

RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISION TAKEN BY AN EXECUTIVE MEMBER

This form **MUST** be used to record any decision taken by the Elected Mayor or an individual Executive Member (Portfolio Holder).
 The form must be completed and passed to the Chief Officer Legal and Democratic Services no later than NOON on the second working day after the day on which the decision is taken. No action may be taken to implement the decision(s) recorded on this form until 7 days have passed and the Chief Officer Legal and Democratic Services has confirmed the decision has not been called in.

1. Description of decision

That the Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) concessions and FAB (Fit & Active in Bedford) card proposals for Borough Leisure facilities for 2024/2025, as outlined in section 4 of the report, be approved.

2. Date of decision

30 October 2024

3. Reasons for decision

The new leisure service specification outlined the importance of offering low-cost access to sport, physical activity, and wellbeing sessions for key user groups within the borough so they can benefit from the opportunities available within council leisure facilities. The proposals help support the most vulnerable and include direct benefits to refugees and asylum seekers, young people, foster carers/families and older people.

4. Alternatives considered and rejected

No other options were considered. The current contract for the management of the Borough Council's Leisure facilities requires the operator to offer a range of concessions for pay-as-you go activities and pre-paid monthly memberships.

5. How decision is to be funded

The introduction of the proposals is forecast by the Council's Finance team to be at no cost to the authority.

6. Conflicts of interest

Name of all Executive members who were consulted AND declared a conflict of interest.	Nature of interest	Did Standards Committee give a dispensation for that conflict of interest? (If yes, give details and date of dispensation)	Did the Chief Executive give a dispensation for that conflict of interest? (If yes, give details and the date of the dispensation).

The Mayor has been consulted on this decision

30 October 2024

Signed

Date: 30 October 2024

Name of Decision Taker:

Councillor Sarah-Jayne Gallagher
Portfolio Holder for Customer Experience
(inc. Leisure, Recreation and Culture)

This is a public document. A copy of it must be given to the Chief Officer Legal and Democratic Services as soon as it is completed.

Date decision published:31 October 2024.....

Date decision can be implemented if not called in:8November2024.....

(Decision to be made exempt from call in.....NO.....)

Bedford Borough Council – Report to the Portfolio Holder for Customer Experience (including Leisure, Recreation and Culture)

Date of Decision: 30 October 2024

Report by: Chief Officer for Regulatory Services and Culture

Subject: LEISURE CONTRACT CONCESSIONS AND FAB (Fit and Active in Bedford) CARD PROPOSALS 2024/2025

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Leisure contract specified that the new operator must offer a range of concessions (for pay as you go activities and pre-paid monthly memberships)
- 1.2 The operator is proposing the introduction of some new offers to attract key user groups, alongside a FAB card (Fit & Active in Bedford) that offers a discount to all users.
- 1.3 Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) have introduced similar offers at several of their other contracts and any loss of income from a reduction in activity charges has been offset by an increase in income through new additional casual users, secondary spend and membership uptakes. The financial modelling for these proposals is forecast at no cost to the Council
- 1.4 The proposals will help ensure the Council can continue to offer low-cost access to sport, physical activity, and wellbeing sessions for key user groups within the Borough, so they can benefit from the opportunities available within Council leisure facilities. The offers help support the most vulnerable members of the community and ensure lower income families have equal access.
- 1.5 An Equality Analysis has been completed for these proposals.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That the Portfolio Holder for Customer Experience (including Leisure, Recreation and Culture) considers and, if satisfied, approves the introduction of GLL’s concessions and FAB Card proposals outlined in the report at the Borough Leisure facilities for 2024/2025.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

3.1 The new service specification outlined the importance of offering low-cost access to sport, physical activity, and wellbeing sessions for key user groups within the Borough so they can benefit from the opportunities available within Council leisure facilities. The proposals help support the most vulnerable and include direct benefits to refugees and asylum seekers, young people, foster carers/families and older people at no forecast cost to the Council

3.2 The proposals will also help provide clarity to customers, give all Borough residents an opportunity for reduced cost access and provide a more user-friendly process for all service users.

