

POLICY, FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

25 JANUARY 2017

REPORT OF HEAD OF CENTRAL SERVICES

CIVIC SUITE REVIEW OF CHARGES 2017-18

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update on activity undertaken to increase civic suite bookings and to recommend changes to the Civic Suite charges to operate from 1st April 2017.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the committee determines the level of charges for 2017-18 for Civic Suite bookings set out in the attached table (Appendix A) to operate from 1st April 2017.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 A review of the Civic Suite has been undertaken with regard to charges, promotion and facilities with an aim to increase income. Benchmarking has been undertaken with similar local venues and we have found that our charges are considerably lower, so a review of charges has been undertaken and an hourly charge is being proposed for the civic suite rooms (currently there is only an hourly charge set on the Fernley Room), to encourage shorter bookings and increase bookings.
- 3.2 A new website is being developed to showcase the facilities and future promotion will be targeted to specific clients to promote MBC as a conference venue. We also intend to offer the option of a buffet lunch which will be supplied by a local catering company in order to offer a wider range of conference packages.
- 3.3 Appendix A shows the proposed revised charges for the Civic Suite which also summarises the financial objective of the current charging policy, the existing charges, the current level of any subsidy and the reason for the recommended charge. Along with the introduction of hourly rates for the civic rooms we are proposing to remove the extended use into the evening charge as there is a specific charge for use between 10-12pm in order to help the rates to be more transparent.

4.0 POLICY & CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The fees and charges set out in this report are the ones that do not meet the Charging Policy set in line with corporate and service objectives; these vary according to the service provided. In line with the Councils need to adopt a more commercial approach and as outlined in the Corporate Charging policy benchmarking has been undertaken to ensure charges are in line within the commercial market.

5.0 FINANCIAL & OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Once approved, these charges will impact on the 2017/18 revenue budget position. Civic Suite promotion has been identified as one of the income generation areas under the Business Expansion stream of the Councils efficiency plan. Any additional income achieved will contribute towards the overall efficiency target to support addressing the budget gap.

5.2 Local Government funding continues to be reviewed and there is great uncertainty surrounding funding in later years although almost certainly this will be reduced. This is reflected in the Council's MTFs and places a greater onus on the Council to seek to maximise its income from other sources.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS

6.1 Local Authorities have certain limited freedoms to charge for discretionary services under the Local Government Act 2003. Where appropriate any other relevant legislation is noted within the Appendix A to this report.

7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

7.1 There are no direct links to community safety arising from this report.

8.0 EQUALITIES

8.1 A full equalities impact assessment (EIA) has not been completed for these charges as it is not envisaged the changes will impact on the current users of the meeting rooms. However, we will be monitoring the impact of any changes to the charges through the room's bookings system to understand if there has been any impact. With the introduction of an hourly charge we believe this will make the facilities more accessible and affordable for smaller groups and businesses. We will be promoting the facilities through the new website to engage with customers and where required tailor our packages to meet their needs. Under the existing room booking policy Charities and Community Groups can have the Ferneley room free of charge when available.

9.0 RISKS

9.1

L I K E L I H O O D	A	Very High				
	B	High				
	C	Significant				
	D	Low	1			
	E	Very Low				
	F	Almost Impossible				
			Negligible 1	Marginal 2	Critical 3	Catastrophic 4
			IMPACT			

Risk No	Risk Description
1	A reduction in usage leads to less income being achieved as a result of the increased charges

10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE

10.1 There are no climate change issues directly arising from this report.

11.0 CONSULTATION

11.1 Benchmarking has been undertaken to review comparable local venues to ensure charges are consistent with the market and set accordingly based on the services offered at Melton. The new website will also be promoting the facilities to our existing and potential new customers.

12.0 WARDS AFFECTED

12.1 All wards are affected.

Contact Officer: Rebecca Barker

Date: 9TH January 2017

Appendices: Appendix A – Review of Fees and Charges

Background Papers: Forms for the Review of Charges
Charging Policy

Reference: X:\Cttee, Council & Sub Cttees\Policy Finance & Administration
Committee\2016-17\250117