

City of London Corporation Committee Report

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| Committee(s): Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee | Dated: 21/10/2025 |
| Subject: Highgate Wood and Queen's Park 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 the Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Kilburn charity (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.

The Highgate Wood and Queen's Park risk register is summarised in the main body of this report and provided in full at Appendix 1.

Recommendation

Highgate Wood and Queen's Park risk management: Members are asked to confirm, on behalf of the City Corporation as trustee, that the register appended to this report satisfactorily sets out the key risks to the charity and that appropriate systems are in place to effectively identify and mitigate risk.

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 the risks faced by the Highgate Wood and Queen's Park charity 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.
9. New risk management reporting appendices have recently been developed for use across all departments as part of the *Informed Decision Making* objective of the Risk Management Strategy 2024-2029. These appendices are intended to help promote consistency and accuracy in risk management reporting to support strategic decision-making. Members will note that the risk register appended to this report takes this new format.

Current Position

10. The Executive Director Environment assures your Committee that all risks held by the Highgate Wood and Queen's Park charity continue to be managed in compliance with the Corporate Risk Management Framework and the Charities Act 2011.
11. 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 2.
12. 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.
13. The three highest risks for the Highgate Wood and Queen's Park charity 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 charity's 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.

The actions include one owned by the CSD's Operations Group Director: to deliver work packages as agreed with the Environment Department. This and all other actions are kept under regular review.

- b. **Impacts of anti-social behaviour on staff and site** – Instances of anti-social behaviour continue to increase.

A contract with an external security provider has now been agreed for the provision of supplemental security resource as required.

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 over time.

- 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, in time, reduce the risk score to Amber 12 (possible / major impact). Other appropriate actions will be considered to enable a further reduction.

Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Risks

- 14. The Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Risk Register 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.
- 15. Since the date of the last report to your Committee, all risks have been reviewed and updated in the risk management information system. The risks are listed below along with explanations of any changes to the scores. Full

details of the risks and their mitigating actions are set out in the detailed risk register at Appendix 1.

- **ENV-NE-HWQP 007: Decline in condition of assets**
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 006: Risk to health and safety**
Current risk score: AMBER 8
- **ENV-NE-HWQP 009: Recruitment and retention of suitable staff**
Current risk score: AMBER 8

- **ENV-NE-HWQP 011: Tree event or failure**
Current risk score: AMBER 8
This risk remains at a score of Amber 8 (likely to occur with a serious impact). However, the approach has changed from aiming to reduce the risk, to accepting that it is at the lowest achievable level. Tree and limb failures are increasing due to the ongoing effects of climate change. There are no actions available that would reduce the likelihood of the risk, nor the impact should it occur. However, officers continue to take a range of actions to control the risk and maintain it at the current level, ensuring the safety of staff and site users.

- **ENV-NE-HWQP 003: Outbreak of fire in woodland/heathland**
Current risk score: AMBER 6
Following the absence of any significant fire events over the summer, the recent acquisition of a fire fogger, and additional training for staff, the impact of this risk has been reassessed and the score lowered to the target of Amber 6 (possible likelihood / serious impact). The risk is now accepted at this lower level as there are presently no additional available actions that would reduce the likelihood or impact any further. However, officers will continue to take the stated actions to control the risk at the current level.

- **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

16. 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.
17. 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.
18. 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

19. 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 – Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Risk Register
- Appendix 2 – City of London Corporation Risk Matrix

Contact

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