

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 3 February 2022

Report of the Interim Head of Cultural Services

Part I

Electoral Division affected:
(All Divisions);

Corporate Priorities:
Delivering better services;
Caring for the vulnerable;
Supporting economic growth

Cultural Services Fees and Charges Review 2021/22

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Brief Summary

This report presents proposals relating to fees and charges in Cultural Services following an annual review to ensure that they support service objectives, efficiency, and effectiveness.

Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to approve changes to Cultural Services fees and charges with effect from the 1 April 2022 as set out below:

- (i) Include people with a physical impairment and those who are deaf or hard of hearing in the list of groups who are exempt from charges for borrowing audio visual materials from libraries.
- (ii) Include care leavers under the age of 25 in the list of groups who do not have to pay for the late return of library books.
- (iii) Remove the reservation charge for CDs in libraries.
- (iv) Remove the charges for craft activities for children and families in libraries.
- (v) Offer half price entry for two months in May and June 2022 for National Trust members at Helmshore and Queen Street Mills.
- (vi) Reintroduce the family Xplorer ticket in Museums.

(vii) To reduce the commission rate for charitable and not for profit organisations on sales of art and crafts in Libraries and Museums from 35% to 10%

Detail

Exemptions from charging

To include people with a physical impairment and those who are deaf or hard of hearing in the list of groups who are exempt from charges for borrowing audio visual materials. The current exemptions apply only to those who are unable to read or use books because of visual impairment, dyslexia or learning disability.

To include care leavers under the age of 25 in the list of groups who do not have to pay for the late return of library books. This will remove barriers and allow these young people to benefit from full use and access to library services. The current exemption applies to people under 18 only and to any books borrowed from mobile libraries.

Reservation charges for CDs

Following the implementation of the collection management policy and the decision to centralise CD and DVD collections it is proposed to remove the reservation charge of £0.75 for CDs to bring them into line with other audio-visual formats and to promote fair and equitable access to these collections.

Charging for craft activities in libraries

To remove the charges for craft activities for children and families which are currently set at £1 per child and a maximum of £2 per family per activity. This will ensure that craft activities are freely accessible to all children and families in Lancashire and will provide equal opportunity for all to take part.

National Trust member offer for Helmshore and Queen Street Mills

To offer half price entry for two months in May and June 2022 for National Trust members at Helmshore and Queen Street Mills with the primary aims of increasing visitor numbers and promoting awareness of both sites to National Trust members.

Reintroduce the Museums family Xplorer ticket

To reintroduce the 12 -month family Xplorer ticket available at all Lancashire County Council museums (except Lancaster Castle). It is proposed to charge £20 for this ticket. This will enable up to 4 paying visitors (2 adults/2 concessions, or 1 adult/3 concessions) plus unlimited children (who enjoy free admission at all our sites) to pay once for a family pass and make as many return visits as they wish within a rolling 12-month period to all Lancashire Museum sites. This includes Clitheroe Castle Museum, Helmshore Mills Textile Museum, Queen Street Mill Textile Museum, Judge's Lodgings Museum and Gawthorpe Hall. It is intended that this will

encourage Lancashire families to visit our museums which will raise awareness of the buildings and their collections and inspire learning and creativity.

Reduction of the commission rate on Art and Craft sales

The service has had some feedback from the charity and not for profit sectors that the current commission rate is too high and that it presents a barrier to the use of our premises for art and craft exhibitions. As a result of this feedback, the service proposes to apply a reduced rate of 10% for organisations with a charitable or not for profit status. The duration of the exhibition will be agreed between the service and the organisation to ensure fair access and use of the premises. The current rate for commercial and private sales is to remain at 35%.

Consultations

The recommendations in this report have been proposed following an annual review of all fees and charges across Cultural Services by senior managers and operational managers.

The Library Service has also held discussions with the leaving care team in developing recommendation (ii).

The National Trust has been involved in developing recommendation (v).

