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| Report To: | CABINET | Date: | 26th JANUARY 2021 |
| Heading: | PROPOSED FEES AND CHARGES 2021/22 | | |
| Portfolio Holder: | COUNCILLOR RACHEL MADDEN – PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR FINANCE AND RESOURCES | | |
| Ward/s: | ALL WARDS | | |
| Key Decision: | YES | | |
| Subject to Call-In: | YES | | |

Purpose of Report

Each year the Council reviews its Fees and Charges as part of setting its Annual Budget. In doing so it considers levels of service demand, inflation and how Fees and Charges in Ashfield compare with neighbouring Councils. Any increases aim to cover, as a minimum, the inflationary cost of service provision. Increases also, to a lesser extent contribute to closing the budget funding gap (the planned expenditure for the year less the resources available to fund that expenditure).

The Council's Commercial Enterprise Strategy for Ashfield aims to 'develop and grow business initiatives and maximise the return from our trading services.' The income from this is to support the Council as it continues to face funding pressures and increasing service demand.

Provisional Fees & Charges proposals have been included in the draft Budget currently being prepared for 2021/22.

All Fees and Charges discussed in the report are contained within the Council's Fees and Charges booklet (Appendix 1 to this report).

Recommendation(s)

Cabinet agrees the proposed Fees & Charges attached to this report for 2021/22 with all applicable increases taking effect as soon as practically possible after 1 April 2021.

Reasons for Recommendation(s)

Additional income generated will meet the inflationary costs of service provision and will contribute towards the Council's saving targets and continue to support the financing of a range of services to Ashfield residents and businesses. In addition, an annual review of Fees and Charges is part of sound financial management practice and a requirement of the Council's Financial Regulations.

Alternative Options Considered (With Reasons Why Not Adopted)

Where applicable, alternative options are presented for consideration.

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with sound financial practice, it is already a requirement to undertake an annual review of Fees and Charges. This exercise is carried out as part of the budget process each year.

APPROACH

Managers have been asked to consider and propose revised Fees and Charges taking into account the following factors:

- i) Market conditions;
- ii) Increases in costs incurred by the Council in delivering the service;
- iii) Charges levied by the private sector where applicable;
- iv) Restrictions due to any contractual arrangement.

Some Fees and Charges are set by the Government. As the Council is unable to amend these, they are excluded from the review.

PROPOSALS BY DIRECTORATE

Proposed revisions are shown in the remainder of the report by Directorate. These are summarised in the 2021/22 Fees and Charges booklet attached to this report as Appendix 1.

PLACES AND COMMUNITIES DIRECTORATE

Planning

Planning fees are set by legislation so cannot be varied as part of this review.

Land Charges

These charges are discretionary but have to remain competitive, as a similar (but generally satisfactory for most needs) service can be obtained from personal search companies.

Fees are split into two categories:

- 1) Full search – which comprises an LLC1 and CON29R.
- 2) Individual enquiries – The price for these has been individually set to take into account the work required to prepare the response.

Commercial Rents

There are individual agreements for all commercial premises and these agreements dictate when a rent review is due. The rent proposed for each unit is dependent upon the current market values for comparable premises in similar areas and there is only scope for an increase if at the point of rent review or lease renewal, market values are higher than those currently being paid.

Markets

Small increases are proposed in order to cover inflationary increases, but with the intention of remaining competitive.

Nationally Market traders are reducing, and the Council is not immune to this trend.

Indoor Markets

Indoor Market charges are set on a commercial basis and current charges have been developed in parallel with the capital investment in the Sutton Indoor Market.

Licences, Registrations, Permits and Consents

A large proportion of the licences, registrations and permits issued are statutory so pricing structures are prescribed. For licences, registrations and permits that are discretionary, fees are set to cover the costs of providing the service. Such licence fees are monitored with the aim of achieving full cost recovery. No increases are proposed for 2021/22.

Pest Control Fees and Charges

Within Ashfield, there are no proposals to increase Fees & Charges for 2021/22. Increases in Fees and Charges for visits outside of the District are planned, reflecting the additional time and costs of travelling to undertake this work.

