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| Committee(s): Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee | Dates: 15 June 2022 |
| Subject: Proposed sustainable management of the Golder's Hill Park Zoo | Public |
| Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly? | 2,11,12 |
| 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? | No |
| Report of: Executive Director, Environment | For Decision |
| Report author: Stefania Horne, Assistant Director | |

Summary

This report provides Members with an update on the proposed sustainable management of the Golders Hill Park Zoo and Butterfly House as stated in the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Sub-Divisional Plan 2022-2025.

Recommendation

It is recommended that:

- Members agree the preferred option and ancillary plans, including the change of use of the Butterfly House, as set out in the report.

Main Report

Background

1. There have been animal enclosures in Golders Hill Park since 1905 and in 2007 the Butterfly House was opened. Additionally, in the same year the Zoo became a member of the British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums (BIAZA). This professional body represents zoos and aquariums across Britain and Ireland. Members of BIAZA pride themselves on their excellent animal welfare, education, and conservation work.
2. In 2017 the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee agreed the Golders Hill Park Zoo Vision and Collection Plan which can be summarised as below:

*"The Zoos mission statement is **"inspiring engagement with our living world"** and it is hoped to achieve this by moving towards a collection that represents wildlife in Britain (Past, Present and Future). Changing the collection would allow the Zoo*

to participate in valuable conservation projects, increase educational opportunities and become a more valuable visitor attraction enabling the Zoo to generate an increased income. The new collection aims to include where possible species such as Scottish Wildcats / Red squirrels / Polecats / Reindeer / Hazel Dormice.”

3. It is essential to note that the development/collection plan is a live, fluid document that will keep evolving with the collection. Addition of new stock will depend on availability and ease of animal acquisitions and market conditions.

4. An outcome of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen’s Park Sub-Divisional Plan 2022-2025, HH6 is to:

“Undertake an options appraisal to inform discussions with the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee regarding the long-term sustainability of the Zoo and Butterfly House.”

5. The zoo is currently heavily subsidised and not sustainable in the long term. This report sets out options for managing the zoo in a more sustainable manner through income generation and visitor engagement.

Current Position

Public Engagement

6. A consultation exercise was carried out as part of the development of a Zoo options appraisal report during the summer of 2021. The following key stakeholders were engaged with:

- Zoo staff and volunteers.
- The Opening Spaces Learning Team.
- Members of the Zoo Ethnic Committee.
- Local stakeholders including park visitors and the Heath and Hampstead Society etc.

Findings from the Public Engagement

7. The main findings in the engagement exercise were :

- The Zoo is well loved and a great resource for the local community.
- People are in support of the new vision and having a greater emphasis on conservation.
- Provides a great platform for aspiring keepers to gain valuable experience and knowledge within the Zoo sector.

Proposed Options

8. The following three options have been considered for how the Zoo moves forward. “Do the same,” “Do less” or “Do more.” The table below sets out the strengths and weaknesses of the three options.

| Option | Strengths | Weaknesses |
|---------------|---|---|
| Do less | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likely to deliver current and future savings • Possibility of re-purposing the land to deliver more valuable ecosystem services. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on staff moral • Possible loss of volunteer contribution • Likely to lead to closure in medium term • Medium term impact on City of London’s reputation • Animal welfare issues for remaining stock • Ten phase plan not honoured |
| Do the same | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service continues to be provided • Can possibly provide further savings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff moral • Lack of strategic direction • On-going deterioration of physical assets • Opportunities to address new thinking on animal welfare/habitation trends |
| Do more | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced Zoo offer • Enhanced park-wide offer • Enhanced learning and volunteering programme • Supports other businesses (e.g., café) • Reputational benefit of re-defined offer • Incorporation current thinking on animal welfare/habitation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires investment • Requires charging regime – possible short term reputational impact • Possible staff resourcing issues • Risk of catastrophic loss of income (e.g., Covid) |

9. Our preferred option is to “Do more” to create efficiencies and look at alternative opportunities to generate income that will provide resources to enhance the Zoo offer, visitor experience that also align with the 2017 Zoo Mission Statement.
10. The Butterfly House is currently closed and has been since the start of the COVID Pandemic. This created an opportunity to review its use for a new purpose that can decrease running costs and increase education value. , It is proposed to now use this footprint area to display smaller native mammals, insects, and reptiles that can be used by schools as well as visitors. A small charge might be considered for its use (appendix 1). This option follows the new collection plan and vision for the Zoo whilst also being the more sustainable and environmentally responsibly option as less heating will be required.

