

**Report to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Planning and Cultural Services**  
**Report submitted by: Head of Service, Libraries, Museums, Culture and**  
**Registrars**  
**Date: 4 November 2015**

**Part I**

Electoral Divisions affected:  
All

**Libraries, Museums, Culture and Registrars (LMCR) Proposed Policy**  
**Clarification and Interim Fees and Charges Report**  
(Appendix 'A' refers)

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**Executive Summary**

This is a set of limited proposals relating to fees and charges across the Libraries, Museums, Culture and Registrars (LMCR) service following a service working group review. It is a limited set of proposals awaiting the outcome of the budget review programme affecting the service. The aim of the review was to ensure that fees and charges are applied consistently across the service and where possible service delivery costs are recovered. The review has also looked at benchmarking, where possible, with other Local Authorities to ensure that Lancashire citizens are receiving services at a similar cost to citizens in other comparable authorities.

This is deemed to be a Key Decision and the provisions of Standing Order 25 have been complied with.

## **Recommendation**

The Cabinet Member for Environment, Planning and Cultural Services is asked to approve the following recommendations:

- (i) To change the fines exemption policy so that only children (people aged under 18) are exempt from being fined for the late return of a loaned item.
- (ii) To re-define the definition of members who are exempt from paying a fee for loaning audio visual items.
- (iii) To introduce a £1 charge for all children's craft activities.
- (iv) To increase the inter-library loan fee for books when the supplying institution charges the full British Library rate.
- (v) To increase the charge for orchestral sets from £20 to £60 and for a set of vocal scores from £10 to £30.
- (vi) To provide free access through our Archive Service to copies of the original sound recordings for all material from the North West Sound Archive but where there is no existing copy of an original sound recording a cost recovery charge be calculated and made so that an access copy can be created.

## **Background and Advice**

### **1. Revision of exemption policy**

The policy for applying fines to library members currently includes a number of exemptions: members who are under 18 years of age, members 65 years of age or over, members with long term health conditions or members who state that they have a disability (evidence is requested to support an exemption on the basis of a long term health condition or disability).

After reviewing the current exemption policy it is recommended that only library members under the age of 18 are exempt.

The aim of having a fines policy in place is to act as a deterrent to the late return of items and to help ensure that as much stock as possible is available to all members.

For information the following are ways in which members can return or renew loaned items:

- Library Elf- an online facility which enables you to receive text or email notifications if your items are approaching the due date. You can see all your family member's tickets and also receive notification when reserved items are in. This is a free service.

- On line renewal - customers can manage their account online. Books can be renewed up to a maximum of 10 times (if they have not been reserved elsewhere).
- Phone – members can ring Lancashire County Council's call centre to renew an item or ring a 24 hour automated renewal system. The telephone number that is promoted is the 24 hour automated renewal system.
- Email – members can email the library service to renew an item. The item is renewed but the member is directed to use the online renewal service in the future.
- In person – members can return or renew items at any of Lancashire's libraries.

As there are now a number of ways in which members can return or renew loaned items back before their due date it is considered that to have the very wide exemption policy currently in place is no longer justifiable. An equality impact assessment has been made for this proposed change of exemption policy and this can be found at Appendix "A".

Current fines income is approximately £15,000 per month. It is impossible to accurately predict how this change in exemption policy would affect this level of fines income as we don't know how members who are currently exempt will respond to no longer being exempt i.e. how much of a deterrent a fine will be for them to avoid returning or renewing an item before the due date.

However it is considered that £20,000 of additional income would be a reasonable estimate for income budget forecast purposes.

## **2. Re-defining the definition of who is exempt from fees for Audio Visual items**

Staff have fed back that it is difficult to apply the current definition of who is exempt from a fee when loaning an audio visual item. There is evidence that this currently results in an inconsistent application of the definition across the library service. It is therefore proposed that the definition is revised so that the following groups of people are exempt:

- Visually impaired members.
- Members with dyslexia or who have a disability which significantly impairs their ability to read standard print materials.

This would replace the current definition of "people who are unable to read or use books because of a disability or visual impairment".

This proposal would make it clearer for staff to apply the fee exemption consistently.

The total income for the hire of audio visual materials for the financial year 2014/15 was £106,035. In having a more clear and robust definition applied consistently across all libraries it is considered that less people could result in the income for audio visual items increasing and whilst it is not possible to

make an accurate estimate of any increase, it is proposed that £10,000 be allowed for income budget forecast purposes.

