

<b>Report on</b>	Swim Ulster
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	14th October 2021
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Kieran Gordon, Head of Leisure
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Sean Cavlin, Leisure & Business Development Manager John Howard, Leisure & Business Development Manager

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b> If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	Yes	
	No	x

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	The Operations Manager at Swim Ulster has contacted Mid Ulster District Council with concerns over current pricing mechanisms for bookings across the Districts three swimming pools. The purpose of this report is to outline the current pricing costs for swimming club/organisation bookings across all Mid Ulster District Council Leisure sites and give consideration to an amended rate.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	In February 2021, Members approved the "Leisure Pricing April 2021 – March 2022" which sought to consolidate all previous Council approvals (2015, 2018, 2019) and built upon the approach that was previously approved in January 2015 for the harmonised fees, charges and concession prices for leisure for the commencement of the new Mid Ulster District Council in April 2015.
2.2	Following the approval of the February 2021 report, the implementation date for any amendments was due to be 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2021 (subsequently delayed until May 2021 due to covid restrictions and facility closures).
2.3	The Operations Manager at Swim Ulster has now contacted Mid Ulster District Council looking to confirm booking arrangements for the forthcoming year but has expressed budgetary concerns over current pricing mechanisms for bookings across the Districts three swimming pools.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	Swim Ulster Limited (originally founded in 1893 as the Ulster Branch of the Irish Amateur Swimming Association) was established in 2005 as a company limited by guarantee. Swim Ulster is part of the Swim Ireland family and is recognised by Sport NI as the governing body for aquatic sports in Ulster. A non-profit making company, Swim Ulster operates within the framework defined in its Memorandum and Articles of Association. These identify the members of the company as being drawn from swimming, water polo, diving and synchronised swimming clubs in Ulster that are affiliated to Swim Ireland. Swim Ulster has approximately 3,500 members in 40 clubs.
3.2	For many years, Swim Ulster have organised and run Talent ID and Talent development programmes within the Mid Ulster District Council area. Prior to the onset of the Global Covid 19 pandemic in March 2020, Swim Ulster would have made bookings within our District's pools (predominately Greenvale LC due to the 50m pool) for approx. 40-45 weeks

per annum. Each weekly session seeks to facilitate up to 48 spaces for swimmers to received specialised coaching and currently there are approx. 18 places apportioned to swimmers from the 3 x Mid Ulster District based swim clubs.

3.3 Greenvale LC is viewed as a key strategic location for Swim Ulster to carry out their role as Governing Body in order to provide support to Mid Ulster clubs along with clubs from neighbouring Council areas and to reduce travel commitments to other 50m pools in the province in Bangor and Craigavon.

3.4 Previously in June 2021, Members approved the Strategic Sports Development Grant (max £15k) as part of its annual grants programme. Swim Ulster made an application and following evaluation were awarded £10k for contribution towards a full time Swimming Development Officer/Coach for this financial year. Part of this role is to deliver specialised coaching and to develop partnerships with the 3 x Mid Ulster District based swim clubs

3.5 A summary of current usage from clubs/organisation in the District's swimming pools is detailed within Appendix A.

3.6 In relation to Greenvale LC, the following clubs/organisations make pool bookings specific to swim coaching:

- 1 x local district swim club make bookings within the pool
- 1 x Governing Body (Swim Ulster)
- 1 x swim club that resides outside the district

Current analysis on bookings and rates are detailed within Appendix A.

3.7 In summary, the following arrangements are in place:

- Local district based swim club - £7.90 per 25m lane and £15.80 per 50m lane – no change
- Swim club that resides outside of the district - previously £30 per 50m lane – mutual agreement to phase to £33.50 until March 2022, £36.60 until December 2022 and then £40 commences from January 2023
- Swim Ulster – previously £20 per 25m lane and £25 per 50m lane. Proposal was to phase £22.50 (25m) and £30 (50m) until March 2022, £25 (25m) and £36.60 (50m) until December 2022 and then £25 (25m) and £40 (50m) commences from January 2023.

