

Committee:	Cabinet	Date: 30 November 2017
Title:	Revision to Museum Fees and Charges – Recommendation from Museum Management Working Group	
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Ranger, Cabinet Member for Communities & Partnerships	Key decision: No

Summary

1. After a break of two years, Saffron Walden Museum is re-launching its services to schools during the autumn term 2017 now there is a new Learning & Outreach Officer in post. Due to restrictions of teaching space in the Museum, it is intended to offer taught session in schools and a new charge for this needs to be introduced. Schools Loans boxes are also being revised and improved. The Museum's fees and charges, as approved with the 2017/18 budget, do not contain these charges.
2. In addition the Museum from time-to-time is offered the opportunity to participate in marketing initiatives which can mean one-off or ongoing variations to published fees and charges.
3. This report seeks permission to revise the published fees and charges for 2017/18 to account for the above issues and seek delegated authority to approve marketing initiatives.
4. The proposals in this report have been discussed and endorsed by the Museum Management Working Group (MMWG). The relevant minute from the MMWG meeting of 4 October 2017 is attached as Appendix A.

Recommendations

5. That Cabinet approves the following recommendations from the Museum Management Working Group:
 - The fees for schools as set out in paragraph 12
 - The revised loan box charge as set out in paragraph 14
 - That delegated authority be given to the Section 151 Officer to approve variations to published entrance fees, in consultation with the Curator. Any variations to be reported quarterly to the Museum Management Working Group.

Financial Implications

6. Once the Museum's learning service is fully re-established, it is estimated that in a full year taught sessions will generate £5,600. Currently the income target for taught sessions is £2,000.

7. Participation in marketing offers as outlined in the report may have some impact on ticket sales, but as the aim of such initiatives is to attract people who would not otherwise have visited the Museum, this is likely to be low. Conversely, souvenir sales from school visits and ticket and souvenir sales due to an improved holiday activity programme designed and run by the Learning and Outreach Officer is estimated to generate an additional £2,500 pa.

Background Papers

8. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

None

Impact

- 9.

Communication/Consultation	Educational opportunities through the museum, either on site or at schools, will be promoted
Community Safety	None
Equalities	None
Health and Safety	Risk Assessments are undertaken for visits by schools to the museum and a new Risk Assessment for visits to schools will be produced. The Education & Handling collection contains objects and specimens, including replicas, which are suitable for handling and surplus to the main collections.
Human Rights/Legal Implications	None
Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	None

Situation

Taught Sessions

10. During the two years since the departure of the previous Learning Officer, the Museum has been unable to offer taught sessions to schools, and the former

Museum Schoolroom has been leased out to provide income of £16,000 per year to the service. Plans for a major development project, which include a new educational facility in a proposed extension to the Museum, will take a few years to achieve and is subject to funding awards from external sources.

11. Gallery space for teaching groups in the Museum is restricted and only single classes of 30 pupils can be accommodated. However, a significant number of schools want to bring two or three classes on a visit, and the cost and logistics of travel by coach mean they cannot make separate visits for each class. There may also be some smaller schools in the district which find it difficult to travel to Saffron Walden but could be engaged through a visit to their own site.
12. Therefore the Museum proposes to offer schools the option of booking a visit from the Learning & Outreach Officer, who would take objects and specimens from the education & handling collection to the school and deliver a taught session in the school classroom. A new charge to cover this is proposed at £120 (£100 + £20 VAT) for a morning and £210 (£175 + £35 VAT) for a full day. These rates are competitive compared to other comparable services but would cover staff costs (time and mileage) and generate income towards our target for education fees. Take-up is difficult to predict, but we anticipate the rate should be affordable and attractive to potential new users. An additional income figure for visits from and to schools has been estimated, which is detailed in paragraph 5 above. These charges would apply to schools in Uttlesford and/or within 20 miles of Saffron Walden by road. Special requests would be priced according to costs of travel and staff-time.
13. Visits by single classes (up to 30 pupils) to the Museum for taught sessions will continue and the current charge of £3 per pupil (£2.50 + 50p VAT) with a minimum fee of £48 (£40 + VAT) per group, remains unchanged this financial year.

