

For publication

Approval of a corporate concessions policy (DLO30)

Meeting:	Cabinet
Date:	1/12/2020
Cabinet portfolio:	Deputy Leader
Directorate:	Policy and Communications

1.0 Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To set out a summary of the way that the Corporate Concessions Policy has been implemented across service areas during the last year, in line with the agreed review schedule.
- 1.2 To approve the continued use of the existing Corporate Concessions Policy.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That cabinet notes the information provided by service areas on the implementation of the policy.
- 2.2 That Cabinet approves the continued use of the existing Corporate Concessions Policy.
- 2.3 That the Service Director – Corporate in consultation with the Deputy Leader is given delegated authority to approve minor concessions policy amendments between the formal review periods.

3.0 Reasons for recommendations

- 3.1 To ensure a consistent approach to concessions within discretionary services while retaining the flexibility needed to achieve the Council's social and legal obligations, as well as its commercial needs.

3.2 To improve accessibility to our events and performances.

4.0 Report details

Background

- 4.1 The concessions policy enables the Council to provide a concession on charges to some discretionary services. The definition of concession in this policy means any reduction in price from the full service charge that has been agreed to achieve the Council's social and legal obligations, as well as its commercial needs.
- 4.2 All concessions offered will support the strategic aims and objectives of the Council in accordance with the approved Council Plan and Medium Term Financial plan.
- 4.3 This sits alongside any agreed corporate Charging Policy that the Council adopts, and has regard to the principles of the Audit Commission's publication 'positively charged'.
- 4.4 The concession rate and type varies for different services depending on the outcome aimed for within the service e.g. to encourage participation, to address inequalities of access, to manage demand etc.

Previous Policy review

- 4.5 The Corporate Concessions Policy was first agreed by Cabinet on the 1st November 2016 for implementation from 1st April 2017. The Deputy Leader was also given delegated authority to approve policy minor policy amendments in between the formal review periods (every two years).
- 4.6 Under these arrangements, and following a best practice equality and diversity consideration, a delegated decision was taken by the Deputy Leader in 2017 to introduce a new concessions category for essential companions.
- 4.7 Therefore, the current policy includes the following concessionary categories:
- Income based (including low income and full-time students)
 - Age based (including people at or over the national state retirement age, children and young people under the age of 16)

- Care leavers under the age of 25 years
- Active Armed Forces members
- Carers
- Essential companions
- Community hiring rates for community and voluntary sector organisations

4.8 Discounts and other offers made for commercial reasons only (such as corporate memberships, promotional discounts, frequent user discounts and/or other group discounts, or to promote bulk purchase and early or pre-payments) are excluded from this policy, and are guided by the council's corporate charging policy.

2020 Policy Review

4.9 Generally the concessions policy has been working well across all relevant service areas (as outlined within the policy), which include leisure, theatres, venue hire, pest control, bulky waste and crematorium services. Data has been gathered to demonstrate the way the concessionary rates have been applied during the last year. This information is summarised at appendix B.

4.10 During this review of the existing policy, no service area has indicated concerns or suggested amendments to the policy. Furthermore, best practise equalities considerations have not resulted in additional concessionary categories being suggested, and therefore, no further amendments are recommended at this point.

5.0 Alternative options

5.1 During the process of this review, no appropriate additional concessionary categories have been identified through best practise research or service area feedback.

5.2 The Council could choose not to provide concessionary discounts on its discretionary services, however, it is anticipated that this would have a negative impact on uptake of services and inequality of access for the groups defined within the policy, This is reinforced in the associated equality impact assessment.

6.0 Implications for consideration – Council Plan

- 6.1 Aligned with the council's strategic aims and objectives as included in the Council Plan and medium term financial plans, the policy will benefit the users of council services. In the main this includes people who live, work and/or study in Chesterfield, but also includes visitors to the area. Concessions apply to a variety of people based on income disadvantage, age and other key groups.

People that meet specific eligibility criteria to receive a concession will benefit from the reduced rate of charge which will help make services more affordable and therefore more accessible to them providing more equal opportunity for social involvement. Concessionary rates encourage participation and help to address inequalities of access.

7.0 Implications for consideration – Financial and value for money

- 7.1 The policy promotes the funding of concessions from service user charges and away from the general tax payer - where that is possible to achieve without detrimental impact on the service.

The cost and loss of income by providing concessions should be offset by income generated by services paid for at the full rate and surplus from higher demand services. This principle is underpinned by the priority to maximise income to sustain and improve services where possible.

All discretionary services have the freedom to vary the rate of concession offered in order to manage service delivery and demand, competition and improvement opportunities. The unit cost should form part of this consideration.

8.0 Implications for consideration – Legal

- 8.1 Legislation allows the Council to choose to provide certain services to the public in the interest of the council's area and its citizens. We refer to these services as discretionary services. The Council may choose to charge for these services and choose to provide a concession on that charge.

9.0 Implications for consideration – Human resources

9.1 No human resources implications are anticipated. The policy does not include corporate discount, as this is covered within individual service fees and charges arrangements.

10.0 Implications for consideration – Risk management

Description of the Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigating Action	Impact	Likelihood
Reputational damage and potential loss of custom if concessionary rates are not available to key groups.	Medium	Medium	Continued use of the existing policy and concessionary arrangements will support access to discretionary services.	Low	Low

11.0 Implications for consideration – community wellbeing

11.1 Concessionary rates encourage participation and help to address inequalities of access, ensuring that discretionary services are accessible for our local communities, including participating in leisure and arts.

12.0 Implications for consideration – Economy and skills

12.1 Increasing the use of Chesterfield Borough Council services can result in additional secondary spend within the wider economy and a have a positive impact on supply chains.

13.0 Implications for consideration – Climate Change

13.1 No climate change implications have been identified.

14.0 Implications for consideration – Equality and diversity

13.1 The Equality Impact Assessment has been updated and is attached at appendix C. Regarding policy outcomes for those people meeting the disadvantaged criteria specified in the policy, concessions will provide an inducement to use the services in the interests of their general wellbeing by creating greater equality of access, social inclusion, physical and mental health improvement, and education and learning.

This will directly assist the council in meeting a number of its social responsibilities, and strategic aims and objectives.

Decision information

Key decision number	983
Wards affected	All

Document information

Report author	
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Background documents	
These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when the report was prepared.	
Appendices to the report	
Appendix A	Concessions Policy
Appendix B	Concessions data summary 2019
Appendix C	Equality Impact Assessment