

CULTURE, LEISURE AND TOURISM PORTFOLIO

DECISION SCHEDULE



Tuesday, 19 August 2008

at 10.00 am

**in Committee Room A,
Civic Centre, Hartlepool**

Councillor Tumilty, Cabinet Member responsible for Culture, Leisure and Tourism will consider the following items.

1. KEY DECISIONS

No items

2. OTHER ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION

- 2.1 Active Card – Review Of Eligibility Criteria For Leisure Concessionary Charging – *Director Of Adult And Community Services*
- 2.2 Culture Shock Project – *Director of Adult and Community Services*
- 2.3 Free Swimming Scheme Proposals – *Director of Adult and Community Services*

3. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/DISCUSSION

No items

4. REPORTS FROM OVERVIEW OF SCRUTINY FORUMS

No items

CULTURE, LEISURE AND TOURISM PORTFOLIO

Report To Portfolio Holder
19 August 2008



Report of: Director of Adult and Community Services

Subject: ACTIVE CARD – REVIEW OF ELIGIBILITY
CRITERIA FOR LEISURE CONCESSIONARY
CHARGING

SUMMARY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report seeks to inform the Portfolio Holder on the amendment of the eligibility criteria for the Active Card concessionary pricing scheme to include over 60 year olds from 1st September, 2008. It also seeks approval for an appropriate refund system to be put in place for any fees that may have already been paid by current Active holders aged over 60 years for the card itself or swim season tickets.

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

The report sets out details of the changes made to the principles of the Council's Active Card concessionary discount scheme in order to better reflect wider strategies and corporate objectives of the Authority.

3. RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO MEMBER

Sport and Recreation is part of the Culture, Leisure and Tourism Portfolio.

4. TYPE OF DECISION

Non-key decision.

5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE

Culture, Leisure and Tourism, 19th August, 2008.

6. DECISION(S) REQUIRED

The Portfolio Holder is requested to:-

1. Note the inclusion of the over 60's as a specific eligibility criteria for concessionary charges as part of the Active Card scheme from 1st September, 2008.
2. Approve the approach to be taken for any request of reimbursement of fees paid for either the Active Card or Swim Season Tickets purchased for the post September 2008 period.

Report of: Director of Adult and Community Services

Subject: ACTIVE CARD – REVIEW OF ELIGIBILITY
CRITERIA FOR LEISURE CONCESSIONARY
CHARGING

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The report seeks to inform the Portfolio Holder on the amendment of the eligibility criteria for the Active Card concessionary pricing scheme to include over 60 year olds from 1st September, 2008. It also seeks approval for an appropriate refund system to be put in place for any fees that may have already been paid by current Active holders aged over 60 years for the card itself or swim season tickets.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The 'Active Card' scheme (Leisure Card scheme) was first introduced in April, 2003, along with a wholesale change in the charging structure, to cover all activities offered by Sport and Recreation within the Leisure Centre and Sports Development services.
- 2.2 The introduction of such a scheme was seen as an important step in promoting more equitable participation. The founding principle was to address poor levels of participation in activities by reducing the normal charges to a point of affordability.
- 2.3 The cards were to provide two main functions:-
- (a) to be used as a non-stigmatising concessionary card, allowing those eligible to take part in leisure activities at subsidised prices, thereby encouraging participation;
 - (b) to operate as a membership card, allowing those ineligible for concessions to purchase a card to receive discounted activities, thereby encouraging repeat visits.
- 2.4 The card, irrespective of whether the holder is a member or entitled to concessions, has been designed to look identical and is offered in the categories of adult, junior and family at a current (2008/2009) annual cost of £10.50, £5.25 and £26.00 respectively or indeed free to those Hartlepool residents eligible for concessions.

3. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR CONCESSIONS

- 3.1 Prior to the launch of the Active Card in 2003, considerable research was undertaken by officers in order to ensure that concessionary pricing was offered to those Hartlepool residents identified as being most in need. With reference to the Cabinet Report in November, 2002, targeting concessions specifically at economic disadvantage, the following defined groups of residents were identified as being eligible for reduced charges:-
- (a) unemployed;
 - (b) those on low income;
 - (c) students;
 - (d) disabled.
- 3.2 At that time, senior citizens were not specifically included as a separate concessionary category, but it was considered that those on low income would qualify.
- 3.3 Eligibility checks are carried out at the time of application, removing the need for confirmation of concession eligibility, confrontation, doubt or debate at the point of sale.
- 3.4 Active Cards are issued for one year for all categories, whereupon all renewals are subject to a fresh eligibility check.

