



Culture in Lambeth

A New Approach to Fees and Charges

Discussion Document 2013

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A New approach to fees and charges across Lambeth's cultural offer.

From arts groups to sports clubs, to activities in our libraries, culture in Lambeth is dynamic. As a council we contribute to our borough's cultural offer by giving those who live, work or visit Lambeth the chance to take part in lots of activities in the spaces and places that we run. But for some of these activities, the council has a range of different fees and charges that we apply, to make sure that we can run activities in well maintained facilities, as well as help to raise additional income for the council to support a range of services that we deliver that cost money to provide.

As part of the Cooperative Commissioning ambition, it's important that we conduct a review of our current policy to make sure that it is fit for purpose and delivers against our strategic outcomes. These are:

- **Communities that feel safer and stronger**
- **Cleaner streets and greener neighbourhoods**
- **More jobs and sustainable growth**

In addition, due to reductions in government funding, by 2016 Lambeth will have to save £178m from its budget. In total, this will mean that the Council's budget will have been reduced by 45% overall. Therefore, we must make sure that we maximise income where we can.

What fees, charges and prices are included in this review?

Broadly, this review will be applied to:

- **Commercial and community activities and events:** commercial activity and community fees to hold events across Lambeth in parks, spaces and places
- **Sport and leisure:** charges in our leisure centres and across the borough on things like tennis courts and football pitches
- **Libraries:** charges for overdue library books, reservations, photocopying
- **Registrars services:** fees for things like marriages and civil partnerships
- **Parks and open spaces:** commercial charges for activities like personal training and selling of food or drink
- **Cemeteries and crematoriums:** fees are applied for burials and cremations

What needs to change?

From our discussions so far, we've been told that:

- We can improve the way we apply, collect and enforce fees and charges for activities and services in Lambeth
- We can improve our communication and publicise charges to make them more transparent
- There is inconsistency on which fees and charges we increase and which we don't
- We can improve the way we use income earned to invest it based on need

What do we plan to do?

The purpose of this document is to help us work together to agree a new fees and charges framework for our cultural offer that will:

- Help to deliver our strategic outcomes
- Improve transparency and communication about our fees and charges
- Implement a consistent and fair fee structure
- A new approach to enforcement to collect commercial fees and manage activity
- Improve booking systems
- Protect our facilities and balance levels of activity
- Help to support growth and increase income

To achieve these aims, we think that proposals to improve our fees and charges can be developed under the following themes:

- **Being cooperative and focussed on outcomes**
- **Transparency**
- **Fairness**
- **Quality**
- **Growth**

Our Principles:

1. Being cooperative and focussed on outcomes

Lambeth Council's ambition is to become a Cooperative Commissioning Council. To help us to achieve this, we have agreed key outcomes and principles about how we can work together.

The council's key outcomes are:

- **Communities that feel safer and stronger**
- **Cleaner streets and greener neighbourhoods**
- **More jobs and sustainable growth**

Our Cooperative Principles are as follows:

- **Partnership** with the community – the council as the local democratic leader ensuring that public services continue to meet the needs of all Lambeth's citizens. Also recognising the wide range of community groups that form Lambeth's vibrant and strong civil society, providing vital services and a voice for citizens to express their point of view
- **Co-production** and building on what exists already – public services are planned by staff, users and the community on an equal basis and delivered through a variety of organisations that will improve outcomes, empower citizens and users, and strengthen civil society
- **Reciprocity** citizens are incentivised to take part in the provision of public services through benefits such as services that better meet local needs, or through financial or non-financial incentives
- **Local employment** and skills development – by engaging in civil society, residents are able to develop new skills and enhance their employment opportunities
- **Maximum accessibility** and equalities – public services should be accessible from a variety of locations, including electronically, and they should be joined up across organisations. Everyone should have the opportunity to be involved and have their voice heard in the design and delivery of public services.

What might this mean for you?

We have a number of activities which take place that can become more cooperative.

Some examples are set out below:

- **We can work together to develop our new fees and charges framework and policies**
- **There could be more reciprocity and scope to deliver more activities that deliver our outcomes. For example:**
 - **Sports coaches delivery - more free classes to specific groups, for example, older people as part of their agreements to help support Lambeth's outcomes**
 - **Commercial events companies providing free activities or investing in things the community needs**
 - **Residents being offered incentives to help run sports clubs or facilities. For example, like discounts off the theatre**

2. Transparency

We know that some fees and charges are published on the council's website and some are not. This is being changed.

To begin, we have published all of the fees and charges. We hope that this will allow everyone to understand what fees and charges exist, and help people to understand how they are currently agreed.

