

COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

18th SEPTEMBER 2013

REPORT OF HEAD OF CENTRAL SERVICES

A CORPORATE REVIEW OF CHARGES 2014-15

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 2014

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **That the committee determines the level of charges for 2014-15 for each of the services set out in the attached table to operate from 1st April 2014.**

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.
- 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 2014-15" 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.
- 3.5 Appendix B shows the list of services that are currently provided free of charge, this is due to a number of reasons such as information being provided as a result of Freedom of Information requests, information being accessible via the website or there being limited demand.
- 3.6 Members should note that no charges are being presented to this committee in respect of the room hire charges at the Community Centres. This is on the basis that a review is being undertaken on the whole process including the development of a marketing strategy for the centres. The level of charges, including ensuring generated income covers the costs of running the service, is within the scope of the review. A report covering the review will be submitted to the November meeting of this committee.
- 3.7 Members should also note that no charges are being presented in this report in respect of the charges for Waterfield Leisure Centre. This is on the basis that these are covered within a separate update report on Waterfield Leisure Centre elsewhere on this agenda.

3.8 **Homelessness**

- 3.8.1 The charges in respect of homelessness have not been changed. This reflects the fact that the charges impact on the most vulnerable who are already feeling the impact of the economic downturn. In addition any increases in charges are negated by lost benefit subsidy due to capping limits set by the Department for Work and Pensions.

3.9 **Cemetery**

- 3.9.1 The majority of charges in respect of cemeteries have been increased in line with inflation. The exception to this is the interment charge made for Saturday burials where it is proposed to remove the service as we do not have the resources to provide it. As the service is rarely used any impact on the level of income will be minimal.

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 2014-15 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: 14th August 2013

Appendices: Appendix A – Review of Fees and Charges
Appendix B – Services provided free of charge

Background Papers: Forms for the Review of Charges
Charging Policy

Reference: X:/Cttee, Council & Sub Cttees/CSA/2013-14/18-09-13/
Review of Charges 2014-15