

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT

**REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT
AND REGULATORY SERVICES**

Report prepared by: Sheila Davison and Steve Wilcock

Date Issued: 9 September 2010

1. FEES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES 2010/2011

1.1 Issue for Decision

- 1.1.1 To consider proposed increase in fees for chargeable services provided by the Environmental Health Section for the financial year 2010/2011.

1.2 Recommendation of the Assistant Director of Environmental Services

That the Cabinet Member for Environment agrees revised fees for the financial year 2010/2011 for chargeable services provided by the Environmental Health Section as detailed in the body of the report.

1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

- 1.3.1 The Environmental Health Section currently provides some services for which a charge is made. These charges have not been increased for a number of years. They are as detailed below:

- Level 2 food hygiene courses, currently £50 plus VAT;
- Voluntary surrender of unsound food, currently £53 for certificate and 1 hour officer time;
- Food export certificates, currently £51;
- Contaminated land search fees, currently £25 per hour up to a maximum of 3 hours; and
- Fees in connection with the service provided by MBC Pollution team on behalf of the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (CEH) in maintaining heavy metal monitoring equipment at the Detling Air Quality monitoring station – currently £780 as 2 payments of £390 at six-monthly intervals.

- 1.3.2 The fees currently charged have been identified as being amongst the lowest in Kent. Whilst some of these services are only used by businesses on a very occasional basis and as such cannot be seen as a source of income, it is felt that appropriate to bring the fees more in line with other Kent authorities. The table in Appendix 1 shows fees comparisons across Kent Authorities.

1.3.3 The need to review contaminated land fees was also raised within a recent audit report.

1.3.4 The fees as recommended are in line with the charges applied by Ashford Borough Council which is considered a sensible approach in the context of the shared service arrangements.

1.3.5 The fees proposed are as follows:

- Level 2 food hygiene courses, increase to £59 plus VAT;
- Voluntary surrender of unsound food, increase to £70 for certificate plus £75 per hour officer time;
- Food export certificates £116;
- Contaminated land search fee of £60 (based on 2 hours work);
- and
- Heavy metal monitoring annual fee of £1300 paid monthly, or as two six-monthly payments of £650.

1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

1.4.1 The fees could be left at current levels. This is not recommended as it is felt that the current fees do not accurately reflect the service costs and as the Council is providing a shared service with Ashford this would also result in a consistent set of fees across both boroughs.

1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives

1.5.1 The process of reviewing fees is essential to ensure that operational costs are recovered and that Council budgetary objectives are met.

1.6 Risk Management

1.6.1 There is a risk that service users could object to the increases. The fees, however, relate to non statutory services and users are not required to take up these services. Neither is the Council required to offer these services.

1.6.2 There is a risk that income could be reduced as a result of services not being requested. Careful budget monitoring will enable us to determine if this happen and if necessary the fees could be further revised. The financial risk is not considered to be significant.

1.6.3 The Council will need to ensure that all the appropriate marketing material and the website is updated to ensure that customers are aware of the latest costs.

1.7 Other Implications

1.7.1

1. Financial
2. Staffing
3. Legal
4. Equality Impact Needs Assessment
5. Environmental/Sustainable Development
6. Community Safety
7. Human Rights Act
8. Procurement
9. Asset Management

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1.7.2 Whilst the charges for the services specified cannot be regarded as income generators, it is considered that they should be increased to be more in line with other Kent authorities.

1.8 Background Documents

None

NO REPORT WILL BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT THIS BOX BEING COMPLETED

Is this a Key Decision? Yes ☒ No ☐

If yes, when did it appear in the Forward Plan? _____

Is this an Urgent Key Decision? Yes ☐ No ☒

Reason for Urgency

How to Comment

Should you have any comments on the issue that is being considered please contact either the relevant Officer or the Member of the Executive who will be taking the decision.

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