

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date:	Meeting: Executive Member for Children's Services
Report title:		Call-in: Fees and charges relating to Children's Services 2009-10 – 2011-12 (Executive Member for Children's Services February 6 2009)	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Overview & Scrutiny Committee	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That, within seven clear working days of receipt of this report, the executive member reconsider her decisions in respect of fees and charges relating to Children's Services 2009-10 – 2011-12 in light of the following concerns of the overview & scrutiny committee:
 - The committee believes that the decision to raise the maximum charge for attendance at early years centres by more than 29%, after school club fees by 17.5% and holiday club fees of up to 34% this year and 24% next year is not proportionate (reason 20.2 a), particularly considering the current economic climate, that inflation is 0.9%, that Southwark Council plans a council tax freeze and that the proposals go beyond the requirements of the Medium Term Resources Strategy (MTRS)
 - Furthermore the decision does not maintain the link between the council's strategy and implementation (reason 20.2 f), indeed the decision seems in many ways to contradict council strategy. The Young Southwark Strategy sets out as a vision:

"We want Southwark to be a place where every child and young person can have high expectations and the best opportunities. We will work together with children, young people and their families so that they can grow up in good health, feeling safe and secure, and realise their full potential"
 - This vision is underpinned by the 5 Every Child Matters outcomes and specific aims including:

"Achieve economic well-being

 - *live in households free from low income*
 - *parents, carers and families are supported to be economically active"*
 - Southwark's Children & Young People's Plan identified as an area of further need to achieve these outcomes:
 - *income maximisation, access to childcare and anti-poverty strategies*
 - It is the committee's view that raising fees for children's services to the extent proposed and the new fee structure runs contrary to the aims and

needs set out in the Young Southwark Strategy and Children & Young People's Plan

- The committee believes that the decision has not been subject to due consultation (reason 20.2 b). Indeed the report makes clear that these proposals will instead be included in a future consultation with parents and other stakeholders – after the decision has been taken.
- The committee believes that this structure of fees penalises parents who work longer or less standard hours or who work further away and can least afford the increase
- The committee refers the decision back to the executive member and recommends that she does not increase the fees or increases them by a smaller, more proportionate amount and that she carries out a proper consultation with parents prior to taking a final decision
- The committee recommends that the executive member should undertake a more detailed study of the impact of changes in charges prior to taking a decision.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. On February 6 2009 the executive member for children's services considered a report on the fees and charges relating to children's services. On February 17 2009 the chair of overview & scrutiny committee - Councillor Fiona Colley - and three members of the committee (Councillors John Friary, Barrie Hargrove and Veronica Ward) requested call-in of the decisions. The call-in was considered at the meeting of overview & scrutiny committee on March 9 2009.

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
<i>Executive IDM Report</i>	<i>Town Hall</i>	<i>Richard Blakeley 020 7525 7232</i>
<i>Overview & Scrutiny</i>		<i>Peter Roberts 020 7525 4350</i>

Lead Officer	Shelley Burke, Head of Overview & Scrutiny	
Report Author	Peter Roberts, Scrutiny Project Manager	
Version	Final	
Dated	11.03.09	
Key Decision?	Yes	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / EXECUTIVE MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Director, Legal and Democratic Services	No	
Executive Member	No	