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Key Decision:	No
Report Track:	Cabinet: 17/07/14

**CABINET
17 JULY 2014
REVIEW OF LEISURE CONCESSIONS TO SERVING MEMBERS OF THE
ARMED FORCES 2014-2015**

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To review the leisure concessions scheme introduced by Cabinet on 30 June 2012 for serving members of the armed forces who are resident in Cannock Chase District.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet note the content of the report.
- 2.2 That Cabinet determine to continue with the leisure concessions scheme for serving members of the armed forces who are resident in the district for the financial year 2014-15, in accordance with the proposals set out in this report.

3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 Cabinet on 21 June 2012 resolved that leisure concessions be introduced for serving members of the armed forces who are resident in the District from 30 June 2012 for an initial one year period. (Minute 8)
- 3.2 Following a review by WLCT during the first year of operation of the scheme, Cabinet on 20th June 2013 resolved to continue with the scheme for a further 12 months (Minute 8 b).
- 3.3 Having assessed the impact during the second year of operation, WLCT have agreed to continue with the scheme for the financial 2014-15, subject to an annual review and subject to there not being a negative financial impact upon the contract in the future.

- 3.4 WLCT will continue to monitor and assess the scheme to determine the costs and benefits associated with making such a concession.
- 3.5 Cabinet are recommended to continue with this offer for 2014-15 in recognition of the commitment made by armed forces men and women to this country in their service throughout the world.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 The Council's Priority Delivery Plan seeks to increase participation in sports and physical activity as a way of contributing to improving health and well being of all those who participate. Any concessions or discounts that encourage access and use of leisure and culture facilities will assist in contributing to increasing participation in physical activity.
- 4.2 Cabinet on 20th December 2012 resolved and delegated authority to the Chief Executive to sign the Armed Forces Community Covenant (Minute 103A) and that the Council's actions in respect of the Armed Forces Community Covenant, and associated matters be reflected in the Council's Priority Delivery Plans.

5 Report Detail

Background

- 5.1 Following a request from the Culture and Sport Policy Development Committee on 17 April 2012, Cabinet on 21 June 2012 resolved that leisure concessions be introduced for serving members of the armed forces who are resident in the District from 30 June 2012 for an initial one year period. Cabinet also resolved to meet the one off cost associated with the production of the lifestyle cards during this period. (Minute 8)
- 5.2 From 1st April 2012 the Council's culture and leisure services are operated by Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust (WLCT) and under the contract arrangements although the cost of the current concessions scheme is contained within the management fee, the free concessions determined by Cabinet for armed forces personnel is not.
- 5.3 WLCT agreed to provide the free concessions for an initial one year period at nil cost, after which they reserved the right to introduce a contract cost increase to the Council for the second and subsequent years, depending upon the impact upon the contract.
- 5.4 Having introduced and administered the free concessions scheme and having assessed the impact during the first year, WLCT agreed to continue with the scheme for the financial 2013-14, subject to an annual review and subject to there not being a negative financial impact upon the contract in the future.

- 5.5 Cabinet on 20th June 2013 resolved to continue with the scheme for a further 12 months (Minute 8 b).

Concession Scheme for Armed Forces Personnel

- 5.6 The scheme only relates to people who are serving in the Armed Forces, including active TA reservists and who are resident in the Cannock Chase District.
- 5.7 The free membership to Chase and Rugeley Leisure Centres only includes the following activities:
- Use of Fitness Suites
 - Use of Swimming Pools
 - Participation in various group activities and fitness classes (e.g. aerobics)

The free concession does not cover activities including sports hall bookings (badminton etc) and meeting room bookings.

- 5.8 Applicants are required to:
- Apply for a Lifestyle Membership and Card (One off Cost £3.70 per card to be covered by the Council within existing budgets)
 - Provide proof of residency within the district (e.g. Council Tax or Utility bill)
 - Provide proof that applicant is a serving member of the armed forces (e.g. Armed Forces Identification card or Certificate)
 - Renew Membership and provide supporting proof annually.
- 5.9 The concession is not available to veterans or wives and husbands or children of Armed Forces personnel.

Outcome of the scheme from 30th June 2013

- 5.10 WLCT have continued to monitor the take up of the free concessions scheme and assess and evaluate the impact upon the contract. The findings are outlined below:-
- There are currently 103 Armed Forces Members
 - 63 Armed Forces Members are registered at Chase Leisure Centre and 40 at Rugeley Leisure Centre
 - 12 held some form of membership prior to the introduction of the free concession scheme
 - 6 Family relatives have taken up membership as a result of the offer of which 2 are corporate members and 4 concessionary members paying 50%.

- Overall the number of Armed Forces Members has reduced by 17 during 2013-14

5.11 The direct cost and income arising from the introduction of this scheme is as follows:

Cost	£
4 Concessionary Members 4 x £180	720
6 Corporate Membership 6 x £300	1,800
2 Profile Membership 2 x £360	720
Total Direct Cost	3,240
Income	£
2 Corporate Members 2 x £180	720
4 Concessionary Members 4 x £180	600
Total Income	1,320
Cost	1,920

- 5.12 The results over the last year indicate that there is a small cost to WLCT, from operating the scheme. However, this does not take account of the hidden costs and benefits resulting from the scheme. For example, the secondary spend, increased participation levels, the enhanced reputation of the service and a genuine social recognition of the selfless contribution armed forces personnel make.
- 5.13 On the other hand there are other costs arising from operating this free concessions offer, such as the accelerated wear and tear of equipment, the issue and replacement of membership cards/ Technogym keys and the potential lost income opportunity.
- 5.15 Following the review of the Armed Forces Concession Scheme WLCT have expressed their support for its continuation and have committed to providing the scheme, free of charge, for a further year (2014/15). WLCT do however wish to continue to review the position on an annual basis.
- 5.16 WLCT have also confirmed that the impact upon the contract is likely to take effect when Memberships numbers reach capacity and the number of armed forces members prevents WLCT from selling other full price or 50% concessionary memberships. This will either result in a loss of income or require capital investment to purchase additional equipment and to possibly provide additional space in order to sustain the free offer.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

The current concessionary scheme provision is contained within existing management fee paid to WLCT.

No budgetary provision exists within the concessions to pay for the additional provision to serving Members of the armed forces.

WLCT have again agreed to support the scheme at nil cost to the Council for the financial year 2014-15, after which a review will be undertaken to assess the cost and benefits associated with the offer.

Should WLCT determine that a charge for the provision of this concession is applicable in future years then, Cabinet may need to consider this as a policy option as part of the budget process, 2015-16 to 2017-18.

6.2 Legal

None

6.3 Human Resources

None

6.4 Section 17 (Crime Prevention)

None

6.5 Human Rights Act

None

6.6 Data Protection

None

6.7 Risk Management

The risk associated with this scheme if withdrawn is potential reputational damage for the Council.

6.8 Equality & Diversity

The Leisure Concessions scheme proactively assists in reducing inequalities through actively targeting and engaging with under-represented groups. It does this through positive discrimination and current pricing policies to encourage usage to assist in reducing health inequalities and improve health. Continuation of the granting of free access to the Council's Leisure centres to serving armed forces personnel has a positive impact and enables the Council to make a small gesture to recognise the commitment made by these

individual men and women to this country in their service throughout the world. There are no identified negative impacts.

6.9 Best Value

There are no identified best value implications as result of this report.

7 Appendices to the Report

Previous Consideration

Leisure Concessions to serving members of the armed forces	Cabinet	21 June, 2012
Leisure Concessions to serving members of the armed forces	Cabinet	20 June, 2013

Background Papers