each natural environment charity, the responsible Management Committee retains oversight of risk, with officers under their relevant delegated authority in the operational management of the charity having day-to-day responsibility for managing and controlling risk.
5. The Charity Commission requires Trustees to confirm in a charity's annual report that any major risks to which the charity is exposed have been identified and reviewed and that systems are established to mitigate those risks. These risks are to be reviewed annually.
6. The City of London's Risk Management Framework requires each Chief Officer to report regularly to Committees on the risks faced by their department.
7. Your Committee, on behalf of the City Corporation as Trustee, reviews risks faced by the Hampstead Heath and Highgate Wood and Queen's Park charities on a quarterly basis to gain assurance that risks are being effectively identified and managed. This reporting frequency aligns with the City of London's Risk

Management Framework and exceeds the requirements of the Charity Commission.

8. Detailed risk registers are presented every six months. The two interim quarterly reports present summary risk registers, with individual risks being reported in detail by exception.

Current Position

9. The Executive Director Environment assures your Committee that all risks held by the Hampstead Heath and Highgate Wood and Queen's Park charities continue to be managed in compliance with the Corporate Risk Management Framework and the Charities Act 2011.
10. Risks are regularly reviewed by the Assistant Director and his management team, in consultation with risk owners, with updates recorded in the corporate risk management information system. Risks are assessed on a likelihood-impact basis, and the resultant score is associated with a traffic light colour. For reference, the City of London's Risk Matrix is provided at Appendix 3.
11. New and emerging risks are identified through several channels, including:
 - Directly by Senior Leadership Teams as part of the regular review process.
 - In response to ongoing review of progress made against Business Plan objectives and performance measures, e.g., slippage of target dates or changes to expected performance levels.
 - In response to emerging events and changing circumstances which have the potential to impact on the delivery of services. For example, changes to legislation, resource availability, severe weather events.
12. For both charities, the three highest risks remain the 'Decline in condition of assets', 'Impacts of anti-social behaviour on staff and site', and 'Work related stress', each of which is currently scored at Red 16 (likely to occur, with a major impact).

- a. **Decline in condition of assets** – There are ongoing concerns about inadequate repair and maintenance of the charities' built assets and a range of actions are underway with the aim of reducing this risk.

Chief Officers in occupation are typically accountable for asset condition within their functional area. They are responsible for commissioning required work, and ensuring an appropriate funding route is identified. This action is often delivered upon the professional advice of the City Surveyor's Department (CSD). Once a work package is commissioned, it is the responsibility of CSD to deliver those works as agreed and funded within the given cost/timeline/specifications. Regular liaison meetings between the two departments are held to manage the delivery programme.

A new mitigating action, owned by the CSD's Operations Group Director, to deliver work packages as agreed with the Environment Department has been added to the risk of each charity and will be kept under regular review.

The Natural Environment Charity Review (NECR) has now concluded its review of land assets and, therefore, the built assets associated with them. Details are presented in a separate report to this Committee.

This risk is reported in detail for each charity, at Appendices 1a and 2a, for Member's information.

- b. **Impacts of anti-social behaviour on staff and site** – Instances of anti-social behaviour continue to occur across the sites. A departmental reporting system is in place to enable rapid reporting of instances where staff experience abusive or unreasonable behaviour by members of the public, which are then followed up with appropriate action. Alongside this, training on conflict management has been delivered to front-line staff across the North London Open Spaces. At a local level, officers encourage responsible behaviour by members of the public, via social media messaging, onsite signage and face to face engagement. Preventative measures are put in place where possible and collaboration with the police and other enforcement agencies to minimise incidents is ongoing. It is hoped that these actions will enable the risk to be reduced.

- c. **Work related stress** - Some members of staff are currently experiencing overwork due to insufficient staffing levels, and are working additional, unpaid, hours to meet service delivery demands. This is resulting in increased levels of workplace stress and anxiety. Senior Management are actively working to address this risk and are undertaking a range of actions, including refining the business plan process to better prioritise workstreams; reviewing staff rotas; seeking funding for additional staff resource; and liaising with HR and Occupational Health to provide staff with appropriate support. It is hoped that these actions will initially reduce the risk score to Amber 12 (possible / major impact). Other actions will then be identified to reduce the score further.

