

Agenda Item

REPORT OF Section 151 Officer

To: Community and Resources Committee

Subject: Miscellaneous Fees & Charges

Date: 25th January 2021

Reference:

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To review the level of miscellaneous fees and charges.

1. INTRODUCTION

Fees and charges contribute towards the cost of providing services. The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) assumes that charges will rise across income budgets where appropriate. The amount of income raised will affect the level of expenditure savings required to deliver a balanced budget. Managers have reviewed the current charges and suggested charges from 1 April 2021.

2. REPORT

This Council receives circa £6.1m per annum from fees and charges for services (note 3 of Financial Statements). Some fees are prescribed by statute (e.g. Planning Applications), but others can be set at the discretion of the Council (e.g. Parking), there may be limitations imposed on the level of some discretionary fees charged.

The income received from Fees & Charges reduces the cost of services to be met from council tax.

The level of fee set should be based on criteria such as;

- Inflation
- To recover costs
- To influence behaviour
- The ability to pay
- What the market will bear
- Whether or not to compete with the private sector

Fees may be set and or, based on more than one criterion.

Although shown within the Fees and Charges booklet, Car Parking, North Devon Joint Crematorium and Harbour charges are not considered within this report as they are to be set separately through different approval arrangements.

The annual charge for the collection of green waste was £35 in 2020/21. The budget report for 2021/22 and MTFS seeks to raise this to £50 potential options to be discussed by members include a one-off raise of £15 in 21/22 or incremental increases of £5 per year over the next 3 years.

The Statutory/Discretionary column sets out whether the charges are set by Statute (S), or are at our discretion (D). Some discretionary charges can only represent a reclamation of costs (e.g. Street Naming and Numbering), or the service as a whole cannot be making a



profit (e.g. Land Charges), additionally some charges are discretionary up to a statutory maximum, where this maximum has been reached this is indicated by (M).

A summary of significant changes are below

There are few significant changes proposed for 2021/22. With inflation remaining low many fees have been recommended to remain at the 2020/21 level.

Land Licenses

Where organisations wish to hold an event on Council Owned land, it is proposed that Commercial Events and Damage Deposit fees to be arranged with hirer according to event size and potential for damage as current levels are, on occasion, insufficient to cover the cost of returning the site to a condition suitable for public use

Garages

It is proposed that Garage rentals be negotiable according to demand, in order to reduce voids and maximise asset returns where appropriate.

Temporary Accommodation for Homeless Households

Temporary Homeless Accommodation Household Properties are leased at (Local Housing Allowance) rates set by the VOA (Valuation Office Agency). These rates have modestly increased.

Northam Burrows

It is proposed that the Car Day Ticket be increased £5, to reduce change handling (COVID risk) and speed up parking - 2020 saw long queues of cars and many customers declined their change because of the above reasons.

Waste Management Services

Some lines (collection of bulky waste etc.) have been revised to reflect inflation & related operating costs.

Increases to Green Waste to be determined

3. IMPLICATIONS

Legal Implications

Some fees are set by statute or have limitations on how they can be determined and this has been reflected in the proposed fees and charges.

Financial Implications

The additional income raised from any increase in fees and charges counts towards the savings required to balance the 2021/22 budget.

Human Resources Implications

There are no specific human resources implications.



Sustainability/Biodiversity Implications

There are no specific sustainability/biodiversity implications.

Equality/Diversity

Some fees and charges have concessionary rates. The committee should consider the impact that the charges may have.

Risk Management

In proposing fees and charges regard has been had to the impact of the fee level.

Compliance with Policies and Strategies

Fees and charges are set within current policies.

Data Protection (GDPR) Implications

There are no GDPR implications regarding the publication of the Fee's and Charges. The relevant providers will be responsible for ensuring that supplies of goods and services are made in compliance with GDPR.

Ward Member and Leader Member Views

Date of Consultation – 11/01/2021

Councillor Hodson –

The annual setting of fees and charges is a key component of the Councils budget setting process. Care is taken to ensure charges are only increased in line with either statutory control and/or with regard to the criteria listed in Section 2. I am happy that where changes have taken place they appear fair and justified and I support this report.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The MTFS assumes that there will be an increase in income from fees and charges. Managers have considered the impact on their services in proposing fees and charges for the next financial year.

5. RECOMMENDATION

That the committee consider and agree charges for services to be effective from 1 April 2021.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Consultations:

Date of Consultation – 11/01/2021

Officers Consulted: -

Chief Executive

Section 151 Officer

Senior Solicitor

Senior and Operational Managers for the relevant service



Contact Officer: Gwydion Batten – Accountancy Assistant

Background Papers: Fees and charges information held in the Accountancy Section at Riverbank House.

