

## Summary Sheet

### Council Report

Cabinet/Commissioners Decision Making Meeting – 14<sup>th</sup> March 2016

Cabinet Members – Councillor Yasseen; Councillor Lelliott; Councillor Sims

### Title

Regeneration and Environment Directorate – Fees and Charges 2016-17

### Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No

### Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Caroline Bruce

### Report Author(s)

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### Ward(s) Affected

All

### Summary

To consider proposed fees and charges for the Regeneration and Environment Directorate for 2016/17

### Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to:

1. Approve the proposed fees and charges for the Planning Service as set out in Appendix 1.
2. Approve the proposed fees and charges for Leisure and Green Spaces as set out in Appendix 2.
3. Approve the proposed fees and charges for Highways Services as set out in Appendix 3.
4. Approve the proposed Building Regulation charges as set out in Appendix 4.
5. Approve the proposed Parking Services charges as set out in Appendix 5.
6. Approve the proposed Community Protection charges as set out in Appendix 6.
7. Approve the proposed Library, Customer Services, Theatre Services and Heritage Service charges as set out in Appendix 7.

**List of Appendices Included**

Appendix 1 – Planning Service - Schedule of Development Management Enquiry Fees

Appendix 2 – Leisure and Green Spaces Fees & Charges

Appendix 3 – Highways Services Fees & Charges

Appendix 4 – Building Regulation Charges

Appendix 5 – Parking Services Charges

Appendix 6 – Community Protection Charges

Appendix 7 – Library, Customer Services, Theatre Services and Heritage Services Charges

**Background Papers**

None

**Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**

None

**Council Approval Required**

No

**Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

## **Title : Regeneration and Environment Directorate – Fees and Charges 2016-17**

### **1. Recommendations**

Cabinet is asked to:

- 1. Approve the proposed fees and charges for the Planning Service as set out in Appendix 1.**
- 2. Approve the proposed fees and charges for Leisure and Green Spaces as set out in Appendix 2.**
- 3. Approve the proposed fees and charges for Highways Services as set out in Appendix 3.**
- 4. Approve the proposed Building Regulation charges as set out in Appendix 4.**
- 5. Approve the proposed Parking Services charges as set out in Appendix 5.**
- 6. Approve the proposed Community Protection charges as set out in Appendix 6.**
- 7. Approve the proposed Library, Customer Services, Theatre Services and Heritage Service charges as set out in Appendix 7.**

### **2. Background**

2.1 Section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003 provides powers for Local Authorities in England to make charges for discretionary services. In addition, some services have a prescribed fee structure, where Government set the fee level annually.

2.2 As part of the development of the Council's 2016/17 Revenue Budget, all services within the Regeneration and Environment Directorate have undertaken a review of their existing fees and charges. The review has taken account of the Council's Fees and Charges policy, the aim of which is to provide a framework for a consistent approach in setting, monitoring and reviewing fees and charges across the Council. The policy ensures that fees and charges support Council priorities and objectives and are set at a level that maximises income generation where it is appropriate to do so.

2.3 In recommending the appropriate fees and charges, consideration has been given to:-

- Current levels of business and associated income
- Customer feedback
- The cost of implementing any changes
- Changes in costs of managing and delivering each service
- The likely impact of any price increase in the demand for each service
- Proposed changes in core revenue support to the service
- Current review of services and associated consultation

2.4 Development of income generating activity is becoming an increasingly vital part of the Council's response to budget savings, with income raised re-invested in delivering public services. As Central Government phases out its revenue grant support to local authorities, all councils will need to consider whether they will maximise income generation opportunities in the

future, in order to ensure that we can continue to deliver key services to the public.

