## Network query responses

### Query Title: Leisure Fees and Charges - SL0165/291113

### Description:
With budget time approaching please can you supply the following information:

What approach are you taking to fees and charges reviews relating to 2014/15 pricing in Sport and Leisure services:

- % increase or no increase linked to inflation and economy?
- Market demand - commercial approach?
- Fixed amount - budget need?

### Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Authority</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29.11.13</td>
<td>Bradford Metropolitan District Council</td>
<td>John Coulton</td>
<td>01274 438795</td>
<td><a href="mailto:john.coulton@bradford.gov.uk">john.coulton@bradford.gov.uk</a></td>
<td>We have been directed to a 1% above inflation price increase.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.11.13</td>
<td>PRESTON CITY COUNCIL</td>
<td>Nigel Parsons</td>
<td>01772 906 900</td>
<td><a href="mailto:N.Parsons@preston.gov.uk">N.Parsons@preston.gov.uk</a></td>
<td>We benchmark against our local authority neighbours for our main prices such as casual swimming, gym and exercise class prices. We are looking at being at or just below an average of these prices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>We tend to benchmark against the local private sector gyms for our membership prices. We want to stay cheaper than them to remain competitive and also to reflect the difference in the standard of facilities. This means we are generally £10 a month cheaper than the cheapest private sector gym.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>We have a continual debate on how to deal with existing members. As in do you put up their prices to increase revenue at the risk of ‘waking’ sleeping members who then cancel memberships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>We did this two years ago and we lost more than we gained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Budget pressures this year have resulted in the above techniques being pushed to the maximum!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>It is a continual battle between the leisure team and the financial dept on competitive and non restrictive pricing versus price increases aimed at reducing the budget deficit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td>02.12.13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authority:</td>
<td>WALSALL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
<td>Ben Percival</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone:</td>
<td>01922 654341</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:percivalb@walsall.gov.uk">percivalb@walsall.gov.uk</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response:</td>
<td>We've recently experienced significant business growth and achievement of social goals from discounting targeted at under-represented groups; we intend to continue this approach for as long as it continues to deliver growth. Our fitness facilities currently operate at the budget end of the market and this will also continue - neither the local economy nor the age &amp; scale of our facilities would allow us to significantly trade in the same market space as commercial providers. Historically we have made the mistake of responding to budget pressures by increasing prices beyond what the market would sustain, leading to a net drop in revenues; we will strive to avoid repeating this error.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>02.12.13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authority:</td>
<td>MIDLOTHIAN COUNCIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
<td>Mark McCafferty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone:</td>
<td>0131 561 6502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mark.mccafferty@midlothian.gov.uk">mark.mccafferty@midlothian.gov.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response:</td>
<td>Midlothian Council will be raising its prices by 4% in April due to 'Budget Need' although we also benchmark with similar sized and surrounding local authorities to gauge where our prices are in relation to other authorities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>02.12.13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authority:</td>
<td>Wigan Leisure &amp; Culture Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
<td>Jeff Gorse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone:</td>
<td>07845 190936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:J.Gorse@wlct.org">J.Gorse@wlct.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response:</td>
<td>Leisure Centre price increases implemented from January each year. Increases are agreed at an activity level based on commercial factors but are sense checked by an overall average increase across the service to check in line with CPI.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>02.12.13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authority:</td>
<td>HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
<td>Ian Atherton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone:</td>
<td>03033334300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ian.Atherton@halton.gov.uk">ian.Atherton@halton.gov.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response:</td>
<td>Fees and charges are typically raised in line with inflation in Haltons Community Venues. This will be the case this year. Occasionally we make additional special recommendations such as reducing the block booking discount, introducing an off peak rate for the sports hall usage between 9-4, removing free lets etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>02.12.13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authority:</td>
<td>Leeds City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
<td>David O’Loan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone:</td>
<td>(0113) 22 43179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:David.OLoan@leeds.gov.uk">David.OLoan@leeds.gov.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response:</td>
<td>Leeds are looking at No increases in January 2014, except for schools and two specialist areas.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Oxford City Council**

*Lucy CHERRY*

**Date:** 02.12.13

**Telephone:** 01865 252707

**Email:** lcherry@oxford.gov.uk

**Response:**

Oxford City leisure facilities are managed on behalf of the Council by Fusion Lifestyle (a registered charity). The Council retains overall control over maximum core programme prices.

Fees and Charges are applied for the year April to March and are reviewed annually by Fusion with amendments proposed to the Council. These proposals are then taken to a stakeholder Leisure Partnership Board for agreement prior to being taken to the Council for approval.

Fusions review and proposals for fees and charges taking consideration of:

- The retail price index
- Competitor pricing
- Usage levels and trends
- Price trends in public and private provision
- Specific facility or service developments.

