

Somerset West and Taunton

Shadow Executive – 6 December 2018

Fees and Charges 2019/20

This matter is the responsibility of the Leader of the Council, Councillor John Williams

Report Author: Andy Stark, Interim Financial Services Manager and Deputy S151 Officer

1. Executive Summary

1.1 This report sets out the proposed fees and charges that are proposed to be applied to services for the first time for the new council for 2019/20. In determination of these fees and charges the following principles have been applied:-

- i) Harmonisation of fees when it has been practical to do so
- ii) Recovery of costs
- iii) Setting of fees in line with statutory guidance

1.2 In the setting of these fees and charges, a pragmatic approach has been taken for the first year of the new council. A detailed review will be undertaken once the new operating model is embedded and fully in place.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Shadow Executive recommends that Shadow Council approves the proposed Fees and Charges for 2019/20.

3. Risk Assessment

Risk Matrix

Description	Likelihood	Impact	Overall
Fees and Charges are not set at an appropriate level resulting in costs not being recovered and income targets not achieved	3	4	12
<i>Fees and Charges are reviewed at least annually to ensure they meet statutory and financial requirements in line with the financial strategy of the Council</i>	1	4	4

Risk Scoring Matrix

Likelihood	5	Almost Certain	Low (5)	Medium (10)	High (15)	Very High (20)	Very High (25)
	4	Likely	Low (4)	Medium (8)	Medium (12)	High (16)	Very High (20)
	3	Possible	Low (3)	Low (6)	Medium (9)	Medium (12)	High (15)
	2	Unlikely	Low (2)	Low (4)	Low (6)	Medium (8)	Medium (10)
	1	Rare	Low (1)	Low (2)	Low (3)	Low (4)	Low (5)
			1	2	3	4	5
			Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
Impact							

Likelihood of risk occurring	Indicator	Description (chance of occurrence)
1. Very Unlikely	May occur in exceptional circumstances	< 10%
2. Slight	Is unlikely to, but could occur at some time	10 – 25%
3. Feasible	Fairly likely to occur at same time	25 – 50%
4. Likely	Likely to occur within the next 1-2 years, or occurs occasionally	50 – 75%
5. Very Likely	Regular occurrence (daily / weekly / monthly)	> 75%

4. Background

4.1 Like its predecessor Councils, Somerset West and Taunton will charge the public for some services that they use. Some of these charges are set by Central Government.

The services that SWT proposes to charge for and are covered by this report are:

- Bereavement Services
- Waste Services
- Land Charges
- Housing
- Licensing
- Planning
- Environmental Health
- Promotional Rotunda Units
- Deane Helpline
- Freedom of Information Enquiries
- Court Fees (Council Tax and Business Rates)

- Open spaces
- Harbours
- Car Parks

4.2 Fees and charges generate in the region of £12m per annum and provide significant funding support to the provision of those services that are charged for. Charges are set broadly within the framework of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and in accordance with legislative requirements.

4.3 Appended to this report are appendices that contain the detailed proposed charges for each service. These incorporate the same service areas currently charged by Taunton Deane and West Somerset Councils. The appendices include the legislation that allows Somerset West & Taunton Council to charge for the service in question, confirms if the charges can only be what it costs to provide the service or can be another charge, or if the charge is set by Central Government. This will give Councillors reassurance that the charges being proposed are legally set.

5. Proposed Increases for 2019/20

5.1 Those services proposing an increase to charges for 2019/20 include:

Cemeteries and Crematorium;
Waste;
Housing Services;
Land Charges;
Pest Control;
Deane Helpline;
Harbours;
Licensing

5.2 Due to a rebasing of the associated costs, Court Fees are proposed to be reduced for 2019/20.

6. Detailed Proposals

6.1 Appended to this report are the detailed proposed charges for each service as outlined below:-

Cemeteries and Crematoria	Appendix A
Waste Services	Appendix B
Land Charges	Appendix C
Housing Services	Appendix D
Licensing	Appendix E
Planning	Appendix F
Environmental Health	Appendix G
Promotional 'Rotunda' units	Appendix H
Deane Helpline	Appendix I
Freedom of Information	Appendix J
Court Fees	Appendix K

