

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
Open Spaces Committee – For Information	5 December 2016
<b>Subject:</b> Open Spaces Business Plan – Quarter 2 Update	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Director of Open Spaces	<b>For Information</b>
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## Summary

This report updates Members on the progress to date against the Departmental Business Plan.

### Vision

- Preserve and protect our world class green spaces for the benefit of our local communities and the environment

### Charitable Objectives

- Preservation of the open spaces
- Provision for recreation and enjoyment of the public

### Departmental Objectives

- 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

These objectives are to be delivered through key actions with milestones and monitored through performance indicators. The department is on track in achieving the various project milestones.

Performance indicators suggest that Tennis has been particularly strong at West Ham Park and Queen’s Park following the partnership with the Lawn Tennis Association. The learning programme is also performing well in terms of percentage of participants who report they are “more knowledgeable about the natural history of our open spaces”.

## Recommendation

- Members are asked to note this report

## **Main Report**

### **Background**

1. The Departmental Business Plan was approved by your Committee on 18 April 2016. The plan was based around the departmental vision which is to preserve and protect our world class green spaces for the benefit of our local communities and the environment and our departmental objectives which are to:
  - a. Protect and conserve the ecology, biodiversity and heritage of our sites
  - b. Embed financial sustainability across our activities by delivering identified programmes and projects
  - c. Enrich the lives of Londoners by providing a high quality and engaging educational and volunteering opportunities
  - d. Improve the health and wellbeing of community through access to green space and recreation

### **Current Position**

2. The department is progressing the various milestones identified within the business plan and an update on these is provided at Appendix 1. The key actions over the three year period of the business plan are included first, and then progress against the key actions for 16/17 is presented. Actions are being progressed for each of the objectives. The completion of the Ponds Project at Hampstead Heath, the recommendation for full Museum Accreditation for the View and the development of a new Fleet Policy are of particular note this quarter.
3. A full breakdown of the agreed performance indicators is at Appendix 2. Tennis performance has been particularly strong at West Ham Park and Queen's Park. West Ham Park have already had more bookings so far this year than all of last year. The partnership with the Lawn Tennis Association has introduced a new online booking system – Club Spark as well as investment in courts (9 resurfaced at West Ham Park) and assistance in recruitment of new coaches. Although participation has increased significantly, free sessions have been held as part of the launch of coaching and so revenue will not fully reflect this increase.
4. The football seasons at Epping, Hampstead Heath and Highgate Wood have not yet started. West Ham Park has benefited from some training sessions over the summer and the use of the park by the Guinea & Bissau football league.
5. The learning programme is being well established, and 99% of those surveyed reported that they had gained more knowledgeable about the natural history of our open spaces following the session. A formal measure is not yet in place for PI 12 (intention to visit with families), but an evaluation consultant has been employed to assist in developing this and other measures.

6. The investigation of Health & Safety accidents is lower than target at 71%. This may reflect the period including August and September which are busy times but also holiday periods. Due to the relatively small number of accidents, the number of late investigations (7) has a significant impact on the figures. The Technical Manager is continuing to work with sites to ensure timely investigations and quality learning.
7. The department is continuing to progress the programmes highlighted within the past two business plans. As Members are aware, the timetable for the Open Spaces Bill has lengthened and this has impacted on other programmes which are reliant on the proposed enabling powers. Generally, the projects are progressing well. Given that a number of projects have now closed down or progressed to “Business As Usual” (car parking, learning, ponds project), officers are starting to give consideration to what projects should be progressed within the next business plan.
8. A full list of the awards for Green Flag and Green Heritage is not yet available as reports are still awaited for Riddlesdown, Ashted Common, Hampstead Heath, Burnham Beeches and Bunhill Fields. The results received thus far have been encouraging – all those sites which we subject to a “mystery shop” rather than a full report have passed and West Ham Park has increased its band from 70-74 to 80+. The City’s sites also received a number of London in Bloom awards. The information to date is attached at Appendix 3.

## **Risk**

9. As reported elsewhere on your agenda, it is now proposed for the department to report on six departmental risks:
  - OSD 001 - Ensuring the health and safety of staff, volunteers, contractors and public (amber)
  - OSD 002 - Extreme weather (amber)
  - OSD 004 - Poor repair and maintenance of buildings (amber)
  - OSD 005 - Animal, plant and tree diseases (amber)
  - OSD 006 - Impact of housing and/or transport development (amber)
  - OSD 007 – Maintaining the City’s water bodies (red – NEW)
10. Each of these risks is further articulated through divisional risks and managed through associated divisional actions.
11. The Department previously has had one corporate risk: CR11 – Hampstead Heath ponds: overtopping leading to dam failure (red). Following the completion of the engineering work in October, this risk will be removed from the corporate risk register subject to the final issue of the revised emergency action plan. A new risk has been drafted on maintaining the City’s water bodies which highlights the issues of repairs & maintenance, changing legislation and land ownership. Local divisional risk registers are being developed to reflect the local conditions.

## **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

12. The Business Plan identifies how the department's improvement activities will support the aspirations of the organisation, as reflected in the Corporate Plan. The Improvement Actions particularly support the organisation's core value of: Working in partnership.

13. Delivering the Business Plan will support the Corporation's strategic aims to:  
SA2 - Provide modern, efficient and high quality local services, including policing, within the Square mile for workers, residents and visitors  
SA3 - Provide valued services, such as education, employment, culture and leisure to London and the Nation.

14. In addition it will deliver the key policy priorities: KPP2, KPP3, KPP4, and KPP5 as defined in the Corporate plan.

## **Implications**

15. As in Quarter 1, Members should be aware that the department is continuing to face uncertainty in respect of the payment of Stewardship Grants both in terms of timescale and payment. Members will be updated as this matter progresses.

16. There are no further implications arising from this report

## **Health Implications**

17. The Open Spaces continue to contribute to health and wellbeing within the City and other boroughs by providing access to green space and opportunities for sports, leisure and creation. The department is also considering how to support healthy food choices through its café tendering.

## **Conclusion**

18. The department has had a good first quarter and is on track to achieve the milestones set for the year.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Actions and milestones – full list and Quarter 2 update
- Appendix 2 – Performance Indicators
- Appendix 3 – Awards

## **Background Papers**

Open Spaces Business Plan 2016/17-2019/20

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