

Cabinet

25 January 2017



Title	Fees and Charges Report 2017/18		
Purpose of the report	To make a Key Decision		
Report Author	Adrian Flynn		
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 and 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, but at the same time be careful in 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 The extra Income calculated to be generated for 2017/18 from increasing fees and charges in some service areas is £143k. (£207k in 2016/17)
- 1.3 A number of income budgets have had to be reduced as a result of them not being achieved during the year.
- 1.4 The total potential income therefore from rents, fees and charges and grant income excluding housing benefit grant income to be incorporated into the 2017/18 budget will be approximately £27.1m. This is a considerable increase on the 2016/17 figures of £14.9m which is largely due to additional rental streams on properties the Council acquired during the year.
- 1.5 45% 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 2017 is shown in the 2017/18 fees and charges document.
- 2.2 As part of the 2015/16 and 2016/17 budget setting process Heads of service adopted a cautious approach to raising the level of fees and a number of fees were reduced in response to the downturn in economic climate which had produced lower levels of income than previously budgeted. These areas have been reassessed as part of the 2017/18 budget process in order to determine whether the change could now be reversed in light of actual incomes received.
- 2.3 All fees and charges were reviewed in 2016/17 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.
- 2.4 For 2017/18 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 2016/17 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 2016/17 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.
- 2.6 Currently Building Control, Refuse collection and Garden Waste bin income are all indicating that they will achieve more than originally budgeted and any increase seen as on-going will be incorporated into the base budget.
- 2.7 Car parking income is one of the largest income generation areas for the council but in order to encourage economic development in the various town centres, car park charges for 2017/18 will not increase and will remain the same as for 2016/17.
- 2.8 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 2017/18.
- 2.9 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.
- 2.10 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 2017.

Background papers: None

Appendices: A & B