

Committee	Dated:
Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee	24 February 2021
Subject: Fees and Charges 2021-22 & 2022-23	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	2, 3, 4, 5, 11 & 12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	
What is the source of Funding?	
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	
Report of: Director of Open Spaces	For Decision
Report author: Superintendent of Hampstead Heath, Open Spaces Department	

Summary

This report sets out the proposed fees and charges for a range of sports and services provided at Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park for 2021-22. In addition, the report sets out the proposed fees and charges for Weddings and Civil Ceremonies for 2022-23.

It is proposed that the majority of charges are increased by 1.3%, in line with the Retail Price Index figure (November 2020), or increased to align with relevant benchmarks, or to reflect the direct cost to the charity for providing the activity or service, as set out in appendix 1.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- Members agree the proposed fees and charges for 2021-22 as set out in Appendix 1 of this report.
- Members agree the proposed Wedding and Civil Ceremony fees and charges for 2022-23 as set out in Appendix 1 of this report.
- Members agree to add Housing Benefit to the Concession Rate Criteria, as set out in para 11.

Main Report

Background

1. Charges for a wide range of services, recreation and sporting activities provided in all the City of London Corporation's Open Spaces are reviewed annually, to ensure that prices and ticket options are relevant and appropriate.
2. The income generated from fees and charges contribute towards the cost of providing sports and recreational facilities across Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park.
3. Sports fees and charges are not based on full cost recovery and are significantly subsidised by the Charities to promote participation in formal and informal recreation to support health and well-being.

Current Position

4. The Hampstead Heath Sports Advisory Forum (HHSAF), Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee (HHCC), Highgate Wood Consultative Group (HWCG) and the Queen's Park Consultative Group (QPCG) Members have been consulted on the proposed sports charges for 2021-22.
5. Feedback from the HHSAF and HHCC is contained with the minutes of the HHCC meeting of 25 January 2021. Officers will provide a verbal update at the meeting on the feedback received from Members of the HWCG and QPCG.
6. COVID-19 has significantly impacted on the income for 2020-21. In addition, there have been increased costs associated with making sites and facilities COVID Secure. The series of National Lockdowns and the introduction of the Tier system have all impacted on events and sporting activities since March 2020. Car Parking and Wedding and Civil Ceremony income has also been impacted.
7. The Hampstead Heath Charity has incurred additional expenditure to provide overnight security at the Bathing Ponds to prevent misuse of facilities and unauthorised bathing.
8. Since 2 May 2020 applied charges for the Bathing Ponds have been in place. Contactless payment and the wristband season tickets were launched at the Bathing Ponds and Lido on the 21 September 2020.

Proposed Charges 2021-22

9. It is proposed that the majority of charges are increased by 1.3%, in line with the Retail Price Index figure (November 2020), or increased to align with relevant benchmarks, or to reflect the direct cost to the Charity for providing the activity or service, as set out in appendix 1.

10. A Sports Charges Benchmarking Exercise has been undertaken. A report setting out the findings of the benchmarking exercise is attached at appendix 2. The impacts of COVID-19 on other Local Authorities and Sports providers is referenced within the Benchmarking report.
11. The proposed fees and charges include concessionary rates, offering a 40% discount on the standard adult charge, except where indicated. In September 2020 Members of this Committee agreed to extend concessions to those on PIP and Universal Credit. Following the Benchmarking Review (appendix 2), it is proposed to add Housing Benefit to the Concession Rate Criteria.
12. The proposed fees and charges have not been rounded due to the majority of payments being made via card or contactless payment. Exceptions are outlined in appendix 1.
13. Due to COVID-19 and the requirement to introduce online booking it is proposed to offer Junior swimming session tickets, which reflect a 70% discount on the adult rate. This is to account for Family Tickets not being available via the online booking arrangements.
14. It is proposed that the Sauna Season and day tickets are suspended for 2021-22 due to the likely on-going impacts of COVID-19.
15. Following local benchmarking we are proposing to increase car parking charges by 12.5% for 0-2 hours & 2-4 hours, and by 9.58% for the additional hours. However, taking account of these increases, the car parks across Hampstead Heath are still less expensive than local comparators. The additional hours charge is set to discourage commuter parking to ensure the parking facilities are available for Heath visitors. A phased approach to increase car parking charges was agreed by Members of this Committee in November 2019.
16. Charges for weddings and civil ceremonies have been adjusted to incorporate the service charge for post ceremony drinks. All couples take this option and therefore it is proposed to incorporate this service into the venue hire price and provide an inclusive hire rate. These charges have been rounded to the nearest £, as set out in appendix 1.

