

**DATE: 11<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2024**

<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	<b>Portfolio:</b>
<b>Cllr. Hazel Evans</b>	<b>REGENERATION, LEISURE, CULTURE, &amp; TOURISM</b>

**SUBJECT:**  
**LEISURE CHARGES 2024-25**

**Recommendations / key decisions required:**

- To approve the Leisure charges framework.

**Reasons:**

- The draft 2024-25 charges are presented to Community Scrutiny Committee annually (26/1/24) as part of the full budget consultation and construction process for the following financial year.
- Full Council signs off the final corporate budget for 2024/25.
- CBM sign-off is sought for the final version of the detailed charges report, which includes this cover report and explanatory narrative (N.B. this cover report does not go to Scrutiny).

Directorate Communities	Designation:	Tel No. 01267 228309 01267 228393
Name of Head of Service: Ian Jones	Head of Leisure	E Mail Address: <a href="mailto:IJones@carmarthenshire.gov.uk">IJones@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a>
Report Author: Richard Stradling	Business & Projects Manager	<a href="mailto:RStradling@carmarthenshire.gov.uk">RStradling@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a>

**Declaration of Personal Interest (if any):**

**Dispensation Granted to Make Decision (if any):**

**DECISION MADE:**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
CABINET MEMBER

**The following section will be completed by the Democratic Services Officer in attendance at the meeting**

Recommendation of Officer adopted	YES / NO
Recommendation of the Officer was adopted <b>subject to the amendment(s) and reason(s) specified:</b>	
Reason(s) why the Officer's recommendation was <b>not adopted:</b>	

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**  
**CABINET MEMBER DECISION MEETING**  
**FOR REGENERATION, LEISURE, CULTURE & TOURISM**

**11<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2024**

**LEISURE CHARGES 2024-25**

**1. Introduction:**

The report details charges for 2024-25 for the following services:

- Cultural Services (Arts, Libraries, Theatres, Museums, and Archives)
- Sports & Leisure venues (Leisure Centres, Swimming pools, Actif Online products, and Actif Community sports charges)
- Outdoor Recreation (Country Parks, including the Millennium Coastal Park; Pendine Attractor site; and the Outdoor Education Service).

**2. Background and market forces**

Factors that inform the annual charges review:

**Political**

- Council's Strategic / business / social objectives
- Alignment with emerging new Leisure Strategy 2023-33, including commercially v socially balanced objectives.
- More detailed three-year business / budget planning process and projections.

**Economic**

- Corporate income targets and inflation - projected **4%** baseline increase for 24/25, as starting point for increasing charges, unless specified otherwise. We have seen significant inflationary rises over the past few years driving up energy and wholesale goods and food prices, which has a huge bearing on the charges we need to set to keep up with inflation whilst not losing our custom base.
- Real-term inflation on certain goods and services been circa 10-15% in some areas.
- Current economic climate and consumer confidence.
- Energy costs and projections (adding significant pressures to leisure services with large buildings that require a lot of heating and lighting).
- Previous years' charges.
- Comparative charges in neighbouring authorities, and similar facility operators
- Performance of venues in previous years: Covid-19 had a huge impact on all Leisure services, and whilst most service areas have more or less fully recovered, the market remains volatile.

- Implications of capital investments, including planned e.g. Pentre Awel; Carmarthen Hwb; Oriol Myrddin developments, all due to open in next 12-24 months.

### **Social**

- Demand / usage trends
- Feedback from users and non-user surveys
- Offering discounted loyalty rates for frequent users via monthly, seasonal, and annual offers, thus providing greater certainty on income, and forming ongoing engagement habits which in turn improves health and well-being.
- Focus on addressing inequality through social pricing.
- Focus on families as key market for local authority run services.

### **Technological**

- Online products and offers e.g. Actif Anywhere platform for broadcasting live and pre-recorded activity to homes, schools, hospitals, and village halls etc.
- Current and future impact of Artificial intelligence on all areas of business.

### **Legal**

- Local Government Act 2000 - provides powers for councils to promote the economic, social, and environmental well-being of their area and a duty to develop Community Strategies
- Local Government Act 2003 (section 93) – Power to Charge for Discretionary Services
- Corporate income and charging policy (2017)

### **Environmental**

- Energy costs have a huge bearing on services such as Leisure, with large buildings that need to be regularly heated and lit. The service is aligned in contributing towards the authority's net carbon zero goal by 2030 i.e. using circular economy principles; more local procurement; minimising waste; reducing energy usage and thus costs, that in turn can affect charging policy.
- Impact of climate change as we are seeing on facilities, events, bookings, costs, and income, especially for seasonal outdoor facilities such as Pembrey Country Park.

## **3. Other information relevant to charging digest**

### **3.1 Discounts and offers**

All charges are upper thresholds and may be discounted, with approval from 2 service officers and the Head of Service. Similarly, cross promoted offers to incentivise retention and new customers will also be developed and promoted throughout the year with agreement for rationale and sign-off by 2 senior officers and HoS. A new cross marketing group has been set up linking 3 main service areas of Cultures, Actif Leisure and Outdoor Recreation, with links to corporate Marketing, media, and Tourism team. Group meets monthly under direction of Business & Projects Manager. Numerous services / products already cross-marketed e.g. via digital information screens at key sites.

