

# Policy & Resources Committee    22 November 2017

## Charging Policy

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Policy & Resources Committee
<b>Lead Head of Service/Lead Director</b>	Mark Green, Director of Finance & Business Improvement
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Ellie Dunnet, Head of Finance
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	All

### Executive Summary

This report introduces a proposed policy on charging for services to replace the existing Fees and Charges policy.

### **This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:**

That the updated Charging Policy, attached at Appendix 1, is approved.

### Timetable

<b><i>Meeting</i></b>	<b><i>Date</i></b>
Corporate Leadership Team	17 <sup>th</sup> October 2017
Policy & Resources Committee	22 <sup>nd</sup> November 2017

# Charging Policy

## 1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 It is appropriate to update the Council's charging policy to reflect changes since the original policy was adopted, for example in the Council's governance arrangements, and to reflect the Council's increased focus on income generation. A draft updated Charging Policy is accordingly attached at Appendix 1 to this report. The proposed policy aims to ensure that charges made by the Council are set at an appropriate level which supports the delivery of strategic objectives and value for money.
  - 1.2 The purpose of the policy is to ensure that a robust and coherent approach is taken to setting fees and charges.
  - 1.3 Fees and charges will continue to be reviewed annually and approved by service committees as part of the medium term financial planning process in line with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules. The new policy also proposes that Policy and Resources committee oversees this process by assessing the overall impact of all proposed changes, and considering the potential impact on customers.
- 

## 2. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Agree the proposed Charging Policy attached at Appendix 1 to this report. This option is recommended for the reasons outlined in section 3 below.
  - 2.2 Propose an alternative version of the policy. The proposed policy seeks to ensure that the Council is able to deliver value for money through maximising cost recovery for discretionary services, as far as it is appropriate to do so.
  - 2.3 Do nothing. This option is not recommended as the absence of a clear framework for setting fees and charges could lead to a lack of transparency and poor decision making in setting charges, which would be to the detriment of the Council's financial position and ability to deliver its strategic priorities.
- 

## 3. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The preferred option is to adopt the proposed policy on charging attached at Appendix I to this report, as outlined at 2.1 above. Income generated through fees and charges represents an important source of funding to the council, particularly in light of reductions in central government funding and constraints on the Council's ability to raise Council Tax in recent years.
- 3.2 The existence of a policy on setting discretionary fees and charges is an important aspect of ensuring that charges are set at an appropriate level and determined in a manner which is consistent, transparent and enables fair access to the service.

3.3 The proposed policy seeks to ensure that a comprehensive approach is taken to charging for services, in order to achieve the correct balance between strategic objectives and income generation. It also allows for concessions to be introduced for certain user groups in order to encourage or facilitate access to a service, promote fair and equal access to services and ensure that the existence of the charge does not put any particular group at a disadvantage.

---

#### **4. RISK**

4.1 The risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.

---

#### **5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK**

5.1 No formal consultation has been undertaken.

---

#### **6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

6.1 Fees and charges for 2018/19 onwards will be reviewed, and proposals will be brought to service committees in December and January.

---

#### **7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>	<b>Sign-off</b>
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	Accepting the recommendations will improve the Council's ability to achieve its corporate priorities. We set out the reasons other choices will be less effective in section 2.	Head of Finance
<b>Risk Management</b>	Covered in section 4.	Head of Finance
<b>Financial</b>	Financial implications are set out within the body of the report.	Head of Finance
<b>Staffing</b>	No implications have been	Head of Finance

	identified.	
<b>Legal</b>	The policy relates to fees and charges which are permissible under the wider general powers to provide and charge for "Discretionary Services" included within the Local Government Act 2003 and Localism Act 2011. It does not cover services for which the council is prohibited from charging.	Interim Deputy Head of Legal Partnership
<b>Privacy and Data Protection</b>	No implications have been identified.	Interim Deputy Head of Legal Partnership
<b>Equalities</b>	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment. However, the introduction of any new fee or charge would require an equalities impact assessment to be completed and this is reflected in the policy.	Equalities and Corporate Policy Officer
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	No implications have been identified.	[Head of Service or Manager]
<b>Procurement</b>	No implications have been identified.	[Head of Service & Section 151 Officer]

## 8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix 1: Charging Policy

---

## 9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None