

Report of Development Manager

Report to Director of Environments and Housing

Date: 11th February 2015

Subject: Tropical World Pricing

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. This report seeks authorisation to increase the entrance charges at Tropical World from 1st March 2015.
2. Prices for entrance into Tropical World have not been reviewed since December 2010, when charges were introduced at a discounted rate for card holders.
3. Comparisons show entrance charges at Tropical World are currently £4.65 cheaper than the average for adults and £4.60 cheaper for children in comparison to other regional attractions. The attraction is also unique in allowing children under 5 to enter for free, compared to most other attractions where this applies to children under 3.
4. There are times during the summer holidays in particular and at weekends and bank holidays when the attraction is at capacity. Advice from commercial marketing companies is that the best option to raise income in these circumstances is to increase prices.
5. It is not anticipated that there will be a significant reduction in the number of visitors and the projected revenue increase is anticipated to be £230k each year.

Recommendations

6. The Director of Environments and Housing is recommended to approve the following increase in entrance charges at Tropical World from 1st March 2015:

Description	Entrance fee including VAT @ 20% £
Adults	5.00
LeedsCard	3.00
'Extra' cardholders	2.00
Breezecard	2.00
5 to 15 year olds	2.50
Under 5s	Free

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report seeks authorisation to increase the entrance charges at Tropical World from 1st March 2015.

2 Background information

- 2.1 The Council continues to face serious budget pressures and has experienced cash funding cuts from central government in addition to internal budget pressures that the council faces. This has also impacted on the Parks and Countryside service, with a £2.7 million budget reduction between 2010/11 and 2014/15 which equates to a reduction of 23% with further reductions required in 2015/16 and 2016/17. The Council is therefore looking to increase revenue as well as identifying efficiencies as part of the overall budget review.
- 2.2 The Arnold and Marjorie Ziff Tropical World at Roundhay Park is one of Leeds' most popular family attractions with around 320,000 visitors each year, situated 3 miles north of Leeds City Centre off the A58 Wetherby Road at Oakwood. A number of improvements have also recently taken place including a new entrance space and retail facility, children's party and education zone, along with a new 'walk over' crocodile enclosure and general electrical improvements. This work was conducted early in 2014, and work has now commenced on further improvements to include a new conservatory extension to the Explorer's Café, a new toilet block with changing facilities, a new aquarium and improvements to the nocturnal zone due to be complete early in 2015. The overall cost of these improvements is over £800k.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 Prices for entrance into Tropical World have not been reviewed since December 2010, when charges were introduced at a discounted rate for card holders. The current entry prices are set out below:

Description	Entrance fee including VAT @ 20% £
Adults	3.50
LeedsCard	2.80
'Extra' cardholders	1.75
Breezecard	1.75
5 to 15 year olds	2.35
Under 5s	Free

- 3.2 A comparison of pricing at relevant attractions in Yorkshire has been conducted and is summarised in the following table:

Attraction	Adult (£)	Child (£)	Free Ticketholder	Annual Pass (£)
Yorkshire Wildlife Park	15.50	12.50	Under 3s	
The Deep, Hull	11.50	9.50		Included in ticket
Harewood House	10.00	9.00		
Tropical Butterfly House, Sheffield	9.00	8.00	Under 3s	Adults: 40 Children: 32 OAP/Student: 38
The International Centre for Birds of Prey	8.00	5.50	Under 4s	
Cannon Hall Farm, Barnsley	6.95 (Weekday 4.95)	6.95 (Weekday 4.95)	Under 3s	
York Bird of Prey Centre	6.50	4.50	Under 3s	
Hesketh Farm, Bolton Abbey	5	5.50	Under 1s	
Filey Bird Garden	4.50	4.00	Under 2s	Adult: 15 Child / Concession: 15 Family: 60
Ponderosa, Batley	4.50	4.00	Under 2s	
Average	£8.15	£6.95		

3.3 Comparisons show that there is scope to increase charges as Tropical World is currently £4.65 cheaper than the average for adults and £4.60 cheaper for children in comparison to other regional attractions. The attraction is also unique in allowing children under 5 to enter for free, compared to most other attractions where this applies to children under 3.

