

Extract from minutes of -

PARKS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

14th October, 2010

“Boost Card: Means-Tested Benefits”

(Ms. C. Wilson, Policy and Business Development Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

‘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.

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.

Key to Abbreviations

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

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor McCann,
Seconded by Councillor C. Maskey,

That the Committee agrees that the Boost Leisure Discount Scheme be extended to include participants on the Training for Success Programme and Asylum Seekers, subject to an Equality Impact Assessment.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Robinson,
Seconded by Councillor Stoker,

That the matter be considered within the review of the Boost Leisure Discount Scheme.

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

The original proposal standing in the name of Councillor McCann and seconded by Councillor C. Maskey was thereupon put to the meeting when nine Members voted for and seven against and it was accordingly declared carried.”