

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
30 SEPTEMBER 2008
REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF ORGANISATIONAL IMPROVEMENT
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO LEADER – CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
Leisure Concessions Scheme
KEY DECISION – YES

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To set out the work undertaken in respect of the review of the Leisure Concessions Scheme and the proposed changes to the current scheme.
- 1.2 To consult Members on the new proposals for the Leisure Concessions Scheme.

2. Recommendation(s)

That Members:

- 2.1 Consider and note the contents of this report.
- 2.2 Confirm the proposals for the new Leisure Concessions Scheme as set out in this report.

3. Conclusions and Reason(s) for the Recommendation(s)

- 3.1 The new scheme has been developed in order to develop a new audience and increase the number of people regularly participating in sport and active recreation.
- 3.2 The new scheme will target those individuals who are currently inactive or are not meeting the recommended level of physical activity in order to reduce health inequalities, particularly in the most deprived wards across the District.
- 3.3 The current scheme has had very little impact on increasing the usage of the Leisure facilities as the number of residents accessing the scheme is less than 2% of the population.
- 3.4 The current scheme has not been actively promoted and there is limited awareness of its existence.
- 3.5 The eligibility for the current scheme does not properly reflect the Council's priorities and it could be argued that subsidies are misdirected.
- 3.6 Evidence based research has identified that there is a clear link between deprivation and inactivity or low participation in sport or active recreation.

4. Key Issues

- 4.1 The Leisure Concessions Scheme and all the Membership categories will be packaged under the brand 'Chase Card'.
- 4.2 It is proposed that the current Leisure Pass part A which entitles all residents to a 10% reduction in fees will cease and no longer be available.
- 4.3 It is proposed that the Leisure Concessions Scheme is extended to non Cannock Chase District residents but will be subject to a higher annual fee.
- 4.4 It is proposed that the Leisure Concessions Scheme eligibility criteria is extended and will include a 10% reduction in hire charges to Sports Clubs that have achieved and maintain either;
 - (a) Sport England Club Mark accreditation
 - (b) or the National Governing Body equivalent accreditation.
- 4.5 It is proposed that the Leisure Concessions Scheme is extended to include a 50% reduction on both annual and monthly membership packages.
- 4.6 It is proposed that the new scheme will be launched and available to access from the 1st January 2009.

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Section 1**Background****The Current Leisure Concessions Scheme**

Cannock Chase District Council has operated a Leisure Concessions scheme since the mid-nineteen eighties. The scheme is available to residents of the District only, and offers a subsidy through a percentage reduction on fees and charges. The reduction is based on residency, the individual's particular circumstances or financial situation.

The scheme is made up of two elements;

- (i) Leisure Pass A is available to all residents of the district and offers a 10% reduction on agreed activities.
- (ii) Leisure Pass B is available to all residents of the district and they must also qualify for one of the below special categories. It offers a 50% reduction on agreed activities;
 - Working Family Tax Credit,
 - Housing Benefit,
 - Attendance and Mobility,
 - Old Age Pensioner,
 - Registered Unemployed
 - Invalidity Pension,
 - Widow/Widower not in full time employment,
 - Student over 16 in full time education,
 - Unwaged spouse or child of any special category pass holder (Dependant).

Membership of the scheme is for twelve months after which the individual has to re-apply.

Culture and Sport Select Committee Review 2004 - 2005

A review of the scheme was completed in 2004 – 2005 by the Culture and Sport Select Committee and as part of the review a survey was issued to all residents in the District who received Council Tax and Housing Benefits (7,000). 336 responses were received, representing almost a 5% return.

Although, the outcomes from the review were not progressed at the time, a number of the observations and comments made are still valid and have helped inform the conclusions of this report. The four key conclusions were;

1. Members highlighted that there was clearly a need to ensure that Leisure pricing policy needs to be more closely linked with the achievement of the Council's objectives,
2. Concessions need to be targeted to ensure they are benefiting the right people,
3. Members highlighted that there is a need to address the lack of awareness about the scheme,

4. Members also acknowledged that there is a need to closely monitor the scheme to assess whether or not it is successful in achieving its objectives.

Leisure Pass Data Analysis

There is limited data on the actual numbers of people who have benefited from the scheme over the years, and the additional cost of subsidising the scheme. This is partly due to the following reasons;

1. The lack of ability to track and record the usage in the early years as all records were manually recorded;
2. The Leisure Fax IT system was introduced in 1991 when the Chase Leisure Centre extension opened and was used for recording and monitoring activity up to 2006 when the Torex system was introduced. During this period the numbers using there Leisure Concessions Scheme were not monitored as it was not identified as a key performance indicator.

