



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Parks and Leisure Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Boost Card: Means Tested Benefits
<b>Date:</b>	14 October 2010
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Caroline Wilson, Policy and Business Development Manager

### Relevant Background Information

Since the implementation of the Boost leisure discount scheme in April 2006, Belfast residents in receipt of Means Tested Benefit (MTB) and their dependant children have availed of a flat rate discounted charge for accessing leisure services. Currently over 26,000 customers are taking advantage of the £1.25 charge in the MTB scheme.

The council agreed in 3 March 2008 to extend the scheme beyond the Belfast boundary. Approval to extend the scheme was provided by DOE on 21 March 2008 and DCAL on 6 January 2009.

### Key Issues

In addition to the benefits already created by the scheme, the council has been requested to consider providing wider access to the MTB discount scheme to include participants in the Training For Success programme and asylum seekers as outlined in Appendix 1.

A report was brought to the Parks and Leisure Committee in August 2010 outlining the case for providing wider access to the MTB discount scheme to include participants in the Training For Success programme and asylum seekers. At this meeting Members asked for confirmation of whether the proposed groups were means tested.

It has been confirmed that participants on the Training For Success programme are not means tested. The National Asylum Support (NAS) cash support payment is means tested.

### Equality Issues

There are no equality implications in the extension of the scheme. However, as a matter of best practice an equality screening was carried out on the scheme and indicated no adverse impact on any of the Section 75 groups and therefore this can be screened out.

### **Resource Implications**

#### Financial

There will be an increase in revenue but unquantifiable at present. However, MTB memberships are reported in performance reports.

#### Human Resources

The amount of officer time required to validate additional applications could be managed within existing structures.

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that:

1. MTB criteria are extended so that the scheme can now be accessed by Asylum Seekers in receipt of payments from the Home Office National Asylum Support scheme.
2. MTB criteria does not include participants on the Training for Success programme, on the basis that it is not a means tested benefit.

### **Decision Tracking**

Officer Responsible – Leisure Operations Manager.  
Actions to be completed by end of November 2010.

### **Key to Abbreviations**

MTB: Means Tested Benefit  
DCAL: Department of Culture Arts and Leisure  
DOE: Department of the Environment  
NAS: National Asylum Support

### **Documents Attached**

Appendix 1: Description of Training For Success programme and the support received by asylum seekers