

AGENDA ITEM 10

COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

13 SEPTEMBER 2017

REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR

A CORPORATE REVIEW OF CHARGES 2018-19

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 2018.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **That the Committee determines the level of charges for 2018-19 for each of the services set out in the attached table to operate from 1st April 2018.**

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 Corporate Director 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.
- 3.4 As part of the review budget holders are asked to complete a "review of charges form for 2018-19" 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 are held electronically and can be viewed at the meeting.

3.5 Public Conveniences

- 3.5.1 A wider corporate project in relation to public conveniences is currently underway. Although the facilities will be greatly improved, it is not proposed that the charge is increased based on benchmarking undertaken which has shown that the existing charge is reasonable. It should be noted that as the facilities will be automated, the concessions for free usage (baby changing, RADAR users, under 16's and out of hours) have been removed.

3.6 Lifeline

- 3.6.1 As the service is in direct competition with other providers it is proposed there is no change in the charges to help sustain the demand and usage. It should be noted that the proposal to not increase the charge is outside of the Council's charging policy.

3.7 Strategic Sports

3.7.1 The charge for the stage lighting equipment loan scheme is to be removed as the equipment is to be disposed of.

3.7.2 There are various sports activities provided under the commissioning plan. The activities provided change regularly and the charges are set based on the activity. Therefore a definitive list of activities is not included for approval. A list of current charges is available electronically and can be viewed at the meeting.

3.8 Homelessness

3.8.1 It should be noted that the Private Leased Schemes charges will increase/decrease in line with the Government Policy for rents and will be brought to this Committee in January as part of the HRA budget setting report.

3.8.2 It is proposed that the homelessness charges do not change as the users of the service will now have to claim under Universal Credit which will result in them being without benefits for many weeks until their claim is processed. The rent element of Universal Credit an applicant will receive is lower than the housing benefit previously paid. Therefore any increase in charges is expected to increase arrears accrued by the claimant. This issue will be covered by a separate report to Members.

3.9 Waterfield Leisure Centre and Melton Sports Village

3.9.1 Waterfield Leisure Centre and Melton Sports Village fees and charges are under this Committee's remit. Members should note that no charges are being presented in this report in respect of Waterfield Leisure Centre or the Melton Sports Village. SLM manage these sites and propose these fees accordingly. A report will be presented to this Committee at a later date.

3.9.2 It should also be noted that the Rugby and Football clubs operate on the Melton Sports Village site and the Council generates income through leases which are also being reviewed separately.

3.10 Wheels To Work

3.10.1 Wheels to work fees and charges are also under this Committee's remit. However, they are not included within this report as a separate report will be brought at a later date covering the fees and charges and wider aspects of the wheels to work service.

3.11 Free Services

3.11.1 With the exception of the concessions as highlighted in Appendix A, there are only two services which have been put forward by budget holders as provided free of charge. These are detailed in Appendix B where budget holders have provided an explanation as to why charges have not been introduced.

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 2018/19 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: 21st August 2017

Appendices: Appendix A – Review of Fees and Charges
Appendix B – Free Services

Background Papers: Forms for the Review of Charges
Charging Policy

Reference: X:\Cttee, Council & Sub Cttees\CSA\2017-18\130917\DG – Review of Charges