### **3. Key Issues**

- 3.1 The annual review of fees and charges is an important part of the budget process, as it has a direct impact on the amount of income received by services. Income from fees and charges is key to ensuring that the level of resources are available to maintain service delivery, at a time of pressure on core revenue budgets.
- 3.2 The proposed fees and charges form part of the Council's Revenue Budget agreed by Full Council at the meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2016 and take account of budget savings proposals included in the Council's Revenue Budget Setting Report to this meeting. The charges for each service within EDS are presented in Appendices 1 – 7. Within the proposed fees and charges, the following changes are specifically highlighted.
- 3.3 Planning Service – Development Management Enquiry Fees (Appendix 1). Historically, the Service has only charged for pre-application advice for Major developments (a charge of £500 or £800 dependant on the scale of the proposal). However, the Planning Service Health check review highlighted an opportunity to charge for officer time on all pre-application advice, not just major developments. The proposed fees set out in Appendix 1 have been calculated using a time monitoring exercise, to ensure that they are at cost recovery levels and they have been compared to surrounding Local Authority charges to ensure they are consistent.
- 3.4 Leisure and Green Spaces (Appendix 2) - In most cases, proposed fees and charges have been increased by at least the rate of inflation and are applied for the 2016/17 financial year, there are however several exceptions to this:
  - There is a proposal to introduce new charges for Wedding Packages in Clifton Park. This service has been under development for several months in response to growing demand, following the relocation of wedding ceremonies from the Town Hall to Clifton Park Museum. Rates charged by other venues in the area have been reviewed, and it is believed that the proposed charges at Clifton Park will be competitive, whilst ensuring that all necessary costs are covered. Approval is sought to set such charges not only for 2016/17, but also for 2017/18. This is because bookings for weddings may be received many months in advance.
  - Changes to the car parking tariff at Clifton Park are proposed, based on the fact that demand rises very steeply over the summer holiday period. A new higher summer rate would apply from 16<sup>th</sup> July to 4<sup>th</sup> September, and would be in line with other town centre car park charges at that time of year. Car park charges for the remainder of the year would only increase by 5 pence per hour.
  - Allotment rents have customarily been set one year in advance. This allows letters to be sent to tenants giving them 12 months' notice of any

increase. Therefore, the rents recommended by this report are for 2017-18.

3.5 Highways Services (Appendix 3) - As part of the Council's savings proposals, the Inspection and Enforcement Team is proposing to generate an additional £20,000 from Highways Services over the 3-year period to March 2019. The proposed increases from April 2016 are within the range of fees currently made by the local authorities across the Yorkshire region. It is proposed to increase fees from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016, and then again from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018, this follows the pattern of increases that the Council has previously adopted. However, should benchmarking show that other local authorities have subsequently increased their charges, a further review will take place this autumn.

3.6 Building Regulation Charges (Appendix 4) - There have been no changes to core Building Control Fees since April 2014, as the service is in competition with the private sector, so needs to be mindful of its positioning in the market place. However, there have been changes to Regularisation Inspections fees, to better reflect the officer time and resources spent on these.

3.7 Parking Services Charges (Appendix 5) - The All Service Review identified changes to the town centre parking tariffs which could generate extra income. The proposed 2016/17 prices are based upon the perceived maximum price increases, when considering the tariffs being offered by local private competitors and neighbouring Local Authorities and are projected to generate about £130k in additional income. Where reductions are being proposed, information from Doncaster MBC, where similar reductions have been introduced, have indicated that existing income levels can be maintained. As a result the following changes are proposed:

- Increase of 50 pence for on-street parking charges for all periods up to and including 120 minutes.
- Increase of 30 pence for off-street parking charges for 120 minutes.
- Reduction of 80 pence for off-street parking charges for 240 minutes.
- Reduction of £3 for all day off-street parking charges.

3.8 Community Protection Charges (Appendix 6) – Changes to the Housing Licensing fee structure have been made following guidance issued by the Local Government Association in 2015, which now requires local authorities to re-structure how it charges for some services. This includes licences issued under the Housing Act 2004. The guidance now requires the licence fee to be split – (i) a fee for assessing the application and (ii) a separate fee, if a licence is granted, for resultant compliance monitoring and administration of the licence.

With regard to Consultation Fees, the fee in previous years had been £61 for the first hour of work, and then an hourly rate of £26 thereafter. Following LGA guidance and internal guidance on charging for services, the charge levied in 2016/17 will be the appropriate hourly rate for the officer carrying out the work. Consequently, the costs charged are variable

on the type, extent and time taken.

- 3.9 Library, Customer Services, Theatre Services and Heritage Services (Appendix 7) - With regards to Library and Customer Services, it is proposed that there are no changes to the fees and charges agreed and implemented in April 2015, pending consultation on the wider service offer and refresh of the Library Strategy. Any changes would be incorporated into the proposals for future service delivery to be considered during July 2016.

