

Report on	Communities & Place Scale of Charges 2024/25
Date of Meeting	15 th February 2024
Reporting Officer	Claire Linney, Assistant Director of Development Kieran Gordon, Assistant Director Health, Leisure & Wellbeing
Contact Officer	Brian McCormick, Manager Seamus Heaney HomePlace Catherine Fox, Arts & Facilities Development Manager John Howard, Open Spaces & Recreation Development Manager Melanie Patterson, Environmental Health Service Manager Paul Bailie, Open Spaces & Recreation Development Manager Sean Cavlin, Leisure Services Development Manager

Is this report restricted for confidential business? If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	Yes	
	No	X

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To provide information to Members on the proposed Scale of Charges April 2024 – March 2025 for the Communities & Place Directorate and to seek approval to implement from 1st April 2024.
2.0	Background
2.1	<p>Health, Leisure & Wellbeing Scale of Charges 2024/25</p> <p>Previously in January 2015, approval was given for the approach to deliver harmonised fees, charges and concession pricing for the commencement of the new Mid Ulster District Council in April 2015. This included approval for an approach to groupings that would be eligible for concession pricing along with the mechanism for promotional pricing (based on market conditions) – see below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>“Management have the discretion (agreed by the Director) to apply discounted pricing packages, varied times and activities in order to market less attractive facilities, low usage periods and to promote Sports Development and Health and Wellbeing initiatives.”</i>
2.2	The Council agreed a new organisational structure in July 2021 which resulted in a series of changes to the then Council structure. Arising from the amendments to the Council structure was the creation of a new service area (Health, Leisure & Wellbeing) fully inclusive of previous standalone services involving Environmental Health, Events, Leisure and Parks.
2.3	Previously in February 2023, Members at the Development Committee resolved to approve the scale of charges for April 2023 – March 2024 which involved a fee freeze and no additional inflationary fee increases were applied with comparison to the April 2022 – March 2023 year (minute reference: D027/23)

2.4	All fees and charges that are proposed for the April 2024 – March 2025 year within the Health, Leisure & Wellbeing service area are detailed in appendices A - D.
2.5	<p>Room Hire Charges & Tour/Exhibition Entry Charges at Arts Venues</p> <p>Room hire and exhibition charges across arts venues have also been reviewed and a benchmarking exercise carried out. Given budgetary pressures, and to bring MUDC facilities in line with comparative centres, a proposal for an increase in hire rates and tour/exhibition entry prices, where applicable, for the Burnavon, Hill of The O'Neill & Ranfurly House and Seamus Heaney HomePlace and the new Pomeroy Forestry Building, is detailed in appendix E.</p>
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>Health, Leisure & Wellbeing Scale of Charges 2024/25</p> <p>Members should note that all fees and charges detailed within the appendix are reflective of previous relevant Council reports pertaining to charging and the subsequent approvals previously applied for the various service areas of Environmental Health, Leisure and Parks.</p>
3.2	<p>There is a variety of legislation enforced by Councils which regulates environmental controls whereby a permit, licence or registration is required to legally operate. There are a number of charges and fixed penalties whereby Council has discretion to set the level of charge or fixed penalty within the parameters of applicable legislation and previously in November 2014, Members considered and agreed the approach for the new Mid Ulster District Council forming in April 2015.</p>
3.3	<p>There have been no fee amendments since 2019 therefore fees have remained static to present whilst during the same period from December 2019 – December 2023, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose by 21.8%. Furthermore, the CPI rose by 3.9% in the 12 month period to December 2023.</p>
3.4	<p>It is therefore proposed that the various discretionary charges for Health Leisure & Wellbeing services be increased by 5% from 1st April 2024. To facilitate the rounding of prices to make costs and cash handling more straightforward for customers and staff, in some instances the percentage increase may vary minimally.</p>
3.5	<p>In addition to above, benchmarking has been carried out for campsite tariffs. Taking in account increases in electricity tariffs and to ensure consistent approach in line with other similar camping sites in other councils, it is proposed to increase the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Touring and Camping (Half Day Stay): £13.75 increased to £16.50 • Touring and Camping (Hard Standing Pitch with Electric): £27.50 increased to £33.00
3.6	<p>Future Analysis Required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1:1 Swimming lessons, gymnastics, dance, Tobermore Golf Centre memberships and personal training within fitness suites: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Decision deferred pending wider consideration of delivery methods; pricing and options to be brought back to a future Development Committee meeting. • Pavement Café Licensing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ In March 2017 Members agreed a zero fee for the grant, renewal or variation of a pavement café licence and that licences would be granted for an initial period of one year (minute reference: E070/17)