A data analysis was completed for the year 2006-2007 and identified that there were 1,465 card holders representing 1.6% of the population;

- the below table shows the number of visits made by Leisure Pass card holders to each of the eligible facilities,

Site	No. of Leisure Pass Visits	Total No. of Visits	% of overall usage
Chase Leisure Centre	16,931	381,507	4.4%
Rugeley Leisure Centre	3,476	108,359	3.2%
Cannock Park Golf Course	738	22,855	3.2%

The below table shows the split between Leisure Pass A and B and the income received from the purchasing and issuing of the Leisure Pass cards was,

Leisure Pass Type	Total	Annual Leisure Pass Fee	Total Income
Adult A (10%)	20	£6.10	£124
Adult B (50%)	1,099	£3.10	£3,406.90
Dependant (50%)	326	£1.00	£326
Junior A (10%)	20	£3.10	£62
Total Holders	1,465		
Total Income			£3,918.90

During 2006-07 the scheme successfully attracted an additional 21,145 visits to the facilities and the below table shows the income taken as a result of their usage,

	Income Received
Chase Leisure Centre	£33,669.27
Rugeley Leisure Centre	£8,616.66
Cannock Park Golf Course	£4,379.10
Total	£46,665.03

2008 Review

The Leisure Concessions scheme has been reviewed during 2008-09 and as part of a wider review of the membership scheme. This has been lead by the Director of Organisational Improvement along with a team of Managers from Culture, Leisure and Major Projects.

Section 2**Details of Matters to be Considered****Current Leisure Pass Usage and Demographic Information**

The current¹ number of live card holder's is detailed in the chart below.

Category	Chase Leisure Centre	Rugeley Leisure Centre	Cannock Park Golf Course	Total
Adult A	15	6	0	21
Junior A	45	1	0	46
Total A	60	7	0	67
Adult B	806	417	68	1,291
Junior B	310	123	0	433
Total B	1,116	540	68	1,724
Total Leisure Pass Card Holders	1,176	547	68	1,791

Considering all of the District's population are eligible for either a Leisure Pass part A or part B there is currently only a 1.9% take up.

¹ Figures taken from the Torex IT System – September 2008

The table below shows where the Leisure Pass Part B residents live by ward and what percentages of the total card holders are from each wards.

Ward Name	% of Holders from Ward	Ward Name	% of Holders from Ward
*Brereton & Raven Hill	8%	Hawkes Green	4%
*Hagley	8%	Heath Hayes & Wimblebury	3.4%
Western Springs	8.5%	Hednesford & Heath Green	5.3%
*Etchinghill & The Heath	11%	*Hednesford North	6.2%
*Cannock South	8.6%	Hednesford South	4%
Cannock East	7%	Rawnsley	2.4%
*Cannock North	4%	*Norton Canes	3.4%
*Cannock West	3.4%	Other – Non specified	3.4%

The wards marked with a (*) have all been highlighted in the State of Cannock Chase District report 2005-06 as ranked within the worst quartile in England for overall levels of deprivation. Cannock North ward is the most deprived area in the District. Cannock Chase District is ranked the most deprived local authority (LA) in Staffordshire (excluding Stoke-on-Trent).

19% (17,917) of the Districts population live in one of these eight wards, and they form twelve Lower Super Output Areas² (SOA's). From analysing the Districts Lower SOA data the following have been identified as key issues; Employment Deprivation, Health Deprivation and Disability and Income Deprivation.

Currently, 63.6% (1,096) of the current total number of Leisure Pass B card holders reside within the twelve Lower SOA's.

Information obtained from the Sport England, Active People survey³ details not only the activity levels, as highlighted in the paragraph below, but also provides information on the type of people who are participating/not participating.

21.2%⁴ of Cannock Chase residents participate in 3 x 30 minutes of moderate sport and active recreation per week⁵. This is just above the national average which is 21.0%. Cannock Chase is ranked 15th in the West Midlands (out of 38) and 179th for participation in England (out of 364 LA's).

² Lower Super Output Areas are new geographies containing populations of between 1,000 – 3,000 persons, which sit within existing ward boundaries.

³ Between October 2005 and October 2006, Sport England commissioned Ipsos MORI to carry out an 'Active People Survey' across England. It was the largest sport and recreation survey ever undertaken. In total 364,501 people were interviewed. With a minimum of 1,000 people in each Local Authority area.

