

ACTIVE BELFAST LIMITED BOARD

Monday, 7th June, 2021

MEETING OF ACTIVE BELFAST LIMITED BOARD

(Held remotely via Microsoft Teams)

Attendees

- Directors:** Mr. J. McGuigan (Chairperson)
Councillor Carson
Councillor Corr
Councillor McLaughlin
Mr. K. Ellison and
Mr. C. Kirkwood.
- Officers:** Mrs. K. Gilliland, Neighbourhood Services Manager;
Mr. N. Munnis, Partnership Manager; and
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer.
- GLL:** Mr. G. Kirk, Regional Director; and
Mr. A. Walker, Partnership Manager.

Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor Newton, Mr. P. Boyle and Mrs. K. McCullough.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 11th January were approved, with no matters arising.

Director Attendance Statement

The Partnership noted that an update on Director attendance would be submitted to its next meeting.

Future Board Meeting Agenda Items

No agenda items were identified by Directors for future meetings.

(Mr. Kirk and Mr. Walker were admitted to the meeting at this point.)

Covid-19 Restrictions – Service Update

Mr. Walker submitted for the Board's consideration a report which provided details of the various restrictions which GLL had put in place since the start of the Covid-19

pandemic, the subsequent easings, the potential long-term impact upon operations and service delivery and the short to medium term impact upon sustainability.

After discussion, the Board noted the information which had been provided.

Performance and Contract Compliance

The Board was reminded that, at its meeting on 9th November, it had approved a new set of performance reports for 2020/21, including a revised Key Performance Indicator scorecard.

Accordingly, Mr. Walker submitted for the Board's consideration performance and contract compliance data, together with a supporting narrative, for the overall service and on a centre-by-centre basis for Quarter 4 of 2020/21, in line with the new reporting format.

After discussion, the Board acknowledged receipt of the Performance and Contract Compliance report for that quarter and noted the information which had been provided.

Pricing Proposal for New Products

The Board considered the following report which had been prepared by GLL:

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To seek board approval for new product pricing for (a) SWiMBiES' (pre-school swimming lessons) and (b) 7-a-side synthetic pitch hire.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 The Board is requested to approve the pricing proposal for (a) and (b), as set out below and in the attached appendix.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 An annual pricing review proposal is normally presented to the board for approval in October with implementation intended to apply from the following April. Due to Covid-19 restrictions the pricing review was delayed until December 2020 at which point the proposed increases were rejected resulting in prices being frozen for the 2021/22 financial year. This decision was subsequently noted and by BCC SP and R Committee and by the Council.

3.2 When new products are launched 'in year' and after approval of the annual pricing schedule, pricing for the new products requires board approval.

3.3 Two new products will be launched in 2021/22, namely:

a) **SWiMBiES (pre school swimming lessons)**

‘SWiMBiES’ is a new addition to the learn to swim programme. The programme caters for adult accompanied pre-school age lessons intended to lead into the established Swim School programme. The programme is aimed at an entirely new age group, includes adult participation, enhanced teacher training and requires a substantially lower teacher/pupil ratio.

It is intended that the SWiMBiES programme will be launched as soon as possible after pricing approval.

b) **7-a-side synthetic pitch hire.**

The new Avoniel complex is due to open in the autumn of 2021. Facilities include a 7-a-side floodlit synthetic pitch. It will be the first pitch of this size in the BCC leisure estate.

- 3.4 The proposed pricing and rationale for the above products is set out in the appendix below.

Appendix

“New Product Pricing Proposal

1 Introduction

The following paper provides details of the two new products which will be added to GLL’s list of programmes and products from 2021. GLL is requesting that the Council agree to the addition of these products and the associated prices as presented.

2 SWiMBiES

2.1 Introduction

GLL does not currently offer ‘Parent Baby/Toddler’ classes in Belfast. Introduced in September 2019, is SWiMBiES GLL’s new baby and toddler swimming lesson programme. It has been designed to ensure that we offer a quality product that can compete against the private baby swimming industry, but provide lessons at an affordable price for the communities that we work in. SWiMBiES will feature exclusive branding that is different to our core learn to swim offer with a brand that people can talk about and share their experiences of. The baby and toddler swimming lesson market is booming, and SWiMBiES will allow centres to capture this demand, build a bigger customer base and allow pupils to progress through the whole learn to swim journey. The SWiMBiES programme

takes babies from three months old to age four, preparing them for the next stage of their swimming journey and a lifetime of fun in the water.