Hampstead Heath Risks

13. The Hampstead Heath Risk Register, summarised below and at Appendix 1, contains fourteen risks (three RED, ten AMBER, one GREEN) which are owned and managed by the Assistant Director, North London Open Spaces, and his management team.
14. Since the date of the last report to your Committee, all risks have been reviewed and updated in the risk management information system. None of the risk scores have changed.
 - **ENV-NE-HH 007: Decline in condition of assets (see Appendix 1a)**
Current risk score: RED 16
 - **ENV-NE-HH 014: Impacts of anti-social behaviour on staff and site**
Current risk score: RED 16
 - **ENV-NE-HH 015: Work related stress**
Current risk score: RED 16
 - **ENV-NE-HH 001: Budget pressures**
Current risk score: AMBER 12
 - **ENV-NE-HH 004: Adverse impacts of extreme weather and climate change**
Current risk score: AMBER 12
 - **ENV-NE-HH 002: Negative impacts of visitor pressure**
Current risk score: AMBER 8
 - **ENV-NE-HH 003: Outbreak of fire in woodland/heathland**
Current risk score: AMBER 8
 - **ENV-NE-HH 006: Risks to health and safety**
Current risk score: AMBER 8
 - **ENV-NE-HH 009: Water facilities**
Current risk score: AMBER 8
 - **ENV-NE-HH 010: Deterioration of water bodies**
Current risk score: AMBER 8
 - **ENV-NE-HH 011: Recruitment of suitable staff**
Current risk score: AMBER 8
 - **ENV-NE-HH 013: Tree event or failure**
Current risk score: AMBER 8
 - **ENV-NE-HH 005: Negative impacts of pests and diseases**
Current risk score: AMBER 6
 - **ENV-NE-HH 008: Negative impacts of development and encroachment**
Current risk score: GREEN 4

Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Risks

15. The Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Risk Register, summarised below and at Appendix 2, contains twelve risks (three RED, eight AMBER and one GREEN) which are owned and managed by the Assistant Director, North London Open Spaces, and his management team.
16. Since the date of the last report to your Committee, all risks have been reviewed and updated in the risk management information system. None of the risk scores have changed.
 - **ENV-NE-HWQP 007: Decline in condition of assets (see Appendix 2a)**
Current risk score: RED 16
 - **ENV-NE-HWQP 012: Impacts of anti-social behaviour on staff and site**
Current risk score: RED 16
 - **ENV-NE-HWQP 013: Work related stress**
Current risk score: RED 16
 - **ENV-NE-HWQP 001: Budget pressures**
Current risk score: AMBER 12
 - **ENV-NE-HWQP 004: Adverse impacts of extreme weather and climate change**
Current risk score: AMBER 12
 - **ENV-NE-HWQP 002: Negative impacts of visitor pressure**
Current risk score: AMBER 8
 - **ENV-NE-HWQP 003: Outbreak of fire in woodland/heathland**
Current risk score: AMBER 8
 - **ENV-NE-HWQP 006: Risk to health and safety**
Current risk score: AMBER 8
 - **ENV-NE-HWQP 009: Recruitment of suitable staff**
Current risk score: AMBER 8
 - **ENV-NE-HWQP 011: Tree event or failure**
Current risk score: AMBER 8
 - **ENV-NE-HWQP 005: Negative impacts of pests and diseases**
Current risk score: AMBER 6
 - **ENV-NE-HWQP 008: Negative impacts of development and encroachment**
Current risk score: GREEN 4

Corporate and Strategic Implications

17. Effective management of risk is at the heart of the City Corporation's approach to delivering cost effective and valued services to the public as well as being an important element within the corporate governance of the organisation.
18. The risk management processes in place in the Environment Department support the delivery of the Corporate Plan 2024-29, our Departmental high-level Business Plan, charity business plans, the Natural Environment Division's core strategies, and relevant corporate strategies, including, but not limited to, the Climate Action; Cultural; Sport; and Volunteering Strategies.
19. Risks which could have a serious impact on the achievement of business and strategic objectives are proactively identified, assessed and managed in order to minimise their likelihood and/or impact.

Conclusion

20. The proactive management of risk, including the reporting process to Members, demonstrates that the Natural Environment Division of the Environment Department is adhering to the requirements of the City of London Corporation's Risk Management Framework and the Charities Act 2011.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Hampstead Heath Summary Risk Register
- Appendix 1a – Hampstead Heath Detailed Risk (reported by exception)
- Appendix 2 – Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Summary Risk Register
- Appendix 2a – Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Detailed Risk (reported by exception)
- Appendix 3 – City of London Corporation Risk Matrix

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