

# Open Spaces Business Plan 2015/16 – 2017/18

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## 1. Director's introduction

We began 2014/5 by looking at the longer term; considering what Open Spaces will need to provide for communities over the next 50 years. Many of the landscapes we manage require long term planning. With the projected growth in London's population, pressures on the NHS and education, as well as substantial reductions in central government grants which have left local authorities with major decisions to make over the levels of service they provide; we determined to focus on ensuring our green spaces would be able to meet the challenges of these changes. Whilst the City of London Corporation is not simply a local authority, we do provide local services. Like other organisations, we are facing serious economic challenges; we are, however, working hard to ensure our financial position remains stable. In reviewing our services we are challenging what and how we provide them, as well as the way we currently operate. This will, allow us to explore more efficient, effective and innovative ways of working. We have used this work to develop a programme of change for 2015 onwards.

As well as planning ahead, there were some significant achievements in 2014. The two reservoir projects – Hampstead Heath's Ponds and Epping Forest's Highams Park Lake – have been examples of excellent joint working with engineers from the Department of the Built Environment, as well as community engagement. Highams Park now has a new dam and significantly less silt, as well as achieving a solution for the home of the local scout canoeists. At Hampstead Heath, following a successful outcome of the Judicial Review and planning permission, work has been able to start on site; achieving the tight planned timescale. Both projects have benefitted from some great staff support, working closely with a wide range of community groups.

Other projects that have made good progress include the Cemetery and Crematorium Shoot, providing additional burial space, where work is now ready to be commencing on site in 2015/6. The Kenley Heritage Lottery Project, involved an interesting workshop on maintaining heritage assets and now has all resources in place to commence work on site later in 2015. As significant part of the grazing strategy was achieved with the completion of the Great Gregory's buildings providing overwintering facilities for 170 cattle including Epping's longhorn and red poll cattle as well as City Common's Sussex cattle. This will enable the herd to grow further in subsequent years, improving wood pasture management.

We are indebted to both staff and volunteers for all their achievements in 2014; with nearly 50,000 volunteer hours, up 10% on 2013, volunteers enable us to together achieve some significant projects; for example the visitor surveys at Epping Forest and the woodland management at City Commons. I was delighted that two Superintendents, Bob Warnock and Andy Barnard, were successful in their appointments to new roles within the Department.

The introduction of a new visual identity, focussing on our charitable trusts, has started to draw together messaging for each site. We continue to focus on improving our web site; seeking to understand the requirements of our customers and using social media to support their interest. We have made good use of QR codes on some sites to direct further information and visitor experience.

This Plan provides our direction for 2015/6 and beyond; focussing on ensuring our green spaces are preserved for recreation and enjoyment, whilst protecting local biodiversity and heritage; providing opportunities for both community and individual enrichment. Our projects are challenging all of us

