

---

<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Education &amp; Communities Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>25 January 2022</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Corporate Director Education, Communities &amp; Organisational Development</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>EDUCOM/13/22/RB</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Ruth Binks</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712748</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Update on Swimming for Under 16s and Gym Membership</b>		

---

## 1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide proposals for the provision of free or subsidised swimming for the year 2022/2023 and to give an update on a pilot for gym membership.

## 2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 At the meeting on Tuesday 19 January 2021 the Education and Communities Committee considered options for providing free swimming for under 16s, following a decision of the Council in December 2020 to agree, as part of the budget process, a saving of £100,000 from the £180,000 budget. The proposals in the paper considered by the Committee in January 2021 are outlined in section 4.2. Option 3 was the option recommended by the CMT.
- 2.2 The Committee asked that consideration be continued to the March Committee for a further detailed report providing further detail and financial implications relative to (1) the possible provision of the extra £27,000 being allocated from the Under 19s Sports Subsidy rather than the GTVO (2) the proposal comprising the following:
- (a) that Inverclyde Leisure be paid for each swim rather than a set annual sum;
  - (b) that under 11s swim be continued on the same basis;
  - (c) that children 11 to under 16 be able to access free swimming with the presentation of a Young Scot Card to enable customer information to be gathered;
  - (d) that the remaining budget be allocated from COVID funding for the period 2021/22; and that a report be brought back to a future Committee providing information on customers using swims who were entitled to free school meals.
- 2.3 A report was taken back to the March 2021 Education and Communities Committee with the following proposals:
- That the Committee asks the Council as part of the 2021/23 Budget consideration to defer the saving until March 2022;
  - That during the year 2021/22 Inverclyde Leisure be paid for each swim rather than a set annual sum;
  - That in order to access a subsidised swim young people under 16 register free of charge for an Under 16 residents' swim card. This card will be provided by Inverclyde Leisure and will ask for proof of address and an agreement that data can be shared with the Council. This method is thought to be the most pragmatic approach. The Young Scot Card would be too costly to link with the IL database already in place and the Council and IL would not be able to monitor data of usage. The Under 16 residents' swim card would entitle users to a free swim during the year April 2021 to end of March 2022; and
  - That a report is submitted to a future Committee to consider how the allocated £80,000 per annum to subsidise swimming is implemented

2.4 Because of the software required and the capacity of any option to use cards to support subsidised swimming will not be in place by March 2022. In order to achieve the saving then the Education and Communities Committee is asked to reconsider the options in section 4.2 of this paper and to reach a conclusion at the January 2022 Committee with option 3 as outlined in paragraph 4.2.3 being the recommended proposal.

This proposed option gives the following:

- Every term time swim subsidised by an additional £2 (giving a cost of £2.60 per swim for under 16s)
- A 2 hour slot for free swimming on Saturday and Sunday from 9 a.m. – 11 .m.
- A further subsidy of £1 per swim during school holiday periods to give a reduced price during holiday periods of £1.60 per swim for under 16s
- Family swim packages

If the Committee does not wish to pursue option 3 at this time and wishes to continue with the scheme operated during 2021/22 then the Committee would need to consider how this would be funded. Whilst it is difficult to predict given the impact of COVID-19 on usage data, officers estimate that the cost of continuing to deliver free swimming for 2022/23 will be approximately £120,000. This leaves a budget pressure of £40,000 which could be funded from the Community Grants Fund.

2.5 In November 2021 the Education and Communities Committee also asked that it be remitted to officers to submit a report to the Members Budget Working Group on the potential for, and financial implications of, providing free access to Inverclyde Leisure gym facilities for young people. Paragraph 5.5 of this report gives an update to the Committee on a pilot linked to this proposal.

