

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 5**

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

<b>Date</b>	<b>13 JANUARY 2014</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES 2014/15</b>

**1. PURPOSE/SUMMARY**

To review the Council's Fees and Charges for 2014/15 in line with the Budget Strategy agreed by Cabinet on 19 December 2013.

**2. KEY ISSUES**

- At a separate agenda item, the draft Budget report for 2014/15 highlights the significant financial challenges the Council faces over the medium term and the scale of savings required. The proposals in this report contribute to the required savings for 2014/15 of £1.135 million.
- The current and forecast economic climate dictates that the Council's charges have to remain sympathetic of local people's ability to pay, whilst at the same time maximising income to the Council.
- The proposed fees and charges for 2014/15 are attached at Appendix A.

The proposals would, at current usage levels, generate further income from fees and charges by an estimated £108,360. This is in line with the assumptions and income levels included in the draft budget report. Consequently, the emphasis is on increasing usage in order to maximise income levels. Any reduction in the level of increases proposed will increase the pressure on the level of savings required.

**3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are asked to consider the proposals contained in this report and at Appendix A and to recommend to Cabinet the Fees and Charges to be included in the final budget proposals for 2014/15.

<b>Wards Affected</b>	All
<b>Forward Plan Reference No.</b> (if applicable)	
<b>Portfolio Holder(s)</b>	Cllr Alan Melton, Leader and Portfolio Holder, Policy and Resources and Strategic Finance Cllr Michael Humphrey, Portfolio Holder, Finance
<b>Report Originator</b>	Rob Bridge, Corporate Director and Chief Finance Officer Mark Saunders, Chief Accountant
<b>Contact Officer(s)</b>	Rob Bridge, Corporate Director and Chief Finance Officer Mark Saunders, Chief Accountant
<b>Background Paper(s)</b>	Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy and General Fund Budget 2014/15

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy and General Fund Budget 2014/15 agreed by Cabinet on 19 December 2013, highlighted the impact on Fenland of the Local Government Finance Settlement which has resulted in significant reductions in Government Grant over the medium term. Full details are contained in the draft budget report at a separate agenda item.
- 1.2 When reviewing the current level of fees and charges, officers have been mindful of the following principles:
- (i) The current economic climate and the impact on residents and businesses. The timing and extent of economic recovery;
  - (ii) The need to remain competitive and maintain/increase activity levels;
  - (iii) Flexibility in the charging regime to encourage increased usage and to assist with meeting Corporate Priorities;
  - (iv) The need to maximise income levels to assist with funding the Medium Term Financial Forecasts.
- 1.3 Although the Draft Budget report did not specifically identify a proposed increase in fees and charges, certain assumptions had to be made in order to produce a draft budget for 2014/15. The proposals detailed in this report will, overall, meet the income levels included in the December Draft Budget report. Any reduction in the level of increases proposed will increase the pressure on the level of savings required.

## 2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1 The proposed fees and charges for 2014/15, together with comparisons with current charges, percentage increase and financial impact are detailed at Appendix A.
- 2.2 Many of our fees and charges are non-vatable and are shown in Appendix A as either exempt(e), non-business(n) or zero-rated(z). All other charges are standard rated and shown inclusive of VAT, with the exception of the charges for South Fens Business Centre and The Boathouse, which are shown excluding VAT.
- 2.3 Some of our fees and charges are set centrally by government and apply to all local authorities. These are included in Appendix A and cover the following:
- Planning Fees
  - Licensing Fees issued under the Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005
  - Electoral Registration
  - Environmental Services – Process Authorisation Fees

We have no discretion in the setting of these fees and there are no further increases planned for 2014/15.

- 2.6 Taking into account the principles detailed in 1.2 above, the proposals in Appendix A generally incorporate an increase in line with inflation (rounded to the nearest 5p) for 2014/15. Exceptions to this are detailed in the following analysis of the service proposals.

2.7 Detailed service proposals are contained in the following sections together with some commentary explaining the rationale for the proposed charges for 2014/15. The following sections are in the same order as detailed in Appendix A.