### **3. Introduce a charge for children's craft activities:**

It is proposed that a £1 charge per child with a maximum charge of £2 per family is introduced for all children's craft activities that are delivered. The charge will help cover the costs and therefore make sustainable the delivery of these activities that although are above our core service offer are valued by our customers. We have made an estimate that we will have at least 3,000 children participate in activities each year.

### **4. British Library - inter-library loan charge**

Most library services (including Lancashire's Library Service) provide an inter-library loan facility. This is for when the item that a library member wishes to loan is not available within its own library stock. If an inter-library loan cannot be facilitated from other local authority libraries across the North West the service will see if the loan can be facilitated from stock held by other third parties, predominantly the British Library. This is done on behalf of the member. The standard charge from the British Library for a book is currently £12.65 per item but this is less than what a member would be charged if they approached the British Library direct. Currently the charge for an inter-library loan from the British Library is £0.60p the same as the charge for inter-library loans from other libraries in the North West. It is considered that this fee is sustainable and that the fee should be increased to £12.65 so that the charge from the British Library or any other organisation that charge at this rate is passed on to the customer and that the charge is increased whenever the British Library increases its charge to remain in line with that charge. We estimate that we have approximately 40 such loans each month and therefore by passing on the charge we would bring in approximately £6,000 each year.

### **5. Music score fees**

Music scores are loaned for a year. It is proposed that the charge for vocal score sets is increased from £10 to £30 and that the charge for orchestral sets is increased from £20 to £60. On the face of it these appear to be significant increases but we have market tested what a private provider would charge and it would be far more expensive. This means that members will still be being provided with a value for money service which supports local musicians and musical groups and we should retain current demand. We have an extensive and enviable music score collection which dates back many years but there is a cost to providing access to the collection. This recommendation aims to recover the staff costs of providing access to the collection. If we are not able to recover the staffing costs the alternative could be that it isn't viable to loan items from the collection. The current income is approximately £8,000 a year. Even though we think we will retain existing demand levels we have taken into account that there could be an impact and estimate a growth in income to £20,000 a year.

## 6. Charges for copying of sound recordings at Lancashire Archives

The North West Sound Archive has had to be relocated to the Lancashire Archive Service. It is proposed that in line with other archives stored by the Archive Service access is free. However, if only an original recording exists an access copy will have to be produced. It is proposed that a charge is made for the creation of an access copy at a cost recovery rate. These charges will vary according to how long it takes to produce an access copy. No information is available to accurately estimate how often an access copy will need to be produced but we don't think it will be very often and it is likely to be for academic study and research purposes. So this proposal is to agree the principle that a cost recovery charge can be calculated and made when applicable. After the first year of the North West Sound Archive being integrated into the Lancashire Archive Service we will be able to better estimate the income level from this copying activity but it is thought that it will only be a few hundred pounds a year, covering the cost of the activity.

### Consultations

Staff within the service have been consulted when putting this set of proposals together and many are as a consequence of feedback from front line staff.

Appropriate consultation has taken place with people who may be affected by the proposed changes to our exemptions policies and this is detailed in the Equality Impact Assessment.

### Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

There is a possibility that some services may be less frequently used and that some of the proposals in this report may attract negative publicity.

### Financial

<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Potential Extra Income per annum</b>
1. Revision of exemption policy	£20,000
2. Redefining the definition of who is exempt from fees for audio visual items	£10,000
3. Introduce a charge for children's craft activities	£3,000
4. British Library – inter-library loan charge	£6,000
5. Music score fees	£12,000
6. Charges for copying of sound recordings at Lancashire Archives	£0
<b>Total potential increase to annual income</b>	<b>£51,000</b>

These values are based on the estimated impact of increasing fees and charges through local knowledge and therefore provide only an indication of the financial

benefit. The demand/usage levels will be closely monitored once the new charges are introduced to evaluate the true financial impact.

### **Risk management**

As stated in the implications some of these proposals may result in some services being used less and could attract some negative publicity but there is reasoning behind all of the proposals based on the basic principles of trying to make policies more clear and able to be applied more consistently and recovering costs of service delivery, whilst also being value for money where possible.

### **List of Background Papers**

Paper	Date	Tel
Equality Impact Assessment	11 March 2014 Reviewed January 2015	Gareth Jones, Libraries, Museums, Culture and Registrars 01772 534007

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A