

DECISION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
HEAD OF PARKS, LEISURE AND CULTURAL SERVICES	TOURISM AND LEISURE COMMITTEE	12 JANUARY 2023	4
SPLASH PARK FEE INTRODUCTION			

PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

SUMMARY

The report outlines the proposal to introduce a nominal charge of £1 per child per hour for the use of the SPLASH facility in St Annes. The report also describes the reasons for the introduction of a fee and the contribution that the income will make towards the cost-of-service provision and activities on the primary beach and promenade garden area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- To recommend to Council the introduction of a fee of £1 per child per hour for the use of the SPLASH facility in St Annes as part of the budget setting fees and charges from the Tourism & Leisure Committee.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS

The proposed fees and charges for services that are within the terms of reference of each programme committee are recommended to Council for approval as part of the annual budget-setting process.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

Economy – To create a vibrant and healthy economy	✓
Environment – To deliver services customers expect	✓
Efficiency – By spending money in the most efficient way	✓
Tourism – To create a great place to live and visit	✓

REPORT

- The SPLASH facility in St Annes has been a popular attraction since it was first opened in 2019. In 2021, the Parks and Coastal Service who operate the facility, introduced a booking system to manage the number of customers using the facility, ensuring compliance with government COVID-19 legislation. The booking system has been retained since this time to aid ongoing management and maintenance.
- To operate SPLASH effectively it requires two attendants to be present when the facility is open, to undertake the maintenance and testing programme for the equipment as well as regular testing of the water and the pipes. The Council has absorbed these costs within existing service delivery budgets and resources to date

however, with escalating costs for almost every aspect of the service and increased demand it is now appropriate to charge a fee for the use of the facility.

3. The proposal is to introduce a nominal charge of £1 per child per hour for use of SPLASH from the 2023 season. The fee has been established based on best practice where other similar facilities have a comparable charge, none charge less and several charge a little more. It is also important to set a fee that is affordable for everyone, as private beach activity concessions along the coast charge significantly higher rates for example trampolines and bouncy castles.
4. The fee will provide income which will contribute towards the cost of services and activities along the beach that have been improved recently with further enhancement schemes proposed for example, paddling pool improvements, ranger service support and beach access.
5. Payment methods will include an online payment system that will enable rebooking if the weather results in the facility having to close. There will also be the ability to book on the day at the facility when there is capacity available. The details of the payment options are still being explored with officers from IT and Customer Services teams.
6. The estimated income has been based on data from the existing booking system, possible impact on visitor numbers with a charge being introduced and 'on the day' passing demand from previous seasons. It is estimated that income would be in the range of £55,000 to £75,000 per annum. The actual income will be impacted by the weather which determines the availability of the facility along with several other potentially unforeseen issues including technical failure and staffing availability.
7. The performance of the facility with a fee charging arrangement will be reported to the new internal scrutiny committee after each season as part of the performance reporting process for all service areas.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	The recommendation to Council of a schedule of proposed fees and charges for services within the remit of each Programme Committee is a key part of the budget-setting process for the coming year. Any financial implications from proposed changes to fees and charges will be quantified and reflected in the financial forecast contained in the final Medium Term Financial Strategy report to be considered by Budget Council in March 2023.
Legal	None arising from this report
Community Safety	None arising from this report
Human Rights and Equalities	None arising from this report
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	None arising from this report
Health & Safety and Risk Management	None arising from this report

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BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
n/a	n/a	n/a