4. DETAILS

The GLL Proposals

4.1 The FAB card (Fit & Active in Bedford)

The FAB card will offer customers a 20% discount on core leisure centre activities for an annual upfront fee:

FAB card	Price per Annum
Adult	£40
Junior (U16)	£16

4.2 Senior (65 and over) card

There would be a small annual fee (£5.50) for this card but the card then allows discounts of up to 30% against the core activities and is subject to annual renewal.

The 65+ criteria is set to more closely mirror the state pension age and is in line with other national schemes and neighbouring local authorities.

The 65+ age criteria will change (increase) in line with increases in the state pension ages and the protected benefits of those on the scheme will continue

4.3 Key Groups – Concession cards

If the customer falls into one of the listed concession categories, they are entitled to free admission (for specified activities) over an agreed period. Customers would have had their credentials checked and (where appropriate) do not need to prove entitlement for another 12 months. There is no charge for one of these cards.

Discount card	Included groups & fees	Pay as you go discounts
Children in care, care leavers & foster families card	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Children currently in care, Care leavers from Bedford Borough corporate parenting team, foster families currently with foster children in Bedford Borough from BBC foster team (All members of the household free to access)Evidence from BBC corporate parenting team uploaded to the app or scanned on site. ALL must be approved centrally at GLL head office.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Free Swim or gym at any site* No concession on racquets or classes
Young persons card	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A free membership for young people that provides 1-month free access to all facilities in the borough.Childhood to adulthood. A recognised time in life when young people face exams, change of school, college or university and are at risk of dropping out from sport and Physical activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">No cost for gym or swim at any facility* in the borough for a 30-day period.

Refugee and Asylum seekers card	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open to Adults (16+ years) and children (11-17 years) • Free for 6 months. • Open to all refugees who have been granted refugee status in England or Wales in the last 12 months. • The scheme is open to all refugees who have been granted refugee resettlement status in the last 12 months by the UK Government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free off-Peak access for gym and swim for a fixed six-month period at any site *
*Not including the Oasis leisure pool due to capacity at peak times		

4.4 Summary of all proposals

- Refugee and Asylum seekers card: Free 6-month card for off peak activities
- Children in care, care leavers & foster families' card: Free swim and Gym card
- Young Persons Card: Free 1 month swim and Gym card
- Senior Card (65+): An annual £5.50 cost giving 30% off all activities
- FAB Card: An annual fee of £40 or £16 (Adult / Junior) giving 20% off all activities

GLL have introduced similar offers at several of their other contracts and any loss of income from a reduction in activity charges has been offset by an increase in income through new additional casual users, secondary spend and membership uptakes. The financial modelling for these proposals, which has been reviewed by Finance, is forecast at no cost to the Council.

Context and Data

- 4.5 Understanding key population data was essential to ensuring that offers are reflective of the needs of the community and will also help support the sustainability of the leisure estate. National data and research continually indicate that cost is a barrier to participation in sport and physical activity for some target groups and the proposals will help make access to leisure facilities easier.
- 4.6 Bedford is expecting an additional 9515 people over 60 by 2031. The senior card for those 65+ will therefore support that specific key demographic to remain active.
- 4.7 In Bedford Borough over 90,000 people aged over 18 are overweight or living with obesity. This equates to three in five adults (63%), which is comparable to the England average of 64%.
 4.8 There are currently 180 care leavers and 163 looked after

children in Bedford. Physical activity, such as swimming is very important for health and wellbeing. Foster families do not receive a specific health and fitness allowance, and care leavers are one of the most at-risk groups of homelessness and poverty. The current usage of free access to swim and gym is at 31 users via data from corporate parenting.

