
Meeting	Cabinet Resources Committee
Date	25 February 2013
Subject	Children's Service and Libraries Fees and Charges
Report of	Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Families Cabinet Member for Customer Access and Partnerships
Summary	To approve proposals to update fees and charges for children's services, including libraries, from April 2013
Officer Contributors	Karen Ali, Operational Manager – Youth Support Service, Children's Service Margaret Sheehy, Interim Libraries Programme Manager, Chief Executive's Service Elaine Tuck, Head of Service Commissioning and Business Improvement, Children's Service
Status (public or exempt)	Public
Wards Affected	All
Key Decision	No
Reason for urgency / exemption from call-in	N/A
Function of	Executive
Enclosures	Appendix A Tables: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Youth Service – Holiday Programmes2. Youth Service – Duke of Edinburgh3. Youth Service – Equipment4. Libraries
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1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 That the Committee approve the fees and charges detailed in this report to take effect from 1 April 2013.**

2. RELEVANT PREVIOUS DECISIONS

- 2.1 Cabinet Resources Committee on 23 September 2004 (Decision item 6) – approved:
- Increases in fees and charges in line with the Financial Forward Plan be approved by Heads of Service in consultation with the Cabinet Member concerned, and that these increases be implemented from January each year, with only limited exceptions to those being increased from 1 April; and
 - Increases in fees and charges above the rate assumed in the Financial Forward Plan be approved by Cabinet Resources Committee, and that these increases be implemented from 1 January each year, with only limited exceptions to those being increases from 1 April
- 2.2 Cabinet Resources Committee, Fees and Charges, 2 March 2011 (Decision item 5) – approved the revised fees and new fees and charges.
- 2.3 Cabinet, Business Planning 2012/13 – 2014/15, 20 February 2012 (Decision item 6) – recommended the budget to Council, which included proposals to start charging for youth and play activities. Council on 6 March 2012 (Decision item 9), agreed this.
- 2.4 Cabinet, Business Planning 2013/14 -2015/16, 7 November 2012 (Decision item 5) – approved the Medium Term Financial Strategy including Appendix 4: Childcare Fees and Charges.
- 2.5 Delegated Powers Report 1523, Positive Activities Equipment, agreed spend to purchase, store and maintain a range of equipment to support the third sector in the delivery of Positive Activities.

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 Regularly reviewing fees and charges enables the Council to ensure it is making the best use of its resources, supporting the corporate priority of 'better services with less money'. The resources generated by changes to fees and charges will help to support the priorities of the Corporate Plan.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 4.1 There is a risk that residents and community groups will feel dissatisfied at increases in charges. However, if libraries fees and charges are not adopted then there is a risk that the service will not be able to meet targets as set out in the Medium term financial Strategy. Libraries budget targets have been set based on projected income receipts in line with the revised charges.
- 4.2 In relation to fees and charges proposed for youth activities, programme planning is based on achieving income targets for activities. Surveys of parents and carers, who

would be the primary purchasers of the activities, have identified that there is a willingness to pay for services if they are otherwise not available. However, a risk remains that activities will not be taken up. To minimise this risk, charges were piloted during the October 2012 half term at a minimal level (£5 per course), and there was no adverse impact on take up of places.

- 4.3 If pricing for the hire of youth equipment is set too low then there is a risk that the quality and availability of the equipment will not be maintained and fewer activities will be available to children and young people as a result. However, if charges are too high then there is a risk that the equipment will not be affordable for voluntary sector organisations and fewer activities will be available as a result. The proposed charging policy has been developed in close consultation with children and young people and voluntary sector organisations to help ensure that it is appropriate. It will be kept under regular review throughout the year and amended as necessary.

5. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 5.1 Changes to the fees and charges have the potential to affect accessibility of services to the customer and accordingly individual cases should be considered as they arise. The resources generated by this decision contribute to supporting the priorities of the Corporate Plan which in turn focuses on providing services to all parts of the community.
- 5.2 The proposed charges for holiday programmes have the potential to impact on young people accessing the programmes. However, the most vulnerable young people will be supported by professionals to enable participation and the young people will not be charged to access these activities.
- 5.3 There is a risk that low income families, vulnerable young people, young people at risk or young people with financial issues may be prevented from enrolling on the Duke of Edinburgh scheme due to price changes. Young people who fall within the set criteria for financial assistance can be granted enrolment at a reduced cost, free enrolment, or subsidised payment when engaged through referring partner/agency, which will help to mitigate this risk.
- 5.4 Officers do not consider that there will be a detrimental impact on users and potential users of library services who have protected characteristics, due to:
- a) the relatively low charges
 - b) the ability of customers to avoid fines due to prompt return or renewal of items on loan
 - c) concessionary charges for replacement library cards

6. USE OF RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (Finance, Procurement, Performance and Value for Money, Staffing, ICT, Property, Sustainability)

- 6.1 The impact of the increases and revised fees and charges have been taken into account in the 2013/14 Medium Term Financial Strategy.

7. LEGAL ISSUES

- 7.1 None.

8. CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS (Relevant section from the Constitution, Key/Non-Key Decision)

- 8.1 Council Constitution, Part 3, Responsibility for Functions, paragraph 3.6 states the functions of the Cabinet Resources Committee including approving income sources and charging policies.
- 8.2 Council's Constitution, Financial Regulations, Paragraph 3.8 requires that the Cabinet Resources Committee approves changes to fees and charges that are significantly different from inflation.
- 8.3 This is not considered a key decision. Although the proposed increases would affect more than one ward, they are not considered likely to have a significant impact on those living in the borough.

9. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 9.1 No above inflation increases are proposed to a range of services provided by the Children's Service, including school meals and social care allowances. Some charges are proposed in other areas, and these are set out below.

Youth Service - Holiday Programmes

- 9.2 There are no proposed increases in the charges for use of youth centres. However, following Cabinet approval (see 2.3), a charge for holiday programmes is being introduced, coordinated by the Youth Support Service. Charges were piloted during the October 2012 half term at a minimal level (£5 per course not per day), and there was no adverse impact on take up of places. The proposed charges are outlined in table 1 of the appendix. They will commence in the February 2013 half term.

Youth Service – Duke of Edinburgh

- 9.3 There is a national increase in the cost of accreditation for the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. The Children's Service cannot contain this and it is proposed to increase Barnet's fees charged to young people from April 2013 as set out in table 2 of the appendix. The increase of cost allows for product price increase, management of enrolments, monitoring and clearance of individual accounts on the Duke of Edinburgh award through the national website until completion of the award. At this stage there is not a planned increase of charges to the schools/academies/colleges, however, this will be reviewed on a yearly basis

Youth Service - Equipment

- 9.4 The youth service has purchased a pool of equipment to be loaned out to voluntary sector organisations to help support a sustainable approach to the delivery of youth and play activities. The intention was to make a charge for loan of the equipment to help support ongoing maintenance and costs associated with hire of the equipment such as training. Detailed work has taken place over the past year to develop a sensitive charging policy which ensures that voluntary sector organisations are not prevented from delivering youth and play activities by prohibitive costs, but ensures that maintenance costs are covered so that the equipment continues to be of an appropriate quality in line with health and safety requirements. To ensure costs were set at appropriate levels focus groups were held with children and young people and voluntary sector organisations, and extensive research conducted into market costs. The proposed charges, which are currently being piloted, are in the appendix table 3. All pricing is the commercial rate, and community groups will be offered a discount of 30% off these.

Proposed charges are subject to change and will be reviewed throughout the year to ensure that they do not preclude voluntary sector organisations from accessing equipment needed to deliver activities to children and young people in Barnet.

Services for Schools

- 9.5 Government is implementing a new national funding formula for schools from April 2013. Under this, schools will receive funding previously delegated to the local authority. Traded services currently offered to local authority maintained schools and to Academies and Free Schools are being revised to take account of this, including the requirement for Academies and Free Schools to purchase our services at full cost. The price of each service offered will be set each year by the appropriate manager to reflect the cost of the service and offered within the existing traded services portfolio for all schools. This report authorises managers to make changes to charging, including the introduction of new charges where appropriate.