[Download the appendix.](#)

Some examples of how fees and charges are set include:

- Agreements between the council and its leisure provider to help to set prices across Lambeth's leisure centres
- Benchmarking and market testing to set commercial rates for things like events in parks
- Internal annual reviews of prices to adjust for inflation or to reflect costs

What will more transparency mean for you?

- All of the fees and charges are more easily accessible and available on the council's website for everyone to see
- By publishing all of our fees and charges we can transparently work together to agree when they need to be changed and use the council's democratic processes, like Cabinet, to make sure that everyone can have their say on what prices should be set at
- We can look at simplifying some of the charges to make them easier to understand
- We can develop an easier to use booking system so people can see what spaces and places are available and how much they cost
- We can be clearer about where the income from fees and charges goes and what it is used for

3. Fairness

We know from conversations and feedback from our communities, residents and businesses that they think some of existing charges are unfair:

- Some people think that commercial firms are not paying enough to run activities
- Some residents feel that rates for the community are too high, meaning that they are prevented from using space
- Enforcement of fees and charges could be improved to make sure that groups pay what they've agreed.

What will 'being fairer' mean?

- We can make sure that we review fees and charges to make sure that they more accurately represent their true cost. If we under charge for activities then it is every council tax payer who is subsidising activities
- We can look at community rates and review prices if they are excluding many groups from accessing some spaces and places
- We can make sure that both individuals and commercial organisations pay the right fees and charges if they want to operate in our facilities

How can we make sure our fees and charges are applied?

To make sure that our fees and charges are paid we must improve how we enforce our new policy.

At present we know not everyone is paying the council for the activities they deliver. This is unfair as it means that council tax payers are subsidising groups and commercial operators for their activities.

To address the issue of enforcement, a number of services could be commissioned. Options may include:

- Lambeth's Community Safety Service
- Lambeth's Events Service
- Lambeth's Parks Service
- Self policing and monitoring from existing providers.

One or a combination of these services could be used to ensure compliance.

In addition, improvements in online booking and keyless entry systems could allow more individuals or groups to pay upfront for activities, ensuring that only those who have paid to use facilities can use them.

Enforcement can also be used, not just make sure that fees are collected, but also prevent any non permitted activities which will help to protect our facilities.

4. Quality

Some of our facilities across our borough are very busy and we have to make sure that we balance the levels of activity so we don't damage them for everyone.

We also want to provide safe facilities of a high standard and quality that are suitable for everyone. This means that we have to make sure we have adequate plans in place that will ensure regular and appropriate maintenance of our facilities is completed. We know that at present some facilities are in need of upgrading to make them fit for purpose. A new fees and charges framework should help to keep our facilities of a high standard into the long term.

What will 'ensuring quality facility' mean?

- **Reviewing our charges and fees that include environmental impact to make sure we have enough money to maintain facilities at a high standard. This includes using enforcement to stop individuals or organisations causing damage to our facilities**
- **Giving more local control to reinvest some of the income collected**
- **Look at capping certain activities so that we get the right balance so everyone has a more equal chance to access some of our facilities**
- **Developing a clear and transparent plan to invest capital and revenue in our facilities in buildings spaces and places**

5. Growth

The more income we raise, the more we can invest in activities for everyone. The more events and activities that we attract can help to generate lots of inward investment. This inward investment might be realised through:

- Tourists and visitors spending money in Lambeth
- More businesses investing and creating jobs
- Busier, more profitable activities that can be reinvested to support other services

We have fantastic facilities that have the potential to increase income, jobs and growth in Lambeth. These include places like Clapham Common and Brockwell Park but other facilities like the new Clapham Library have great potential to bring in income.

For example, the Lambeth Country Show alone will generate over £2m for Lambeth's economy. This comes from visitors across London coming to Brockwell Park during the show and buying everything from plants to ice creams all from local suppliers. In addition, the local restaurants and pubs are also busy all weekend.

We have lots of valuable and attractive spaces and places that, if we think creatively, can positively contribute to growing our local economy.

However, we know that some residents have concerns about having things like big events on parks because of their impact. Therefore we must look at ways to mitigate their environmental impact, but without raising income, this will increase the risk to all of our service.

What will 'encouraging more growth' mean?

- **Review our existing commercial fees and charges to ensure that they are both competitive and maximise income**
- **Look for further facilities that could contribute to Lambeth's economy, creating investment and jobs**
- **Explore how we can use the assets we have in different ways that might help to support services**

Tell us what you think?

- Please take a moment to fill out our online '[Consultation Feedback Questionnaire](#)', which can be accessed on the Council's 'Cultural Charges' page: www.lambeth.gov.uk/CulturalCharges
- Send a feedback email to: culturalfees@lambeth.gov.uk