

Cabinet

24 January 2018



Title	Fees and Charges Report 2018/19		
Purpose of the report	To make a Key Decision		
Report Author	Laurence Woolven (Chief Accountant)		
Cabinet Member	Councillor Howard Williams	Confidential	No
Corporate Priority	Financial Sustainability		
Recommendations	Cabinet is asked to consider and approve the charges as set out in Appendix A.		
Reason for Recommendation	Fees & Charges are an important source of income for the authority each year and are a key importance in balancing the budget.		

1. Key issues

- 1.1 In the current challenging economic climate, the council has to perform a balancing act between trying to maximise the additional income that can be generated through fees and charges, and setting fee levels which are sustainable and will not adversely impact on its overall income levels. It also needs to be mindful of the impact on residents and the local business community.
- 1.2 Additional income of £19k has been calculated to be generated for 2018/19 from increasing fees and charges. Whilst increases have been applied to most areas, the budget managers feel that in a lot of cases additional income will not be generated from the increases.
- 1.3 The total potential income therefore from rents, fees and charges and grant income excluding housing benefit grant income to be incorporated into the 2018/19 budget will be approximately £4.1m.
- 1.4 More than a third of the Council's total income excluding housing benefit grant income is generated through fees and charges, rents and grants and is therefore of key importance in balancing the budget.

2. Options analysis and proposal

- 2.1 The detailed schedule of proposed fees and charges to be effective from 1st April 2018 is shown in the 2018/19 fees and charges document.
- 2.2 All fees and charges were reviewed in 2017/18 by Group Heads to ensure that they are covering our costs and they have been assessed as to the reasonability of the fee being set.

- 2.3 For 2018/19 in common with previous years Group Heads have been asked to revisit the overall budgeted income estimates, compare them with other authorities' charges and then base them upon the income seen in 2017/18 to date in order to reassess the likely full year income position.
- 2.4 In respect of the economic climate all areas are being monitored through the 2017/18 budget monitoring process to see how the income is holding up against budgets. Management team receive a monthly report on the major income area's highlighting the current position against the previous year position.
- 2.5 Local authorities are able to increase planning fees by 20% if they commit to invest the additional fee income in their planning department. In addition, the draft regulations also state that a planning application fee may be charged by local planning authorities where permitted development rights have been withdrawn by a condition imposed on a planning permission.
- Whilst this increase is welcomed the position for Spelthorne is that the current planning fee budget is not being achieved and it is therefore felt that this increase will only generate an additional £12k.
- 2.6 Only minor changes to Car Parking fees are proposed, this reflects the Councils desire to help local retailers and the business community.
- 2.7 The proposed fees and charges submitted here for the next financial year have in the majority of cases been up rated by 2% which is the current inflation rate (RPI). Some fees have been amended to reflect the maximum level it is perceived that the market can currently stand, while in some cases, there is no increase to the proposed fees and charges for 2018/19.
- 2.8 It should be noted that in exceptional circumstances discounted pricing may be considered where an activity supports a strategic priority of the council to the benefit of a particular community group.
- 2.9 The Authority is continuing to look at Services and ensuring that all areas make appropriate charges for all services provided in order to ensure that those users of the service are charged for it so that the rest of the Council Tax payers are not subsidising them.

3. Financial implications

- 3.1 As in the body of the report.

4. Other considerations

- 4.1 There are none.

5. Timetable for implementation

- 5.1 The fees and charges proposed are to be implemented from the 1st April 2018.

Background papers: None

Appendices: A & B