


<div><div><div>CARLISLE CITY COUNCIL</div><div></div></div><div>REPORT TO EXECUTIVE</div><div>www.carlisle.gov.uk</div></div>			
PORTFOLIO AREA: ECONOMIC PROSPERITY			
Date of Meeting:		4 November 2003	
Public			
Key Decision:		Yes	Recorded in Forward Plan: Yes
Inside Policy Framework			

Title: CHARGES REVIEW REPORT 2004/05

Report of: Head of Economic and Community Development Services

Report reference: EDC.30/03

Summary:

This report sets out the proposed fees and charges for areas falling within the responsibility of the Economic and Community Development Business Unit.

Recommendations:

The Executive is asked to agree the charges as set out in the report with effect from 1 April 2004.

Contact Officer: Catherine Elliot **Ext:** 7502

CITY OF CARLISLE

To: The Executive ECD.30/03

4 November 2003

REVIEW OF CHARGES 2004/05 –

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Each Service Manager is required to carry out an annual review of fees and charges.

1.2 This report proposes the review of charges within the Economic and Community Development Business Unit in respect of Carlisle Enterprise Centre, Brampton Business and Telecentre and the Assembly Room at the Old Town Hall. The report has been prepared in accordance with the principles recently approved under the Council's Corporate Charging Policy.

1.3 The charges, which have been reviewed, are addressed separately below.

2. CORPORATE CHARGING POLICY

1. The Corporate Charging Policy, which was approved by the Executive on 07 July 2003, sets out three basic principles to underpin the City Council's policy for reviewing charges.

- A Corporate Approach – to help the delivery of the Council's corporate objectives and to address strategic and cross cutting themes between departments.
- Consistent Concessions – to clarify the basis by which the Council subsidises services and activities and to identify which citizens should benefit from the subsidies.
- Income Targets – to raise income from services where this is appropriate. This should include consideration of charging for services where this is not currently the case. Where charges for services are made they should be cognisant of the costs where appropriate. For 2004/05 each service has been given a corporate target for income generation of a minimum of 3.5%, i.e. an additional 1% increase over and above the assumed retail price index.

1. In addition, the policy recognises that each Service is different, and requires Service Managers to develop specific principles for their particular service or clients groups, but within the parameters of the three main principles.

1. SERVICES INCURRING CHARGES

At the review in 2001, the service charge was increased above inflation to £30 per month to equate to the actual cost of common services. Last year, the charges were increased at the standard rate for an inflationary uplift only. Members were also advised that the objective of providing the Enterprise Centre at nil cost in operational terms had now been achieved, due to reduction in operating costs and increase in income. Improved marketing activities were to be undertaken, particularly to attract new tenants to the less popular units. The Centre currently reports high levels of demand for workspace with an overall occupancy rate of 88%.

3.2 Brampton Business and Telecentre

At the last review, charges were generally amended to achieve an inflationary uplift. Experience, user needs and market circumstances were taken into account to improve services where possible with costs being recovered from larger increases in some charges where this was considered appropriate. New services, arising from developments such as the Wooden Hut, hiring out of computers and use for conferences, were added.

No concessions are offered at the centre. Charges were set at the outset to reflect users' ability to pay bearing in mind that unemployed and unwaged people are part of the target group for the Centre. Meeting room charges assume business or commercial users. Charitable and community users are catered for by the adjacent Community Centre and there is an unwritten agreement with the Community Association that they will service this need. This arrangement works well in practice.

The Centre has now prepared a programme for the next academic year with funding from Carlisle College. In addition to IT training, the Centre and the college are working together to offer a wider range of training to meet the needs of the community. All the lettable Units are currently occupied.

3.3 Assembly Rooms

In last year's review it was reported that the Executive had decided not to progress the outcome of a feasibility study into proposals to change the usage of the Assembly Rooms to include an exhibition/display attraction, at a cost to the Council of £40,000. The situation remains the same. Without improvements to the premises, potential for alternative uses and hence a significant change in income is limited. A continuation of the status quo, with evening and weekend hire by charitable and community organisations, would appear to be the most appropriate use for the premises.

2. SUMMARY OF INCOME GENERATED

4.1 The introduction of the charges proposed is forecast to generate income of £53,032 in 2004/05 which is summarised in the table below:

Service Area	Original Estimate 2003/04 £	Estimate 2004/05 £	% Increase
Enterprise Centre	20,160	20,870	
Brampton Business Centre	21,360	22,110	
Assembly Rooms	9,720	10,060	
Total	51,240	53,040	3.5

3. CONSULTATION

5.1 Consultation to Date -

This report has been considered by CMT and SFPG and their comments have been incorporated into the report.

The letting of units and the setting of service charges also needs to be consistent with the principles of the wider Asset Management Strategy.

5.2 Consultation Proposed -

Overview and Scrutiny as part of the budget process.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive is asked to agree the charges as set out in the report with effect from 01 April 2004.

5. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure that the City Council's Corporate Charging Policy is complied with.

6. IMPLICATIONS

- Staffing/Resources – none at this stage
- Financial – Included in the report
- Legal –
- Corporate – Considered by CMT
- Risk Management – The major risk to this Charges Review is the heavy reliance on income from fees and charges which reflect past and present experience of economic and customer activities. Any significant slowdown or economic recession would likely impact on projected income and would result in budget bids for future years.
- Equality Issues – Charges targeted at specific vulnerable groups using the Brampton Business Centre and Assembly Rooms reflect the ability of those groups to pay.
- Environmental – None
- Crime and Disorder – None

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