

Committee(s)	Dated:
Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee – For Discussion	07.11.2016
Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen’s Park Committee – For Decision	21.11.2016
Subject: Hampstead Heath Management Plan Review Findings	Public
Report of: Superintendent of Hampstead Heath	For Discussion
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Summary

The process to review and update the Hampstead Heath Management Plan has reached another milestone in its development. The purpose of this Report is to share the findings from the review of the 2007 Plan for your consideration and guidance in shaping the 2018 Plan.

Workshops were conducted to consult with members of past working groups involved in developing the 2007 Plan and with Hampstead Heath staff. The review captured insights and learning under five key headings to inform the development of the 2018 Plan. Key recommendations by theme include:

Theme 1 – Progress: the 2018 Plan shall build on the 2007 Plan and embed monitoring and regular reporting into ways of working.

Theme 2 – Structure: the 2018 Plan shall be embedded in a management framework for Hampstead Heath, to establish a golden thread from the 2018 Plan through to service delivery at the site level.

Theme 3 – Relevance: refreshing the objectives set out in the 2007 Plan and setting a mid-term review (five-yearly) for the 2018 Plan, will ensure it remains relevant and responsive to future changes.

Theme 4 – Engagement: engaging widely to articulate a long term vision for the Heath will inform strategic principles that can guide future management decisions and resolution of emerging issues.

Theme 5 – Evaluation: the 2018 Plan shall adopt an outcomes-based approach to inform prioritisation of resources and realise management aspirations.

Recommendation(s)

- That the views of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee are conveyed to the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen’s Park Committee.
- That Members endorse the recommendations in this Report being incorporated into the 2018 Plan.

Main Report

Background

1. The ten-year Management Plan for Hampstead Heath will expire in 2017, making development of a revised Plan for implementation in April 2018 (2018 Plan) a priority project. Work commenced with a review of the current Management Plan (2007 Plan) and is progressing in line with the programme outline presented to the Consultative Committee and Management Committee in March 2016.
2. Completion of the Review Stage marks an important milestone. The purpose of this Report is to share the findings from the review of the 2007 Plan for your consideration and guidance to shape the 2018 Plan.

Current Position

3. Early consultation revealed consensus that the 2018 Plan must build on the strengths and reflect the intentions of the current Management Plan, whilst making necessary updates to ensure it remains relevant into the future. A series of meetings and workshops has been conducted to review the effectiveness of the 2007 Plan and to share insights and capture lessons learned.
4. A review of achievements and progress towards the Essential Actions and Aspirational Goals set out in the 2007 Plan was conducted with the Hampstead Heath management team and a summary report is included in the appendices. The report demonstrates that the Overriding Objectives set out in the 2007 Plan have shaped our work over the past 9 years, with the majority of Essential Actions achieved or on-going. This review has highlighted the importance of embedding regular reporting into the 2018 Plan.
5. Two workshops were facilitated by Creative Wit, the first on Thursday 1 September 2016 bringing together fourteen Hampstead Heath and Open Space Division staff drawn from all service areas. On Saturday 10 September, four members of past working groups who had been involved in developing the 2007 Plan joined the Superintendent and three staff to reflect on the 2007 Plan and to discuss the way forward. In addition, a number of interviews and meetings were conducted for those who were not able to take part in the workshop, including the past Superintendent of Hampstead Heath, and the previous Open Spaces Communications Manager, Senior Ecologist, a member of the policy working group for the 2007 Plan and a member of the working group for natural landscape. Full details of participants are included in a consultation register provided in Appendix 1.
6. Findings from both workshops are summarised in reports prepared by Creative Wit, which are included in Appendix 2. The workshops provided a rich mix of ideas and suggestions to feed into the development of the 2018 Plan. In particular, several consistent messages emerged:
 - The 2018 Plan should set the principles, values and ethos within which everyone operates. The review was seen as an opportunity to 'put people at

the heart of the Plan', to capture the passion and commitment to ensure the Heath remains a unique, high-quality, accessible public space for all.

