

REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE MEETING OF 15 JANUARY 2018

Meeting: Executive
Date: 15 January 2018
Subject: Corporate Charging Policy & Fees and Charges 2018/19
Report of: Kirsty Cowell, Finance Services Manager
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Hallam, Finance and Assets
Status: For Recommendation to Council
Relevant Ward(s): All

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To refer the Corporate Charging Policy to Council for approval to ensure that the Council has in place a framework to support and guide a practical approach to fees and charges, and to provide a consistent approach.
- 1.2 To consider and recommend fees and charges for 2018/19 to Council for approval.

2 Recommendations:

- 2.1 To refer the Corporate Charging Policy set out at Appendix A to Council for approval
- 2.2 To recommend to Council that delegated authority is given to the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Assets to make future changes to the policy in line with the approved MTFS.
- 2.3 To refer the Fees and Charges for 2018/19 set out at Appendix C to Council for approval.
- 2.4 To recommend to Council that delegated authority is given to the S151 Officer in consultation with the Finance and Assets Portfolio Holder to agree new fees and charges during the year and agree changes to fees and charges where required within the financial year.
- 2.5 Recommend to Council to agree the delegation at 2.4 to remain in place for future years.

3 Summary of Reasons for the Recommendations

- 3.1 To provide a policy framework to support and guide the Council's approach to fees and charges setting.
- 3.2 In the context of ongoing reductions in funding it is important, for the Council to consider its calculations of fees and charges on a consistent basis to support the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).
- 3.3 To discuss the fees and charges and ensure they are set prior to the start of the next financial year.

4 Key Facts

- 4.1 During 2016/17 Internal audit completed a review of fees and charges. The overall findings on the review was rated as "Sufficient Assurance", this is the second highest rating available. Further information is available in the internal audit report.
- 4.2 One of the recommendations was to strengthen the existing framework by developing a clear corporate charging policy – this report addresses this recommendation.
- 4.3 The overall governance framework is currently based on a number of broad principles set out in the medium term financial strategy and operating model, with a recognition and commitment to adopting a more commercial approach to income generation.
- 4.4 The Council levies fees and charges for a wide range of services. The fees & charges provides for inflation at 1% unless they are set nationally or are set on a full cost recovery basis. The proposed fees and charges for 2018/19 are attached at Appendix C.

5 Legal Issues

- 5.1 There are no direct legal issues arising from this report.

6 Resource Issues

- 6.1 There are no direct resource implications arising from this report, as this is a policy framework.
- 6.2 The impact of changes to fees and charges for 2018/19 has been incorporated into the revenue general fund budget for 2018/19.

7 Equality Analysis Implications/Outcomes

- 7.1 The Equality Analysis Statement is attached at Appendix B.

7.2 There is no evidence that this policy will have a disproportionately negative impact on any of the protected equality groups, therefore a full Equality Analysis has not been completed.

7.3 Services are required under this policy to complete an Equality Analysis for each new fee or charge, and these should be reviewed annually when the fee or charge is reviewed.

8. Risk Management Implications

8.1 The Corporate Charging Policy is being introduced to strengthen the existing framework included in the MTFs, and to provide transparency and mitigate risks in calculating and setting fees and charges for the Council.

9 Consultation

9.1 Comments were requested on the draft policy from service managers and the equality officer.

9.2 No consultation has been undertaken with service users on the policy as this is a policy framework. Consultation with service users in relation to fees and charges is completed by the service or as part of the annual budget setting process.

10. Options

10.1 The Council is not required to adopt a Corporate Charging Policy but to do so would ensure that the Council had in place a robust and consistent approach to the setting of fees and charges and would be in line with audit recommendations.

11 Background Papers

11.1 Governance and Audit committee 8 March 2017; Internal Audit – progress and performance update.

Previous report(s): N/A

Information Issued Under Sensitive Issue Procedure: ~~Y~~/N

Ward Members Notified: ~~Y~~/N

Appendices:

A. Corporate Charging Policy

B. Equality Analysis Statement

C. Fees and Charges 2018/19