Libraries

- 9.6 It is proposed to increase Libraries fees and charges as set out in table 4 in the appendix. More detail on the proposals is given below.

9.6.1 Fines for overdue books and CDs

Barnet Libraries' current fines are as follows:

- 15p per item per day for books and CDs
- There is a maximum charge of £10.20 per item (once a borrower's account reaches £10 owing, they cannot borrow any more items until the account is reduced)
- Late DVDs attract a repeat hire charge

In comparison, other London local authorities surveyed charged between 15p and 30p per day, with the majority centring around 20 – 22p. Barnet's neighbouring authorities all charge 20p per day. Most authorities charge the same for late CDs as for late books.

The following issues have been considered in relation to this charge:

- The service has made it increasingly easier for people to avoid returning their items late, and thus avoid fines, by enabling online renewals.
- The purpose of fines is principally to encourage people to return items on time so that they can be available for other users: this is particularly important for audio-visual items.
- Maximum charges per item are applied to encourage people to return stock, rather than holding onto items for fear of exorbitant fines.

It is therefore proposed to increase book fines to:

- 20p per item per day (adult stock, books and CDs only)
- The policy of charging a repeat hire charge for DVDs returned late will be retained

9.6.2 Reservations

Barnet Libraries' current reservation fees are as follows:

- 75p if no notification is sent of arrival of reserved item
- £1.35 if letter sent notifying item ready for collection
- Requests from outside the borough are charged at the basic reservation rate plus £1, and £3.40 for a renewal
- British Library photocopies charged at £6.40
- No charge is made for children's or teenage stock.

The model of charging for reservations varies hugely between different local authorities.

Between these various options, charges in London range from zero, to £5 (up to £12.60 for British Library requests). Charges in Barnet's neighbouring authorities range between 40p and £2.

Barnet's charge includes a contribution to the cost of processing the reservation, but does not cover costs. It is considered that charging for reservations is reasonably price-sensitive so that significant price increases would lead to a reduction in usage and hence income.

It is therefore proposed to increase reservation fees as follows:

- 80p for self-reservations and no notification is sent. (Pending resolution of technical issues).
- £1 if reservations made with staff involvement and no postal notification is sent, including those made online via webforms etc
- £1 plus second class postage if reservations made with staff involvement and notification sent
- Requests from the British Library: standard reservation fee plus £5.00
- Renewal of British Library items: £4.30 per item
- Items borrowed from other local authorities via UNITY UK – standard reservation fee plus £3.00 on collection
- Subject to successful resolution of current technical issues, it is proposed to offer self-service reservations and text/ email notifications

9.6.3 DVD hire

Barnet Libraries' current charges are as follows:

- £2.55 for blockbuster items
- £1.55 for all other items

In comparison, other authorities surveyed charged between £1 and £3 for a blockbuster, and £1.50 to £2.50 for standard DVDs. Children's DVDs are generally charged at lower rates, between £1 and £1.50. Fewer boroughs allow concessions for this category. Barnet's neighbouring authorities charge between £2 and £3.

The DVD hire service, although declining in usage, remains profitable. It is considered that use of the service is price-sensitive, and care is needed not to raise prices so high that usage falls, rendering the service unprofitable.

In light of current charges in other boroughs, it is now proposed to increase DVD/ computer games hire charges as follows:

- £2.60 for blockbuster items
- £1.60 for all other items

9.6.4 Replacement library card

Barnet Libraries' current charge for replacement of a lost library card is £1.85 (50p concessions). In comparison, other London local authorities surveyed charge between £1 and £3.50, with most offering concessions of around half price to children, over 60s and registered blind people. Some boroughs provide the first lost card free and charge thereafter. Barnet's neighbouring authorities all charge £2 (with varying concessions). It is therefore proposed to increase the charge to £2 with £1 for concessions.

9.6.5 PC Use

PC use is free for the first hour to Barnet Library members, an extra hour for members and guest usage is charged at £2.60 per hour (£1.60 for concessions). It is proposed to increase this charge to £2.70 per hour for an extra hour and for guests, (£1.35

concessions).