4. KEY HEALTH DRIVERS

- 4.1 It has now been accepted and proved that increasing participation in sport and physical activity can make a huge impact on health. Reducing sedentary behaviour and increasing the numbers of people who are at least moderately active, can help prevent numerous illnesses, diseases and disabilities, such as coronary heart disease, stroke, obesity, type 2 diabetes, cancer etc., as well as improve mental health and a person's self esteem.
- 4.2 This is particularly important for older people where regular lifestyle activity plays a key part in the maintenance of mobility and independent living (*Chief Medical Officer Report - At least 5 a week : evidence on the impact of physical activity and its relationship to health" - 2004*).
- 4.3 In Hartlepool, taking figures from the 2006 mid year estimate population data, 21.18% of residents are aged 60 or over and despite all the documented health benefits, levels of physical activity amongst this age group remain very low. Participation data from the Active People survey (2005/2006) indicates that in the 55+ age group, only 9.7% are deemed to be physically active in comparison with 10.85% regionally and 11.45% nationally.
- 4.4 Whilst it is generally recognised that participation in sport declines with age, in the knowledge it is estimated that by 2020, almost half the UK population

will be over 50 years of age, encouragement must be given to increase and sustain physical activity participation amongst our older population. It is in this context therefore, that consideration was given to include the Over 60's as a specific concessionary category for the Active Card.

5. REVIEW OF ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- 5.1 Since the launch of the Active Card, the eligibility criteria for concessionary charging has remained largely unchanged, apart from an annual revision of the types of benefits payable to those on low income. The only exception to this has been the introduction of concessions to foster parents and children as a specific concessionary category in April, 2007.
- 5.2 In November, 2006, a report was commissioned by the Assistant Director, Community Services, where our approach to the application of concessionary charges across Community Services in general was examined. The aim of this was to identify a common approach in the application of concessions and under what eligibility criteria.
- 5.3 The report, completed in March, 2007, focused on the application of concessions to the over 60's, the underlying aspects of the issue and included the approach of other Local Authorities. It summarised that either concessions were granted on the basis of financial hardship (as with the Active Card) or a 'blanket approach' for the over 60's or over 65's was taken, but in the main, blanket coverage was used. This therefore identified that the approach taken with the Active Card was inconsistent in comparison with elsewhere.
- 5.4 Coupled with the benefits of ensuring participation of this age group in sport and physical activity, the evidence was compelling to include the over 60's as a specific concessionary category for the Active Card.
- 5.5 It must be reiterated that concessionary rates are not available to any eligible resident without possession of an Active Card.

6. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 It was recognised at an early stage, that extending the concessionary eligibility for the Active Card would incur a cost. The study into the concessionary charges for Community Services did examine various options to minimise this, with officers subsequently exploring different financial models as part of the 2008/2009 budget proposals.
- 6.2 As a consequence, officers estimated a loss of income at the worst being in the region of approximately £33,000, but allowing for an increase in throughput and a time lag for introduction felt would be reduced to £20,000. This was therefore highlighted as a budget pressure as part of the 2008/2009 proposals and the additional resource was approved.

- 6.3 It should be noted that this was an estimated figure based on several unknowns and, as a consequence, there may be a requirement for additional resources in the future. This will not be known, however, until such time the revised scheme has run for at least a year.

7. IMPLEMENTATION AND TRANSITION ISSUES

- 7.1 Preparatory work has been undertaken in readiness for implementation of the new eligibility criteria with the reprogramming of the computerised till and booking system. However, there are some specific transition issues to be considered.
- 7.2 Having now concluded the preparatory work, it is proposed to implement the inclusion of the over 60's as a concessionary category of the Active Card from 1st September, 2008. This therefore means that Active Cards will be available free of charge, instead of being available at a cost of £10.50. It will also significantly reduce the cost of activities. For example, the current cost of a swim will reduce from either £2.35 or £1.80 (dependent on whether a member or not) to a charge of £1.15.
- 7.3 However, some over 60's may have already previously purchased an Active Card and may enquire about the reimbursement of fees. With the refunding process being time consuming administratively and with the amounts involved being potentially small, it is not considered appropriate to offer a refund in these cases. Obviously under the previous system, these Active Card holders will have already had their application considered on an 'ability to pay' basis.
- 7.4 Similarly, some may have already purchased swimming season tickets. However, with the costs involved being greater (one year ticket £103.00 compared to £79.50 and six months ticket £65.50 compared to £48.00), it is considered reasonable to offer a refund in the form of a credit to be redeemed against the future purchase of season tickets. This would be calculated on a pro rata basis for full calendar months.

8. CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 Research has evidenced that:-
- There are disproportionally high levels of over 60's in Hartlepool.
 - There are severe health problems and low levels of participation generally in sport and physical activity in Hartlepool.
 - The benefits of ensuring participation is undoubtedly an investment in preventative health care.

- The exclusion of the over 60's as a specific concessionary category in Leisure Card schemes is now inconsistent in comparison with what happens elsewhere.
- An additional £20,000 has been made available as part of the 2008/2009 budget process to offset estimated loss of income.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Portfolio Holder is requested to:-

1. Note the inclusion of the over 60's as a specific eligibility criteria for concessionary charges as part of the Active Card scheme from 1st September, 2008.
2. Approve the approach to be taken for any request of reimbursement of fees paid for either the Active Card or Swim Season Tickets purchased for the post September 2008 period.

CONTACT OFFICER: Pat Usher, Sport and Recreation Manager

Background Papers

Introduction of a Leisure Card scheme incorporating concessionary pricing - Cabinet, 18th November, 2002.

Hartlepool Community Services : Concessionary Charges Report, March, 2007.

Chief Medical Officer Report : 'At least 5 a week : Evidence on the impact of physical activity and its relationship to health' - 2004.

CULTURE, LEISURE AND TOURISM PORTFOLIO

Report To Portfolio Holder

19 August 2008



Report of: Director of Adult and Community Services

Subject: CULTURE SHOCK PROJECT

SUMMARY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise the Portfolio holder of the implications and requirements of being a partner in the Culture Shock programme.

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

The project will enable people to explore, document and share their heritage with people from both similar and different backgrounds, through the use of digital storytelling and museum collections, to help them explore their own identities, develop a sense of citizenship and begin to challenge preconceptions, prejudice and intolerance between different groups.

The project will capture 1,000 digital stories over two years, bringing together people from different communities across the North East.

3. RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO MEMBER

Museum and Heritage is part of the Culture Leisure and Tourism Portfolio.

4. TYPE OF DECISION

Non Key

5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE

Culture Leisure and Tourism Portfolio – 19 August 2008

6. DECISION(S) REQUIRED

The Portfolio Holder is requested to support participation in Culture Shock as it will give Hartlepool national coverage being one of only three projects nationally.

Report of: Director of Adult and Community Services

Subject: CULTURE SHOCK

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Portfolio Holder of Hartlepool's participation in Culture Shock project.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The project will capture 1,000 digital stories over two years, bringing together people from different communities across the North East.
- 2.2 Some stories will begin with a visit to the museum store of the participant's choice, to explore the collections and to choose an object, or group of objects, to inspire their story. Other stories will begin with individuals or communities, or with the use of loans boxes. Some stories will also be inspired by North East Hub exhibitions and programmes. This project will complement conventional interpretation by encouraging people to describe and respond to the objects with their own thoughts, memories and ideas.
- 2.3 A central exhibition will take place at Discovery Museum, with subsequent exhibitions in other museums. The stories will also be available to view on the Web. Copies of the finished stories will then be accessioned into the appropriate museum collection, and will be incorporated into future interpretation, exhibitions, loans boxes and reminiscence packs, as appropriate.
- 2.4 The project will enable people to explore, document and share their heritage with people from both similar and different backgrounds, through the use of digital storytelling and museum collections, to help them explore their own identities, develop a sense of citizenship and begin to challenge preconceptions, prejudice and intolerance between different groups.
- 2.5 We aim to:
- Develop a modern day, community-led interpretation of museum collections and ownership of collections for communities in the North East
 - Create a new collection and permanent record of personal testimonies about the heritage of the North East

- Promote greater awareness and understanding of the full breadth and diversity of communities in the North East and their heritage, and
- Enable people to gain new skills and develop confidence in the process and techniques of digital storytelling and other technologies, being able to use this knowledge in future and cascade their knowledge to others.

