

Notice of:	Cabinet Member for Levelling Up People
Decision number:	PH19/2024
Relevant Officer:	Chris Rushton, Head of Leisure Facilities, Catering and Integrated Transport
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Councillor Jo Farrell, Cabinet Member for Levelling Up People
Date of Decision:	9 February 2024

FEES AND CHARGES FOR LEISURE AND PARKS SERVICES 2024/25

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 The proposed Community and Environmental Services fees and charges for Active Blackpool and Parks and Green Open Spaces for 2024/25.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To agree the Community and Environmental Services proposed fees and charges for Active Blackpool and Parks and Green Open Spaces 2024/25, 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 2024/25 need to be approved in order to take account of business development, inflation, the budget, the market and the cost of providing leisure services while encouraging participation in Parks and Green Open Spaces, 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 the cost of living crisis 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 which in combination are branded Active Blackpool
- Parks and Green Open Spaces 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 for targeted groups

6.3 Active Blackpool operates the Blackpool Leisure Card scheme which 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 such as the Blackpool Polar Bears Disability Swimming Club and Together We Can Do - an activity club for disabled people which has access to subsidised 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 leaving care up to the age of 25, who are in education or training.
- 6.6 Active Blackpool apply fees and charges to three distinct categories of customers; pay on day, memberships and via group block bookings. In addition, bookings for one off events across a range of sports are taken with fees calculated to reflect space required, staffing commitment and additional cost recovery such as hire of equipment, setting up costs and post event clearing or reinstatement works.
- 6.7 The recommended prices set out in Appendix 'A' show a 5% increase across all fees and charges for leisure services, reflecting the level of customer sensitivity in the current economic conditions whilst balancing the significant increase in costs faced by the service, particularly in relation to increased energy costs though these are incorporated within the Property Services budget. It is also the case that the majority of Active Blackpool employees are paid the Real Living Wage which is due to increase by some 10% from April 2024.
- 6.8 Health and Fitness membership rates will remain unchanged with two exceptions:
- SCC
 - Corporate
- In January of 2024, the headline SCC rate was reduced from by £2.50 to £19.99 whilst the headline corporate rate was reduced by £7, also to £19.99 and it is proposed that these reductions are implemented as permanent reductions from April 2024 onwards
- 6.9 These pricing interventions seek to strike the balance between enhanced access within the context of reducing disposable income which affects the most vulnerable disproportionately and cost recovery per 3.1 above. Whilst the full impact of these changes have yet to play out, they have been well received by existing customers and this is fuelling overall growth through advocacy and referral.
- 6.10 In December of 2023, the Young Person's membership was divided in to two categories:

11-13 years - £10 per month (was £15 per month)

14-16 years - £15 per month

- 6.11 Given the significant attrition beyond 16 years (currently 40%) it is proposed to extend the 14 – 16 category to 14 – 17 year olds to further support young people to lead and active lifestyle.
- 6.12 Parks and Green Open Spaces provide numerous pitches across the town which supports rugby, cricket and football from junior ages to veteran matches. This also includes several tournaments and events throughout the year, which brings clubs and organisers in from around Lancashire and contributes to the tourism economy for Blackpool. Therefore, fees are recommended to be set at a 5% increase to maintain consistency with Leisure Services and take account of the current economic conditions, whilst balancing the costs to ensure Parks and Green Open Spaces are in a useable condition for recreational activities.
- 6.13 The 5% increase is also recommended for the Stanley Park visitor Centre to assist with maintenance costs and the continuing increase in energy costs, whilst still proving an affordable community space for a range of activities and being home to the friends of Stanley Park.
- 6.14 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 requires consideration of the following:
- Ongoing recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic
 - The department's indicative 2024/25 revenue budget
 - Benchmarking the proposed Fees and Charges within the market place
 - The role Active Blackpool and Parks and Green Open Spaces plays in increasing physical activity levels to improve the health and wellbeing of local residents.
 - Social Return on Investment across the 'whole system' and in particular the ICS
 - Energy market costs, consumption and renewable energies

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 None.

10.0 Equalities considerations:

10.1 The impact of the cost of living crisis on local residents.

11.0 Risk management considerations:

11.1 Active Blackpool 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.

12.2 The fees help to contribute to the preservation of Parks and Green Open Spaces and assist in providing resources for re-investment. Utilising the resources to contribute to the actions identified in the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy, Tree Strategy and Park Development Plans.

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 recommendation as outlined above namely:

1. To agree the Community and Environmental Services proposed fees and charges for Active Blackpool and Parks and Green Open Spaces 2024/25, detailed in Appendix A.
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.

20.0 Date of Decision:

20.1 9 February 2024

21.0 Reason(s) for decision:

21.1 The fees and charges for 2024/25 need to be approved in order to take account of business development, inflation, the budget, the market and the cost of providing leisure services while encouraging participation in Parks and Green Open Spaces, healthy leisure and recreational activities.

22.0 Date Decision published:

22.1 9 February 2024

23.0 Executive Members in attendance:

23.1

24.0 Call-in:

24.1

25.0 Notes:

25.1