2.2 Our Approach

The way we should be teaching babies and toddler has changed drastically over the last five to ten years, with some types of practices being inappropriate to deliver. SWiMBiES is a product that is at the forefront of the industry. Lessons focus on what a baby and toddler, as well as the parent are comfortable to do, linked to the natural development of the child. Lessons focus on developing relationships between parent and child rather than being skill assessment based. All lessons centred on love, bonding and enjoyment.

2.3 Our Aims

The aim of the SWiMBiES programme is as follows:

- Increase the number of pupils enrolled on lessons
- Improve the customer journey and experience while in lessons and in centres
- Improve retention of customers through the programme
- Establish the SWiMBiES product at the forefront of industry development and standards.

2.4 Pathway and Pricing

SWiMBiES fits in before the Foundation phase of the BETTER Learn to Swim pathway (Swim School). SWiMBiES participants then progress into Better Swim School.

2.4.1 Customer Rational for Pricing Changes

- Lower ratios of 6 per class, compared to 10 - 12 per class for normal Swim School, which enable our SWiMBiES Teachers to spend more time with each parent and child offering a better quality of lesson.
- Specific equipment for SWiMBiES lessons to create variety and fun lesson which allow for parents and child to explore, develop and achieve our objectives of being child focused.

2.4.2 Client Rational

- GLL's SWiMBiES pricing structure is based on market research on the UK average cost of a Baby and Toddler 30minute lesson in the private and public market. 2019 market average cost was £14 per lesson. For example, 'Water Babies' in North Down charge £165 for a 10 week course (30 minutes per lesson). £16.50 per lesson.

- Our market research in 2019 found that Private Operators (such as Water Babies, Puddle Ducks etc.) are the preferred provider of Baby Swimming lessons (84%). GLL's aim is to change the culture within the market to bring more parents back into our centres.
- GLL's price points have been built on ensuring that lessons remain affordable for local communities by offering the same quality of lessons as the private sector, but at a lower price point.
- Our proposed price per 30-minute lesson is £6.25 compared to £14.00 average private sector price (above).
- To enable our lessons to compete in a market dominated by the private sector we have invested heavily in our teacher training and development to ensure that they deliver dynamic lessons and continue to develop their skill sets linked to the most up to date child development research and activities.

2.4.3 Pricing and Locations

This programme is accessed by joining as a SWIMBiES member for £25 per month. This direct debit payment entitles the parent, grandparent or guardian and the child with access to one class per week. 48 weeks of lessons would be delivered within the year. From the age of four, the participant would then be able to access the Swim School membership and the price would drop to what is currently £19.50 per month (subject to price increases over the next number of years).

The programme will initially be delivered at Andersonstown, Grove, Lisnasharragh and Olympia. These facilities have been selected due to having separate teaching pools. Therefore, the introduction of SWIMBiES will not disrupt the delivery of other pool programming for clubs and the general public. Classes will be delivered back to back at each centre with each centre delivering the programme one day per week with the intention to expand to two days a week to meet demand.

2.5 Structure

2.5.1 Classes

Classes are broken down into the following four age categories:

Lesson Name	Ratio	Entry Requirements	Type of lesson
Dippers	1:9	New and existing adults and babies aged between 3 months to cruising (approx. 12-18months)	50 week, DD
Splashers	1:9	Adults and toddlers who have completed Dippers. Walking (approx. 12-18 months) through to 2 years	50 week, DD
Paddlers	1:9	Adults and toddlers who have completed Splashers. Aged 2 to 4 years.	50 week, DD
Pre School	1:6	Children who have completed Paddlers. Aged 3 years through to 4. Lessons without the adult in the water.	50 week, DD

2.5.2 Core Areas

1. SAFETY SKILLS	2. HOLDS	3. BALANCE, FLOATATION & ROTATIONS	4. SWIMMING WITH ADULT
5. AQUATIC BREATHING	6. BUOYANCY AIDS	7. JUMPING & SURFACE DIVES	8. TRANSITIONS TO SWIMMING

2.5.3 Milestones

Lessons all evolve around the 8 core areas below. Lessons are not just about singing songs in a circle! Teachers are given training on how to deliver lessons following a set scheme of work which ensures that lessons are structured with variety each week. Customers can clearly see what they are working on and will be able to track progress through Milestone's rather than assessment awards.

