



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Scale of Charges at the Zoo
Date:	14 June 2012
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Jacqui Wilson, Business Manager

1	Relevant Background Information
	<p>In February Committee adopted the scale of charges in relation to the zoo and agreed the concessionary rate to be set at 50% of the full rate. It was agreed that the concessionary rate will be applied across all activities in relation to over 60s, those on means tested benefits, students and children.</p>

2	Key Issues
	<p>The review of fees and charges ensured that there was a simpler more consistent approach across the department and that there was agreement on the groups receiving a concession. Detailed benchmarking was undertaken regarding the charges and advice sought regarding the approach in relation to disabled people and other groups. This information was reflected in the charges put forward for Committee's approval with concession charges for disabled children and special needs groups and free admission for carers</p> <p>The above approach is being monitored and reviewed and will link to the wider issues in the Zoo regarding income generation and operational efficiency. To date a number of issues have been raised in relation to charging disabled groups of children or children with special needs as previously no charge would have been applied in these circumstances.</p> <p>To address these issues it is proposed that the Director can use his delegated authority to review on a case by case basis whether a charge to certain groups should be waived. The department will also continue to monitor this position and review it in line with the upcoming estimates process.</p>

3	Resource Implications
3.1	<p><u>Financial</u> In the last financial year the Zoo experienced a deficit in its income target of approximately £150k. Currently the impact of the economic downturn is affecting the service and it is hoped that reviewing how we charge our customers will generate additional income either through increased visits, new services or the retention of existing users.</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u> There are no HR implications.</p> <p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u> None.</p>

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
	The scale of charges is subject to Equality screening.

5	Recommendations
	Members are asked to agree to the Director of Parks and Leisure being granted delegated authority to assess the level of charge to be applied to disabled or special needs children's groups on a case by case basis.

6	Decision Tracking
	Business Manager to monitor the issues arising from the scale of charges and review the charges in line with the estimates process.

7	Key to Abbreviations
	None.

8	Documents Attached
	None.