

Committee	Dated:
West Ham Park Committee	05/12/2016
Subject: Fees and Charges 2017/18	Public
Report of: Superintendent of Parks and Gardens	For Decision
Report author: Lucy Murphy – West Ham Park Manager	

Summary

Within the City Corporation's Open Spaces, charges for sports activities are reviewed annually. This report sets out the proposed fees and charges for sports facilities and services provided at West Ham Park for 2017.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Approve the proposed schedule of charges (attached at Appendix 2) for sports facilities in West Ham Park for the 2017/18 financial year.

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. A benchmarking exercise to compare the facilities at West Ham Park with other local providers was carried out in 2015. The outcomes of this review were incorporated into the charging structure for 2016/17 which was approved by this Committee in April 2016. The review of 2017 charges has been brought forward to fall in sequence with other Open Spaces sites reviews of fees and charges, and to provide user groups with advance notice of any changes.

Current Position

2. A benchmarking exercise to compare West Ham Park's sporting facilities with other local providers has been carried out (see Appendix 1). Newham Council reviewed charges in 2016/17, having kept prices static since 2012/13. Prices were kept affordable for residents, community groups and schools, however prices to commercial organisations were increased by 10%. Prices for 2017 have not yet been set.
3. At West Ham Park one football pitch has been marked for the 2016 football season. In previous years two have been laid out; however demand has been low

with only two Sunday league teams using the pitches in 2015. Football pitch number 2 is being used this winter, allowing football pitch number one to be rested and undergo ground improvement works. To date all requests that have been received from our existing teams and ad-hoc requests have been able to be accommodated on this single pitch.

4. Tennis court renovation works were completed at the end of June and on-line booking was launched with the reopening of the courts on the 17th July. New tennis coaches were appointed in July and they have been building up clients over the summer and autumn. To date they have held two weekend tennis tournaments in conjunction with Local Tennis Leagues attracting over 100 players. They have also delivered a number of beginner, intermediate and advanced lessons for adults as well as one to one coaching sessions. They are currently working with local primary schools to schedule classes for the autumn and have applied for Lawn Tennis Association funding to support their junior programme in 2017.

Proposals

5. Following on from Members comments last April, this review of charges has sought to introduce a 40% discount to concessionary prices wherever possible. This is in line with similar charging structures at other open spaces sites.
6. In the majority of cases changes to prices have been recommended based on benchmarking of facilities or the introduction of a standard 40% concessionary discount (shown in Appendix 1). Where neither factor has had an impact on prices the Consumer Price index rise of 1% has been applied (this is the CPI for the year to September 2016). A summary of the proposed Sports Charges for West Ham Park is listed in Appendix 2. Further detailed information regarding the changes to each sport is provided below:
 - a. **Cricket:** The adult grass wicket at West Ham Park is maintained to Essex County Cricket Board standards as the Park's regular teams play in their league. Currently matches are heavily subsidised. Previous increases to the price of an adult match have been in line with inflation, this has resulted in the park now being considerably cheaper than the neighbouring facility in Flanders field. It is proposed to raise the prices of adult cricket matches over the next 3 years so that the park is in line with other neighbouring facilities. A 40% discount has been applied to the concession prices. The Park Manager has met with Capital Kids Cricket who organise West Ham Cricket Club (WHCC) for players under 17 year old, to discuss working in partnership with them more closely. A licence agreement is being drafted with WHCC to permit them to be the parks coaching team for cricket and use the park's facilities for their matches. Minimum targets will be set for number of hours training, games played and tournaments held in the park which will go towards achieving the targets that have been set in the draft Cricket Development Plan 2017-2020 for the borough and the outcomes of the Open Spaces Department's Sports and Physical Activity Framework. It is felt that a fixed pricing structure will allow WHCC to

maximise its use of the junior all weather strips, increasing their ability to reach local children.

