

Central Bedfordshire Council

Executive

5 February 2019

Traded Services to Schools 2019/20

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This report relates to a Key Decision

Purpose of this report

The report proposes the revised 2019/20 charges for Traded Services to Schools & Academies for non-statutory services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive is asked to agree and recommend to Council the following:

1. **2019/20 charges for traded services to Schools & Academies (Appendix A);**
2. **Charges for the new services proposed to be introduced for 2019/20 (Appendix B); and**
3. **note the Year on Year price changes (Appendix C) and Volumetrics analysis for 2017/18 and 2018/19 (Appendix D).**

Overview and Scrutiny Comments/Recommendations

1. This report was considered by the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the 31 January 2019 and comments are set out at Appendix E.

Issues

2. Fees & Charges (F&C) are subject to an annual review and any proposed increase to prices are subject to Council approval.
3. Whilst not specifically mentioned in the Charging Policy, traded services to Schools and Academies for non-statutory services are the equivalent of Fees & Charges to the public and non-School organisations, but to a restricted audience.
4. The Council's Charging Policy states that:
 - All fees and charges will be reviewed annually and adjusted as necessary in line with the Council's charging policy. The Director of Resources will provide services with guidance each year as to the general inflation rate that may be applied.
 - All F&C should be reviewed on a more fundamental basis at least every 3 years, where it will be necessary to examine all the factors set out below in accordance with good practice guidance i.e. the CIPFA Practical Guide for Local Authorities on Income Generation (Fully revised 2015). This is so that Members may make informed choices on any revised level of charge to be set.
 - The result of such review should be included in the annual F&C report in that year in order that the Council is able to ensure that charges are fair, appropriate and comparable to local alternatives. The review should include an equalities impact assessment.
5. At the Executive meeting on 10 October 2017, the Executive recommended that an inflationary increase as at September of each year be applied to F&C. This was agreed at the full Council meeting that took place on 16 November 2017.
6. In October 2018, the Office for Budget Responsibility confirmed that the UK inflation measured by the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) for September 2018 was 2.4%. Where there have been significant variations from this advisory level these have been identified below.

Pricing for 2019/20

7. The review of prices proposed for 2019/20 reflect three pricing options:
 - Prices remain at their 2018/19 level either because they are in line with other providers (Local Authorities) or because there is insufficient data available to support a price change.
 - Prices increased with inflation (2.4%).
 - Prices increased by more than inflation if there is sufficient information to justify an increase

Review of service charges

8. For Schools Trading this is being undertaken on a rolling basis in line with Fees & Charges to the public. Appendix A describes all traded services to school and academies along with proposed charges for 2019/20.
9. Following review, the IT Services delivered to schools will cease from 31 December 2018. Schools were informed of the cease at the start of this year and IT Services have been in regular communication with all schools to provide support and advice throughout this change.
10. A new service “AnyComms Plus and Xporter” will continue to be traded separately by Children’s Services. These systems are the Council’s preferred system to securely transfer/extract data between schools and the Local Authority.
11. Services that have increased by more than 2.4% to take into account actual cost recovery are listed below:
 - Educational Visits and Journeys – from 15.4% up to 50% increase is proposed in line with national charges which included additional £10 training levy.
 - Access and Inclusion Services for Academies – from 6.7% up to 12.9% is proposed.
 - The Jigsaw Centre - Extended Educational Support Services – up to 4.3% is proposed.
 - Census Checks - Additional Support – from 4.8% up to 5.3% increase is proposed.
12. Fischer Family Trust Aspire (FFT) is an extremely useful resource which helps schools in target setting and comparing value added progress of pupils to the progress of similar pupils nationally.
13. The FFT is currently consulting on a new pricing structure for 2019/20. The outcome of the consultation will not be known until January 2019. The Council will consult with schools through the Partnership Vision for Education Board and other forums to understand the demand from schools for the FFT subscription and the impact of any new pricing model. The Council will write to schools individually once the outcome of the consultation is known to explain the new costs.
14. Insurance charges to schools are being reviewed and the outcome will depend on the result of the insurance re-tendering exercise currently underway. The decision of re-tendering will be communicated to all CBC’s maintained schools in due course.
15. The charges for advertising vacancies for Schools and Academies provided by the Academy (formally known as The Academy of Social Work and Early Intervention) have been reduced by 25%. This is to bring these charges in line with admin cost for advertising vacancies.

