

**Appendix 4**

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON  
ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.30 pm on 7 JULY 2009**

**SC4 REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES**

The Head of Customer Support and Revenue Services presented the report of the Interim Change Manager. The report updated Members on the conclusion of a review of the Council's fees and charges, with particular reference to ensuring equality of treatment in concessionary charging. A number of inconsistencies had been identified in the setting of charges and the granting of concessions. Recommendations to policy committees were made.

Members considered the report. Comments made were as follows: Councillor Wells said, as a member of the working group which had looked into this subject, that the current fees and charges contained many discrepancies. Inconsistencies were identified in the report and policy committees were invited to consider ways in which to ensure uniformity of fees and charges.

Regarding rodent control, Councillor Rolfe warned people could be discouraged from taking action if a fee for dealing with rats was introduced. Councillor Wells said the report did not suggest making such charges, but recommended areas to be looked at more closely.

Regarding bulky waste collection, Councillor Yarwood said there had been incidents where the concession rate service was being abused, at a cost to the Council.

Councillor Rolfe had reservations about the working group's view that concessions for over 65s should be examined. This age tended to be the trigger for many concessions. Councillor Wells said the criteria should be financial need rather than age, as those who were over 65 were not necessarily those in most need. Councillor Yarwood said there was a potential risk in that discrimination could be perceived. Further work needed to be done in exploring these issues.

Councillor Sell said it would be helpful to have the input of Environmental Health officers and Building Control officers. The Head of Customer Support and Revenue Services said the lead officer for the group reviewing pest control services was the Head of Environmental Health. Building control services were being explored through the Strategic Solutions initiative.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Yarwood, seconded by Councillor Wells and carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED**

- 1 that the Community and Housing Committee be invited to consider and act upon the views

## Pest Control Review Task Group

- relating to pest control services set out in the report;
- 2 the attention of the Environment Committee be drawn to the working group's comments on burial charges;
  - 3 the Chief Finance Officer be asked to prepare a draft corporate pricing and concessions policy for consideration by the Finance and Administration Committee and that
    - a) the policy provides for a standard level of discount of 50% for those on state benefits;
    - b) no specific discounts be granted on the basis of age
    - c) consideration be given regarding whether the above proposal should be the subject of some form of public consultation;
  - 4 charges for services should be set on the basis of full cost recovery; and
  - 5 the attention of the Community and Housing Committee be drawn to the need to review the approach by which leaseholders of Council owned properties are charged for maintenance and other costs.