

## **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **CABINET**

**28<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2017**

### **LEISURE CENTRES AND SWIMMING POOLS INVESTMENT AND LEISURE FOR LIFE 2018-2020**

#### **REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR FOR PUBLIC HEALTH AND PROTECTION IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, COUNCILLOR A CRIMMINGS**

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

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update for Cabinet on progress of the Council's "Leisure for Life" Leisure Membership scheme, following the priority investment programme of 2016.
- 1.2 To review the current pricing of "Leisure for Life" memberships following the 3 year price freeze.
- 1.3 To consider further options for investment.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note the progress that has been made following the priority investment programme.
- 2.2 To agree to the revised pricing structure for 'Leisure for Life' memberships as set out in Appendix 1 with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2018.
- 2.3 To agree an increase of 2.5% on all other Leisure Fees and Charges with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2018.
- 2.4 To support establishing a priority investment programme for improving the changing facilities at key centres as laid out in Appendix 2, with funding to be identified as part of a forthcoming report on wider investment opportunities.

### **3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 There is clear evidence that the targeted investment into fitness facilities has led to significant and sustainable growth in Leisure for Life Membership.
- 3.2 The Council has held the Leisure for Life committed membership price of £35/month for the past 3 years. This is £3 below the former cost of a MoreCard Membership. Appendix 3 gives comparative details of pricing in neighbouring Council areas, and private sector providers.
- 3.3 Leisure Services carry out regular customer satisfaction surveys across all facilities. The big positives are the investment into the fitness facilities, however we receive regular negative feedback on the poor condition of changing rooms, particularly at Rhondda Sports Centre, Bronwydd Swimming Pool, Abercynon Sports Centre and the Sobells Centre, Aberdare.

### **4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 Following a review of Leisure Services undertaken as part of the service changes of 2014/15, the Council launched its new Leisure for Life Leisure membership scheme. The scheme replaced the MoreCard, and aimed to provide a simplified customer focussed approach to Leisure Centre membership.
- 4.2 The review of Leisure Services highlighted the need for investment into the way the Council delivered the fitness side of the business. The investments into Llantrisant Leisure Centre (2012) and the Sobell Leisure Centre (2013) set new standards of service delivery, and led to significant increases in membership. In 2016 Cabinet approved a £1.7 million investment into the fitness facilities in Rhondda Sports Centre, Abercynon Sports Centre and Bronwydd Swimming Pool.
- 4.3 The targeted investment programme into top of the range fitness facilities allied to a competitively priced membership scheme have led to a 33% increase in members from 7544 in April 2015 to 10,079 in August 2017. This has also led to an increase in income; in August 2017, membership income was £216k for the month in comparison with £165k for the month of April in 2015.
- 4.4 Since the launch of Leisure for Life in April 2015, Cabinet has decided to hold the price of all committed memberships, these now account for 70% of all memberships. The average length of stay has now increased from 5 months in 2015 to 8 months in 2017. Whilst this has undoubtedly contributed to the take up of memberships, it is now felt that this is an opportune time to review the pricing structure. Appendix 3 presents details of the price of membership schemes from neighbouring Councils, and the services included in those schemes.
- 4.5 As can be seen the Leisure for Life membership in Rhondda Cynon Taf offers a wider range of activities than any other comparator and allied to the generous discount levels offered by RCT makes the Leisure for Life amongst the best value membership schemes available in South Wales. In order to contribute to

the financial targets of the Council's Medium Term financial strategy 2017-20, it is recommended that Cabinet consider raising the cost of Leisure for Life membership from January 2018. Appendix 1 presents the proposed fee structure for 2018 onwards, based on a £2 increase on existing fees per monthly membership. If agreed, it is also recommended that the price is again frozen until January 2020. If agreed, this freeze on price increases for two years will mean that full committed membership fees at 2020 will still be £1 below the level they were in 2015.

- 4.6 For all other Leisure Fees and Charges it is proposed to increase these by 2.5% with effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2018.
- 4.7 Whilst the priority investment into fitness facilities has clearly led to a marked rise in memberships, it has also highlighted the deteriorating condition of other parts of the Leisure offer. If the Council is to retain and build on the success of the past 3 years, further investment into the facilities is essential. The most notable issue is the poor condition of the changing facilities in some of the centres. Whilst changing rooms in themselves do not bring in customers or increase income, they do contribute to how a customer views the quality of their Leisure experience and will ultimately assist us in customer retention.
- 4.7 A number of our changing facilities are essentially the same as when the centres were built, whilst they have received cosmetic updates, a number of them are now in need of significant improvement works. Appendix 2 gives details of the works required to bring the changing rooms in Rhondda Sports Centre, Bronwydd Swimming Pool, Abercynon Sports Centre and the Sobell Leisure Centre up to an acceptable standard. If approved, this work would increase the life span of the changing facilities in these centres for a further 10 to 15 years.

## **5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 In developing this proposal, an Equality Impact Assessment screening has been undertaken to ensure that;
  - I. The council meets the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duties;  
and
  - II. Due regard has been taken on the likely impact of the decision in terms of equality and discrimination.