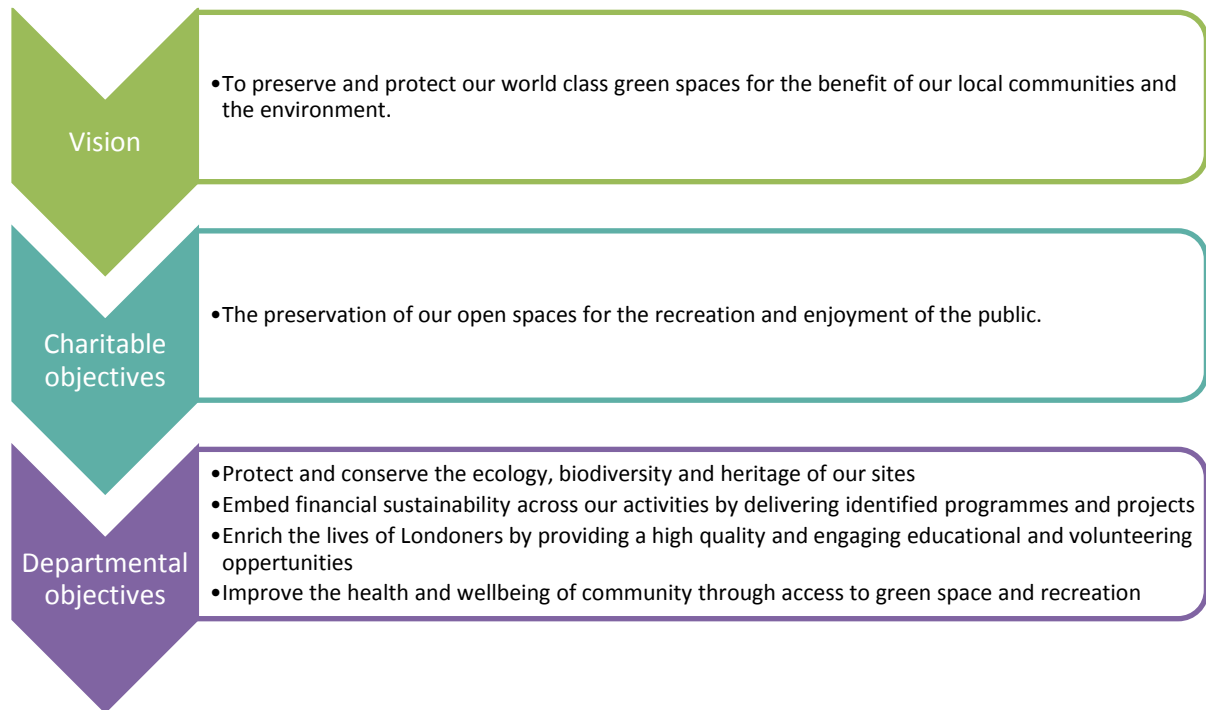
to do things differently and some of them will require our staff to develop new skills – particularly around developing ideas into financially viable projects, managing projects and managing change. Each of our divisional training plans will need to reflect these new requirements alongside day-to-day operational considerations.

In preparing for change, we recognise the need to develop staff skills both in project management, leadership and managing change; as well as developing management information to better understand our customers, empower staff and achieve improvements and efficiencies. Specific projects will focus on the opportunity that the introduction of a Various Powers Bill will enable; a strategic property review and a new Learning Strategy. We will seek further opportunities to become more efficient through energy and fleet reviews, together with achieving additional funding from wayleaves, car parking, cafes and other opportunities to promote our services. Although our focus must be on developing our skills, reducing costs and increasing income; there are several significant projects that must also be delivered. The Ponds Project will be a year for considerable upheaval on site, whilst construction starts; working with the community to ensure the short term impact is limited where possible. At Epping Forest the new management plan will be presented for public consultation.

These projects present an ambitious programme of change that will allow our charities to operate more effectively in delivering their objectives and our Departmental objectives, in a way which is effective, efficient, sustainable and wide reaching.

## 2. Our vision and objectives

The Open Spaces Department is integral to the service that the City of London offers to the community of London and beyond. Our green infrastructure contributes to ecological diversity and conservation as well as positive outcomes for people - enjoyment, recreation, wellbeing and health.

