

- Agree in principle to the approach being undertaken to scope out a possible regional business start programme
- Note the proposals for a more localised approach to social economy support and business growth support, linking to the range of infrastructure investments in the city and taking account of key growth sectors in Belfast."

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

### **Service Convergence - Pricing for Outdoor Leisure**

(Mr. A. Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered the following report:

#### **"1 Background**

- 1.1 On 29 January 2015, a report had been submitted to the Transition Committee setting out proposals as to how the Council may wish to manage the converging of prices for comparable services currently provided by Lisburn City Council (LCC), Castlereagh Borough Council (CBC) and North Down (ND) in those areas transferring to Belfast.
- 1.2 To inform this report, a detailed analysis and comparison was undertaken of the scope of services, and associated scale of charges (prices) applied across the councils. The findings of this work indicated that the Belfast level of charge is generally lower than that of the other Councils.

The analysis identified that for street trading licences the Belfast service charge is significantly higher than that applied by LCC/CBC in the transferring area. Significant had been defined as being a sudden and adverse increase in price for recurring services, as a direct result of the boundary extension, when converging the transferring area price to the Belfast price.

#### **2 Key Issues**

2.1 Following discussion, the Transition Committee agreed:

- (i) a general principle that Belfast prices would be applied to services delivered in the transferring areas which will mean that in the majority of cases transferring users and residents will experience a reduction in service prices.

- (ii) in relation to Street Trading Licenses, whereby a significant price difference would be experienced, that a phased approach (i.e. incremental levelling of prices over a 4 year period) would be applied.
- (iii) further consideration be given to the differential in prices for outdoor leisure provision, specifically 3G Pitch usage, in assets transferring from LCC and that a separate report be brought back to Committee for consideration.

2.2 The purpose of this report is to outline the position in regards to any potential differential between the charges applied by BCC for outdoor leisure: 3G Synthetic Pitch provision as compared to LCC as well as some of the key considerations which Members may need to take into consideration.

#### 3G Synthetic Pitch

2.3 Members will note that there is only 1 asset transferring from LCC which is affected (i.e. Brooke Activity Centre). The table below sets out the current differences in charges between BCC and LCC. The greater increase in prices relates to hiring pitch (both full and half pitch) at full cost. There is insignificant increase for concession usage; however, Lisburns peak/off-peak times differ from BCC's.

Description	BCC	LCC
3 G Synthetic Pitch Peak, full pitch	£82.00	£60.00
3 G Synthetic Pitch Peak, full pitch - concession	£41.00	£40.00
3 G Synthetic Pitch Peak, half pitch	£41.00	£30.00
3 G Synthetic Pitch Peak, half pitch - concession	£20.50	£20.00

In liaison with colleagues from LCC, a summary of the usage of this facility is set out below:

- Primarily School bookings during the day at the facility (concession rate)- usage of half pitch;
- There are 18 weekly bookings at other times (after 5 and at weekends) – all bookings are for half the pitch in a casual, cash basis; and
- 10 local teams and 8 community groups book the facility

If a decision is taken to retain the current LCC charging structure for any specified period post transfer of asset to BCC,

it is estimated that there would be a potential loss in income of £4-5K (approx) per annum.

**2.4 Options for Consideration**

1. Move to the BCC rate. BCC will work with the existing groups to consider block booking options, where not currently applied. A block booking by a recognised team or community group secures usage and is exempt from VAT, reducing the charge applied to:
  - £68.30 for full price full pitch
  - £34.15 for concession price full pitch
  - £34.15 for full price half pitch
  - £17.10 for concession price half pitch
2. Consider the proposed BCC charges for Brooke as 'significant' and phase in the increase in line with the agreed approach to other transferring council charges
3. Hold existing LCC charges for 12 months. This would not be in line with the agreed charges for other activities or services.

2.5 Regardless of which option is agreed, P&L, via the emerging pitches strategy, are considering options for community and discounted charges. Brooke 3g pitch will be included in this exercise.

**2.6 Service Continuity & Bookings**

Members should note that in the interest of ensuring business continuity, Belfast have agreed to honour any bookings taken by LCC/ CBC that transcend 01 April 2015 and that the price charged at point of booking (on basis of a payment or part payment being made) will be also honoured. This mainly relates to outdoor leisure arrangements.

**3 Resource Implications**

If a decision is taken to retain current LCC prices for a year period, there may be a potential loss of income of £4-5K annually.

**4 Equality and Good Relations Implications**

All recommendations outlined will be taken forward within the context of the Council's equality and good relations frameworks. Communications in relation to pricing will be as

per all existing Council processes and channels (e.g. City Matters, website).

**5 Recommendation**

- (i) To agree the preferred option (as set out in section 2.4 above) to be applied for 3G Synthetic Pitch bookings linked to the asset transferring from LCC.”

The Director of Parks and Leisure outlined the principal aspects of the report and answered a range of Members' questions in respect of the options which had been identified.

**Proposal**

Accordingly, it was

Moved by Councillor Magennis,  
Seconded by Councillor Clarke,

That the Committee agrees to adopt Option 3, as set out within section 2.4 of the report, specifically to retain the Lisburn City Council rate for the hire of 3G pitches at the Brooke Activity Centre for a period of 12 months, that is, from 1st April, 2015 till 31st March, 2016.

**Amendment**

Moved by Councillor Hussey,  
Seconded by Councillor McKee,

That the Committee agrees to adopt Option 1, as set out within section 2.4 of the report, specifically to apply the Belfast rate for the hire of 3G pitches at the Brooke Activity Centre from 1st April, 2015.

On a vote by show of hands, four Members voted for the amendment and eight against and it was declared lost.

The proposal standing in the name of Councillor Magennis and seconded by Councillor Clarke was thereupon put to the meeting when eight Members voted in favour and none against and it was declared carried.

Chairman