

Committee(s):		Date(s):
Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee	For information	3 rd November 2014
Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee	For decision	24 th November 2014
Subject:		Public
Fees and Charges Report		
Report of:		For Information
Superintendent of Hampstead Heath.		
<u>Summary</u>		
This report sets out the proposed fees and charges for a range of facilities and services provided at Hampstead Heath for 2015/16.		
Recommendations		
It is recommended that:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the views of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee be received on the proposed fees and charges for 2015/16, as set out in Appendix 1 of this report. • That the views of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee be conveyed to the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee at their November meeting. 		

Main Report

Background

1. Charges for the wide range of recreation and sporting facilities that are provided in all the City Corporation's Open Spaces are reviewed annually. The current 2014/15 charges for Hampstead Heath were approved by the Management Committee in January 2014.

Current Position

2. The Sports Advisory Forum had been developing a differentiated charging policy and this was presented to the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and

Queen's Park Committee in January 2014. Over the summer, the Hampstead Heath Management Team completed a benchmarking exercise to compare the Hampstead Heath Athletics Track with the other local running tracks. This was followed by a visit to Perivale running track to compare the facilities there in relation to the extent of the offer, quality of the grounds maintenance and public access to the facilities. The visit also allowed the Team to learn from another organisation, as a result of which a scoring sheet has been prepared to compare facilities objectively. Staff from Hampstead Heath will continue this benchmarking exercise with the other local athletic tracks and report their findings to the Sports Advisory Forum.

3. The proposed charges for 2015/16 were discussed with the Sports Advisory Forum on 22 September 2014. At this meeting, the Superintendent also set out the implications of the Service Based Review and the level of savings the Open Spaces Department is required to achieve over the next three financial years.
4. The Review will require the Superintendent to look at alternative ways of delivering activities that are not part of our core obligations. This will involve exploring the possibility of using third-party providers for sports facilities, attracting sponsorship for sports, and increasing the income generated from these activities.
5. The proposed fees and charges include concessionary rates, and have been set at a level that encourages schools and young people to use the recreation and sporting facilities on the Heath. However, with the agreement of the Sports Advisory Forum, further work on the differentiated charging policy has been put on hold whilst the Service Based Review is being undertaken.

Proposed Charges 2015/16

6. It is proposed that charges for 2015/16 are increased by 2.4%. This reflects the current rate of inflation (RPI 2.4% Sept 2014).
7. Where the charges and fees are for less than £50, these have been reviewed on a case-by-case basis, with rounding to the nearest 50p to avoid the problems of cash handling. For charges more than £50, an increase of 2.4% has been applied and these have then been rounded up to the nearest pound.
8. Swimming charges have been reviewed and simplified, to re-establish the links between day ticket prices and season ticket charges.
9. The adult cost of the Pitch & Putt Course at Queen's Park has been benchmarked with Gunnersbury Park.
10. For 2015/16, Wedding and Civil Ceremony charges have been included in the report for the first time.
11. The Education and Play charges have been benchmarked against other local providers. However, as part of the Service Based Review, we will evaluate our education and play provision to ensure we are charging appropriately. We will also develop a funding strategy for these activities that will seek to maximise our grant funding.

12. The proposed increases in charges for sports and recreational facilities during 2015/16 are set out in Appendix 1.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

13. 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 that have been assessed against other local providers.
14. The provision of sports facilities supports the City Together Strategy theme, *‘A World Class City which is vibrant and culturally rich’*. Linked to this is the associated Open Spaces Strategic Aim: *‘Promote opportunities to value and enjoy the outdoors for recreation, learning and healthy living’*.
15. Starting in 2015, further works are proposed to review all the charges for facilities and services to ensure that income is maximised. This will be undertaken in conjunction with the Open Spaces Department Income Generation Project Board. Three Project Boards have been established to oversee the delivery of £2.2m savings identified across the Open Spaces Department, as part of the City of London’s Service Based Review. Income generation forms a critical contribution towards delivering the required level of savings with a view to avoiding the loss of facilities and services.

Implications

16. The City’s Financial Regulations require all departments to recover full costs when setting charges to persons or external organisations, or submit reason 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.
17. The licencing of filming and photography are the subject of a separate corporate report presented to the Open Spaces Committee.

Conclusion

18. The proposed sports and recreation fees and charges have been determined by a number of factors, not least providing continued access to sports facilities while encouraging young people to participate.
19. It is also recognised that it will be necessary in the coming years to review how charges are levied across all facilities, to ensure the Service Based Review savings are achieved.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Proposed Fees and Charges for 2015/16

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