

ANGUS COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENTAL AND LEISURE SERVICES COMMITTEE – 12 OCTOBER 2004
RESOURCES AND CENTRAL SERVICES – 21 OCTOBER 2004

INCREASING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMPLOYEES

JOINT REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF LEISURE SERVICES
AND THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

ABSTRACT

To seek committee approval to pilot a scheme to allow Angus Council employees subsidised access to sports facilities, to increase physical activity uptake, as part of the Routes to Leisure Direct Debit scheme.

1. RECOMMENDATION (S)

It is recommended that the Committee: -

- Approve the introduction of a six month pilot scheme as identified within this report
- Agree that an evaluation of the pilot should be carried out after six months on the staff uptake on the scheme with revised financial implications
- Agree that a further report will be presented to committee on the results of the evaluation

2. INTRODUCTION

This report provides detail on the remit given to the Personnel Services Manager to 'Consider possible staff discount rates at council owned leisure centres' by the Resources and Central Services Committee of 17 June 2004.

There are already a number of local employers within Angus who offer employee benefits by subsidising access to Angus Council sports facilities. The schemes all operate on the basis of the employee paying as they go for use of the facilities. The rate, which the employee is charged, is set within the Leisure Management Information System (LMIS) according to the percentage discount as agreed with that employer. At the moment this varies between 25% and 50% depending upon employer. One scheme currently in operation with Glaxo also offer discount to the employees immediate family.

Most of these schemes have been running for a number of years with the companies being very satisfied with the services provided by the council.

Recent internal meetings regarding Scotland's Health at Work (SHAW) have highlighted a desire by the departmental co-ordinators for Angus Council to examine the possibility of the introduction of scheme to subsidise Angus Council employees to access sports facilities. SHAW is an award scheme to encourage and support employers to develop policies for promoting health in the workplace.

The Corporate Health Improvement Network discussed the issue of promoting physical activity opportunities to Angus Council employees at their meeting on 16 September 2004. Recognition was given to initiatives presently being developed and the opportunity to be involved in any future developments.

The Scottish Executive established a Physical Activity Task Force (PATF) to promote physical activity in Scotland. The task force, within it's strategy, 'let's make Scotland more active' has set a target to achieve 50% of all adults aged over 16 years of age to take 30 minutes of moderate activity on most days of the week by 2022.

This target and others from the PATF replaces those set out in the White Paper 'Towards a Healthier Scotland'.

The PATF further recommends that employers should be given incentives to promote physical activity and that this should be developed and supported through initiatives such as SHAW.

Evidence suggests that having a physically active workforce:

Fewer days off work – research shows that active employees take 27% fewer days sick leave than inactive employees.

Lower staff turnover – studies show that following the introduction of an on-site fitness programme, turnover was reduced by between 8% and 13%.

Fewer industrial injuries – studies show that following the introduction of physical activity initiatives to workplaces, the number of injuries was reduced by 25%

Becoming more active can also contribute to an improvement in overall mental health, alertness and general well-being.

The PATF refers to workplace policies that have been proven to have a significant effect on promoting physical activity amongst employees including:

Discounts for employees who want to use recreational facilities

3. PROPOSALS

Angus Council, as an employer wishing to promote health and well-being and maximise attendances amongst employees, sees the benefits of the introduction of a scheme to promote physical activity as an integral part of all employees lives.

It is proposed to introduce a pilot scheme for Angus Council employees, which would be managed and evaluated through the LMIS and specifically by utilising the existing Route to Leisure card and Direct Debit (DD) scheme.

The LMIS would have a new member type, 'Angus Council', added to the database that would allow the department to monitor the uptake and visit history of the individual Angus council employees.

Existing Route to Leisure members would convert from their existing member type to the new category with new members being entered into the system as this new member type.

Both existing and new members would require to sign up to the DD scheme and it is proposed that the employee scheme would offer a 25% discount on the standard DD monthly charge. There would be no discounted rate for joint or concession DD monthly chargers during the pilot stage.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The management of the scheme can be contained within the existing infrastructure associated with the LMIS.

The current level of monthly charge for a standard DD member is £25.00 (inclusive of VAT), which would mean that each employee joining the scheme would be subsidised £5.32 (after accounting for VAT) per month for the period of the pilot.

Employees wishing to apply to join the new scheme would require to sign up for a minimum period of the six month pilot and would be charged a monthly DD of £18.75 (inclusive of VAT) This charge would provide unlimited use of the sports facilities, subject to availability, on the production of their Route to Leisure card.

It is anticipated that for the duration of the pilot period that a financially neutral position will be achieved. Notwithstanding in the event that any nominal adverse financial implications arise they will be contained in the overall available Leisure revenue budget. An assessment will be carried out at the end of the pilot period and the results including any possible proposed changes to the scheme will be reported to Committee at that time

It is also anticipated that the promotion of the scheme by the SHAW co-ordinators will result in an increased uptake by inactive members of the workforce who will compensate for existing active members transferring to the scheme. If this is the case then there should be no detriment to the income generation potential by sports services and all costs can be absorbed.

5. CONSULTATION

The Director of Law and Administration, the Director of Finance, and the Director of Social Work and Health have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

6. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

There are no human rights implications associated with this report.

JOHN R ZIMNY

DIRECTOR OF LEISURE SERVICES

A B WATSON

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

NOTE:

The following background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information), were relied on to a material extent in preparing this report.

'Let's make Scotland more active'
A strategy for physical activity
Physical Activity Task Force