

<b>Report To:</b>	<b>CABINET</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>19<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2017</b>
<b>Heading:</b>	<b>FEES AND CHARGES REVIEW 2017/18</b>		
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	<b>CLLR JACKIE JAMES CORPORATE SERVICES</b>		
<b>Ward/s:</b>			
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>YES</b>		
<b>Subject To Call-In:</b>	<b>YES</b>		

### **Purpose Of Report**

The Council is seeking to achieve £670k in savings in 2017/18 with a further £670k in savings to be achieved in each year up until the end of 2021/22. This figure is likely to be increased in the forthcoming Medium Term Financial Strategy following the recent Local government Financial Settlement. In addition to reducing costs through efficiency reviews the Council has reviewed the level of fees and charges for the services it delivers to ascertain the scope of further income generation.

In addition to this Fees and Charges Review, the Council has recently approved the adoption of a Commercial Enterprise Strategy for Ashfield, of which one of the aims is to 'develop and grow business initiatives and maximise the return from our trading services.' This is to support the Council as it continues to face funding pressures, further reports on this initiative will be tabled to update Cabinet on the good progress being made.

The Fees and Charges Review proposals within this report are expected to generate £11k for 2017/18. There are other areas which are still being reviewed which may increase income further.

All fees and charges discussed in the report are contained within the Council's Fees and Charges booklet. This has been updated in draft to reflect the recommendations made and is attached to this report.

### **Recommendation(s)**

1. Increase cemetery charges in line with neighbouring authorities. This is expected to generate additional income of £10k.
2. Allotment fees for 2017/18 to be increased by 2% which is expected to generate additional income of £1,000. Fees are set 12 months in advance and the fees for 2017/18 were set in 2016.
3. Agree the revised Fees & Charges booklet for 2017/18 with all applicable increases taking effect as soon as practically possible after 1 April 2017.

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## **Reasons For Recommendation(s)**

Additional income generated will contribute towards the Council's saving targets and continue to support the financing of a range of services. In addition, an annual review of fees and charges is part of sound financial management practise and a requirement with the Council's Financial Regulations.

## **Alternative Options Considered (With Reasons Why Not Adopted)**

Where applicable, alternative options are presented for consideration.

## **Detailed Information**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

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

### **1.2 APPROACH**

Managers have been asked to consider and propose revised fees and charges taking in account the following factors.

- i) Market conditions;
- ii) Increases in costs incurred by the Council in delivering the service;
- iii) Charges levied by other local authorities in the immediate area and those in 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 charges they are excluded from the review.

### **1.3 PROPOSALS BY DIRECTORATE**

Possible fee revisions are shown in the remainder of the report by Directorate. These are summarised in the draft 2017/18 fees and charges booklet attached to this report.

## **PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE**

### **Planning**

Planning fees are set by legislation so cannot be varied as part of this review. However, in 2013/14 discretionary fees were introduced for pre-application advice with a charge of £40 per request set for householder development, this fee is offset against any subsequent planning applications. Other fees are set for advice on other development schemes. The service generated additional income of £15k in 2013/14, £15k in 2014/15 and £14k in 2015/16. An increase in fees in 2017/18 is not proposed at present however these charges will be monitored with a view to potentially increasing in future years especially if there is an increase in planning application fees.

## Building Control

The overarching principles of the new local authority building control charging system under the Charges Regulations 2010 are that full cost recovery is achieved and users only pay for the service they receive.

Income from charges levied should as far as possible equate to the costs incurred, i.e. a 'break-even' position should be aimed for. Charges must be reviewed at the end of each financial year for the purpose of achieving this overall objective. When setting charges, surpluses and deficits made in earlier years must be taken into account and offset against projected future costs/incomes so that over a reasonable period income matches costs. Good practice suggests 'break-even' over a rolling period of three years should be aimed for.

So whilst the Council has independence over setting charges there is little scope for additional income generation from chargeable building regulations activity whilst adhering to the Charges Regulations 2010.

The review conducted at the end of 2016 has identified a need to change the charge for certain types of work to maintain a 'break-even' position. Revised fees will be implemented 01/04/17.

## Land Charges

These charges are discretionary but have to remain competitive with the market as a similar (but generally satisfactory for most needs) service can be obtained from personal search companies. HMRC has announced its intention to introduce VAT for local authority searches (excluding the LLC1) from 1st April 2017.

Following the previous review when the Council revised commercial fees in line with the residential product, fees are now 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.

## Street naming and Numbering

Charges were introduced in November 2006 for street naming/numbering. Charging is at the discretion of the Council and whilst it is common in the south of the country, very few authorities in the northern half of the country charge for this service. Nottingham City have only recently introduced charging for this service. Fees have been slightly increased for 2017/18 but current charges are still comparable to those charged by other authorities.

	<b>New Address (1-5)</b>	<b>New Address (6+)</b>	<b>Amendment</b>	<b>Street Name</b>	<b>House name</b>	<b>Rename Street</b>
<b>Ashfield District</b>	£35 per plot	£35 per plot for first 5 (£175 for 5) and then £12 per plot thereafter	£55	£115	£55	£200 + £51 per plot
<b>Mansfield District</b>	£41.82 for a single plot and a	A fixed fee of £104.04 for 6,7,8,9 or 10 plots	£44.82	£130.05	£41.82	£130.05 + £25.50 per plot

	fixed fee of £78 for 2,3,4 or 5 plots					
<b>Newark &amp; Sherwood District</b>	£25 per plot	£25 per plot	£75 + £25 per plot	£75 + £25 per plot	£25	£75 + £25 per plot
<b>Nottingham City</b>	-	-	£60 + £6/plot	-	-	£300 + £5/plot
<b>Amber Valley Borough</b>	£75 for a single plot and a fixed fee of £100 for 2,3,4 or 5 plots	A fixed fee of £150 for 6,7,8,9 or 10 plots	£100 + £10 per plot	£125	£45	£250
<b>Broxtowe BC</b>	No charges					
<b>Gedling BC</b>	No charges					
<b>Bassetlaw DC</b>	No charges					
<b>Rushcliffe BC</b>	No charges					

The income received for street naming and numbering is expected to reduce in 2017/18 as result of their being fewer developments expected in 2017/18.

