

Report of: Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing and Executive Member for Environment

Meeting of:	Date	Ward(s)
Executive	27 Nov 2014	All

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SUBJECT: Leisure Fees and Charges 2015

1. Synopsis

- 1.1 Leisure Fees and Charges are reviewed annually to take effect on the 1st of January each year. The Council retains ultimate responsibility for the charges set. This report includes charges within the Leisure Centres as well as those for leisure facilities in parks and open spaces.
- 1.2 The principles applied to the 2015 pricing are as follows:
- Introduce a new prepaid junior member offer for 11 to 15 year olds
 - Introduction of Better Gym (gym only) at Cally to compete with the budget gym sector
 - Scrapping premium pricing for IRB and Highbury Pool and Fitness Centre
 - An average of 2.09% price increase across all price lines
 - Reviewing pricing so that it is easier to understand
 - Residents can also benefit from wider GLL memberships which offer access across GLL facilities, such as the Better Inclusive Card offering discounted access for those with disabilities, and the Better Swim Card which replaces the AquaCard.
 - Reviewed pricing compared with neighbouring boroughs, and as a result, freezing outdoor tennis pricing.
 - If existing members are adversely affected by the changes proposed then they will be protected for up to five years, with just inflationary rises and same membership and benefits they have now.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To agree the 2015 schedule of leisure fees and charges as set out in Appendices 1 and 2
- 2.2 To agree to delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Environment and Regeneration to authorise any in-year changes to leisure fees and charges following consultation with the relevant Executive Member.
- 2.3 To agree the revised scheduling for future leisure fees and charges proposals, these to be presented in

February for implementation from 1st of April each year from 2016.

3. Background

- 3.1 Islington continues to build on the success of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games by delivering a lasting legacy to residents. The Council is ambitious that the Leisure offer should grow despite difficult economic times.
- 3.2 In April this year GLL commenced a new long term relationship with the Council to manage and develop the leisure facilities on behalf of the Council. This will benefit Islington as the contract provides for;
- £10m's worth of investment into its buildings and equipment
 - Increased access with the number of users increasing 2% per annum
 - A significant payment to the Council which will offset savings.
- 3.3 Current improvements at various stages of delivery are;
- Sobell – Changing room improvements are under way
 - Market Road – Refurbished and new football pitches being created along with a new changing pavilion
 - Archway – consultation is ongoing about a new reception and reconfigured facilities internally to the gym and health suite
 - Highbury Pool and Fitness Centre - consultation is ongoing about a potential second floor to increase the activity space and increase the amount of changing facilities
 - Cally Pool works have started to the gym and reception layout.
- Further improvements at other centres are being developed and will be announced in due course.
- 3.4 GLL and the Council have worked together to review pricing. The existing pricing structure is complicated and runs to many pages. One of the principles was that the pricing structure should be simplified so that it was easier for everyone to understand.
- 3.5 The cost of running the leisure facilities continues to rise with a large proportion being utility costs. The Council and GLL have tried to minimise the potential impact of price rises. Generally, prices have been raised by 2% and then rounded.
- 3.6 As well as making prices simpler, the Council and GLL have listened to the views of member of the public. As a result, new membership options have been introduced. Better Gym will offer gym only access at Cally at a very competitive price. Better Swim will replace the AquaCard, and includes the benefit of users being able to access GLL operated swimming pools across London.
- 3.7 A new junior membership will be introduced for 11 to 15 years olds at a very competitive monthly rate, and includes a concessionary option. This will give access to programmable fitness sessions, swimming and specific classes at after-school, weekend and holiday periods.
- 3.8 The Council has over recent years looked very carefully at concessionary pricing to ensure the services reflect the Council's fairness agenda. However, fairness is not just the price paid but is also about access in a wider sense. Recognising this, the historic price differential making Highbury and Ironmonger Row Baths more expensive and only available to those that can afford the premium is removed
- 3.9 Prices have also been reviewed in comparison with other providers and neighbouring boroughs, and this has highlighted that the cost of outdoor tennis is relatively high and therefore the price has been frozen and is not subject to inflationary rises. Otherwise, our prices are similar to neighbouring boroughs and generally favourable.
- 3.10 In addition to the Islington specific membership options contained with this report, there are also the GLL pan-London membership options which are available to Islington residents, though these prices are

not controlled by the Council. These memberships not only allow access to Islington facilities but also access to all London facilities managed by GLL, and include Better Inclusive for those with disabilities.

- 3.11 It is recognised that by simplifying the pricing structure, some existing customers current memberships will no longer appear. Some will benefit from the new offers whilst others may not get quite the same offer. However, any existing deals will be honoured for a period of five years, with just inflationary rises.
- 3.12 The fees and charges are proposed to take effect from 1 January 2015 and are in line with inflation. They will apply to all Council owned leisure and sports facilities, whether operated by Greenwich Leisure Limited or the Council's Greenspace Team.

Appendix 1 details the proposed fees and charges for Greenwich Leisure Limited
Appendix 2 details the sports fees and charges for Greenspace.

- 3.13 It is recommended that these new fees and charges are maintained until 31 March 2016 (15 months duration rather than 12) with future increases being proposed as part of the annual Council budget setting report in Feb 2016. This will be beneficial to user of the facilities.

4. Implications

4.1 Financial implications:

The report seeks to increase fees and charges by an average of 2.06% and this is in line with recent inflation forecasts with RPIx for September 2014 confirmed at 2.3%. Price increases will take effect from the 1st January 2015 and the report recommends that future price rises are from 1st April with the next price rise scheduled for 1st April 2016 giving a 15 month period of fixed prices. A move from January to April price rises does not have any financial implications for the Council.

4.2 Legal Implications:

The Council may fix such charges as the authority thinks fit for use of its recreational facilities (section 19(2) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous) Provisions Act 1976). Under the leisure services contract, the Council retains responsibility for fixing the charges for the recreational and leisure facilities provided by Greenwich Leisure Limited at the Council's leisure establishments.

- 4.3 **Environmental Implications:** The improvement projects mentioned above and the capital investment secured as part of the procurement build upon the success of energy efficiency measures already implemented e.g. at Ironmonger Row Baths and the Bunhill energy project. All the leisure centres have had energy audits and improvements planned such as rainwater harvesting, combined heat and power plants and energy efficient floodlighting

4.4 Resident Impact Assessment:

The Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

A full RIA has been completed. The impacts are positive, with the addition of new membership offers for disabled and junior members. This complements an already extensive concessionary offer. Any adverse impacts on existing members are mitigated by the five year protection being offered and any issues that emerge over this time can be addressed in future years pricing proposals.

A key part of GLL's performance framework is monitoring usage and the demographics of this usage to ensure that those with protected characteristics are not adversely affected, the target being that usage should reflect Islington's profile. This is a key performance indicator with financial deduction if the targets are not met.

5. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

- 5.1 The proposed fees and charges alongside the capital investment programme will enable the Council to both maintain and grow this high volume customer service and will contribute to the making Islington healthier, fairer and more active place.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Leisure Centre Fees and Charges

Appendix 2 Greenspace Fees and Charges

Final report clearance:

Signed by:



17.11.14

Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing

Date



14.11.14

Executive Member for Environment

Date

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