

**FEES AND CHARGES 2016/17**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Geoff Denaro
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Jayne Pickering , Director of Finance and Resources
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor Consulted	No
Non-Key Decision	

**1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

To set out the fees and charges to be levied on services provided by the Council as used as the basis for income targets in the Medium Term Financial Plan 2016/17 – 2018/19.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Overview and Scrutiny consider the fees and charges as included at Appendix 1 and recommend to Cabinet any changes to the fees proposed.

**3. KEY ISSUES**

**Financial Implications**

- 3.1 The Medium Term Financial Plan has been prepared on the basis that additional income will be generated from fees and charges. The guideline increase provided to Heads of Service was 3%.
- 3.2 As Members are aware Cabinet recommended a zero increase on fees and charges for 2016/17. Any charges above zero would have to be identified separately. This recommendation was due to be considered by full Council on 18th November. The financial pressure of £150k was also recommended to be funded included as unavoidable pressure for 2016/17.
- 3.3 It is proposed that the revised fees and charges will be advertised to the public within approved deadlines with a start date of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016, where an invoice has not already been raised covering the last quarter of the financial year, or as soon as practicable thereafter, dependant upon the notice period required prior to implementation.
- 3.4 There are a number of increases that are in excess of the 0% approval to include:

- **Garden Waste** – the increase for 2017 requires approval during this budget round. The proposed increase for 2017 is £2 which equates to a 5% increase on the current price of £40. The new charge will therefore be £42. This will take into account all associated increases in costs to the service including staffing and vehicle costs and will ensure the service continues to contribute to the financial position of the Council.
- **Private Sector Housing** - The fees have been increased by 3%. This is in line with guidance which requires that the charges reflect actual costs of the service.
- **Lifeline** - installation charges have been increased to more accurately reflect the true cost of the service. The proposed fee of £35.00 is a reflection nearer to the true cost in officer time that it takes to complete an installation visit. There is more emphasis in that visit to profile our customers and find a holistic solution that meets their needs and sign post and refer on residents to other services where appropriate. This takes time and care and the charge remains up to £25 less than some other providers in the region.
- **Council Tax Court Costs** – there is specific guidance in relation to the charge that can be applied in relation to court costs. This has been followed and the associated increases are as a result of complying with the guidance.
- **Development Control** (pre-application re development) – The increase of 3% is proposed due to there being strong evidence that the housing market can tolerate the increase in pre-application fees as this is a small part of the cost associated with bringing forward residential development and reflects the cost of the officer time in dealing with cases.
- **Building Control** - improving on efforts to maintain and increase market share, a further reduction in the number of published building control fees is proposed. Increasing numbers of rival private sector firms have used the publication of local authority fees as a vehicle to increase their own market share. In 2014 / 2015 a number of more mainstream work categories had their published fees withdrawn in favour of providing site specific quotations. This revised way of working has now bedded in amongst both officers and customers, many of whom are repeat customers and has proven to be beneficial. With the exception of the publication of archiving charges and the optional consultancy based hourly charge, it is now proposed to remove all the remaining published fees. The invitation to the customer to seek a site specific quotation

is within the provisions of the Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulations 2010 and allows early contact with the customer to ensure the best possible chance of receiving a building regulations application. These final few work categories amount to around just 5% of fee earning applications. The increase in archiving and optional consultancy is to reflect the true cost to the Council of the administration time in delivering this service.

**Legal Implications**

- 3.5 A number of statutes governing the provision of services covered by this report contain express powers or duties to charge for services. Where an express power to charge does not exist the Council has the power under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 to charge where the activity is incidental or conducive to or calculated to facilitate the Council's statutory function.

**Service / Operational Implications**

- 3.6 Monitoring will be undertaken to ensure that income targets are achieved.

**Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 3.7 The implementation of the revised fees and charges will be notified in advance to the customer to ensure that all users are aware of the new charges and any concessions available to them.

**4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

There is a risk that if fees and charges are not increased income targets will not be achieved and the cost of services will increase.

**5. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Fees and Charges

**6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.

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