- b. **Cricket Nets:** Prices for cricket nets have been held at the 2016 rate as the nets are due for refurbishment in 2017. The City Surveyor has £19,000 committed to replace the fencing around the nets. The Park Manager is looking for additional external funding to resurface the all-weather strips, nets and end boards and would look to increase prices for the nets at next year's review once this work has been completed.
 - c. **Tennis:** It is proposed to increase adult prices for one off games to bring the park in line with neighbouring facilities and to recognise the investment that the City has made in resurfacing the courts. The prices listed reflect the maximum price that will be charged. Discounts and taster sessions will be offered to promote the courts and coaching programmes. Regular quarterly review meetings will be held with the LTA and the parks coaches to track progress against agreed participation and income targets and adjustments made where necessary. The fees associated with the tennis membership fee have been increased in line with the rates stated in the park's Tennis Development plan.
 - d. **Marking out charges:** It is proposed to continue last year's approach of maintaining lower prices for small schools or classes of children, but have higher prices for larger school visits to reflect additional keeper time associated with facilitating sports day events. An increase for adult's rounders pitches is suggested in line with what is charged at neighbouring facilities.
 - e. **Football:** Adult prices have been increased by inflation. Concessionary prices have been benchmarked against local facilities. The cost of a game on a weekday does equate to a 40% discount, however the price of a weekend games has been decreased in line with neighbouring facilities and to bring the cost closer to a 40% discount. The price of multiple games on a Saturday and Sunday offer a greater than 40% discount and have been maintained at this lower rate to encourage youth teams to use the park. It is proposed to remove the fee for 5 aside football from the pricing matrix, as this is rarely requested
 - f. **Changing rooms:** An increase to £50 is recommended to better cover the utilities costs associated with this facility.
7. The charges stated are inclusive of VAT, other than for block booking of football where more than ten games are booked each season (subject to HMRC conditions being met).

Corporate & Strategic Implications

8. The proposed sports charges are consistent with Objective 8 of the West Ham Park Management Plan 'a healthy and active park'. The proposals set out in this report contain a range of charges with concessionary rates that have been benchmarked against other local providers and City Open Spaces.

9. 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' and the Departmental Objective to 'Improve the health and wellbeing of community through access to green space for recreation'.
10. The generation of additional income contributes towards delivering the required level of savings over the next two years.

Implications

11. The City's Financial Regulations require all departments to recover full costs when setting charges to persons or external organisations, or submit reasons 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.
12. Any shortfall in income, from the budgeted level, would need to be met by offsetting reductions elsewhere in the Chief Officer's local risk budgets or from new income sources. In light of the current financial situation it is desirable that, where appropriate, income generated from fees and charges should be maximised, where this can be achieved within individual Committees' pricing policies.
13. Fees and charges in this report have been set by benchmarking fees with other facilities in the local area. The costs recovered from these charges are marginal. For 2015/16 it has been estimated that it costs the City £139k to provide the sports and associated facilities at West Ham Park (this includes staff time, a portion of the machinery and equipment costs associated with laying out pitches and building maintenance and running costs). The total income for this period was £19k therefore the subsidy provided is £120k. The net cost of providing sport across the open spaces department during the same period was £1.7m. Steps have been taken at West Ham Park in 2016/17 to reduce this subsidy whilst minimising the increases that are passed on to the local teams (by only marking one football pitch and increasing the use of the tennis courts for example). If prices were increased to recover the full cost, it is expected that local individuals and teams would be unable to afford to pay them and/or would choose to use cheaper neighbouring facilities.

Conclusion

14. The City seeks to maximise the use of the sporting activities in its Open Spaces and encourage active participation from all sections of the community. The approach to charging for sports facilities in West Ham Park will continue to be reviewed annually, in the light of market conditions, user requirements and the implementation of local sports strategies.

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Benchmarking of West Ham Park sports charges
- Appendix 2: Summary of West Ham Park proposed charges for 2017
- Appendix 3: Open Spaces Sports and Physical Activity Framework

Background Papers

- [Fees and Charges 2017/18: Report to Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee \(for discussion\), Highgate Wood Joint Consultative Committee \(for Discussion\), Queen's Park Joint Consultative Group \(for discussion\), Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee \(for decision\), November 2017](#)
- [Epping Forest Association Football Charges 2016/17 \(SEF 18/16\): Report to Epping Forest and Commons Committee \(for decision\), May 2016](#)
- [West Ham Park Sports Charges 2016/17: West Ham Park Committee \(for decision\) April 2017](#)

Lucy Murphy

West Ham Park Manager

T: 020 8475 7104 (internal ext. 6534)

E: lucy.murphy@cityoflondon.gov.uk