

Item No. N/a	Classification: Open	Date: 6 September 2018	Decision maker: Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure, Equalities and Communities
Report title:		The introduction of room hire charges for newly built library meeting rooms at East Street and Grove Vale libraries	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All residents and non-residents seeking to hire a room in East Street and Grove Vale libraries	
From:		Fiona Dean, Director of Leisure	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the deputy leader and cabinet member for culture, leisure, equalities and communities gives approval for the introduction of the room hire charges for new library meeting rooms at East Street and Grove Vale libraries, with effect from 6th August 2018, as set out below.
2. It is proposed that for both East Street and Grove Vale libraries the following charges are introduced:
 - Full rate of hire £30 per hour
 - Concessionary rate of hire £15 per hour

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. On 12 July 2018 the Leader of the council agreed to vary the executive scheme of delegation for the purpose of delegating the decision sought in paragraph 1 to the deputy leader and cabinet member for culture, leisure, equalities and communities.
4. The library service currently hires out rooms at five libraries and Kingswood House. Charges for room hire are set annually and approved by cabinet as part of the fees and charges for libraries and heritage. Since the 2018/19 fees and charges were approved construction has started on two new meeting rooms at East Street library and the new Grove Vale library.
5. The GLA have awarded Southwark a grant to make improvements in the Old Kent Road area including improvements to East Street library. The main focus of the library refurbishment is an extension to the existing building to include a meeting space. This will be accessible via a new entrance allowing the space to be used by the local community beyond library opening hours. The refurbishment will also include accessible toilet and improved kitchen facility and some improvements to the external façade of the building. Improvements to the library are designed to help support and promote local business use and encourage local start-up projects. Hire of the new meeting room is an important part of this, with the improvements expected to be completed and the meeting room available for hire in late July 2018.

6. Grove Vale library in East Dulwich is due to be relocated in 2018 as part of a new development currently being constructed by Northridge Capital. The new library forms part of a Section 106 funding agreement and is being built within a new development which includes residential housing and a retail outlet adjacent to East Dulwich station. The new library has a floor area of 244.5 square metres, which is approximately double the size of the existing library, and which will include a meeting room for public hire. The library is expected to open in November 2018.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

7. Library meeting rooms are a key resource for the local community. They allow individuals or groups to hire fully accessible spaces in modern facilities with provisions such as WiFi, ICT equipment and in some cases kitchen facilities. They provide excellent value for money as compared to other local meeting rooms, and there are a number of long term customers who regularly use library rooms for services ranging from keep fit classes and health checks to church groups.
8. Existing meeting rooms have a full rate of hire and a concessionary rate of hire. The full rate of hire applies to businesses and commercial groups, the concessionary rate to registered charities and not for profit community groups.
9. Benchmarking of meeting room hire costs was carried out against a number of local organisations as part of the process of setting the fees and charges for 18/19. The proposed charges for the two new meeting rooms are comparable to the charges for the existing library rooms that were agreed by cabinet:

Meeting room	Capacity	Hire cost per hour
Dulwich library hall	100	£52 full rate £26 concessionary
Peckham library room 1	50	£52 full rate £26 concessionary
Peckham library room 2	50	£52 full rate £26 concessionary
Camberwell library room 1	4	£25 full rate £12 concessionary
Camberwell library room 2	4	£25 full rate £12 concessionary
Camberwell library room 3	50	£52 full rate £26 concessionary
John Harvard library room	30	£40 full rate £20 concessionary
<i>Grove Vale library room (proposed)</i>	10	<i>£30 full rate £15 concessionary</i>

<i>East Street library room (proposed)</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>£30 full rate £15 concessionary</i>
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10. During 2017/18 the library service introduced a new marketing and income generation strategy for room hire. The strategy has been developed focusing on opportunities for room bookings at non-peak times, to promote a clear offer including list of facilities available with transparent and competitive pricing structure, and a user-friendly online booking system that is scheduled for release in August/September 2018.

Policy implications

11. A successful room hire programme increases library visits and exposes a greater number of people to the additional services that libraries provide, assisting libraries to meet key performance indicators around book loans, library visits and WiFi usage.