DIPPERS 1	DIPPERS 2	SPLASHERS	PADDLERS	PRE SCHOOL
My First Dip	My Next Dip	My first Solo Catamaran	Our Back Ride	I Can Kick with a Float
I can relax in a cradle hold	My First Bubbles	My First Solo Wiggle In	My Solo Mat Journey	I Can Submerge Confidently
My First Finger Hold	My Happy Harbour Hold	I Can Float	My First Solo Jump In	I Can Rotate in the Water
My First Mat Work	My first Open Harbour	I Can Be Safe at the Wall	I Can Paddle on a Noodle	I Can be Safe in the Water
My First Seat Hold	I'm ready for splashing	I'm ready for paddling	I'm ready for Swimming on my own	I'm Can Swim on my own

3 7-a-side Pitch Price

3.1 Introduction

The £8million development of the new facilities at Avenel will focus largely on outdoor leisure provision. The centre will provide one intermediate standard 3G football pitch, three covered 3G 5-a-side pitches, two outdoor 3G 5-a-side pitches and one outdoor 3G 7-a-side pitch. The centre pavilion will provide 240 covered seats, two studios/multi-purpose rooms, two meeting/training rooms, changing facilities for teams, officials and individuals and play service provision.

3.2 Pricing Considerations

The provision of a seven-a-side pitch will be the first of its kind in Belfast operated by GLL and currently no price is in place for such a product.

The current price matrix for synthetic pitches is provided below:

Facility Hire	Description	Price
Synthetic Pitch Full Pitch	Full Price	£66.00
Concession: Synthetic Pitch Full pitch	Concession price (Junior)	£34.00
Synthetic Pitch Part pitch	Defined part pitch bookable unit	£34.00
Concession: Synthetic Pitch Part pitch		£18.00
Synthetic 5-a-side cage - Covered	Covered full price	£50.00
Concession: Synthetic 5-a-side cage - Covered	Covered concession	£25.00
Synthetic 5-a-side cage - Uncovered	Uncovered full price	£40.00
Concession: Synthetic 5-a-side cage - Uncovered	Uncovered concession	£20.00
Synthetic Pitch Commercial Hire	Full size synthetic pitch. Lights included if required.	£124.00

3.3 Client Rational

The dimensions of the 7-a-side pitch will be similar to a half of a full-size football pitch. Currently the price for this product is £34.00 (£18.00 concession). The price for the 5-a-side cage pitches was set at £40 (£20 concession) for uncovered and £50 (£25 concession) due to the bespoke nature of the facilities.

With the following taken into account GLL would propose that the 7-a-side pitch price is set at £50 (£25 concession). Although this is higher than the half of a full size football pitch option the 7-a-side pitch is bespoke to this game format and still offers good value for money for the

customer at £3.57 per person for 14 players. The proposed price point is deliberately set at the same level as a covered 5-a-side cage with the rationale being that the larger area is offset against the fact that the 7-a-side is not under cover.

3.4 Competitor Analysis

Similar 7-a-side products exist at the Playball facility in Stormont which is priced at £30 per hour and at Lagan Valley LeisurePlex which is priced at £49.50 per hour (£30.50 off peak). In comparison the 5-a-side options (all uncovered) at these facilities are priced at £20 and £36 (£20.50 off peak) respectively. These facilities do not offer concessionary prices.”

After discussion, the Board approved the pricing proposal for the SWiMBiES pre-school swimming lessons and for the hire of the 7-a-side floodlit synthetic pitch and agreed that the prices be reviewed six months after being introduced.

(Mr. Kirk and Mr. Walker left the meeting at this point.)

Review of Leisure Operating Model

The Board was reminded that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 20th November, had agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting setting out the terms of reference for a review of the Active Belfast Limited Board, including its membership and governance arrangements.

