

ITEM 9

Fees and Charges 2017/18

Report of the Head of Finance

Recommended:

That the proposed fees and charges for 2017/18, as set out in the annexes to the report, be reviewed and endorsed.

SUMMARY:

- Fees and charges are set annually for the forthcoming Financial Year and are presented for review prior to approval by Cabinet.
- Most charges are proposed to be increased in line with inflation or kept at the same level as 2016/17. Significant increases from 2016/17 are explained in the body of the report.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Fees and Charges are reported annually to Councillors as part of the budget process. This report provides information on proposed Fees and Charges for 2017/18.
- 1.2 By reporting Fees and Charges separately, as an individual component of the budget process, Councillors can provide direction on the level of charges across the Council.
- 1.3 Proposed increases to existing charges and charges for new services are attached in the Annexes to this report for approval.
- 1.4 The two main inflation indices are the Retail Prices' Index and the Consumer Prices' Index. These currently show year-on-year increases of 1.8% and 0.6% respectively. Services have been advised to use these figures as a guide for increasing charges in line with inflation.
- 1.5 Heads of Service have also been asked to consider the impact of increases to fees and charges on their customers before recommending any increases for next year.
- 1.6 The Council is in the process of tendering a new Leisure Management Contract. Consequently, no fees and charges schedules are shown in the attached annexes for facilities currently managed by Valley Leisure Ltd. All bidders for the new contract must provide the Council with proposals for activity pricing by 31st December each year. The new draft contract sets out specific maximum prices for certain activities and users (based on current charges) which may only be increased as a maximum at the rate of inflation

for the Contract Period. These fees and charges will be subject to Cabinet approval. Other fees and charges can be set at the discretion of the contractor and these will be reported to the Cabinet for noting. A separate Leisure Management Fees and Charges report will be presented to Cabinet on 18th January 2017 once the preferred bidder has been chosen.

2 Background

- 2.1 Heads of Service were asked to provide details of the Fees and Charges they wish to levy in 2017/18 for the services they provide.
- 2.2 The attached Annexes show, in Budget Book Format, the level of charges in 2016/17, the proposed charges for 2017/18 and the percentage change between the two.
- 2.3 In the majority of cases, fees and charges have been kept the same or raised in line with inflation.

3 Fees & Charges – changes by Service

- 3.1 The following paragraphs give explanations of any charges that are recommended to be increased by more than inflation or where the basis for charging for an item has changed.

3.2 Community & Leisure (Annex 1)

Charges across the Service have largely been increased in line with inflation or remain frozen at 2016/17 levels.

A new fee has been included for Mini Soccer at East Anton at the same rate as at other TVBC pitches.

The Screen hire fee at The Lights has been increased by 11% to reflect the time required to put the screen up.

The Wedding Reception Venue Hire charge has been increased by nearly 7% having been held constant since being introduced in 2011/12.

3.3 Corporate (Annex 2)

The charges shown in the Corporate section remain unchanged from 2016/17.

3.4 Environmental Service (Annex 3)

Most charges made by the Environmental Service are recommended to remain the same as 2016/17 or increase in line with inflation.

The charges for garden waste collection are an exception. It is proposed to increase the initial annual subscription by 5%. The charge for a replacement sack is to be increased by almost 17% to reflect the cost to the Council. The 6 monthly subscription, early bird discount and online discount will no longer be available.

An increase of 20% has been applied to the purchase of black wheeled bins, whilst leaving the charge for brown bins for recycling static. These charges have remained the same for the last three years.

3.5 Estates & Economic Development Service (Annex 4)

The charges in this Service have been frozen at 2016/17 levels or increased in line with inflation.

3.6 Housing & Environmental Health Service (Annex 5)

The majority of charges in this Service have been frozen at 2016/17 levels or increased in line with inflation.

An exception is an increase of just over 5% on the licensing fees for houses in multiple occupation which have been reviewed to ensure that costs are recovered without making a surplus or deficit.

The administration charge of 10% on Disabled Facilities Grants where an architect or agent isn't employed is subject to approval by Cabinet on 2nd November 2016.

3.7 Legal & Democratic Service (Annex 6)

The majority of fees in this service are statutorily set and remain the same as for 2016/17.

Licence fees for scrap metal dealers are valid for three years. The fees have been reviewed and increased by just over 9% for a site licence and almost 15% for a Collector's licence. This is to ensure that the Council adheres to the accepted legal principle that the fees charged must cover costs without producing a surplus or deficit. The increase of just over 103% for a variation of licence is to remedy the loophole where a dealer could apply for a collector's licence then apply to vary it to a site licence as a means of avoiding paying the full site licence fee.

Taxi (hackney carriage and private hire vehicle) licence fees have been reviewed and there are a mixture of increases, reductions and no changes to ensure that the Council recovers the costs for this function without making a surplus or deficit. New charges have been added for a temporary change of vehicle and a transfer of vehicle ownership.

3.8 Planning & Building Service (Annex 7)

All fees in this Service are remaining the same as in 2016/17.

3.9 Planning Policy & Transport Service (Annex 8)

The majority of charges within this service are to remain the same or increase in line with inflation.

The exception is an increase of 10% to the charge for providing information on street naming and postal numbering on new developments of 21+ dwellings which has not been increased since its' introduction in 2010/11.

All parking fees for 2017/18 are recommended to be frozen at 2016/17 levels.

3.10 Revenues Service (Annex 9)

The Council can only cover its own costs in the fees it charges for Summonses and Liability Orders i.e. it cannot generate a budget surplus from the charges. A review of the calculation of the existing charges has recently been carried out. As a result of a number of efficiency savings that have been delivered by the Revenues Service, it has been necessary to reduce the charge for Liability Order Costs from £46 to £23.

3.11 There are no charges levied by the Chief Executive's Office, Finance Service or IT Service.

4 Consultations/Communications

4.1 Heads of Service and Managers have been asked to provide details of the charges they wish to make in 2017/18.

5 Risk Management

5.1 An evaluation of the risks associated with the matters in this report indicates that further risk assessment is not needed because the changes / issues covered do not represent significant risks.

6 Resource Implications

6.1 The impact of the proposals will be considered when preparing Service estimates for 2017/18.

6.2 If approved, any additional income to be generated by increases to fees and charges will be shown in the budget report to be presented to Cabinet in January.

7 Equality Issues

7.1 An EQIA screening has been completed in accordance with the Council's EQIA methodology and no potential for unlawful discrimination has been identified, therefore a full EQIA has not been carried out.

8 Conclusion and reasons for recommendation

- 8.1 Heads of Service have considered the services currently available to the public and the Fees and Charges applicable to them.
- 8.2 Based on recommendations from Heads of Service, the Committee is requested to consider the proposed fees and charges for 2017/18, prior to submission to Cabinet.

<u>Background Papers (Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D)</u>			
<u>Confidentiality</u>			
It is considered that this report does not contain exempt information within the meaning of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and can be made public.			
No of Annexes:	1	File Ref:	
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Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Date:	12 October 2016