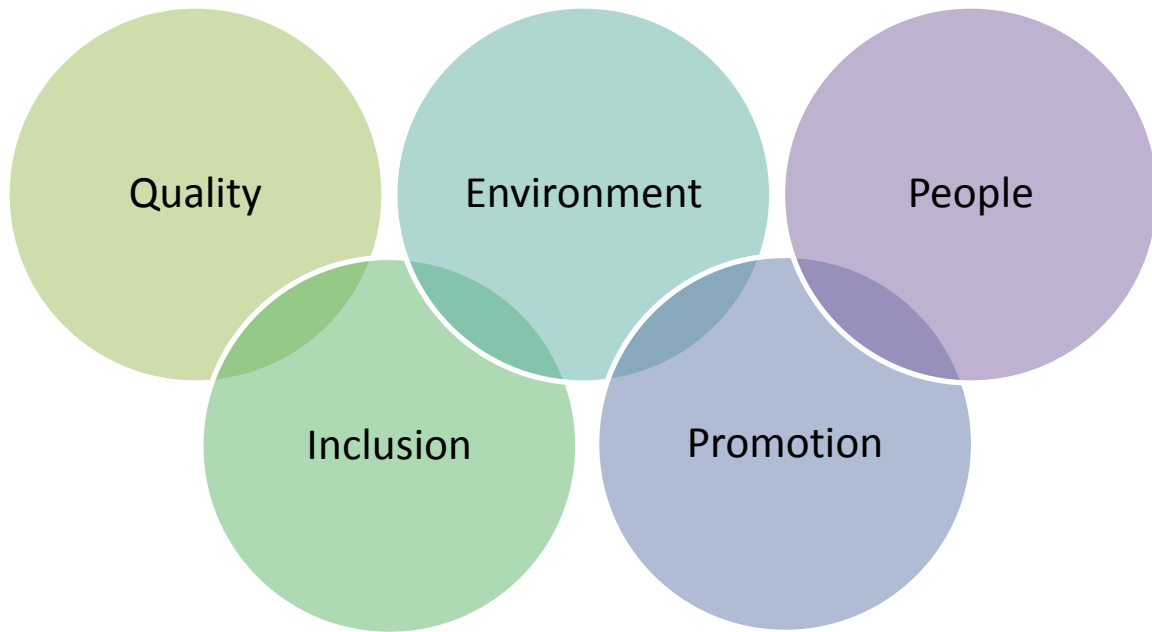


This vision reflects the objectives of each of our eight charities, which focus on the preservation of our green spaces for the recreation and enjoyment of the public. The objectives for each of our charities are included in appendix 2.

The Department's objectives reflect our charities' joint focus on communities and the landscape we all enjoy. Through this business plan, the Open Spaces Department through its charities at Ashted Common, Burnham Beeches & Stock Common, Coulson Common & Other Commons, Epping Forest, Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park, West Ham Park, West Wickham Common & Spring Park and as well as our Cemetery & Crematorium will:

- Protect and conserve the ecology, biodiversity and heritage of our sites
- Embed financial sustainability across our activities by delivering identified programmes and projects
- Enrich the lives of Londoners by providing a high quality and engaging educational and volunteering opportunities
- Improve the health and wellbeing of community through access to green space and recreation

In delivering our charity and departmental objectives, we are also conscious of our five departmental values of quality, inclusion, environment, promotion and people; and the City's values of lead, empower and trust.



### **3. Delivering our key priorities**

The delivery of our charitable objectives for each open space and our four departmental objectives is supported by a number of corporate, departmental and divisional projects and programmes. These are illustrated on our departmental roadmap.

Roadmaps are being introduced across the City of London to illustrate priority projects including a timeline and milestones. Each roadmap presents an overview of programmes and activities and it is supported by a suite of project and programme management documents which include new “Opportunity Outlines”, “Corporate Impact Assessments”, “Project Initiation Documents” and “Highlight Reports”. These documents form the basis of a new corporate gateway process for the scoping, delivering and monitoring of non-capital projects.

Our departmental roadmap also reflects those corporate cross cutting projects which will impact on the department, as well as those projects that we are running as a Department. Our departmental programmes are:

Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•City Bridge Trust Bid   Education strategy and operating model   Golders Hill Park Zoo and Queen's Park Children's Farm   One O'Clock Club   Volunteering and outreach work at City Gardens and West Ham Park   Hampstead Heath education and play facilities</li> </ul>
Sports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Sports strategy   Charging   Paddling pools   Wanstead Park changing facility improvement   Hampstead Heath Lido   Golf course recovery   Online sports booking   Operating model</li> </ul>
Various Powers bill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Management powers   Income generation   Enforcement</li> </ul>
Promoting our services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Market research  Events   Charging   Commercial activity   Promotion of charities   Increase awareness of services   Understanding of costs   Digital development</li> </ul>
Energy efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Audit of property   Reduction in utility usage   Increase electricity generation</li> </ul>
Fleet & equipment review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Audit of equality and costs   Disposal   Management options</li> </ul>
Wayleaves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•New charging model   Annual process of review   Enforcement</li> </ul>
Ponds Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Engineering and landscaping project to improve dam safety, improve water quality and create diverse habitats</li> </ul>
Lodges and operational property review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Identification of surplus property   Exploration of short and long term leasing opportunities   Disposal of surplus assets   Income generation</li> </ul>
Car Parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Divisional based projects considering charging strategy and infrastructure to support this</li> </ul>
Cafes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Development of food sales, concessions and cafe   Service improvements   Increased income</li> </ul>

Together these projects present an ambitious programme of change that will allow our charities to operate more effectively together in order to deliver each of the charities' objectives and our departmental objectives in a way which is effective, efficient, sustainable and wide reaching. Our roadmap is attached at appendix 1.

