

 <b>Executive 10<sup>th</sup> August 2011</b>		<b>Agenda Item No.</b>  <b>5</b>
<b>Title</b>	An update on the Review of the Concessions offered by Warwick District Council	
<b>For further information about this report please contact</b>	Andy Crump (01926 456810) Mike Snow (01926 456800)	
<b>Wards of the District directly affected</b>		
<b>Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006?</b>	No	
<b>Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number</b>		
<b>Background Papers</b>		

<b>Contrary to the policy framework:</b>	No
<b>Contrary to the budgetary framework:</b>	No
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No
<b>Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)</b>	No
<b>Equality &amp; Sustainability Impact Assessment Undertaken</b>	No
It is proposed that the Assessment will undertaken as part of the review by the Working Group.	

Officer/Councillor Approval		
Officer Approval	Date	Name
Chief Executive/Deputy Chief Executive	22/7/11	Chris Elliott
Head of Service	20/7/11	Mike Snow
CMT	22/7/11	
Section 151 Officer	20/7/11	Mike Snow
Monitoring Officer	22/7/11	
Finance	20/7/11	Mike Snow
Portfolio Holder(s)		
Consultation & Community Engagement		
Final Decision?		Yes/No
Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)		

## 1. **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The report will detail the concessions currently offered by this Council and give details of the proposed mechanism to review these.
- 1.2 The mechanism will assess whether these concessions are still appropriate and whether they need to be altered, reduced or discontinued.
- 1.3 Details of concessions currently offered by this council are attached as per Appendix A.

## 2. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 Executive agrees that the Income Generation Member Working Group oversee the changes to be proposed to the concessions currently in place within the Fees and Charges regime.
- 2.2 Any proposals for change coming forward from this Working Group are brought to the Executive as part of the October Fees and Charges Report for its consideration.
- 2.3 Executive advises the group of any concessions which they wish to be subject to review and which, if any, should be excluded.

## 3. **REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 The Working Group can look more into the detail and are able to meet on a more frequent basis.

## 4. **POLICY FRAMEWORK**

### 4.1 **Policy Framework**

This report is in accordance with the Council's Financial Strategy as last approved by the Executive in February.

### 4.2 **Fit for the Future**

One of the key elements of Fit For the Future is ensuring that the Council achieves the required savings to enable it to set a balanced budget whilst maintaining service provision. This report updates members on the financial projections for future years, savings required to be found and some of the key issues needed to be considered in preparing the 2012/13 budget and beyond. By working differently, this Council may still be able to assist those customers who need the most help, without a reduction in service, by using fewer resources.

## 5. **BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK**

- 5.1 The Council needs to find financial savings of approaching £2.8m over the next five years on a net General Fund Budget of £18m. Concessions represent a "cost" to this Council. Additional income generated by removing concessions that are not likely to place a burden on the Council's customers will help to redress this deficit.
- 5.2 The latter will be confirmed by an Equality & Sustainability Impact Assessment, that will be undertaken by the Group. This will form part of the report to the

Executive in October so that Members can be reassured that resources are being targeted to those who need them most.

**6. ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S) CONSIDERED**

- 6.1 Not to undertake the review.

**7. BACKGROUND**

- 7.1 Concessions are offered by the Council and by doing so there is a financial effect to the service manager's income budget. Some of the concessions offered by this Council are historical and WDC could be offering concessions to those who do not need them. It may not be targeting those with most need. The concessions have not been reviewed for a number of years and it is felt that now is the right time to do so.
- 7.2 An initial review of concessions has shown that the Council offers a minimum of 133 different types of concessions, totalling £305,000 (see Appendix A). A thorough investigation is likely to reveal more. If the Council was able to reduce these concessions by even 10% (without reducing its customer base) it would generate an extra £30,000.
- 7.3 An Income Generation Member Working Group (made up of officers and Members) was set up in 2010 to assist with the maximisation of income this Council received through the Fees and Charges process. It made a valuable contribution to the Fees and Charges report that went to Executive in October 2010. In the Fees and Charges report it was promised that the Group would report back to Executive in August 2011.
- 7.4 The Working Party had, at the time, initially reviewed the concessions offered by the council to the unemployed, elderly and disabled. It felt that it needed guidance from the Executive as whether to progress a review of these concessions, in order to consider if these concessions are justified and whether additional income could be generated. It is now felt that this review should be widened to include all concessions (e.g. include juniors too). Member's views are requested as to whether any concessions should be excluded from this review.
- 7.5 The Working Party now has new Members, since the elections in May 2011. It is proposed that this group will recommence meetings in the near future and it would like to hear the wishes of the Executive before it starts its work fully.
- 7.6 Any proposals for change coming forward from this Working Group would be brought to the Executive as part of the October Fees and Charges Report for its consideration.