

<b>Notice of :</b>	Deputy Leader of the Council
<b>Decision Number:</b>	PH34/2019
<b>Relevant Officer:</b>	Alan Cavill, Director of Communications and Regeneration
<b>Relevant Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Gillian Campbell, Deputy Leader of the Council (Tourism, Economic Growth and Jobs)
<b>Date of Decision:</b>	8 March 2019

## LIBRARY FEES AND CHARGES 2019-20

### 1.0 Purpose of the report:

- 1.1 To consider proposed changes to fees and charges for the Library Service in 2019-20. Alongside the general Library fees and charges, this includes a proposal to remove all fines for library customers from 1 April 2019, and to have an amnesty of historic fines in order to further remove barriers to accessing Library services.

### 2.0 Recommendation(s):

- 2.1 To approve the amended library fees and charges for 2019-20 as set out in Appendix A with effect from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.
- 2.2 To agree to implement a removal of library fines and have a historic fines amnesty.
- 2.3 To note that this means that all books that go overdue from 1 April 2019 will no longer incur any overdue charges. For note, the service will still retain the ability to charge customers for any items that are lost.
- 2.4 To agree that all fines accrued up to 31 March 2019 will be wiped, and any outstanding charges sitting on individual accounts (e.g. for items lost) will also be cleared – this is the historic, amnesty element of the proposal.

### 3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

- 3.1 The setting of the amended fees takes into account market conditions, the Council's draft Revenue Budget 2019/20, and the costs of providing the service.

The significant proposal to remove library fines altogether from 1 April 2019, and to have a full amnesty on historic fines and related charges for lost items, is being recommended in order to increase the reach of the service and eradicate the single most significant barrier to people accessing it (especially low-income users).

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

The current library fines, fees and charges could remain in place but this would mean continuing to put barriers in place to people accessing the service, and offering services that are no longer cost effective in terms of administrative time, or keeping pace with market rates.

#### **4.0 Council Priority:**

4.1 The relevant Council Priority is: "Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience".

#### **5.0 Background Information**

5.1 Library fees and charges are amended on a regular basis to reflect the costs of provision but are also intended to be kept as low as possible to encourage take-up. The last report in February 2018 recommended a number of changes that have since been reviewed. Appendix A shows a list of charges and date of implementation.

5.2 The significant proposal to remove library fines altogether from 1 April 2019, and to have a full amnesty on historic fines and related charges for lost items is recommended as outlined above to remove a significant barrier to increased library use. The service is seeking to encourage lots of new members to join their library, and bring back people who used the service previously and it should be noted that fines are already not levied for under-18's and this is a logical extension.

5.3 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

#### **5.4 List of Appendices:**

Appendix A – Review of Fees and Charges for Libraries 2019-20.

#### **6.0 Legal considerations:**

6.1 Library Charges (England and Wales) regulations 1991  
Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964

**7.0 Human Resources considerations:**

7.1 None.

**8.0 Equalities considerations:**

8.1 The proposed fines removal and amnesty will be open to all library users, but is particularly relevant to low income library users.

8.2 Recent analysis of active library users shows that lower income population groups use the library service more than might be expected, compared to the population as a whole. This is positive in terms of reach and the removal of fines and having an amnesty on historic overdue charges will further enable access to this much needed community service.

**9.0 Financial considerations:**

9.1 The loss of income that will come from the removal of fines will be met corporately.

**10.0 Risk management considerations:**

10.1 None.

**11.0 Ethical considerations:**

11.1 None.

**12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:**

12.1 None.

**13.0 Background papers:**

13.1 None.

**14.0 Key decision information:**

14.1 Is this a key decision? No

14.2 If so, Forward Plan reference number:

14.3 If a key decision, is the decision required in less than five days? No

14.4 If **yes**, please describe the reason for urgency:

**15.0 Call-in information:**

15.1 Are there any grounds for urgency, which would cause this decision to be exempt from the call-in process?

No

15.2 If **yes**, please give reason:

**TO BE COMPLETED BY THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE**

**16.0 Scrutiny Committee Chairman (where appropriate):**

Date informed:

Date approved:

**17.0 Declarations of interest (if applicable):**

17.1 None.

**18.0 Executive decision:**

18.1 The Deputy Leader of the Council agreed the recommendations as outlined above namely:

1. To approve the amended library fees and charges for 2019-20 as set out in Appendix A with effect from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.
2. To agree to implement a removal of library fines and have a historic fines amnesty.
3. To note that this means that all books that go overdue from 1 April 2019 will no longer incur any overdue charges. For note, the service will still retain the ability to charge customers for any items that are lost.
4. To agree that all fines accrued up to 31 March 2019 will be wiped, and any outstanding charges sitting on individual accounts (e.g. for items lost) will also be cleared – this is the historic, amnesty element of the proposal.

**18.2 Date of Decision:**

8 March 2019

**19.0 Reason(s) for decision:**

The setting of the amended fees takes into account market conditions, the Council's draft Revenue Budget 2019/20, and the costs of providing the service.

The significant proposal to remove library fines altogether from 1 April 2019, and to have a full amnesty on historic fines and related charges for lost items, is being recommended in order to increase the reach of the service and eradicate the single most significant barrier to people accessing it (especially low-income users).

**19.1 Date Decision published:**

8 March 2019

**20.0 Executive Members in attendance:**

20.1

**21.0 Call-in:**

21.1

**22.0 Notes:**

22.1