

ADULTS AND PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES PORTFOLIO DECISION RECORD

9 July 2009

The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor Gerard Hall - Adult and Public Health Services Portfolio Holder.

Officers: Maggie Heaps – Adult Education Co-ordinator
Neil Harrison – Strategic Commissioner – Working Age Adults
Jill Harrison – Assistant Director of Commissioning
Louise Dauncey – Commissioning Officer
Sylvia Tempest – Environmental Standards Manager
David Cosgrove – Democratic Services Team

1. Adult Education Fees – Academic Year 2009-2010 (*Director of Adult and Community Services*)

Type of decision

Key decision - test (ii) applies.

Purpose of report

To consider the level of adult education fees for the academic year 1st August 2009 to 31st July 2010.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The report set out details of the funding received for adult education, the current fees and the various categories of adult learning available. The report went on to set out the options for the charges for the fees for the four categories of courses (Vocational, First Steps, Personal and Community Development Learning and courses which currently attracted no fee) for the new academic year. In each case the report identified a preferred option for the charges proposed.

The Portfolio Holder was concerned that the proposed increases in charges would not dissuade any particular group of students or lead to complaints. It was indicated that there was little evidence to support this. There were occasionally some complaints when charges were increased. The Portfolio Holder was also concerned that the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) may have a view on the charges being levied in Hartlepool being somewhat lower than those they recommended. The Adult Education Coordinator

indicated that the LSC only made recommendations on charges. This had to be balanced against encouraging the take of the courses run by the Council. There was competition in some areas of the town from other providers.

Decision

1. That Vocational and First Steps Learning courses be charged at £ 93 for a 60 hour course and £ 31 for a 20 hour course;
2. That Personal and Community Development Learning (PCDL) courses be charged at £ 120 for a 60 hour course and £ 40 for a 20 hour course;
3. That no course fees should be charged to students entitled under the LSC guidance on remitted fees (except for a one-off administration charge);
4. That the fee remission policy should continue to apply, as at present, to those categories of courses which are considered as developmental. These categories are as set out in Appendix 1 to the report. In particular it would include groups of students who were recruited to widen participation or in response to specific government initiatives e.g. students with a disability, Asylum seekers and Refugees, Family learning or community regeneration activities.
5. That the administration charge should remain at current levels i.e. £10 for vocational and First Steps courses and £ 15 for PCDL courses.
6. That courses which are not supported through LSC funding or other income streams will be delivered at the Full Cost rate

2. The Informal Adult Learning Pledge (*Director of Adult and Community Services*)

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To seek portfolio holder approval for the Council to sign the Informal Adult Learning Pledge.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The government white paper “The Learning Revolution” was published in April of 2009. The paper was the result of an enquiry into informal adult learning. Informal adult learning is described as learning for its own intrinsic value where the purpose is not to get a qualification.

One of the priorities suggested by the report was to build a culture of learning. The report suggested that there was a need to ‘build a strong and

diverse coalition of organisations to promote learning and point adults to new opportunities'. One of the initiatives planned by the report to assist in building capacity is the introduction of the Learning Pledge

The signing of the pledge would confirm that the council recognised the benefits of informal adult learning and confirms the councils' support.

Decision

That approval be given to the signing of the Informal Adult Learning pledge.

3. Revision Of Charges For Wednesday Open Market 2009/10 *(Head of Procurement, Property and Public Protection)*

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To provide additional information for consideration by the Portfolio Holder in respect of charges for the Wednesday open market.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

Proposed charges for the open markets were considered by the Portfolio Holder on 16th February and 16th March 2009. The initial proposal was to introduce self-erect stalls on both the Wednesday and Thursday open markets including a reduction in the charges for a stall. The proposal has been introduced on the Thursday market but the Portfolio Holder requested that the options for the Wednesday Market be re-examined.

The majority of the Wednesday market traders do not own their own stalls and generally only attend markets where stalls are provided. Therefore their preference would be for the council to continue to provide, erect and dismantle the stalls on their behalf.

Following the meeting of the Portfolio Holder on 16th February a poll of the Stallholders was undertaken. The result of this poll was that 99% of the stallholders were not in favour of going self-erect on the Wednesday market. There did, however, seem to be some acceptance that to continue to receive this service, there would be an increase in charge necessary.

The Portfolio Holder was concerned that the Wednesday market continued, so therefore accepted the suggested proposal to increase the charge by £2 to £22, despite the fact that this would not lead to the previously approved reduction in costs. The Portfolio Holder was also concerned at some recent press reports which seemed to give the impression that the Council's income from the market was significantly higher than it was.