### **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 The Education and Communities Committee is asked to consider the contents of this report and:

- approve the option for subsidised swimming outlined in paragraph 4.2.3; and
- note the pilot for free gym usage

**Ruth Binks**  
**Corporate Director**  
**Education, Communities & Organisational Development**

## 4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 At the meeting on Tuesday 19 January 2021 the Education and Communities Committee considered options for providing free swimming for under 16s following a decision of the Council in December 2020 to agree, as part of the budget process, a saving of £100,000 from the £180,000 budget.

4.2 The proposals in the paper considered by the committee in January are outlined below. Option 3 was the option recommended by the CMT.

### 4.2.1 Option 1

This option proposes to change the free swimming to holidays only and a 2 hour slot for free swimming during weekends from 9 am – 11 am.

The cost of this option is approximately £100,000. The intention would be to allocate the additional funding for the free weekend slots from the GTVO (now the Community Grants fund). This proposal means that 51% of current swims used would be free.

The advantage of this proposal is that it allows access to free swimming during the holidays and all year round at off peak times at weekends.

The disadvantage of this option is that the cost would exceed the allocated £80,000 and further funding would need to be found from elsewhere. The average cost per swim of £4.60 outwith these off peak times when families have to pay may also be prohibitive for some.

### 4.2.2 Option 2

This option proposes to subsidise every swim by £2 and have a 2 hour slot for free swimming on Saturday and Sunday from 9 a.m. -11 a.m. This means that the cost for an under 16 swim would be £2.60 throughout the year and the option of free swimming would be still be available every weekend between 9am and 11am. This would cost £88,000. The proposal would be to allocate the additional sum of £8,000 from GTVO (now Community Grants Fund)

The advantage of this option is that free swimming is still available at a period of time at weekends and all swims at other times are subsidised.

The disadvantage of this option is that there is still a cost for young people and families during the holiday periods.

### 4.2.3 Option 3

This option is similar to option 2 but allocates more money from the Community Grants Fund to further subsidise swimming during the holidays. An extra subsidy of £1 per swim during the school holidays would bring the cost of holiday swimming down to £1.60 per under 16 during the holiday period. This option would make it more affordable for families during the holiday period. This option gives the following:

- Every term time swim subsidised by £2 (giving a cost of £2.60 per swim for under 16s)
- A 2 hour slot for free swimming on Saturday and Sunday from 9 a.m. – 11 .m.
- A further subsidy of £1 per swim during school holiday periods to give a reduced price during holiday periods of £1.60 per swim for under 16s
- Family swim packages

This option could cost approximately £27,000 in addition to the £80,000 allocated to support swimming.

4.3 The Committee asked that consideration be continued to the March Committee for a further detailed report providing further detail and financial implications relative to (1) the possible provision of the extra £27,000 being allocated from the Under 19s Sports Subsidy rather than the GTVO (2) the proposal comprising the following:

- (a) that Inverclyde Leisure be paid for each swim rather than a set annual sum
- (b) that under 11s swim be continued on the same basis
- (c) that children 11 to under 16 be able to access free swimming with the presentation of a Young Scot Card to enable customer information to be gathered
- (d) that the remaining budget be allocated from COVID funding for the period 2021/22 and that a report be brought back to a future Committee providing information on customers using swims who were entitled to free school meals.

4.4 A report was taken back to the March 2021 Education and Communities Committee with the following proposals:

- That the Committee asks the Council as part of the 2021/23 Budget consideration to defer the saving until March 2022;
- That during the year 2021/22 Inverclyde Leisure be paid for each swim rather than a set annual sum;
- That in order to access a subsidised swim young people under 16 register free of charge for an Under 16 residents' swim card. This card will be provided by Inverclyde Leisure and will ask for proof of address and an agreement that data can be shared with the Council. This method is thought to be the most pragmatic approach. The Young Scot Card would be too costly to link with the IL database already in place and the Council and IL would not be able to monitor data of usage. The Under 16 residents' swim card would entitle users to a free swim during the year April 2021 to end of March 2022; and
- That a report is submitted to a future Committee to consider how the allocated £80,000 per annum to subsidise swimming is implemented.

