

Committee(s):		Date(s):
Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee	For Discussion	7 April 2014
Hampstead Heath Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee	For Decision	14 April 2014
Subject:	Partnership Management of Bowling Green at Parliament Hill Fields	Public
Report of:	Superintendent of Hampstead Heath	For Decision

Summary

In 2012, new management arrangements were successfully implemented at the Parliament Hill Bowling Green, including the granting of a new lease to the Parliament Hill Bowling Club. This report updates members on the discussions that have since taken place with members of both the Parliament Hill Bowling Club and the Hampstead Heath Croquet Club, and the proposal to renew the lease to the Parliament Hill Bowling Club for a further five-year term, with a mutual break clause after three years.

Recommendations

That the views of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee are conveyed to the Hampstead Heath Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee on the proposed arrangements for the management of the Parliament Hill Bowling Green and ancillary buildings.

That the Hampstead Heath Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee approves the renewal of the lease for a further five-year term, with a mutual break clause after three years.

Main Report

Background

1. Prior to 2012, the Bowling Green at Parliament Hill was home to the Parliament Hill Bowling Club, with the green and pavilions managed directly by Hampstead Heath staff.
2. Following an extensive review of the facility in late 2010, it was determined that the costs associated with managing the Bowling Green were in the order of £40,000 per annum, whilst annual income from the 25 members and casual players rarely exceeded £2,700. The most significant costs were attributable to staffing arrangements, as the green requires daily, year-round maintenance.
3. In early 2011 the City of London (like many other local authorities) was faced with having to achieve significant budgetary reductions. In July 2011, Hampstead Heath Consultative and Management Committees agreed that officers:

“Investigate alternative means of providing ground maintenance services for the bowling green. This could include shared service delivery between the Parliament Hill Bowling Club and Hampstead Heath Croquet Club, potentially in partnership with other clubs managing the green and clubhouse facilities.”

4. To bring in additional income, discussions were held with the recently formed Hampstead Heath Croquet Club over the possibility of sharing the Bowling Green on a one-year trial basis during the 2011 season. Prior to this, the Croquet Club had played on two temporary greens at Golders Hill Park.
5. The trial period was a success and from 18th April 2012, the Parliament Hill Bowling Club entered into a two-year lease, which included a requirement for the management of the Bowling Green and ancillary buildings to be shared between the Parliament Hill Bowling Club and Hampstead Heath Croquet Club.

Current Position

6. There are currently 22 members in the Parliament Hill Bowling Club and 34 members in the Hampstead Heath Croquet Club, 17 of whom play off handicap on the Bowling Green while the less experienced members use two temporary lawns in Golders Hill Park.
7. Two meetings were held with the Bowling and Croquet Clubs on 12th December 2013 and 4th February 2014, chaired by the Chairman of the Hampstead Heath Sports Advisory Forum and supported by Officers, with the aim of establishing a way forward in the management arrangements for the facility.
8. At the first meeting the Clubs provided constructive feedback on the management arrangements during the term of the two-year lease. Although, as expected there were some initial “teething problems”, the management arrangement was deemed by both Clubs to have been an overall success.
9. The Clubs requested a new five-year lease on the same basis as before, with minor updates to the Operational Management Plan on issues around access arrangements for play.
10. The Chairman of the Sports Advisory Forum recommended the inclusion of five Key Performance Indicators (to be reviewed annually) in the Operational Management Plan, in order to develop both Bowls and Croquet and measure the success of the partnership.

Proposals

11. That the City enters into a five-year lease with the Parliament Hill Bowling Club outside the security-of-tenure provisions of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954, and with a mutual break option at the end of the third year. As per the previous lease, it is proposed the management of the Bowling Green and ancillary buildings is shared between the Parliament Hill Bowling Club and the Hampstead Heath Croquet Club.
12. To assist the Clubs, the City will pay a management grant of £4,500 per annum, an increase of £500 per year on the previous lease.
13. The Clubs agree to apply for funding grants from local and national sporting bodies (where available) to assist with their operational running costs. At

present the Clubs are preparing an application for £500 from the Camden Sports Council.