- The review of the 2007 Plan should be one of 'evolution not revolution'; it is important that we build on the good work and solid foundation in the current Plan.
- An outcomes-focused plan should enable effective decision-making, and establish a proactive approach to achieving and celebrating success.
- There should be clear mechanisms for evaluating and reporting progress.
- The new Plan can share clear messages about the purpose of the Heath and allow stakeholders to understand how priorities have been arrived at.
- Conflicts will arise and the Plan should provide a transparent framework for how they are resolved.
- The 2018 Plan should provide a clear link between strategic objectives and how they frame the day-to-day work on the Heath.
- The Plan should provide a long term framework for how Hampstead Heath will be managed into the future, supported by a medium term implementation plan which sets out how this will be delivered in response to changing priorities and resource implications.
- Future scanning - mapping out future trends, challenges and opportunities was seen as important.

Options

7. As set out in the March 2016 Committee Report, the consultative review of the 2007 Plan addressed five key themes:
 - Progress: measuring progress and achievements to date;
 - Structure: reviewing the structure of the plan and associated framework for delivery;
 - Relevance: refreshing the objectives, actions and goals to ensure relevance in the current and future contexts;
 - Engagement: fostering a spirit of shared stewardship;
 - Evaluation: adopting an outcomes-based approach.

Proposals

Progress: Measuring progress and achievements to date

8. Workshop participants generally agreed that progress towards the objectives in the 2007 Plan has been achieved, and were able to highlight many projects and improvements. Many achievements have been presented in various Committee Reports over the past nine years, although it was somewhat challenging to qualify this in the absence of a regular reporting framework. It was felt that reporting procedures as set out in the 2007 Plan were not successfully

embedded into ways of working and that this is an improvement that needs to be made in the 2018 Plan.

The question of how effectively the 2007 Plan has guided management, prioritisation and decision-making was also challenging. There was general agreement that the established protocol of referencing the relevant 2007 Plan objective or action in Committee Reports is useful, and that this could be taken further to establish a direct link between the strategic objectives and proposals being presented to Committee (Committee Forward Plan).

9. **Recommendation:** It is proposed that there is regular reporting on progress and achievements, in direct reference to the strategic objectives set in the Plan. This may be achieved by building on the current reporting to Committee and the yearly report on the Annual Work Programme (AWP), with an expanded scope to include all programmes of delivery (currently conservation focused).

Structure: reviewing the Plan structure and associated framework for delivery

10. There was a great deal of discussion about the structure of the 2007 Plan and the rationale underlying the title "Towards a Management Plan for Hampstead Heath". Generally it was thought that the three-part structure had served its purpose for the theme of Natural Landscape, where fifteen compartment management plans have been prepared with detailed specifications for targeted areas of conservation value. However, it was thought unnecessary to replicate this for the other management themes. There was strong consensus that the body of technical papers and specialist knowledge collated for Natural Landscape should not be lost, nor duplicated, whilst acknowledging that this was not necessarily appropriate for other themes.

It was agreed that the 2018 Plan should ensure a clear thread from the strategic level through to implementation, and that on-ground delivery is established and maintained. Development of a medium-term plan (Divisional Plan) will ensure the allocation of resources may be prioritised in response to changing circumstances and needs.

11. **Recommendation:** It is proposed that the 2018 Plan establish a management framework that includes:
 - a 2018-2027 Management Plan that sets strategic directions;
 - a medium-term plan that guides implementation;
 - an Annual Work Programme and Projects Plan, with detailed specifications and guidance.

Relevance: refreshing the objectives, actions and goals to ensure relevance in the current and future contexts

12. Discussion about the ten-year term of the Plan drew the conclusion that this is an appropriate period for a strategic plan. Recognising that change is constant, with the Ponds Project a pertinent example, it was suggested that a mid-term (five-

yearly) review of the strategic plan be conducted, to enable any unforeseen changes to be addressed.

Participants felt that the content of the 2007 Plan remains relevant and that this review should seek to update, rather than rewrite, and to add content where gaps are identified. It was agreed that new issues, challenges and opportunities are likely to emerge in the coming ten years, and that the management framework should be adaptable and responsive to these. It was suggested that a briefer document is more readily updated, and that the 2018 Plan includes a section that considers emerging trends and challenges that are likely to affect future management.

Participants agreed that the 2007 Plan provides a clear statement of intention for the various management themes but felt that it falls short in guiding management on some key issues impacting the Heath today, particularly issues that cross several themes.

