

Agenda item:

Title of meeting: Culture, Leisure and Sport Decision Meeting

Date of meeting: 8 December 2017

Subject: Parks and Seafront Fees and Charges

Report by: Director of Culture and City Development

Wards affected: All

Key decision: No

Full Council decision: No

1. Purpose of report

1.1 To seek approval for changes to the fees and charges levied for the use of Parks, Recreation and Seafront facilities for 2018-19.

2. Recommendations

2.1 **That the fees and charges be approved in accordance with the attached schedules (Appendix 1 - Schedule A).**

2.2 **That the Cabinet Member agrees for an introduction of mid-season charges for the weekly beach huts to maximise income and adapt to customer demand.**

2.2.3 **That the Cabinet Member agrees for the introduction of amenities charges for tables and chairs on the promenade in accordance with the provisions of the Highways Act sections 115A-115G to be incorporated into the existing Amenities Policy or otherwise implemented in accordance with a similar scheme.**

3. Background

3.1 In line with Audit Commission recommendations and Financial Rules the fees and charges have been reviewed and market rates applied where appropriate. See Appendix 1 Charges for 2018 /19.

3.2 Hire of Seafront Equipment

3.2.1 Equipment is available for those smaller organisers who may need to hire event equipment to support their event. This may range from hire of smaller items

such as traffic cones and crowd barriers to larger items such as generators and marquees.

3.2.2 PCC offer this service to support the smaller and medium sized event organisers who may not be in a position to purchase the items for one off events or have suitable storage.

3.2.3 Therefore, the intention in 2017/18 is to apply only the rate of inflation to current charges (at 3% Consumer Price Index CPI) as an average rate, with some items slightly lower than CPI and others slightly higher and to round off amounts for ease of charging.

3.3 Site Fees

3.3.1 We are proposing a revision to the site fees charges with specific charges for all events expecting less than 10,000 people and an ability to enable more direct negotiation with organisers of larger scale events where the nature of the event and the land it is proposing to use would determine the land hire fee. Currently there are only two seafront and one other event where the events are structured to support more than 10,000 people and each of these have an individually tailored contract.

3.3.2 This approach for larger scale events allows for more consideration for the individual event infrastructure where the impact on the area is much greater and also is linked to the delivery of suitable plans and detailed papers to the Portsmouth Event Safety Advisory Group for consideration.

3.4 Poster Sites

3.4.1 Research tells us that one of the best ways organisations can connect with the public is to use a medium such as poster boards, to raise their profile and to manage their campaign messaging.

PCC manage advertising sites located at strategic points across the city, to capture over 200,000 Portsmouth residents, 6,500 city businesses, and almost 23,000 students and to connect with over 9.4 million annual visitors.

3.4.2 There are 34 A1 poster board sites and 7 "entrance to city" boards all of which have recently been replaced and repaired to ensure they are of a high quality and clearly visible .

3.4.3 This is an affordable medium for all types of business to advertise their message and to raise their profile. There was an increase in charges in 2017/18 of an average of 1.4% and following a recent benchmarking exercise our current pricing policy appears to be in line with most local authorities offering a similar service. Therefore, the intention in 2018/19 is to apply the 3% CPI as an average rate overall, with the exception being the differential between posters of 5plus and 10plus which has been increased by a further 8%. Please refer to Appendix 1 Schedule A for details of these charges.

3.4.4 As the Parks and Open Spaces services is now part of Culture and City Development, the service will be working closer together to proactively encourage the use of poster sites by actively discouraging flyposting and stickering across our parks and open spaces.

3.5 Beach Huts

3.5.1 The recommendation in 2018 is to maintain the annual hire charging schedule and to increase annual hire by CPI only. Non-resident charging will remain at the current differential of 81% more than resident's fees and will also increase by the same CPI of 3%.

3.5.2 Following an internal and external survey of all 3 beach hut sites in 2016, a two year maintenance programme has been developed to ensure all beach huts are to a "good" standard inside and out. The first year has been completed and extensive repairs include:

Eastney : 7 porch repairs, 7 hinge and hasps replaced alongside posts

St Georges : 18 front facias replaced, 5 thresholds replaced and gable boards replaced

Lumps Fort : 10 x new doors, frames and thresholds and over 50 front slats have been replaced and painted by technician

All beach huts on all sites have been painted and the carpentry, security, rendering and painting work will continue early in the New Year ready for the start of the season in 2018.

3.5.3 A complete refurbishment of the two weekly beach huts was completed as part of the winter maintenance programme early in 2017. The exterior and interior was fully refurbished, painted; flooring laid and fully equipped and the beach huts were remarketed with a focus on digital marketing. This has led to a successful booking season with additional income created of £1,100.00 above what would have been realised if the beach huts remained as annual hire. It has also meant an increase in visitor numbers to the seafront which also supports the visitor economy.

3.5.4 However, the slower months for weekly hire were April/ May/ an early June and September and in order to maximise income, a mid-season charge will be introduced before and after the high season to make them more affordable. This trial costing model has been benchmarked and is in line with other local authorities' fees and charges. This introduction of a mid-season charging at the shoulders of the high season should encourage bookings in these months as these are now available to hire at the lower rate. The higher season charges will remain and a simple inflationary charge will be applied to these weeks

3.5.5 In order to encourage bookings and to maximise income we have introduced, as a trial this year, the ability for residents to book the weekly beach huts in the PCC housing stock areas extended to P010. The exception to this will be in the high season, which will remain ring-fenced for residents in P01 to P06. This will be trialled for the financial year 2018 to 2019.

3.5.6 The low season charge introduced last year was a success with 14 bookings in the winter months. In 2018/19, the low season charging which will be increased by 20% to be in line with other authorities.

