

AGENDA ITEM 10

POLICY, FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

30TH SEPTEMBER 2014

REPORT OF HEAD OF CENTRAL SERVICES

A CORPORATE REVIEW OF CHARGES 2015-16

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide information on the various fees and charges that are made by this committee.
- 1.2 To recommend changes to these charges to operate from 1st April 2015.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **That the committee determines the level of charges for 2015-16 for each of the services set out in the attached table to operate from 1st April 2015.**

3.0 BACKGROUND

All charges

- 3.1 As set out in the constitution only new proposed charges or charges that were proposed to be increased above or below inflation are considered by members. As such statutory charges have not been included within the report for consideration by members. Those that are increased in line with inflation are approved by the Head of Central Services under delegated authority. There are no charges under this committee that are being increased by inflation.
- 3.2 Appendix A shows the proposed charges for services that fall outside delegated authority. The table also summarises the financial objective of the current charging policy, the existing charges, the current level of any subsidy and the reason for the recommended charge.
- 3.3 There is a charging policy included in the MTFs; this should be used as a guideline when setting fees and charges.
- 3.4 As part of the review process managers are asked to complete a "review of charges form for 2015-16" for each distinct charging area. The aim of this process is to gather background information to the charges being reviewed. A set of completed forms will be available at the meeting.

Phoenix House- First Floor

- 3.5 The Me and My Learning facility on the first floor at Phoenix House has been created for a trial period until March 2015; a bid is currently being drawn up for funding for the facility to continue until 31st March 2016. The funding will be on the same basis as the funding that has been awarded for 2014-15. Therefore it has been assumed that no fees are required to be set for the first floor as the Me & My Learning facility will still be in occupation.

Phoenix House- Ground Floor

- 3.6 The ground floor is currently partially occupied; these leases are bespoke to each occupier dependent on the occupier's requirements. Therefore no fees are required to be set for the ground floor.

Land Charges

3.7 The proposed fees would allow for full cost recovery whilst allowing investment in the service in order to respond to increased demand and usage. Demand for the service has increased by approximately 30% in 2014/15 (compared to previous years) and the regulations allow for investment where it is supported from revenue from fees.

3.8 Land Charges is supported by staff within the Regulatory Services administration team, which is also responsible for the administration of planning, building control and licensing. There is an increase in workload across all of these areas but the increase of 30% in Land Charges is the most profound. As a result, the resource allocation required both overall and in proportion in terms of Land Charges can no longer maintain service levels across all areas. Discussions will be undertaken to determine the way forward through the budget setting process, this may result in options being submitted for inclusion in the 2015-16 budget.

4.0 POLICY & CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The fees and charges set out in this report are the ones that do not meet the charging policy set in line with corporate and service objectives; these vary according to the service provided. More detailed explanations on each service's corporate implications can be found on the forms available at the meeting.

5.0 FINANCIAL & OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial and resource implications have been addressed within paragraph 3. Once approved, these charges will be built into the 2015-16 revenue budget process.

5.2 Some services include chargeable and non chargeable elements. In line with the charging policy, the best estimate of under/over recovery of costs is included in Appendix A. Members may wish to review whether it is appropriate for those services receiving a subsidy to continue to do so.

5.3 Local Government funding continues to be reviewed and there is great uncertainty surrounding funding in later years although almost certainly will be reduced. This is reflected in the Council's MTFs and places a greater onus on the Council to seek to maximise its income from other sources.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS

6.1 Local Authorities have certain limited freedoms to charge for discretionary services under the Local Government Act 2003. Where appropriate any other relevant legislation is noted within the Appendix A to this report.

7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

7.1 There are no direct links to community safety arising from this report.

8.0 EQUALITIES

8.1 An equalities impact assessment (EIA) has been completed for the charging policy previously agreed by PFA.

9.0 RISKS

9.1 A possible risk to the Council is that budgeted revenue income may not be achieved if services are not taken up due to any charges increase. Income budgets are regularly monitored and where a downturn in demand is identified appropriate action is taken.

10.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE**

10.1 There are no climate change issues directly arising from this report.

11.0 **CONSULTATION**

11.1 Budget Holders carried out the review with the assistance of the Service Accountant as required with reference to current budget monitoring protocols.

12.0 **WARDS AFFECTED**

12.1 All wards are affected.

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Date: 3rd September 2014

Appendices: Appendix A – Review of Fees and Charges

Background Papers: Forms for the Review of Charges
Charging Policy

Reference: X:/Cttee, Council & Sub Cttees/PFA/2014-15/30-09-14/
Review of Charges 2015-16