



**South
Cambridgeshire
District Council**

Report To: Environmental Services Portfolio Holder
Lead Officer: Director Health & Environmental Services

14 January 2014

Proposed fees and charges for Health and Environmental Services 2014/15

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to propose fees and charges for Health & Environmental Services for the 2014/15 financial year.
2. This not a key decision. Under the terms of the Council's Constitution it is a decision for the portfolio holder. It was first published in the July 2013 Forward Plan.

Recommendations

3. That the Environmental Services Portfolio Holder confirms the proposed fees and charges set out in Appendix 1.

Reasons for Recommendations

4. Confirming the proposed fees and charges will contribute to the efficient and cost effective delivery of a range of council services that impact directly on people's safety and health.

Background

5. Fees and charges for functions and services undertaken by Health & Environmental Services are reviewed at least annually and recommendations made for the next financial year. These are both statutory and therefore fixed, or discretionary, where there is an opportunity for variation.
6. In deciding on any variation the portfolio holder has previously had regard to a number of factors including council policy, council Aims and Objectives, economic factors e.g. inflation, neighbouring authority charges, market conditions and the need to recover costs.
7. For the purposes of cost recovery, actual costs incurred have been used wherever possible. Elsewhere, estimates have been used based on a combination of hourly rates, time spent etc. Although it has not been possible at this time to identify actual unit costs across all relevant service areas, a programme of cost recovery identification is underway, which will be used in future wherever possible.

Considerations

8. Appendix 1 shows the recommended charges for 2014/15 and includes references to policies relating to the charges. The council's current Medium Term Financial Strategy has assumed an inflationary increase of 2.4%. All discretionary fees have

therefore been increased by this amount, rounded up to the nearest whole pound, where appropriate, except in the following areas:

Street and Layby Traders (Section 2)

9. Layby trader fees have been frozen at 2013/14 levels as the current fees continue to recover the council's costs

Licensing (Section 3)

10. Under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 the fees charged should be set so as to be sufficient to cover in whole or part, the reasonable cost of administration or other costs in connection with the service.
11. The actual full year costs and income from fees are being monitored over a rolling two-year cycle, as previously agreed, in order to ensure they accurately reflect the cost of administering the service. The fees have been adjusted accordingly.
12. This two-year cycle has led to a change in the way we calculate fees for Operator licences to better reflect the service costs and better benchmark with neighbouring authorities
13. 2013 saw the introduction of new legislation in the form of the Scrap Metal dealers Act 2013 which repealed the existing Motor Salvage Act. Fees were set for this by the Portfolio Holder in October 2013 and the cost of administering the service will be reviewed in the same way as for Taxi licensing to ensure they accurately reflect the costs incurred.
14. A higher percentage increase has been applied to Dog Breeding establishments and Dangerous Wild Animal licences as they require a mandatory inspection by SCDC each year

Pest Control

15. This service has now been deleted

Bulky Household Collection Charges (Section 4)

16. The charge for bulky household collections has been frozen at 2013/14 levels. The current level of fees has successfully reduced demand for this service thereby encouraging re-use and recycling, but still provides access to disposal services for those residents who are unable to access the household waste and recycling centres at Milton and Thriplow e.g. those without access to suitable transport.

Provision of Environmental Information – Research & Reporting (Section 6)

17. The fee for the provision of environmental information, which can involve an element of research to gather a range of data on a number of topics (e.g. potential land contamination, location of landfills, records of pollution incidents etc.), has been frozen at 2013/14 levels as the current fee continues to recover the council's costs without inhibiting access to environmental information. As much information on environmental quality as possible is provided on the council's web site so that it is readily available for residents and any interested parties.

Trade Refuse Charges (Sections 8 & 9)

18. 2013/14 saw a slow improvement on the previous year. However we still experienced a number of customers closing due to the current economic environment. Landfill tax will rise in April by another £8 per tonne to £80 per tonne. However the County Council maintained the MTB processing cost resulting in an overall disposal charge for 2014/15 of £95 per tonne. The trade service continues to be offered at zero V.A.T. which provides an advantage against our private sector competitors.
19. The trade waste recycling service that was introduced in the autumn of 2011 continues to be popular and 22% of trade waste this council collects is being recycled.
20. The fees and charges for the next financial year set out in Appendix 1 will produce an income to the council that will contribute to the efficient and cost effective delivery of a range of council services that impact directly on people's safety and health.

Conclusion/Summary

21. In setting the proposed level of discretionary fees and charges a number of factors have been taken into account, including council policy, council Aims and Objectives, economic factors e.g. inflation, neighbouring authority charges, market conditions and the need to recover costs.
22. In recognition of these factors the many of the discretionary fees and charges have been subject to a below inflation increase. A small number of charges have however been either frozen or increased by a greater amount in response to market conditions and additional cost pressures.

Options

23. The Portfolio Holder has the option to:
 - (a) Accept the charges detailed in Appendix 1
 - (b) Reject the charges detailed in Appendix 1
 - (c) Amend the discretionary fees and charges detailed in Appendix 1. There is no ability to amend statutory fees

Implications

24. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk management, equality and diversity, climate change, community safety and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered: -

Financial

25. The recommendation in this report will result in a like for like increase in income.

Risk Management

26. Regular performance and financial monitoring of services will be undertaken.

Equality and Diversity

27. A partial Equality Impact Assessment was completed with no adverse impacts identified.

Consultation responses (including from the Youth Council)

28. A number of adjoining Local Authorities have been consulted for comparative and consistency purposes.

Effect on Strategic Aims

29. Confirming the proposed fees and charges will contribute to the efficient and cost effective delivery of a range of council services that impact directly on people's safety and health, so contributing to the achievement of the council's Strategic Aims.

Background Papers

No background papers were relied upon in the writing of this report.

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