

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee	20 January 2013
Subject: Fees and Charges Report	Public
Report of: Superintendent of Hampstead Heath	For Discussion
<p>Summary</p> <p>This report sets out the proposed fees and charges for a range of facilities and services provided at Hampstead Heath for 2014/15. It includes the Charging policy developed by the Sports Advisory Forum and its future application in terms of developing a differentiated approach to setting charges for the wide range of sports and recreational activities on the Heath.</p> <p>Recommendation(s)</p> <p>That the views of the Committee be received on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the proposed fees and charges for 2014/15; and • the Charging Policy and framework that is being developed to implement a differentiated approach to setting charges for the wide range of sports and recreational activities on the Heath. 	

Main Report

Background

1. Charges for the wide range of recreation and sporting facilities that are provided in all the City's open spaces are traditionally reviewed annually. The current charges for 2013/14 for Hampstead Heath were approved by the Management Committee in November 2012.

Current Position

2. Weather conditions during the past year have been very favourable, June and July were exceptionally hot months and many of the facilities, particularly the bathing ponds attracted many thousands of visitors during that period. Conditions at the Lido became so busy that for the first time in several years the facility had to close early.
3. For the period April – September 2013 inclusive the following income levels have been achieved across sports and recreation facilities:

Facility	Income Estimate (£)	Income for period April – September 2012 (exc. VAT) (£)	Income for period April – September 2013 (exc. VAT) (£)
Athletics Track	15,000	14,200	14,500
Cricket	5,000	7,600	11,950
Lido	125,000	142,300	245,500
Bathing Ponds	80,000	34,800	39,900
Tennis	37,000	56,300	68,200
TOTAL	262,000	255,200	380,050

NB. Invoices for rugby and football have been raised but income is recorded for the third and fourth quarter periods.

Charging Policy

4. At your meeting in November 2012 officers reported that the Sports Advisory Forum had commenced work on reviewing the current basis for setting charges. In the past this has focussed on utilising benchmarks in isolation from other criteria or inflating prices in accordance with national indices. This approach was noted as being fairly crude in terms of what issues influence people's choices to pay to use a service.
5. The Forum has now prepared a Charging Policy (see attached Appendix 1) that is based on adopting a differentiated approach to charging, that recognises that each sport or activity should have charges set reflecting price sensitivity of what individuals are prepared to pay that are influenced by:
 - their ability to pay – how charges relate to an individual's level of disposable income;
 - perceptions of value for money – whether charges are judged to provide value for money for the level of service being offered and influenced by the extent to which service is deemed to be a necessity, or a choice; and
 - the availability of alternatives – whether the same or similar services can be obtained from other public, private or voluntary sector providers at lower cost or with greater value.
6. Other factors that affect price sensitivity are accessibility, awareness, attitudes and quality of provision. In addition the Forum has considered which priority groups the Heath should be targeting in terms of increasing use. These are set out in the policy.
7. Two examples are given in Appendix 2 setting out how the policy would be applied to individual sports. It is hoped that for 2015/16 the Forum will have had the opportunity to look in detail at four specific sports:
 - Athletics

- Cricket
 - Football
 - Tennis
8. In addition to the Charging Policy it is also important to confirm the current Concessionary Policy, ensuring that there is consistency of approach across sites. This policy was adopted in 2004 when the Department last undertook a major review of charges:
- young people aged 16 years or younger
 - full time students and those on Modern Apprenticeship schemes
 - senior citizens over state pensionable age
 - individuals on low incomes in receipt of means tested benefit
 - Individuals receiving “carer’s allowance”
 - holders of “Blue Badges”
9. As part of the work of the Sports Advisory Forum it is proposed to review the level of discount applicable to each of the various concessions and also to specific priority groups.

Proposed Charges 2014/15

10. The Charging Policy has taken some time to develop and it has not been possible this year to utilise the framework above to develop charges for 2014/15. In line with discussions at the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen’s Park Management Committee the fees and charges for 2012/13 were rounded where appropriate to the nearest 50pence. It has been custom to increase figures by Retail Price Index which at October 2013 was 2.6%. A view was taken last year to retain the lower fees and charges at their current rates to avoid the problems of having to manage increases of 5p or 10p. With inflation still relatively low, discretion has again been taken on increasing the lower charges significantly at this point.
11. The proposed increases in charges for sports and recreational facilities during 2014/15 are set out in Appendix 3.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

12. The current management policy plan states at policy 78 that: “recreational facilities will be managed in a way which recognises the right and ability of everyone to use and enjoy the Heath ...” The proposals set out in this report contain a range of charges with concessionary rates which have been assessed against other local providers.
13. The provision of a wide range of recreational and sporting facilities meets the current Business Plan strategic aim of ‘promoting opportunities to value and

enjoy the outdoors for recreation, learning and healthy living'. Access for all to facilities that help improve fitness and promote healthy lifestyles particularly obesity in young people is an important objective.

Implications

14. Further works are proposed during 2014 to apply the Charging Policy set out in this report to develop a more sophisticated approach to setting charges for sports and recreational facilities.

Conclusion

15. The development of a Charging policy will enable different sports and recreation activities to have differentiated charges recognising price sensitivities in relation to a framework that ensures that identified priority groups have the ability to access facilities to maximise their use.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Charging Policy
- Appendix 2 – Examples of How the Charging Policy will be Applied
- Appendix 3 – Proposed Fees and Charges for 2014/15

Simon Lee

Superintendent of Hampstead Heath

T: 020 7332 3322

E: simon.lee@cityoflondon.gov.uk