

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE:	<b>Finance, Policy and Resources</b>
DATE:	<b>6 May 2014</b>
DIRECTOR:	<b>Gayle Gorman</b>
TITLE OF REPORT:	<b>Review of Access to Leisure Scheme</b>
REPORT NUMBER:	<b>ECS/14/027</b>
CHECKLIST RECEIVED:	Yes

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The purpose of this report is to bring Committee up to date on the progress of a review of the Access to Leisure (A2L) Scheme. Access to Leisure is the concessionary scheme that offers discount to residents of Aberdeen who meet certain criteria, to sports facilities, childcare services, and some catering facilities.

### **2. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

It is recommended that the Committee:

- a) Note the work undertaken to date to review the Access to Leisure Scheme; and
- b) Approve the following policy recommendations as set out below:
  - i. to confirm the requirement to have a scheme in Aberdeen that seeks to reduce health and wellbeing inequalities in Aberdeen, with an aim to facilitate access to increased regular participation in health and wellbeing for those whom affordability or disability is a barrier.
  - ii. That the A2L scheme is re-aligned to fit with, reflect, and contribute to, appropriate corporate, strategic and SOA priorities including the Welfare Reform and new benefit system, and linked to reducing health and wellbeing inequalities with in the city.
  - iii. Eligibility for discounted coffee and tea should cease. Instead the Accord Card should be used as a vehicle to continue targeted discounted offers on teas and coffees.

- iv. Subsidised childcare should remain within the scheme.
  - v. The scheme should facilitate access to regular participation in physical activity for all those with an evidenced physical or learning disability or a long term health condition (linked to benefits).
  - vi. The scheme should be linked to a robust, evidence based health referral/ social prescription scheme.
  - vii. Consideration should be given to linking the scheme in with the national retirement age (to be implemented on a phased basis).
  - viii. The scheme should be available for off-peak activities only, except for family swimming which should also be available during peak periods.
  - ix. A review should be carried out on the impact of the provision of free swimming. In the meantime, free swimming should continue at existing designated community swimming pools.
  - x. A2L should be available at all ACC leisure facilities across the city, including those operated by partners.
- c) Note that a short term working group will be set up to implement the recommended operational changes to the scheme:
- i. To revise and re-launch a more focussed and targeted A2L scheme.
  - ii. To undertake detailed work on the impact of the changes.
  - iii. A new, more targeted and integrated approach to marketing is adopted.
  - iv. The application and administrative processes for A2L are simplified.
  - v. A new monitoring approach for the A2L Scheme is developed so that the outcomes can be clearly understood.
  - vi. The new scheme should be implemented on a phased basis taking into consideration individuals who have a current entitlement, but would not be entitled under the new scheme criteria.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

### Partners

At the present time, £100,000 per year is provided to Sport Aberdeen specifically for the purpose of supporting the Access to Leisure Scheme. Both Aberdeen Sports Village and Garthdee Alpine Snowsports Centre are required to recognise the scheme. No additional funding is provided to these organisations above their core grant. RGU Sport, a non-financially supported partner provider also identifies concessions through the Access to Leisure Scheme, and provides discounted access to these concessions.

### Council Services

The Childcare service has £20,000 per year integrated into its budget to support Access to Leisure. The Museums and Galleries service does not receive any additional budget to cover the cost of providing half price teas and coffees.

### Financial Impact

Due to the complex nature of the way that the concessionary scheme is used and its perceived value or cost, it is very difficult to anticipate the financial implications of the proposed changes.

For example, it may be that as a result of a clearer package which is more effectively marketed, there is greater uptake of the scheme. Operators may perceive this to represent a greater cost to them, however for an activity such as swimming, where the pools are rarely full to capacity, there will arguably be no loss in income, but potentially greater income due to secondary expenditure. Also if participation levels increase, the cost per head for providing the service will decrease.

It is therefore recommended that the financial implications are closely monitored as the revised scheme is rolled out and the scheme is evaluated after a set period.

## **4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

### Legal Implications

The Council's legal agreements with Sport Aberdeen, Aberdeen Sports Village and Garthdee Alpine Sports requires these organisations to recognise and provide discounted charges for those registered with the Access to Leisure Scheme.

### Equalities and Human Rights Implications

This report seeks to ensure greater equality of opportunity to access sport and childcare facilities for those whom cost or disability may be a barrier. An Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment has been completed in respect of this report.

### Health Implications

This report seeks to increase opportunities for individuals in communities, for whom cost or disability may be a barrier, to improve their health and wellbeing chances through increased levels of physical activity and for those with

childcare responsibilities opportunities to contribute to the local economy and their local community through learning new skills and gaining employment.

#### Employee Implications

Staff training will be required for staff who are responsible for administering the system.

## **5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES**

### **5.1 Background**

Access to Leisure is the Council's concessionary scheme that offers discount to residents of Aberdeen who meet certain criteria, to sports facilities, childcare services, and some catering facilities. The scheme helps to realign resource to help to enable the most vulnerable to access services.

The current scheme has been in operation for a considerable time, and the review was commissioned to ensure that the scheme is fit for purpose into the future.

The detailed Review is attached as an Appendix to this report and contains 18 recommendations which have been summarised and identified as policy or operational as set out in the recommendations section of this report.

## **6. IMPACT**

Corporate – This report relates to 'Aberdeen – the Smarter City' as follows:

- We will work with our partners to seek to reduce the levels of inequality in the city.
- We will encourage and support citizens to participate in the development, design and decision making of services to promote civic pride, active citizenship and resilience.
- We will enhance the physical and emotional wellbeing of all our citizens by offering support and activities which promote independence, resilience, confidence and self-esteem.
- We will aim to have a workforce across the city which has the skills and knowledge to sustain, grow and diversify the cultural economy.
- We will embrace the distinctive pride the people of Aberdeen take in their city and work with them to enhance the sense of well-being here, building strong communities which look out for, and look after one another.

This report also relates to the Combined Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement as follows:

Learning and Workforce: Reduced levels of unemployment

	<p>Universal literacy  Effective lifelong learning through vocational and academic education training from secondary school</p>
Health and Wellbeing:	<p>Reduced inequalities in healthy life expectancy and improved physical and mental health through increased physical activity.  Improved mental and physical health and social inclusion of long term unemployed by equal access to employability opportunities</p>
Older People	<p>Older people in Aberdeen have increased independence  More older people in Aberdeen are benefiting from “Active Aging”</p>
Children & Young People:	<p>Every child and young person in Aberdeen enjoys being young and at the same time feels safe, nurtured, healthy, active, included, respected and responsible.</p>
Priority Families	<p>Communities demonstrate independence, resilience, confidence, self-esteem and aspiration. Preventative approaches reduce the number of families experiencing multiple and complex negative outcomes.</p>
Target those most in need:	<p>Deprivation is reduced, resulting in the closure of outcome gaps within Aberdeen’s population.</p>

Public - This report is likely to be of interest to the media and citizens of Aberdeen.

## **7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK**

Risk will be managed through the implementation of a working group and robust evaluation process.

## **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

## **9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS**

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