

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

10 DECEMBER 2009

CITY SERVICES – CULTURE AND TOURISM FEES AND CHARGES SCOPING PAPER

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CITY SERVICES

Link to Strategic Priorities

Learning City

C101 Delivering customer focused services

C103 Efficient and effective Council

1.0 WHY HAS THIS PAPER COME TO THE COMMITTEE?

- 1.1 The purpose of this scoping paper is to provide Members with the outline of a proposed review of the Culture and Tourism Fees and Charges Policy and to seek views from members on the approach to be adopted.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In February 2009 a review was undertaken of all fees and charges across the former Community and Cultural Services Directorate. Following this review revised fees and charges were agreed for a range of services across Culture and Tourism and approved by the Portfolio Holder under delegated decisions.
- 2.2 In May 2009 the revised fees and charges were implemented across Culture and Tourism.
- 2.3 In September 2009 at a meeting of the Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee concerns were raised in respect of the new charges and it was agreed that a review be carried out six months after the introduction of the revised charges.
- 2.4 Following the implementation of the revised charges 16 complaints were received, the main areas of concern being increased printing charges, meeting room hire and the cost of the Nifty Fifties.
- 2.5 A number of actions were taken to address immediate concerns including:-
- i. Meetings were held with community and voluntary groups to draw up formal agreements supporting the continuation of free or concessionary room hire charges for community organisations.

- ii. The existing policy of supporting children and young people through the provision of 10 free printouts or photocopies for homework purposes was extended to job seekers and also to unlimited printouts for all users from Sunderland.gov.uk.

3.0 NEXT STEPS

- 3.1 Following the concerns raised it is now proposed to carry out a full review of the Culture and Tourism Fees and Charges Policy.
- 3.2 It is proposed that the review examines the fees and charges policy with reference to the following:-
 - The current level of fees and charges across Culture and Tourism.
 - Concerns raised by Members and customer complaints
 - The impact of increased fees and charges on customer satisfaction
 - The impact of increased fees and charges on performance outturns
 - The impact of increased fees and charges on income
 - The level of income generated through fees and charges
 - Current concessionary rates and entitlements to them
 - Consultation with members of the Nifty Fifties including a review of the group membership, programme and admission charges
 - Work with colleagues to ensure alignment with other council services in respect of concessionary entitlements to services
 - Work with colleagues to ensure alignment with other council services in respect of meeting room hire charging policy
 - A review of the marketing of fees and charges

4.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 Members of the Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider and comment on the contents of this scoping paper.