Schools Loan Boxes

14. The Schools Loans Boxes are being revised in line with the National Curriculum and requests from local schools, with significant improvements to contents, presentation and packaging. Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd has funded the cost of new boxes and replicas from an educational grant which it received. Our current loan box charge is £12 per half-term but we intend to raise this to £18 (£15 + £3 VAT) to reflect these improvements and investment of staff-time, and generate an appropriate level of income for the service. A charge of £18 for Schools Loans and reminiscence boxes would still be competitive compared to other museum services in Essex, and should remain affordable for our local village schools. The museum plans to roll out the new loan boxes from autumn 2017 onwards as they are completed.

Delegated authority to the Section 151 Officer

15. Currently, the Museum offers free admission during the National Heritage Open Weekend in September, a long-standing arrangement.

16. To extend the range of its marketing, the Museum takes advantage of selected free or low-cost promotional campaigns. However, some of these campaigns require participation in a 'special offer' on admission tickets which fall outside the published fees and charges.
17. In order to address this issue, it is recommended that the Section 151 Officer is given delegated authority to approve involvement in such initiatives, in consultation with the Curator. Any such approvals would be reported quarterly to the Museum Management Working Group.
18. An example of such an initiative is the Essex Big Weekend. This is a new event, held for the first time this year (in April), and organised by Visit Essex. Saffron Walden Museum did not take part this year, but if it becomes an annual event then there is benefit to being involved. The Museum would be free to determine its offer which would likely be either 2 for 1 entry or free entry.
19. In 2016, 71% of Kent Big Weekend survey participants stated that they would visit the attraction they went to again and 85% would recommend the attraction to family and friends.
20. The new Essex Pass is a second example of a marketing initiative which the Museum could take advantage off. This annual pass, purchased for £9.99 gives discounted entry on dozens of Essex visitor attractions. Heritage attractions already signed up include the Museum of Maldon, Havering Museum and Hedingham Castle.
21. More locally, the Museum is planning an event with Saffron Screen, through which a family film screening will be linked to the Museum's current temporary exhibition. Attendees at Saffron Screen will then be able to show their cinema ticket to gain entry to the Museum, see the exhibition and take part in an activity.
22. Such initiatives are aimed at broadening the Museum's audience, bringing in people who might not otherwise visit and then encouraging repeat visits. These visits would also generate income through souvenir sales and donations.

Risk Analysis

23.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Schools do not book visits to their sites	2 – even during the absence of a Learning Officer, the Museum was regularly contacted by	2 – Education fee income targets would not be met	Effective marketing to schools and via Museum website and social media Learning Officer will apportion time between schools visiting the Museum

	schools		and visits out to schools according to demand, so income will be maximised in either event
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1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.

Appendix A

MMWG13 REVISION TO MUSEUM FEES AND CHARGES

The Assistant Director – Corporate Services presented the Museum Fees and Charges report to Members.

In light of the recent appointment of a Learning and Outreach Officer, the Museum had decided to revise its fees and charges, specifically with regards to the new service of delivering taught learning sessions in schools, Loan Boxes and promotional events.

The taught sessions would be a new service by which the Learning and Outreach Officer would attend schools in the district with items from the education and handling collection. The rates charged would be competitive in comparison to similar services and there would be no change to the fee charged for sessions taught in the Museum.

There would also be a revised charge for the Schools 'Loan Boxes' scheme, which would include significant improvements to the contents, presentation and packaging. This would be rolled out during the autumn of 2017.

To allow the Museum to determine its participation in promotional events, where the ticket pricing fell outside of published fees and charges, it would be necessary to approve the delegation of authority to the Section 151 Officer. By doing so the Museum could take advantage of promotional events to gain publicity and broaden the Museum's audience, without having to gain approval from Cabinet on each occasion.

The Chairman said this was a good idea but asked if the MMWG would be consulted on one-off promotional events. The Assistant Director of Corporate Services said that this was possible.

Councillor Sell said being involved in promotional events would be positive for the Museum. The Essex Pass, whereby members paid an annual fee to gain access to various institutions in Essex, was a particularly good idea as it encouraged people to visit heritage sites across the district.

RESOLVED that the Museum Management Working Group recommends to Cabinet:

- The fees for taught sessions in schools are set at £120 (£100 + £20 VAT) for a morning and £210 (£175 + £35 VAT) for a full day.
- The revised loan box charge to be set at £18 (£15 + £3 VAT).
- That delegated authority be given to the Section 151 Officer to approve variations to published entrance fees, in consultation with the Curator.