

Report to: **Overview and Scrutiny Panel**
Date: **19 January 2017**
Title: **Review of Fees and Charges for 2017/18**
Portfolio Area: **Support Services – Cllr S Wright**
Wards Affected: **All**
Relevant Scrutiny Committee: **N/A**

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

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RECOMMENDATION

- 1) That the Overview and Scrutiny Panel RESOLVES that the Executive RECOMMEND to Council that it approves the proposed fees and charges set out for Parks, Open Spaces and Outdoor Sports.**
- 2) That the Overview and Scrutiny Panel RESOLVES that the Executive RECOMMEND to Council that it approves the proposed Environmental Health charges review.**
- 3) That the Overview and Scrutiny Panel NOTE the ongoing work of the Lower Ferry working group relating to income generation opportunities, in advance of assessment at a later date.**
- 4) That the Overview and Scrutiny Panel NOTE the planned review of the pre-application service (including the fee structure), which will be presented to the Panel at a later date.**
- 5) That the Overview and Scrutiny Panel RESOLVES that the Executive RECOMMENDS to Council that it approves a percentage increase to car park charges. Potential options include:**
 - 0% increase;**
 - 1% increase;**
 - 2% increase.**
- 6) That the Overview and Scrutiny Panel RESOLVES that the Executive RECOMMEND to Council that delegated authority is given to the Group Manager for Environmental Services in**

consultation with the Portfolio holder, to set the Commercial Waste charges, once all the price modelling factors are known.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 This report sets out proposals for fees and charges for all services for 2017/18. The estimated additional income that could be generated from the review of fees and charges for 2017/18 will range from totals £1,260 to £39,060 depending on the final recommendation on Car Parking fees.

2. Background

2.1 The Council has the power to levy fees and charges for various services and functions it undertakes. Some of these fees are set by statute while for others the Council can make "reasonable" charges for the services it provides. The undertaking of regular reviews of charges allows, where possible, for the Council to recover the cost of officers' time in providing the service.

3. Proposals for Charges 2017/18

3.1 Parks, Open Spaces, Outdoor Sport and Recreation

Appendix A sets out proposals related to Parks, Open Spaces, Outdoor Sport and Recreation. For pitches, courts and greens the proposal is that charges for 2017/18 be retained at current levels as part of the continued strategy to promote sport and outdoor activities. The aim going forward is to prioritise income through marketing and additional use rather than increasing charges. Officers are continuing to pursue options to transfer management of facilities to local clubs and organisations, with some transfers already completed.

The number of events on Council land increase year on year, and it is proposed that charges for 2017/18 remain the same. Community and charity events take place on Council land free of hire charge. It is proposed that an event administration charge introduced in 2014/15, to help offset the staff costs in facilitating the busy event programme, will continue into 2017/18. The opportunity remains for this event administration charge to be waived at the local Ward Member/s discretion upon request. It is also proposed that all other events, memorials and sponsorship remain the same in 2017/18 although the Events Policy is currently under review by officers and Members, and there may be changes to fees as a result in the following year.

The Council continues to offer a play area inspect and insure service to community groups and town and parish councils. Since 2009 this has been set at £100 + VAT, for which the Council annually provides 12 visits by a qualified inspector (Mobile Locality Officers), an annual Allianz engineering report and insurance premium. It is proposed that the charge increases to £130 + VAT for 2017/18 as recent research shows the current fee falls significantly short of the costs associated with delivering this service. It is also proposed the Council conducts a consultation with relevant community groups, parishes and towns regarding the future long term provision of play area inspections and insurance.

3.2 Environmental Health Charges

It is recommended that there are no increases to fees and charges for Environmental Health Services. Appendix B sets out proposals for Environmental Health Charges for 2017/18.

Environmental Health charges were reviewed for 2016/17 to ensure that the Council charges were consistent across SHDC and WDBC and complied with the legislation in terms of the maximum charge being full cost recovery. The charges were changed to reflect this requirement.

A wider review will be required this year of all licensing functions to ensure compliance with the European Services Directive and the implications of the new guidance produced by the Local Government Association covering the implications of the European Court of Justice ruling on the Hemming vs Westminster case.

3.3 Lower Ferry, Dartmouth

Tariffs were reviewed by the Dartmouth Lower Ferry Task and Finish Group and, as a result, increased charges were implemented from 11th July 2016. The work of the group is continuing to look at other cost saving / income generation initiatives, with a revised ferry timetable to be rolled out in April 2017. It is recommended that the impact of this is assessed before further reviews of the tariffs are undertaken.

3.4 Car Parking

Having reviewed the parking tariffs across the District, it would be possible to implement a % total income increase whilst still maintaining the integrity of the Community Led Tariffs policy. However, it will be necessary for the Council to agree a % increase before delegating the detailed tariffs to officers to negotiate with individual communities where necessary, with recommended Pay & Display tariffs being presented to the Executive for consideration. As such, it isn't possible to produce a list of revised tariffs at this stage, although some modelling has been done as an assurance that it is possible to implement a blanket percentage increase without the need to standardise fees across the District.

A 1% increase in total income would generate approximately £18,900

A 2% increase in total income would generate approximately £37,800

Comparable tariffs for benchmarking will be presented at the Overview and Scrutiny meeting as this information is currently being prepared by the BDT team.

3.5 Commercial Waste Charges

The pricing model for Commercial Waste charges requires consideration of budget performance, disposal charges and market factors, but it is considered too early in the financial year for this review to be undertaken. Given the timing of these factors, it is requested that the Group Manager for Environmental Services is given delegated authority in consultation with the Portfolio holder, to set these charges once the outcome of the review is known.

3.6 Planning

A review of the pre-application service (including the fee structure) is to be undertaken in the next six months, as a result of the recommendations arising from the Planning Peer Challenge undertaken in 2016.

The review, which will also cover Planning Performance Agreements and the Duty Planning service, has been subject to a short delay whilst resources have been focussed on performance with regard to determining planning applications and delivery of the Joint Local Plan. In view of this, any changes to charges or projected income cannot be confirmed at this stage.

4. Proposed Way Forward

1) The level of fees and charges will continue to be monitored during the year.

5. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	The Council has the power to introduce, maintain and increase charges under S.19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 or as set out in specific pieces of relevant legislation.
Financial	Y	The estimated additional income that could be generated from the review of fees and charges for 2017/18 ranges from (depending on the percentage option decided for car park charges) £1,260 and £39,060.

Risk	Y	Achieving anticipated income targets in the current financial climate – regular monitoring of corporate income streams and revenue budgets ensures early identification of variances.
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity	Y	Charging helps to support the provision of a wide range of public facilities available to all ages and all abilities.
Safeguarding	Y	Charging assists in supporting the running and management of a range of facilities in appropriate locations for local communities.
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder	Y	Charging helps to maintain the range of facilities.
Health, Safety and Wellbeing	Y	Charges for pitches, courts and greens have not been increased in line with the continued strategy to promote sport and outdoor activities.
Other implications	N	None directly arising from this report.

Supporting Information

Appendix A – 2017/18 Proposed Charges for Outdoor Recreation

Appendix B – 2017/18 Proposed Charges for Environmental Health

Background Papers:

Medium Term Financial Strategy – Executive 15 September 2016