The Partnership Manager had, at the Board meeting on 11th January, reported that it had been the intention to commence the review immediately, with the views of Elected Members and Directors to be sought in relation to a proposed terms of reference and other issues. However, that process had been delayed until such time as the Council was in a position to return to something approaching normal service delivery, post Covid.

He explained that, in recent months, the emphasis had, understandably, been placed on the re-opening of services and on planning for business recovery. However, now that there had been a return to the Council’s normal meeting schedule, there was a need to initiate the review process. Officers had begun to compile a draft terms of reference and it was envisaged that those, together with a timeframe for the completion of the review, would be presented to the Board and to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in August.

He pointed out that, since the review would include the membership of the Board, there would be an inevitable impact upon the Director recruitment programme, which it had been agreed would take place in 2021, and that this would be considered in greater detail later in the meeting.

The Board noted the information which had been provided.

Resumption of Active Belfast Limited Board – Meeting Schedule and Governance Arrangements

The Board considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To update the Board on the re-commencement of Board meetings, along with proposals for the recovery of the contract compliance and performance report schedule.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Board is requested to consider the proposals presented below and approve the proposed plan to return to the previously agreed 2021/22 reporting schedule.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Following the suspension of Board meetings since 11th January 2021, Council business and Committee/Board activity has now resumed under substantially normal procedures.

3.2 Board meetings were suspended for most of 2020/21. During a brief period between lockdowns, the Board approved a revised meeting schedule and report ‘catch up’ plan. The Board met in November, December and January before returning to lockdown in March 2021. However, during these three meetings substantial progress was made in presenting contract compliance and performance reports. Significantly, the following Board business is up to date:

- a) All quarterly KPI reports for 2020/21 have been presented and approved;**
- b) All policy alignment reports/statements for 2020/21 have been presented and approved;**
- c) ABL annual accounts and company statement were approved and returned to Companies House on time in December 2020; and**
- d) a Schedule of Charges for 2021/22 has been approved.**

3.3 Given the above position, along with the fact that in 2021/22 the Board has only missed its scheduled meeting for April, it is recommend that normal Board business resumes, in line with the already agreed reporting schedule for 2021/22.

3.4 Meetings for the rest of the year are scheduled as follows:

- Monday, 9th August**
- Monday, 6th September
(Potentially to be replaced with an open forum meeting)**
- Monday, 25th October and**
- Monday, 6th December.**

3.5 The Board report schedule for April 2021, as approved on 12th December 2020, was:

- **Policy and procedure alignment report (Equality and Diversity) + (Health and Safety)**
- **Update on ABL Strategic Plan six-monthly action**
- **Confirmation of receipt of ABL Director declaration of interest forms**
- **Six monthly report - Facility Management and Centre Inspection**
- **Six monthly report - Community Engagement**

3.6 The above reports can comfortably be absorbed into the August to October Board meetings. Subject to approval, this would bring the Board fully up to date by October and allow meetings between December 2021 and March 2022 to be consistent with their normal/planned agendas.

The Board adopted the recommendations contained within the report.

Update on Director Recruitment

The Board was reminded that, at its meeting on 14th December, it had approved a proposed approach for the recruitment of up to a maximum of four new Directors.

The Partnership Manager reported that, at that time, it had been the intention to commence the recruitment process in February, 2021 and to complete it by June, 2021. However, in light of the revised governance arrangements which the Council had put in place to ensure that maintaining recovery would be given priority and the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to initiate a review of the Active Belfast Limited Board, including its membership and governance arrangements, the Board, at its meeting on 11th January, had agreed to retain the recruitment plan and place the recruitment process on hold until such time as there had been a return to a sustained level of business stability.

He informed the Board that the service was now emerging from the most recent lockdown with some confidence and that, subject to the continued easing of restrictions and stability in the service delivery model, it was anticipated that business may recover to pre-Covid levels by the end of 2021, although that could be impacted by many external factors. Accordingly, he recommended that the Board agree that the Director recruitment process remain on hold until late Autumn/early Winter 2021.

The Board adopted the recommendation.

Other Business

No additional items of business were raised.

Chairperson