

Title of meeting:	Culture, Leisure and Sport Decision Meeting
Date of meeting:	16 March 2018
Subject:	Portsmouth Museums and Visitor Services venue hire charges and Charles Dickens Birthplace museum admission charge.
Report by:	Director of Culture and City Development
Wards affected:	All
Key decision:	No
Full Council decision:	No

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To propose new venue hire charges for The D-Day Story and new Butterfly House and amended charges for other museum sites.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **Agree the new D-Day Story venue hire charges and Butterfly House venue hire charge as Appendix A.**
- 2.2 **Agree that the D-Day Story can discount venue hire up to 30%.**
- 2.3 **Agree amended venue hire and wedding charges for other museums.**
- 2.4 **Agree flexible pricing for optional catering in conjunction with room hire.**
- 2.5 **Agree to maintain current admission charges for Charles Dickens' Birthplace for 2018-19 including free entry for Portsmouth residents.**

3. Background

- 3.1 The D-Day Museum is about to reopen following its transformation with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). Operation of the new Museum is underpinned by a business plan that was submitted and agreed as part of the HLF bid. It includes a target income from admissions and other income generating activity that will enable the museum to cover its increased operating costs. A review of the existing pricing structure for venue hire has been carried out, including income modelling and benchmarking against similar attractions. Similarly the creation of a new Butterfly House offers the potential for generating

additional revenue streams through venue hire. The 2015/16 charges of £75/£150 are entirely inappropriate.

- 3.2 D-Day Story is currently able to discount venue hire for charities and community groups up to 25%. A new joint charge for weddings and receptions at Southsea Castle has been introduced, offering a 15% discount when booking both together. Discounting hire to attract clients is common practice within the attraction sector, for example offering introductory offers and repeat booker discounts.
- 3.3 Existing venue hire and wedding charges have been reviewed across the remaining museum sites and the charging policy rationalised. This has seen some increases and some decreases in charges. In addition, charges have been simplified from three to two prices for each space available by removing a separate Sunday and Bank Holiday charge (and replacing this with a single Friday to Sunday charge that includes Bank Holiday Mondays).
- 3.4 Catering requirements connected with venue hire vary according to client's needs, for example, catering for a wedding will differ from that for a business meeting.
- 3.5 A copy of current charges are show in Appendix C.

4. Reasons for recommendations

- 4.1 The existing venue hire prices do not reflect the quality of the offer at the new D-Day Story and also the new Butterfly House at Cumberland House. The D-Day Museum transformation project is underpinned by a business plan that outlines the income needed to cover the ongoing cost of operating the museum. Venue hire pricing that is in line with attractions of a similar size and type will help the venue achieve this aim. Benchmarking data can be found in Appendix B.
- 4.2 Flexibility to discount D-Day Story venue hire will enable us to offer introductory offers to attract new business, offer repeat booking discounts and stimulate interest during quieter periods. Charities and third sector groups are already entitled to a 25% discount. Other discounts could include multiple room hire, repeat booking discounts or a discount on the first booking.
- 4.3 Museum fees and charges for venue hire have not been reviewed since November 2014.
- 4.5 As catering costs will vary according to the event, we need the flexibility to charge the customer accordingly. This will allow us to meet income targets and offer affordable options to customers.
- 4.6 Charles Dicken's Birthplace prices for 2018/19 are retained at their previous level as promotional material has already been printed and distributed.

5. Equality impact assessment (EIA)

5.1 A preliminary EIA is attached as Appendix D

6. Legal comments

6.1 The setting of the level of the charges referred to in this report is in the discretion of the Council, having regard to commercial factors and subject to any considerations which may be identified in undertaking an EIA.

7. Director of Finance comments

7.1 Income generated by the Museum and Visitor Services currently funds 27% of the budgeted service expenditure. It is extremely important that the fees and charges policy enables the service to maximise fee earning opportunities whilst remaining flexible to customer requirements.

7.2 The recommendations in this report and the schedule of fees proposed support this objective.

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Signed by:
Stephen Baily
Director of Culture and City Development

Appendices:

- Appendix A - Venue hire charges for D-Day Story
- Appendix B - Benchmarking Data
- Appendix C - Current Charges
- Appendix D - Preliminary EIA

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/
rejected by on

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Signed by:
Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport