

POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

8TH JUNE 2016

MODEL PUBLICATION SCHEME AND SCALE OF CHARGES

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To guide the Council to adopt the model Publication Scheme as recommended by the Information Commissioner's Office.
- 1.2 To provide information on the current scale of charges to enable the Council to review the charges.

2.0 Model Publication Scheme

- 2.1 Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 every public body is required to adopt a Model Publication Scheme to ensure that it is completely transparent in all that it does. In 2015 the information Commissioner produced a new version which is attached hereto.
- 2.2 The purpose of this scheme is to make the maximum amount of information readily available at minimum inconvenience and cost to the public.
- 2.3 The authority will indicate clearly to the public what information is covered by this scheme and how it can be obtained.
- 2.4 Where it is within the capability of a public authority, information will be provided on a website. Where it is impracticable to make information available on a website or when an individual does not wish to access the information by the website, a public authority will indicate how information can be obtained by other means and provide it by those means.
- 2.5 Material which is published and accessed on a website will be provided free of charge.
- 2.6 Charges may be made for information subject to a charging regime specified by Parliament and Charges may be made for actual disbursements incurred such as:
 - photocopying
 - postage and packaging
 - the costs directly incurred as a result of viewing information
- 2.7 If the information is requested as a result of a Freedom of Information Request, the Council can charge for the direct employee costs of looking for the information.
- 2.8 The Council is also required to publish a scale of charges as part of the Scheme

3.0 Scale of Charges

3.1 The current scale of charges is attached hereto.

- For Publications and Photocopies, the exact charge should be made.
- Time taken to retrieve FOI requests can also be charged for depending on the estimated time to retrieve the information if this should go over the 20 day time limit.
- It is difficult to establish how many actual cups are drunk, so the charge has been per person since the machine was in operation.
- The charges for the Council Chamber were not based on like for like as there are no other similar facilities in Pontypool town centre, except the Civic Centre, for which there is no charge.
- The rental fee for the offices needs to be reviewed as the two rooms available have now been vacated. We are in the process of doing this by contacting estate agents for a current rental figure and seeking advice from Torfaen CBC. The current charges are attached. The Council will approve any new tenants.
- The Task Force charges were reviewed and changed in 2013 and should be reviewed again.

4.0 Use of the Council Chamber

- 4.1 Prior to the refurbishment of the Council Chamber there were no bookings for it for over a year. Since its refurbishment that has been some interest.
- 4.2 One Voice Wales would like to hold training sessions there but 3 out of 3 have been cancelled due to insufficient numbers. However they would like to use it in the future. (There is a course booked in on 4th July 2016. The Clerk will open and close as the time is 6.30pm to 9.00pm)
- 4.3 The WEA has used the Chamber for several weeks at the current charges for 'tablet' training. The course has now finished but will hopefully restart in September.
- 4.4 Whitehead, Ross Education and Consulting has booked the Chamber for 4 days a week (Monday to Thursday) from 6th to 30th June 2016. This booking has been agreed at the current rates.
- 4.5 List of users of the Council Chamber were regularly presented to committee and this can be reinstated now that there is some regular use again.
- 4.6 It is also proposed that the Chair and the Vice Chair of the Policy and Finance committee, and the Clerk be given delegated powers to approve new bookings, prior to confirmation of availability

5.0 Recommended

- 5.1 That the Council adopts the Model Publication Scheme
- 5.2 That the scale of fees for services be reviewed.
- 5.3 That the charges for the letting of the upstairs offices be agreed, when the current charging figure is available.
- 5.4 That the use of the Council Chamber be reported monthly to the Policy and Finance committee
- 5.5 That delegated powers be given to the Chair, Vice Chair and Clerk to approve new bookings for the Council Chamber, prior to confirmation of availability

Mrs. R.V. Tucker

Clerk to the Council

3rd June 2016.