New charges for 2019/20

16. New proposed services to schools and academies for 2019/20 along with a recommended price are shown at Appendix B.

School Improvement Partner

17. Each School has the primary responsibility for improvement and ensuring high educational standards. The School Improvement Service will provide appropriate challenge and support to schools designated as causing concern, as set out in the "School Intervention Strategy" 2014. School improvement partners (SIP) evaluate schools' self-evaluation forms and provide professional challenge and support to schools. The SIP will work within a local context but also a national framework.
18. The basic package for a three-day SIP programme which includes a visit each term, headteacher appraisal and all aspects of the Ofsted schedule are covered across the academic year is £585 (excluding VAT) for both maintained and academies.

Inspiring Music

19. Inspiring Music is the Music Service of Central Bedfordshire, offering tuition and music making opportunities in schools and in the community. Inspiring Music's vision is to help people at all stages of life to participate in and enjoy music, supporting individuals in reaching their full potential in developing musical skills.
20. The Inspiring Music website provides information on some of the musical opportunities available to families and schools and provides a forum for community and other groups to publicise what they do. Additional music services have been added to the Brochure. These were delivered in Central Bedfordshire previously, but were advertised through other channels;
 - Instrumental Whole Class Tuition
 - Developing a Singing School
 - SEND Projects
 - CPD, Support and Resource
 - Sing Up!
 - Focus on Sound

AnyComms / Xporter

21. "AnyComms Plus and Xporter" will provide schools with a secure platform to transfer and extract data between schools and the Local Authority. The Learning Performance Team will send out invoices (£200 to cover annual licenses) by March 2019, as per previous arrangements. The service will include:
 - AnyComms Plus, (Secure Data Transfer): web-based secure file transfer system used by schools and teams across the council e.g. Social Services, Finance and HR. This enables schools to receive and respond in a timely and secure manner.

- Xporter, (Automatic extract of data from schools' management information system to Central Bedfordshire Council): This enables teams such as Admissions and Free School Meals to access current information when determining places and eligibility checks.

Educational Visits and Journeys (EVJ) Revalidation – Half Day

22. Existing Educational Visits Coordinator (EVCs) are expected to revalidate their training every three years. This course focuses on the role of the EVC and the monitoring and training of other staff within their own environment. For maintained Schools and Academies buying the EVJ support package the cost will be £45. For Academies that have not bought back the EVJ support package the cost will be £75.

Volumetrics analysis for 2017/18 and 2018/19.

23. The review of services to schools and academies also included the volumetrics analysis which shows the actual volumes and income for 2017/18 and budgeted volumes and income for 2018/19. This analysis is shown at Appendix D.

Council Priorities

24. The proposed services to schools and academies for 2019/20 support the Council's priorities listed below:
 - Improving education and skills
 - Great resident services
 - A more efficient and responsive Council.

Legal Implications

25. Although central government policy is giving increasing independence to schools, local authorities still retain some responsibility for educational outcomes in their local area. Schools and academies have the autonomy to purchase the support they need from any number of alternative providers, but the council is still held accountable for the impact that support has on the success of local schools.
26. Despite these services not being statutory functions for the council, they nevertheless remain important tools that help influence schools and support core strategic aims. Whilst local authorities typically are not allowed to make a profit on charged-for services however they can generate a contribution towards overheads that can offset some costs for the council.
27. In setting and reviewing services to schools the Council's Fees and Charging policy is adhered to.

28. The relevant statutory provisions on charging are as follows:

- The Local Government Act 2000 gave local authorities a wide power to act for the economic, social and environmental well-being of their areas. The general power to charge for discretionary services was included in the Local Government Act 2003. Section 93 of the 2003 Act provides that when the Council is providing a discretionary service, it may charge for the service, provided the person receiving the service has agreed to its provision.
- The Localism Act 2011 introduced the 'general power of competence'. Section 3 mirrors section 93 of the 2003 Act and duplicates the existing power to charge for providing discretionary services on a cost recovery basis. Section 4 permits local authorities to trade in areas that are not connected to the performance of their functions in exercising the general power of competence.

Financial and Risk Implications

29. Financial and risk implications are part of the annual review of all fees and charges in line with Council's Fees and Charging Policy. The Director of Resources will provide services with guidance each year as to the maximum inflation rate that may be applied.

Equalities Implications

30. Central Bedfordshire Council has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

31. The Council's F&C policy requires that reasonable notice should be given to service users before any new charge or significant change is implemented. This is to ensure that there is no adverse effect on vulnerable groups when setting new fees and charges or making significant changes to an existing charge. Where appropriate, Equalities Impact Assessments will be carried out for proposals.

Appendices

Appendix A – Statutory and Traded Services to Schools & Academies booklet 2019/20.

Appendix B – New proposed services for 2019/20.

Appendix C – Year on Year changes to charges.

Exempt Appendix D – Volumetrics analysis.

Exempt by reason of paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 'Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).'

Appendix E – Overview and Scrutiny Comments.