

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee(s): Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee	Dated: 03/02/2026
Subject: Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Risk Management Update Report	Public report: For Information
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
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Summary

This report provides an overview of the risk management processes in place, including risk governance and the format and frequency of reporting, for the Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Kilburn charity (charity number 232986) for which your Committee is responsible.

The report provides Members with assurance that these processes align with the Corporate Risk Management Framework and meet the requirements of the Charities Act 2011. A summary of the current Highgate Wood and Queen's Park risk register is included within the report, and at Appendix 1.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the content of this report and:

- The summary of the Highgate Wood and Queen's Park risk register provided within the report and at Appendix 1.
- The assurance of the Executive Director 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.

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.
4. To support delivery of the Risk Management Strategy 2024-2029, a Corporate Risk Appetite Statement was recently approved by Court of Common Council. This Statement details the City Corporation's approach to taking risk across nine themes and will be used to aid strategic decision making. Initially, this is being applied to Corporate-level risks only, but will, in time, be rolled out to risks at all levels, including charity risks. Further details will be reported to your Committee as they become available.
5. 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.

Risk governance and reporting

6. 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.
7. 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.
8. The City of London's Risk Management Framework requires each Chief Officer to report regularly to Committees on the risks faced by their department.

9. Your Committee, on behalf of the City Corporation as Trustee, reviews risks faced by the Highgate Wood and Queen's Park charity on a quarterly basis to gain assurance that risks are being identified and managed effectively. This reporting frequency aligns with the City of London's Risk Management Framework and exceeds the requirements of the Charity Commission.
10. 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

Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Risks

11. 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.
12. The Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Risk Register contains 12 risks (two RED, nine AMBER, one GREEN) owned and managed by the Assistant Director, North London Open Spaces and his management team. Risk owners monitor each risk, remaining aware of changes or factors that could affect it, either positively or negatively, and identify any new opportunities to better control each one. Since the last report to your Committee, all risks have been reviewed and updated as necessary.
13. The risk '**Impacts of anti-social behaviour on staff and site**' has been reassessed and the score reduced to Amber 6 (possible/serious). This revised score reflects the lower levels of anti-social behaviour at Highgate Wood and Queen's Park in comparison to other North London Open Spaces sites. The aim is to reduce the risk further through a range of mitigating actions. 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. Locally, officers encourage responsible behaviour and put preventative measures in place where possible. This risk is reported in detail at Appendix 1 for reference.
14. The two highest risks remain '**Decline in condition of assets**' and '**Work related stress**', each of which is currently scored at Red 16 (likely to occur, with a major impact). Further details of these risks are provided below, and both are presented in detail at Appendix 1 for Members' information.
 - a. **Decline in condition of assets**

There are ongoing concerns about inadequate repair and maintenance of the charities' built assets. Progress on necessary works is now being seen, including toilet refurbishment at Queen's Park and Highgate Wood; fencing repairs at Queen's Park Farm; and commencement of repairs to the Education Centre at Highgate Wood.

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 mitigating actions for this risk include one owned by the CSD's Operations Group Director: to deliver work packages as agreed with the Environment Department. All actions are kept under regular review.

b. Work related stress

Some members of staff are currently experiencing increasingly high workloads due to insufficient staffing levels to meet greater service delivery demands. This is leading to higher levels of workplace stress and anxiety, with individuals working additional, unpaid, hours. The operation of Queen's Park is reliant on casual staff to support the increased visitor numbers during the busy summer months. The risk is lower for Highgate Wood which is relatively well-resourced. Senior Management are actively working to address this risk, including ensuring appropriate support and training for individuals; reviewing staff rotas; and identification of additional funding to increase staff resources where needed. It is hoped that these actions will, in time, reduce the risk score. Other appropriate actions will be considered to enable a further reduction.

15. All Highgate Wood and Queen's Park risks are listed below (and at Appendix 1).

16. The following risks are being managed with the aim of reducing the likelihood and/or impact ratings, and officers are undertaking a range of appropriate actions to achieve the target scores.

- **ENV-NE-HWQP 007: Decline in condition of assets**
Current risk score: Red 16 (Likely/Major)
- **ENV-NE-HWQP 013: Work related stress**
Current risk score: Red 16 (Likely/Major)
- **ENV-NE-HWQP 001: Budget pressures**
Current risk score: Amber 12 (Possible/Major)
- **ENV-NE-HWQP 004: Adverse impacts of extreme weather and climate change**
Current risk score: Amber 12 (Possible/Major)
- **ENV-NE-HWQP 002: Negative impacts of visitor pressure**
Current risk score: Amber 8 (Likely/Serious)
- **ENV-NE-HWQP 006: Risk to health and safety**
Current risk score: Amber 8 (Unlikely/Major)
- **ENV-NE-HWQP 009: Recruitment and retention of suitable staff**
Current risk score: Amber 8 (Unlikely/Major)
- **ENV-NE-HWQP 012: Impacts of anti-social behaviour on staff and site**
Current risk score: Amber 6 (Possible/Serious)

17. The remaining risks, listed below, are 'accepted' with actions in place to maintain them at their current score. These risks have been reduced to the lowest level

possible at present, but officers remain aware of changes and opportunities which could enable a further reduction.

- **ENV-NE-HWQP 011: Tree event or failure**
Current risk score: Amber 8 (Likely/Serious)
- **ENV-NE-HWQP 003: Outbreak of fire in woodland/heathland**
Current risk score: Amber 6 (Possible/Serious)
- **ENV-NE-HWQP 005: Negative impacts of pests and diseases**
Current risk score: Amber 6 (Possible/Serious)
- **ENV-NE-HWQP 008: Negative impacts of development and encroachment**
Current risk score: Green 4 (Unlikely/Serious)

Corporate and Strategic Implications

18. 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.
19. 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.
20. 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

21. 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 Risks
- Appendix 2 – City of London Corporation Risk Matrix

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