

LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

Meeting of the Executive - 13 December 2004

Report from Director of Education, Arts & Libraries

For action/information

Wards affected: All

Report Title: LIBRARY SERVICE FEES & CHARGES 2005

Forward Plan Ref: EAL-04/05-0066

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out officers' proposals for the schedule of Library Service fees and charges for the year beginning January 2005. The proposed introduction of the new charges is timed to coincide with an increase in library opening hours.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Members agree the proposed schedule of charges set out in Appendix 1.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Background

- 3.1.1 The Library Service has not increased fees and charges since September 2003. The Best Value Review of Fees & Charges made some recommendations for the library service, some of which are incorporated in the revisions contained in this report.
- 3.1.2 In 2003/4, the Library Service generated £510,980 in fees and charges. Income from fees and charges constituted approximately 9% of overall expenditure and is therefore a significant element within the Library Service budget. The income projection for 2004/5 is £480,000. The projection for 2005/6 will be affected by the likely short-term closure of Willesden Green Library towards the end of December 2005 and by the closure of the halls at Willesden Green Library Centre whilst the work to build the new Grange Museum takes place. It is likely that income

will be reduced during this period and this is reflected in the figure above but this an estimate only until a contractor for the build is appointed and a timescale/plan agreed in detail.

- 3.1.3 Income is derived from the following categories: Video/DVD hire and overdues; tenants/lessees/halls hire; book overdue charges. It is intended the implementation of the revised fees and charges for the library service will coincide with a proposed increase in opening hours at selected libraries in January 2005.

3.2 **Charging principles and policy**

- 3.2.1 The proposals contained within this report are intended to optimise the income streams available in order to meet this year's income target of £530,000.

- 3.2.2 At the same time, officers have been mindful of the need to consider Council and Government objectives on social inclusion in relation to charging policies.

- 3.2.3 In keeping with the Council's Corporate Strategy key themes of promoting the quality of life, (with the action for the Library Service to increase the opening hours of local libraries and provide additional resources for new stock) and achieving service excellence, the Library Service's broad policy is to make its services easily accessible to all residents as well as achieving value for money. Clearly, access to library services, particularly by disadvantaged members of the community, is potentially limited by high fees and charges. The ability of users to pay and the desirability of ensuring that facilities are accessible to the community have therefore been key factors in determining officers' recommendations.

- 3.2.4 In developing their proposals, officers have also taken into account:
- i) Comparative charges made, for example, by neighbouring Boroughs or, where appropriate, by commercial competitors;
 - ii) The potential impact of increasing charges on use, income recovery rates, and stock retrieval rates;
 - iii) Public Library Standards (regulated under the Local Government Act 2000). The Library Service has specified targets to meet on the numbers of visitors to libraries by 2005. Fees and charges need to be in line with encouraging both physical visitors to the library and virtual visitors (e.g. to library website)
 - iv) The need to have consistent and standardised charges across the Service as a whole;
 - v) Clarity and ease of comprehension by customers and staff.

3.3 Proposed revisions

3.3.1 The proposed fees and charges are set out in Appendix 1 and this includes a comparison with existing fees and charges. There is also a clarification on the age limits for concessionary charges, where they apply. Children under 12 and senior citizens are not charged at all or have reduced charges where concessions apply. Children between the ages of 12 years old and 15 years old (inclusive) are also charged at a concessionary rate. All other age bands are charged at the standard rate. The chart in Appendix 1 clearly identifies where concessionary rates apply.

The key changes to existing fees & charges are explained in the following paragraphs:

3.3.2 *Overdue charges*

Officers propose to increase the charge levied on overdue books by 1p per day. The overdue charge for 12-15 year olds will remain at 50% of the adult charge. It is proposed that senior citizens no longer pay overdue charges for books.

Charges are in line with other London boroughs.

It is proposed to re-introduce a daily overdue charge for the hire of videos, and DVDs. This will replace the levying of a new loan charge as soon as an item becomes overdue. This takes into account feedback from customers many of whom preferred a daily overdue charge and also encourages the swifter return of items into libraries for further loans. As the library service is now limited in the number of DVDs or videos it can purchase due to the spiralling costs of purchase of rental items, it is crucial that those that are purchased have a high turnaround rate in terms of numbers of hire periods. The introduction of a further weekly loan period charge to replace the daily overdue charge has meant that customers retain their loans for a week longer rather than just a day.

3.3.3 *Lost Library Cards*

The proposal is to increase the charges for lost library cards from £1.50 to £2.00 for adults and from 75 pence to £1.00 for concessions. This increase reflects the increased costs of purchasing library cards.

3.3.4 *Reservations*

It is proposed to abolish the fee for reserving items already in stock or on order in Brent libraries. The current fee of 80p generates very little income per annum (c£2,400). Furthermore, the online borough wide

catalogue, which also displays on order items, means that customers are increasingly able to locate titles themselves without any administration required by library staff. However, a new charge of £1.25 is proposed for reserved items, which are obtained from libraries outside Brent, or items which will be purchased new for stock in Brent libraries. This charge will offset the overheads incurred in this process.

3.3.5 *Videos/DVDs/music hire charges*

It is proposed to simplify the hire charges for videos and DVDs by removing some of the price bands. There has been a significant change in video and DVD borrowing as a result of changes in the supply of new titles. Libraries can no longer buy films on video and DVD at retail prices as the film companies now insist that only rental product can be purchased. Rental charges for new titles are extremely high, in some cases more than double the cost of retail items. Titles are now purchased after six weeks of release when the film companies offer rental films to libraries at a significantly discounted rate. Consequently our range of stock is not as current as retail and rental outlets. In addition, the rate of borrowing of videos is declining as this technology becomes outdated and charges need to reflect this. In order to stimulate demand and ensure a swift turnaround in hire it is proposed to reduce prices accordingly. The library service will consider the length of loan period for hire of dvds and videos as part of an indepth look at all fees & charges with regard to the Best Value Review Fees & Charges recommendations and issues such as disability access.

