

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

5th February 2013

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Juliet Brunner (Chair), Councillor Simon Chalk (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Andrew Brazier, David Bush, Andrew Fry, Pattie Hill and Pat Witherspoon

Also Present:

Councillor Brenda Quinney

Officers:

L Berry, R Cooke, C Felton, T Kristunas, J Pickering, S Singleton, J Staniland, and D Wheeler

Democratic Services Officers:

J Bayley and M Craggs

MINUTE 138

FEES AND CHARGES 2013/14

The Committee received a report which outlined the proposed fees and charges for 2013/14 for the Council's chargeable services.

Members returned a number of comments regarding the proposed charges within Leisure and Cultural Services. In particular, it was suggested that more could be done to encourage families to visit Council owned gymnasiums. To address this it was agreed that this suggestion should be referred to the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Tourism.

Upon it being suggested that charges for swimming and badminton appeared excessive, Officers explained that the charges were comparable with fees levied by other local authorities, and that income generation was essential to sustain existing services, including free swimming sessions for over 60 and under 16 year olds. Officers also mentioned that the concessionary charge allows residents, such as those on low incomes, to access swimming lessons at a lower rate which is cheaper than any rates charged by other local providers.

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Officers clarified that each promotion and performance split at the Palace Theatre was agreed on an individual basis. This was common industry practice and was proving to be far more beneficial to the Council than the earlier practice of guaranteeing artists a set fee.

Regarding charges under Regulatory Services, Officers agreed to provide clarification on why the fees listed for gambling act permits and gaming machine permits had not changed since the previous year.

Finally, it was suggested that there should be three price brackets for potential dwellings in relation to pre-application advice to help encourage small housing developments in the town. Officers agreed to take this suggestion into account as part of the Planning transformation process.

RECOMMENDED that

subject to the comments in the preamble, above, the fees and charges for 2013/14 as set out in Appendix A - H to the report be approved; other than in cases where:-

- a) **fees or charges are statutory,**
- b) **fees and charges are set externally, or**
- c) **other Council- approved circumstances apply.**

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.37 pm