

City of London Corporation Committee Report

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| Committee(s): Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee | Dated: 3 February 2026 |
| Subject: Assistant Director's Report (Queen's Park) | Public report: For Information |
| This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes | -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? | £0 |
| 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 Department |
| Report author: | Bill LoSasso, Superintendent, North London Open Spaces |

Summary

This report provides Members with an update on matters relating to Queen's Park since the last update to committee of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee meeting on 21 October 2025.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Report format

1. The Assistant Director's Report aligns with the four strategic themes and ten priorities of the Queen's Park Management Plan. Additional matters of interest and importance are covered in an "Additional Relevant Matters" section if and as needed.

Caring: We care for the Park to ensure it continues to fulfil its many functions for the benefit of the community, heritage and the environment, now and for future generations.

2. The Queen's Park Team had a busy autumn and maintenance tasks consisted mainly of grass cutting and strimming. These tasks continued until the winter when the weather and ground conditions changed. Most of the leaves have now fallen from the deciduous trees, so the team will continue to collect leaves from the paths and lawns until the end of January. These tasks ensure the Park remains clean, safe and a welcoming environment for everyone all year round.
3. The long grass areas are established on the Field of Hope, the Milman and Harvest Road boundary lawns. These meadows had their final cut in the autumn, after the later-flowering species went to seed.
4. After bird-nesting season finished, the team at Queen's Park started the two-month task of reducing the Park perimeter hedges in September. This included reduction of the privet hedge around the tennis courts and the mixed hedge around the perimeter of the playgrounds; both to improve sightlines. All the hedges were reduced in height by the end of November.
5. A Nordmann fir (*Abies Nordmanniana*) has been planted on the main field opposite the Queen's Park café, which will become the Park's Christmas tree. This species was chosen as it has a good growth rate, offers a classic pyramidal shape, is hardy and thrives in parks and large gardens in the UK.
6. On 15 September there were strong predicted winds (with 50 mph gusts), which led to the Park being closed. One large ash tree sustained damage with a

severed limb, requiring limb removal. On 4 October, during Storm Amy (with predicted >50 mph gusts), the Park was closed again. One medium-sized ash branch severed and fell to the ground close to the toilet block.

7. The areas that were temporarily fenced off in the Woodland Walk to prevent erosion from visitors and to allow natural regeneration of woodland flora have produced some positive results in this effort. The areas are being monitored so the biodiversity value can be enhanced within the woodland. Hedge-laying will take place before the end of March 2026, which will also be a great learning opportunity for the staff based at Queen's Park.
8. Meetings have been held with the Carbon Removals Project Team to discuss possible areas within the park that may be suitable for hedgerow planting.
9. Contractors were appointed through the City Surveyor's Department to carry out minor repairs and to repaint the bandstand, which is a Grade II-listed building. This work will be completed in the spring when the weather conditions allow.
10. As part of the Cyclical Works Programme, the City Surveyor's Department sourced additional funding to replace and install new enclosure fencing at the farm. The Farm was closed to the public whilst external contractors carried out the work but reopened to the public on 17 December.
11. The team also undertook additional work at the Farm. This included some repairs, painting the sheds, housing and perimeter fencing panels, creating some enrichment for the farm animals, and new signage. The work has made a significant improvement, which will also be of benefit to those visiting the Farm.
12. The City Surveyor's Department has informed Officers that they are projecting a significant overspend for the current financial year on reactive maintenance works, and as a result, spending controls are being put into place through 31 March 2026. This will result in prioritising absolutely necessary tasks and those that are statutorily required, or those that can be funded alternatively, and deprioritising other works. It is hoped that the ongoing investment and improvements being made via the City Surveyor's Department's Cyclical Works Programme will improve the overall state of the estate, thus reducing the need for reactive repairs.

Excellence: We maintain high environmental, conservation, heritage and horticultural standards.

13. The Head Gardener carried out and led three bulb-planting sessions with Malorees School in early November. A total of 750 *Narcissus* (daffodils) were planted on the bunds in the south of the Park, adding to the existing displays. This is an annual event and 2025 marked the tenth year of working in partnership with Malorees School.
14. Site meetings are being held with suppliers to review the irrigation system and consider improvements to the pitch and putt course.

Inclusion: We ensure that the Park and its facilities are accessible to all and inclusive, so that all can enjoy the benefits of enhanced physical and mental well-being.

