

## Pre-Scrutiny Questions and Answers – Cabinet Agenda 10 April 2024

### Report Title: Park Exercise Permit

Report Author(s): Ann Hill

Councillor Russell:

I have a general question in relation to how we will successfully re-introduce this scheme after its hiatus. From reading the report into the previous incarnation, there were significant issues last time with being able to appropriately staff the scheme, both in office function and also successfully monitoring the parks concerned. I am not clear looking at the new proposal, how we are going to mitigate these issues this time around. If any specifics could be given on this, I would be most grateful.

Response:

When the previous Parks Exercise programme was in operation the Sports and Leisure Team consisted of only 2 members of staff.

The team has grown and developed adding an additional 4 members of staff over the last 10 months. With the expansion within the team this allows us to manage and monitor the scheme as set out in the report.

There will be a Team leader managing the overall scheme with 3 Officers supporting with the monitoring along with business development team assisting with processing the application and payment process.

Follow-up question from Councillor Russell:

With regards of monitoring (going out and checking), is that resource included in the latest recruitment?

Response:

Yes the capacity within the latest recruitment allows for monitoring the scheme.

Councillor Syson:

From my reading of 7.2 am I right in thinking that Octavian Droobers will in future, on application, be able to use non-exempt WDC parks for free public taster orienteering sessions, without being charged, as was the case up until 2022.

Response:

I understand from my colleague that Octavian Droobers fall under the category of an event, this is due to their activity being one off events in different areas during the year and not a regular weekly activity. PEP (Park Exercise Permits) are in place to cover regular weekly activities. Therefore 7.2 would not be applicable

Councillor Payne:

1. When the scheme was in operation, what (if any) sanction was available if the activities ran without a permit?
2. Does Warwick District Council have any evidence of (i) damage to parks/wildlife habitats and (ii) accidents occurring, from these group exercise activities?

Response:

1. There were no sanctions available, however the sports team or Rangers challenged groups without permits . This in most cases encouraged groups to apply for permit.
2. We have documented evidence from our Green Spaces colleagues of damage to our parks caused by fitness groups. I include photos of St Nicholas Park by the Pitch and Putt area where a group had trained throughout a wet winter, and Nordic walkers in the wrong area and damaging crocus beds and saturated grass. These groups when spoken to understood the rationale behind preserving the parks and issuing permits and were happy to move to other regulated areas. Accidents weren't reported to WDC as this would be the responsibility of the organiser. We would expect to be advised of any risks/defects of the areas being used.



**Report Title: Revisions to fees for markets in 2024**

Report Author(s): Charlotte Sully

Councillor K Dickson

Thank you for your work on supporting our local markets. I have visited Kenilworth Market today and met concerned stall holders. The stall holders appreciate the suggested freeze in prices at Kenilworth because they rely on the business made at Warwick to support the much lower takings from Kenilworth.

My understanding is that they feel that a rise in the cost of the stall at Warwick, following the large rise in costs in 23/24, would put off smaller stall holders.

Please can you confirm that, should your recommendation in item 5 of the agenda be supported, stallholders at Warwick will have a reduction in costs because the costs were previously increased in January? The stallholder in Kenilworth I spoke to did not think this was the case.

Response:

The revised fees are outlined in the table within the report (below). They show that we are proposing to freeze the fees in Kenilworth at £33.00. The fees in Warwick would be £44.00 if the new fees are approved, which is only a £2.00 increase (4.7%) from 2023/2024.

Table 1: Existing a proposed market fees

Market	Charge 23-24	Charges 24/25 as approved (Nov 23).	REVISED proposed charge 24-25	Proposed % increase of REVISED charges
Warwick Market	£42.00	£46.00	£44.00	4.7%
Leamington Market	£48.00	£53.00	£50.00	4.2%
Leamington Covent Garden Market	£48.00	£53.00	£50.00	4.2%
Leamington and Warwick	£42.00	£46.00	£44.00	4.7%

Market	Charge 23-24	Charges 24/25 as approved (Nov 23).	REVISED proposed charge 24-25	Proposed % increase of REVISED charges
Kenilworth Market	£33.00	£35.00	£33.00	0%
Leamington Autumn	£55.00	No fee listed.	£65.00	18.2%
Leamington Christmas	£80.00	No fee listed.	£90.00	12.5%

Councillor K Dickson:

I understand the proposed changes, my question is whether the original proposal was implemented in January this year as stated in the papers?

If that did happen then the cost following approval of this proposal, would be going down.

Response:

CJ's are currently charging the 2023/2024 prices, they are waiting until the Cabinet meeting before implementing any changes.

**Report Title: Proposed Hackney Carriage Fare Increases**

Report Author(s): Rachael Russell

Councillor Payne:

The Cabinet Report's risk assessment refers to the possibility of drivers leaving the trade. Cost of living pressures are also mentioned. One of taxi drivers' main anxieties is the availability of too many licences (as opposed to fares being set too low). This can lead to intense competition for custom, making drivers' jobs unsustainable.

Has this decision taken into account the data and trends on the number of taxi licences being issued in the District?

Response:

There is nothing in legislation that allows us to limit numbers of licenced drivers. If an application is presented to us and the applicant has met the criteria set out in our policy then a licence must be issued.

We can, in legislation limit the number of Hackney Carriage vehicle licence we issue. A survey was undertaken in 2017. Please follow the link below to view the report that went to Executive in 2018 (item 4) regarding imposing a Hackney Carriage vehicle limit;

[cmis > Meeting Dates \(warwickdc.gov.uk\)](http://warwickdc.gov.uk)

In reality since 2018 our driver and vehicle numbers have reduced further, a combination of app based companies dominating the market and the effects of the pandemic. As mentioned in the report, we cannot stop drivers/private hire vehicles licenced with other Local Authorities (such as Uber) working in our area.

**Report Title: Shared Information Governance Service**

Report Author(s): Graham Leach

Councillor Milton:

Given our recent experience with the waste contract, could you outline how the distribution of effort will be monitored on an ongoing basis, to make sure that the investment is fair across the two authorities?

Response:

These are set out in the confidential appendix, item 19 on the agenda, which will require time recording and monitoring of performance in the same way we do with the shared legal service.

Councillor R Dickson:

Recommendation 1 makes reference to Appendix 1, but I can't see this on CMIS. Have I missed it?

Paragraph 1.12 refers to resource demand. Can you please provide some more detail on this at least as far as WDC is concerned?

Response:

There is a confidential appendix to the report which is item 19 on the agenda.

In respect the areas we have numbers do you mean you'd like to see the number of requests being made to each authority? While I have the numbers for SDC these were provided in confidence originally so I have contacted them today to discuss how best that we can share them, as to only share the WDC figures would only present half the picture.

However as set out in the report the numbers are a guidance either way as the key part is understanding the time taken for each request and this is where a judgement has to be made but in future will require time recording.

**Report Title: Kenilworth Carnival**

Report Author(s): Charlotte Sully

Councillor R Dickson:

In proposing to move the funfair to Area 5 of Abbey Fields, has the police confirmed their agreement with this request? Also will there be a post-event review of how the move of the funfair has worked and its success as a community event?

Response:

The Police are not required to confirm agreement, as the land is owned by District Council. Police's involvement will be to review the event documents when they are out for consultation.

Yes, the Events team will have an internal debrief post-event to review how the move has worked and identify areas for improvement.