A separate list of future capital projects is included at appendix 3. However over the next three years the Department will primarily be focusing on our roadmap projects and programmes. As a result only those capital projects associated with roadmap projects have been added to the business plan.

#### 4. Performance measures

As the Directorate undertakes the change programme as part of our key priority projects and programmes to secure financial sustainability and to meet our key objectives, it will be increasingly important for staff to have access to information about our customers and our business performance to inform decisions.

New Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were introduced in 2014/15 – Conservation, Customer Satisfaction, Finance and People Management. These will continue as: Preserving the ecology and biodiversity of our sites, Customer Satisfaction, Finance and Developing our staff. A new indicator, Energy efficiency and sustainability, has been added to reflect two of our roadmap projects – Energy Efficiency and Fleet Review.

To enable decisions to be based on good evidence, we are developing the performance indicators established by the previous business plan. To facilitate this, a broader basket of site specific indicators will sit behind each KPI. These will drill down into further detail. The development of a broader range of indicators will also enable us to recognise the variety and differences between each of our 14 open green.

KPI	Performance 2014/15	Basket of Indicators for 2015/16
Preserving the ecology and biodiversity of our sites	Target of all sites having either a current management plan or work on next plan initiated met by the end of 2014/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sites with current management plan</li> <li>• Green flags awards</li> <li>• Green heritage awards</li> <li>• SSSI condition</li> <li>• London in Bloom awards</li> <li>• Heritage assets at risk</li> </ul>
Customer satisfaction	Target of all divisions to have completed a hundred “60 second surveys” met in 2014/15	<p>Completion of hundred 60 second surveys for each site</p> <p>A basket of indicators will be developed during 2015/16 following a market segmentation exercise and as part of the Promoting our Services roadmap project. These indicators will link to COL Customer Strategy</p>
Finance - Income as a percentage of local expenditure (actuals)	<p>Goal of increase percentage for 14/15 compared to 13/14</p> <p>TBC at year end</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Road map projects successfully delivered</li> <li>• Net profit evaluation of events</li> <li>• Net profit evaluation of commercial activity</li> </ul>
Developing our staff	<p>Target of trainings spend of 1.5% of direct employee costs</p> <p>TBC at year end</p>	<p>Target of training spend of 1.5% of direct employee costs</p> <p>A basket of indicators will be developed during 2015/16 that link to Investors in People, a training analysis and a departmental workforce strategy. It</p>

		is anticipated that these indicators will consider the effectiveness of training and how it is contributing to the business; staff progression and retention; development of core skills over and above business specialist.
Energy efficiency and sustainability	Performance against the Department Sustainability Improvement Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce utility consumption by 2.5% per annum</li> <li>• Reduce fuel consumption by 5% per annum</li> <li>• Increase in electricity generation of 100KW (two additional buildings generating at least 50KW each)</li> </ul>

The Cemetery & Crematorium has an additional set of Key Performance Indicators which reflect the commercial and regulatory environment in which it operates.

Target 2014/15 and 2015/16	Performance 2014/15
Maintain 23% market share of cremations	Under KPI to date due to reduced operating in January and February as a result of operational issues
Maintain 8% market share of burials	7Under KPI due to a slight shift away from burial this year.
Income compared to income target	To be confirmed at end of year – expect to exceed income target
Percentage cremations using the new fully abated cremator – target of 60%	48.5% due to the failure of our abated cremator during parts of November, January and February.

In addition to our KPIs, as part of our roadmap projects, we are also embedding consideration of outcomes in each project and programme as they are developed. Over time the development, monitoring and refinement of our outcomes will feed into our KPIs and indicators.

## 5. Our People

The Open Spaces Department employs 350 staff across a broad range of activities including arboriculturalists, litter pickers, rangers, constabulary, lifeguards, bereavement services, grounds maintenance, administration, marketing, sports, fleet management and education. A structure chart is included at appendix 6.

Our roadmap projects are challenging all of the staff in the Open Spaces Department to do things differently and some of them will require some of our staff to develop new skills – particularly around developing ideas into financially viable projects, managing projects and managing change. Each of our divisional training plans will need to reflect these new requirements alongside day-to-day operational considerations.



