

Decision under Delegated Powers

Officer Requesting Decision

Sport & Active Recreation Manager

Officer Making the Decision

Head of Neighbourhood Services

Recommendation

That approval is given to:

1. To introduce a standard charge of £4 for an annual wild card membership from 1st January 2019 and further increase the standard charge to £5 from 1st January 2020.
2. To retain the free wild card for those eligible.

Reason

1. To integrate the wild card transaction process into the new Council's online booking system and to simplify the customer journey when purchasing a wild card.
2. To protect those who cannot afford the card and ensure their ability to take advantage of the membership benefits.

Authority for Decision

Item 1 of the delegations to Heads of Service in section 8.3 of the Constitution gives authority to undertake the periodic review of fees and charges raised within their service areas and falling within the scope of the Council's income and Charging Policy Framework. The Cabinet Lead member for Communities, Safety and Wellbeing, Finance and Internal Support Services have also been consulted as part of the review process.

Decision and Date

Julie Robinson 18/10/18

Background

The Authority for approving fees and charges has been delegated to the Head of Neighbourhood Services. The proposed charges detailed in the report have been put forward having taken into consideration the Council's Income and Charging Policy.

What is the Wild Card?

The WILD Charnwood Leisure Pass entitles 5-16 year-olds discounted savings on Charnwood Borough Council's holiday activity programmes and holiday programmes provided by our Leisure Centre operator Fusion Lifestyle at Loughborough Leisure Centre, Soar Valley Leisure Centre and South Charnwood Leisure Centre. In addition residents can also receive discounts on any casual swimming session's at all 3 leisure centres.

The wild card has been operating for the last 20 years, residents currently pay either £3 if they live or go to school in the borough or £5 if they live outside the borough but go to school in the borough (a 25% discount card is issued).

The card is free to those young people whose families are in receipt of benefits and live in the borough (a 50% discount card is issued). If the family is in receipt of benefits and lives outside the borough but their child goes to school in the borough the card is £5 (a 50% discount card is issued).

The card is valid for 12 months from the date of purchase. These prices have not changed since the schemes inception in 1998.

Where can it be purchased?

The Wild card can currently be purchased at all 3 leisure centre sites or over the telephone through the borough council's contact centre, usually at the same time as parents make bookings for their child's holiday programme activities. The card is posted out to the customer. The card details the child's name, date of birth and expiry date of the card. The customer is required to attach a photograph of the child which is then enclosed by a self-sealed laminated cover.

Over 95% of customers that book onto the council's holiday programmes currently have a valid wild card and indicate that the activities are value for money.

Quality Customer Experience

As an authority we are committed to putting customers at the heart of everything we do and we work hard to ensure that services are accessible to all and great value for money.

Over the last 12 months the Sport and Active Recreation team have been in discussions with Customer Services Experience team to look at introducing an on line bookings system where the customer can book all their holiday activities on line at their own convenience without the need for staff involvement.

Built into the booking system is the option to purchase a wild card; which once purchased automatically applies the discounts to activities. Currently this process is carried out over the phone via the contact centre, the booking process is lengthy and time consuming for both the customer and the contact service advisor. An online booking system will ensure a quick, convenient smooth and more satisfactory service for the customer.

The Sport and Active Recreation team have recently met with the Customers Services Experience team to map the process for purchasing a wild card online. One of the considerations is that currently there are three different charges for Wild card £3, £5 or free, one charge for the wild card will streamline the process for the customer and make the booking system more efficient, reducing confusion as to which price they need to pay.

Financial Implications

Financially the vast majority of cards purchased are for those residents that live or go to school in the borough so should similar levels of use be achieved there will be increased income to the council which will achieve the 2018/19 income budget of £1000. Key to this decision is the safeguarding of the 50% card to those that are in receipt of benefits at no cost to those residents meeting the eligibility criteria.

Proposed Charges

The following Wild Card membership charges are proposed :

- £4 from 1st January 2019
- £5 from 1st January 2020

It is planned to provide as much notice as possible to residents of this proposed change.

Risk Management

Risk Identified	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Management Actions Planned
Resistance to price increases by customers	Low	Low	Benchmarking with other local providers has been undertaken and the proposed changes reflect this local variance.

Key Decision

No

Background Papers

No