Decision

1. That the council continue to provide, erect and dismantle the stalls for the Wednesday market.

2. That the charge for a standard stall (plus proportional increases on additional space used by traders) be increased to £22 (currently £20).
3. That the charge during January and February for stall-holders with full attendance be increased to £17 (currently £15).
4. That the additional charge for casual traders for the 4 weeks running up to Christmas to be £4 (currently £4).
5. If holiday is taken or any other absence without notification a service charge will be levied £5 per stall (currently £5).
6. If payment is not received at the Civic Centre by 11:30 am on market day, an administration charge of £5 per stall will be made (currently £5).

4. Update On Revision Of Pest Control Charges 2009/10 *(Head of Procurement, Property and Public Protection)*

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To provide an update to the portfolio holder following the introduction of charges for pest control treatments.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

Proposed charges for pest control treatments for rats and mice, fleas (human), bedbugs and cockroaches were considered by the Portfolio Holder on 16th February and 16th March 2009. It was agreed to introduce a flat rate charge for these services of £25 from 1st April 2009.

The charges were introduced on 1st April 2009 and since this date customers have been given the option of taking up the service or have been given advice by the pest control service. Since the introduction of the charges we have received to date 87 complaints about the charges for treating rats and mice.

In the same period there has been a reduction in the number of customers taking up the service. In the first quarter of 2007 there were 326 calls for problems with rats and 139 calls for problems with mice. In the same quarter of 2008 there were 334 calls for rats and 90 for mice. In the first quarter of this year we have dealt with 141 calls for rats, 24 of these took advice only and 61 calls for mice of which 6 were for advice only. This was a reduction of approximately 65% in treatments undertaken for rats and approximately 50% in treatments undertaken for mice.

In the Portfolio report of 16th February 2009 it was reported that there

would be an increase in annual income of approximately £25,000 based on an estimated 1000 treatments to domestic premises and 200 to business premises. If the take up of the service for the rest of the financial year follows the current demand this increase in income will reduce to approximately £8500.

The Portfolio Holder commented that the introduction of these charges had been the cause of many complaints from the public and some Councillors. He was concerned that while the charges were significantly advantageous over those charged by other commercial organisations, there could be perceived to be an increase in vermin problems due to the charges. The Portfolio Holder, therefore, decided that the charges should be removed and those residents that had paid since their introduction should be reimbursed.

Decision

- 1 That the charges introduced for pest control treatments be removed and the service revert to a free service and those charges incurred by residents for treatments undertaken since 1st April 2009 be refunded.
2. That the Environmental Standards manager produce a further report indicating how the budget shortfall may be recovered.

5. Intention to Tender for the Provision of 24 Hour Care and Accommodation for Adults with Learning Disabilities *(Director of Adult and Community Services)*

Type of decision

None – the report was for the Portfolio Holder's information only.

Purpose of report

To advise the Portfolio Holder for Adult and Public Health Services' of the intention to tender for the provision of 24 Hour, Care and Accommodation for Adults with Learning Disabilities

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

In order to purchase quality, cost effective services and ensure a level of competition amongst providers in the region it is proposed to undertake a tender exercise for six respite beds plus one bed for emergencies. The contract term is anticipated to be for a five year period (plus a two year extension period) subject to satisfactory performance reviews and is estimated to cost c£330,000 p/a. It is proposed that the tender will follow the procedure as detailed in Appendix A of the report.

The proposed tender exercise was reported to Contract Scrutiny on 22nd June 2009 and it is anticipated that tenders received will be opened by the Panel on 17th August 2009. The outcome of the tender procedure will be the subject of a further report to the Director of Adult and Community Services.

Decision

That the report be noted.

6. Reducing Health Inequalities through Tobacco Control (*Director of Adult and Community Services*)

Type of decision

None – the report was for the Portfolio Holder's information only.

Purpose of report

To advise Portfolio Holder of the £100,000 Department of Health allocation to Hartlepool Borough Council to reduce health inequalities through tobacco control in 2009/2010 (with a further allocation in 2010/2011).

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

A grant of £100,000 has been granted to Hartlepool Borough Council for the 2009/2010 financial year, with a similar allocation for 2010/2011. The Council was awarded this grant as smoking prevalence rates in Hartlepool are within the highest 25 in the country. The smoking cessation services offered in Hartlepool were, however, well regarded and had proved to be very successful for those that had taken part.

As part of the programme, grant recipient authorities will work within their local health partnerships to develop and implement integrated and comprehensive tobacco control programmes locally. IDeA will manage the programme on behalf of the Department of Health and the Local Government Association and will facilitate collaborative practice between participating authorities and the wider local government sector, and disseminate the good practice.

Decision

That the report be noted.

The meeting concluded at 11.00 a.m.

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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