

City of London Corporation Committee Report

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| Committee(s): West Ham Park Committee | Dated: 29 January 2026 |
| Subject: West Ham Park Fees and Charges FY'2026-27 (1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026) | Public report For decision |
| This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes• provides business enabling functions | -Diverse engaged communities -Leading sustainable environment -Vibrant thriving destination -Providing excellent services -Flourishing public spaces |
| Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending? | No |
| If so, how much? | N/A |
| What is the source of Funding? | N/A |
| Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department? | N/A |
| Report of: | Katie Stewart, Executive Director Environment |
| Report author: | Bill LoSasso, Superintendent, North London Open Spaces |

Summary

This report proposes a procedure to guide the annual review of fees and charges in West Ham Park and proposes fees and charges for financial year 2026-27 (1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026).

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the proposed procedure to guide the annual review of fees and charges in West Ham Park.
- Approve the update to the existing fees and charges for financial year 2026-27 (1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026) as proposed herein.

Main Report

Background

1. North London Open Spaces (NLOS) charges for a wide range of services and recreation and sporting activities provided across the four public open spaces that it oversees (Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, Queen's Park, and West Ham Park). These fees and charges are reviewed annually to ensure that fees and charges remain relevant and appropriate.
2. The income generated from fees and charges contributes towards the cost of managing and maintaining West Ham Park and the sports and recreational facilities provided at West Ham Park. Sports fees and charges are not currently based on full cost recovery and continue to be subsidised by the Charity to facilitate engagement with the local community and to promote participation in formal and informal recreational activities and sports, to support health and wellbeing for West Ham Park visitors.

Procedure for Reviewing Fees and Charges

3. In addition to proposing fees and charges for financial year 2026-27, the Superintendent also proposes to document a procedure to guide NLOS's annual review of fees and charges that ensures consistency and transparency, as outlined below.
4. Officers will review the fees and charges at West Ham Park on an annual basis, with any changes to be implemented at the beginning of each financial year (1 April). Any further proposed amendments to fees and charges would be brought to committee during the year if and as needed.

5. Unless circumstances warrant otherwise, Officers will submit proposed fees and charges for the forthcoming financial year to the West Ham Park Committee for approval at that committee's final scheduled meeting of the financial year (29 January 2026 for financial year 2026-27).
6. Any approved changes to fees and charges will be implemented to take effect at the start of the forthcoming financial year on 1 April. Relevant updates to booking systems, websites, signage, and other places where fees and charges are communicated will also occur by 1 April.

Inflation

7. The rate of inflation in the preceding year regularly informs decisions on fees and charges. To ensure consistency, and in alignment with past practice, Officers will use the 12-month Retail Price Index (RPI) as reported by the Office of National Statistics to measure the rate of inflation.¹ To further ensure consistency of analysis, Officers propose to use the September 12-month rate each year in their review of fees and charges.
8. Although any changes to fees and charges would not occur until 1 April, it is necessary to use the September rate because this allows Officers sufficient time to: 1) complete fees and charges analyses, 2) develop recommendations on any proposed changes for the forthcoming financial year, and 3) ensure these processes are completed before this committee meets, which is also often months prior to the beginning of the financial year on 1 April. Officers also believe that it will allow sufficient time for the Office of National Statistics to public the September inflation rate following the conclusion of the month, which is often delayed by approximately one month.

Review of Fees and Charges

9. In reviewing the fees and charges and in developing a recommendation for the West Ham Park Committee, factors that Officers will consider include:
 - a. Inflation: The 12-month RPI rate of inflation as measured in September of the current year.
 - b. Financial position: The past, present, and future-projected financial position of the charity.
 - c. Benchmarks: Where available, benchmarked local rates for similar fees, charges, and services.

¹ [RPI All Items: Percentage change over 12 months: Jan 1987=100 - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk)

- d. Service and charity needs: The specific needs of the charity and West Ham Park, including the need for investments, repairs, new and existing services and programmes, and staffing needs.
- e. Other relevant factors as reported to this Committee.

Rounding

- 10. For administrative ease, the following rounding conventions will be observed when proposing fees and charges for adoption by the West Ham Park Committee:
 - a. Under £50: rounded to the nearest £0.10.
 - b. Between £50 and £100: rounded to the nearest £0.50.
 - c. Over £100: rounded to the nearest £1.00.

Benchmarking

- 11. When proposing fees and charges for other NLOS sites (Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, and Queen's Park), Officers perform benchmarking to similar local providers for those sites where it is possible. This helps ensure that fees and charges remain relevant and appropriate to local communities.
Benchmarking of fees and charges at West Ham Park will also occur, where possible, in alignment with other NLOS sites.

