

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE
CORPORATE DIRECTOR'S MEETING WITH EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

1st February 2022

OUTDOOR LEARNING SERVICE
CHARGES AND FEES SEPTEMBER 2022 – AUGUST 2023

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To approve an increase in all fees in line with inflation and financial procedures for September 2022 to August 2023.

2.0 ISSUES

- 2.1 The charges and fees for the school year September 2021 – August 2022 were put forward for approval in June 2021 due to the coronavirus pandemic and the restrictions placed on the service by DfE guidance.
- 2.2 Following the Executive decision to reopen the service, there is a requirement to now open to bookings for the school year September 2022 to August 2023. Opening for bookings at this time will allow schools and other groups' sufficient time to launch their visits with parents and guardians and plan their school year.
- 2.3 Following the strategic review, further work is being undertaken to consider pricing so that a future charges and fees structure will ensure that the service can meet financial KPIs. This charges and fees structure for future years will be brought to CYPLT for approval in the summer term in line with the time frame for an Executive decision on the final business case.

3.0 PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 It is acknowledged that this particular round of price increase considerations come at an exceptional point in time as (a) the services look to recover from the impact of Covid and (b) pricing needs to stimulate usage of the service during the 22-23 academic year at a point in time when the service is expecting a period of change in line with the recommendations of the review.
- 3.2 Under normal circumstances the prices for any individual academic year would be set in the summer term of the previous academic year (i.e. summer 2021 consideration for 2022-23 academic year) to facilitate communication of prices in advance of inviting bookings.
- 3.3 The proposal from the service is that the annual year of operation should continue to be split into three zones, with a focus on setting prices to stimulate additional usage in the latter two zones. This will allow additional collection of data to evaluate the impact of a zonal charging structure.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The strategic review work undertaken has taken into account an estimate of 4.2% inflation across the service - and the average rates of increase do comply with the requirement to at least increase the charges in line with inflation.
- 4.2 Following the mandated closure, it is not currently possible to provide a comprehensive outturn of a whole year of the new fees structure as the impact of the pandemic and resultant demand for outdoor learning residential visits is not yet fully understood.
- 4.3 Whilst a detailed exercise to review the break- even position in the service has not been undertaken as part of this review exercise (given the intense work being undertaken in the strategic review), and given that the service does operate at close to break even, it is considered that the pricing proposals under discussion in this paper would not jeopardise that position.
- 4.4 It does however need to be acknowledged that no work has been undertaken to assess the benchmarking position in 2021-2022. Detailed work was undertaken in 2021-2022 and it is proposed that this is reviewed again more fully in any consideration of charges for the 2023-24 academic year

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.5 Proposals are in line with the constitution and financial procedures.

5.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 To continue a trial period of seasonal pricing to provide supporting evidence for the strategic review.
- 5.2 To propose an increase of at least inflation for the forthcoming school year 2022-2023 in line with financial procedures.

6.0 RECOMMENDATION

To approve the continuation of a seasonal fees structure for residential school groups and increase other fees in line with financial procedures and increasing by 4.2%.

STUART CARLTON
CORPORATE DIRECTOR – CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE

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