

POLICY, FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

28 SEPTEMBER 2016

REPORT OF HEAD OF CENTRAL SERVICES

A CORPORATE REVIEW OF CHARGES 2017-18

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 2017.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the committee determines the level of charges for 2017-18 for each of the services set out in the attached table to operate from 1st April 2017.
- 2.2 That the committee determines that new charges, as referred to in paragraph 3.6, are to operate from 1st October 2016.

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 MTFs; this should be used as a guideline when setting fees and charges. The current charging policy has been reviewed and is presented to this committee elsewhere on this agenda, which incorporates the recommendations arising from a recent internal audit report around fees and charges. The fees and charges review has taken on board the proposed changes in the new proposed policy.
- 3.4 As part of the review process managers are asked to complete a “review of charges form for 2017-18” 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.

Legal Services

- 3.5 As a shared service both authorities will incur legal fees separately at each authority and we will always share costs equally between all parties involved in any legal transaction. In addition to this where work is undertaken on behalf of others and where we are able to, costs will be recharged based on a set hourly rate which includes a proportion of overheads. Any work undertaken and associated income will be recharged to Melton accordingly as part of the delegated service, the main source of income relates to s106 agreements.

New Charges

- 3.6 Contained in Appendix A are some new fees and charges within the Land Charges service to be introduced from 1st October 2016. They are expedited searches (response within 48 hours) and responses to individual CON29 questions.

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 2017/18 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. The EIA has been reviewed in conjunction with the updated charging policy. The main implication arising is the need for service areas to undertake their own EIA for the charges they are responsible for to ensure the appropriate equalities considerations have been taken into account when setting the fees and charges.

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: 26th August 2016

Appendices: Appendix A – Review of Fees and Charges

Background Papers: Forms for the Review of Charges
Charging Policy

Reference: X:\Cttee, Council & Sub Cttees\Policy Finance & Administration
Committee\2016-17\280916