### **3. GROWTH & INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES**

#### **3.1 Wisbech Port – Statutory Harbour Dues (Harbour & Light Dues, Conservancy Dues, Pilotage Dues and Additional Charges) and Wharfage Dues (Wisbech only)**

- (i) Members will be aware that this Council is the Statutory Harbour Authority for the River Nene from Wisbech to the Bar Flat Buoy in The Wash. The Council is allowed to set charges to recover costs over a period of time, a principle re-iterated by the Department for Transport in a letter to the Council dated 10 January 2012, where they emphasise that there should not be any 'substantial or continuing subsidy from a local authority's general funds to its port'.
- (ii) In accordance with the 'cost-recovery' principle, the Council will be seeking to recover not only the estimated annual running costs associated with the Statutory Harbour Authority activities, but also the additional annual payment to the Pilots' National Pension Fund relating to its' deficit recovery plan. These costs will be recovered from the charges levied on ships visiting Wisbech and Sutton Bridge using the Harbour Authority/Pilotage service. These will include both commercial shipping and ships associated with the Wind Farms construction.
- (iii) Taking into account the total estimated costs of running the service in 2014/15, together with anticipated shipping activity, it is proposed that all Statutory Harbour Dues are increased by 5%.
- (iv) It is also proposed that Wharfage Dues (levied on goods being imported or exported from Wisbech and discharged across the Council's quay) be increased by 5%.

#### **3.2 Wisbech Yacht Harbour**

- (i) All fees are proposed to increase by around 5%.

#### **3.3 Mini-Factories, South Fens Business Centre and The Boathouse**

- (i) Rental rates at South Fens and The Boathouse are proposed to increase by just under 3%. With the current challenging economic climate, rents have been set at a level which maintains competitiveness and encourage increased occupancy.
- (ii) Room hire rates have been set a level to maintain competitiveness, which has resulted in a variety of proposed percentage increases rounded to the nearest 50p.

#### 4. ENVIRONMENT & LEISURE SERVICES

4.1 All fees have generally been increased by inflation except for Process Authorisation Fees which are statutory charges, Ship Sanitation Certificates which are increased annually in line with the Association of Port Health Authorities recommended charges and the specific charges detailed below.

#### 4.2 Cemeteries Service

- (i) The Council provides a burial service in 6 cemeteries across the District, whilst maintaining another 15 closed cemeteries. FDC works hard to make sure that the cemeteries are pleasant and attractive places to visit. In order to deliver what visitors to the cemeteries expect, we work together with our contractor, TLG, to ensure that high standards are maintained.
- (ii) When assessing local charges for the cemeteries service, fees charged by neighbouring authorities are considered alongside the Council's current set of fees. In addition, the Council looked at the ongoing costs of maintaining the cemeteries throughout Fenland, and in particular the future implications of our memorial inspection programme. The recommended fees have been set at a level that continues to compare favourably with neighbouring authorities and will allow the Council to continue to manage cemeteries effectively in the future.

#### Comparison Adult Burial with neighbouring authorities (2013/14).

Proposed 2014/15		Current Prices 2013/14		
Product	Fenland	City	Peterborough	BCKLWN
Interment - Adult	£595	£553	£632	£800
Purchase – Adult Plot	£595	£547	£800	£780
Memorial - Adult	£160	£172	£94	£225
Memorial - Inscription	£85	£117	£49	£125
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>£1,435</b>	<b>£1,389</b>	<b>£1,575</b>	<b>£1,980</b>

- (iii) From the table above it can be seen that there remains scope for Fenland to increase prices in line with inflation and remain reasonable by comparison.

A new fee is proposed, the Short Notice Fee, to recognise that additional charges and work are incurred if an interment is arranged at short notice.

(iv) **Impact of 2013/14 Cemetery Fees and Charges**

The burial and ashes interment for the first 6 months of this year were broadly similar to the same period in 2012.

	<b>April – Sept 2012</b>	<b>April – Sept 2013</b>
<b>Burials</b>	82	78
<b>Ashes Interments</b>	58	63
<b>Burials income</b>	£41,420	£46,457
<b>Ashes income</b>	£11,051	£13,115
<b>Sale of plots</b>	£39,161	£33,261
<b>Memorial Applications</b>	£16,544	£15,541
<b>Total Income</b>	£108,979	£111,084

Income for Cemetery Services is subject to natural change and varies year to year. The changes to fees and charges approved 12 months ago have preserved the income to the authority from this service against the background trend of a gradual movement from burials to ashes interments.

4.3 **Commercial Waste and Recycling Charges**

- (i) Market analysis shows there to be wide differences between prices set by commercial service providers with FDC in the upper range of these prices. FDC provides a fair single price with no extras or VAT and has a good reputation for a reliable and personal service. Feedback indicates that businesses are mostly satisfied with the services offered.
- (ii) In line with customer feedback a new service has been offered this year to extend the domestic blue bin service to our commercial customers. Our customers are under pressure to save money and the services offered must remain price competitive against the local commercial providers.
- (iii) It is apparent our general waste and recycling services are reasonably priced.