14. The Parliament Hill Bowling Club and the Hampstead Heath Croquet Club are to adhere to the attached updated Operational Management Plan (Appendix 1), including the following five new Key Performance Indicators:
 - a) Each Club to offer ten free hours coaching sessions throughout the season.
 - b) Each Club to advertise in one local newspaper offering details on membership.
 - c) Each Club to participate at the “Give it A Go” Day on Hampstead Heath.
 - d) Each Club to increase membership by 25% over the next 12 month period.
 - e) Each Club is to provide five taster sessions with local schools, and seek to encourage younger people to become Members.

15. Authority be delegated to the City Surveyor (in consultation with the Director of Open Spaces and the Comptroller and City Solicitor) to settle all other necessary terms to protect the City’s interests, and that the Comptroller and City Solicitor be instructed to complete any necessary documentation.

Corporate and Strategic Implications

16. The proposed management arrangements for the Bowling Green support the **City of London Corporate Plan 2013 – 17: Key Policy Priorities (KPP2)** *“Maintaining the quality of our public services whilst reducing our expenditure and improving our efficiency”* and **KPP4** *“Maximising the opportunities and benefits afforded by our role in supporting London’s communities”*.
17. The management arrangements support the Overriding Policy S1 in the Hampstead Heath Management Plan Part 1 – Towards a Plan for the Heath 2007-2017: *“Work collaboratively in maintaining and developing the existing sports facilities and activities in response to changing demands ensuring appropriate provision for all sections of the community”*.

Implications

Financial Risks

18. The grant of £4,500 will be met from the Superintendent’s local risk budget.
19. The proposal will enable The City to continue to save approximately £40,000 per annum in management expenditure on the Parliament Hill Bowling Green.

Key Risks

20. Whilst every effort will undoubtedly be made to sustain bowls and croquet provision on Hampstead Heath, there is always the risk that these arrangements will not prove financially viable if membership numbers decrease.

Property

21. Terms have been agreed for a new five-year lease outside the security-of-tenure provisions under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954: the Parliament Hill Bowling Club will therefore have no automatic right to renew the lease at the end of the term. Additionally, there is a mutual break provision at the end of the third year, which gives the City of London flexibility should it be decided not to continue with the lease and management arrangement at that time (see Appendix 2 – Heads of Terms).
22. During the lease, the Parliament Hill Bowling Club is to be responsible for maintenance and repair of the Bowling Green and associated buildings, which should be in no worse condition than at the commencement of the lease, thereby removing this liability from the City of London.

Legal

23. Under section 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 the City may provide such recreational facilities as it thinks fit, including Bowling Greens. It can also contribute by way of grant towards the expenses incurred by any not-for-profit organisation in providing such facilities.
24. Under article 7 of the Greater London Parks and Open Spaces Order 1967 The City may again provide grounds, lawns, courts, greens and such other open air facilities as it thinks fit for any form of recreation whatsoever. Under article 8 The City may let these facilities and attendant buildings to any person on such terms and conditions as to payment or otherwise as it considers desirable, and may contribute towards their expenses.
25. The restrictions on the disposal of charity land contained in section 117 of the Charities Act 2011 do not apply to any disposition for which general authority is expressly given by any statutory provision.

Consultees

26. Members of the Parliament Hill Bowling Club and Hampstead Heath Croquet Club have been consulted and advice has been received from the City Surveyor's Department.

Conclusion

27. The granting of a new five-year lease and the partnership arrangements for the management of the Bowling Green and ancillary buildings will enable the City of London to maintain savings of £40,000 per annum, while allowing the facility to remain open and still allow casual public play on two rinks.
28. The management arrangements give the Clubs opportunities to seek external funding from various local and national sporting bodies.
29. The proposed partnership arrangements meet City of London Key Policy Priorities KPP2 and KPP4.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Operational Management Plan.

Appendix 2 - Heads of Terms.

Contacts:

Bob Warnock | bob.warnock@cityoflondon.gov.uk | 020 7332 3322

Declan Gallagher | declan.gallagher@cityoflondon.gov.uk | 020 7332 3771

Andrew Cotton | andrew.cotton@cityoflondon.gov.uk | 020 7332 3535