---

**STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

*Geoff Caine*

**Date:** 02.11.13

**Telephone:** 01438-242206

**Email:** Geoff.Caine@stevenage.gov.uk

**Response:**

Hi our approach to increases are

- % increase or no increase linked to inflation and economy?
- Market demand - commercial approach?

---

**Merton Council**

*Francis McParland*

**Date:** 02.12.13

**Telephone:** 020 8545 4172

**Email:** Francis.McParland@merton.gov.uk

**Response:**

The London Borough of Merton approach this year is to increase our F&Cs for sport pitches, tennis, public halls, by an inflationary amount - we have already done this with Allotments.

---

**BELFAST CITY COUNCIL**

*Adrian Walker*

**Date:** 03.12.13

**Telephone:** 02890 320202

**Email:** walkeradrian@BelfastCity.gov.uk

**Response:**

In Belfast City Council we are adopting a general rise of 5% across the board...i.e inflation / economy rise.

Some prices i.e summer schemes have been priced more on demand and in an attempt to break even over a 2-3 year cycle. Our private coaching is being priced based upon commercial approach with a 17% rise in 2014-15.

---

**EAST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE COUNCIL**

*Dave Clark*

**Date:** 03.12.13

**Telephone:** 01262 606715

**Email:** Dave.Clark@eastriding.gov.uk

**Response:**

East Riding Leisure approach is market demand commercial approach led, although in reality this will lead to most prices being frozen for a second successive year.
LARNE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Kevin Thomas

03.12.13

Email: ThomasK@Larne.gov.uk

Telephone: 028-2826 0478

Response:

In the past there has often been a ‘blanket approach’ whereby we are instructed to put prices up by 5% (for example). Often the instruction (guideline) has come from Finance section and is linked to the retail price index (or in some way to the rate of inflation).

This year we will be leaving many prices as they are and putting others up by modest margins in line with market trends. Locally, I am aware that customers will not tolerate any substantial price hikes due to the on-going economic climate.

MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

David Boothroyd

03.12.13

Email: d.boothroyd@manchester.gov.uk

Telephone: 0161 223 1155

Response:

•% increase or no increase linked to inflation and economy?

We work closely with our delivery partners, Manchester Sport and Leisure Trust, Wythenshawe Trust and The Velodrome Trust in agreeing a pricing package on an annual basis. This has varied in recent years ranging from no increase to no more than an inflationary rise. Targeted programmes for social and community benefit and health activities have been made more accessible via an affordable or free offer.

•Market demand - commercial approach?

We have a balanced approach to the commercial aspects of the service alongside the our social, partners (health, sport) and localised need within our community programmes. We work with our delivery partners as above to develop and agree the programmes/promotions and the offer is driven through their marketing/commercial managers, Council officers and sports/health partners to develop participation.

•Fixed amount - budget need?

MIDLOTHIAN COUNCIL

Mark McCafferty

03.12.13

Email: Mark.McCafferty@midlothian.gov.uk

Telephone: 0131 561 6502

Response:

Midlothian Council Sport & Leisure service will be increasing its charges in 2014/15. This is a budget need, with an element of commercial approach to bring some charges in line with other providers/authorities.

South Staffordshire Council

Simon Nuttall

06.12.13

Email: S.Nuttall@sstaffs.gov.uk

Telephone: 01902 696518

Response:

•% increase or no increase linked to inflation and economy?

We are given a require income target by Financial Services, generally this tends to be around 3%, but has been lower in past year.

•Market demand - commercial approach?

We tend to do a bit of both, dependent on the sensitivity of the activity. We try to take commercial approach, but this is also backed up by extensive price benchmarking. We use this to set our process in an area where they remain competitive based on neighbours, both local authority and commercial operators. This is balanced again our current usage trends and process fixed accordingly.

•Fixed amount - budget need?

As I stated earlier we are set our overall financial target by our accountants. However, we are increasingly looking at reducing our bottom line as part of that budgetary need.
**Response:**

We are undertaking a comprehensive review of all prices as we still have a number of inconsistencies across what were 7 authorities prior to becoming Durham County Council. The premise for concessionary prices is intended to be 'ability to pay' rather than status but this has yet to be approved.

Because of the complications of our situation it would be better for anyone wanting to know more to contact me directly.

---

**Date:** 09.12.13  
**Authority:** GWYNEDD COUNCIL  
**Name:** Ian Jones  
**Telephone:** 01286 679804  
**Email:** IanJones@gwynedd.gov.uk  

**Response:**

Further to your request below, I can confirm that we are taking the following approach with regard to Fees and Charges for 2014/2015:

- There will be a general increase linked to inflation across the whole pricing structure, as well as:
  - Targeted further increases in swimming and centre sessions
  - No increase in DD fees for existing members however, new members will pay a higher rate
  - A commission will be set up in order to investigate the impact on differential fees for different areas within the county.