The service will monitor the proposed changes, should they be approved, and any findings will be considered during the annual review in 2022/23.

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

Financial

The following financial implications have been identified. All calculations are based on figures from the financial year of 2019/20 to illustrate, as far as possible, the impact of any changes on the service without disruption due to closure of premises.

Please note that not all library members who have physical, visual, or hearing impairments (and those with any long-term health condition which may mean they are exempt from certain charges) have this recorded as part of their membership details on the library database and therefore the calculations are estimates only.

Exemptions from charging

There were an estimated 824 Audiobook issued to physically impaired, deaf or hard of hearing library members in 2019/20 together with 107 CDs and 159 DVDs.

The income generated for these issues would be £1,036 although the actual loss in income if these proposals are agreed would be lower due to the declining popularity of CD and DVD borrowing.

There is no available data on how many care leavers under the age of 25 are library members and therefore no current means of estimating the cost of implementing this proposal. The service will work with colleagues in the leaving care team to identify the best way of implementing the change and promoting this offer with our care leavers if the proposal is agreed.

Charging for craft activities in libraries

Charges have not always been applied at every event due to the difficulty of defining a craft activity and the free availability of some materials. The proposal will therefore remove any potential confusion as to what constitutes a chargeable craft activity and ensure that the service can promote these events as freely accessible to all.

Reservation charges for CDs.

Chargeable reservations made during the 19/20 financial year totalled 604. The removal of the £0.75 charge for CDs would therefore result in a potential loss of income of £453. The actual loss of income however is estimated to be significantly lower due to the general decline in the popularity of this format among library members.

National Trust member offer for Helmshore and Queen Street Mills

The National Trust member offer will last for two months between May and June 2022 with National Trust members being allowed access to the two mills at half price. Income generated by National Trust visitors alongside other visitors will be monitored to establish the viability of extending the offer.

If the proposal is approved, it is anticipated that there will be an increase in visitor numbers to Queen Street Mills and Helmshore Textile Museums and an opportunity for additional income generation in the museum shops and cafés.

Reintroduce the Museums family Xplorer ticket

The reintroduction of the family Xplorer ticket should see a very modest increase in admissions during the holidays and summer months, with income from sales levelling up across all sites. The service will monitor future ticket sales and anticipates that the introduction of the tickets will lead to an increase in new or repeat visits at museums. This increase should provide an opportunity for additional income to be generated from visitor spend on activities and in museum shops and cafes.

Reduction of the commission rate on Art and Craft sales

Commission on the sales of Arts and Crafts in our Library and Museum venues during 2019/20 totalled £1800. Therefore, a reduction in the commission rate for the

charitable and not for profit sector will have a very low impact on income for the service.

Legal

There have been no legal implications identified.

Human Resources

No staffing / Human Resources implications have been identified.

Equality and Cohesion

Following consultation with the Equality and Cohesion Manager, the service has further clarified the terms of the Xplorer ticket offer to include the numbers of people the ticket covers and that all children can visit for free. In addition, the service has identified the community partners we will engage with to promote the offer which includes schools, libraries and Lancashire County Council community services working with families such as the Refugee Integration Team. A communication plan will be developed to promote the offer via social media campaigns to Lancashire Families.

The service has also expanded the criteria, after consultation with the Equality and Cohesion Manager, to include people who are Deaf or hard of hearing in being exempt from charges to borrow audio visual materials from libraries. This strengthens the original proposal of exemption from charges for those with a physical disability.

The proposals on the removal of reservation charges for CDs in libraries and the removal of charges for craft activities reflect the commitment of the service to remove barriers to access services wherever possible.

The proposed changes to cultural services fees and charges reflect the general aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty and their implementation should have a positive impact on groups with protected characteristics in Lancashire, building on existing positive work across all groups and with individuals.

There are no further implications which have been identified during the review process.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
None		
Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate		
N/A		