

Notice of :	Cabinet Member for Community Cohesion and Leisure
Decision number	PH23/2021
Relevant Officer:	Lisa Arnold, Head of Parks, Leisure and Catering Services
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Councillor Maria Kirkland, Cabinet Member for Community Cohesion and Leisure
Date of Decision:	25 February 2021

FEES AND CHARGES FOR LEISURE AND PARKS SERVICES 2021/22

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 The proposed Community and Environmental Services fees and charges for Leisure and Parks Services for 2021/22.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To agree the Community and Environmental Services proposed fees and charges for Leisure and Parks Services 2021/22, detailed in Appendix A.

2.2 To agree that the fees and charges above can be amended as per the published officer decision of the Director of Community and Environmental Services so that the service can utilise flexible pricing models and respond to demand.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 The fees and charges for 2021/22 need to be approved in order to take account of business development, inflation, the budget, the market and the cost of providing leisure and parks services while encouraging participation in healthy leisure and recreational activities.

3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

None.

The current financial climate and economic impact of COVID-19 on local residents has been considered as part of this proposal.

5.0 Council Priority:

5.1 The relevant Council Priority is: “Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience”.

6.0 Background Information

6.1 The Community and Environmental Services fees and charges relate to the following services within the department:

- Leisure Services
- Parks Service

6.2 In relation to the review process of the fees and charges, the services operate within a framework underpinned by the following key principles:

- Maximise income, particularly to support cross subsidy
- Consideration of market forces
- Concessionary pricing for vulnerable groups
- Resident discounts applied to a range of activities
- Free or discounted use to targeted groups.

6.3 Leisure Services operates the Blackpool Leisure Card scheme that allows local residents easy access to sports facilities and provides reduced rates to ensure those residents in greatest need gain additional support through the standard concessionary charge (SCC) rates. In excess of 60,000 people are registered for a Leisure Card, with the following groups receiving concessions:

- Under 16 years of age
- Over 60 years of age
- Low / no income households
- Disabled persons
- ‘Our Children’
- Full time students/ Apprentices
- Armed forces veterans

6.4 A range of groups and clubs are supported by concessionary charges, with the

Blackpool Polar Bears Disability Swimming Club given subsidised access to facilities. In addition the service continues to offer free swimming to all juniors during school holiday periods.

- 6.5 The most vulnerable young people who are in public care or have recently left public care are issued with a Passport to Leisure card, which allows free use of sports facilities for pay on the day activities and up to 50% reduction on coach-led instructional activities. This scheme was extended in 2015, to cover those in the leaving care team up to the age of 25, who are in education or training.
- 6.6 A benchmarking exercise across other local leisure providers was completed in 2020 in relation to key leisure prices. Our prices have been considered against North West local authority areas; public facilities, private sector gyms and leisure trusts, to compare against average price and the price range to balance the aim of maximising income against increasing physical activity levels.
- 6.7 Leisure Services apply fees and charges to three distinct categories of customers; pay on day, memberships and via group block bookings. In addition, one off events for a range of sports are taken with fees calculated to reflect space required, staffing commitment and recover additional costs such as hire of equipment, setting up costs and post event clearing or reinstatement works.
- 6.8 The recommended prices set out in Appendix 'A' show a 0% increase across all fees and charges for leisure services, reflecting the level of customer sensitivity in the current economic conditions as a result of COVID-19 lockdown restrictions and the level of uncertainty regarding demand on leisure facilities in the coming 12 months.
- 6.9 Leisure Services have had a challenging year in 2020/21 with significant periods of closure and a requirement to limit participation numbers in all activities when open, significantly impacting on patronage and income. Therefore this report does not contain performance highlights as it has done in previous years.
- 6.10 The Parks Service has traditionally offered a number of fee generating services including; grounds maintenance (service level agreements) and arboriculture services. These are charged based on the client specification and site surveys to recover costs, including administration and associated invoicing.
- 6.11 Increasingly members of the public are requesting memorial benches and trees to be installed in the public parks; the service will try and accommodate all requests whilst considering the impact on the local environment and balancing the views of all users. Both benches and trees are charged based on supply price cost recovery, installation and administration costs.
- 6.12 There is also an increasing demand for events in parks, which requires input from

parks staff and wider services. These are commercial and non-commercial (charity) events in nature and can in many cases be quite human resource intensive.

6.13 Officers will calculate event fees based on the commercial/non-commercial nature of the event, taking account of size and requirements of the event, with a minimum fee of £56.25 to cover administrative costs associated (c.4 hours) for small local groups through to several thousand for larger events attracting a fee paying audience and potentially offering other income generating activities e.g. catering.

6.20 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 **List of Appendices:**

Appendix 'A' Fees and Charges.

8.0 **Financial considerations:**

8.1 The Fees and Charges process required consideration of the following:

- The current and future impact of COVID-19 on leisure facility usage
- The department's indicative 2021/22 revenue budget;
- Benchmarking the proposed Fees and Charges within the market place.

9.0 **Legal considerations:**

9.1 None.

10.0 **Equalities considerations:**

10.1 The pace at which the service can regain customers lost as a result of the COVID-19 facility closures

11.0 **Risk management considerations:**

11.1 Leisure Services operates a concessionary price scheme to ensure price is not a significant barrier to access.

12.0 **Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:**

12.1 The fees are in line with the approved Active Lives Strategy.

13.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

13.1 A benchmarking exercise has been completed to compare with other local/regional providers.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None.

15.0 Key decision information:

15.1 Is this a key decision? No

15.2 If so, Forward Plan reference number:

15.3 If a key decision, is the decision required in less than five days? N/A

15.4 If **yes**, please describe the reason for urgency:

16.0 Call-in information:

16.1 Are there any grounds for urgency, which would cause this decision to be exempt from the call-in process? No

16.2 If **yes**, please give reason:

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

17.0 Scrutiny Committee Chairman (where appropriate):

Date informed: N/A Date approved: N/A

18.0 Declarations of interest (if applicable):

18.1 None.

19.0 Executive decision:

19.1 The Cabinet Member agreed the recommendations as outlined above namely:

1. To agree the Community and Environmental Services proposed fees and charges for Leisure and Parks Services 2021/22, detailed in Appendix A.
2. To agree that the fees and charges above can be reduced on the published officer decision of the Director of Community and Environment so that the service can utilise flexible pricing models and respond to demand.

20.0 **Date of Decision:**

20.1 25 February 2021

21.0 **Reason(s) for decision:**

21.1 The fees and charges for 2021/22 need to be approved in order to take account of business development, inflation, the budget, the impact of COVID-19 and the cost of providing leisure and parks services while encouraging participation in healthy leisure and recreational activities.

22.0 **Date Decision published:**

22.1 25 February 2021

23.0 **Executive Members in attendance:**

23.1

24.0 **Call-in:**

24.1

25.0 **Notes:**

25.1