3. Hartlepool Element

- As part of the project the Hartlepool-led Tees Valley element of the project will have two project employees (1 Outreach Officer full-time (20 months initially) and 1 Curatorial Assistant (18 months initially), these employees will start work in October/November 2008.
- We will be expected to deliver 120 digital stories. (12 projects in total).
- We will receive a pro-rotta percentage of the 'doing money' element of the project's £661,354 budget (HLF Funded).
- Possible areas for collecting digital stories:
 - 150th anniversary of Cameron's Brewery.
 - 25th anniversary of Miner's Strike.
 - 2012 Cultural Olympiad.
 - Shipbuilding in Hartlepool.
 - Other Industries.
 - 'Me and Captain Cook' (Middlesbrough)
 - Railway and Community Heritage (Darlington)
 - Suggestions from Tees Valley partners.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Culture Shock project as submitted by Tyne & Wear Museums the lead partner will ensure that all costs of delivery, including staffing are borne from the project grant. Hartlepool will provide staff accommodation for 2 officers and officer guidance.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 The Portfolio Holder is requested to support participation in Culture Shock as it will give Hartlepool national coverage being one of only three projects nationally.

CULTURE, LEISURE AND TOURISM PORTFOLIO

Report to Portfolio Holder

19 August 2008



Report of: Director of Adult and Community Services

Subject: FREE SWIMMING SCHEME PROPOSALS

SUMMARY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

Following the recent Government announcement concerning a nationwide free swimming scheme, the report seeks to update the Portfolio Holder on the details available to date.

The report provides the information available on the Government's intention for the implementation of the scheme and our understanding of the available funding to support it.

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

As part of a Government drive to increase participation in sport and physical activity, a target has been set to get two million people more active by the London 2012 Olympics. Associated with this has been the recent announcement by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport concerning the free swimming initiative.

Details of the scheme are provided along with the offer of funding that Local Authorities can apply for. There are four distinct elements available as follows:-

- (a) Pot 1: Free swimming for over 60's available for financial years 2009-2010 and 2010-2011. An allocation of £26,848 per annum is being offered to Hartlepool to fund this and confirmation of acceptance is required by 15th September, 2008.

- (b) Pot 2: Free swimming for under 16's available during financial years 2009-2010 and 2010-2011. Hartlepool will need to commit to Pot 1 to be eligible for this and having registered our interest in this scheme by 15th September, 2008 we will be advised of an allocation of funding by 30th September, 2008. We will then have to subsequently confirm acceptance of the offer by 15th October, 2008.
- (c) Pot 3: Modernising Pool Provision - Capital Reward Fund. Available for 2008-2009 as a one-off capital grant and only to those Local Authorities participating in the initiatives detailed in (a) and (b) above. £10 million is being made available nationally and we will be advised of an amount allocated on a pro-rata population basis.
- (d) Pot 4: Modernising Pool Provision - Capital Challenge Fund. Available for 2009-2010 and 2010-2011, £25 million per annum is being made available nationally. Again, only those Local Authorities committing to Pots 1 and 2 will be eligible and costed plans have to be submitted by 15th October, 2008.

3. RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO MEMBER

Sport and Recreation is part of the Culture, Leisure and Tourism Portfolio.

4. TYPE OF DECISION

Non-key.

5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE

Culture, Leisure and Tourism Portfolio, 19th August, 2008.

6. DECISION(S) REQUIRED

The Portfolio Holder is requested to:-

1. Note the details available to date in relation to the Government's Free Swimming Scheme.
2. Approve the participation in the Over 60's free swimming initiative and acceptance of the funding offer from DCMS as detailed in paragraph 3.1.1.
3. Approve the intention to participate in the other elements of the scheme should officers, on receipt of more detailed information, conclude that it will be appropriate and of benefit for Hartlepool to do so.
4. Approve consideration of a capital pot submission for swimming pool improvement in 2009/2010 onwards.

Report of: Director of Adult and Community Services

Subject: FREE SWIMMING SCHEME PROPOSALS

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Following the recent Government announcement concerning a nationwide free swimming scheme, the report seeks to update the Portfolio Holder on the details available to date.
- 1.2 The report provides the information available on the Government's intention for the implementation of the scheme and our understanding of the available funding to support it.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 As the Portfolio Holder will be aware, the beneficial effects on regular participation in sport and physical activity, particularly concerning health and well-being, are well documented. As such, there is a significant Government drive to increase participation as well as get two million people more active by the London 2012 Olympics as part of their legacy action plan.
- 2.2 Swimming has the same health benefits as many other forms of physical activity and proves to be one of the most popular activities across age groups. It is seen to also be very accessible, with the vast majority of Local Authorities providing pool facilities in their local areas.
- 2.3 As a consequence, the Government are keen to encourage as many Local Authorities as possible to participate in making swimming free specifically for over 60's and under 16's in their local communities.