### 3.2 Rounding up / down of charges

Where charges differ significantly from previous year, an explanation is provided. Charges are / will be rounded up / down to nearest 10p. Some charges will have been held or increased by more / less than inflations in recent years and may therefore show higher or lower than average % increases this year.

### 3.3 Commercial lettings / charges

Where a customer applies to hire a facility on a commercial basis, the cost can be charged at up to x2.5 times that of the normal hire rate.

### 3.4 Internal, partner, and charitable charges

Internal, partner and charitable organisations may apply for up to 50% reduction for fundraising events, to be agreed by 2 senior officers and HoS.

### 3.5 Advance charges

It should also be noted that 2024 seasonal charges for our campsite at Pembrey have already been agreed with our Cabinet Member, given that these sales take place early in the calendar year.

### 3.6 Cost of living challenges

With wages not keeping up with inflation, our most deprived communities and residents are struggling to make ends meet. One of our guiding principles for any revisions to charges during the covid period was to try and maintain long term custom and memberships, to both help long term prosperity, but equally to keep the people of Carmarthenshire healthy and engaged in their communities. Leisure service managers are actively involved with the corporate 'Tackling Poverty working group' to support in a variety of initiatives, including: Warm Spaces at Libraries; Social pricing / concessionary offers; and targeted interventions such as WG Summer of Fun / Winter of Well-being initiatives.

### 3.7 Concessions

Currently offered for certain charges in the following categories with full review aligned to corporate policy planned during 24/25:

- Housing Benefit
- Council Tax Benefit
- Working Tax Credit
- Guarantee Credit part of Pension Credit
- Income Support
- Income-based Job Seekers Allowance
- Senior Citizens
- Disabled Persons
- Asylum seekers
- Full time students over the age of 16 years
- Children in the care of the Council
- Children under 16 years of age of customers who qualify via above

- Armed services personnel
- Free school meal recipients
- Elite athletes

### 3.8 Actif Sport & Leisure

- Consideration of new Llanelli Leisure Centre at Pentre Awel from circa Jan 2025. Proposed that charges align with current wider Actif service charges as per integrated site membership officer.
- Planning ahead for opening and operation of new Carmarthen Hwb 24/7 single site gym from Spring 2025
- Will be working up a new set of charges for completely new commercial leisure offer at Carmarthen Hwb from Spring 2025, to include: e-Karting; indoor adventure golf; Toy Town; and Tag Active
- Look at charges and possible free / discounted offers to help address challenges on childhood obesity (linked to Scrutiny Task & Finish review).

### 3.9 Other points considered as part of charging proposals:

- Can we increase numbers, or do we increase charges?
- Capacity: can we increase it if demand is there? E.g. more gym spaces in existing facility
- Can we do more of what we do but in a different place e.g. more campsites / car parks?
- Triggers: what are the triggers to attend / not attend; join / stay / come again / leave?
- Existing customers: Aim to reward loyalty to help promote long-term engagement and habits
- New Customers: Can we incentivise? E.g. refer a friend; multi-family memberships?
- Future operation of Burry Port Harbour. A separate report will consider options / scenarios.

### 3.10 Joint memberships and cross-selling:

This year's charges report includes a tab outlining combined offers where we incentivise the sale of one product with another from a different part of the overall Leisure service. This drives new custom to different services and offers better value to new and existing users e.g. a £50 voucher towards a stay at Y Caban, or free annual entry pass to Pembrey Country park if you re-new an Actif Household & Play Centre Direct Debit membership @ £61 pcm; Free family swim session for a family booking at Y Caban for 1 night; 2x Theatre vouchers worth £20 each for a family signing up for a 12 months ski pass; free swim session for all children signing up as a new library member etc (see final tabs of charging digest).

Principle is that we offer add-ons up to a maximum of 10% of value of product we are selling to help incentivise the sale or renewal, with secondary spend and sales at the add-on service far out-weighting any lost revenue, and generating significant additional income overall, whilst also offering better value to our residents and visitors.

**DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?**

**YES – copy of charges report**

# IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report :

Signed: Ian Jones

Head of Leisure

Policy and Crime & Disorder	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Organisational Development	Physical Assets	Bio-diversity & Climate Change
<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>

## Finance

The attached charges report forms part of the income generating plan for the leisure division for 2024-25.

It is acknowledged that multiple factors will play a part in the service's ability to charge and generate income for this coming financial year, and possibly next. Regular monitoring throughout the year will assist in delivering a best possible financial return for these services by year end.

**SPJ**

# CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below

Signed: Ian Jones

Head of Leisure

## 1. Scrutiny Committee –

Community, Homes & Regeneration Scrutiny committee was consulted on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

### **RESOLVED THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO THE CABINET/COUNCIL THAT:**

- The Charging Digests for the Regeneration, Leisure, Place and Sustainability and Non HRA Services, as detailed in Appendix C to the report, be endorsed.

2. Local Member(s) - N/A

3. Community / Town Council - N/A

4. Relevant Partners - N/A

5. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations - N/A

Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information  
List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

- [Local Government Act 2000 - provides powers for councils to promote the economic, social, and environmental well-being of their area and a duty to develop Community Strategies](#)
- [Local Government Act 2003 \(section 93\) \(Wales\) – Power to Charge for Discretionary Services](#)
- [Corporate income and charging policy – March 2017](#)
- [Leisure, Culture, and Outdoor Recreation Strategy 2023-33](#)