

# Cabinet

20 February 2019



<b>Title</b>	Fees and Charges Report 2019/20		
<b>Purpose of the report</b>	To make a Key Decision		
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<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Howard Williams	<b>Confidential</b>	No
<b>Corporate Priority</b>	Financial Sustainability		
<b>Recommendations</b>	Cabinet is asked to consider and approve the charges as set out in Appendix A.		
<b>Reason for Recommendation</b>	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 maximising additional income that can be generated through fees and charges, and setting fee levels which are sustainable and will not adversely impact on overall income levels. The Council also needs to be mindful of the impact on residents and the local business community.
- 1.2 Additional income of £216k is estimated to be generated for 2019/20 from increasing fees and charges, £93k of which relates to changes in HMO licensing.
- 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 2019/20 budget will be approximately £4.3m.
- 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. This therefore is of key importance in balancing the budget.

## 2. Options analysis and proposal

- 2.1 The detailed schedule of proposed fees and charges effective from 1 April 2019 is shown in the 2019/20 fees and charges document.
- 2.2 The inflation rate as at December 2018 is 2.7% (RPI). For 2019/20, the Council's fees and charges have been reviewed in the context of inflation and other factors, and revised with a range of changes. Some fees have been amended to reflect the maximum level it is perceived that the market can currently stand, a few have been reduced for consistency, while some fees have not been increased from 2018/19 rates.

- 2.3 All fees and charges were reviewed in 2018/19 by Group Heads in the context of the services concerned and in terms of reasonability of the fee being set.
- 2.4 For 2019/20, as with previous years, Group Heads have been asked to revisit the overall budgeted income estimates, compare them with other authorities' charges and then base revisions on the income seen in 2018/19 to date in order to reassess the likely full-year income position.
- 2.5 In respect of the economic climate, all areas are being monitored through the 2018/19 budget monitoring process to assess the actual income compared to budgets. Management team receive a monthly report on the major income areas highlighting the current position against that for the previous year.
- 2.6 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.

Planning fees that are discretionary have been reviewed, including by comparison to other authorities, and increased on average by 5%, with an estimated increase in income of £26k. Planning application fees are set by Government and have not been increased.
- 2.7 Car parking charges remain at 2018/19 rates. This reflects the Council's desire to help local retailers and the business community.
- 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 Council is continuing to look at services to ensure that all areas make charges for services provided where appropriate. In this way, users of such services are charged for those services, and Council Tax payers are not subsidising those services.

### **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 1 April 2019.

**Background papers: None**

**Appendices: A**