Community impact statement

12. Impact on the community will be beneficial as the number of modern, affordable meeting spaces in the borough will be increased. The East Street library meeting room in particular has been planned as a key meeting space for local community groups and businesses, and will be accessible to these groups outside of the regular library opening hours.

13. In March 2018 the library service, in partnership with the council's Local Economy team, achieved a successful funding bid for the British Library Start Up in London Libraries project. The project, due to start in Q3 18/19, will support local entrepreneurs, business start-ups and SMEs to develop the insight, skills and confidence they need to start and grow successful businesses, thereby making a significant contribution to local economic growth through safeguarding and creating jobs. Part of this project will be delivered using the new East Street library meeting room, and will assist in the regeneration of the Old Kent Road area.

Financial implications

14. Room hire in libraries achieved revenue of just under £105,123 in 17/18 (excluding the rooms at Canada Water Library, which are managed under contract by The Albany). Latest forecasts show an unfavourable variance for income from libraries, which the new rooms at East Street and Grove Vale libraries will help to address.

15. Fees will continue to be reviewed annually to ensure they remain in line with neighbouring boroughs

16. This recommendation does not require any additional staffing resource.

Consultation

17. Formal consultation is not carried out for the introduction of these charges. However, once approved, notification of the new charges will be published through the appropriate channels and key stakeholders. The deputy leader and cabinet member for culture, leisure, equalities and communities was briefed.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Director of Law and Democracy

18. This report seeks approval for the introduction of hire charges for new meeting rooms at East Street and Grove Vale libraries.
19. The report advises that fees and charges for libraries and heritage in 2018-19 have been approved by Cabinet. Under the council Constitution the Leader of the council may agree to vary the executive scheme of delegation in order to specify that a decision is to be taken by a particular decision maker. On [***2018] the Leader exercised that power in order to delegate the decision contained in the recommendation to the deputy leader and cabinet member for culture, leisure, equalities and communities.
20. The proposed new hire charges are intended to be consistent with corporate policy, in particular the Medium Term Resources Strategy, and will apply to the existing non-statutory fees and charges. The Community Impact Statement contained within paragraphs 12 and 13 notes the benefits that the provision of the new meeting spaces will generate.
21. Section 93(1) of The Local Government Act 2003 enables the Council to charge for providing discretionary services. The power in the Act is subject to the requirement that the Council is not prevented from charging for the services by virtue of any other legislation. The Director of Law and Democracy is not aware of any specific legislative provision which would prevent the Council from relying on these powers to charge.
22. The power to charge for a service under the Act is also subject to the duty to make sure that, taking one financial year with another, the income from charges made from a service does not exceed the cost of the provision of the service.
23. There are no prescribed legal requirements for consultation on the proposed hire charges although those charges will need to be publicised and notified. Officers should ensure that all forms of notification explain how and to whom any complaints or queries should be made.

Strategic Director of Finance and Governance (ESR18/005)

24. This report seeks approval from the deputy leader and cabinet member for culture, leisure, equalities and communities for the introduction of the room hire charges for new library meeting rooms at East Street and Grove Vale libraries, as proposed in the recommendations. It proposes the introduction of new charges with effect from 6th August 2018. These changes are in accordance with the council's guidance on fees and charges, contained within the Medium Term Resources Strategy.
25. The strategic director of finance and governance notes the financial implications detailed in paragraphs above and that the additional income generated as a result of implementation of these recommendations will contribute towards the budget pressure in this area. The impact will be reported through 4 monthly revenue budget monitoring to cabinet.
26. Fees will continue to be reviewed annually to ensure they remain in line with

neighbouring boroughs.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Libraries and Heritage fees and charges 2018/19	Culture	Brian Cape 020 7525 1575
Approval of delegated decision	Culture	Brian Cape 020 7525 1575

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Fiona Dean, Director of Leisure	
Report Author	Praveen Manghani, Libraries and Heritage Manager	
Version	Final	
Dated	30 August 2018	
Key Decision?	Yes	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Director of Law and Democracy	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team / Community Council / Scrutiny Team	30 August 2018	