

LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

EXECUTIVE MEETING – 8TH DECEMBER 2003

REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR POLICY AND REGENERATION

FOR ACTION

NAME OF WARD(S)

ALL

SCOPE FOR CHARGING POLICY BEST VALUE REVIEW 2003/04

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report outlines the scope for the 2003/04 best value review of Charging Policy

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members are asked to:

(i) consider the attached scope and approve or make amendments to it

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are none specific to this report. However the best value process will enable the council to examine all services thoroughly to establish their efficiency, effectiveness and economy. It is therefore important that reviews are properly scoped to enable the maximum benefit to accrue from the examination of the service. This review in particular will examine how effectively the council is levying charges for services provided.

4. STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are none specific to this report

5. DETAILED CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 The Council's Performance Plan outlined the programme of reviews for 2003/04. The review of fees, charges and rental properties will ensure that the Council is levying charges in the most effective manner in order to ensure that resources are optimised in the context of delivering the corporate strategy.

- 5.2 This review is in the second tranche to be undertaken using the panel process outlined in last year's scopes report. This process has proved very successful and has ensured the timely completion of the majority of the programme of reviews for 2002/03. The process has also been commented upon favourably during inspection of completed reviews by the Audit Commission.

- 5.3 The Policy and Regeneration Unit continues to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the process and to provide detailed training and guidance for services as part of the broader service improvement agenda.

6. **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The following papers were referred to in the preparation of this report:

Best Value Performance Plan 2003-2004

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DIRECTOR POLICY AND REGENERATION

BEST VALUE REVIEW OF FEE, CHARGES AND RENTAL PROPERTIES

DRAFT SCOPE

The best value fees and charges review will consider options for optimising the council's revenue funding through the use of fees, charges and rental properties (excluding housing rents).

It will seek to establish a clear corporate process for setting fees and charges in the context of the delivery of the corporate strategy that reflects best practice across London whilst maximising income generation.

In particular, it will examine:

- In the context of the delivery of the council's corporate strategy, how fees and charges are set across the council and whether the charging policies, currently in place can be varied.
- The amount of funding the council currently obtains from fees, charges and rental properties.
- A comparison of fees and charges mechanisms in place in other London Boroughs in order to elicit 'Best Practice'.
- The impact of the new Government proposals, for a general power to enable local authorities to charge for discretionary services, on LB Brent.

It will generate recommendations from an investigation of a number of high priority services delivered across the council and will seek to generalise from these findings to develop a comprehensive charging policy.

The review will seek to identify at least 2% efficiency savings which will be used to secure performance improvement in line with service development priorities or corporate strategy or CPA action plan priorities.