

Report to Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board

18 December 2023

Subject:	Sandwell Leisure Trust Fees and Charges - January 2024 implementation
Director:	Director for Borough Economy Alice Davey
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1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Board consider and comment upon Sandwell Leisure Trust (SLT) Fees & Charges for implementation with effect from January 2024.

2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 To drive income whilst still providing an affordable choice and flexibility for all residents and user groups.
- 2.2 To balance the financial imperative for commercial charging with ensuring accessibility and affordability for residents.
- 2.3 To drive increased activity and regular participation by protecting the membership base, increasing retention, loyalty and enhancing the value of membership options.



2.4 Delivering an uplift in swimming lessons and lesson fees taking into account the reduction in pools across Sandwell - Haden Hill, Smethwick & Langley resulting in an increased demand.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	People live well and age well
	A strong and inclusive economy

4 Context and Key Issues

4.1 SLT have charging discretion to set their own fees and charges; however, SLT are keen to set their charges in a transparent manner, in consultation with the Council.

4.2 Charges have historically been uplifted in April, however the peak trading period in the New Year is generally when the industry applies an uplift, with an eager market looking to return to leisure facilities. It is therefore intended to move the 2024 charges review to 1 January – in line with the wider leisure and fitness industry.

4.3 Changes to fees and charges have been based on sound benchmarking and market analysis. Appendix 2 shows the local competitors used for benchmarking.

4.4 In Q1 & Q2 there has been strong growth in fitness and swim income, circa 15% across all sites as a result of pro-active marketing and digital promotions.

4.5 A further report may be presented to SNAC at a later date to discuss the more effective targeting of concessions in 2024.

4.6 Key Considerations

- Free Swimming will be programmed to specific times and not open to general public swimming access. This is to reduce operational incidents and the impact of access for full paying members supporting member retention.



- Junior access 14+ access to gyms will be restricted to specific programmed times to enable supervision and effective support.
- One Card membership will provide one inclusive induction and charge for additional 1-2-1 gym personal programmes.
- Corporate Membership discount rate to employers to increase to £29.50 per month.
- All other fees and charges at facilities will be increased in line with inflation 5-10%.
- SLT to continue to provide 'pay as you go', targeted concessions, free swimming and membership options, family, student corporate, monthly and annual.

Table 1 – SLT proposed fees & charges with effect from 1st Jan 24

Description	Charge Unit	Comparator average	Highest	Lowest	Current fee	Proposed fee	% increase
Swim adult	per head	£5.33	£6.00	£5.00	£4.95	£5.25	6%
Swim adult - concession	per head	£2.65	£2.80	£2.50	£2.50	£2.75	10%
Swim - Junior	per head	£3.10	£3.50	£2.70	£3.00	£3.25	8%
Swim Junior - concession	per head	£1.78	£1.80	£1.75	£1.50	£2.00	33%
Parent and toddler swim	per head	£6.00	£6.50	£5.50	£5.70	£6.50	14%
Full Fitness Membership (non-Family)	per month	£29.95	£65.00	£17.99	£33.00	£33.00	0%
Full Membership (Family)	per month	£64.00	£64.00	£64.00	£65.00	£65.00	0%
Corporate Membership	per month	£26.30	£30.00	£17.99	£28.00	£29.50	5.4%
Gym or Swim Only membership	per month	£24.55	£28.00	£20.00	£21.00	£23.00	9.5%
Gym Session	per visit	£7.59	£19.00	£3.00	£8.00	£8.00	0%
Swimming Lesson (*Reference Only)	per lesson	£8.75	£15.00	£4.75	£6.25	*£6.72	7.5%
Swimming Lesson (month)	per month	£34.30	£45.00	£22.50	£26.04	£28.00	7.5%
Exercise to Music (Aerobics etc)	per class	£5.65	£6.50	£4.00	£6.60	£7.00	6%
Exercise to Music (Aerobics etc) - concession	per class	£3.38	£3.50	£3.25	£3.30	£3.50	6%



5 Implications

Resources:	Maintaining charges at market rates is essential to ensure the long-term viability and sustainability of the leisure service.
Legal and Governance:	None – SLT have contractual discretion over fees and charges.
Risk:	Careful and timely monitoring of performance will ensure no unintended consequences from any review of fees and charges.
Equality:	Implications for equality (all aspects and characteristics) including how meeting Equality Duty, equality impact assessments.
Health and Wellbeing:	The approach to fees and charges is to encourage residents to participate with greater regularity.
Social Value:	No impact.
Climate Change:	No impact.
Corporate Parenting:	No impact.

6 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Heat Map

Appendix 2 – Authority Comparators & Local Competitor Benchmarking

7 Background Papers

None