Suggestions included that the review build on the objectives set out in the 2007 Plan, to develop guiding principles for addressing complex issues and considering a diverse range of views. Also to review the language used in the Plan, to ensure it reflects the role the Heath plays in the context of the wider London environment, networks and communities, and to be more forward and outward looking.

13. **Recommendation:** It is proposed that the 2018 Plan sets out strategic objectives in the context of a long-term vision for Hampstead Heath and seeks to develop principles to guide future decision-making about integrated and complex management issues. A mid-term review of the strategic Plan is recommended to ensure relevance, with a major review every ten years.

Engagement: fostering a spirit of shared stewardship

14. In terms of priorities, it was felt the Plan could provide clarity around the potentially overlapping priorities of conserving the Heath while ensuring many people benefit from the experiences and facilities it offers. It was suggested that engagement across the wide spectrum of Heath users and communities could help to tease out this paradox. The resulting community data could be used to refresh the existing vision statements, and to inform the development of principles for managing potential conflicts. At the same time, participants expressed a range of views on community engagement, some mindful of the risks of complex issues becoming over-simplified, the challenges of engaging harder-to-reach groups, of managing expectations, and where this sits relative to the role of the Consultative Committee in representing Heath stakeholders. Others were mindful of the importance of inclusive processes and of seeking representation of all Heath users, including the voices of those least heard. A strong theme was recognising the value of partnership working, and the important role that volunteers and local organisations play in realising aspirations for the Heath.

Establishing the Committee Forward Plan as a mechanism for setting and communicating management priorities over the short to medium term, consulting at the formative stage of proposals, and aligning with existing governance

structures will ensure effective engagement is embedded into our ways of working.

15. **Recommendation:** It is proposed that a programme of engagement with the wider community proceeds to refresh the Heath vision and to foster a shared sense of stewardship for the Heath, now and into the future.

Evaluation: adopting an outcomes-based approach

16. There was a general view that a key improvement needed for the 2018 Plan is to establish a framework for monitoring and evaluation, reporting and review that is embedded in our ways of working and governance structures. There was a good deal of discussion about the challenge of acknowledging and communicating success in the absence of clear outcomes being identified. Staff in particular suggested that the 2018 Plan adopts an outcomes-based approach. This will enable us to define the desired result or change we want to achieve and then track progress towards this, communicating and celebrating achievements. It was felt that a monitoring and evaluation framework must be efficient to implement, and must utilise existing knowledge and information if it is to be effective.
17. **Recommendation:** The objectives set out in the 2007 Plan provide an excellent foundation for developing an outcomes-based framework to inform decision-making and prioritising in the context of a long-term vision for the Heath.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

18. The recommendations for a management framework for Hampstead Heath are aligned with the business planning cycle, with key actions, projects and programmes able to be prioritised in the 2018/19 Divisional Plan for Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park. Annual Work Programmes across all three sites are also being aligned to financial years, as described in the Superintendent's Update.

Implications

19. The completion of the review stage has provided useful insights into ways that the 2018 Plan can build on the 2007 Plan to steer management over the next ten years. The project may now proceed into Stage 2: Defining Success, which will see a wider engagement programme to capture aspirations for the Heath and describe outcomes and impacts for the Heath and its community, now and into the future.

Conclusion

20. Following a consultative review process, the Superintendent is proposing that the review findings and recommendations be incorporated into the 2018 Plan. The 2018 Plan will span ten years and will be strategic, comprehensive and forward-looking to reflect the scale, significance and complexity of the Heath. It will be supported by a management framework, and will set the strategic direction for

prioritising and allocating resources via a Divisional Plan, which will be delivered via annual work programmes and projects. This management framework will facilitate effective and timely community engagement, and will embed regular reporting, evaluation and review into our ways of working.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Consultation Register
- Appendix 2a – Workshop Report - Staff
- Appendix 2b – Workshop Report – past working group members
- Appendix 3 – Programme Outline for the review of the 2007 Hampstead Heath Management Plan (prepared March 2016)
- Appendix 4 – Hampstead Heath Management Plan interim progress report

Background Papers

March 2016 Committee Report: Hampstead Heath Management Plan Review and programme outline

November 2016 Committee Report: Superintendent's Update

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