



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	2011/12 Scale of Charges for Parks and Leisure Services
Date:	13 th January 2011
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Jacqui Wilson, Business Manager, Ext 3403

Relevant Background Information	
	<p>Fees and Charges for the use of facilities within Parks and Leisure Services are reviewed annually, in line with the estimates process and revised rates implemented with effect from 1st April.</p> <p>This year a number of operational reviews are taking place and the proposed Scale of Charges, implemented from 1st April 2011, may be subject to amendment at some stage during the course of the year. In addition, approval has been given by committee for a review of the Boost Discount Scheme within Leisure Services. This review has been initiated but will not be completed in time to ensure updated charges are in place for April. Consequently, any implications from this review may form the basis of a revised Scale of Charges report for Leisure Services later in the year.</p> <p>The reviewed scale of charges takes into account the increase in VAT from 17.5% to 20% which changed on 4th January 2011.</p>

Key Issues	
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Belfast Castle and Malone House

These venues have seen income adversely affected by the economic downturn. The proposed increase in the Scale of Charges for 2011/12 is an average of 2.5% including the VAT increase, which is in line with corporate guidance issued as part of the Revenue Estimate setting process. A promotional period of 3 months introducing reduced prices is being proposed in April. This trial may include reducing some Block room bookings by up to 20% while other room bookings may be increased by the same amount. If the trial is successful in stimulating usage any significant amendment in charges will be reported to committee for approval.

Outdoor Leisure and Open Spaces

The average increase for most activities is 5%, which is in line with corporate guidance plus the 2.5% in VAT, effective from 4th January 2011. An initial assessment has highlighted that the current scale of charges for some outdoor leisure activities does not adequately reflect the costs of providing a number of the services. Increases of 23 -60% would be required in some areas notably cricket and grass pitch charges. An increase of 10% is being proposed in these areas for 2011-12 and further work will be undertaken to ensure the charges are accurately reflecting the costs associated with each individual activity.

Cemeteries

The average increase for cemetery charges is 5%, again in line with corporate guidance and the need to account for the VAT increase. A separate report on cemetery and crematorium charges has been tabled at this committee for members' views. The proposed charges for 2011/12 will be in line with the recommendations approved by members.

Belfast Zoo

An average increase of 5% is proposed for 2011/12. A review of the business model for the Zoo is currently underway and will be reported to committee at a later date. Any recommendations coming out of that review which affect pricing will be brought through committee for approval.

Indoor Leisure

Pending the review of the Boost Discount Scheme, an average increase of 5% is proposed for 2011/12. Exceptions to this increase have been proposed for "legacy members." Legacy members are those that still retain a membership that existed prior to Boost. These memberships have been increasing by more than inflation each year, to encourage members to convert to Boost. If approved, each legacy member will be contacted and advised of the more appropriate boost membership relevant to their needs. Given the annual increase in charge, the equivalent Boost membership should provide better value for the member.

Equality and Good Relations Implications

There are no equality implications in agreeing the 2011/12 Scale of Charges. The outcome of any current or proposed reviews, which may impact on the Scale of Charges, will however be subject to equality screening

	Resource Implications
	<p><u>Financial</u> The impact of the recommendations will be to increase potential income by an inflationary level, accounting for the increase in VAT. In addition, reviews will be required to consider what impact the economic downturn has on the ability to generate revenue.</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u> There are no additional human resource requirements in relation to implementation of the proposed Scale of Charges.</p>

	Recommendations
	It is recommended that Committee adopts the Scale of Charges for 2011/12, as detailed in the attached appendices, for implementation in April 2011.

	Decision tracking
	Officer Responsible: Business Manager Actions to be completed for 1 st April 2011.

	Guide to abbreviations
	None

	Documents attached
	<p>Appendix 1: 2011/12 Scale of Charges Malone House and Belfast Castle</p> <p>Appendix 2: 2011/12 Scale of Charges Outdoor Leisure and Open Spaces</p> <p>Appendix 3: 2011/12 Scale of Charges Cemeteries and Crematorium</p> <p>Appendix 4: 2011/12 Scale of Charges Belfast Zoo</p> <p>Appendix 5: 2011/12 Scale of Charges Indoor Leisure</p>