## **Investors in People**

The City of London Corporation being assessed over a period of three years against the Investors in People (IIP) core standard and the wider IIP framework. In year one (September 2014) the assessment focused on validating the 'one team' culture and effectiveness of leaders and managers. In September 2015 the assessment focus will be on the effectiveness of engagement of frontline teams in all elements of strategy implementation and in year three the assessment focus will be on the skills of managers in evaluating the outcomes from learning and development activities.

In September 2014 the City Corporation met the evidence requirements of the IIP core standard and enough of the wider framework evidences from indicators 1, 3, 4 and 5 to secure recognition as a Bronze Investor in People. It is hoped that by the last assessment in September 2016 enough of the wider IIP framework evidences will have been met to secure the Gold award.

An Open Spaces Departmental action plan based on the 2014 assessment has been developed. Superintendents and their teams are working towards imbedding the IIP principles into everyday management, develop and share areas of good practice and gathering evidence for the next assessment.

## **Workforce planning**

In recognition of our need to effectively manage and develop our workforce, we will be replacing our Human Resources Improvement Group with a Workforce Planning Group. This departmental group will contribute to a broader corporate programme of activity around workforce planning.

## **Succession Planning**

The Department recognises the need to succession plan both as part of individuals development but also to secure positive outcomes for the Department. The Senior Leadership Team will be discussing how to take this forward with our HR Business Partner.

## **Learning priorities and outcomes**

The department has a suite of learning priorities which are: project management, people management, leadership, financial awareness, managing and working with volunteers, operational training and coaching/mentoring skills. In setting our learning priorities for this business plan period, consideration has been given to our charitable and departmental objectives, and our roadmap projects and programmes.

Our learning priorities will be used to identify appropriate learning opportunities. Learning outcomes will be set for each learning opportunity, such as courses, conferences or events, and outcomes will be evaluated on completion of learning and cost-benefit will be evaluated. This will allow the Department to understand the impact of its learning programme and to highlight those learning opportunities which have proved particularly valuable.

## **Volunteers**

We are hugely grateful for the work of our volunteers who support a wide range of activities across our green spaces including woodland management, ecological surveys, ecological enhancements, event organisation & delivery, mentoring, visitor engagement and installing new planting schemes. Some of activities and services are only possible due to the time given by volunteers.

In recognising the support of our volunteers in managing and maintaining our green spaces, we also recognise that volunteering should be a beneficial and enjoyable experience for those who volunteer. Volunteering can contribute to a range of outcomes including: connectivity to open space and the wider community, exercise, a sense of wellbeing, engagement with others and skills development. As part of our learning programme, we will be developing a series of outcomes and indicators which will help us to assess and understand the impact of volunteering for those who participate.

A volunteering programme is now embedded at each of our sites with the exception of the Cemetery & Crematorium. The Department will continue to develop its volunteering offer and ensure that the contribution of volunteers is maximised through its Volunteering Improvement Group which brings representatives from across the Department together to share good practice.

As we progress our roadmap projects and programmes we will continue to work with communities and volunteers to deliver the services they need.

## **6. Risk Register**

The Open Spaces Department manages risk through a Departmental risk register, divisional risk registers, generic risk assessments and dynamic risk assessments. The Department also currently has one risk on the Corporate Risk Register – Corporate Risk 11.

Risks are managed on a divisional basis and each divisional management team is responsible for managing risks locally. Risks are escalated to the Departmental risk register to reflect those risks which cut across divisions, or which would have an impact which would be felt beyond the division. Risks are escalated to the Corporate Risk Register in accordance with the City of London Risk Management Strategy.

Generic risk assessments have been produced by the Open Spaces Risk Assessment Group and agreed by Senior Leadership Team to ensure a common standard across the Department. These generic risk assessments are then used as a basis for preparing risk assessments and safe systems of work in each of the divisions.

Dynamic risk assessments are conducted by staff prior to undertaking any risky activity. Where alterations are made to agreed safe methods of working these decisions must be documented.

The most significant risks facing the Department are our ability to deliver our roadmap projects & programmes; animal, plant & tree disease; and health & safety.

