

## **Report to Cabinet**

**Subject: Review of Civic Centre room hire policy and charges**

**Date: 13 February 2014**

**Author: Senior Members' Services Officer**

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### **Wards Affected**

Borough – wide.

### **Purpose**

To seek approval from Cabinet Members for proposals for a revised Policy for hire of the Civic Centre and charges for external use of meeting facilities.

### **Key Decision**

This is not a Key Decision.

### **Background**

1. The following rooms at The Civic Centre are available for public hire:

- Council Chamber
- Reception Room
- Committee Room
- Foyer area

Currently and historically, the principle has been that first priority for use of public meeting rooms is for Cabinet and Committee meetings.

Secondly, that priority is given during the working day for business use by Gedling Borough Council and those partner organisations that occupy parts of the Civic Centre under a lease agreement with the Council, i.e. the Clinical Commissioning Group.

It has also been the case that, once the above priorities are met, use of the Council Chamber and Reception room by Voluntary and Community groups is encouraged for significant local events.

In the lead up to and during elections, use of rooms for elections purposes would override all other priorities.

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## **Proposal**

2. In reviewing public room hire charges, it is proposed that the above principles are retained and that the Council should seek to recover costs only where additional costs are incurred.

Taking account of actual cost to the Council and annual RPI, proposals for charging were arrived at following a short benchmarking exercise with both external commercial and not for profit facilities and with reference to charges currently applied by Gedling Leisure for use of public meeting rooms in leisure and community centres.

Costs of refreshments have been factored in to the hourly charge for the Reception and Committee Rooms and for additional caretaking during the evenings and at weekends.

An amended Room Hire Policy which reflects these principles is attached at **Appendix 1** and proposals for charging are set out at **Appendix 2**.

## **Alternative Options**

3. In drafting these proposals, the following alternative options were considered:
  - That the charges set in 2009/10 are simply inflated to reflect the year on year RPI increase. This option was not recommended as it did not fully reflect the costs incurred for additional caretaking and would also significantly undercut those facilities available through Leisure Services.
  - That charges are set on a commercial basis and used as an avenue for income generation. This option was not recommended as it did not reflect the aim of the Council to encourage use of public rooms by the Community and Voluntary Sector.

## **Financial Implications**

4. The Council has an annual room hire income budget of £1,800 and a refreshment income budget of £1,300. The room hire proposals set out in this policy have been set in order to achieve this, and the income budget and charges will be subject to annual review against actual costs incurred.

## **Appendices**

**Appendix 1:** Proposed Council Room Hire Policy

**Appendix 2:** Proposed room hire charges

## **Background Papers**

5. None identified.

## **Recommendation**

**THAT Cabinet considers and adopts the proposed Council Room Hire Policy and agrees the proposed room hire charges**

**Reasons for Recommendations**

The approach taken in determining the Room Hire Policy and in setting the charges reflects the Council's aim to clarify the rationale for hire and use of public rooms at the Civic Centre, and to set charges which encourage greater use of those facilities, particularly by the Voluntary and Community Sector.

## **POLICY FOR HIRE OF THE CIVIC CENTRE**

### **1. Principles of hire**

First priority for use of public meeting rooms is for Council, Cabinet and Committee meetings and for the administration of Elections. Secondly, priority is given during the working day for business use by Gedling Borough Council and those partner organisations that occupy parts of the Civic Centre under a lease agreement with the Council. Once these priorities are met, use of the Council Chamber, Reception and Committee rooms by local Voluntary and Community groups is encouraged. The Council also welcomes proportionate use of the facilities by Corporate and Public Sector bodies.

### **2. Hiring arrangements**

Charitable, Voluntary, Public and Corporate bodies will be able to hire the Chamber and/or Foyer area for events of special significance such as Annual General Meetings and awards events.

The Reception and Committee Rooms will also be available for hire by Charitable, Voluntary, Public and Corporate bodies including political organisations connected with this Council.

Booking of the Foyer area for events is restricted to out of office hours only (6pm – 10pm on weekdays and 9am – 6pm on Saturdays).

Refreshment costs and costs of additional caretaking for evening and weekend use of the Civic Centre are reflected in the hourly charge to the hirer.

As a matter of policy, payment for room bookings must be made in advance.

### **3. Concessions**

A discount of 25% on the standard hourly charge will be granted to Gedling based Charitable and Voluntary groups.

Free use of the Chamber, Committee and Reception rooms and foyer will be granted for the purpose of joint strategic partnership events and meetings, wherever Members of the Council and/or Gedling Borough Council staff are leading in their coordination.

Free use of public rooms will also be granted for Gedling Borough Council political group meetings and events. Wider political group meetings will be charged at the standard rate.

In the event that the hirer applies a charge to delegates for attending an event booked at the Civic Centre, all rights to free or concessionary use will be waived.

### **4. Car Parking**

In the event that the hirers require parking facilities for 11 or more external delegates they will be advised to book the overspill car park.

### Proposed Public Room Hire Charges

ITEM	£ CHARGE PER HOUR
	<b>25% discount is granted for Gedling based voluntary and community organisations</b>
<b>Reception room</b>	
Weekdays to 6pm	<b>17.00</b>
Weekday evenings	<b>21.00</b>
Saturdays to 6pm	<b>27.00</b>
<b>Committee room</b>	
Weekdays to 6pm	<b>11.00</b>
Weekday evenings	<b>14.00</b>
Saturdays to 6pm	<b>21.00</b>
<b>Foyer area</b>	
Weekday evenings 6pm – 10pm	<b>28.00</b>
Saturdays to 6pm	<b>40.00</b>
<b>Council Chamber</b>	
Weekdays to 6pm	<b>24.00</b>
Weekday evenings	<b>28.00</b>
Saturdays to 6pm	<b>40.00</b>
<b>Overspill Car park (11 external delegates or over)</b>	<b>25</b>