

Committees	Dated:
Open Spaces Committee – For Information	11 October 2017
Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park - For information	15 November 2017
Epping Forest and Commons Committee – For information	20 November 2017
West Ham Park Committee – For Information	11 October 2017
Education Board – For Information	9 November 2017
Subject: Year 1 Review of Learning in Open Spaces	Public
Report of: Director of Open Spaces	For Information
Report author: Grace Rawnsley – Head of Learning (Open Spaces)	

Summary

'Green Spaces, Learning Places', the Open Spaces Department's new innovative learning programme, was launched in April 2016 and has reached over 45,000 children, young people and adults in the first year of delivery. This programme represents a key method for the City of London to contribute to the health and wellbeing of residents of some of London's most deprived communities through connecting them more powerfully to their local green spaces.

The programme has achieved overwhelming success as highlighted in the first year evaluation report (Appendix A). However, the future of the project remains at risk due to uncertainty over the long term funding arrangements for the core areas of the work.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that:-

1. Members note the success of the learning programme in the first year of delivery and support its continued delivery into years 2 and 3 of the current funding.
2. Members note the issue of not achieving funding from external sources and the risk this presents to the programme.

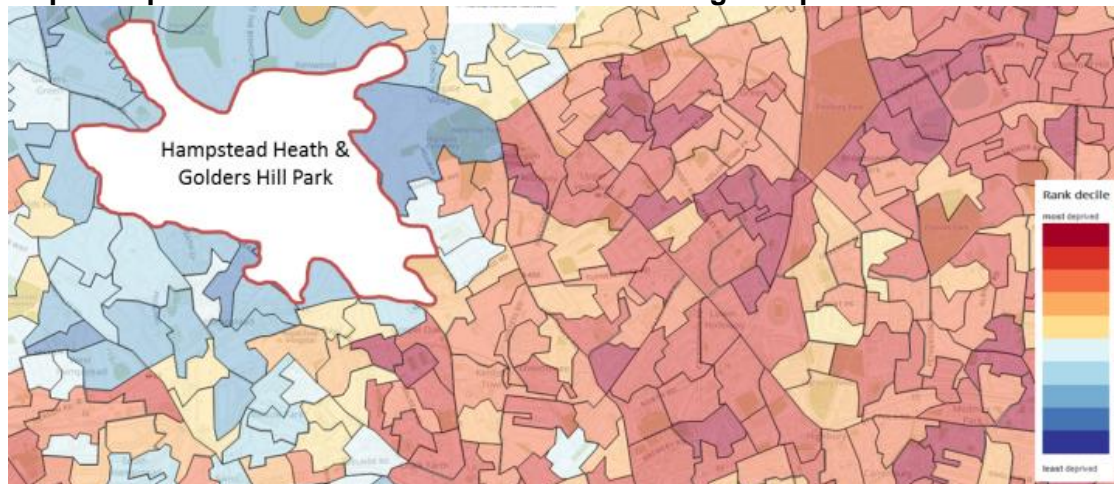
Main Report

Background

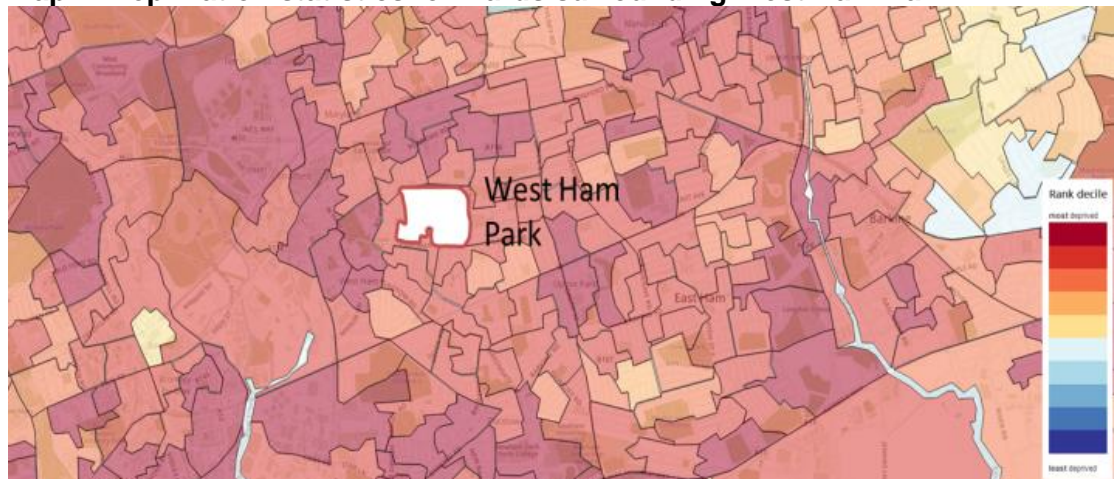
1. Children in deprived areas of London face more barriers than most to accessing nature. City of London green spaces are often located near areas of high deprivation (maps 1-3 below) which makes us uniquely placed to

tackle this challenge. Our goal is to get people outdoors to experience the good feelings and health benefits that we all know come from spending time in green spaces.