Each roadmap project will develop its own risk register for the project and the associated change implementation. These risks will be managed by the project lead and reported to the programme board or programme executive. Risks and issues will be escalated by the programme executives to the Department's Senior Leadership Team as necessary, who in turn may choose to escalate risk further through the corporate process.

## **7. Health and safety**

Health and Safety is managed in the Department through the Health & Safety Improvement Group which meets quarterly and is chaired by the Director. Each division is represented at this meeting, and each divisional representative is charged with communicating the outcomes and

recommendations of the Health & Safety Improvement group to their divisions. The minutes of the meetings are circulated through the Department and made available on divisional notice boards.

The Health & Safety Improvement Group has a Risk Assessment Sub Group which is currently reviewing and rationalising risk assessments and safe systems of work.

Each division also has its own Health & Safety group which escalates issues up to the Departmental Health & Safety Improvement Group as necessary.

The Director represents the Department on the City of London Health & Safety Committee which is chaired by the Town Clerk. The Open Spaces Technical Manager also attends the City of London Safety Managers Forum.

The Open Spaces Department uses 12 indicators to monitor Health & Safety which are attached in appendix 5. An annual Health & Safety audit is carried out to monitor the 12 Health & Safety indicators. The audit is carried out by each division carrying out a self-assessment which is followed in alternate years by a validation from another division.

The current areas the Department is focusing on to improve are:

- Managing contractors
- Maintenance of equipment
- Working with the public/lone working
- Musculo-skeletal issues
- Premises fire risk assessments
- Noise and vibration
- Risk assessments for the use of chemicals.

## **8. Property and asset management**

The Open Spaces Department is the custodian of the City's open space land, while the City Surveyor is responsible for the maintenance of the buildings and other built infrastructure. The Open Spaces Department will be working together with the City Surveyors and Chamberlains as part of the operational property review during the course of this business plan to review our operational assets to ensure that assets are used effectively and sustainably and any surplus assets are identified.

Preparations for this review have already identified surplus assets including surplus lodges, the "rabbit triangle" and a toilet block at the Cemetery and an empty office at Farthing Downs. This work is reflected on our roadmap. Discussions have also started to consider cases where assets could become surplus in the future, such as Heathfield House which currently houses the management and administration team for Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park.

## 9. Summary Business Plan

<b>Our Vision is:</b>	To preserve and protect our world class open spaces for the benefit of our local communities and the environment.
<b>Our Charitable Objectives are:</b>	The preservation of our open spaces for the recreation and enjoyment of the public.
<b>Our Departmental Objectives are:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and conserve the ecology, biodiversity and heritage of our sites</li> <li>• Embed financial sustainability across our activities by delivering identified programmes and projects</li> <li>• Enrich the lives of Londoners by providing a high quality and engaging educational and volunteering opportunities</li> <li>• Improving the health and wellbeing of community through access to green space and recreation</li> </ul>

Our Key Performance Indicators are:		
Description:	2013/14 performance	2014/15 target
Preserving the ecology and biodiversity of our sites	Target of all divisions to have completed a hundred “60 second surveys” met in 2014/15	Basket of indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sites with current management plan</li> <li>• Green flags awards</li> <li>• Green heritage awards</li> <li>• SSSI condition</li> <li>• London in Bloom awards</li> <li>• Heritage assets at risk</li> </ul>
Customer satisfaction	Target of all divisions to have completed a hundred “60 second surveys” met in 2014/15	100 surveys per site completed.  A basket of indicators will be developed during 2015/16 following a market segmentation exercise and as part of the Promoting our Services roadmap project. These indicators will link to COL Customer Strategy
Finance - Income as a percentage of local expenditure	TBC at year end	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Road map projects successfully delivered</li> <li>• Net profit evaluation of events</li> <li>• Net profit evaluation of commercial activity</li> </ul>
Developing our staff	TBC at year end	Target of training spend of 1.5% of direct employee costs

		A basket of indicators will be developed during 2015/16 that link to Investors in People, a training analysis and a departmental workforce strategy. It is anticipated that these indicators will consider the effectiveness of training and how it is contributing to the business; staff progression and retention; development of core skills over and above business specialist.
Energy efficiency and sustainability	New indicator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce utility consumption by 2.5% per annum</li> <li>• Reduce fuel consumption by 5% per annum</li> <li>• Increase in electricity generation of 100KW (two additional buildings generating at least 50KW each)</li> </ul>

