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| Committee: | Date: |
| Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee | 23 May 2018 |
| Subject: Open Spaces Department Events Policy | Public |
| Report of: Superintendent of Hampstead Heath | For Information |
| Report Author: Paul Maskell – Open Spaces Department | |

Summary

The City of London Corporation (Open Spaces) Act 2018 received Royal Assent on 15 March 2018 and requires the development of an Events Policy for each of the City Corporation's Open Spaces.

Hampstead Heath, in common with many of the City Corporation's Open Spaces, has a long tradition of events.

To reflect the increasing volume and complexity of event requests being considered by the City Corporation's Open Spaces, it is proposed that an overarching Departmental Policy be adopted, with a Site Specific Policy setting out detailed guidance for each Open Space. This will ensure that events are consistently managed across the Department; and that event applications are considered against the impact they may have on a specific Open Space.

The Site Specific Policy for Hampstead Heath will set out guidelines to ensure events are appropriate to the local character of the Heath and meet the statutory obligations and charitable trust objectives to preserve the Heath and to provide recreation and enjoyment.

The Superintendent proposes that the Site Specific Policy for Hampstead Heath be presented to this Committee in September 2018 following further consultation with the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee in July 2018.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Consider the Open Spaces Departmental Events Policy as attached as Appendix 1.
- Note the proposed timetable for finalisation of the Site Specific Events Policy for Hampstead Heath and other sites.

Main Report

Background

1. Hampstead Heath, in common with many of the City Corporation's Open Spaces, has a strong and rich history of hosting public events under existing statutory powers. Over the years events have included fairs, circuses, concerts, sporting events and charity initiatives.
2. Currently events are managed locally, and the application and licensing process is not consistent across the Open Spaces sites. The creation of an Open Spaces Departmental Policy (Appendix 1) will help to ensure a consistent approach to the approval and management of events. It will also highlight the existing legal restrictions at each site and meet the specific requirements of the City of London Corporation (Open Spaces) Act 2018.
3. The proposed policy framework which has been developed draws upon these considerations and wider legislative requirements regarding public safety and local authority licensing procedures.
4. The City of London Corporation (Open Spaces) Act 2018 requires the development of an Events Policy for each of the City Corporation's Open Spaces.

Current Position

5. In recognition of the differing characters of the Open Spaces managed by the City of London Corporation, an Open Spaces Department wide policy framework has been developed in collaboration with Officers from all sites. The Policy seeks to protect the environment and character of each distinct site from pressure of events, whilst recognising the value that amenity events can bring to the spaces. The overarching Policy (Part One), is attached as Appendix 1.
6. More detailed Site Specific Policies with associated charges are being developed by the individual Open Spaces sites. These should be read in conjunction with Part One of the Departmental Open Spaces Events Policy (Appendix 1).
7. The Hampstead Heath Site Specific Policy is in development in consultation with Events Advisory Group, comprising of representatives of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee and the Heath & Hampstead Society.
8. The Site Specific Policy will set out guidelines to ensure events are appropriate to the local character of the Heath and meet the statutory obligations and charitable trust objectives to preserve the Heath and to provide recreation and enjoyment. It will set out a procedure for considering event applications, the charging rationale for events and will include an application form for event organisers.
9. Both Policies are drawn from extensive experience of managing and hiring spaces for events by Officers across the Open Spaces Department.

Benchmarking with policies from several other London Boroughs has also informed the development of the Policies.

10. Hampstead Heath has been the venue for several types of event. Currently, a draft annual events programme is presented to the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee for discussion, and to the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee for approval in the spring.
11. There are an increasing number of requests to hold events on the Heath. The Open Spaces Departmental Policy will ensure that a fair, consistent and transparent system operates for decision making and to regulate the type and frequency of events that take place. Such regulation is also particularly important given the environmental sensitivity of the Heath and its statutory protections for nature and heritage conservation.

Proposals

12. Applications for events will be considered on Hampstead Heath according to the framework set in the Departmental Events Policy attached as Appendix 1. It is intended that this Policy will be reviewed after 12 months.
13. A Site Specific Policy for Hampstead Heath will be developed and presented for approval to this Committee in September 2018 following consultation with the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee in July 2018.
14. Site Specific policies for events at Highgate Wood and Queen's Park will be prepared for consultation with the Consultative Group for each site in October 2018.

Consultation and Committee process

15. A Hampstead Heath Events Advisory Group, comprising of representatives of the HHCC and Officers have been consulted on and involved in the development of the draft Part Two: Hampstead Heath Site Specific Policy.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

16. A Departmental events policy will help deliver two of the aims of the Corporate Plan 2018 – 2023, to:
 - Contribute to a flourishing society.
 - Shape outstanding environments
17. It will also deliver the Open Spaces Departmental Business Plan top line objectives:
 - Open spaces and historic sites are thriving and accessible.
 - Spaces enrich people's lives.
 - Business practices are responsible and sustainable.

Financial

18. The scale of hire charges for events will be discussed with Committee in the autumn and will form part of the annual Schedule of Fees & Charges for Hampstead Heath. The charges will be in accordance with the guidance set out in the Open Spaces Departmental Events Policy and will ensure costs associated with events are recovered and reinvested back into services at each site.

Reputation

19. The careful assessment of event requests through a clear and consistent policy approach should ensure fairness consistency and equality of access. A clear requirement for event managers to apply the appropriate legislative and licensing regimes, which will increase the likelihood of events being run safely and professionally.

Conclusion

20. The City Corporation frequently receives applications to hold events on the Heath. The Open Spaces Departmental Events Policy establishes a framework for a fair and transparent system for assessing these applications and regulating the type, location and frequency of events that are permitted. A Site Specific Events Policy is in preparation for Hampstead Heath and will set out guidelines for events in accordance with the overarching policy.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Open Spaces Departmental Events Policy (Part One)
- Appendix 2 – Example template site specific events policy

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