

<b>Committee(s):</b>	<b>Date(s):</b>
Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee	11 September 2019
<b>Subject:</b> Hampstead Heath Division - Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Café Update	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Bob Warnock – Superintendent of Hampstead Heath	<b>For Decision</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Richard Gentry – Open Spaces Department	

### **Summary**

This report provides an update to Members on the tendering of the Highgate Wood Pavilion and the Queen's Park Cafés.

### **Recommendation**

Members are asked to:

- Members agree the revised tendering timeline, as set out in Para 9.

### **Main Report**

#### **Background**

1. Both Highgate Wood and Queen's Park have established cafés which over the years have provided a range of hot and cold drinks and hot and cold food to eat in and take out for visitors to the Park and Wood.
2. The café premises in the Park and Wood are leased and the rental from these facilities provides an income which supports the maintenance of these two open spaces.

#### **Current Position – Highgate Wood Pavilion Café**

3. The Highgate Wood Café is currently leased to Hoxton Beach under a Tenancy at Will.
4. The Highgate Wood Café tender process will follow the same timeline as the Queen's Park Café tender process.

## **Current Position – Queen’s Park Café**

5. Urban Leisure Group are the current tenant at the Queen’s Park Café, they have been in tenancy since March 2018. In April 2019 they informed the City of London Corporation that they wished to terminate their 3-year lease. The lease will terminate on the 2 October 2019.
6. The Queen’s Park Manager has appointed Groundwork London to carry out user engagement and consultation at Queen’s Park. An online questionnaire will be developed, seeking the views of park users. Pop up events and a focus group session will also be held. The objective of the engagement and consultation process is to have an understanding of what café users and non café users expect from a park café, and to consider whether further outcomes can be delivered through modifying the tender brief.
7. Due to the availability and workload of the Consultant, a delay in the original timeline, which was reported to this Committee in June 2019, has been encountered.
8. The outcome of the user engagement and consultation will be reported to the Queen’s Park Consultative Group (QPCG) and the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen’s Park Committee (HHHWQPC). The outcomes of the engagement will support the development of the tender process.

## **Timeline**

9. It is expected that the user engagement and consultation process at Queen’s Park will commence in September 2019.
  - Early September 2019 – User engagement and consultation – Queen’s Park
    - Pop Up events, first event to take place on 15 September
    - Focus Group to follow
  - Early October 2019 – Temporary catering arrangement to be provided at Queen’s Park
  - 9 October 2019, provide an update on progress to the QPCG and the Highgate Wood Consultative Group (HWCG)
  - Mid / Late October 2019 – Conclusion of user engagement and consultation
  - Late October 2019 – Analysis of the user engagement and consultation
  - Late October / Early November 2019 – The QPCG will be convened to give feedback on the learning from the consultation and to discuss the proposed tendering methodology for the Café
  - 13 November 2019 – Taking into account the QPCG’s feedback, the Superintendent will seek Members of the HHHWQPC agreement for the proposed tendering methodology
  - 18 November – Commence the Tendering Exercise for both Cafés
  - 20 January 2020 – Tender process closes

- January 2020 – City Surveyors Department to complete planned Cyclical Work Programme works at the Cafés.
- Late January 2020 – Evaluation of the Highgate Wood and Queen’s Park Café tender submissions
- 11 March 2020 – Report to the HHHWQPC the outcome of the tender process for the Highgate Wood and Queen’s Park Cafés
- 12 March 2020 – Dependent upon decision / outcome of HHHWQPC meeting of 11 March 2020, award tenders to the Highgate Wood and Queen’s Park Café
- Late March 2020 – Lease agreed and begin lease mobilisation.

## **Proposals**

10. Urban Leisure Group will cease trading from the Queen’s Park Café on the 2 October 2019. It is intended to offer a temporary solution and the Park Manager is considering an appropriate catering supplier to facilitate this offer. Subject to the terms of a Tenancy at Will, it is intended for a catering supplier to remain in situ until the tender is awarded.
11. An income will still be provided by a supplier who operates in the Queen’s Park Café on a Tenancy at Will. The Park may see a reduction in the expected income for the financial year 2019/20 for this facility.
12. The Park Manager will approach existing catering suppliers within the Hampstead Heath Division to seek an expression of interest in a temporary offer.
13. The Superintendent proposes that the leases for the Highgate Wood and Queen’s Park Cafés be for a period of at least seven years, with suitable break clauses and the option to extend for an additional three years, subject to satisfactory performance and service delivery.
14. A Tenancy at Will is in place at Highgate Wood and this will continue until a new lease has been awarded and they begin their mobilisation.

## **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

15. Highgate Wood & Queen’s Park, Kilburn is a registered charity, for which the City of London Corporation is the Trustee. The purpose of the charity is the preservation of Highgate Wood & Queen’s Park for the exercise and recreation of the public. The HHHWQPC manages Highgate Wood and Queen’s Park on behalf of the City of London Corporation and must take decisions in the best interests of the charity.
16. The provision of Café facilities provides income that contributes to the maintenance of the open spaces, and the Cafés must be let on the best terms that can reasonably be obtained for the charity, in order to comply with the duties of the Trustee. However, the Cafés are also fundamentally part of the experience provided to users and the HHHWQPC may consider the wider social and environmental benefits that they bring to the open spaces.
17. In letting the Cafés for the longer terms that are now available under section 6 of the City of London Corporation (Open Spaces) Act 2018, Members must have

regard to the desirability of ensuring that the service or facility is provided to a satisfactory standard throughout the duration of the lease. Before granting a lease, the HHHWQPC must consult such persons or bodies as it thinks appropriate. Part II of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 (which provides security of tenure for commercial tenancies) does not apply.

18. The letting of the Cafés at Highgate Wood and Queen's Park contributes towards the achievement of the three aims set out in the City of London Corporate Plan 2018-23: Contribute to a flourishing society, Support a thriving economy and Shape outstanding environments, in particular the following Corporate Plan outcomes:
  - (4) Communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need.
  - (5) Businesses are trusted and socially and environmentally responsible.
  - (10) We inspire enterprise, excellence, creativity and collaboration.
  - (12) Our spaces are secure, resilient and well maintained.
19. It also meets the three objectives and outcomes set out in the Open Spaces Business Plan 2018-19: (a) Open spaces and historic sites are thriving and accessible, (b) Spaces enrich people's lives and (c) Business practices are responsible and sustainable.
20. A communications plan will be prepared to keep visitors informed throughout the tendering processes.
21. The rental income received from the letting of the Cafés will be reinvested in the management of Highgate Wood and Queen's Park.

## **Conclusion**

22. The unexpected withdrawal of the current leaseholder of the Queen's Park Café provides the opportunity to repeat the tendering process along previously successful lines, with the opportunity of a longer-term lease now being offered allowing greater continuity of service, investment in the facilities and development of the business.
23. The Highgate Wood Café is currently being let on a Tenancy at Will. Although this arrangement is terminable at any time by either party, it is anticipated that this agreement will remain in place until the commencement of a new lease following the completion of the tender process.
24. As with the tender of the Queen's Park Café, there is an opportunity to grant a longer-term lease delivering an outcome of greater continuity of investment and business development opportunities.

## **Appendices**

- None

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