

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 01/06/2020

Subject: Hammersmith & Fulham Parks Commission Interim Report

Report of: Cabinet Member for the Environment, Councillor Wesley Harcourt

Report authors: Peter Smith, Head of Policy & Strategy
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Responsible Director: Sharon Lea, Strategic Director of Environment

Summary

This report sets out in detail the findings and recommendations from the resident-led Parks Commission (exempt Appendix 1). This is an interim report and is specifically focussed on the Procurement Strategy for the grounds maintenance contract. The Parks Commission will produce a final report later this year to inform the wider Parks and Open Spaces Strategy.

Recommendations

1. That Appendix 1 is not for publication on the basis that it 'contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)' as set out in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), be agreed.
 2. To note the findings and recommendations listed below of the Parks Commission in their interim report attached as Appendix 1.
 3. To consider recommendations 4, 6, 10, 11 and 12 of the Park Commission's interim report when considering the Parks Commission's final report.
 4. To instruct officers to have due regard to the recommendations of the Park Commission's interim report which relate to the Grounds Maintenance Procurement Strategy when preparing said Strategy.
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Wards Affected: All

H&F Priorities

Our Priorities	Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Priorities
Doing things with local residents, not to them	<p>This report presents the interim report of the resident-led Parks Commission, which has engaged residents in the development of the Grounds Maintenance contract specification.</p> <p>The Commission will continue to work on a wider Parks and Open Spaces Strategy and will present a final report later this year.</p>
Being ruthlessly financially efficient	The report considers how the new Grounds Maintenance contract might deliver greater efficiencies
Taking pride in H&F	The report examines how the biodiversity of the borough's parks might be improved via the Grounds Maintenance contract.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications relating to the recommendations in this report (i.e. considering the findings and recommendations of the Park Commission's interim report). Financial implications arising from any decision to implement the recommendations will be considered as part of the re-procurement of the grounds maintenance contract, which will be the subject of a separate decision report

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications in respect of this proposal.

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Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report

This report is based on the interim report of the Parks Commission (exempt Appendix 1). This is not for publication on the basis that it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) as set out in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

BACKGROUND

The Parks Commission is a resident-led commission, convened in January 2020, to look at the use of parks and open spaces in the borough and to make recommendations to the Council for improvements in how parks are managed and maintained for the enjoyment of residents. The Commission's interim report is focussed on the current Grounds Maintenance Contract and the Council's Procurement Strategy that will inform the specification for the new contract within the re-tendering timetable. Outlined below are the Commission's interim recommendations, followed by the proposed responses.

The Parks Commission's final report is expected to be published later in 2020 and will look at the future of parks and a wider Parks and Open Spaces Strategy.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Proposals and Analysis of Options

General Principles

It is proposed in the Parks Commission's Report (exempt Appendix 1) that any incentive does not impact on another priority. The Commission's evidence gathering has suggested that incentivising income has affected the affordability of parks for some people. The Council is keen to ensure that this conflict of interest is not built into the contract as a general principle.

Summary of the Parks Commission's Recommendations and Officers' Responses

Recommendation 1. Biodiversity: The General Maintenance Contract should incentivise biodiversity through planting and maintenance. We recommend that a Biodiversity Survey be carried out throughout H&F's Parks and Open Spaces in order to identify areas that can be set aside for biodiversity planting.

Response - Increasing biodiversity will be included in the Procurement Strategy Report.

Recommendation 2. Onsite Composting: The General Maintenance Contract should encourage the Council, contractors and other stakeholders to review whether on-site composting and recycling is feasible and advantageous, and set up composting areas in some or all parks.

Response - On site composting will be included as part of bidder proposals and included in the Procurement Strategy Report.

Recommendation 3. Tree Maintenance: The General Maintenance Contract should include tree work in parks and open spaces.

Response - Tree Maintenance will be included in the Procurement Strategy Report.