⁴ Sport England Active People Survey 2006.

⁵ Regular participation in sport and recreation is defined as taking part on at least 3 days a week in moderate intensity sport and active recreation for at least 30 minutes continuously in any one session. The recommended health level is 5 x 30 minutes per week.

The participation rate was plotted against deprivation levels and demonstrates the impact that deprivation has on participation in sport and active recreation. The following observations and findings have been made;

- The survey shows that socio-demographic factors heavily impact on participation. The highest socio-economic groups have higher participation than those from the most deprived backgrounds,
- Households with less income levels are significantly less likely to participate in sport and active recreation compared with higher household income groups,
- Participation rates amongst people in employment were shown to be higher than people not working,
- People with no qualifications participate less in sport and active recreation compared with more qualified people,
- Participation rates are higher for young people compared with old age groups and for male participants, compared with females.

Proposed changes to the current Scheme

The key objective for the concessions scheme should be to assist in reducing inequality and improving access to opportunities in order that everyone has a better quality of life. The scheme does this by reducing or removing cost as a barrier to participation.

Therefore, consideration needs to be given to who should be eligible for the scheme and what the benefits will be to the individual based on their personal circumstances. On the basis of the above research, it would be correct to suggest that the current scheme allows an increased subsidy to those people who can probably afford to access Leisure opportunities and they would more than likely continue to participate in sport and active recreation in the absence of the Leisure Pass part A. This is also reinforced by the fact that there is only 67 active Leisure Pass part A cards. Therefore, the removal of this element of the scheme would have an insignificant affect on the current usage and income. If this were adopted, then the current part A card holders would have their card honoured up to the end of their twelve months membership.

The development of a membership scheme with an integrated Leisure Concessions scheme under a single banner of the 'Chase Card' would assist in removing any stigma associated to receiving a concession.

It has been identified from the data available that only 6.1% of the 17,917 residents who live in SOA's currently have a Leisure Pass part B card. Based on the research linking deprivation to inactivity it would be proper to assume that the 16,821 who do not have cards are currently not using or have limited use of the leisure facilities.

Therefore, through both a broad and targeted approach to raising the profile of the Chase Card and promoting the benefits to the special category groups; based on the Sport England market segmentation information, data contained within the State of Cannock Chase Report and those entitled to Housing Tax and / or Council Tax benefits, the number of eligible individuals using the facilities could be significantly increased with the following positive outcomes;

- Increased usage at the Leisure Centre's,
- Increased income through the annual card payments,
- Contribution to the National and LAA target NI 8: Adult participation in sport and active recreation (1% increase year on year),
- Contribution to the National and LAA target NI 110: Young People's participation in positive activities,
- Contribution to improving the health and wellbeing of the population and supporting the Healthy Communities Beacon Status and the partnership working being undertaken with the PCT and other groups.

Proposed additions to the current scheme

1. Due to the geography of the County and the locations of Cannock Chase District Council Leisure facilities, they are often more closely associated to residents who live on the fringes of the District in other LA areas than the facilities provided by those Council's.

Therefore, it is likely to assume that in those areas, the residents who would fall into one of the Chase Card eligibility categories are probably sedentary or take part in limited sport or active recreation. Consequently, they are probably suffering the same health inequalities and poor quality of life as the Cannock Chase District residents.

It is proposed that the eligibility of the Chase Card is extended to include non Cannock Chase District residents. The benefits to the Council will include all of those highlighted above.

2. Culture, Leisure and Major Projects works with and hire's the Leisure facilities out to a number of different sports clubs and organisations. These clubs are non profit making and are managed and ran by a very loyal and dedicated voluntary workforce.

They give not only many hours in time but also financially as they pay for their various qualifications and accreditations as set out by the Sports Governing Bodies.

It is crucial that these organisations are operating safely and effectively and provide a good quality service. The consequences if they fail to do this could have serious implications on the Council's reputation. Especially with issues such as Child Protection.

Therefore, in recognition of this and to support and endorse the partnership working, it is proposed Sport Clubs that have achieved and maintain either (a) Sport England Club Mark accreditation or (b) the National Governing Body equivalent accreditation would receive a 10% reduction in hire charges. Currently, there is only one club that would qualify.

This will encourage and rewards clubs for their efforts and also provide a peace of mind to both the Council and residents that their operation is safe and promotes good practice. It will also assist in the positive promotion of not only the club but will provide kudos to the Council and its facilities.