3.5.7 Leisure card holder discount will remain throughout the season for all new charges, set at 40% discount, to continue to encourage use from lower income families and the weekly huts will be marketed to the Leisure Card database. Please refer to Appendix 1 Schedule A for details of all annual and weekly beach hut charges.

3.6 Seafront Amenities Charges

3.6.1 Over the last 12 months PCC has received a number of requests from food operators along the seafront promenade to allow for tables and chairs to be put out onto the promenade. This area of provision falls outside of the current Highways Amenities proposals and therefore we currently have no mechanism for monitoring.

3.6.2 The proposed charges are very similar to those implemented by the Highways Amenities schedule although we have slightly rounded the figures for ease of management. This is proposed as an annual fee on an agreed area of land for the individual concession which would be determined by the specific location and width of the promenade at that point. The Council will reserve the right not to grant permission and would not anticipate providing any refunds for poor weather or other occasions where the table and chairs could not be put out.

3.7 Parks Site Fees and Fitness Operator Fees

3.7.1 It is recommended to align the minimum site hire deposit fee with that charged on the seafront at £300. The recommendation is to increase all other fees and charges by the Consumer Price Index inflation rate (figures rounded).

3.8 Sports Pitches

3.8.1 Football, cricket and rugby pitch hire charges are competitive with neighbouring authority charges and the recommendation is to increase fees and charges by the Consumer Price Index inflation rate (figures rounded to the nearest £0.05).

3.9 Great Salterns Golf Course

3.9.1 Great Salterns Golf Course continues to produce a net income for the council. Golfers pay for their round either by purchasing a season ticket, or by purchasing a 'pay-and-play' green fee.

3.9.2 It is the view of the course professional that charges are broadly at the 'correct rate' that the market will bear, taking into account the offer at Great Salterns Golf Course within the local market. Course participation and income generated is broadly at the maximum sustainable level for the course.

3.9.3 It is recommended that, rather than applying inflationary increases, any increases are carefully targeted where opportunities are identified. Flexi-season ticket fees have been unchanged since April 2015 and it is recommended that adult and senior citizen charges are increased by £20. It is not proposed to increase the junior off peak flexi-ticket fee. The start fees that are payable with a flexi-ticket per round played are not proposed to change.

Standard (peak-time) green fees	2017/18	2018/19
Adult 7-day flexi ticket	£329	£349
Adult 5-day flexi ticket	£259	£279
Senior citizen flexi-ticket	£199	£219

3.9.4 There is a nationwide trend of a decline in golf play during the months where inclement weather is more common and players are less likely to commit the same time or expense to playing if there is a doubt over conditions. It is proposed to introduce a new midweek offer that will compete with other offers available locally with a midweek 11-hole green fee that would be available any time of the day during the week, October to March. The 11 holes are those playable on the northern side of the course. If players then decide to continue playing the remaining 7 holes (on the southern side of Burrfields Road), a further fee is payable to make the fee the same as the standard weekday green fee for 18 holes.

3.9.5 If this new offer is approved, it will be introduced in January 2018.

4. Reasons for recommendations

4.1 Charges have been reviewed and adjusted, where appropriate, to reflect the rates currently being charged in the market, maximising income, but also ensuring value for money and retaining discounted rates where possible to charitable organisations and Leisure card holders.

4.2 Site fees have been reviewed to ensure that a commercially appropriate fee for the hire of PCC land is charged.

4.3 We believe it is acceptable for commercially organised events to meet the costs of their Performing Rights Society charges directly at no detriment to their events.

5. Equality impact assessment (EIA)

5.1 An equality impact assessment is not required as the recommendations to not have a negative impact on any of the protected characteristics as described in the Equality Act 2010. This is an annual review of the fees and charges and as such there is not a change of policy.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1 Under the City Council's Constitution, delegations for determining the level of any charge including a new charge (other than in accordance with RPI or where the strategic director of corporate resources and services believes there are corporate policy implications in the proposal) shall be to the Executive and the appropriate regulatory committee. The Constitution's delegation provisions must therefore be adhered to when setting the new charges for the mid-week beach huts and the tables/chairs on the promenade. In that regard, it is confirmed that the Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport has power to approve the proposed charges set out in the report, including those new charges.
- 6.2 In relation to the proposed new charges for tables and chairs on the Seafront Promenade, it is noted that the promenade is unadopted highway which is maintained by the Council's PFI contractor. The status of land as highway is not affected by it being adopted or unadopted. Adopted highway is simply highway maintainable by the local highway authority.
- 6.3 The Highways Act 1980 provides statutory authority for the placing of objects and structures on the highway for the purposes of enhancing the amenity of the highway and its immediate surroundings or providing a service for the benefit of the public (section 115B). The promenade is effectively a footway for the purposes of the Act. The Council may also authorise other parties to place such structures on the highway. This will include tables and chairs. Where the exercise of the power to place such structures is either (a) for a purpose which will result in the production of income; (b) for the purpose of providing a centre for advice or information; or (c) for the purpose of advertising, the Council may not grant the permission until it has obtained the consent of all frontagers with an interest. The placing of tables and chairs for use by customers of cafes and refreshment facilities will fall within category (a) and so the consent of frontagers will have to be obtained. Frontagers only includes those where the table and chairs would be placed wholly or partly between their premises and the centre of the highway.
- 6.4 The administration of this scheme should be capable of being incorporated into the existing Amenities Policy or a similar scheme be developed to implement it.

7. Director of Finance comments

- 7.1 The fees and charges have been reviewed to improve clarity for customers and have taken into account the need to maximise income whilst ensuring that services remain competitive.

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Signed by:
Stephen Baily
Director of Culture and City Development

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Schedule A - Seafront, sports pitch and site hire charges 2018/19

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by the Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport on 8th December 2017

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Signed by:
Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport