

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Open Spaces, City Gardens and West Ham Park	4 th February 2013
Subject: Sports Charges for West Ham Park 2013/14	Public
Report of: Director of Open Spaces	For Decision
<p>Summary</p> <p>In line with the City's financial regulations and departmental policies, sports charges are set to recover costs at a minimum. This year most prices have increased in line with inflation. Tennis Court prices have been held at the same level as last year, whereas prices for cricket nets have been held for two years, and have been subject to a 50p increase for cash handling purposes.</p> <p>Recommendation(s)</p> <p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve the proposed schedule of charges (attached at Appendix A) for sports facilities in West Ham Park for the 2013/14 financial year. 	

Main Report

Background

1. Charges for the wide range of sporting facilities that are provided in the City's Open Spaces are traditionally reviewed annually. The current charges for West Ham Park were approved by your Committee in February 2012.

Current Position

2. While the overall aim is to increase the income received from the sports facilities in the Open Spaces, it has been accepted that charges should aim

to recover relevant costs as a minimum. For some activities, charges strive to maximise income but there is a controlled subsidy to promote the activity. Charges should also be related to the market price and local comparators. As a result, the blend of options that has been adopted provides a flexible approach to charging that can be applied to each activity as appropriate.

3. Where concessionary charges apply, it has been agreed that they should generally be set at 50% of the full price for the facility and apply to: young people under 17; students in full time education; people aged 60 or over; unemployed people and schools/youth organisations. Concessions are granted on the production of any appropriate identification.
4. The Superintendent has delegated authority to carry out trials for limited periods in order to encourage off-peak use, to see whether demand increases as a result of different charging arrangements and to closely monitor such trials, so that they can be halted if a beneficial outcome is not achieved. The Superintendent may also consider not charging for facilities at certain times, if the cost of supervising the facility is much higher than the amount of income received.

Charging Proposals for 2013/2014

5. The overall charging policy has been taken into account when formulating the proposed West Ham Park sports charges for 2013/14, which are attached as Appendix A to this report. The Superintendent will continue to monitor closely the usage of the sports facilities and the income received. It is proposed that most charges for the coming year will generally be increased in line with inflation, although rounding up has been applied in some cases to ease cash handling.
6. The proposed charges for 2013/14 take into account the current VAT charges of 20%. The charges for block booking of football are not subject to VAT as more than ten games are booked each season (subject to HMRC conditions being met). The current inflation rate (January 2013) of 2.7% has also been applied to all sports charges. The charges relating to the tennis courts have been held at the same level as last year whilst refurbishment takes place to some of the courts this season. Cricket net hire have been rounded up to assist with cash handling. It should be noted that these latter charges have been held for the last two years.
7. The proposed charges for schools have been directly increased in line with inflation, as these are invoiced directly to the schools and do not

have cash handling implications. The University of East London and Stratford Colleges have requested the use of the tennis courts, cricket nets, football and cricket pitches during term time, to accommodate their sports clubs and physical education programmes. The Superintendent proposes to implement the same fees as charged for the schools.

8. A summary of income received from sports charges 2010/11 and 2011/12 is attached as Appendix B to this report. There has been an overall increase of £7,038. Temperatures on average throughout the year were warmer than 2010 which resulted in increased income from play on the tennis courts and in the cricket nets. Cricket 'general' showed no significant change in income. Income received from the football pitches increased as a result of two additional teams playing in the Park. Schools sports bookings also increased as a result of many schools hiring the athletics track and requests for additional six lane 100m tracks.
9. Provision of tennis coaching for children was provided free by the Tessa Sanderson Foundation & Academy and the Richard Krajicek Foundation. This enabled over 400 children to participate in tennis over the spring and summer months. Newham Sports department provided free cricket coaching throughout the summer and this has replaced the previous West Ham Park Cricket clinic run by Essex County Cricket club.
10. Officers continue to consult with local users and neighbouring boroughs about their local sports strategies to ensure that the objectives for sports provision in West Ham Park is in line with local needs. The feasibility of extending concessionary charges to include specific local groups and to offer other discounts, possibly in association with Newham Council and the Tessa Sanderson Foundation & Academy, will continue to be considered in the future.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

11. The proposed sports charges support four of the five community strategy themes:

- Supports our communities – by encouraging well-being and participation in volunteer activities
 - Protects, promotes and enhances our environment – by encouraging use and enjoyment of City open spaces
 - Is vibrant and culturally rich – by promoting and encouraging activities for all
 - Is safer and stronger – evidence suggests increasing legitimate use in open space creates a safer environment
12. The proposed sports charges link to the following two of the five aims identified in the Open Spaces Department Business Plan 2012-15:
- Inclusion: Involve communities and partners in developing a sense of place through the care and management of our sites
 - Promotion: Promote opportunities to value and enjoy the outdoors for recreation, learning and healthy living.

Implications

13. 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.
14. Any shortfall in income, from the budgeted level, would need to be met by offsetting reductions elsewhere in the Chief Officers' 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.
15. The majority of the increases in fees and charges proposed in this report have been set in line with inflation and should produce additional income in line with the City's budget management policy.

Conclusion

16. 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 A – Schedule of proposed sports charges for 2013/14
- Appendix B – Sports Income 2010/11 and 2011/12

Geraldine King

Park Manager, West Ham Park

T: 020 8475 7104

E: geraldine.king@cityoflondon.gov.uk