

## PLACE COMMITTEE

5<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2018

### REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR FOR CORPORATE SERVICES

#### A CORPORATE REVIEW OF CHARGES 2019-20

#### 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 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018 or 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019, as applicable.

#### 2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

##### 2.1 That the Committee:

- (i) **determines the level of charges for 2019-20 for each of the services set out in the attached table to operate from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019;**
- (ii) **determines the level of charges for the activities described at 3.12.3 for implementation with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018 (commensurate with the introduction of the new Regulations), as highlighted in Appendix A**

#### 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 process managers are asked to complete a “review of charges form for 2019-20” 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 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 **Building Control**
  - 3.6.1 As previously approved by the Melton Economic and Environmental Affairs Committee, delegated authority has been given to the Head of Regulatory Services to deviate from the

standard Building Control fees. In accordance with the Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulations 2010; certain fees can be assessed on an individual job by job basis based on the level of risk of non-compliance of the Building Regulations.

- 3.6.2 The Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulation 2010 requires that building regulation charges relate to the costs of carrying out the building regulations chargeable service. The CIPFA guidance on the Charges Regulations 2010 states that Local Authorities are to calculate charges to achieve full cost recovery by relating the hourly charge of Local Authority building control officers to the time spent carrying out their *chargeable* building control regulation functions and advice. The Regulations also require the chargeable functions to break even over a reasonable period of time, normally three years. Currently, the chargeable function rolling three year position is a deficit of £7,382. Therefore it has been recommended that the hourly figure is increased to £77.90 per hour from £73.32 to reflect the need to recovery previous years deficits. Please refer to Appendix C to see the proposed charges.

### 3.7 **Licensing – Hackney Carriage / Private Hire**

- 3.7.1 The Assistant Director of Planning and Regulatory Services will provide a separate report on hackney carriage/private hire fees and charges later in the year as the current approach for calculating fees is being reviewed.

### 3.8 **Control of Pests**

- 3.8.1 The Control of Pests service to external customers went forward as a disinvestment during 2017/18, therefore all external charges have been removed from list.

### 3.9 **Public Conveniences**

- 3.9.1 The corporate project in relation to the public conveniences is underway. The facilities will be greatly improved and be fully automated despite this it is proposed that the current charge should not be increased, based on benchmarking undertaken which has shown that the existing charge is at the higher end of the scale. It should be noted that as the facilities will be fully automated, the concessions (baby changing, under 16's and out of hours) have been removed.

### 3.10 **Open Spaces**

- 3.10.1 The proposed fee increase in relation to casual football pitch bookings is as a result of a benchmarking exercise and will bring the charge in line with the lowest of the benchmarks. It should be noted that due to the Melton Sports Village and other local facilities, it is not expected that there will be much take up of these services but it is proposed to leave the charge in to allow a charge to be made should the need arise.

### 3.11 **Allotments**

- 3.11.1 As part of the 2017-18 fees and charges setting process, Members approved a three year fixed fee which is in place until 2019-20.

### 3.12 **New Charges**

- 3.12.1 Contained in Appendix A are some new charges to be introduced from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019. The new charges include one within the Environmental Health service. As a service it is expected that an offer of Food Business Improvement Advice would be accepted by customers. The second new charge is within Waste, this new charge relates to New Housing Developers purchasing the initial set of bins for each of the new properties. It is difficult to predict the impact that the new charges will have on demand of the services.

- 3.12.2 New charges are being proposed regarding the initial issue and replacements of wheeled bins to households. A report has been submitted to this committee by The Director for Growth and Regeneration outlining the proposal. Please refer to agenda item 8, regarding this proposal.
- 3.12.3 In July 2018 the Government announced that the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations would take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018. The legislation consolidates a series of licensing responsibilities that were previously dispersed across several bodies of legislation into a single statute and assigns responsibility to the Council as a Licensing Authority. It comprises the adjustment of some existing licences, the transfer of existing regimes currently assigned to other bodies such as Trading Standards and some entirely new responsibilities. The legislation also clarifies the methodologies and administration required to process and determine the licences concerned. It is applicable to pet shops, animal boarding establishments, riding establishments, dog breeding and performing animals.
- 3.12.4 With regard to fees, the legislation allows for full cost recovery of all activities associated with the administration and determination of the licences. An exercise has been carried out to estimate the time required to administer each of the licences, relating the relevant stages and associated work to the staff concerned (different aspects fall to different officers, e.g. Environmental Health Officers, Licensing Officers, administration officers etc.). The results of these calculations are included in Appendix A within the shaded lines under the Animal Welfare Licences section to this report as new fees. The new legislation overrides some of the types of licences we have formally dealt with and as such these are now deleted.

#### **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 2019-20 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.

Contact Officer: Emma Peters

Date: 8<sup>th</sup> August 2018

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\Place Committee\2018 19\3 - 050918/  
Review of Charges 2019-20