With regards to Theatre Services, the fees and charges only apply to theatre hirers. The negotiation of professional contracts remains outside the scope of these charges and will continue to be negotiated by Theatre management.

Terms and conditions for Registration Services apply fees for celebratory services, for which the authority has discretionary powers in relation to fees and charges. Statutory fees are outside the scope of this proposal. It is proposed that ceremony cancellation fees are introduced in order to recover costs incurred by the Service. Non statutory ceremony fees which came into effect on the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2015 are not scheduled for review prior to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017.

- 3.10 Markets – A fees and charges report will be brought to the 11<sup>th</sup> April Cabinet/Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting for approval.

#### **4. Options considered and recommended proposal**

4.1 In each case consideration has been given to the following options:-

- Discontinuation of the charge, for example where the level of business has fallen to the point where the cost of collecting charges exceeds the potential income collectable.
- Reducing or freezing charges, for example where an increase is likely to make the offer uncompetitive and lead to a loss of business.
- A small percentage increase, where this reflects increasing costs and, in some cases, an opportunity to generate sufficient income to gradually reduce net running costs.
- An increase well above the rate of inflation, for example where demand for a service is very high, and comparison with similar offers elsewhere suggests charges are lower than average.
- Introduction of a new charge, either where a new service has been introduced, or customer feedback suggests the need for a change in the way we charge for a service.

#### **5. Consultation**

- 5.1 The proposed fees and charges have been developed as part of the 2016/17 Revenue Budget proposals, in conjunction with Members and Commissioners.

5.2 Customer Surveys are undertaken with service users. These provide insight into numerous aspects of services, and any comments about value for money can be taken into account in setting next year's fees and charges.

5.3 It is proposed to review fees and charges for Library and Customer Services as part of the wider service consultation during 2016.

5.4 With regard to Highways fees and charges, a review has been carried out through the Yorkshire Joint Authorities Group to benchmark the fees for providing highway and street works licences.

## **6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

6.1 Most proposed fees and charges will take effect on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016. However, the proposed charges for Theatre Services would start on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2016 in line with the programming of the Civic Theatre.

6.2 Managers of the relevant facilities and services within the appropriate Services will be responsible for the implementation of the recommended fees and charges.

## **7. Financial and Procurement Implications**

7.1 The proposed increases are designed to generate the levels of income required to operate services within available budgets. Where changes are expected to increase the overall level of income, then this will be taken into account in the profiling of 2016-17 budgets.

7.2 With regards to Theatre Services, for non – vat registered organisations, the fees and charges shown are **inclusive** of VAT (where applicable). For VAT registered organisations, the fees and charges shown are **exclusive** of VAT.

7.3 The proposal has no procurement implications.

## **8. Legal Implications**

8.1 Both the Library Service and Archives and Local Studies Service are statutory.

8.2 The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 makes it the duty of every library authority to provide a “comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof”.

8.3 Rotherham Archives and Local Studies is the appointed place of deposit for Rotherham's public records.

8.4 Legal Services have approved the proposed Registration Services terms and conditions, which set out the cancellation fees and refund policy for ceremonies.

8.5 The Council controls certain activities taking place on the highway through licence agreements under The Highways Act 1980 and under the New Road and Street Works Act 1991.

## **9. Human Resources Implications**

9.1 This report has no human resources implications

## **10. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

10.1 Discounted rates are available to children, young people and Rothercard holders for a range of services.

## **11 Equalities and Human Rights Implications**

11.1 This report has no equalities or human rights implications.

## **12. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates**

12.1 Where appropriate, any implications have been discussed with partners e.g. delivery of services within Clifton Park and Museum.

## **13. Risks and Mitigation**

13.1 Any cost increase can have an adverse impact on levels of business, and this can make it difficult to meet income targets.

13.2 Service Managers will continue to monitor usage and customer feedback as appropriate, and take this into consideration in future reviews of fees and charges.

## **14. Accountable Officer(s)**

14.1 Approvals Obtained from:- Pete Hudson

Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services:-

Director of Legal Services:- Stuart Fletcher

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