

# Management Committee

15<sup>th</sup> August 2017

## Deckchair pricing policy

### For Decision

#### Briefholder(s)

Councillor R Kosier - Briefholder for Tourism, Culture and Harbour

#### Senior Leadership Team Contact:

M Hamilton, Strategic Director

#### Report Author:

N Thornley, Head of Economy, Leisure & Tourism

#### Statutory Authority:

Local Government Act 1972

### Purpose of Report

1. To consider the public consultation results regarding the policy of providing free deckchairs and half price windbreaks for residents of Weymouth and Portland aged 60 and over and the outcomes of the Equality Impact Assessment.

### Recommendations

2. To keep the existing charging policy of free deckchairs;
3. To consider the age of eligibility onto the scheme so that it fits in line with the recommendations of the Equality Impact Assessment and;
4. That should the age of eligibility be changed, that all existing pass holders will continue to be users of the scheme and any age changes will be implemented as of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018.

### Reason for Decision

5. The Policy Development Committee considered the results of the public consultation at the 31<sup>st</sup> July committee meeting with a recommendation that there are no changes to the current policy. The results from the consultation and the Policy Development Committee report are attached at Appendix A and B of this report.
6. The results from the Equality Impact Assessment also favour keeping the existing policy however, the evidence suggests that the current age requirement for eligibility onto the scheme need to be updated to take into account changes in society with people working longer. The new proposal

suggests keeping the scheme but increasing the age of eligibility to fit in line with the English National Concessionary Bus Pass. This bus pass concession for older people has been in place since 2001. To be eligible for the scheme men and women must have reached the state pension age for women. Previously the eligible age for concessionary travel was 60 years of age. However, since 6 April 2010, the age of eligibility for concessionary travel in England has been tied to the pensionable age for women. So, as the pensionable age for women gradually increases from 60 to 65, so too will the age of eligibility for concessionary travel increase for both men and women. The full Equality Impact Assessment is attached as Appendix C.

7. Earlier this year, the Policy Development Committee considered a report to review the current policy of providing free deckchairs and half price deckchairs on Weymouth seafront to older residents living in the Borough. This policy had not been reviewed since its introduction 30 years ago. Members agreed to carry out a public consultation on proposed changes to the policy. This was carried out in May/June on dorsetforyou.
8. The consultation results are presented at Appendix A. There were a total of 370 respondents with 81% supporting a continuation of the current policy. 75% of respondents did not support any increase in income from changing the policy being used to provide free or subsidised swimming for disabled people at Weymouth Swimming Pool and Fitness Centre.
9. 85% of respondents were aged 55 plus and 53% were aged 65 plus. The results of the consultation clearly demonstrated that the current scheme is highly valued by residents and therefore they are keen for it to be retained. Almost all respondents added a comment as part of their response.

## **Implications**

### **Corporate Plan**

10. Empowering Thriving and Inclusive Communities - Building strong inclusive and sustainable communities that empower local people to influence and provide the services that matter most to them.
11. The population in Weymouth and Portland is becoming increasingly elderly as residents live longer and because many people who come to live in the area are close to retirement age.

### **Financial**

12. The deckchair operation is vulnerable to weather conditions annually but the last 4 years have shown net profits of:

2013/14 - £25,532

2014/15 - £25,567

2015/16 - £6,501 (impacts of Job Evaluation coupled with extremely poor weather during "peak" season)

2016/17 - £22,519

The cost of administering the subsidy scheme annually is approximately estimated £750. The current printing expenditure is £1,055 for 4,250 passes which are in circulation.

13. It is estimated that if all those who enjoy a free deckchair pay the standard £2.20 then an additional £5000-£6000 would be generated.

### **Equalities**

14. An equality impact assessment has been undertaken on the current scheme (Appendix C) to ensure that the extent of the dependencies and impacts are known.

The main impact relates to people that are aged 60 and over and residents of the Borough who have been issued a pass. Any decision to increase the age to 60 would not affect the validity of any passes already in circulation.

Affordability of the deckchair hire may be an issue for some wishing to use the service; however there is alternative free public seating available on and around the seafront offered by the Council.

There is also a wide range of seating options provided by the private sector (eating out and seating areas) along the seafront.

### **Risk Management (including Health & Safety)**

15. The operation of the deck chair hire service has a full risk assessment together with adopted operational procedures to mitigate against risk.

### **Consultation and Engagement**

16. A consultation exercise was undertaken by the Consultation Officer in line with Council policy throughout May and June 2017, a copy of the Consultation and subsequent results are included at Appendix A & B

### **Appendices**

Appendix A. Consultation Results Overview

Appendix B. Policy Development Committee Report, 31 July 2017

Appendix C. Equality Impact Assessment

### **Background Papers**

None

### **Footnote**

Issues relating to financial, environmental, economic and equalities implication have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.

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