15. Football training continues to take place every Saturday and offers sessions for different ages and needs focusing on skill development, a positive safe environment, enjoyment, and fun. The weekly sessions are provided by Queen's Park Sharks, Atlantic Sports Development Football Club, and Little Foxes Club.
16. Significant research has been carried out on splash pads, designs, and maintenance. The team has visited two splash pads within the London area to learn from their experiences, and to gain knowledge and a better understanding of the maintenance regime and resources needed.
17. Following playground inspections and resistograph tests, replacement beams were ordered for the hexagon swing and zip line. The beams were installed on the two pieces of play equipment, and both were open to the public at the end of October, when they were safe to use.
18. A resistograph test was also carried out on another piece of play equipment, named the 'Timberwood Tangle'. The results identified that several structural beams were structurally unsound and needed to be replaced. Officers decided to remove it from the playground to mitigate any risk during high winds. The future use of this area will be reviewed alongside the designs and plans for the proposed splash pad.

19. The annual play safety inspection was carried out on all the play equipment, including the trim trail on 24 October 2025.
20. The defibrillator inside the staff yard has been relocated. It has been installed on the wall outside the café in a locked cabinet to provide quicker and easier access for the public to use. The team has registered the defibrillator on the national database (<https://www.thecircuit.uk/>), so anyone can access it during Park opening hours by calling 999 and obtaining the code from the operator. The unit is housed in a temperature-controlled cabinet. Weekly checks are being carried out by the Queen's Park team.
21. We are in touch with the Head of Planning and Development Services at Brent Council with regards to the BT phone box on City Corporation-owned land and the potential for Brent Council to take on the license, installation and maintenance of a defibrillator on that site.

Community: We work in partnership with our local community and engage visitors and the local community in understanding and caring for the Park.

22. In November, one of the older Ouessant sheep died. Three new hens were added to the collection, to join the resident cockerel.
23. Letters of support have been received from representatives of the Queen's Park Consultative Group, and a grant application to HS2's Community and Environment Fund was submitted in November to help raise the additional funds required for the splash pad. The outcome of the grant application should be known by February 2026.
24. The public fundraising campaign for the proposed splash pad is ongoing and has raised over £17,000 including gift aid to date. Donations have been made consistently via QR codes on posters and banners around the Park, social media posts, newsletters, and events such as the QPARA's Christmas carols. Through the campaign, we were contacted by SuperKind, a social action platform which was founded by a Queen's Park resident and empowers school children to change issues they care about. We will be looking into ways we can engage young people in this and other future projects. The splash pad campaign will remain open until at least the end of the Easter holidays, by which time we should know the outcome of the HS2 application and will be able to update community donors and implement any final fundraising effort required.

Events

25. QPARA's Christmas carols event took place in Queen's Park around a Christmas tree on Saturday 6 December. Mince pies and mulled wine were provided, and the Christmas tree was kindly donated by Kensal Pines.

Additional Relevant Matters

26. A new Operative Ranger commenced work in October and is an excellent addition to the team. Another Operative Ranger position is also being recruited for. Recruitment is underway for an Operative Ranger (Farm), a position that prioritises caring for the Farm in addition to the other duties of an Operative Ranger.

Remarketing of cafes

81. Officers are now actively progressing the next steps on the transition to Daisy Green as the operator at Queen's Park Cafe and are discussing the provision of an interim food and beverage service while the interior fit out of the cafe occurs. In addition, the City Corporation will be completing its own scheduled works to the exterior of the building in parallel with the new operator's interior works in early 2026. It is anticipated that all works will be completed by spring 2026, and the City Corporation is working to minimise any service disruptions during this time. Access to Queen's Park and its recreation assets will not be affected. Additional information will be shared with this Committee in due course. We committed to ensuring that the cafe continues to thrive as a welcoming hub where people can meet and relax and are focussed on supporting a smooth transition and a positive future for this important community asset.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications

82. This report furthers strategic aims of the new Queen's Park Management Plan and the Corporate Plan.

Financial implications

83. No implications.

Resource implications

84. No implications.

Legal implications

85. No implications.

Risk implications

86. Risks are monitored and recorded through the various risk registers, including the Division and Departmental Risk Registers.

Equalities implications

87. No implications.

Climate implications

88. Included within the business plan for 2025-26 are a series of projects which contribute towards achieving the City of London's Climate Action Strategy.

Security implications

89. Security implications are monitored and recorded through the Departmental Risk register.

Conclusion

90. This report provides Members with an update on matters relating to Queen's Park since the last update to the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee meeting on 21 October 2025.

Appendices: N/A

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