<p>3.7</p> <p>3.8</p> <p>3.9</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The planned review into the fee structure and duration of pavement café licences was postponed due to the pandemic and remains outstanding. ➤ Options to be brought back to a future Development Committee meeting. <p>Room Hire Charges & Tour/Exhibition Entry Charges at Arts Venues An internal pricing review of the charges for room rental and facility hire charges that apply to Arts venues was carried out in conjunction with departmental and facility management. The review compared and contrasted the various costs and charges that currently apply across all arts venues and also examined current charges in similar venues outside Mid Ulster for the same services eg room/facility hire, tours, exhibition prices.</p> <p>According to the Northern Ireland Visitor Attraction Survey 2020, carried out by Tourism Statistics Branch (NISRA), the average price of an admission for an adult to a visitor attraction in NI is £14.04, and child is £6.86. While these figures fell in the 2022, this was possibly due to the effect of and recovery from Covid 19. While an exact comparable visitor attraction does not exist for each of the facilities due to the nature of the product, research has been conducted with similar attractions and these have been used to influence the proposed reviewed admission charges.</p> <p>It is thus proposed to implement the price increase commencing from April 2024 across the 3 Arts venues - Burnavon, Hill of The O'Neill and Ranfurly House, Seamus Heaney HomePlace and Pomeroy Forestry Building; please refer to the appendix for current and subsequent proposed charges. To facilitate the rounding of prices to make costs more straightforward for the customer, in some limited instances the percentage increase may vary minimally.</p> <p>Pomeroy Forestry Building is a new facility which will be operational from April 2024 and therefore prices are reflective of this.</p>
<p>4.0</p>	<p>Other Considerations</p>
<p>4.1</p>	<p>Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications</p> <p>Financial: Health, Leisure & Wellbeing Scale of Charges 2024/25 The 2024/2025 budget setting approach for income has been based on the scale of charges approach outlined in Appendix A. The proposed scale of charges structure for 2024/2025 seeks to balance affordability with cost of providing the service; Cost recovery and maintenance of income has been considered as far as reasonably possible.</p> <p>Room Hire Charges & Tour/Exhibition Entry Charges at Arts Venues The revised structure will align the facilities with other attractions, while developing an equitable revenue stream while not excluding visitors on the basis of price as detailed within the appendix.</p> <p>Human: Officer time – to make staff aware of the scale of charges and to update and configure literature and computerised till systems. Officer time required to discharge the functions will remain regardless of fees (particularly for any statutory duties or enforcement activities)</p> <p>Risk Management: In line with Council policies and procedures and will continue to ensure a more robust and standardised approach to fees and charges across Communities & Place facilities.</p>

4.2	<p>Screening & Impact Assessments</p> <p>Equality & Good Relations Implications: It is not anticipated that the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity and good relations.</p> <p>Rural Needs Implications: The proposal and recommendations tabled for consideration do not fall within an activity subject to Section 1 (1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</p>
5.0	<p>Recommendation(s)</p>
5.1	<p>To note the contents of this report and approve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities & Place Scale of Charges 2024/25 as outlined within the appendices. • Amended campsite tariffs as per section 3.5 of the report
6.0	<p>Documents Attached & References</p>
	<p>Appendix A: Communities & Place Scale of Charges 2024/25 – Indoor Leisure Appendix B: Communities & Place Scale of Charges 2024/25 – Parks Appendix C: Communities & Place Scale of Charges 2024/25 – Commerical/Non Comm Appendix D: Communities & Place Scale of Charges 2024/25 – Environmental Health Appendix E: Communities & Place Scale of Charges 2024/25 – Arts</p>