The proposals are as follows:

Videos

- To charge £1.50 for all videos.
- To charge £0.50 for children's videos

DVDs

DVDs are now available for hire from all Brent libraries.

- To charge £2.50 for all DVDs
- To charge £1.00 for children's DVDs

Music

- To increase the charge for music CDs from 90 pence to £1.00.

3.3.6 *Playstation2 Games*

A collection of Playstation2 games at will be launched at Ealing Road to attract

young adults to the library. It is proposed to charge £2.50 for a week's loan, with daily overdue charges as for videos/dvds.

3.3.7 Internet access and other ICT services

The Library Service cannot make a charge for the use of any of the People's Network ICT provision in libraries, as a condition of receiving funding from the New Opportunities Fund to install the equipment in all libraries. The Library Service can charge for photocopying or printing. It is not proposed to make any change to charges for these services.

3.3.8 Library Hire Charges

No changes are proposed to the charges for hire of rooms at Willesden Library. It is proposed to charge £15.00 per hour for the room at Harlesden and £12.50 per hour for other library rooms. Community groups would be charged £10.00 per hour at all libraries apart from Willesden Green where a 10% reduction off the full hire charge will apply. The hall hire charges at Willesden Green Library Centre will need to be reviewed when the relocated Grange Museum opens in Spring 2006.

3.3.9 Fax Charges

It is proposed to simplify the fax charges by removing the reduced charge for subsequent pages. Charges have been reduced in line with retail charges.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 The proposals are aimed at simplifying existing fees and charges, making them more inclusive and optimising the income generated by fees and charges. Budgeted income for the libraries service is £530k in 2004/05, and will increase to £541k in 2005/06 in line with the corporate inflation assumption on fees and charges of 2%. Failure to agree the proposals will make it difficult for the library service to achieve its budgeted income figure in 2005/06 and would require compensatory savings elsewhere in the library service.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 No legal implications arise from the recommendations contained within this report. The proposals are made pursuant to the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 and the Library Charges (England and Wales)

Regulations 1991 which authorise library authorities to impose charges for certain library facilities.

6.0 Diversity Implications

6.1 The ability of customers to pay is a key consideration in the setting of fees and charges for library services. Concessions for children, young people and older people have been made on most fees and charges; and hall hire charges make concessions for use by community organisations.

7.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications (if appropriate)

7.1 No staffing implications arise from the recommendations contained within this report.

Background Papers

The following papers were used in the compilation of this report:-

- i) Report 0001R to the Executive Committee 23rd June 2003
- ii) Report 0165R to the Education, Arts & Libraries Deciding Committee 17th April 2002

Contact Officers

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**LIBRARY SERVICE
PROPOSED FEES AND CHARGES 2005**

	<i>Existing fees & charges</i>	<i>Proposed fees & charges 2005</i>
Overdue books	Adults – 15p Concs*. – 8p	Adults - 16p/day Concs** – 8p/day
Overdue Videos/DVDs	Standard second week's charge	Adults - 40p/day Concs**- 20p/day
Overdue music	Adults – 15p Concs*. – 8p	Adults - 16p Concs**- 8p
Lost Library Card	Adults – £1.50 Concs*. – 75p	Adults - £2.00 Concs** – £1.00
Lost/Damaged stock	£4.00 min.	£4.00 min.
Reservations	Adults – 80p Concs* – 40p	Free for 'in stock' or on order items Interlibrary loans and new stock: £1.25
Videos	Single £ 1 - £2 Double & current films £2 - £2.50 Educational, Children's & reduced rate 75p	All videos £1.50 Children's 50p
Music	CD – 90p	CD - £1.00
DVDs	£2 – £3	£2.50 Children's £1.00
Playstation2	N/a	£2.50 Overdue charges as for DVD/Videos
WP/Internet/e-mail	Free access. Floppy disks – 75p PC printing B/W – 10p Col. – 50p	Free access. Floppy disks – 75p PC printing B/W – 10p Col. – 50p
Photocopying	B/W A4 – 10p B/W A3 – 20p Col. A4 - £1.00 Col. A3 - £1.50	B/W A4 – 10p B/W A3 – 20p Col. A4 - £1.00 Col. A3 - £1.50
Fax	UK-£1.00 Europe-£3.00 World-£4.00	UK-50p Europe-£1.50 World-£3.00
Hall hire	Studio 95-£35/hr Weekend £37.00/hr	Studio 95-£35/hr Weekend £37.00/hr

	<p>Willesden Suite- £25.00/hr Weekend £27.00/hr</p> <p>Gallery Room-£12.00/hr Weekend £14.00</p> <p>Harlesden Library Room- £12.50/hr</p> <p>Other Library rooms- £12.50/hr</p> <p>Community groups are charged £10.00/hr at all libraries except willesden Green</p>	<p>Willesden Suite- £25.00/hr Weekend £27.00/hr</p> <p>Gallery Room- £12.00/hr Weekend £14.00</p> <p>Harlesden Library Room-£15.00/hr</p> <p>Other Library rooms- £12.50/hr</p> <p>Community groups are charged £10.00/hr at all libraries except Willesden Green where a 10% reduction will be given</p>
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* 03/04 Concessions: 12–14 yrs old and senior citizens, (under 12s no charge)

** 04/05 Concessions: 12–15yrs old, (senior citizens and under 12s no charge)

Contact Officers

Any person wishing to inspect the above papers should contact, Assistant Director Lifelong Learning & Cultural Services, Marianne Locke.

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EXEC-13.12.04/ML//Lead Officer J. CHRISTIE