

Report for:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	13 January 2026
Subject:	Leisure Pricing Strategy 2026
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Josh Wright
Responsible Officer:	Dean Emery – Head of Service Revenues, Benefits & Leisure
Exempt:	
Wards Affected:	All
Enclosures:	None
Reason for Report:	Proposals to change the Leisure fees and charges from April 1 st , 2026
Recommendation:	<p>That Cabinet approve a freeze on membership prices for the forthcoming year to support affordability and encourage sustained participation, while increasing pay as you go tariffs in line with inflation and market rates. The charges proposed are in section 3.10 of this report.</p>
<p>This report was noted by the Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement PDG</p>	
1.0	Introduction/Background
1.1	Active Mid Devon is a non-statutory service, operating centres in; Crediton, Cullompton and Tiverton. The assets include Artificial Turf Pitches, Fitness Studios, Multipurpose Studios, Sports Halls, Squash Courts, Swimming Pools, Teaching Pools, Tennis Courts, Training Rooms and Saunas.
1.2	In July 2025, Leisure consultants, TA6 (part of Alliance Leisure), were appointed to undertake an independent pricing review for our Leisure service. This report reviews the pricing strategy for 2026. TA6 services are utilised annually to maintain consistency. Active Mid Devon was keen to

understand how current pricing compares to the wider public leisure sector and its offer against local competition.

- 1.3 2025/26 has been successful as was 2024/25, The leisure service has reduced it operating cost by £ **543K**.
- 1.4 The service to date has circa 4,500 adult members and 2,200 junior members, in addition to walk-in pay and play customers.
- 1.5 In 2024/25, more than 600,000 visits were recorded primarily attending the fitness, swimming pool and outdoor activities. The service also works with more than 60 schools, clubs and organisations that access the swimming pools and 'dry' areas such as sports halls, studios, racquet courts and artificial-turf pitches. In the financial year 2025/26 targeted an annual income of circa £3.7m operating with an establishment of 60 full-time equivalent roles deployed across approximately 162 team members.
- 1.6 A Latent demand report was commissioned from Integratis consultants. Their report confirmed active members within a 10-mile radius of our facilities, highlighting the strong potential for engagement and growth in the area, particularly Active Tiverton. The report measures how many people are present in each location and how likely they are to participate in or use our services. This data helps us see not just the size of the market, but also the strength of local demand. Having this level of insight provides confidence in our pricing decisions, ensuring we are aligning our offer with genuine customer interest and positioning ourselves to capture market opportunities effectively.

2.0 Pricing Review and Future Strategy

- 2.1 The current Active Mid Devon monthly membership price of All-Inclusive membership £41/ Gym or Swim membership £35, is broadly comparable to those shown in the table (paragraph 2.2).

2.2

Leisure Service	All Inclusive Membership Price
Local Authority	
LED Honiton	£44.00
Exeter Leisure, St Sidwell's Point, Exeter	£39.00
Everyone Active, Taunton	£47.99
Local Competitors	
SNAP Fitness, Tiverton	£37.99
OJ Gyms, Tiverton	£35.00
HD Fitness, Cullompton	£50.99

*The prices of these leisure providers may see an increase in either January or April 2026.

2.3 Current Membership Base.

Membership Type (Direct Debits)	Totals (based on August 2025 figures)
Lifestyle - All Inclusive	2,414
Lifestyle – All Inclusive Concessionary	193
Lifestyle - Gym	878
Lifestyle – Aqua	388
Lifestyle - Junior	2,273
Lifestyle – Junior Concessionary	116

*this only refers to our primary membership types, not all of the memberships we offer.

