

## Civic Suite Room Bookings

### Operations, item 12

<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Operations</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>28 September 2006</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Civic Suite Room Bookings</b>	
<b>Author:</b>	<b>Carole Hughes and David Noble</b>	Item for decision

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#### Summary

1. The room booking pricing regime has been in place since 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2002 and requires updating. Internal Audit has recommended that following this report a yearly pricing review takes place. This can be part of the annual review of fees and charges undertaken by Scrutiny Committee.

#### Recommendations

2. Members agree
  - a. the following hourly rates

i. For the Civic Suite	£70.00
(plus £5.00 per hour if the booking includes the Chairman's Room)	
ii. The Council Chamber:	£55.00
iii. The Committee Room:	£40.00
iv. Great Dunmow Committee Room:	£25.00
v. Charity and Community Groups	£18.00
  - b. A minimum booking period of 3 hours to be introduced. This is recommended to ensure the costs incurred in administering the booking, setting up and administering sundry debtors invoices, setting up and striking of rooms etc are recouped by the Council.
  - c. The Executive Manager with responsibility for the Civic Suite has the authority, on behalf of the Council, to levy additional charges when large events require additional stewarding or events leave excessive debris requiring additional cleaning etc.
  - d. Booking fee of £50.00 to be required from all Hirers when booking with 25% to be retained by the Council to cover costs if the event is cancelled rising to 100% if the cancellation is within 7 days of the event.
  - e. Prices to be increased from 1 October 2006 for all new bookings.
  - f. Bookings will only be confirmed if there are no Council Meetings scheduled.

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- g. Any Charity that can supply a Registration Number, recognised local Trusts and properly constituted Community Groups be allowed the reduced rates.
- h. Fees to be increased in line with inflation each year, rounded to the nearest pound or
- i. if circumstances arise which require greater price increases a report be forwarded to Members for decision.
- j. The current practice continues that the rooms are only available for conferences, meetings, exhibitions and other similar functions and that the facilities are not available for any parties, social events or any other events deemed not suitable by the Council.
- k. Costs incurred by the organisation for example cleaning, laundry and use of kitchen facilities are fully recouped from Hirers.
- l. The following additional charges:
 

Flip charts & pens (per pad),	£7.00
Cost of a jug of Coffee for 10 with 1 packet of biscuits included	£10.00
Cost of a jug of tea for 10 with 1 packet of biscuits included	£10.00
Juice per 10 people	£2.00
Cover Charge for up to 20 people	£10.00
Cover Charge for 20+ people	£25.00
Additional Set up and reset costs per hour and per Steward	£12.50
Additional Steward(s) per hour per steward	£15.00
Additional cleaning if required, per hour	£15.00
- m. The above costs are incurred by all Hirers.

### 3. Members consider whether:

- a. They wish to see proposals for a more aggressive marketing and bookings approach and task the Executive Manager (HR) with preparing a further report for decision.
- b. They wish partner organisations (eg PCT or Police) to be charged at a reduced rate.

## Background Papers

- 4. Report to Resources Committee, May 2001
- 5. Audit reports 2000 and 2004

## Impact

Communication/Consultation	<b>Letters will be written to previous users to advise of price changes</b>
Community Safety	<b>none</b>
Equalities	<b>none</b>
Finance	<b>Possible slight increase in income</b>
Human Rights	<b>none</b>

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Legal implications	<b>none</b>
Ward-specific impacts	<b>none</b>
Workforce/Workplace	<b>None at current levels. If Members wish to aggressively market room lettings it is likely that an additional part time post will be required to deal with increased bookings</b>

### Situation

6. The current pricing regime was introduced in 2002 and the increases introduced were the first for several years. Charges have not increased since this date.
7. The previous Steward completed a review of the pricing regime earlier this year. Using his knowledge of the building, previous problems/issues, costs and usage he has recommended a new means of calculating the costs. He also carried out a review of other authorities lettings policies. The above costs have been calculated based on the rateable hourly value and the costs incurred pre during and post the booking. The costs include for example setting up the room, moving tables and chairs etc, stewarding the building, clearing the room when the event has concluded, heating, lighting, wear and tear of the fabric of the building, cleaning etc.
8. Catering costs are not reflected in the current charges to the Hirer. New costs will be dependent on Hirers requirements and will include for example cover charges, costs for the laying out, taking delivery of, storing and presenting food, use of cutlery, crockery, serving, clearing away, use of the dishwasher and chemicals and supporting caterers especially during large events.
9. The occupants of the Great Dunmow office have, as part of their lease agreement, the right to use the Committee room at Great Dunmow during the day free of charge. Charges are incurred outside of office hours and the Charity and Community group rate above would apply.
10. The Council Chamber is hired to the Registrar for weddings during office hours on Fridays and from 9.00 am until 1.00 pm on Saturdays. No booking is undertaken that would interfere with the Registrar's functions in any way. There is an additional charge for weddings that take place on other weekdays.

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#### Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
<b>Council does not cover costs</b>	<b>Low if the above prices are agreed</b>	<b>Low for most hirers Possibly medium for some Charities</b>	<b>If costs to the Council are not reflected in the charges passed to the Hirer there is the possibility that the Hirers event is subsidised.</b>
<b>Hirers breach licensing laws or try to ignore other aspects of the Hire Agreement</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Booking literature has been rewritten. Certificates etc must be viewed and copied prior to an event taking place Stewards authorised to close down any event which contravenes the law or breaches the terms of hiring.</b>