

COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

17th 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.
- 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 MTFIS; 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.
- 3.5 For information, 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 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.
- 3.7 In addition no charges are being presented in respect of charges for Homelessness or for Melton Lifeline as these will be presented separately to this committee in November.

3.8 **Cemetery**

- 3.8.1 The majority of charges in respect of cemeteries have been increased in line with inflation. The exceptions to this are the charges relating to Granite Sanctum 2 Cremation Vaults, where there is no proposed increase to retain a competitive charge, and the purchase of graves for children under one year, which is a subsidised cost, unlike all the other cemetery charges which are commercial.

3.9 **Lifeline**

- 3.9.1 A more detailed report reviewing the charging policy associated with these fees and charges including the proposals for the 2015/16 financial year will be presented to the committee at its November meeting.

3.10 **Homelessness**

- 3.10.1 As with section 3.9 a review of the homelessness charges is also being undertaken and the outcomes of this will also be presented to the committee at its November meeting.

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.

Contact Officer: Joanne O’Gorman

Date: 26th August 2014

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/2014-15/17-09-14/Review of Fees and Charges 170914