4.5 An update report on usage was taken to the November 2021 Education and Communities Committee. This highlighted that because of COVID-19, it was difficult to give any trend analysis with confidence but that usage of the pool was broadly in line with the SIMD demographics of Inverclyde. Although the cards issued by Inverclyde Leisure have allowed the Council to better understand the usage of the pools but data from a full year's 'normal' usage will not be available until COVID-19 stops having an impact on pool numbers.

## 5.0 PROPOSALS

5.1 The hope is to replace the current IL free swimming cards with the new Young Scot Cards which will be issued this year to incorporate free travel for young people. It is anticipated that the new cards will be able to work with the Inverclyde Leisure booking system and although the full extent of the capabilities of the new card are not yet known, it may be possible that the cards could be pre-loaded with free or subsidised swimming sessions.

5.2 In order to achieve the agreed saving of £100k, the Education and Communities committee is asked to reconsider the options in section 4.2 of this paper and to agree option 3 as outlined in paragraph 4.2.3

- Every term time swim subsidised by £2 (giving a cost of £2.60 per swim for under 16s)
- A 2 hour slot for free swimming on Saturday and Sunday from 9 a.m. – 11 .m.
- A further subsidy of £1 per swim during school holiday periods to give a reduced price during holiday periods of £1.60 per swim for under 16s
- Family swim packages

This does not exclude further targeted work being considered if the committee wish to pursue this option and the software becomes available.

5.3 Since the March 2020 Education and Communities Committee the GTVO and Under 19 sports subsidy have now been amalgamated into the Community Grants Fund, so it is

anticipated that if members are so minded that any additional funding required would be allocated from this fund.

- 5.4 If the Committee does not wish to pursue option 3 at this time and wishes to continue the scheme operated during 2021/22 then the Committee would need to consider how this would be funded. Whilst it is difficult to predict, officers estimate that the cost of continuing to deliver free swimming for 2022/23 will be approximately £120,000. This still leaves a budget pressure of £40,000, which could be funded from the Community Grants Fund.
- 5.5 The November 2021 Education and Communities Committee also asked officers to undertake work on the financial impacts of free use of gyms for secondary aged pupils. This was in light of positive feedback from the free usage over the summer 2021 period. An application to the Covid health and wellbeing recovery fund has been made for £15k to provide free gym usage for 6 free hours per week to allow all young people in Inverclyde aged 12-16 access to all Inverclyde Leisure gyms. This pilot will run from 3 January 2022 until 1 June 2022. At the time of writing, the full implications of full free access to gyms is not known. The only specific funding implications known at this point is that Inverclyde Leisure currently has 225 12-16 year old members paying direct debits and the loss of income to IL from these members would be £4,950. Other than this more work is needed to fully identify the cost. This work will be not completed in time for the 2022/23 budget setting process. It also makes sense to wait until the Young Scot card is in place to begin this work.
- 5.6 At this point in time, the Scottish Government has indicated that it may be considering funding activities during the summer holiday (in a similar way to activity during the summer of 2021). If this is the case, then members may wish to consider allocating some of this funding towards subsidised or free swimming or gym sessions in the future.

## 6.0 IMPLICATIONS

### 6.1 Finance

#### Financial Implications:

##### One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

##### Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (if Applicable)	Other Comments
Inverclyde Leisure	Subsidised Swimming	2022/23	£107k	£27k	£27k virement needed from Community Grants Fund

### 6.2 Legal N/A

### 6.3 Human Resources N/A

### 6.4 Equalities

## Equalities

- (a) Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

X

NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required

- (b) Fairer Scotland Duty

If this report affects or proposes any major strategic decision:-

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

X

YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.

NO

- (c) Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

X

YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.

NO

## 6.5 **Repopulation**

N/A

## 7.0 **CONSULTATIONS**

- 7.1 The CMT support the recommendations in the report.

## 8.0 **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 8.1 January 2021 Education and Communities Committee agenda item 3  
March 2021 Education and Communities Committee agenda item 3  
November 2021 Education and Communities Committee agenda item 6