

Report To:	CABINET	Date:	26 NOVEMBER 2018
Heading:	FEES AND CHARGES 2019/20		
Portfolio Holder:	COUNCILLOR ROBERT SEARS-PICCAVEY, CABINET MEMBER (INWARD)		
Ward/s:	ALL		
Key Decision:	YES		
Subject to Call-In:	YES		

Purpose of Report

The Authority has assessed the level of fees and charges for the services it delivers in order to ascertain the scope for further income generation and to help mitigate inflationary costs associated with service provision.

The fees and charges discussed in this report are contained within the Authority's Fees and Charges booklet. A comparison between current and proposed charges is attached to this report (Appendix 1).

Recommendation(s)

Agree the revised Fees & Charges proposals for 2019/20, with all applicable increases taking effect as soon as practically possible after 1st April 2019.

Note that where reviews are ongoing and the proposed 2019/20 fees and charges are not yet available that these will be included in the Council's 2019/20 Budget Setting Report.

Reasons for Recommendation(s)

Additional income generated will contribute towards the Council's saving targets and continue to support the financing of a range of services. In addition, an annual review of fees and charges is part of sound financial management practise and a requirement of the Council's Financial Regulations.

Alternative Options Considered

To not review fees and charges. This would necessitate the identification of further savings to assist in closing the funding gap. It would also lead to subsidisation of some services where full cost recovery is a requirement.

Detailed Information

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with sound financial practice, it is already a requirement to undertake an annual review of fees and charges. This exercise is carried out as part of the budget process each year.

APPROACH

Managers were asked to consider and propose revised fees and charges for 2019/20 taking into account the following factors.

- i) Market conditions;
- ii) Increases in costs incurred by the Council in delivering the service;
- iii) Charges levied by the private sector where applicable;
- iv) Restrictions due to any contractual arrangement.

Some fees and charges are set by the Government. As the Council is unable to amend these charges they are excluded from the review.

PROPOSALS BY DIRECTORATE

Proposed fee revisions are shown in the remainder of the report by Directorate. These are summarised in the Appendix to this report.

PLACES AND COMMUNITIES DIRECTORATE

Planning

Planning fees are set by legislation so cannot be varied as part of this review. There are no known changes at this time. Any changes will be included in the 2019/20 Budget Setting report.

Building Control

The Building Control Statutory Fees have been recalculated to take account of hourly rates and service delivery plans for standard scheme types. This has resulted in some small adjustment to the fees. The charges have also been benchmarked against the published Scheme of Charges for adjacent local authorities.

Where a project does not fall within one of the standard categories the charges are individually assessed using a risk based approach.

Land Charges

These charges are discretionary but have to remain competitive with the market as a similar (but generally satisfactory for most needs) service can be obtained from personal search companies.

It is proposed to increase charges for 2019/20. In 2018/19, the Council absorbed price rises from Nottinghamshire County Council and Severn Trent Water, however, for 2019/20, these increases have been incorporated into the revised charges.

Commercial Rents

There are individual agreements for all commercial premises and these agreements dictate when a rent review is due. The rent proposed for each unit is dependent upon the current market values for

comparable premises in similar areas and there is only scope for an increase if at the point of rent review or lease renewal, market values are higher than those currently being paid.

Street naming and Numbering

These charges are reviewed every three years, and were updated in 2018/19. There are no plans to raise charges for 2019/20.

Markets

Price resistance continues to be a significant issue for Markets, with occupancy levels fluctuating and traders seeking towns offering the greatest footfall.

It is proposed to increase charges, but the level of increase takes into account the need to attract footfall and competition from nearby towns. The planned rises will still mean that Ashfield charges are the second lowest rates amongst its neighbours.

Licences, Registrations, Permits and Consents

A large proportion of the licences, registrations and permits issued are statutory so pricing structures are prescribed. For licences, registrations and permits that are discretionary, fees are set to cover the costs of providing the service. Such licence fees are monitored with the aim of achieving full cost recovery. The service currently covers its costs, and there are no plans to increase charges for 2019/20.