Annual recommendations for committee

- 12. In communicating a recommendation to the West Ham Park Committee, Officers will:
 - a. Present the relevant fees and charges for the current fiscal year.
 - b. Present the proposed fees and charges for the forthcoming fiscal year, both before and after rounding as noted in paragraph 11.
 - c. Include a concise narrative of the underlying reasoning for the proposed fees and charges and note exceptions or items for specific consideration where applicable.
- 13. Officer recommendations on fees and charges will be for one fiscal year (1 April to 31 March) and will take effect on 1 April annually.

Proposed Fees and Charges for Financial Year 2025-26 (1 April 2026 – 31 March 2027)

14. Officers have given considerable thought to the fees and charges in West Ham Park. While raising additional revenue remains important and necessary to support delivery of the objectives of the Charity remains important, Officers also seek to ensure that the Charity continues to promote access to and the benefits of open spaces, the natural environment, and recreation, in line with its objects, by engaging with the local community to increase participation.
15. Accordingly, Officers propose to increase the majority of fees and charges only in line with the September 2025 RPI 12-month inflation rate of 4.5%, except for limited exceptions as noted in Appendix 1. This helps ensure that the Charity is taking appropriate measures given the impact of inflation on the Charity's expenses.
16. For reference, in 2025-26, an increase of 2.7% was adopted by the Committee, equivalent to the rate of inflation.
17. Officers have undertaken benchmarking to ensure charges remain in line with local other similar providers (Appendix 2).
18. The proposed fees and charges continue to include concessionary rates, which offer a 40% discount on the standard adult charge, as indicated in Appendix 1. Officers believe that this concessionary rate is competitive and helps to further the Charity's objective to promote participation in formal and informal recreation and support health and wellbeing for West Ham Park visitors.

Forest schools

19. Officers are reviewing the fees for forest school across all four open spaces at North London Open Spaces and will propose an updated and simplified fee structure to this Committee meeting on 30 April 2026.

Sponsorship of benches

20. Officers are finalizing a review of bench sponsorship across all four open spaces at North London Open Spaces and will propose a modernised fee structure and programme in the next Committee meeting on 30 April 2026.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

21. No implications.

Strategic implications

22. The proposed fees and charges directly support the West Ham Park Management Plan 2025 – 2035. This also contributes towards the achievement of the three

strategic outcomes outlines in the City of London Corporate Plan 2024-29 and the four Natural Environment Strategies (2024-29).

Financial implications

23. 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.

Resource implications

24. Officers are currently operating in an environment of significant resource constraint. Fees and charges are a critical means for West Ham Park Charity to retain and generate resources needed to deliver services and manage the Park.

Legal implications

25. West Ham Park Charity is a registered charity and the City of London Corporation is the corporate trustee. Members are reminded that any decision they take in respect of the Charity must be in the best interests of that Charity.

26. The objects of the West Ham Park Charity are to "for ever maintain and preserve the park in a proper and ornamental condition as open public grounds and gardens for the resort and recreation of adults and as a playground for children and youth". Under section 76 of the Public Health Acts Amendment Act 1907 (as amended by section 56 of the Public Health Act 1925 and applied to West Ham Park by section 4 of the City of London (Various Powers) Act 1933) the City of London Corporation may expressly also:

- a. Set apart any part of West Ham Park for the purpose of any game or recreation, charge reasonable sums for its use and exclude the public from the part set apart while it is in actual use for that purpose.
- b. Provide any apparatus for games and recreations, and charge for their use, or let the right of providing any such apparatus to any person.
- c. Provide and maintain pavilions or other buildings and conveniences and charge for admission.

Risk implications

27. Risks are recorded in the West Ham Park Risk Register.

Equalities implications

28. Equalities implications have previously been considered in respect of the proposals included in this report. Providing consistency in charging (including the application of concessions) and decision making provides equality of opportunity to individuals and groups applying to use West Ham Park.

Climate implications

29. No implications.

Security implications

30. No implications.

Conclusion

31. West Ham Park continues to provide excellent value for money sports and recreational opportunities. The income generated through fees and charges contributes towards the cost of providing services and sports and recreational facilities, and to the significant cost of maintaining West Ham Park.
32. It is proposed that the majority of charges are increased by 2.7%, or increased otherwise as set out in Appendix 1, as noted herein.

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Proposed Fees and Charges (FY'2026-27)
- Appendix 2: Fees and Charges Benchmarking (FY'2026-27)

Background Papers

None

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