

Report to Mousehold Heath Conservators
30 January 2015
Report of Head of local neighbourhood services
Subject Annual work programme 2015-16

Item
5

Purpose

To propose the draft work programme for 2015-16

Recommendation

That the Conservators comment on and approve the draft work programme for 2015-16

Corporate and service priorities

The report helps to meet the corporate priority a safe and clean city.

Financial implications

Any costs that arise from this report will be met from the approved Mousehold budget or from external funding.

Ward/s: All wards

Cabinet member: Councillor Driver – Neighbourhoods and community safety

Contact officers

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north

Background documents

None

Report

Review of 2014-15 work programme

1. All main objectives set out in the 2014-15 works programme for biodiversity improvements will have been met by the end of the financial year, including heathland and grassland habitat improvements set out in the site's Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) agreement.
2. Infrastructure improvements programme of levelling car park surfaces carried out through the year is providing improved access to visitors and local users. This will continue during 2015-16 as part of the annual work programme.
3. The guided walk programme was very well attended with full attendance on nearly all public walks.
4. A large number of flora and fauna surveys have increased biological records, as well as increasing community involvement, understanding and enjoyment of the site.
5. A new six monthly tree inspection survey, to cover all well used paths, was designed and implemented by the Mousehold wardens, resulting in over 130 dead, dying, dangerous and windblown trees and branches being made safe.
6. In line with the management plan objectives the maintenance of all public car parks particularly Britannia Road, are now managed on a six monthly inspection basis with the support of a civil engineer from our contractor to assess what works need to be ordered. This will help in providing a safe surface condition mitigating any severe pot holes developing, drops near the kerb and water collection.

Proposed work programme 2015-16

7. The Conservators have in more recent years, approved the annual work programme for the following financial year at the same meeting that the budget and precept is approved. This is to ensure that activity is aligned with the budget setting process.
8. As in previous years, the draft work programme has been produced in a spreadsheet format to show the following – see appendix 1:
 - Each proposed action has been listed under one of nine thematic headings, together with the relevant management plan objective and location details.
 - The actions have been prioritised as follows: 1 = highest priority, 2 = medium priority, 3 = lowest priority. Priorities may need to change during the year depending on circumstances.
 - Tree works, and items included in the grounds maintenance contract or as grounds maintenance day works are identified separately and costs provided where available. Projects, including those which are one off, are identified separately. It should be noted that many of the actions will be carried out by volunteers, or by city council staff as part of their normal duties, so these items are not separately costed.

- The lead person(s) or organisation for each action is identified. The chart depicts the proposed date range for the action and the individuals and/or organisations involved.
9. Reporting on the implementation of the work programme will be provided to Conservators during the financial year.

Rationale

10. Many of the proposed actions in the work programme consist of ongoing site management works and activities such as the annual programme of events. It is intended to at least maintain, and where possible expand, the levels of habitat management activity, infrastructure improvement and services to the public undertaken in previous years, subject to the availability of resources. This will be achieved through the following actions:

- New ways of working, especially the greater availability and involvement of volunteer time, have reduced costs and enabled an increase in the amount of management work undertaken. It should be noted that organising and supervising volunteer work parties takes up a considerable amount of staff time, and this has only proved possible due to the current staffing establishment of two Mousehold wardens.
- The use of contractors with specialist machinery has been increased, especially for heathland management. Also, the increased use of machine tools e.g. chainsaw and brush-cutter for use by the Mousehold wardens, has enabled many smaller tasks, such as, tree safety works, path maintenance, habitat management, etc., to be undertaken at lower cost and more efficiently.

References

Mousehold Heath management plan 2013-2018
Mousehold Heath work programme 2015-16