Pest Control Fees and Charges

A full review of Pest Control has set new charges that cover the cost of service delivery based on time taken per job and demand. Domestic prices are included in the fees & charges booklet, however, Commercial fees are excluded on the grounds that they are commercially sensitive.

Dog Control Fees

Part of the Dog Control fee is statutory, and the rest of the charge is set by the Council. No rise is planned for 2019/20.

Penalty Notices

These are fees associated with the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005. Fees are mostly set by the Government although the Council does have some discretion in respect of early fee payment. The fee is in line with that charged by neighbouring authorities so there are no proposals to change the early payment fee at this point.

Cemeteries

Ashfield prices were significantly lower than most Councils so the Authority has been working on bringing its fees into line with others and this is reflected in the proposed fee increases. No increases have been applied to children's burials.

Leisure Centres

The fees for the Leisure Centres are set by the contractor, Sports and Leisure Management Ltd (SLM), as long as they remain within the parameters of the overall contract and the Council is consulted on proposals.

SLM are free to set prices within the parameters of the prevailing Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) % rate (September of the previous year for all CPI %), however, if they wish to exceed CPI, the Authority's consent is required. Prices are available at the centres and on the Leisure Centre websites.

MOT tests

The price is currently £40 for a class 4 test, £45 for a class 7 test and £10 for a retest. These prices are comparable with local competition and it is therefore not proposed to increase them.

Trade Waste

Under the Environmental Protection Act, the Council is obliged to provide a commercial waste collection service if requested by local businesses, and can make a 'reasonable' charge for the service. The Council aims to provide a quality and reliable service, which is efficient and highly valued by our commercial customers. As Trade Waste charges are commercially sensitive these are excluded from the report.

Special Collections (Bulky /domestic items)

The increases proposed for 2019/20 include a 50p increase per item to reflect the significant increase in disposal costs levied by the County Council.

Garden Waste

Garden Waste charges were reintroduced in 2018/19, after the end of the two year free of charge scheme. It is recommended that fees are set at £28 per annum for 2019/20, with a charge of £14 per additional bin.

Parks and Outdoor Recreation charges

Increases in sports facility charges have remained low for a significant amount of time, however, having looked at the costs of maintenance of sports pitches and having assessed the number of users, an appropriate pricing requirement has been proposed. Youth and children's sports charges have been kept low in order to support delivery of the health and wellbeing agenda.

HOUSING AND ASSETS DIRECTORATE

Car Parking Fees

Car Parking fees are currently the subject of a review. Any proposed change will be included in the 2019/20 Budget Setting report.

Community Centres

The facilities provided by Community Centres are well received by the community groups that utilise them but occupancy rates vary from centre to centre and are low in some cases, affecting income levels. There are no increases proposed for 2019/20 to encourage their use by the local community.

Private Sector Call Monitoring Service

This is a non-statutory service, first established by Ashfield Homes Limited, run on a commercial basis. Prices were increased in 2018/19. There are no proposals to increase charges for 2019/20. The service helps to protect vulnerable adults in the District.

LEGAL LAND GOVERNANCE DIRECTORATE

Fees for S106 agreements are currently under review. Any changes will be included in the 2019/20 Budget Setting report.

Implications

Corporate Plan:

Fees and charges are an essential contributor to assist in meeting the costs and sustainability of delivering some services to residents and local businesses.

Legal:

All fees need to be set within the constraints of any relevant legislation.

Finance:

Budget Area	Implication
General Fund – Revenue Budget	The impact of the revised fees and charges will be reflected in the update to the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the Budgets set for 2019/20.
General Fund – Capital Programme	Not applicable
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	Not applicable
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	Not applicable

Risk:

Risk	Mitigation
Where fees and charges have increased there is a possibility of an adverse impact on demand.	Any proposed increase in fees and charges is deemed reasonable and the potential impact on demand has been considered when determining the revised fees. Performance against 2019/20 budgeted fees and charges income targets will be monitored throughout the year with any variations to budget being reported to CLT and Cabinet.

Human Resources:

None.

Equalities:

No direct Equality implications arising from the report.

Other Implications:

None.

Reason(s) for Urgency

Not applicable

Reason(s) for Exemption

Not applicable

Background Papers

None

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