

Subject:	Sports Facilities Leisure Card Update		
Date of Meeting:	18 September 2014		
Report of:	Assistant Chief Executive		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Ian Shurrock	Tel: 29-2084
		Toby Kingsbury	29-2701
	Email:	ian.shurrock@brighton-hove.go.uk	
		Toby.kingsbury@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the council's Leisure Card scheme since it was introduced in April 2013. It reports on take-up of the scheme and provides an assessment of its impact upon the levels of physical activity by Leisure Card holders.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the positive benefits following the successful introduction of the citywide Leisure Card in April 2013.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 A new Leisure Card scheme was introduced across six council sports facilities in April 2013. These facilities are operated on behalf of the council by Freedom Leisure as part of the Sports Facilities Contract.
- 3.2 The Leisure Card scheme is based upon the principle of providing a discounted price to those less likely to be able to afford to pay standard prices. It is therefore designed to increase participation in sport and physical activity by traditionally low user groups for whom price is a particular barrier to taking part. This creates more opportunities for residents on low income to access sports facilities, thereby leading to a reduction in health inequalities.
- 3.3 The Leisure Card scheme is also designed to bring a clear and consistent approach to concessionary pricing. It is means-tested to ensure that it provides a fair and transparent system which gives discounts to those residents who are most in need.

How the Scheme works

- 3.4 The Leisure Card can be applied for, free of charge, by any residents in receipt of the following benefits:

- Jobseekers Allowance (Income Based)
- Employment & Support Allowance (Income Based)
- Pension Credit (Guaranteed Credit)
- Income Support
- Disability Living Allowance
- Attendance Allowance
- Child Tax Credit

Leisure Card holders are then entitled to a discount of 40% off the following activities at the six facilities:

- Swimming
- Fitness Suite
- Fitness Membership
- Squash
- Badminton
- Tennis
- Table-tennis

3.5 The scheme is administered by Freedom Leisure on behalf of the council.

Marketing of scheme

3.6 The Leisure Card has been marketed extensively by displaying posters and leaflets throughout the six sports facilities as well as through Freedom Leisure's and the council's website and social media channels. By working with colleagues in Revenues and Benefits, a number of priority sites were identified for displaying information including the Housing Offices, Job Centre Plus and other advice agencies likely to be visited by residents in receipt of benefits. Posters and leaflets were sent to GP surgeries and the scheme has been promoted at a series of high profile events including Peoples Day and TakePart and publicised through Public Health initiatives such as the exercise referral scheme, Food Partnership and Health Trainers. Specific target groups have also been provided with information including the Federation of Disabled People and the BME Sports Working Group. Active for Life, LATs

Measuring success

3.7 There are currently 1284 registered Leisure Card holders enjoying discounted access to council sports facilities. This is more than double the original target of 500 in the first year. There have been a total of 34,397 visits since the card was introduced in April 2013. Details of which centres have been visited and the activities undertaken are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1 – Leisure Card visits

	Swimming	Fitness Suite	Exercise Classes	Badminton	Total
King Alfred Leisure Centre	5339	5620	1241	48	12248
Prince Regent Swimming Complex	5863	2735	842	-	9440
Withdean Sports Complex	-	2877	2126	-	5003
Moulsecoomb Leisure Centre	-	4747	2637	96	7480
Stanley Deason Leisure Centre	-	212	6	8	226
Total	11202	16191	6852	152	34397

3.8 The table above shows that use of the fitness suites and swimming have been the most popular activities amongst Leisure Card holders. It also shows a good geographical spread of usage at different facilities across the city.

3.9 The data also shows a good mix of qualifying benefits which is demonstrated by the table below.

Table 2 – Leisure Card holders

Qualifying benefit	Number of Leisure Card holders
Jobseekers Allowance	366
Employment Support Allowance	210
Pension Credit	43
Income Support	116
Disability Living Allowance	189
Attendance Allowance	172
Child Tax Credit	156
Universal Credit	6

- 3.10 In June/July 2014, the council undertook a survey of Leisure Card holders to help measure the success of the scheme and to see whether it had positively impacted upon their ability to access the facilities.
- 3.11 A total of 90 responses were provided via a combination of online and paper copy surveys issued through the facilities. The key results of the survey are provided below.
- 34% of respondents had not previously used the council's sports facilities before joining the Leisure Card scheme. This equates to 436 new users.
 - 91% of respondents are now visiting council sports facilities at least once a week. Before the introduction of the Leisure Card scheme, the number of respondents visiting at least once a week was 37%. (See Table 2 below.)
 - Swimming and use of the Fitness Suites are the most popular activities amongst Leisure Card holders.

Table 3 – Frequency of visits

Frequency of visits	Before Leisure Card	Since Leisure Card	+ / - %
Daily	8%	16%	+8%
1-3 times per week	17%	56%	+39%
Weekly	12.5%	19%	+6.5%
Fortnightly	4.5%	2%	-2.5%
Monthly	19%	4.5%	-14.5%
Annually	4.5%	2%	-2.5%
Never	34%	0%	-34%

- 3.12 The Leisure Card scheme will continue to be marketed in partnership with Freedom Leisure and colleagues in Public Health to ensure it provides maximum opportunity for residents on low income to access sports facilities and be physically active.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 None required.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Consultation has been undertaken with Leisure Card holders to help measure the success of the scheme. Freedom Leisure was consulted prior to the scheme's introduction to ensure it was able to administer it effectively. Colleagues in Revenues and Benefits were consulted on the qualifying criteria to ensure the scheme targeted those in most need and they have also assisted with the promotion of the Leisure Card.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The results of the survey clearly demonstrate that the Leisure Card scheme has helped to provide better opportunities for residents on low income to access council sports facilities.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising out of this report.

Finance Officer Consulted: Michael Bentley

Date: 21/8/2014

Legal Implications:

- 7.2 There are no legal implications arising out of this report. The current Sports Facilities Contract with Freedom Leisure places an obligation on the company to work with the Council to implement and administer the Leisure Card Scheme, and this is being effectively administered in accordance with the contract, as set out in the report.

Lawyer Consulted: Jo Wylly

Date: 27/8/2014

Equalities Implications:

- 7.3 The introduction of the Leisure Card has had a positive impact upon equalities by providing increased opportunities for residents on low income to access sports facilities.
- 7.4 The continued promotion of the Leisure Card scheme is a key action in the Sports Facilities' Equalities Impact Assessment.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

N/A

Documents in Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

None