- 4.9 BRASS (Bedford Refugee and Asylum seeker Charity) supports refugees and asylum seekers fleeing war and persecution to integrate locally. Physical activity is a positive way to manage trauma and supports integration. Home Office figures show 188 people were claiming assistance in Bedford as of December 2023.
- 4.10 The national active lives survey reveals that 72.8% of the adult population in Bedford Borough is now meeting the Chief Medical Officers' guidelines of at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise per week. This represents a remarkable 14.3% increase compared to previous data, highlighting a positive shift towards a healthier and more active community.
- 4.11 GLL in partnership with the Council are determined to continue to offer opportunities to participate in physical activity and the proposals will help support this aim.
- 4.12 GLL expect to see a high uptake of the FAB card, this is based on evidence from this scenario in other areas. This estimated increase in the uptake of FAB cards will help offset any lost income (through lower admission prices) by creating additional income from new users and increased usage.

5. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 5.1 No other options were considered. The current contract for the management of the Borough Council's Leisure facilities requires the operator to offer a range of concessions for pay-as-you go activities and pre-paid monthly memberships.

6. KEY	IMPLICATIONS
7.1 Legal Issues	None – The signed and agreed leisure contract that is in place with the operator (GLL) requires support for key user groups
7.2 Policy Issues	None – The proposals support the council's corporate strategy and aims of improving the health and wellbeing for all members of the community

7.3 Resource Issues	<p>The financial modelling for the introduction of the concessions and the FAB card forecast the proposals are at no cost to the council.</p> <p><i>GLL have introduced similar proposals at several of their other contracts and any loss of income from a reduction in activity charges has been offset by an increase in income through new additional casual users, secondary spend and membership uptakes.</i></p>
7.4 Risks	<p>All customers will have any current concession benefits protected so they are able to choose to stay on their current offer or move to the new offers if they feel they will be more beneficial</p>
7.5 Environmental Implications	<p>None – GLL are working with the Council to provide improvements in the use of energy at Borough facilities and the authority in partnership with the new operator have received a grant from Sport England of around £250K for the addition of PV (Photo Voltaic) panels at Kempston Pool.</p>
7.6 Equalities Impact	<p>In preparing this report, due consideration has been given to the Borough Council’s statutory Equality Duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations, as set out in Section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>The proposals promote equality by providing discounts for those in most need whilst recognising the importance of keeping all demographics physically active. The service specification states that <i>“The Operator’s pricing policy shall promote the principles of equality of access and sustainability. Usage and attendance by all sections of the wider and local community shall be encouraged through the Operator’s pricing policy to support delivery of the Services Specification”</i>.</p> <p>An Equality Analysis has been carried out and indicates a positive benefit to key groups within the community</p>
7.7 Impact on Families	<p>The offer is aimed at helping to attract more vulnerable groups/users to the facilities and make access for all members of the community more attractive. The offer includes concessions that will support all members of the community and offer some families a more affordable opportunity to make use of the Council facilities.</p>
7.8 Community Safety and Resilience	<p>Providing positive activities at affordable prices is likely to have a positive impact on anti-social behaviour.</p>
7.9 Impact on Health and Wellbeing	<p>The provision of affordable opportunities to access sport and physical activities play a significant role in supporting the Council’s Health and Wellbeing aims, promoting mental health and wellbeing, resilient and healthy communities. Access to opportunities is supported by this report, a key driver of which is to make our facilities accessible to all our residents.</p>

8. SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS AND OUTCOME

The following Council units or Officers and/or other organisations have been consulted in preparing this report:

- Cllr Sarah Gallagher Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture
- Tom Wootton – Mayor of Bedford Borough
- Sarah Hall – Chief Officer (Regulatory Services and Culture)
- Richard Tapley – Manager for Sports Development and Leisure
- Lila Begum – Senior Officer for Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
- Georgina Luther – Team Leader (Finance)

9. CONTACTS AND REFERENCES

Report Contact Officer	<i>Sarah Hall, Chief Officer for Regulatory Services & Culture sarah.hall@bedford.gov.uk</i> <i>Richard Tapley, Manager for Sports Development & Leisure tom.perrett@bedford.gov.uk</i>
File Reference	<i>N/A</i>
Previous Relevant Minutes	<i>None</i>
Background Papers	<i>None</i>
Appendices	<i>None</i>