

## THE EXECUTIVE

5 APRIL 2006

### REPORT FROM THE INTERIM CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF ADULT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

SOCIAL CARE SERVICES CHARGING REVIEW FOR 2006/07		FOR DECISION
<b>Summary</b> As part of the Council's financial planning for 2006/7, it is a requirement that income estimates / fees and charges are reviewed. This report sets out the annual review of charging for Social Care Services for 2006/7. The level of increase in charges to users from the proposed recommendations amount to, on average, 3%.		
<b>Wards Affected:</b> All		
<b>Implications:</b> <b>Financial:</b> This report reviews the level of charging for services provided by Social Services, and recommends broadly inflation increases in current charging levels. The extra revenue generated from the increase in charging will cover increased costs of running the service and contribute towards the Social Services base budget for 2006/7  <b>Legal:</b> None  <b>Risk Management:</b> None  <b>Social Inclusion and Diversity:</b> None  <b>Crime and Disorder:</b> None		
<b>Recommendations:</b> The Executive is recommended to approve the revised charges for Social Care Services as set out in Appendix A with effect from 10 April 2006, to coincide with the increase in state benefits for 2006/07.		
<b>Reasons:</b> To meet legislative requirements and assist the Council to achieve its Community Priority of 'Improving Health, Housing and Social Care'.		
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## 1. Background - Social Services Charging

1.1 This report makes recommendations regarding levels of charges for the 2006/07 financial year, in respect of personal social services.

1.2 There is statutory guidance "Fairer Charging" on Councils in deciding charges for any non-residential services. The Guidance was issued under Section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970, and as such the Guidance is mandatory and must be followed if the Council implements a non-residential charging scheme.

1.3 The framework described by the guidance includes a number of key points, the main ones being:-

- the Fairer Charging guidance requires non-residential charges to take account of both the users ability to pay and the level of service received.
- the level of charge should be set in order to prevent service users net disposable income from falling below basic levels of Income Support plus a 25% buffer (approximately £142 per week for 2006/7). Service users with an assessed weekly income below this level **should not be charged**. This requirement in effect necessitates the need for a form of financial assessment to be undertaken.
- full account should be taken of an individual's disability related expenditure when assessing net income available for charging. Previous charging policies had assumed disability benefits are a form of income to pay charges. It is strongly argued by User Groups that these allowances are entirely to meet the additional costs related to disabilities (i.e. heating, clothing, aids and equipment) and not to pay for care.

1.4 Residential care charges are governed by statute (National Assistance Act 1948), whereby service users are financially assessed (including the value of their properties) to pay towards their care. The charges levied on Users range from between £90.65 and £530 per week. The full charge also applies to other Local Authorities who place people in Barking & Dagenham establishments, although this is rare.

1.5 There are some services the Council currently do not charge for, including Transport, Day Centres and Clubs, and Mental Health services. The Council also has the power under Schedule 3 of the Children's Act 1989 to make a charge for Children's Services. At present (in line with the vast majority of Boroughs) the Council does not charge, but retains the option to charge in appropriate cases.

## 2. Increased Charges for 2006/7

2.1 Proposed charges for 2006/7 are detailed at Appendix A, the level of increase ranges between 2½ and 3½% - in line with inflation.

### **3. Financial Implications**

- 3.1 The extra revenue generated from the increase in charging will cover increased costs of running the service and contribute towards the Social Services base budget for 2006/7.

### **4. Consultation**

#### **4.1 Councillors**

##### **Portfolio Holders**

Councillor Bramley, Financial Planning

#### **4.2 Officers**

The following officers have seen this report and are happy with it as it stands:

##### **Finance**

Steve Whitelock, Head of Finance (SS)

##### **CS**

Robin Hanton – Corporate Legal Manager

##### **SS**

Steven Forbes – Head of Older Persons

### **Background Papers**

Nil

## APPENDIX A

### Proposed Charges for 2006/07

#### A. Home Care charges

An average increase of 3% per week for the 167 users assessed to pay, and an increase of £0.25p per hour for users assessed to pay full costs (approx 59, which equates also to 3%) is recommended.

Hours of Service Per Week	Current Charge per week 2005/06 £	Proposed Charge per week 2006/07 £
Up to 2 hours	16.50	17.00
2 to 10 hours	19.00	19.50
10 hours plus	21.50	22.00

#### B. Welfare Meals

A 3% increase from £2.05 to £2.11 per meal. Members are also advised that the Welfare Meals contract is due for renewal/re-tender in 2006/7.

#### C. Nursery Charges

It is necessary to review Nursery Place Charges to working parents Council run nurseries – It is proposed to increase the current charge of £140 pw to £145 per week (increase 3.5%). This is felt acceptable in the current “market “ and is further supported by the benefits available to working parents to help towards such costs.

#### D. Residential and Day Care Places

The proposed charges are based on an average increase of 3%, and apply to full cost payers (residential) and other Local Authorities who place in LB of Barking & Dagenham establishments as follows:

	Present Charge	Proposed Charge
Elderly Residential Homes	£530 per week	£545 per week
Learning Disability Res. Homes	£754 per week	£777 per week
Mental Health Day Centres	£30 per day	£31 per day
LD Centre	£52 per day	£54 per day
Heathlands	£126 per day	£129 per day

\*Up to 3 sessions per day (at £43 each)

#### E. Supporting People

The majority of schemes provided via the Supporting People Programme (eg short-term schemes) are exempt from charging, and similarly service users who receive Housing Benefit are also not charged. Collection of charges is the responsibility of the service provider and aligned with fairer charging guidance. This applies to only a small proportion of clients (approximately 5-10%), the majority are older persons in sheltered housing who will be paying charges which range from £2 to £46, depending on the diverse range of support services offered by each provider.