

6th December 2017

Environment & Enforcement Committee

Fees & Charges – Street Scene and Environment

Report of: Dawn Taylor – Business Support Services Manager

Wards Affected: All

This report is: Public

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Fees and charges made by the Council for various services are reviewed on an annual basis by the relevant Committees relating to the Services.
- 1.2 Recommended amendments to fees and charges are incorporated into the budget setting process to take effect from the following financial year.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **That the proposed fees and charges attached in Appendices A, B and C are agreed and incorporated within the 2018/19 budget.**
- 2.2 **The members agree to reduce the period of time for an Exclusive Right of Burial (ERB) from 100 years to 50 years.**

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1 The Council has many fees and charges relating to the services it provides. As part of the budget setting process, these charges are reviewed on an annual basis. Whilst some of the fees and charges are statutory and therefore determined through legislation, the Council must also review its charges for discretionary services to ensure that they reflect the current cost of service provision.
- 3.2 The individual charges that are being proposed are set out in Appendices A, B and C of this report.

4. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

- 4.1 Some fees were increased last year, but some were not increased and therefore, it is proposed to implement an increase of 3% (to be rounded to nearest pound). There are 4 notable exceptions to the key principles laid out above, and these are as follows:

- I. Trade Waste – as agreed previously some services such as Trade Waste operates in a competitive environment and need to be able to change within the market(s). Trade Waste fees are delegated to Managers to make appropriate changes either through negotiations or when the market dictates.
- II. Garden Waste Leased Bin Charge - currently the annual fee for a Waste Bin is £46.00. The Street Scene Department in 2016 took part in an income Generation Review undertaken by BDO, and their recommendation was that the Council matches the mean average price for the peer group (£45.82). The proposal for 2018-19 is to increase the cost of the Garden Waste leased bin charge by 8.70% to £50 per annum. It should however be noted that this would still be lower than the identified upper quarter of £55.00 plus and would put us in the mid-price range.
- III. Garden Waste Biodegradable Sacks- a 3.3% increase for the retail price is proposed. This will enable the procurement of a sack that has a sufficient gauge to ensure the integrity of the sack for a minimum period of four weeks.
- IV. Cemeteries – As already highlighted in the report as part of the Income Generation Review by BDO, a number of income streams were reviewed and compared to the authority's peer groups. One of these streams was the Councils Cemetery Services. Whilst Officers are conscious of the sensitive nature of this service area they are also mindful of the cost of the service to provide and the need for services to be sustainable and where possible cost neutral. The BDO report highlighted that the authority's charges were lower than others within its peer group and recommended that in order to bring it in line with its counterparts, increases be applied over a two-year period to achieve this. The increases form part of a two-step progress to ensure the Council is in line with its other peer group members whilst avoiding a significant increase in a single year. This will result in a similar increase being tabled to members as part of the fee setting process for the 2019/20 financial year.
- V. In addition to this, it is proposed to reduce the length of period an Exclusive Right of Burial [ERB] is issued for. The authority currently issues ERB's for 100 years before they are due for renewal, Officers are now frequently finding that ERB's are expiring without being transferred to alternative living family members or friends due to the excessive time that will have lapsed since the ERB was issued. This can make tracing ERB owners almost impossible if a need to contact them arises in the future. In addition to this it is recommended by the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management [ICCM] that ERB's should not exceed 99 years and under statute must not exceed 100 years. Following the consideration of the above and in line with many other authorities in the County it is proposed to reduce the active time period for an ERB from 100 years to 50 years.

- VI. It is proposed that all other fees and charges within Cemetery Services be raised by 3% in line with other service areas.
- VII. Discretionary Environmental Health fees and charges are also proposed to be increased by 3%.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1 The recommendation is to increase charges by 3% (rounded to nearest pound) plus the exceptions detailed above, which will make a small contribution to the subsidised services provided by the Council and aiming to recover the cost of the services being provided.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 Not applicable

7. References to Corporate Plan

- 7.1 A Modern Council – providing increased customer satisfaction in the quality of Council Services.
- 7.2 Costs of services provided based on efficient systems providing value for money to customers.

8. Implications

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The fees referred to in this report inform the 2018/19 budget setting process.

Legal Implications

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The report adheres with the general duty for the Council to maintain transparency when levying fees and charges for relevant services.

Other Implications (where significant) – i.e. Health and Safety, Asset Management, Equality and Diversity, Risk Management, Section 17 – Crime & Disorder, Sustainability, ICT.

None.

9. Background Papers (include their location and identify whether any are exempt or protected by copyright)

- 9.1 None.

10. Appendices

Appendix A – Fees and Charges - Cemeteries
Appendix B – Fees and Charges – Waste Management
Appendix C – Fees and Charges – Other Environment

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