

Report to Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board

15 February 2024

Subject:	Fishing Policy
Director:	Director of Borough Economy Alice Davey
Contact Officer:	Matthew Huggins Assistant Director (Borough Economy): Green Spaces, Green Services, Visitor Services, Events;

1 Recommendation

- 1.1 To consider and comment upon the proposed Fishing Policy for all Sandwell Councils waterbodies within the Green Spaces portfolio.



2 Background

- 2.1 Sandwell Council has 25 water bodies within the borough that are accessible by the public. Many of these sites are popular for Angling.
- 2.2 There are often discrepancies and confusion in the understanding of rules and regulations for fishing on these sites. Fishing with a permit issued by Sandwell Council is included in our parks and open space bylaws.
- 2.3 To fish in one of the designated locations in Sandwell (4.1), a fishing permit must be obtained and produced on demand, which can be purchased online at www.sandwell.gov.uk or through one of the physical locations. A photo ID must also be produced identifying the correct owner of the fishing permit, and identifying any concession.



- 2.4 This policy will remove any previous confusion regarding the rules and regulations and identify what locations angling is permitted.
- 2.5 This policy will identify the cost of fishing and where permits can be purchased.
- 2.6 Angling has been a popular pastime within Sandwell's Green Spaces for many years. This policy will look to balance this, whilst also ensuring future use, other Park users, wildlife and ecology flourish.
- 2.7 In the development of this policy a six week public consultation was conducted using Citizen Space and advertised online and through the Council's social media channels:
- 20 responses were received, split by 7 respondents who fish, and 13 who do not.
 - 10 respondents disagree with the proposed policy, and 10 respondents agree.
 - The respondents who disagree cited the main reason as fishing causing a negative impact on other wildlife and causing unnecessary pain to the fish.
- 2.8 The policy development approach has been to review national best practice on Angling and other Local Authorities approach to fishing. The policy focusses on introducing specific criteria for fishing in Sandwell, which is intended to address the concerns of those that do not fish and feel this causes harm to other wildlife and fish and provide a safe environment. Swan Pool as also been removed as fishing site, because of the impacts experienced by swimming clubs and water sports clubs using this pool.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	<p>Best start in life for children and young people Children are able to learn to fish and enjoy time in nature.</p>
	<p>People live well and age well People are able to fish, which they do for their mental health and wellbeing.</p>

4 Context and Key Issues

Angling Locations

- 4.1 The following sites listed below are where angling is permitted:
- a) West Smethwick Park boating pool, Smethwick
 - b) Victoria Park Pool, Tipton
 - c) Dartmouth Park Boating Pool, West Bromwich
 - d) Dartmouth Park Fishing Pond, West Bromwich
 - e) Warrens Hall Nature Reserve, Rowley Regis
 - f) Hydes Road Pool, Wednesbury
 - g) Swan Pool (excluding Saturdays and Sundays)
 - h) Sheepwash Nature Reserve, Tipton (excluding Pump House Pool)
- 4.2 Fishing is not permitted at any other location or waterbody that is not identified in the list above.

Fees and Charges

- 4.3 The fishing fees are as follows, which are subject to annual budget setting (these figures are correct for the financial year 24/25):

Item	Cost
Day/Part Day max 2 rods - all Sandwell waters	£7.50
Day/Part Day max 2 rods - all Sandwell waters - Concessionary Charge	£4.40
Season Ticket - All Sandwell waters	£62.60
Season Ticket - All Sandwell waters - Concessionary Charge	£31.40

4.4 Fishing permits will be available to purchase from the following locations:

- Sandwell Council website (www.sandwell.gov.uk)
- Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre
- West Smethwick Park Pavilion
- Forge Mill Farm Visitor Centre

Future Pools and Waterbody Development

4.5 We will undertake the following to maintain good fishing practices and seek to encourage new participants to use to these sites by committing to the following:

- a) Maintaining clear access to identified fishing locations
- b) Identify and mark suitable fishing locations where practically possible
- c) Work with community groups and other organisations to develop strategies and projects for improved facilities including Fish stock, infrastructure, ecology, wildlife and partnership arrangements
- d) Work with community groups and other organisations in hosting events and activities that encourage Angling on our Waterbodies
- e) Work with organisations and community groups to develop volunteer lead activities and events to improve the ecology, waterbody and green space aesthetics.
- f) Erect signage around fishing pools highlighting the rules and regulations of the fishing policy (Appendix A)
- g) Make this policy available for download via the Sandwell website
- h) Identify any improvements or highlight works that will improve Angling as part of the wider programme of works for Green Spaces. As per the following website:
 - i. <https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/parks-green-spaces/green-spaces>

Enforcement

4.6 Enforcement and periodic permit checks will be undertaken via various Council Officers, including but not limited to the following:

- a) Green Spaces Officers
- b) Countryside Rangers
- c) Environmental Protection Officers

- d) Green Service Operatives and Officers
- e) Private Security (when procured for spot checks)

- 4.7 Enforcement or requests for the sight of permits from members of the public, Friends groups or other community groups / clubs is not permitted.
- 4.8 Any suspected breach of rules identified in Appendix One should be reported via the mysandwell portal.
- 4.9 Any breaking of the law or local byelaws should be reported to the Police, ASB team or Environment Agency.

Ecology, Wildlife and Waterfowl

- 4.10 The rules highlighted within Appendix seek to enforce good practices in Angling, to ensure no detrimental impact to the fish or accompanying waterfowl.
- 4.11 No Angler is permitted to make alterations, remove or interfere with wildlife, waterfowl or the sites habitat including reed, shrubbery or tree growth.

5 Implications

Resources:	The policy will be dependent on staff able to conduct spot checks on fishing and fishing permits.
Legal and Governance:	The bylaws will be relied upon to enforce permits.
Risk:	The risk to wildlife is mitigated by the measures outlined within this policy and the Sandwell Angling Code of Conduct.
Equality:	There are no specific equality implications as a result of this report.
Health and Wellbeing:	Some people use fishing to maintain their health and wellbeing. This policy supports that objective.
Social Value:	There are no specific social value implications as a result of this report.
Climate Change:	There are no specific climate change implications as a result of this report.

Corporate Parenting:	There are no specific corporate parenting implications as a result of this report.
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6 Appendices

Appendix One – Draft Sandwell Angling Code of Conduct.

7 Background Papers

None.