Recommendation 4. Trial Extended Opening of Parks: The Council should consider the feasibility of extending the opening hours of parks and look to introduce automatic locking and unlocking of park gates.

Response - The proposed trial of extended opening hours will be addressed by Cabinet, when considering the Parks Commission's final report.

Recommendation 5. Reimagining the Park Warden: Each park should have a designated and named contact provided by the Council or Grounds Maintenance Contractor - a "Park Warden". This person should be the direct contact for residents regarding issues and matters pertaining to their park and provide oversight for the maintenance and activities that occur in the park.

Response - Reimagining Park Wardens will be addressed by including a requirement within a new contract, that the contractor must have a named person responsible for each park as a point of contact. This will be included in the Procurement Strategy Report.

Recommendation 6. The Council should consider repurposing the Parks Police and their budget.

Response - The Parks Police and their budget will be considered by Cabinet, when taking into account the Parks Commission's final report.

Recommendation 7. Delivering Social Value through Engagement with Residents and Volunteers: The Grounds Maintenance Contractor should be incentivised to actively engage with residents and volunteers within each park.

Response - The social value proposal, regarding incentivising engagement with volunteers and local people, will be included in the Procurement Strategy Report.

Recommendation 8. Delivering Social Value through Apprentices:

The procurement strategy for the Grounds Maintenance

Contract should actively reward the creation of an apprenticeship scheme as well as work placements for young people and people with disabilities.

Response - The social value proposal, regarding apprenticeships and work placements for young people and disabled people will be included in the Procurement Strategy Report.

Recommendation 9. Bookings for all sports facilities and land should be brought in-house and run through a single, centralised digital platform, owned and controlled by H&F.

Response - This will be included in the Procurement Strategy Report.

Recommendation 10. The management and usage of parks land for commercial purposes by any non-council owned body (including all leases) should only be done on very clear terms which include appropriate reflection of land value, some degree of free community access, clear Council sight on all income and costs and regular contractual reviews.

Response – The management and usage of parks land for commercial purposes by any non-council owned body (including leases), will be addressed by Cabinet, when considering the Parks Commission`s final report.

Recommendation 11. Management of park-related costs and income should be joined-up, so priorities and incentives can be clearly aligned, and the parks run as a whole and as efficiently as possible.

Response - The management of parks-related costs and income will be addressed by Cabinet, when considering the Parks Commission`s final report.

Recommendation 12. Parks should be affordable to all schools and all residents to use. The use of parks by young people both in and out of school should be encouraged. Engaging young people in outdoor activity is an essential part of education.

Response - This will be addressed by Cabinet when considering the Parks Commission`s final report.

Reasons for Decision

The recommendation that Cabinet note the Parks Commission`s interim report and instruct officers to take account of the recommendations in the revision of the Procurement Strategy, will ensure that the Grounds Maintenance Procurement Strategy is fully informed by the Parks Commission`s evidence gathering and analysis before the contract specification is finalised and retendered.

Recommendations that do not impact on the Procurement Strategy Report, will be addressed by Cabinet, when considering the Parks Commission`s final report later this year.

Equality Implications

There are no direct equality implications for groups with protected characteristics at this stage, under the Equality Act 2010.

Implications completed by: Fawad Bhatti, Policy & Strategy Officer, tel. 07500 103617.

Risk Management Implications

The interim report from the Commission is welcome and comes at a time where Parks have played a significant role in the Covid-19 response in maintaining good mental and physical health of residents, particularly those who have no access to a garden. Parks should continue to delight residents, remain safe and provide a positive contribution to the biodiversity of the local area. There could also be some opportunity to using Parks for events for children, education, hosted walks and showcasing horticultural management but undertaken as the Commission advises under very clear terms.

Implications completed by: Michael Sloniowski, Risk Manager, tel. 020 8753 2587

Consultation

Consultation has taken place with the resident-led Parks Commission.

List of Appendices:

Exempt Appendix 1: Interim Report and Recommendations of the H&F Parks Commission