3.0 Proposed Leisure Service Pricing Changes.

- 3.1 **Membership Fees.** Membership fees to be frozen at current rates for 2026/27. Active Mid Devon recognises the competitive threat posed by new entrants to the market and to support affordability. Freezing fees reflects a retention-first approach and demonstrates value for members.
- 3.2 **Concessionary memberships Fees.** Membership fees will be frozen at current rates. Active Mid Devon will maintain its commitment to concessionary discounts, ensuring affordability for priority groups, while aligning with the broader strategy to standardise percentage reductions.
- 3.3 With membership prices remaining unchanged, our primary growth driver will be to improve retention. To support this, we are exploring the introduction of AI solutions to streamline customer interactions, particularly around cancellations and enquiries. By enhancing responsiveness and reducing friction in these processes, we aim to improve member satisfaction, minimise churn, and create more sustainable growth without relying on the membership price increases.
- 3.4 **Pay As You Go.** Pay as you go fees will rise this year, as advised by consultants. Evidence shows there is scope for increases without negatively impacting casual participation. This provides a revenue boost while protecting core membership pricing.
- 3.5 **Concessionary Discounts.** We are pleased to confirm that we will continue offering concessionary discounts to make our services more accessible for individuals on lower incomes. This includes 20% off memberships and 25% off pay as you go sessions, ensuring that everyone can enjoy and benefit from what we provide. Our aim is to keep our facilities and activities open to as many people as possible, supporting affordability and inclusivity within our community.
- 3.6 **Memberships.** All Adult and Junior membership fees will be frozen at current rates.

3.7 **Pay As You Go Fees.** Charges will be increased by 3% on 01/04/2026, (paragraph 3.10).

3.8 **Concessionary Pay As You Go Fees (25% Discount).** Charges will be increased by 3% on 01/04/2026 (paragraph 3.10).

3.9 **Table of Proposed Pay As You Go Fees.**

3.10 **Table.**

Activity	Current Price 25/26	Percentage Increase %	Proposed Price 26/27	Price	LED 25/26 Prices
Adult					
Fitness Studio	£8.40	3.00%	£8.65	£8.65	£8.75
Fitness Studio Concession	£6.80	3.00%	£7.00	£7.00	£6.60
Fitness Class	£7.90	3.00%	£8.14	£8.15	£8.50
Fitness Class Concession	£6.30	3.00%	£6.49	£6.50	£6.40
Swim	£6.30	3.00%	£6.49	£6.50	£6.50
Swim Concession	£5.10	3.00%	£5.25	£5.25	£4.90
Junior					
Teen Gym	£5.80	3.00%	£5.97	£6.00	£5.50
Teen Gym Concession	£4.70	3.00%	£4.84	£4.85	N/A
Teen Fitness Class	£5.80	3.00%	£5.97	£6.00	£5.50
Teen Fitness Class Concession	£4.70	3.00%	£4.84	£4.85	N/A
Swim	£3.70	3.00%	£3.81	£3.85	£3.90
Swim Concession	£3.00	3.00%	£3.09	£3.10	£2.95

* LED will see an increase in April 2026.

3.11 **Pay As You Go Pricing Income.** In 2024/25, income from pay as you go activity, including fitness studio, classes, and casual use totalled £214,588. Based on last year's income, applying a 3% price increase across these activities would generate approximately £6,500 in additional income. This modest adjustment would help offset inflationary pressures while maintaining affordability and accessibility for casual users.

3.12 **Care Leavers.** We will continue to offer care experienced young people (up to the age of 25) a leisure membership at an effective 100% discount rate as part of a wider package of support intended to provide them with the best possible start in their adult lives. This concession will be applicable to a relatively small number of people, and identification will be possible via existing channels linked to other support mechanisms provided by DCC and MDDC in collaboration. However, the implementation of these accords with

advice given by the national adviser on behalf of the Department for Education, and it is considered vital to ensure we meet our corporate parenting duties that we provide access should they be able to make use of our facilities. We currently have 6 care leavers' memberships.

3.13 **Unpaid Pilot for Devon Carers.** To ensure that unpaid carers are supported and recognised for the vital role they play, we will continue to offer a discounted membership scheme for adult unpaid carers and offering free memberships for unpaid carers under the age of 18. This initiative will help reduce financial barriers, promote inclusion, and provide opportunities for carers to access services, activities, and wellbeing support. By offering this concession, we acknowledge the significant contribution unpaid carers make to their families and communities, while also encouraging them to take time for themselves and benefit from the resources available through membership. We currently have 38 adult unpaid carer memberships and 41 under 18 unpaid carer memberships.