Licenses

17. New charges have been added for Forest School Licenses and Professional Dog Walking Licenses.

18. At Highgate Wood, an additional weekly charge for storage has been proposed for Forest Schools.
19. The application fees for Events have been held at £25 for Community Events and £50 for Commercial Events.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic Implications

20. The proposed fees and charges directly support the Hampstead Heath Management Strategy 2018-2028 Strategic Outcomes A: The Heath is maintained as a flourishing green space and historic landscape, B: Improved quality of life for Heath visitors, C: The Heath is inclusive and welcoming to a diverse range of visitors and D: Greater number of and diversity of People taking care of the Heath.
21. This also contributes towards the achievement of the three aims set out in the City of London Corporate Plan 2018-23. Contribute to a flourishing society (1-4), Support a thriving economy (5) and Shape outstanding environments (9-12).
22. The proposed fees and charges support the three objectives and outcomes set out in the Open Spaces Business Plan 2021-22 (a) Open spaces and historic sites are thriving and accessible, (b) Spaces enrich people's lives and (c) Business practices are responsible and sustainable.

Financial Implications

23. The City's Financial Regulations require all Departments to recover full costs when setting charges to persons or external organisations or submit reasons to the appropriate service Committee when that objective is not met. It is therefore at the discretion of individual spending Committees to determine the actual level of fees and charges relative to the services they provide, after taking into account local considerations and priorities.
24. Officers and Members are committed to working to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on budgets and to ensure our finances are on a sustainable footing for the medium-term. Elected Members have also agreed a high-level approach to setting 2021-22 budgets that will require savings of 12% corporately given the extremely challenging financial environment.

Legal Implications

25. Heath (Charity No. 803392) and Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Kilburn (Charity No. 232986) are registered charities and the City of London Corporation is the

corporate trustee for both Charities. Members are reminded that any decision they take in respect of either Charity must be in the best interests of that Charity.

Risk Implications

26. The projected income for 2021-22 could be further impacted by COVID-19, as recorded in the Departmental Risk Register.

Equality Implications

27. A Test of Relevance has been completed in relation to the proposed fees and charges. A full Equality Analysis is not recommended.

Climate Implications

28. The City of London Corporation has a newly adopted Climate Action Strategy which seeks to achieve Net 0 by 2040. There will be a range of measures implemented to realise this including increasing carbon sequestration and storage across the Open Spaces alongside biodiversity enhancement and resilience measures.
29. Site Specific Event's Policies for Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park set out requirements for event organisers and encourage events to be environmentally sustainable.

Conclusion

30. Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park continue to provide excellent value for money sports and recreational opportunities. The income generated through fees and charges contributes towards the cost of providing sports and recreational facilities and maintaining Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park.
31. It is proposed that the majority of charges are increased by 1.3%, in line with the Retail Price Index figure (November 2020), or increased to align with relevant benchmarks, or to reflect the direct cost to the Charities for providing the activity or service, as set out in appendix 1.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Proposed Fees and Charges for 2021-22 & 2022-23.
- Appendix 2 – Benchmarking Report.

Contact

Bob Warnock - Open Spaces Department
T: 020 7332 3322
E: bob.warnock@cityoflondon.gov.uk