## **6. CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 There are no consultation implications arising from these proposals.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

- 7.1 Based on current membership levels, and after adjustment for VAT, the additional income from the price rise to 'Leisure for Life' memberships will be approximately £180k for 2018/19.
- 7.2 The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) already assumes an increase of approximately £50k as part of the standard inflation assumptions, therefore the contribution to the Council's budget gap will be in the region of £130k. Any additional income in respect of all other Leisure Fees and Charges will be reflected in future MTFP updates.
- 7.3 The initial estimated cost of upgrading the changing rooms as per Appendix 2 is approximately £750k. Funding requirements will be confirmed should Cabinet agree to support this investment and funding options will be considered as part of a forthcoming report on wider investment opportunities.

## **8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

- 8.1 There are no legal implications associated with these proposals.

## **9 LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/ SIP / FUTURE GENERATIONS – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.**

- 9.1 The improved facilities will enhance customer retention positively impacting residents' health and wellbeing and reducing levels of obesity throughout the County Borough creating a healthier Rhondda Cynon Taf (SIP, WFG Act, Cwm Taf Plan, and Corporate Plan).
- 9.2 The proposed price increase, frozen until 2020, will continue to provide reduced pricing for specific groups. The reduction of prices for residents that require financial assistance supports the ongoing Prosperity priority of the Council (SIP).
- 9.3 The proposals present an opportunity for Council run leisure and sport centres becoming a focal point for residents to live independent and fulfilled lives using sport and recreation as the tool for engagement. (WFG Act, SIP, Corporate Plan).

## **10. CONCLUSIONS**

- 10.1 The priority investment programme of 2016 allied to the competitively priced Leisure for Life Membership Scheme has had a positive effect on the improved performance of the councils Leisure Centres and swimming pools.

- 10.2 Following the price freeze of the last 3 years the time is right for the Council to revise the cost of its Leisure for Life scheme whilst maintaining the generous discounts for specific groups.
- 10.3 Holding the prices for a good length of time has proved to be an excellent marketing tool and has been a persuasive factor in convincing customers to sign up for a committed membership.
- 10.4 Following the success of the priority investment programme and the subsequent growth of membership numbers, the service now needs to concentrate on customer retention. A targeted investment into the changing rooms will send a clear message to customers that the Council is committed to providing the best service possible despite continuing pressure on local government finance.

## APPENDIX 1

Universal £2 increase on all monthly memberships and £20 on all Annuals

Category	Current Gross Price	New Gross Price
Full Annual	£350.00	£370.00
Discounted Annual	£210.00	£230.00
Military Annual	£0.00	£0.00
Corporate Annual	£262.50	£282.50
Corporate	£26.50	£28.50
Full Committed DD	£35.00	£37.00
Discounted Committed DD	£21.00	£23.00
Full Uncommitted DD	£39.40	£41.40
Discounted Uncommitted DD	£23.65	£25.65
Full Cash Monthly	£46.65	£48.65
Discounted Cash Monthly	£28.00	£30.00

Changing Room Refurbishment Scope Of Works

Rhondda Sports Centre – Estimated Costs £350K

- Renew all lockers female wet
- Replace and maintain male lockers as required.
- Renew showers
- Re-tile (board) showers male and female
- New Ceilings and lighting male and female
- Renew all cubicles and toilet panelling male and female
- Replace all wash room toilets, sinks etc
- Repaint mixed changing area
- New flooring male and female changing areas
- Replace all doors, door frames
- Replace all bench seating
- Replace wall tiles with new tiles and redecoration.

Abercynon Sports Centre - Estimate Cost £200K

- Renew all lockers
- Renew showers
- Re-tile (board) showers male
- New Ceilings and lighting male and female
- Renew all cubicles and toilet panelling male and female
- Replace all wash room toilets, sinks etc
- Replace all doors, door frames
- Replace all bench seating
- Replace wall tiles with new tiles and redecoration.
- Re-configure 1<sup>st</sup> aid room into family changing area.

Bronwydd Swimming Pool – Estimated Cost £125K

- Replace all lockers
- Upgrade ventilation
- Replace cubicles
- Replace Flooring
- Redecorate
- Redecorate/retile pool area outside offices
- Re-configure showers

Sobell Leisure Centre – Estimated Cost £75K

- Redecorate male and female
- Consider re-configuration to form more family cubicles
- Change all toilets fixtures and fittings
- Renew shower fixtures and fittings

**APPENDIX 3**

**Comparative Leisure Membership Scheme Prices**

Organisation	Leisure For Life	Halo (Bridgend)	Caerphilly	Merthyr	GLC Cardiff	Village Hotel	Vale
Activity							
Fitness Suite	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Fitness Classes (Unlimited)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Sauna Steam Jacuzzi	*	*	*	*			
Swimming Pools	*	*	*	*	*		*
Racquet Sports	*	*	*		*		*
Dry Sporting Courses/ Classes	*						
Swimming Lessons (1 per week)	*						
Number of Sites	9	7	10	2	9	1	1
Monthly Full Paying Cost	£35 per mth	£36 per mth	£31.35 per mth	£32.50 per month	£46 per mth	£57 per mth	£61 per mth
Annual Full Paying Cost	£350 per year	£360 per year	no annual	no annual	£506 per year	£632 per year	no annual