The current 2013/14 collection charges (per lift) for general commercial waste are:

<b>Supplier</b>	<b>Sack</b>	<b>240lt</b>	<b>360lt</b>	<b>660lt</b>	<b>1100lt</b>
<b>FDC Current</b>	£1.95	£6.95	£7.50	£10.90	£15.75
<b>BCKLWN</b>	£2.32	£8.27	£9.78	£12.46	£15.99
<b>SCDC</b>	£1.45	£3.75	£5.65	£10.00	£14.00
<b>City</b>	£1.30	£4.80	£6.69	£10.08	£11.88
<b>Glazewing</b>	£1.75	£6.61	£7.51	£8.50	£12.84
<b>UK Waste</b>		£7.16	£8.50	£10.25	£12.00
<b>Average of Above</b>	<b>£1.46</b>	<b>£6.25</b>	<b>£7.60</b>	<b>£10.36</b>	<b>£13.74</b>
<b>FDC 2014/15</b>	£1.95	£7.10	£7.65	£11.10	£15.75

- (iv) A large part of the cost of the general waste service is the disposal charge for the waste collected. This year the landfill tax will increase by £9 and this increase will need to be passed on to our customers. This results in prices increasing above inflation. It is also proposed to re-profile prices offered for the range of bins and sacks to better mirror the prices offered by the private sector.

#### 4.4 Bulky Household Waste

- (i) In recent years the income from this service has steadied at around £15-16,000. Tonnage from this service is showing a slight increase.

April to August 12 = 25.22 tonnes

April to August 13 = 30.12 tonnes

A proportion of the materials is also rightly moving to the local 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector Furniture Re-use companies who offer free or low cost collections in order to re-use or provide products for resale.

- (ii) The Bulky Service does remain essential to many householders who do not have the transport to dispose of larger items, or have items that are not suitable for re-use.

#### Other authority's current charges for 4 items of bulky household waste:

District	2013/14 Charge
Fenland	£23.00
Cambs City	£33.00
East Cambs.	£25.00
Hunts	£31.00
South Cambs	£35.00
Kings Lynn West Norfolk	£32.50
Basingstoke and Deane	£20.96
Welwyn and Hatfield	£30.00

- (iii) It is proposed that this charge be increased to £25.00 in 2014/15.

#### 4.5 Domestic Bin Provision

- (i) The Council has the power under Section 46 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to make a charge to the householder for waste receptacles.

The present charge covers newly built properties and properties where bins have been taken by occupiers moving within or out of Fenland, the charge does not apply to cases of:

- where the bin has been stolen,
- where damage to the bin has been caused through the collection process,
- at properties subject to an assisted collection or
- fair wear and tear.

- (ii) Practice varies amongst local authorities on charging for replacement bins, but the trend appears to be increasingly towards making a charge, although the charges vary:

	Fenland	Cambridge City	Peterborough	Kings Lynn and West Norfolk	Basingstoke and Deane
Charge	£24.50	£50.00*	£36.00 incl.	£38.00 incl.	£25.56 incl.

\*(residual bins)

- (iii) The proposed charge for 2014/15 is £29.50 for a single bin and £69.50 for the supply of all 3 bins to a new property.

#### 4.6 Kitchen Caddies and Sacks

- (i) These remain a popular and useful product that our customers appreciate. The authority makes no profit on the sale of caddies and sacks. The proposed increase in prices reflects the increases experienced as a result of paper and plastic costs rising.

#### 4.7 Graffiti Removal

- (i) The Graffiti Removal Service is provided to ensure there is a response in cases of racist or offensive graffiti on private or public property once reported. Over the past year the cleansing team have responded to 145 reports of graffiti.
- (ii) Graffiti removal chemicals are expensive and this charge is intended to recover a proportion of the expenditure. Customers requesting the service are required to provide a written disclaimer confirming their consent for the removal to take place.
- (iii) At present commercial premises are provided with quotes and charged for all occasions of graffiti removal and domestic properties are free. The proposal is to recognise this service within Fees and Charges and to charge businesses a set rate for removal and domestic premises to receive a reduced cost service on the first occasion only. Domestic premises will be charged a contribution towards material costs on each occasion and towards labour costs on any revisit to premises. The charge of £50 will be applied for the first hour of any work. Advice on graffiti removal/treatment is also available on the Council's website.

#### 4.8 Clinical Waste Charges

- (i) Fenland District Council provides a clinical waste collection service to over 100 domestic households. These collections are made separately on a weekly basis to domestic customers, referred to Fenland District Council by the NHS, where care is being administered in their own home.
- (ii) In order to support the cost of providing this service Fenland District Council also provides a commercial clinical collection.