3.8 A comparison of Mid Ulster District Council's pricing against other pools in the province is noted below:

Pool Hire Pricing			
Facility	Council Area	25m Lane Price Per Hour	50m Lane Price Per Hour
Aurora	Ards & North Down Borough Council	£13.25	£26.50
South Lakes	Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council	£10.00	£20.00
Lisnasharragh	Belfast City Council	£15.30	N/A
Newry LC	Newry, Mourne & Down District Council	£10.30	N/A
Greenvale LC	Mid Ulster District Council	£25.00	£40.00

<p>3.9</p> <p>3.10</p>	<p>Based on current usage of Greenvale LC and when calculating annual estimated income from Swim Ulster based on previous rates of £25 per 50m lane, it is estimated that Council would have received approx. £7.2k - £8.1k per annum in income. Should booking commitments stay the same, with the approved pricing and a phased incremental approach adopted, Council would achieve approx. £9k - £10.1k per annum from January 2023 onwards.</p> <p>Options for consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) <b>Do Nothing</b> – this option would maintain the status quo in line with the pricing rates as previously approved in February 2021.</li> <li>(b) <b>To offer Swim Ulster the same price that local clubs avail off</b> - instead of working towards the approved pricing of £25.00 per lane (25m) and £40.00 per lane (50m) then adopt the local club rate of £7.90 per lane price.</li> <li>(c) <b>Hybrid approach to Swim Ulster Pricing</b> – pro-rata the approved rates by the percentage of coaching spaces that are made available to the 3 x Mid Ulster District based swim clubs</li> </ul>
<p>4.0</p>	<p><b>Other Considerations</b></p>
<p>4.1</p>	<p><b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b></p> <p>Financial:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) <b>Do Nothing</b> – this option would maintain the status quo in line with the pricing rates as previously approved in February 2021. Swim Ulster have advised they would find it difficult to maintain current operations within the district if they were to pay these rates therefore potential loss of income and/or reduction in coaching hours/pool bookings based on Swim Ulster’s available budget. Potential impact to the 3 x Mid Ulster District based swim clubs and clubs within neighbouring Councils.</li> <li>(b) <b>To offer Swim Ulster the same price that local clubs avail off</b> - instead of working towards the approved pricing of £25.00 per lane (25m) and £40.00 per lane (50m) then adopt the local club rate of £7.90 per lane price. Whilst this would be acceptable to Swim Ulster, it may bring pressure from other club groups including those that reside outside the District who appear content with the rates. Potential loss of up to £4.3k - £4.9k per annum in income based on current Swim Ulster rates. Concerns that this loss in income may not be able to be realised elsewhere during this period of recovery from the Covid pandemic.</li> <li>(c) <b>Hybrid approach to Swim Ulster Pricing</b> – 18 out of the 48 weekly spaces for specialised Swim Ulster coaching is currently apportioned to the 3 x Mid Ulster District based swim clubs therefore a direct benefit of Governing Body support to residents in our District. This equates to 37.5% of total spaces.</li> </ul> <p>Officers have pressed Swim Ulster to make available more coaching spaces for Mid Ulster District residents therefore Swim Ulster have committed to working towards making available 24 out of the 48 weekly spaces (50%) available to the 3 x Mid Ulster District based swim clubs over the next 12 months and putting support in place with the 3 x clubs to help them achieve this.</p> <p>Additionally Swim Ulster would seek to hold at least two skills camps in the Mid Ulster area per year. (Holiday time).</p>

	<p>Therefore propose to offer the same percentage discount to Swim Ulster charges to recognise the benefit of this coaching provision for local swimmers within the Mid Ulster District area, ie. £12.50 (25m) and £20 (50m). This would be more in line with what other Council's charge. Whilst there would be a decrease in income, approx £2.7k-£3k per annum, it would not be as severe as option B and the non-monetary benefit is increased provision for Mid Ulster District residents.</p>
	Human: N/A
	Risk Management: Considered in line with Council policies and procedures.
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications:.
	Rural Needs Implications:
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	To note the contents of the report, to progress with option C as detailed within section 3.10 of this report.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
	Appendix A: Pricing Information and summary of Club/Organisation Usage