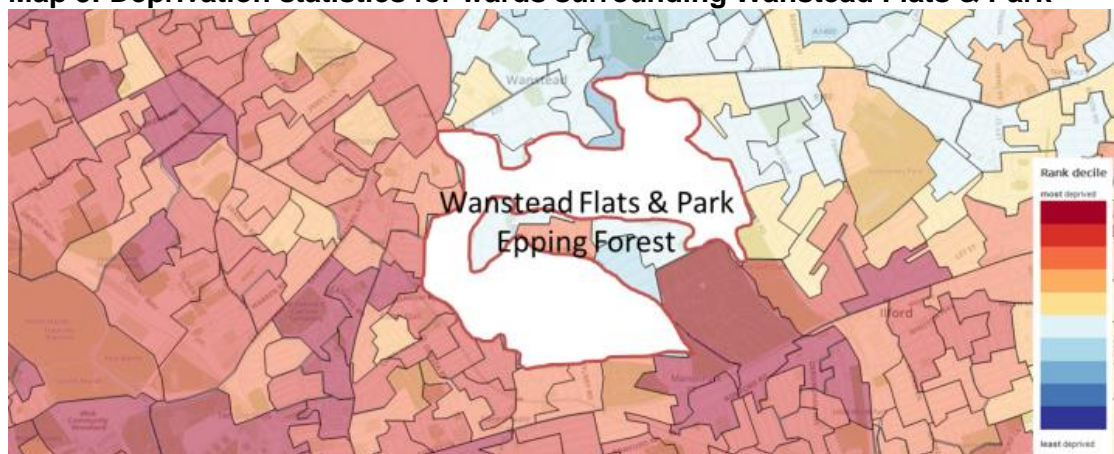
Map 1: Deprivation statistics for wards surrounding Hampstead Heath



Map 2: Deprivation statistics for wards surrounding West Ham Park



Map 3: Deprivation statistics for wards surrounding Wanstead Flats & Park



2. A number of government white papers and prominent studies have highlighted the barriers that young Londoners face to engaging with nature which range from geographical and cultural, to emotional and social. Studies

have shown the results of these barriers on children and young people in London:

- a. Only 1 in 10 children play outside regularly
 - b. People in deprived areas of London are 10 times less likely to have access to green space
 - c. 30% of schools in London have no natural features in their school grounds
 - d. Young people in deprived areas of London face the most barriers to accessing nature in the UK
3. In order to tackle this challenge, we developed a new centrally coordinated outcomes-based approach to delivering learning, focusing on delivering to deprived communities close to our open spaces. This approach was centred around 5 impact areas which make up our strategic learning framework; understanding, confidence, involvement, wellbeing, and connection. Using this approach we designed learning projects and services that deliver impact in our local communities.
4. In April 2016, the new programme entitled 'Green Spaces, Learning Places' was launched and included 5 innovative community based projects and 2 reinvigorated community services. Part of this programme was funded through a generous grant from the City Bridge Trust of £400,000 over three years.
5. The remaining funding is to be accomplished through carry-forwards of local risk savings, grants from other external funders, and hypothecated property income from lodges.
6. The programme was designed to have a number of core roles and services that are ongoing and support future development, as well as a number of fixed term projects. This structure allows the programme to be responsive, resilient and adaptable in the face of changing needs and priorities.
7. Each project was developed to work with communities or audiences who traditionally face barriers to accessing green spaces. The projects are short term but high impact and focus on quality over quantity. The services are designed to reach a wide and inclusive audience to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to learn and connect with nature. The projects are detailed below:
 - a. **Green Talent:** we provide opportunities for unemployed young people or those at risk of becoming NEET near Hampstead Heath to explore careers in the environmental and green spaces sector. However, we have a hidden agenda - we want them to love our green spaces as much as we do, and realise their role in the future of green spaces in London.

- b. **Wild Schools Project:** we work closely with our local schools near West Ham Park to get them using our green spaces to teach their lessons, so that all young Londoners grow up experiencing nature.
- c. **Wild East Project:** often people use green spaces but don't know the stories behind them. Through the Wild East Project we want to tell these incredible stories using mobile interpretation tricycles at West Ham Park and Wanstead Flats.
- d. **Playing Wild:** from experience we know that it doesn't take much for a child to want to play outdoors – they love it. We also know that many children under 5 don't have the opportunity to play outside regularly. We work with parents and community groups to take children outdoors on Hampstead Heath.
- e. **Hampstead Heath Ponds Education Project:** using this real life example of science and engineering in action, we work with secondary school students to bring their learning into context, raise their aspirations and role model STEM careers.