3. DETAILS OF THE FREE SWIMMING SCHEME

- 3.1 Local Authorities are being offered the opportunity to take part in the following initiatives:-

3.1.1 Pot 1 : Free Swimming for the Over 60's

This is an initiative to make swimming free for over 60's in Hartlepool; that is casual swimming and not structured lessons or classes. An allocation of funding is being made available, based on the size of our over 60's population and amounts to £26,848 per annum to be utilised over 2009-2010 and 2010-2011.

We will be required to make free swimming available for this age group in accordance with our normal public swimming programmes available at Mill House Leisure Centre as well as keep appropriate performance monitoring data and we are required to register our intention to take up the offer of funding no later than 15th September, 2008.

3.1.2 Pot 2 : Free Swimming for the Under 16's

All Local Authorities choosing to participate in free swimming for the over 60's will also be offered the opportunity to submit no later than 15th September, 2008 an expression of interest to make swimming free for under 16's.

Should we register an interest details of the available allocation of grant funding to support this initiative will subsequently be confirmed to us no later than 30th September, 2008 whereupon we will be expected to confirm no later than 15th October, 2008 whether we wish to take up the offer.

As the Government is hoping that "Local Authorities will work creatively with local partners, including Primary Care Trusts to access funds from other sources", for this initiative, officers have interpreted this as a requirement for additional partnership funding to be sourced. It is assumed this will be made known to us at the time our allocation is confirmed.

Again the grant will be available for the period 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 and £25 million per annum is being made available nationally.

3.1.3 Pot 3 : Modernising Pool Provision - Capital Reward Fund

In order to support Local Authorities in making swimming free for the over 60's and under 16's, one-off capital funding will be allocated to only those Local Authorities participating in Pot 1 and Pot 2 on a pro-rata population basis during this current financial year 2008/2009, to modernise pool provision. However, only £10 million is being made available nationally.

From the details we have at present, these funds can be used as project development costs for bids for financial year 2009-2010 and 2010-2011, but cannot be used as partnership funding for bids from 2009-2010 onwards.

3.1.4 Pot 4 : Modernising Pool Provision - Capital Challenge Fund

The Government also intend to make further capital available in 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 to modernise pool provision and support “more ambitious plans for free swimming”. £25 million per annum is being made available nationally.

At present, we have received little detail. However, we have been advised by DCMS that this will only be available to those who commit to Pot 1 and Pot 2; that is, the over 60's and under 16 schemes. Sport England will administer the capital challenge fund on behalf of the Government and a prospectus for funding bids will be published.

- 3.2 Of concern is the associated timescales, however, according to the detail from DCMS, those committing to Pots 1 and 2 will be invited to submit costed plans no later than 15th October, 2008 for the Capital Challenge Fund bid. This gives little time within which to do this work.

4. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 From the available information, the swimming scheme will be jointly funded by DCMS, Department of Health, Department for Work and Pensions, Department for Children School and Families and the Department for Communities and Local Government.
- 4.2 The free swim scheme and reimbursement of lost income from a central government pot is welcomed. What cannot be determined in fine detail is whether the current offer of £26,848 will fully neutralise the potential impact on the Councils revenue budget.
- 4.3 Whilst officers are confident that the Older People Swim initiative should be cost neutral, we will not be informed of the support grant available for under 16's free swims until after we have indicated our intention to take part.
- 4.4 To demonstrate positive engagement and to help position the Council to secure capital resources, then it is recommended that a positive response to both schemes is submitted.
- 4.5 Overall, £140 million will be made available to Local Authorities. However, what remains unclear at present is whether there are any match-funding requirements for additional funding towards any of the specific capital pots.

5. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Portfolio Holder is requested to:-

1. Note the details available to date in relation to the Governments Free Swimming Scheme.

2. Approve the participation in the Over 60's free swimming initiative and acceptance of the funding offer from DCMS as detailed in paragraph 3.1.1. once if confirmed and Officers are confident that it will not cause any budgetary pressures.
3. Approve the intention to participation in the other elements of the scheme should officers, on receipt of more detailed information, conclude that it will be appropriate and of benefit for Hartlepool to do so.
4. Approve consideration of a capital pot submission for swimming pool improvement in 2009/2010 onwards.

CONTACT OFFICER: Pat Usher, Sport and Recreation Manager

Background Papers

None