It will also contribute to NI 8, and NI 110 but also NI 6: Participation in regular volunteering.

Summary of new Leisure Concessions Scheme – Chase Card

The Chase Card will be available to all residents and non residents of the district and they must qualify for one of the below special categories. It will offers a 50% reduction on agreed activities, monthly direct debits and annual memberships;

- Working Family Tax Credit,
- Housing Benefit,
- Attendance and Mobility,
- Old Age Pensioner,
- Registered Unemployed
- Invalidity Pension,
- Widow/Widower not in full time employment,
- Student over 16 in full time education,
- Unwaged spouse or child of any special category pass holder (Dependant).

The scheme will also be the vehicle to target specific activities, geographical locations or target groups to support the Councils objectives or possibly by working with the PCT or other partners; by allowing greater fee reductions or a zero cost.

The proposed annual charge is detailed in the table below;

	Resident Annual Charge	Non Resident Annual Charge ⁶
Adult Chase Card (50%)	£3.10	£20.00
Dependent / Junior Chase Card (50%)	£1.00	£10.00

Sports Clubs that have achieved and maintain either (a) Sport England Club Mark accreditation or (b) the National Governing Body equivalent accreditation will receive a 10% reduction in their hire charges. This will have to be renewed annually and a fee of £50 will be charged.

Monitoring and Evaluation

It is also proposed that a robust monitoring process is implemented to monitor the effectiveness of the scheme and is reported and monitored through the performance management process.

⁶ The opportunity to work with other Council's to develop reciprocal arrangements where they currently do not exist will be explored.

Section 3

Contribution to CHASE

The Leisure Concessions scheme plays a key role in delivering many of the Council's priorities, particularly in helping the Council to achieve its main **CHASE** objectives and Core Values including:

Children & Young People – *“Increasing participation in culture and sporting activities”*

Healthier Communities, Housing and Older People – *“Developing a healthy community”*

Safer & Stronger Communities – *“Reducing inequality”*

The Leisure Concessions scheme also actively contributes to the National and LAA indicators;

- NI 8: Adult participation in sport and active recreation (1% increase year on year),
- NI 110: Young People's participation in positive activities,
- NI 6: Participation in regular volunteering.

Section 4

Financial Implications

The costs of the Chase Cards and all associated promotion and marketing will be met from existing revenue budgets.

There will be increased income as a direct result of stopping the 10% category as these individuals will have to pay the full price.

The projected cost of the Sports Club 10% reduction is currently been calculated on the basis of all the clubs eventually being eligible. Currently there is only one swimming club that meets the required criteria.

The finance team still needs to calculate the potential income from engaging with the currently underrepresented target groups which the scheme is aiming to attract.

Section 5

Human Resource Implications

There are no identified implications in respect of human resources arising from this report.

Section 6

Legal Implications

Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 empowers the Council to do anything which they consider is likely to achieve the promotion of the economic, social or environmental well being of their area. The power may be exercised for the benefit of all or any of the residents of the area or people visiting. It extends to incurring expenditure and to giving financial assistance. The Council is using these powers in operating the Leisure Concessions Scheme.

Section 7

Section 17 (Crime Prevention)

There are no identified implications in respect of crime prevention arising from this report.

Section 8

Human Rights Act Implications

There are no identified implications in respect of the Human Rights Act 1998 arising from this report.

Section 9

Data Protection Act Implications

The Data Protection Act 1998 does apply as the Council will be requesting and storing individual's personal data. The data is securely stored in accordance with the Council's IT Policy and all systems are pass word protected and the information is only available to key employees who have been trained in the use of the Torex System.

Section 10

Risk Management Implications

There are no identified implications in respect of Risk Management arising from this report.

Section 11

Equality and Diversity Implications

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 uses a pricing policy to encourage usage will assist in reducing health inequalities and improve health.

Section 12

Other Options Considered

The options that have been considered included;

1. No changes to the scheme but actively promoting it;
2. Remove Leisure Concessions altogether;
3. Develop a new scheme that links to the achievements Council's priorities and targets groups based on socio-economic and health related needs.

Section 13

List of Background Papers

The State of Cannock Chase District Partnership Report 2005/06

Sport England, Active People Survey 2006

Leisure Operations, Business Plan 2007-08

Chase Leisure Centre User Survey July 2007

Leisure Services Survey – Council Tax and Housing Benefit 2005

Annexes