The services are detailed below:

- a. **Wild Schools Service:** what better way to learn about science, geography and history than seeing, hearing, smelling and feeling it first-hand. Our school sessions on Hampstead Heath and Epping Forest are the perfect introduction to green spaces, while hitting some learning objectives at the same time.
- b. **Play Service:** Our popular staffed play areas on Hampstead Heath are the first stepping stone to getting outdoors for many local young people and their parents. We provide family-friendly, nature-focused activities that inspire our visitors to take that next step into nature and green spaces.

Current Position

- 8. In 2016-17, 'Green Spaces, Learning Places' engaged over 45,000 children, young people and adults in learning activities across our green spaces, bringing them closer to the natural world.
- 9. The report 'Year 1 evaluation of Green Spaces Learning Places' (appendix A) specifically highlights the success of the CBT funded projects and services that make up part of our wider learning offer. In summary these successes include:
 - a. **12,225 school students** were inspired through hands-on learning sessions designed to promote discovery, connection and deeper understanding of the natural world
 - b. **33 new dedicated volunteers** from our local communities increased their wellbeing and confidence by giving their time, energy and skills to helping their communities discover more about green spaces
 - c. **2 interpretation bikes and 4 new interpretation kits** have brought nature closer to families in our Wild East Project

- d. **1 vision for volunteering** has allowed the department to continue to create a positive culture of volunteering and 34 staff have received volunteer management training to support this
 - e. **15 new school sessions** have been developed to find new ways to connect students to the natural world and green spaces
 - f. **66 young people** have increased their confidence and employability skills through our Green Talent project
10. Highlights from other areas of our work which are not funded through our CBT grant include:
- g. **Over 3000 secondary school** students experienced a real-life example of maths and engineering in action through our Ponds Education Project
 - h. **Almost 30,000 young people, unders-5s and their parents** got their creative juices flowing, developed new skills and confidence and increased their wellbeing in our nature-focused play activities
 - i. **1 set of school engagement principles** has focused our work with schools to ensure that each student has the opportunity to discover, learn, build confidence and put their learning into context
 - j. **1 set of play principles** has given us guidance on developing the most engaging, child-led, and fun play opportunities
11. Over the first year, we have also been collecting stories, quotes and feedback from our participants about the impact of our work. A representation of this qualitative data can be found throughout the Year 1 Evaluation Report in Appendix A.
12. In order to fully understand our impact we are working in partnership with the University of Derby's Nature Connection Lab to continue to collect robust data and analyse the impact of the programme more definitively and with academic rigour.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

- 13. The Learning programme supports the City's vision for "high quality, accessible and responsive services benefiting its communities, neighbours, London and the nation", and specifically supports KPP5 "Increasing the impact of the City's cultural and heritage offer on the life of London and the nation".
- 14. The programme supports the aspirations of the City of London Education Strategy 2016-2019, particularly in respect of strategic aim 1) Ensuring that the City Corporation's outstanding cultural and historical resources enrich the creative experience of all London's learners; specifically by the Prioritised Action to Promote the national STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) education agenda through working in partnership across our venues;

and strategic aim 3) Develop excellent employment opportunities and pathways and specifically by the Prioritised Action of Work-related learning and work interactions.

15. Finally, the learning programme is a key mechanism for achieving the Corporate Plan People outcomes specifically; people live enriched lives and reach their potential, people enjoy good health and well-being, and people are safe and feel safe.

Financial Implications

16. The programme is part funded by the City Bridge Trust on a tapered 3 year grant of £400,000 (£220k in year 1, £130k in year 2, £50k in year 3). Currently the City of London funds £200,000 per year made up of central funds and carry forwards where possible. However, the tapered grant requires continued fundraising from external sources to make up the deficit in funding each year (£30k in year 2 and £90k in year 3). Fundraising continues to be difficult for a variety of reasons. Many funders do not fund projects which are currently running, preferring to fund new initiatives instead, making our current funding arrangements problematic. Also, the reputation of the City of London as being a wealthy organisation leads many funders to favour organisations with significantly less turnover.
17. The current programme is funded until the end of the CBT funded period in 2019. However, the programme was designed to continue past this date to continue to build, develop new projects, and make an impact in the community. The future of the programme remains at risk if a suitable funding arrangement is not identified by the end of the third year of the current funding. Given the significant success of the project within the first year and the strong alignment with corporate goals, the department are very keen to continue to programme; the department are considering a bid for a permanent budget uplift to support this.

Conclusion

18. The learning programme has reached an astounding 45,000 people in the first year of delivery, helping to connect these individuals more powerfully to their local green spaces. Through these programmes we have engaged with previously under-represented audiences, and contributed to improving access and connection to green spaces for some of London's most deprived communities. However, the programme faces challenges in achieving further funding both within and after the first 3 years of the programme.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Year 1 review of Green Spaces, Learning Spaces

Grace Rawnsley

Head of Learning, Open Spaces

T: 020 7332 3523

E: grace.rawnsley@cityoflondon.gov.uk