

Community and cultural services - Fees and charges review

AGENDA ITEM 8(A)

Principles for Services where the Council is free to set its tariffs:							
Fee description	Any subsidy from council taxpayers to the service users should be a deliberate choice	Discretionary fees and charges should generate income to help deliver service improvements in priority services	Discretionary fees and charges should support the medium term financial strategy	There should be a measure of consistency in the setting of charges for similar services	Fees and charges should be set at a level to avoid unnecessary subsidies from the council taxpayer to commercial operations	If the impact of the fees and charges policy is going to be high, consideration should be given to changes being phased in	Comments
Markets (charges shown as presented in budget book page 217 - appended)	The subsidy is implicitly recognised within Markets Policy as being beneficial to the economy of the market towns and is a deliberate choice. The current total net expenditure estimate for Bishop's Stortford, Hertford, Ware and the Farmers' Market 2009/10 is £61,530.	The level of charges is determined by the practicality of what the market traders are prepared to pay.	The costs associated with the markets are taken into account in the mtfp process.	The markets are not readily comparable with any other service.	The level of charges is determined by the practicality of what the market traders are prepared to pay and are designed to retain vibrant markets at minimum subsidy.	N/A	A review of markets is due to be presented to scrutiny in October 2009. Specific fees and charges relating to corporate and other markets will be addressed.

Meals on Wheels (charges shown as presented in budget book page 217 - appended)	This is a deliberate choice that has been recently reviewed with the result that from 1/8/09 subsidy will be passed to HCC over a phased three year period.	No surplus available.	The costs associated are taken into account in the mtfp process.	The charges have been benchmarked against other LAs in Hertfordshire.	The service is being transferred to HCC from 1 August 2009 and HCC has taken the decision to increase the charge to reduce subsidy.	The charge will increase from £3 per meal to £3.25 on transfer to HCC. Consideration was given to providing additional subsidy to keep the charge at a lower amount.	The subsidy payable by EHC on transfer will reduce to zero at the end of the third year after transfer.
Swimming pools and leisure	The new leisure contract procurement process has secured the best subsidy level available in the market from 1 January 2009 for ten years.	No surplus available.	The costs associated are taken into account in the mtfp process and have been adjusted and improved as a result of capital investment.	The charges will be set agreed annually with the contractor in response to prevailing market conditions.	The charges will be agreed annually with the contractor.	N/A	
Castle Hall (charges shown as presented in budget book page 215 and 216 - appended)	Castle Hall is the subject of a current review by a senior officer/member working party. Net expenditure as represented in the budget estimate for 2009/10 is £470,000	Current fees and charges are under review as part of the Way Forward review.	The costs associated are taken into account in the mtfp process.	The markets are not readily comparable with any other service.	Events/shows and promotions are negotiated with commercial organisations to reflect market forces and industry standards.	N/A	The pricing structure relating to hire is under review and there are proposals to amend and simplify structure subject to refurbishment and re-modelling investment proposals.