3.4 Visitor surveys over the summer in 2013 and 2014 have been conducted which demonstrate that around 60% of visitors are from outside Leeds. The following table provides more detail based on 535 people surveyed in 2013 and 368 in 2014.

Visitors	2013	2014
All Leeds postcodes	39%	41%
Outside Leeds	61%	59%

3.5 In terms of frequency of visit, 74% indicated that this was either their first visit or that they would only visit once a year (75% in 2013). The remaining people surveyed indicated that 18% would visit every 6 months (16% in 2013), which means that only 8% visit more frequently than every 3 months (10% in 2013).

3.6 The age profile of visitors demonstrates the importance of Tropical World as a family attraction. 37% of visitors were aged 26 – 55 (33% in 2013), with 21%

aged 0 – 4 (17% in 2013) and 19% aged 5 – 12 (20% in 2013). The remaining visits were 13% from those 55 and over (11% in 2013), with 10% of visits from those 13 – 25 (19% in 2013).

- 3.7 There are times during the summer holidays in particular and at weekends and bank holidays when the attraction is at capacity. Advice from commercial marketing companies is that the best option to raise income in these circumstances is to increase prices. The main proposal in response coupled with the fact that current entrance charges are nearly 60% cheaper than other regional attractions (with under 5s free in contrast to all other attractions identified), is to increase charges for adults from £3.50 to £5 with other charges as set out in the following table:

Description	Entrance fee including VAT @ 20% £
Adults	5.00
LeedsCard	3.00
'Extra' cardholders	2.00
Breezecard	2.00
5 to 15 year olds	2.50
Under 5s	Free

- 3.8 This will allow the Council to ensure that under 5s can still enter free of charge, with all other fees increasing by a modest amount. This means that the equivalent discount increases from 20% for LeedsCard holders to 40%; 'Extra' cardholders (in receipt of defined benefits) would now receive a 60% discount. It is not anticipated given the circumstances described above that there will be a significant reduction in the number of visitors and the projected revenue increase is anticipated to be £230k each year.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 A consultation document outlining the pricing proposals in detail was placed on Talking Point for a period of 3 weeks that ended on Friday 6th February. There was one response to the consultation that expressed disappointment that the Council is proposing to increase entrance fees following the improvements made. Concern was also raised as to whether the proposed increase would impact on overall visitor numbers and therefore not achieve the projected income rise which they regard as modest yet would have an impact the cost to those visiting.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.2.1 An equality screening form has been completed for these revised charges which concludes that as the existing concessions for children and those on defined benefits are being retained due consideration has been given.

4.3 Council policies and City Priorities

- 4.3.1 The Vision for Leeds 2011 to 2030 sets out an objective to ensure all Leeds' communities are successful. A part of this is detailed as ensuring local cultural and sporting activities are available to all, and that there are high quality green spaces which are clean and looked after.
- 4.3.2 The Council Business Plan sets out as one of its objectives to become a more efficient and enterprising council. Maximising income and trading, and reducing costs and increasing value for money comes as part of this objective. The revision of Tropical World entrance charges therefore contributes to this aim.

4.4 Resources and value for money

- 4.5 The main proposal in response coupled with the fact that current entrance charges are nearly 60% cheaper than other regional attractions (with under 5s free in contrast to all other attractions identified), is to increase charges for adults from £3.50 to £5 with other charges as set out in the following table:

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4.6 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 4.6.1 The effect of the proposed price increases is projected at £230k therefore the decision is considered as operational in nature and is therefore not eligible for call in. There are no issues with regard to access to information.

4.7 Risk Management

- 4.7.1 These price changes come as part of a wider aim across the Council to meet budget targets. If price increases were not implemented then there would be a risk that future budget targets would not be met.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 The main proposal is to increase charges for adults at Tropical World from £3.50 to £5, which will allow the Council to ensure that under 5s can still enter free of charge, with all other fees increasing by a modest amount. This means that the equivalent discount increases from 20% for LeedsCard holders to 40%; 'Extra' cardholders (in receipt of defined benefits) would now receive a 60% discount. It is not anticipated given the circumstances described above that there will be a significant reduction in the number of visitors and the projected revenue increase is anticipated to be £230k each year.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 The Director of Environments and Housing is recommended to approve the following increase in entrance charges at Tropical World from 1st March 2015:

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7 Background documents¹

- 7.1 None.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.