

Notice of:	Deputy Leader of the Council
Decision Number:	PH19/2020
Relevant Officer:	Mark McCree, Head of Libraries
Relevant Cabinet Member	Cllr Gillian Campbell, Deputy Leader (Place and Tourism)
Date of Decision:	21 February 2020

LIBRARY AND HERITAGE FEES AND CHARGES 2020-21

1.0 Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To consider proposed changes to fees and charges for the Library and Heritage Services in 2020-21.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 To approve the amended library and heritage fees and charges for 2020-21 as set out in Appendix A.
- 2.2 To agree to continue with the removal of library fines for 2020-21.

3.0 Reasons for recommendations

- 3.1 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 2019 recommended a number of changes that have since been implemented and these have been reviewed. Appendix A shows a list of charges and date of implementation.

With the exception of licensing fees and print sales heritage 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. Licensing fees reflect the additional cost of provision on the service for commercial companies and include a small profit which is directed back into the sustainability and care of the historic collections. Fine art print sales are costed to raise money to support the care of collections.

- 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

4.0 Council Priority:

- 4.1 The relevant Council Priority is: “Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience”

5.0 Background Information

5.1 Libraries

Following a comprehensive review of Library fees and charges in 2019, only one amendment is being suggested for 2020-21 - the removal of local reservation charges (whilst retaining a subsidised charge for regional and national inter-lending requests).

- 5.2 The reason for making the proposed change is largely tied to the emerging Libraries Ambition Plan and the core principle of removing barriers to library access. People currently have to pay a small fee to get a locally held book sent from one Blackpool library to another for collection. The service’s general policy is to treat all stock as belonging to the service; and it is managed in a holistic way. Given this stance, it is ‘unfair’ that a resident might be effectively penalised because their local branch does not hold the specific title that they want to read. This charge acts as a barrier to people having access to the full range of stock held by the service. There is a specific action within the draft Libraries Ambition Plan to “Remove any remaining financial barriers to accessing the service” and this development would go a long way to achieving that target.

- 5.3 The income raised by this charge, currently 70p per item, totals under £2,000/year; and the service would be able to cover the lost income from within present financial resources given that the additional budget directed to the service to cover the removal of library overdue charges in 2019-20 has been retained.

- 5.4 As noted above, the removal of library overdue charges in 2019-20, has had a universal positive impact. Aside from the national profile it brought, the service has seen an increase in the number of people joining/re-joining the service, which was ultimately one of the key aims in taking this bold step. The service has seen no increase in the number of overdue or lost items; and, staff have reported a significant amount of ad hoc positive user/partner-feedback. It is still relatively ‘early days’ for the change (less than a full year), and performance/impact continues to be closely monitored, but the service would very strongly recommend that the Council continues to not charge for overdue items (whilst retaining replacement charges for lost and/or badly damaged items) and now mainstreams the ‘lost’ income of £6,000/year.

- 5.5 The review of fees and charges has been consulted with the relevant Cabinet Member who supports the changes to be introduced for 2019-20.

- 5.6 Heritage Services
Licence fees are charged to commercial companies for using collection reproductions. Following the trial of different price lists over several years finalised rates are suggested as being the most appropriate. These rates reflect benchmarking against other archives and collection and take into consideration the need to have a clear and simple list rate list to offer clarity and speed for commercial companies wishing to licence material. It also offers incentives for Blackpool based business and companies using Blackpool venues to encourage use and product development locally.
- 5.7 Following an expanding interest in the volunteer delivered talks package it is proposed to add an additional mileage fee to the cost of private talks booked when the volunteer is traveling outside of a ten mile radius of Blackpool to reflect the increase in expenses.
- 5.8 The cost of the cinema heritage tour has been reduced to reflect the changed offer which no longer includes an afternoon tea as the provider can no longer deliver this at a suitable rate.
- 5.9 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

List of Appendices:

Appendix A – Review of Library and Heritage Fees and Charges 2020-21

6.0 Legal considerations:

- 6.1 Library Charges (England and Wales) regulations 1991
Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964
Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015

7.0 Human Resources considerations:

- 7.1 None.

8.0 Equalities considerations:

- 8.1 The removal of local reservation charges and continuing not to charge overdue fines, whilst positive for all library users, is particularly relevant to library users on a low-income.
- 8.2 Socio demographic analysis of active library users shows that lower income groups (transient renters, family basics and municipal challenge) are over-represented users of the library service compared to the population as a whole.

9.0 Financial considerations:

9.1 The recommendations are funded by a continuing corporate budget contribution of £6,000/year to replace 'lost' income from unrecovered fines, as per the 2019-20 library budget.

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?

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 and heritage fees and charges for 2020-21 as set out in Appendix A.
2. To agree to continue with the removal of library fines for 2020-21.

18.2 Date of Decision:

21 February 2020

19.0 Reason(s) for decision:

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 2019 recommended a number of changes that have since been implemented and these have been reviewed. Appendix A shows a list of charges and date of implementation.

With the exception of licensing fees and print sales heritage 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. Licensing fees reflect the additional cost of provision on the service for commercial companies and include a small profit which is directed back into the sustainability and care of the historic collections. Fine art print sales are costed to raise money to support the care of collections.

19.1 Date Decision published:

21 February 2020

20.0 Executive Members in attendance:

20.1

21.0 Call-in:

21.1

22.0 Notes:

22.1