

For publication

Approval of a corporate concessions policy (J030)

Meeting:	Cabinet
Date:	1 st November 2016
Cabinet portfolio:	Deputy Leader
Report by:	Policy and Communications Manager

1.0 Purpose of report

1.1 To approve a corporate concessions policy for the Council.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 That the corporate concessions policy is approved and implemented for 2017/18.

2.2 That the Deputy Leader is given delegated authority to approve minor concessions policy amendments between the formal review periods.

2.3 That a full review of the concessions policy takes place after two years.

3.0 Background

3.1 At the 12th January 2016 Cabinet meeting, Councillor J Barr, Scrutiny Project Group Leader presented a report and recommendations of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny

Forum on how Chesterfield Borough Council offered concessions on fees and charges made on chargeable services. The review had examined the consistency, fairness and objectives in the provision and application of concessions across council services. The full report is available [here](#).

- 3.2 Cabinet approved in principle all of the recommendations of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum report on Concessions on Fees and Charges, but that before the implementation of any resolution that could have a financial implication to the Council, further investigation on the impact is carried out by officers and brought to Cabinet for consideration.
- 3.3 A member and officer working group was established to investigate this issue further and to develop a corporate policy on concessions.

4.0 Corporate concessions policy

- 4.1 Further research, investigation and consideration was undertaken by the concessions working group which included elected members from the original scrutiny project and key officers from services that offer concessions. Taking account of research and best practice, scrutiny recommendations and officer experience a new corporate concessions policy has been developed and is being recommended for approval.
- 4.2 The concessions policy aims to ensure a consistent approach to concessions within discretionary services while retaining the flexibility needed to achieve the Council's social and legal obligations, as well as its commercial needs. All concessions offered will support the strategic aims and objectives of the Council in accordance with the approved Council Plan and Medium Term Financial plan.
- 4.3 The policy attached at Appendix A includes:
- Policy context and key principles
 - A clear scope
 - Service manager responsibilities for policy implementation
 - Concession eligibility criteria
 - A table showing which services offer the various concession categories

4.4 Responsibility for reviewing this Policy will be that of the Policy and Communications Manager in consultation with the responsible Cabinet Member(s) and Chief Financial Officer. In light of constantly changing financial pressures and other circumstances this policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis as necessary, but at least every two years.

5.0 Financial considerations

5.1 Service Managers will report to Cabinet at least annually on their proposed concessions as part of the council’s budget setting process and the setting of fees and charges for services. This should include the reasons for the concession and their expected outcomes i.e. how they will contribute to the Council’s priorities. The report should also include an impact assessment of any previous concessions offered in order to inform decision making. The policy expects Service Managers to be able to evidence their pricing approach through undertaking benchmarking with other comparable facilities and services, through service usage statistics, and service user surveys, as appropriate.

6.0 Risk management

6.1 The main risks associated with the proposals are shown in the table below:

Description of the Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigating Action	Impact	Likelihood
Loss of custom as some people will no longer qualify for concessions.	Low	Medium	The Policy increases clarity on concession eligibility which should improve access to concessions for priority groups.	Low	Low
Increased numbers of	Medium	Medium	The Policy increases clarity	Low	Low

<p>people claiming concessions impacting on income generation.</p>			<p>on concession eligibility which should improve access to concessions for priority groups. The policy also provides for increased eligibility checking at the point of booking.</p> <p>Service Managers will undertake impact analysis as part of the annual budget setting process and the setting of fees and charges for services.</p>		
<p>Access to concessions by ineligible people.</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>The current approach to concessions varies across the Council with concerns about eligibility checking in some areas. The Policy increases clarity on concession eligibility which should improve access to concessions for priority groups. The policy also provides for</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Low</p>

			increased eligibility checking at the point of booking.		
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7.0 Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

7.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been produced and is attached at Appendix B.

8.0 Recommendations

8.1 That the corporate concessions policy is approved and implemented for 2017/18.

8.2 That the Deputy Leader is given delegated authority to approve minor concessions policy amendments between the formal review periods.

8.3 That a full review of the concessions policy takes place after two years.

9.0 Reasons for recommendations

9.1 To ensure a consistent approach to concessions within discretionary services while retaining the flexibility needed to achieve the Council's social and legal obligations, as well as its commercial needs.

Decision information

Key decision number	663
Wards affected	ALL

Document information

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Communications Manager	
Appendices to the report	
Appendix A	Concessions Policy
Appendix B	Equality impact assessment