Without the commercial income the full cost of around £18,000 per annum would fall to the Council to support. Without this income it is estimated that a



charge of £3.50 per collection per week would be required to cover the costs of providing the service to our domestic clinical customers.

- (iii) Recent changes to HMRC rules concerning VAT application to clinical waste (dated 1<sup>st</sup> November 2013) remove the requirement to apply VAT to clinical waste and offensive waste when classified as 'Household' or 'Commercial' which have created some new classification for fees within the Fees and Charges document.

## 4.9 Leisure Services

### (i) Summary

- Fenland operates a leisure centre in each market town. Attendances are approximately 625,000 paying visits per year, generating a projected revenue of just under £2.2m in 2013/14.
- There is spare capacity in each of the facilities to accommodate more users during the daytime, peak time usage is at capacity in most gyms and dance studios.
- The leisure service is a discretionary service, provided by the Council for the benefit of the community delivering a quality, customer focused service which maximises income.
- The leisure service is positioning itself on a more commercial footing with the adoption of a leisure strategy, incorporating principles used by the private sector to achieve improved financial performance.
- Customer feedback indicates that customers are generally pleased with the service that they receive and would recommend the service to a friend or colleague.

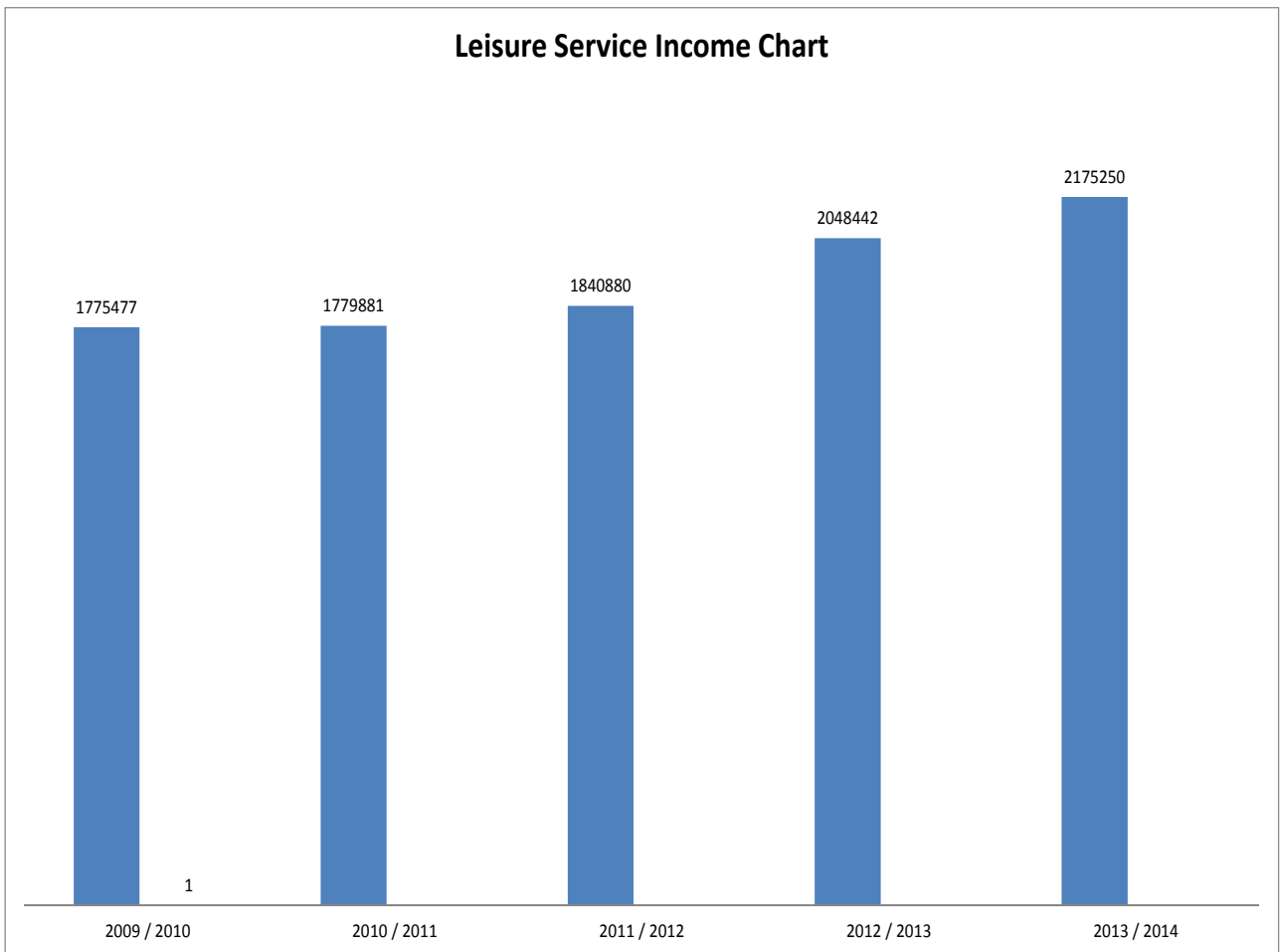
### (ii) Budget Position

Fees and charges levied for use of the leisure centres contribute towards reducing the net cost of providing the service. The net position is a deficit, however in recent years the cost of running the centres has been reduced considerably.

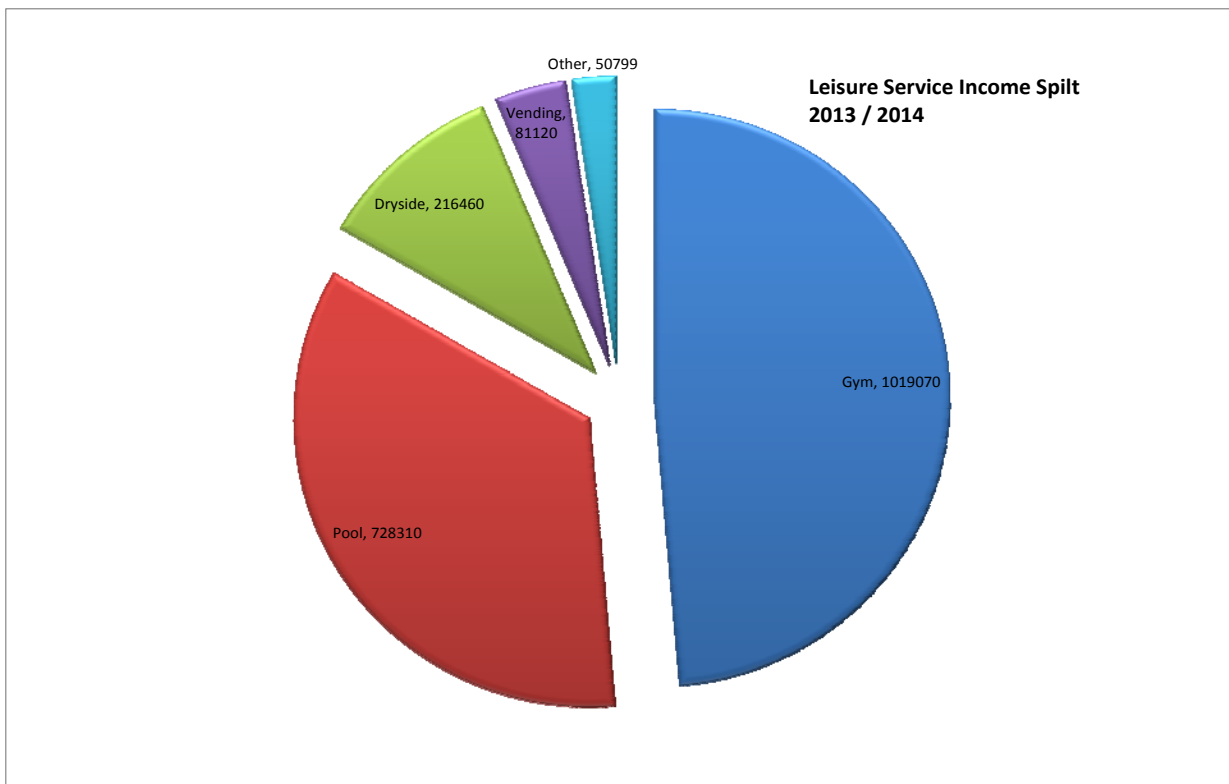
### (iii) Income Trends

The chart below illustrates the income position of the business over the past few years, with a projection for the current financial year, highlighting that, despite the economic downturn, the service income levels are being maintained. Income has risen more significantly in the past two years due to the opening of Chatteris Leisure in October 2012.

### Leisure Service Income Chart

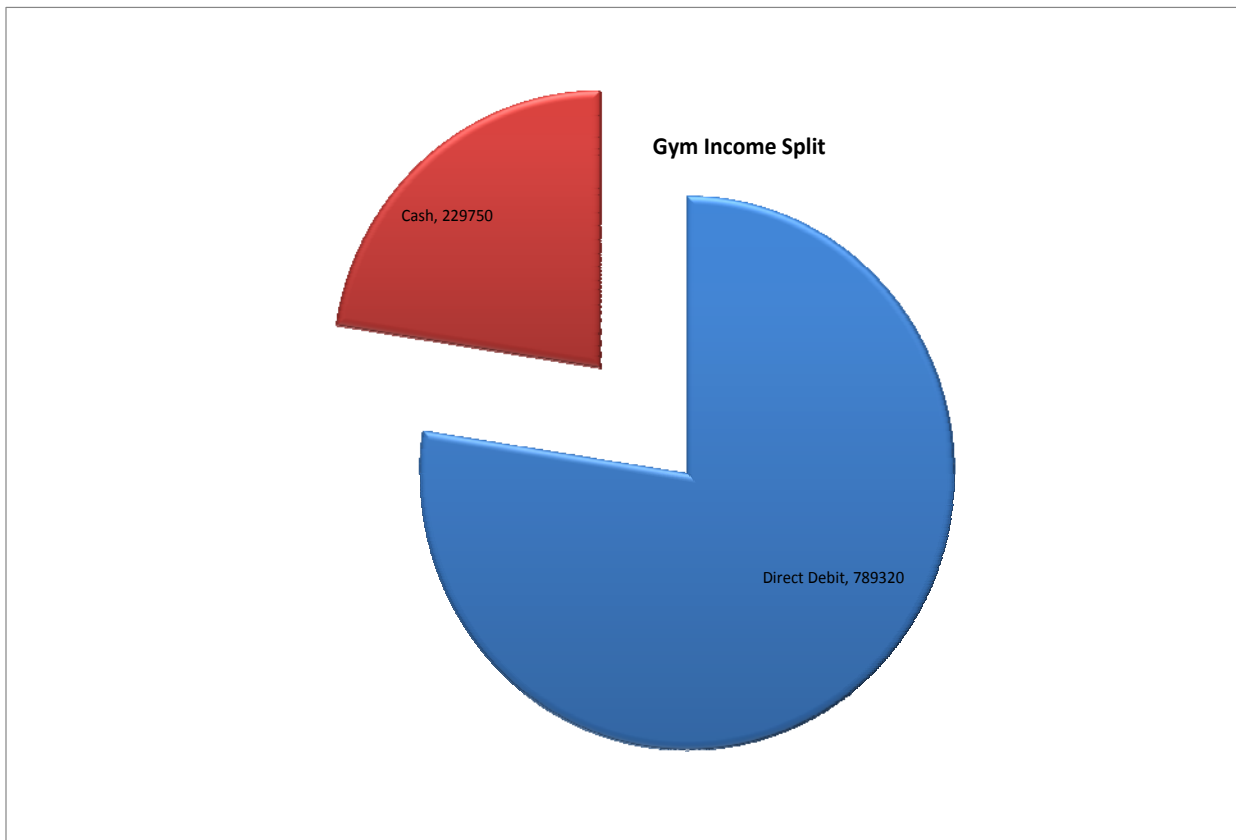


Whilst the service provides many activities, from a sensory room for disabled people to outdoor tennis courts, the bulk of revenue stems from swimming pool and gym income; this is demonstrated and further broken down in the following charts:



Of the £728,000 pool income, approximately 40% will come from swimming lesson income.

The following chart highlights the importance of the direct debit scheme to the gym income; the majority of customers are part of the membership scheme and pay monthly by direct debit.



It is clear from this information that focussing on income from the gym direct debit membership scheme and pool income, especially swimming lessons, is essential to maintaining and increasing the income levels of the leisure service.

(iv) **Leisure Services Pricing**

The current economic climate and market trends within the leisure sector makes, for most products, an increase in prices above inflation unlikely to realise any increased income. With leisure being a discretionary spend, increases to prices may affect the purchase decision of the customer. The following table demonstrates that prices are at the market rate for similar services offered in the neighbouring area.

