

Appendix 5 – additional information from Housing and Libraries

Housing update on 12 Month HMO licenses:

The Housing Act 2004 permits a local authority to charge a HMO fee for a Mandatory and Additional Licence. This fee must take into all costs incurred in processing the application including inspections.

Currently, the Council issues a 5-year licence to landlords on operating this scheme.

We are proposing a 3-year licence in certain situations if there are concerns in the circumstance of a particular property (such as landlords who had failed to license) and not a shorter 12-month licence, alongside our 5-year licence scheme.

The largest single cost of operating a licensing scheme is staffing costs.

A 12-month licence was not considered an option because of the administrative and financial burden on the Council to employ extra staff on carrying out this function to control costs including revisits during the licensing period.

Libraries update for Consortium with Essex County Council:

Assumed Lost policy

The Library Management System runs a weekly report for the The Libraries Consortium (TLC) to identify items that are “assumed lost”, i.e. those between **49 – 150 days overdue**. All other members of the TLC (except Essex & Thurrock) already use the assumed lost process.

TLC have requested Essex and Thurrock to adopt the assumed lost policy as this will ensure the catalogue accurately reflects the status of items so that customers are not placing holds on or waiting for items to be returned that in reality will never be returned. It also allows stock gaps to be better identified to reflect demand.

When we join the process and when the report is run:

- The Recommended Retail Price (RRP at the time of purchase) or if there is no RRP on the system default value of £10 is added to the customer account as cost of replacement and the item is marked as assumed lost.
- The item remains on the customer’s account as an inactive loan until the lost item bill is paid or until the item is returned (if the item is returned overdue charges are levied instead if applicable).
- The item’s location is changed to LOST-ASSUM, which means the item will not appear in the public catalogue.
- The item remains on the customer account for 6 years and if the customer continues to be ‘inactive’ the debt/item/customer account will be cleared from the system.

Additional information:

- The assumed lost report only covers overdue between 49 and 150 days. To account for items overdue between 150 days and 6 years, TLC are proposing a special one-off run (possibly a few due to the size of the authority) to capture anything older than 150 days.
- A separate process would have to be run to deal with items more than 6 years old that need to be cleared from the system.

Thurrock Snapshot of data produced by CSS:

- The current total value of items in scope is £140k.
 - Of this total, £3.4k would be written off as over 6 years old
 - £109k was borrowed 1st Jan 2017 to 31st Dec 2021.
 - £28k was borrowed 1st Jan 2022 to present.
 - Of the total, £96k is either children's fiction or children's non-fiction books. Of this amount, £21k relates to 2022 alone.
- The items are across 6000 customer records.
 - Of this total, just under half (2,800) are CHILD.
 - 1,300 are standard adults
 - 1,200 are TEEN

Essex Snapshot of data produced by CSS:

- The current total value of items in scope is £1.22 million.
 - Of this total, £48k would be written off as over 6 years old
 - £869k was borrowed 1st Jan 2017 to 31st Dec 2021.
 - £305k was borrowed 1st Jan 2022 to present.
 - Of the total, £823k is either children's fiction or children's non-fiction books. Of this amount, £237k relates to 2022 alone.
- The items are across 44,500 customer records.
 - Of this total, just under half (21,200) are CHILD.
 - 9,500 are standard adults
 - 7,000 are TEEN

Decisions:

- Liaising with Essex CC to confirm start date, cut off point and finer details.
- Suggest that we don't implement assumed lost policy until after the annual stock 19th Dec 22– 31st Jan 23 take has taken place
- Looking to run an amnesty for Jan and Feb 23 to try and recover some stock with a view to start the Assumed lost policy in April 23.
- Agree any User Profiles to exclude
- Agree that the Default value of £10 per item be charged in the event that the RRP is not available on the Library Management System.

Work that needs to take place

- Agree start date and finer details with Essex
- Internal comms to staff and external comms for customers. In particular the comms needs to reflect the fact that half the users affected are children and their records may not have email addresses or mobile phone numbers.
- Posters and web sites with charges notifications to be updated.
- Update the overdue notices issued to customers to reflect the new policy.

Immediate Implications:

The Fees and Charges below for 23/24 have already been proposed to O&S, if Thurrock go ahead with proposed plan to adopt the Assumed lost policy there will be changes to the following:

AHH98-NS	Cultural Services - Damaged and Lost items - Books for which no current value can be traced - Adults books	O	£	30.00	£	-	£	30.00	O	REMOVED	£	-	REMOVED	£	-	£
AHH99-NS	Cultural Services - Damaged and Lost items - Books for which no current value can be traced - Children's books	O	£	20.00	£	-	£	20.00	O	REMOVED	£	-	REMOVED	£	-	£
AHH209-NS	New - Damaged and Lost items – Current value minus 10% reduction per year from date of purchase to a maximum of 50% of the value. Not applicable to Children's board books and picture books								O	Value minus 10% per year	£	-	Value minus 10% per year	£	-	£

New Charges

- All Damaged and lost items for which no current value can be traced - £10 per item
- All Damaged and lost items - Full cost recovery