

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

LEISURE and ARTS ADVISORY BOARD

16 September 2013

**Report of the Director of Central Services
and the Director of Finance and Transformation**

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non-Key Decision (Decision may be taken by the Cabinet Member)

1 TONBRIDGE CASTLE GATEHOUSE CHARGES

Summary

This report recommends revised charges for the Tonbridge Castle Gatehouse tourist attraction for implementation from 1 April 2014.

1.1 Gatehouse Charges – Background

- 1.1.1 As Members may be aware, the charges for Tonbridge Castle Gatehouse are reviewed at this time for implementation in the next financial year. This allows the revised prices to be incorporated in tourism marketing material, much of which is published during the winter months.
- 1.1.2 Visitors to the Gatehouse continue to be very positive about the experience and the value for money offered. The schools market has shown growth this year, but it is essential to remain competitive in this market.
- 1.1.3 A feedback form has been introduced for monitoring school groups. To date all elements of the service provided at the Gatehouse have been rated as either “very good” or “excellent”.

1.2 Proposed Charges

- 1.2.1 The current 2013/14 charges for a number of neighbouring attractions, along with the current charges for Tonbridge Castle Gatehouse are shown at **[Annex 1]**. Members will be aware that when reviewing charges, the general approach is to consider not only the prevailing inflation figures, but to also take account of competitor charges and local market conditions. The following table shows the proposed charges:

	Existing Charge 2013/14 (£)	Proposed Charge 2014/15 (£)
Adult	7.35	7.70
Concessions (Junior/OAP/Student/Leisure Pass)	4.20	4.40
Family ticket	20.50	21.00
Education Facilities (1 teacher free per 10 children. For special needs groups, carers admitted free as required)	65.00	65.00
Season ticket (adult)	20.00	20.00
Season ticket (concession)	15.00	15.00

1.2.2 It is estimated that the proposed increases will provide approximately £1,000 of additional income.

1.3 Legal Implications

1.3.1 None.

1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.4.1 These proposals are in accordance with the guidance in the Council's budget strategy.

1.4.2 Feedback from customers identifies that the charging regime provides value for money for casual visitors as well as group visits.

1.5 Risk Assessment

1.5.1 There is a risk that excessive increases in charges could deter visitors and lead to a fall in overall income. Dialogue with customers and comparison with other attractions has been taken into consideration in bringing these charges forward.

1.6 Policy Considerations

1.6.1 Community – These proposals will maintain access to the local heritage by all sectors of the community.

1.6.2 Young People – The educational elements of visits to the Castle are an important aspect. The educational visits are designed to encourage “hands-on” learning and continue to be well received by the visit organisers and the children,

1.7 Recommendations

1.7.1 The proposed charges have been brought forward to reflect the current market conditions.

1.7.2 It is, therefore, **RECOMMENDED TO CABINET** that:

- 1) the proposed charges for Tonbridge Castle Gatehouse as outlined above be agreed for implementation from 1 April 2013; and
- 2) these charges be reflected in the appropriate tourism marketing material.

The Customer Services Manager confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

Background papers:

contact: Tina Levett

Nil

Adrian Stanfield
Director of Central Services

Sharon Shelton
Director of Finance and Transformation

Screening for equality impacts:		
Question	Answer	Explanation of impacts
a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community?	No	
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality?	Yes	We provide an audio tour viewed through a screen for anyone who has walking difficulties.
c. What steps are you taking to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above?		

In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above.