<b>Our Financial Information:</b>					
	<b>2013/14 Actual 000</b>	<b>2014/15 Original Budget 000</b>	<b>2014/15 Revised Budget 000</b>	<b>2014/15 Forecast Outturn (latest) 000</b>	<b>2015/16 Original Budget 000</b>
Employees	£13,777	£14,206	£13,850	£13,850	£14,256
Premises	£2,118	£1,849	£1,983	£1,983	£1,771
Transport	£639	£597	£1,027	£1,027	£622
Supplies & Services	£2,455	£2,142	£2,100	£2,100	£2,152
Third Party Payments	£61	£78	£112	£112	£78
Transfer to Reserve	£213	£100	£66	£66	£74
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£19,263</b>	<b>£18,972</b>	<b>£19,138</b>	<b>£19,138</b>	<b>£18,953</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-£8,344</b>	<b>-£8,376</b>	<b>-£8,376</b>	<b>-£8,626</b>	<b>-£8,280</b>
<b>Total Local Risk</b>	<b>£10,919</b>	<b>£10,596</b>	<b>£10,762</b>	<b>£10,512</b>	<b>£10,673</b>
<b>Central Risk</b>	<b>-£2,235</b>	<b>-£1,203</b>	<b>-£516</b>	<b>-£516</b>	<b>-£619</b>
<b>Total Local and Central</b>	<b>£8,684</b>	<b>£9,393</b>	<b>£10,246</b>	<b>£9,996</b>	<b>£10,054</b>
<b>Recharges</b>	<b>£4,019</b>	<b>£3,829</b>	<b>£4,031</b>	<b>£4,031</b>	<b>£3,992</b>
<b>Total Net Expenditure</b>	<b>£12,703</b>	<b>£13,222</b>	<b>£14,277</b>	<b>£14,027</b>	<b>£14,046</b>
<b>City Surveyor Local Risk</b>	<b>£3,164</b>	<b>£4,785</b>	<b>£4,181</b>	<b>£4,181</b>	<b>£5,039</b>
<b>Total Net Expenditure</b>	<b>£15,867</b>	<b>£18,007</b>	<b>£18,458</b>	<b>£18,208</b>	<b>£19,085</b>

Our People													
Total staff	353												
Full time	314												
Part time	39 (figure does not include seasonal casual staff at Hampstead Heath and Epping Forest)												
Turnover	10-15% of permanent posts become vacant in any one year												
Vacancies	All vacancies are advertised internally within the City of London. From April 2015, all vacancies for Team Leaders and above it will be advertised across the department prior to any further recruitment in order to identify existing employees would like to be considered for secondment, acting up or to have development experience.												
Sickness absence	<p>The Open Spaces department is predominantly a manual worker department and the average number of days lost for the 12 months ending December 2014 was 6.2 days per employee. This compares favourably with the corporate average.</p> <p>The main areas which caused the sickness absence in late 2014 were musculo-skeletal problems such as knee, back, neck, hip and shoulder injuries and infections such as flu, coughs, cold etc. These absences accounted for 52.6% of all sickness absences during the period October to December 2014.</p>												
Gender	74.2% of staff are males, whilst 25.8% of staff are females												
Age range	<p>The Open Spaces Department has an aging workforce, with over 70% employees over 41</p> <table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td>20 and under</td> <td>0.6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>21-30</td> <td>9.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>31-40</td> <td>20.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>41-50</td> <td>36.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>51-60</td> <td>27.8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>61 plus</td> <td>6.2%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	20 and under	0.6%	21-30	9.1%	31-40	20.1%	41-50	36.3%	51-60	27.8%	61 plus	6.2%
20 and under	0.6%												
21-30	9.1%												
31-40	20.1%												
41-50	36.3%												
51-60	27.8%												
61 plus	6.2%												
Ethnicity	89.39% of the workforce are white British/European, 1.52% are Asian, 3.33% are black, 5.57% are classified as being of mixed ethnicity												

## **10. Appendices**

1. The Open Spaces Department Roadmap and divisional roadmaps
2. Charitable objectives
3. Capital projects
4. Risk register
5. Health & Safety indicators
6. Structure charts