Development of the Preferred Option

11. The Zoo and Farm Team Leader in discussion with the Assistant Director of Hampstead Heath and the Operations Manager consulted with the chair of the BIAZA commercial & guest services working group, who is also the commercial director of another BIAZA collection. The discussion focused on ways the Zoo can generate an income stream that can be used to re-invest in the facility and make the zoo more sustainable.
12. Income generation options have been explored, and it is proposed to trial the following activities for an eighteen-month period:
 - Updating the current adoption scheme which has generated on average £2,000.00 per year. The aim is to increase this scheme to £4,000.00 annually. The current offer for adoptees will be evaluated and modified. This will include updating signage to inform visitors on how their donation can help the Zoo with its running costs.
 - The introduction of contactless donation posts to increase the opportunity to collect income. This will be dependent on being able to secure a Wi-Fi connection at the Zoo and collaboration with colleagues in other departments within the City of London Corporation will be needed to achieve this outcome.
 - It is intended to offer for the first time two chargeable behind the scenes experiences as stated below:
 - a) Zookeeper Experience

Four-hour experience working with the keepers on a range of tasks within the Zoo. Sessions would be charged at £160 for one participant with a discounted rate of £250 for a two-person booking on the same session.
 - b) Animal Feeding Experience

Twenty minutes with a keeper feeding chosen animal. Sessions charged at £45 for one participant and a discounted rate of £80 for a two-person booking on the same session.
13. To begin with these sessions will only be open to adults over the age of eighteen, however once the sessions are established, we will look to create sessions suitable for children.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

14. The preferred option in this report 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.

15. The preferred option outlined in this report contribute towards the achievement of 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.

Financial Implications

16. The budget for maintaining the Zoo is £120,000.00 per annum and this is met via the Assistant Director's Hampstead Heath Local Risk Budget.
17. An income generation target range of £10,000.00 - £15,000.00 is being set, for the Zookeeper Experiences, the Animal Adoption Scheme, and additional donations. This would reduce the current yearly subsidy by around 10%.
18. There will be cost implications involved in setting up the contactless donations posts these include administration and rental charges. Further costs will lie in the installation of Wi-Fi to allow the contactless posts to work.
19. There will be some need for capital investment to convert the Butterfly House in its current form into the small native's centre. It is hoped that most of the work can be completed in house and can be done in phases.

Resource Implications

20. Staff resources for the proposal are minimal. The Zookeeper and animal feeding experiences will include daily work activities and only being schedule on days with additional volunteers and work experience students.
21. There will be a small financial outlay to purchase personal protective equipment to be used in the Zookeeper sessions than can be met through existing budgets.

Climate Implications

22. No Impact.

Legal Implications

23. Participants will be asked to sign a contract before undertaking their activity. The contract will be drawn up with advice from the controller and city solicitor.

Risk Implications

24. The preferred options will be managed under the City of London Corporate Health and Safety policies and procedures.

Equality Implications

25. An equality impact assessment will be undertaken.

Security Implications

26. No Impact

Conclusion

27. It is proposed to implement the 2017 Golders Hill Park Zoo Vision and Collection Plan, to introduce the two new behind the scenes experiences and change the Butterfly House to a small native's centre. The proposed changes will allow the Zoo the opportunity to generate additional income, reducing the level of subsidy and improve its education and conservation value. The collection will become more focused and create a more inclusive visitor experience.

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Future collection at Golders Hill Park Zoo, Development Plan.

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