Harbours
Parking
Open Spaces

Appendix L
Appendix M
Appendix N

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 Fees and charges income contributes to the overall costs of running the organisation. The level of fees and charges impact directly on the Council's budget and detailed analysis is required to understand the impact of price increases and decreases on service budgets as a whole. It is important that fee levels comply with statutory requirements and where there are no statutory levels in place, that they are reasonable, affordable and proportionate to the service costs.
- 7.2 In order to set appropriate fees, services will need to analyse trends and understand how fee levels influence their customers. An understanding of risks associated with the fee levels is paramount in setting appropriate levels which will generate a value which can be confidently relied upon for budget setting purposes. Any unforeseen loss of income will impact on the Council's resources and may lead to overspends and affect service delivery.
- 7.3 The overall budgetary impact of the various proposals are summarised below. **Only those services that have changed their fees have been included.** There are decreases for Court Fees and Land Charges. This shows that the changes to Fees & Charges should contribute an additional £64k to the General Fund and £41K to the HRA, compared to initial single Medium Term Financial Plan estimates for the new council.

Service Area	Appendix	GF £000	HRA £000	Total £000
Crematoria and Cemeteries	A	37		37
Waste	B	22		22
Housing Services	D		41	41
Environmental Health-Pest Control	G	4		4
Deane Helpline	H	18		18
Court Fees	K	(17)		(17)
TOTAL		64	41	105

8 NOTES ON PARTICULAR FEES

Crematoria and Cemeteries

- 8.1 The income increase from this is expected to be £57k. The service is proposing to spend £20k on tree planting and inspection and hardstanding repair and replacement to the roads and pathways. (Appendix A)

Housing Services

- 8.2 In accordance with the 30 year Housing Business Plan, it is proposed to increase housing (non-rent) fees and charges by applying Retail Price Index (RPI) inflation as at September 2018 (3.3%), with some exceptions. (Appendix D)

Licensing

- 8.3 Although the fees in some areas have increased any surplus or deficit should be dealt with across a rolling three years such that there is full cost recovery and an overall balanced position. (Appendix E)

Promotional Rotunda

- 8.4 The charges for this discretionary service have been reviewed to ensure that costs are covered and that we are reflecting a "market rate". With this in mind there is no increase in the charges. (Appendix H)

Court Fees

- 8.5 The Fees in this area have been reviewed following the High Court Case referred to in Appendix K. We have taken the view that a lower charge would be more appropriate for Somerset West and Taunton Council and representative of the costs involved. This will have a negative impact on the MTFP.

Deane Helpline

- 8.6 The proposal is to increase charges to private customers by 2.2% as referred to in Appendix I. The installation charge is increased to £40 from £35. Welfare calls are to be charged at 86p per call. There will be no increase to the charge for HRA tenants. GSM lifeline units will increase by £1.13 per week. A new service package will be introduced to accommodate the standard lifeline provision and a customer's choice of 2 telecare peripheral at £8.50per week.

9 Links to Corporate Aims / Priorities

- 9.1 The financial performance of the Council underpins the delivery of corporate priorities and therefore all Corporate Aims.

10 Finance / Resource Implications

- 10.1 Contained within the body of the report

11. Legal Comments

- 11.1 The legislation that allows Somerset West and Taunton Council to charge are included within the appendices.

12 Environmental Impact Implications

12.1 None for the purpose of this report.

13 Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications

13.1 None for the purpose of this report.

14 Equality and Diversity Implications

14.1 Attached as appropriate.

15 Social Value Implications

15.1 None for the purpose of this report.

16 Partnership Implications

16.1 None for the purpose of this report.

17 Health and Wellbeing Implications

17.1 None for the purpose of this report

18 Asset Management Implications

18.1 None for the purpose of this report.

19 Consultation Implications

19.1 None for the purpose of this report.

Democratic Path:

- **Shadow Scrutiny – Yes**
- **Shadow Executive – Yes**
- **Shadow Full Council – Yes**

Reporting Frequency: Annually

List of Appendices

Appendix A	Cemeteries and Crematorium
Appendix B	Waste Services

Appendix C	Land Charges
Appendix D	Housing Services
Appendix E Appendix E1	Licensing
Appendix F Appendix F1	Planning
Appendix G	Environmental Health
Appendix H	Promotional 'Rotunda' units
Appendix I	Deane Helpline
Appendix J	Freedom Of Information
Appendix K	Court Fees
Appendix L	Parking
Appendix M	Harbours
Appendix N	Open Spaces

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