

Draft Concessions Policy

A concession is defined as a reduction in the usual price of a service that is granted to specific target groups or individuals (and their helpers where appropriate). A concession should not be confused with discounts available as routine marketing initiatives.

Objective

To enable groups of persons or individuals, who through personal circumstance cannot afford or need an incentive, to use a specific service provided by or on behalf of the Council at a concessionary rate below the normal service fee.

Principles

This policy shall apply to certain fees that the Council has discretion to set for services provided to individuals, and shall form the basis of contractual discussions on concessions to the fees for services contracted out through alternative providers

There shall be consistency and harmony in the way that concessions are applied across the District.

All concessions shall be simple to implement and monitor.

Car park charges and museum entry fees shall be known exceptions to the policy, and will be subject of separate detailed consideration.

This policy recognises that market forces will be the main determinant in setting the basic service charges.

Target groups and Individuals

Concessions will be targeted at specific groups of persons or individuals: these will include, *et al*, those entitled to:

- Disability Living Allowance;
- Attendance Allowance;
- Industrial Disablement Allowance;
- Incapacity Benefit;
- Blue badge parking permits.

- *What mechanism required identifying and approving these target groups??*
- *What mechanism to set service objectives? by the Portfolio Holder.*

Application

The Council will offer its concessions through the Cherwell Link Card Scheme.

Disadvantaged individuals will be charged a £5 administrative fee for their Cherwell Link Card, which will then enable them to half-price admission for 12 months at all municipal pools and gyms in the area and ten-pin bowling in Bicester, and a 50% discount on young person's holiday road shows.

Monitoring

The Cherwell Link Card Scheme will be monitored at officer level by the service manager (currently the Recreation & Health Improvement Manager) on behalf of the portfolio holder (currently the Deputy Chairman of the Executive).

Periodic monitoring by members will be undertaken through the normal overview and scrutiny process.

Cost

It is not possible at present to quantify the cost to the Council of subsidising these entrance fees, as this scheme formed part of the 25 year leisure contract negotiated in 2009, and the chosen bid did not expose any specific amount for this (which is believed to be a marginal element in any case).

However, the subsidy element might be identified during any future contract renewal negotiations, and the value for money assessed through the normal budget scrutiny process.

Authority

The Concessions Policy and the Cherwell Link Card Scheme will be approved by the full Council, on the advice of the Budget Scrutiny Committee.