

REPORT TO: Executive Board Sub Committee
DATE: 9th February 2012
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Communities
PORTFOLIO: Neighbourhood, Leisure & Sport
SUBJECT: Leisure and Recreation Services Scale of Charges
WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To set out the proposed admission charges for 2011/12 for the Council Libraries, The Kingsway Learning Centre, Leisure Centres, Halton Athletics Track and the Brindley Arts Centre.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the charges as proposed be approved.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Proposed charges for 2012/13 are attached as an appendix.

3.2 The Brindley

Charges for the Brindley are for 2013/14. Charges for 2012/13 were approved last year. These charges have some changes to consider:-

- i) It is proposed that the previous separate charging structure for Halton Community Groups is retained but simply offers a 10% discounted rate on the standard community hire rate. Costs for Halton groups would increase modestly including costs to local dance schools.
- ii) Charges for rehearsal time show increases to charges, this is because the days on which different hire rates apply have been changed to: -
 - Monday to Thursday, replacing Monday to Friday.
 - Friday and Saturday, replacing Saturday and Sunday
 - Sunday has been combined with the Bank Holiday rate to reflect more accurately the costs of operating on these days.

3.3 **Athletics Track**

At the request of Wade Deacon High School charges will be held at last years prices.

3.4 **Leisure Card**

The leisure card gives additional discounted admission charges to specific groups on casual admissions. Charges are discounted as a percentage of the full adult admission charge. The current percentage discount is 50%. This is one of the most generous discount rates in the country. The purchase price of the card has also remained unchanged since the introduction of the card and needs to rise to reflect increased administrative costs. It is therefore recommended that: -

- i) The discount reduces to 40%.
- ii) The eligibility criteria are reviewed next year.
- iii) The annual purchase price of the Halton Leisure Card rises from £2.00 to £4.00

3.5 **Libraries**

It is proposed to increase the fines for the late return of library books to 15p/day from 10p/day and to reduce the maximum fine from £4.00 to £2.00.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 None identified.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Given significant savings over future years it is recommended that officers work with Members to closely review all fees and charges for 2013-14.

6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

The Council's charging policy operates in favour of children and young people by offering lower charges to encourage participation and the constructive use of leisure time.

6.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

Charges cover access to learning and training. These opportunities are offered at subsidised rates or free of charge to residents.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

Active participation in cultural and leisure activities are a key pillar of the boroughs health strategy to reduce the incidence of chronic illnesses caused by poor lifestyle choices.

6.4 A Safer Halton

Constructive and diversionary activities offered in this area impact on anti social behaviour and contribute to a safer Halton.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None identified.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 Income from charges is part of the council's overall budgeting strategy, new charges must therefore be implemented on 1st April 2012.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 The Council's charges are structured and are at a level designed to enable the use of services by everyone in the community irrespective of individual circumstances. The new level of charges have, been set at a level which continues to facilitate this.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

None under the meaning of the Act.