

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Environmental Services Portfolio Holder
AUTHOR/S: Director Health & Environmental Services

28 January 2016

PROPOSED FEES AND CHARGES FOR HEALTH & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES 2016/17

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to propose fees and charges for Health & Environmental Services for the 2016/17 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 Forward Plan.

Recommendations

3. That the Environmental Services Portfolio Holder confirms the proposed fees and charges set out in Appendix 1.
4. The fees set for commercial Trade Waste are not publicised due to commercial sensitivity

Reasons for Recommendations

5. 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.
6. Fees charged by competitors for trade waste are not readily available, therefore, by publicising our fees and charges for trade waste we allow an advantage to commercial competitors.

Background

7. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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 formula has been identified and applied

for our Primary Authority and Business Hub activities and will be used across other areas as required. Where the charging for EH&L services permit. A programme of cost recovery identification is underway, focusing at present on food & health & safety advice, housing enforcement and licensing advice which will be used in future wherever possible.

Considerations

10. Appendix 1 shows the recommended charges for 2016/17 and includes references to policies relating to the charges. The council's current Medium Term Financial Strategy has assumed an inflationary increase of 1.4%. 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)

11. Layby trader fees have been frozen at 2015/16 levels as the current fees continue to recover the council's costs

Licensing (Section 3)

12. 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.
13. 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.
14. During 2014 new legislation was introduced in the form of Mobile Homes Act 2013 permitting fees to be set. These fees have now been assessed to reflect the cost of administering the service, in particular for 2016/17 it has been identified that the cost for single occupancy requires significantly less involvement in the form of assessment and therefore the fee has been reduced accordingly. All fees will be reviewed annually using the same format as Taxi Licensing
15. During 2015 an amendment to taxi legislation now requires Private Hire Operators to be offered a 5yr licence instead of a 1yr licence. A fee has been set for both 1 & 5yr licences to assist the trade generally.
16. A higher percentage increase has been applied to Animal licenses as they have shown a small deficit over recent years and the aim is to cover the cost of the service by the fees charged.

Bulky Household Collection Charges (Section 4)

17. The charge for bulky household collections has been frozen at 2015/16 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)

18. 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 2015/16 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)

19. 2015/16 saw an improvement on the previous year and a number of changes were introduced to improve efficiency and standard of service across all activities that has resulted in an increase in income by more than 10% despite the current economic climate. At the time of writing this report it is expected that landfill tax will rise again in 2016 by from £82.60 to £84.40 per tonne. However the County Council maintained the MTB processing cost resulting in an overall disposal charge for 2016/17 of approximately £95 per tonne. The trade service continues to be offered at zero V.A.T for businesses that are unable to reclaim it..
20. In order to further promote the Trade refuse service it is recommended that the recycling charges are frozen for the period 2016/17 to further encourage customers to minimise their residual waste and maximise recycling.
21. Above percentage increases have been introduced in respect of clinical waste and sack collections to better reflect the true cost of administering the service.

Options

22. 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

23. 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.

24.

Financial	The recommendation will result in a like for like increase in income
Legal	None identified at this time
Staffing	None identified at this time
Risk Management	Regular performance and financial monitoring of services
Equality and Diversity	None identified at this time
Equality Impact Assessment completed	Yes Partial EQIA completed. No adverse impacts identified
Climate Change	None identified at this time

Consultations

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

Effect on Strategic Aims

26. 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.

Conclusions / Summary

27. 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.
28. 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.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

None

Contact Officer: Myles Bebbington – Head of Service Env Health & Licensing
Telephone: (01954) 713132