9.6.6 Marketplace

Barnet Libraries provide a service for local businesses and organisations to advertise in libraries as follows:

Postcard:	40p per week
A5:	£1.00p per week
A4:	£2.00 per week

Only three London library authorities surveyed provide this service: in Enfield the charge is £1/ week. The going rate for local newsagents appears to be £1 per postcard per week, £2 for larger signs.

It is therefore proposed to increase the charge to:

Postcard:	£1
A5:	£1.50
A4:	£2.50

9.6.7 Cost of replacement of lost or damaged items:

The charge for lost or damaged items is the retail price as shown on the library management system (Vubis). The charge for lost interlibrary loan items is set by the lending authority. The charge for lost British Library items is £147.20, it is proposed that this charge is passed on to the borrower.

9.6.8 Music sets and scores

This service operates via an annual subscription, currently this is £27.50. It is proposed to increase this to £30 plus an additional charge of £10 per 20 items at point of loan. Additionally it is proposed to institute standard overdue charges of 20p per week per item. The loan period for items will be set at 3 months with no renewals possible. If any copies of the set are lost it is proposed to set an administration fee of £5.00.

9.6.9 Playsets

The playset subscription charge is currently £20. It is proposed to increase this to £25 per year.

9.6.10 Bookstart charges

The majority of Bookstart Services are centrally commissioned by the Children's Service and provided to Barnet's Children's Centres. It is proposed additional services will be charged at the following rates:

- Half day centralised literacy training courses - £39.50 per delegate
- Half day literacy training courses bespoke to a specific children's centre – £300
- One off rhyme time/ toddler read and rhyme sessions - £120
- One off extended literacy session - £150
- Half term - series of 6 sessions (rhyme time/ toddler read and rhyme) -£600
- Full year – series of 39 sessions (rhyme time/ toddler read and rhyme) - £3,600

In addition to services delivered to children's centres, the Bookstart team also provides training for other Local Authorities and outside organisations. Proposed charges are as follows:

- Half day centralised literacy training courses - £49.50 per delegate
- Half day bespoke literacy training course - £350

The proposed charge for additional sessions for parents is £4.95 per session per parent.

9.6.11 Room Hire Charges

It is proposed to increase room hire charges according to the table in the appendix. Concessionary rates are available for registered charities, non-profit making organisations and educational organisations that are non-profit making. Out of opening hours bookings do not have concessions as these have to cover the costs of service the let.

9.6.12 Display cabinets / windows

Display cabinets are available at Hendon Library only and are currently charged at a rate of £15.00 per cabinet per week. It is proposed to increase this charge to £20.00 per cabinet per week.

The display windows are available at Chipping Barnet Library. There is an internal and an external window charged at different rates. Concessions also apply to these windows. Current charges are £20.00 per week external, (£10.00 concessions) and £15.00 per week internal, (£7.00 concessions).

It is proposed to increase these charges as follows:

External window – commercial organisations - £25.00 per week, £16.00 concessions.

Internal window – commercial organisations - £20.00 per week, £13.00 concessions.

9.6.13 Local Studies

Local Studies currently levy the following charges:

- Research:
 - general public: 1st half hour free, then £30 per hour
 - other council departments: £15 per hour
 - commercial: £30 per hour
- Reproduction/use of images:
 - Scanned image – 50p black and white, 75p colour
 - Use of own camera to record images - £3 per day
 - Use of images - £20 per use, irrespective of use
- Talks - £20 per hour

It is proposed to increase these charges as below and to introduce a scale of charges for the use of images:

- Research:
 - general public: 1st half free, then £30 per hour
 - other council departments: £15 per hour
 - commercial: £40 per hour
- Reproduction/use of images:
 - Scanned image – 75p black and white, £1 colour
 - Use of own camera to record images - £10 per day
 - Use of images - £20 per use, community and private website or hardcopy publication purposes
 - Use of images - £40 per use, commercial website use publication purposes
 - Use of images - £60 per use, commercial hardcopy publication purposes
- Talks - £40 per hour

The income generated by these charges will be used to support the delivery of the public library service. All other library charges will remain at current levels.

10. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None.

Cleared by Finance (Officer's initials)	MC/JH
Cleared by Legal (Officer's initials)	JOH