Dog Control Fees

An increase of £5 per band of days for which Dogs remain unclaimed is proposed. This equates to between 3.85% and 8.33%.

Fixed Penalty Notices

These are fees associated with the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005. Fees are mostly set by the Government although the Council does have some

discretion in respect of early fee payment. Some of these, in respect of littering and graffiti, were raised recently in year, however, on top of this, it is planned to increase the charge for abandoned vehicles from £200 to £500.

Cemeteries

The proposed changes for 2021/22 range between 2% and 4%.

Leisure Centres

The fees for the Leisure Centres are set by the contractor Sports and Leisure Management Ltd (SLM), as long as they remain within the parameters of the overall contract and the Council is consulted on proposals.

MOT tests

The price is currently £40 for a class IV test, £45 for a class VII test and £10 for a retest. It is intended to increase them by 5%.

Trade Waste

Under the Environmental Protection Act, the Council is obliged to provide a commercial waste collection service if requested by local businesses and can make a 'reasonable' charge for the service. The Council aims to provide a quality and reliable service which is efficient and highly valued by our commercial customers. Increases are proposed, ranging from 4% to just over 7%.

Special Collections (Bulky /domestic items)

No increase is proposed for the collection and disposal of the first Bulky waste items.

Garden Waste

For 2021/22 it is proposed to retain these at the same levels as for 2020/21, i.e. £28 for the subscription, and £14 for each additional bin.

Parks and Outdoor Recreation charges

Various rises are proposed. These are detailed in the attached Appendix.

HOUSING AND ASSETS

Car Parking Fees

No increases are proposed for 2021/22. The existing free parking arrangements within the District will continue.

Community Centres

The facilities provided by Community Centres are well received by the community groups that utilise them but occupancy rates do vary from centre to centre and are low in some cases, therefore affecting income levels. However, no increases are proposed for 2021/22.

Private Sector Call Monitoring Service

This is a non-statutory service, first established by Ashfield Homes, and run on a commercial basis. It is proposed to increase these charges by 2%, apart from the newly introduced 'Digital Sim' Call Monitoring charge, which remains at the same level.

Private Sector Licensing

Proposed changes to licences for Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) are shown in the Appendix to this report.

RESOURCES AND BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION DIRECTORATE

Street naming and Numbering

These have not been increased in recent years. Changes are laid out in Appendix 1.

Mansfield and District Joint Crematorium Committee

The above Joint Crematorium is owned jointly by Ashfield, Mansfield and Newark & Sherwood District Councils. For the purposes of profit sharing, Ashfield's share stands at around 40%.

The proposed fees for 2021/22 have not yet been determined by the Joint Committee.

LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE DIRECTORATE

A number of changes are proposed. These are shown in the Appendix to the report. The fees relating to providing copies of Electoral Registers are proposed to remain at current levels.

Corporate Plan:

Income from fees and charges support delivery of priorities in the Corporate Plan.

Legal:

All fees need to be set within the constraints of any relevant legislation.

Finance:

Budget Area Implication

General Fund – Revenue Budget: The impact of the revised fees and charges will be reflected in the update to the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the Budgets set for 2021/22.

General Fund – Capital Programme: N/A

Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget: The impact of the revised fees and charges will be reflected in the update to the HRA Business Plan and the HRA Budgets set for 2021/22.

Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme: N/A

Risk:

Risk Mitigation

Where Fees and Charges have increased there is a possibility of an adverse impact on demand. Any proposed increases are deemed reasonable and the potential impact on demand has been considered when determining the proposed revised fees. Performance against 2021/22 budgeted Fees and Charges income targets will be

monitored throughout the year with variations to budget being reported to CLT and Cabinet.

Human Resources:

No direct HR implications arising from the report.

Equalities *(to be completed by the author):*

No direct equalities implications arising from the report.

Other Implications:

None

Reason(s) for Urgency (if applicable):

N/A

Background Papers

N/A

Report Author and Contact Officer

Mike Brennan

PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTANT

m.brennan@ashfield.gov.uk

01623 457368