

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 06/12/2021

Subject: Parks Commission report and recommendations

Report of: Councillor Sharon Holder, Cabinet Member for Strategy

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Responsible Director: Sharon Lea, Strategic Director of Environment

SUMMARY

This is a covering report accompanying the final report and recommendations of Hammersmith & Fulham's (H&F) resident-led Parks Commission (Appendix A). The commission launched in January 2020, and their recommendations follow a year of extensive research and engagement with council officers, residents, and other park users and stakeholders. Interim recommendations were made in June 2020 to support the re-procurement of the grounds' maintenance contract.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That cabinet note, and comment, on the final report and recommendations of H&F's resident-led Parks Commission (Appendix A).

Wards Affected: All

Our Values	Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Values
Building shared prosperity	The commission has examined the role of park charges, commercial enterprises, entrepreneurship and volunteering opportunities in providing prosperity, equitable access and opportunities for park users, and made recommendations that aim to maximise the benefit to all residents.
Creating a compassionate council	The report seeks to widen access to park use and decision-making through

	more equitable representation and addressing barriers to access and encourages greater attention to disabilities and the full range of user needs in considering employment opportunities and facilities.
Doing things with local residents, not to them	The recommendations have been produced by a resident-led commission, and map out how parks can achieve the greatest possible engagement and representation from their communities.
Being ruthlessly financially efficient	Proposals for the review of commercial arrangements in parks seek to ensure H&F and residents obtain the greatest possible financial returns and benefit from park space.
Taking pride in H&F	The report aims to see all parks reach a standard that reflects the preferences of their local communities, and to widen access to decision-making, ensuring all residents can take pride in their local open spaces.
Rising to the challenge of the climate and ecological emergency	A number of recommendations support H&F's climate and ecology strategy, including management practices and monitoring that benefit biodiversity, and the exploration of open spaces as sites for low-carbon heat generation to decarbonise the borough. They align with and reinforce recommendations from previous resident-led commissions including those on air quality, biodiversity, and the climate and ecological emergency.

Financial Impact

This report recommends that Cabinet note and comment on the Commission's recommendations and findings. As such, there are no direct financial implications arising from this recommendation. Further decision reports will be required as the Council seeks to respond to the recommendations made. The financial impact of any future proposals will be the subject of separate decision reports for consideration.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications in the noting and commenting on the findings report.

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Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report – *PUBLISHED*

[Hammersmith & Fulham Parks Commission – interim report, 1st June 2020](#)

Background

1. In January 2020, the council appointed ten local resident commissioners following an open call for expressions of interest, to review the borough's vision, strategy and management of parks and open spaces, answering three core questions:
 - i. What is the vision for our parks, green and open spaces?
 - ii. What is the best way to involve local people in the decisions made about our parks?
 - iii. What currently works, what could be better, and what doesn't work in the way our parks and open spaces are managed?
2. The commission researched and engaged widely in developing its recommendations, including:
 - i. An open call for evidence from residents during spring 2020
 - ii. Online resident survey

- iii. Online consultation with ‘friends of’ parks groups, tenants’ and residents’ associations, and park sports and service providers
 - iv. Examination of documentary evidence
 - v. Discussions with a wide range of residents, council officers, other stakeholders, and external experts.
3. In June 2020, the commission produced interim recommendations to support the development of the council’s procurement strategy for the grounds maintenance of parks, public open spaces and housing estates (Appendix B.3). An update on the council’s implementation of these is available at Appendix B.4. Further recommendations beyond the grounds maintenance procurement were held over for inclusion in the commission’s final report, now being presented to Cabinet.
4. These final recommendations are the product of enormous dedication, time, diligent research and extensive discussion from each of the commissioners, and the council is greatly indebted to them for their efforts.

Recommendations of the Commission’s report

5. The commission’s report makes twenty-two practical headline recommendations concerning democracy and decision-making; how parks are maintained and used; how they are financed; and how green space and biodiversity are enhanced and protected.
6. Each headline recommendation is accompanied by more detail, and proposed outputs and timelines for implementation.
7. The findings and recommendations are attached as Appendix A.

Reasons for decision

8. The report represents a thorough analysis and insightful vision for the borough’s open spaces. The independent commission’s findings should be noted and received with thanks, and the council is very grateful to all members of the commission for their hard work, time and expertise in developing the report. Individual responses to the policy and project proposals contained within the report will always require Cabinet decisions and approval.

Equality Implications

9. One of the aims of the report is to better involve and represent residents equitably in decision-making, as well as providing opportunities such as apprenticeships for those currently less able to access them, and a minimum level of access to facilities for all. There are likely to be beneficial equality implications from this report when individual recommendations are progressed into policy and projects, and the equality impacts should be assessed at this point.

Risk Management Implications

10. The recommendations outlined in the Commission's report will need to be evaluated against a number of areas including ease of implementation, cost and time, benefit and risk. For the Commission recommendations which are subsequently agreed to be progressed, ownership of actions needs to be clearly identified and appropriate programme governance arrangements put in place to monitor and track their implementation.

Implications completed by David Hughes, Director of Audit, Fraud, Risk and Insurance, tel: 07817 507 695

Climate and Ecological Emergency Implications

11. There are no direct climate and ecology implications from noting the recommendations. Several of the recommendations, including 'Powering parks' (12) and recommendations 15-22 concerning green space and biodiversity, complement the council's climate and ecology strategy, and if implemented would lead to a positive improvement on the borough's greenhouse gas and biodiversity baselines.

Implications verified by: Jim Cunningham (Climate Policy & Strategy Lead – 07468 365829)

Procurement implications

12. There is no direct procurement resulting from this report as it is for information only. There may be procurement implications for individual decisions and initiatives in the future based on the recommendations in the report. Future procurements will need to ensure governance and compliance.

Implications verified by: Ian Hawthorn, Assistant Director Environment Special Projects and Highways - 07968857843

Consultation

13. The commission was formed to give resident-led proposals to the council on the vision and management of parks. The commission engaged extensively with the community in preparing this report, including through an online resident survey (a summary of responses is included as Appendix B.5) and survey of service providers (Appendix B.8), as well as discussions with individual and group stakeholders.

LIST OF APPENDICES

[Appendix A: Parks Commission final report](#)

[Appendix B: Parks Commission appendices](#)