	Fenland District Council	Huntingdonshire District Council	Kings Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council	Leisure Connection Stamford & Spalding	Vivacity, Peterborough	Alpine Fitness (no pool or fitness classes)	Oliver Cromwell Hotel (no fitness classes)	TruGym, P'boro (no pool, limited classes)	13 Fitness, Kings Lynn (no pool, limited classes)	Lakeside Lodge, Pitley No pool or classes
Headline monthly direct debit membership	<b>£40.50</b>	£46.50	£40.55	£32.00	£39	£40	£40	£15.99	£40	£27
Cash Gym Entry	<b>£6.70</b>	£7.00	£5.75	£6.55	£5.60	N/A	£8.00	N/A	£5.00	£7.00
Fitness Class	<b>£5.80</b>	£6.00	£4.40	£5.50	£5.60	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Headline monthly direct debit swim only	<b>£26.70</b>	£27.50	£20.00	£19.00	N/A	N/A	£28.00	N/A	N/A	N/A
Casual Swimming	<b>£3.80</b>	£3.50	£3.35	£3.30	£4.50	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Pool Hire	<b>£77.40</b>			£60.50		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Badminton Court Hire	<b>£10.30</b>	£9.50	£10.15	N/A	£11.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Football Pitch	<b>£48.50</b>	£48.00	£52.05	N/A	£56.50	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Soft Play	<b>£3.60</b>	£3.80	£4.70	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

[ Similar local authority facilities ] [ Private leisure facilities ]

Fees charged by the Council are generally at a similar rate compared to local authority neighbours. There is a variance in what private operators charge due to the difference in products. Private operators do not generally publish prices, so obtaining detailed pricing information is problematic.

An inflationary increase is considered appropriate for most products with the exception of the membership scheme.

(v) **Leisure memberships**

As highlighted earlier by the gym income analysis chart, the bulk of leisure service income stems from direct debit memberships. Market analysis indicates that there is little scope to further increase the cost of monthly memberships above their current level without the risk of losing members to other facilities or them dropping out of the scheme altogether.

The key to increasing membership revenue levels is retaining our current customers for longer and acquiring more customers to use the facilities when there is spare capacity – during weekday daytime.

The current leisure membership is split into concession and adult rates, with concession members being able to access facilities at off peak (weekdays prior to 4.30pm) and weekends only. In order to attract more adults to the membership, increasing the use of facilities throughout weekday daytimes, a significant change in the membership scheme is proposed. The proposed changes will make the membership scheme clearer, are designed to increase access for the general population throughout the day, and do not determine price by age.

**Proposal:**

Introduce membership schemes for all customers based on the time that they access the service, not their age. This is typical of the industry and is the direction that the service has been moving in for the past four years; the introduction of a simple to understand peak and off peak pricing model. This proposal is designed to encourage access to the facilities by people who do not work during the daytime, as well as retirees and younger people. To further differentiate the peak (Anytime) membership, access to all Les Mills and Zumba fitness classes will only be available to peak (Anytime) members or otherwise payable at the standard non-member rate.

As the Council has always charged adults aged 18 to 65 a standard rate, even if they only access the services off peak, there is a potential to reduce overall income with this strategy. Fenland does not have any data regarding this sort of membership to base changes to our members on. Using data from another authority who has been running a peak (Anytime) / off peak (Daytime) scheme for many years, the split between membership types for adults aged between 18 and 65 is that 12% of adults will take up the off peak scheme.

If this was the case in Fenland, the income reduction would be in the region of £27,000 p.a. as 200 adult members may take up the off peak (Daytime) option. However, as the facilities are under utilised during the day, this change would be expected to increase the size of the off peak (Daytime) membership base. To realise an additional £27,000 p.a., the service would need to attract add an additional 78 members for a year, paying the current monthly direct debit off peak rate of £28.80 / month. The membership changes, linked to the rebranding of the service and the investment in new gym equipment, is anticipated to add more than 78 members to the Daytime Membership ensuring the service hits revised income targets for 2014/15.

There is a risk to this approach. The data from a neighbouring authority is based on a mature product that has been in existence for some time. In Fenland we might expect some volatility with regard to the Daytime membership as customers decide what is right for them and swing between the two memberships. This being the case, there is a risk that more members could chose the Daytime option than anticipated, opening up the income gap further, creating a more difficult financial target.

**Anytime Membership**

- Anytime access to use the pool, fitness classes and the gym.
- Prices to remain at the current 2013 / 2014 rates, with a £1 per month reduction on the 12 month committed direct debit scheme to further enhance the attractiveness of this monthly product to clients.

**Daytime Membership**

- Access to use the pool, gym and fitness classes, excluding Les Mills and Zumba classes between 9.30am and 4.30pm.
- Last entry prior to 4.30pm weekdays and anytime at the weekend.
- Fitness class access in the evening possible by paying non-member rate.
- Prices to be set at £10 per month below the Anytime membership rates.

