

Committee(s)	Dated:
Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park	23 November 2015
Subject: Location of Committee meetings	Public
Report of: Town Clerk	For Decision

Summary

This report outlines the implications and options relating to Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee meetings being held 'in the community' at venues at or near the Heath, Highgate Wood or Queen's Park, as raised during the meeting of your Committee in July 2015.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to consider the options to hold Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee meetings 'in the community' at or near Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, or Queen's Park.

Main Report

Background

1. At its meeting in July 2015, Members of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee requested that the location of future Committee meetings be re-considered. It was suggested that it may be appropriate to include Committee meetings held 'in the community' at venues at or near Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood or Queen's Park throughout the year.

Current Position

2. Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee meetings are currently held in the Committee Rooms, 2nd Floor, West Wing, Guildhall at either 11:30am or 1:45pm. The Committee currently meets six times a year on Mondays between January and November. Committee visits are held twice a year in March and September, where Members of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee are provided with a guided walk of Hampstead Heath. Transport to and from the Heath is arranged for Members by the Town Clerk's Department prior to these visits.
3. Three Consultative Committees (one for each of the North London Open Spaces) exist in addition to the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee: the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee; the Highgate Wood Joint Consultative Committee; and the Queen's Park Joint Consultative Group.

4. The Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee currently meets three times a year at the Parliament Hill Staff Yard, Hampstead Heath. The Membership of the Consultative Committee comprises the Chairman of the Grand Committee and not less than 19 other members, one of which shall be appointed from amongst the Members of the Grand Committee (in recent years the Deputy Chairman) with the remaining members appointed in consultation with local and other special interest organisations in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 1(2) of Schedule 4 of the London Government Reorganisation (Hampstead Heath) Order 1989.
5. The Highgate Wood Joint Consultative Committee and Queen's Park Joint Consultative Group meet twice a year: once during spring/summer and once during winter. Spring/summer meetings are held at or near Highgate Wood and Queen's Park, preceded by a guided walk and followed by a lunch. Transport to and from Highgate Wood and Queen's Park is arranged for Members by the Town Clerk's Department prior to these meetings. Winter committee meetings are held at 11:30am or 1:45pm in the Committee Rooms, 2nd Floor, West Wing, Guildhall.
6. Membership of the Highgate Wood Joint Consultative Committee and Queen's Park Joint Consultative Group consists of the Chairman and Deputy Chairman and not less than three other Common Council Members of the Grand Committee, in addition to several non-Common Council Co-Opted members representing local boroughs and local organisations.

Implications

7. There is currently no additional cost for a Committee lunch held at the Guildhall Club prior to or following Grand Committee meetings held in the Committee Rooms, 2nd Floor, West Wing, Guildhall as they are included as part of the general running costs within the Town Clerk's Department.
8. An additional cost would be incurred for lunches served prior to or following Committee meetings held at Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood or Queen's Park. Approximate cost implications of Committee lunches held on site are detailed as follows:-
 - Parliament Hill Café (Hampstead Heath): £450 (excluding VAT)
 - Golders Hill Park Café (Hampstead Heath): £600 (excluding VAT)
 - Highgate Wood Café: £300 for two courses without wine
 - Queen's Park Café: £425
9. Additional staff time and transport costs should also be taken into consideration. The Superintendent of Hampstead Heath and several of his staff, depending on the business to be considered, are currently required to travel from their office(s) at the North London Open Spaces to Guildhall for Committee meetings. Travel time for the Superintendent and his senior staff to and from the Guildhall would be reduced for a Committee meeting held in venues at or near Hampstead Heath or Highgate Wood.

10. Increased Officer travel time and expense for Officers based at the Guildhall (from the Town Clerk's Department, Remembrancer's Office, Chamberlain's Department, Comptroller and City Solicitor's Department, Open Spaces Department, Department of the Built Environment, and City Surveyor's Department) who regularly attend Grand Committee meetings would need to be taken into consideration for meetings held at Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood or Queen's Park. Transport could be arranged for Officers alongside Members travelling from Guildhall, which would require larger or additional vehicles at an additional cost.

Options

11. The Committee could meet at or near Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood or Queen's Park for the summer meeting in June or July. The meeting would be preceded or followed by a Committee lunch at Parliament Hill, Golders Hill, Highgate Wood or Queen's Park Café depending on time and location. Details of the costs for a Committee lunch at each of these Cafés have been outlined above.

12. Alternatively, the Committee could meet at or near the Heath, Highgate Wood or Queen's Park in March or September to combine a Committee meeting with one of the two bi-annual walks. A meeting at or near Highgate Wood or Queen's Park may require some changes to the usual schedule of site visits. The Committee meeting would be held in the afternoon, preceded by a guided walk and a lunch at the relevant Café.

Proposals

13. It is proposed that Members consider whether to hold Committee meetings 'in the community' at Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood or Queen's Park to allow an opportunity for all Members of the Committee to visit the North London Open Spaces division. Members may be able to engage with local staff who would not normally attend meetings at Guildhall.

14. Officers based in Guildhall who regularly attend Committee meetings will require additional time and expenses for travel to and from the meeting at Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood or Queen's Park but it would only be an annual occurrence. The Town Clerk's Department would arrange transport to and from the meeting for Members and Officers based at Guildhall.

Conclusion

15. This report provides details of the current meeting locations of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee and its various consultative committees as well as the implications for holding Grand Committee meetings at the Heath, Highgate Wood or Queen's Park. Members are invited to consider whether they wish to agree with the recommendation that one meeting of the Grand Committee each year in spring/summer is held at or near Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood or Queen's Park or consider viable alternatives.

Appendices

- None

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