

# Culture and Communities Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 7 March 2023

## Response to motion by Councillor Campbell – Edinburgh Leisure Pitch Hire Prices

Executive/routine Wards Council Commitments	Routine All
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### 1. Recommendations

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- 1.1 Culture and Communities Committee is asked to note the report detailing prices of 3G pitches within Edinburgh Leisure's core venue estate and the Council's school estate along with a market comparison.

**Paul Lawrence**

Executive Director of Place

Contact: Graham Croucher, Acting Sports Partnership Development Manager

E-mail: [graham.croucher@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:graham.croucher@edinburgh.gov.uk) | Tel: 0131 529 7994

## Response to motion by Councillor Campbell – Edinburgh Leisure Pitch Hire Prices

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 This report provides an update for Committee on the actions agreed at the City of Edinburgh Council's meeting on [27 October 2022](#) in response to a motion by Councillor Campbell.

### 3. Background

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- 3.1 On 27 October 2022, Council agreed the following actions in response to a motion by Councillor Campbell about Edinburgh Leisure pitch hire prices:
- 3.1.1 To note that prices for hiring 3G pitches within the schools' estate that were operated by Edinburgh Leisure were lower than for pitches within Edinburgh Leisure's own facilities, but the board had since agreed to lower the prices for the synthetic pitches at EL venues i.e. the Jack Kane Centre, Saughton and Meggetland;
  - 3.1.2 To note that this produced anomalies where prices were lower at some locations in the least deprived deciles on the SIMD index on account of them being part of the schools' estate, but higher at some locations in areas of high multiple deprivation, such as at the Jack Kane Leisure Centre/Hunter's Hall Park in Niddrie, which formed part of Edinburgh Leisure's own facilities;
  - 3.1.3 To note that team sports were hugely important and beneficial for children and young people for a wide range of reasons – e.g. fostering good mental and physical health, developing social skills, instilling a sense of community, and creating friendships;
  - 3.1.4 To recognise that sports clubs for children and young people in areas of high multiple deprivation were reluctant to pass on rising costs to families, particularly during the current cost-of-living crisis, but that sometimes this was unavoidable;
  - 3.1.5 To recognise that the Council, being committed to achieving the goals of the Poverty Commission, had a crucial interest in ensuring that children and young people in our poorest communities had continued and

expanding access to team sports at an affordable price because of the benefits these provide as noted above;

- 3.1.6 To further note that the Council was the owner both of Edinburgh Leisure's facilities and the schools' estate and therefore could exert influence in how pricing structures for the pitches operated by Edinburgh Leisure were set;
- 3.1.7 To call for a report within two cycles to the Culture and Communities Committee detailing prices for all 3G and 4G pitches within the schools estate, and Edinburgh Leisure's own facilities, along with a market comparison;
- 3.1.8 To agree to invite the Chief Executive of Edinburgh Leisure to that Committee to discuss how access to 3G and 4G pitches in areas in SIMD 1-4 could be made more affordable and in a way that avoided any unintended consequences;
- 3.1.9 To note that in respect of pitch hire, the Edinburgh Leisure Board had already agreed to harmonisation of prices for hiring synthetic pitches with revised pricing coming into force in August 2022, (an exception being the cost of hire of synthetic pitches at the new Meadowbank Sports Centre);
- 3.1.10 To note that Edinburgh Leisure pitch venues when not booked out, could be used on a casual basis (turn up and play) at a cost of £1 per head. Access was also available to Edinburgh Leisure synthetic pitches at a cost of £1 per head was via the Edinburgh Leisure Community Access Programme;
- 3.1.11 To note that the Management Fee received by Edinburgh Leisure from The City of Edinburgh Council had decreased from circa £9.5 million in 2014/15 to circa £7 million in 2022/23 (exclusive of any additional monetary COVID related support received from CEC); and
- 3.1.12 To agree that a briefing note would be circulated to councillors on the findings relating to point 3.1.8) above within two cycles.

## **4. Main report**

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### **3G and 4G Pitches**

- 4.1 3G pitches are made of synthetic material with a pile length of between 40mm and 65mm with a sand and rubber in-fill to support the synthetic pile. 4G pitches are made in a similar way but with a denser pile that removes the need for in-fill materials to support the pile.
- 4.2 The Council's estate (both schools and Edinburgh Leisure) has 3G pitches only.
- 4.3 The table below details the location of the Council's full-size 3G pitches:

<b>Secondary schools</b>	<b>Edinburgh Leisure core venues</b>
Balerno High School	Jack Kane Sports Centre
Broughton High School	Meadowbank Sports Centre
Castlebrae Community High School	Meggetland Sports Complex
Craigmount High School	Saughton Sports Complex
Currie High School	
Firrhill High School	
Forrester High School / St Augustine's RC HS	
Gracemount High School	
Leith Academy	
Portobello High School	
Queensferry High School	
The Royal High School	
Tynecastle High School	
Wester Hailes High School	

### **Harmonisation of Charges**

- 4.4 As part of the transfer of management of secondary school sports facilities to Edinburgh Leisure, both the Council and Edinburgh Leisure have been working towards harmonising prices for the hire of sport spaces between the school estate and core venue estate (e.g. Royal Commonwealth Pool, Ainslie Park Leisure Centre).
- 4.5 The transfer of secondary school sport facilities began in 2017 and since then steps have been taken to harmonise prices. As of 1 August 2022, Council and Edinburgh Leisure prices for 3G pitch hire were harmonised.
- 4.6 The majority of 3G pitches sit within the school estate and the Council sets the charges for community access to these school facilities as part of its budget process each year.
- 4.7 Council and Edinburgh Leisure officers work closely to ensure any increase in charges are duplicated by both organisations and price harmonisation is maintained.

## Market Comparison

- 4.8 The table below details market comparison of prices from a selection of local authorities, two university pitch providers in the city as well as from **sportscotland's [review of local authority charges for sports facilities](#)**.
- 4.9 All authorities have a bespoke approach to charging for access, with some offering peak and off-peak prices and different ways of splitting a full-size pitch.
- 4.10 The Local Authorities near to Edinburgh that provide the closest comparison to the Council/Edinburgh Leisure's approach to charging for 3G pitches are shown in the comparison table.

							sportscotland 2022/23		
3G pitch prices	CEC/EL £	Fife £	Clackmannanshire £	East Lothian £	Oriam (HWU) £	Edinburgh University £	Low £	High £	Average £
Full pitch – adult/standard (1 hour)	118	120	69.60	66	152	102	33.7	120	69.81
Full pitch – concession (1 hour)	59	84	34.8	45.5	92 (partner rate)		16.85	84	43.4
1/3 pitch – adult/standard (1 hour)	39.4	40	46.40	22.2			22	69.6	40.5
1/3 pitch – concession (1 hour)	19.7	28	23.20	15.2			11	42	25.19

## 5. Next Steps

- 5.1 To note content of this report.
- 5.2 Following Committee, and in advance of a briefing note being prepared, a discussion with Culture and Communities Spokespeople will take place to address any questions or concerns on how access to 3G pitches in areas in SIMD 1- 4 could be made more affordable and in a way that avoided any unintended consequences.

## **6. Financial impact**

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- 6.1 The charges associated with hire of 3G pitches and the comparison of costs with other local authorities and other providers in Edinburgh is included within the main report.
- 6.2 Charges are set annually as part of the Council's budget process.

## **7. Stakeholder/Community Impact**

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- 7.1 There is no stakeholder/community impact resulting from this report.

## **8. Background reading/external references**

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- 8.1 None.

## **9. Appendices**

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- 9.1 None.