## Summary

These changes simplify the membership structure, ensuring that customers have a choice of options and that the team is able to explain the membership clearly to all customers. The change to membership by access time for all is simple to understand and fair, encouraging use during the daytime when the facilities are currently underutilized.

## Further Product Development

The service will develop further in the next year by offering nutrition support, small group and personal training sessions to customers. These products will be offered on a trial basis to gauge demand and developed accordingly.

Additionally, the service will actively search for groups meeting regularly during the day and offer bespoke packages to them in order to attract them to the facilities. Consultation with target groups is essential to understand what they want from the service in order to move this work forwards.

## Recommendation

To adopt the Anytime and Daytime membership model, with prices in Appendix A.

### (vi) Summary of Financial Effects

The adjustments to prices and memberships proposed in this paper are designed to ensure that the service increases income levels by approximately £40,260 on the current year's original income target to match expectations for next year's revenue budget. This assumes that the expected reduction in income from peak (Anytime) memberships is off-set by an increase in off-peak (Daytime) memberships.

The approximate changes in income are detailed below:

Leisure	Increase £
Pool	14,710
Lifestyle	18,020
Dryside	3,920
Other	3,610
<b>Total:</b>	<b>£40,260</b>

## 5. RESOURCES & CUSTOMER SERVICES

- 5.1 Room hire charges at the Fenland Hall and the One Stop Shops are proposed to increase by inflation. A small amount of income is generated from these charges.

## **6. HOUSING, ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

### **6.1 Travellers Sites**

- (i) The Council operates and manages 5 sites comprising 64 pitches, situated in Wisbech, Wisbech St. Mary, Murrow, Parson Drove and Chatteris, on behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council (who owns them). No increase in site rents are proposed as the income from these currently exceed operating costs. Any surplus generated from these rents are re-invested in the sites in accordance with the management arrangements agreed with Cambridgeshire County Council.

### **6.2 Homeless Persons Accommodation**

- (i) No increase in rents at Creek Road Hostel are proposed as it is considered that current rent levels reflect the standard of facilities offered.
- (ii) Increase in rents of 3.7% at the temporary accommodation properties (leased from Roddons) are proposed, in accordance with the lease agreement. This mirrors the increase for the rest of Roddons' properties.

### **6.3 Building Control**

- (i) The charging schedule for these fees comply with the provisions of The Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulations 2010. The principle of the charging regime is to cover the costs of works. All charges have been reviewed in conjunction with an analysis of time spent and cost of providing the service. As a result, it is proposed that the charges are increased by an overall 4.8% (individual charges increases vary according to type of work, time taken and cost).

### **6.4 Planning Fees**

- (i) These fees are set by government. Following four years of no increases, These fees were last increased by 15% with effect from 22 November 2012, following four years of no increases. No further increases are planned for 2014/15.
- (ii) Officers are currently reviewing the potential to introduce a 'pre-planning application' charge. This would produce benefits both to the public and the Council in terms of timeliness of responses, quality of submissions and generally ensuring a smoother planning application process. Proposed future charges for this will be considered by the review of the Planning service currently taking place.
- (iii) Ancillary charges have been increased by inflation.

### **6.5 CCTV**

- (i) No increase in these charges are proposed. Very limited income is generated from these charges.

## 6.6 **Licensing**

- (i) Licensing Fees issued under the Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005 are set by government and no increases are proposed for 2014/15.
- (ii) Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Licences charges should be set a level to recover the estimated cost of the service. In order to meet this objective, it is proposed that Drivers Licence fees are increased by 11.1%.

## 7. **POLICY & GOVERNANCE**

### 7.1 **Land Charges**

- (i) From January 2014, the service will be actively promoting the payment and receipt of information electronically and to assist with this objective, it is proposed that from April 2014, a 'hard copy' search will be charged at 10% above the basic search fee. No increase in the basic search fees are being proposed, as the current fees are at a level which covers costs and maintains competitiveness.

The Council does not charge for 'Personal Searches' (which had been set by government) in accordance with guidance received.

### 7.2 **Electoral Registration**

- (i) These fees are set by government and no further increases are planned for 2014/15.

## 8. **FINANCIAL SUMMARY**

- 8.1 The proposals in sections 3-7 above and Appendix A would, at current usage levels, generate further income from fees and charges by an estimated £108,360. This would, in overall terms, meet the income levels already included in the draft budget report for 2014/15. Any reduction in the level of increases proposed will increase the pressure on the level of savings required.
- 8.2 The total estimated fees and charges which will be included in the final budget report for 2014/15, takes into account the agreed level of fees together with estimated usage/activity levels.