3.14 **Commercial Hire and Series of Lets.** Groups, clubs, schools and organisations access the leisure facilities to operate their own activities. Charges are subject to supply and demand considering commerciality offering of the hirer, commercial programming, and local alternatives for activities such as external pitches. Charges are implemented considering cost of provision and times of access, and potential for increases are considered at the end of each contract period. Individual agreements will be reassessed for the most favourable revenue opportunity considering competition and commercial potential to use our facilities.

3.15 **Financial Position - 2026/27 Budget.** Whilst some additional growth is possible, and this is noted in the latent demand report. Our main priority moving forward will be to sustain current performance while working towards gradually reducing attrition rates across membership base.

To support the proposed price freeze, success will be quantified through measurable improvements in member engagement and retention. The key performance indicators will focus on increasing total membership and reducing member attrition. This will be targeted through an extended length of stay by at least one month.

Targets will be set against current membership numbers, increase in total membership by 5%, based on current yield of £33.00 to generate circa £52k by targeting 7 month length of stay. Targeting an increased length of stay from an average 6 months to 7 months would see an additional £148k based on circa 4500 adult members staying one month longer at a yield of £33.00.

Performance will be managed through Power BI, which will take membership data from our new management system to provide us with a live dashboard on key metrics such as joiners, leavers, average membership duration, and attendance frequency. This will enable us to look at real time monitoring. The monthly Power BI report will summarise our progress against targets, with

quarterly reviews to evaluate the impact of actions taken and refine strategies as needed.

3.16 This pricing strategy for Leisure Services was based on membership figures from September 2025.

Financial Implications: The commercial nature of the industry means Leisure is vulnerable to threats from; competition, substitutions and price sensitivity considering the national current cost of living challenge. Implementation of the changes to fees and charges will drive membership retention and grow income into the organisation for 2026 onwards, whilst marketing strategies strive to increase market share.

Legal Implications: There is a legal obligation to notify customers with direct debits of any changes to their payments with at least 10-day notice. However, we are not increasing these. We are partnering closely with our Communications team to make sure members are fully informed about our pay as you go prices. The good news is that we will be holding prices, giving our members continued value and peace of mind. Together, we are ensuring clear, consistent messaging so everyone understands what this means and can feel confident that their costs won't be changing.

Risk Assessment: The commercial nature of the industry and the cost-of-living crisis means that Active Mid Devon can be vulnerable to threats from; competition, substitutions and price sensitivity. It could also exclude certain priority groups the service is trying to encourage to use the facilities and get active, however the pricing strategy is trying to minimise the impact on these groups as much as possible. The service plans to ensure the marketing message around any price increases showcases the value attached to the service with the service's unique selling points to ensure we continue to grow, and maintain, participation levels at Active Mid Devon.

Impact on Climate Change: None with regards to price increase, however our centres are run on 100% renewable energy supported by solar panels.

Equalities Impact Assessment: Active Mid Devon continues to support those members of the community accessing means tested benefits via Concessionary discounting to pay and play fees and charges, in addition to discounted membership opportunities. Corporate parenting is a legal obligation. The inclusion of a product for care leavers reflects advice given by the national adviser currently working alongside the Devon system to help move our offering to care experienced young people out of its current 'inadequate' rating.

Relationship to Corporate Plan: The details of this report and the delivery of the Active Mid Devon service directly contributes to Corporate Plan objectives: "2.3: We will support the health, wellbeing, and safety of our residents"; "We will maintain our leisure services and ensure they are fit for the future."

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett

Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151 Officer

Date: 12.11.25

Statutory Officer: Maria De Leiburne

Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Date: 12.11.25

Chief Officer: Stephen Walford

Agreed by or on behalf of the Chief Executive/Corporate Director

Date: 12.11.25

Performance and risk: Steve Carr

Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager

Date: 14 November 2025

Cabinet member notified: (yes)

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Andy Mackie (Operations Manager)

Email: amackie@middevon.gov.uk

Background papers: TA6 part of Alliance Leisure Membership Pricing Review 2025
(based of membership figures for July 2025) – Confidential report