

Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Londonderry

Tionól Spioradalta Bhahá'ithe Dhoire

DERRY CITY AND STRABANE DISTRICT COUNCIL LEISURE AND SPORT PRICING POLICY CONSULTATION

This comment on the Council's policy on Leisure and Sport Pricing Policy is made by the Spiritual Assembly as the representative and administrative body for the Bahá'í Faith in the City of Derry/Londonderry. We are glad to have had the opportunity to be part of the consultative process.

- One of the issues facing society is the difficulty many have in finding a suitable work/life balance.
 - While work (paid or otherwise) is, in our view a service to others and therefore an act of worship of God that does not mean it should be elevated to a position where it dominates all aspects of life.
 - We feel that leisure should not simply be seen as an opportunity to recuperate until work starts again, but as a time for the individual to develop, both physically and mentally.
- Health issues relating to obesity and a lack of physical activity are of growing concern and likely to significant long-term implications both for individuals and for society through the healthcare and other costs resulting.
- The obesity issue is most marked among the poorer sections of the population, lower-cost food is more likely to be fattening and less likely to be “healthy”, while the costs of private gyms and health facilities can be prohibitive.
- It therefore seems that there is a social need for affordable leisure and sport facilities to be provided and to be both accessible and actively promoted while being available to all.
- We therefore welcome the Council's commitment to provision of facilities and increasing public access, and to increasing the number of people using them.
- We welcome the recognition that health issues are something to be taken into account as a reason for provision of the facilities and ease of access.
- We are **not**, however, certain about the Council's policy of ensuring that “prices are compatible with competitors...(etc.)” which seems to imply that the comparator is the sort of process charged by private health clubs. That sort of pricing would put it beyond the level that many could afford and we feel that both social justice and the long-term benefit of the community as a whole call for prices to be less than those charged elsewhere.

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