### **Leisure Centres**

The fees for the Leisure Centres are set by the Council, in consultation with the contractor, Sports and Leisure Management Ltd (SLM), and many of the price bands have not been increased for 2017/18. A review of fees and charges relating to the surrounding district authorities and operators leisure centre provision indicates that Ashfield's prices represent value for money. Fee income is retained by the contractor. The revised fees and charges have been incorporated into the fees and charges booklet for 2017/18, appended to this report.

### **Markets**

Price resistance again continues to be a significant issue for Markets, with occupancy levels fluctuating and traders seeking towns offering the greatest footfall. The refurbishment of the indoor market begins in earnest early January, with existing traders being supported and consulted throughout the works. A new licence and rental agreement with fees reflecting the new offer are being developed going forward, and will be in place on completion of the refurbishment.

Kirkby's market fees were raised in 2015/16 – to bring into line with our other outdoor markets and the Council did see a reduction in traders seeking additional stalls through this. The Council continues to offer a number of initiatives to improve occupancy at our markets and use our added value events to promote our towns to new traders, and shoppers alike. Significantly though, nationally Market traders are reducing, and the Council is not immune from this trend.

With the aim of bringing the Council's fees in line with other market operators, the Council has reviewed the rates paid by catering stalls and are looking to bring this into line with our double stall rental and also seek to recoup costs towards the electricity charges if the trader uses our supplies. The Council is also seeking an uplift in certain added value events such as Christmas and season plant fairs etc., as these often incur additional charges through closing later or operating on Sundays. A comparison with other market sites is shown below.

## Local Indoor Markets Comparison

Market Name	Stall Rent Price
<b>Sutton-in-Ashfield</b>	<b>POA under review during refurbishment</b>
Alfreton	£18.90 - £21.60
Alfreton	£20.25 - £22.95
Nottingham Victoria Centre	£20.00 - £59.00
Chesterfield	£24.50 - £47.00

## Local Outdoor Markets Comparison

Market Name	Market Days	Stall Rent Price
<b>Sutton-in-Ashfield</b>	<b>Monday, Wednesday, Friday-Saturday</b>	<b>£11.00</b>
<b>Kirkby-in-Ashfield</b>	<b>Tuesday, Thursday-Saturday</b>	<b>£11.00</b>
<b>Hucknall</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>£11.00</b>
Arnold	Wednesday	£12.00
Bulwell	Tuesday-Wednesday, Friday-Saturday	£21 - £60
Chesterfield	Monday, Friday	£9.70 - £20.10
	Saturday	£15.60 - £31.20
	Thursday	£16.60 - £27.40
Mansfield	Tuesday	£11.00 - £21.00
	Wednesday	£6.00 - £16.00
	Thursday	£11.00 - £21.00
	Friday	£11.00 - £21.00
	Saturday	£16.00 - £26.00
Newark	Monday, Thursday	£15.00
	Wednesday, Saturday	£23.00
	Friday	£19.00
Retford	Thursday	£14.50
	Saturday	£15.50
Ripley	Friday	£14.00
	Saturday	£15.00
Shirebrook	Tuesday-Wednesday, Friday-Saturday	£12.00
Southwell	Thursday	£15.00
	Saturday	£18.00
St. Ann's	Tuesday	No pitch fees
Staveley	Tuesday	£6.00
	Friday	£10.00
	Saturday (flea market)	£5.00
Worksop	Wednesday	£14.50
	Friday	£18.00
	Saturday	£15.50 - £19.00

## CORPORATE AND TRANSFORMATION DIRECTORATE

### Car Parking Fees

New parking charges were implemented on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2015. Users can now park free for up to 1 hour, with an increase to tariffs for parking stays of over 2 hours. The aim of this tariff change is to encourage short stay visitors in support of businesses and shops within the Town Centres. There will be no change in fees for 2017/18.

### 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, therefore affecting income levels. A review

of charges is currently progressing.

## **PLACE & COMMUNITIES DIRECTORATE**

### **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. Work is underway to review such licence fees, set by the Council where it may be that full cost recovery is not being achieved. This is a three pronged approach including, reviewing processes to reduce processing time, increasing fees if necessary and looking at charging for activity that is not currently charged for. Licence fees for hire vehicles and drivers have been reviewed and amended during the 2016/17 financial year. Where applicable, changes to fees for 2017/18 have been included in the fees and charges booklet.

### **Pest Control Fees and Charges**

A commercialisation strategy and marketing strategy have been adopted and a new pricing structure introduced from March 2016. Domestic income to December 2016 is around £3,000 higher than the same period in 2015/2016. This will in part be from higher fees being charged. Fees and charges will be kept under constant review in addition to operating costs with a view to benefiting the trading position of this service.

### **Dog control Fees**

Part of the Dog Control fee is statutory, and the rest of the charge is set by the Council. The annual review has shown that an increase in fees is likely to result in the loss of fee paying customers, especially in view of the fact that they were increased in 2014. This seems to have materialised as income to December 2016 is around £1,500 less than for the same period in the 2015/2016 financial year. The policy of taking stray dogs back to their owner in the first instance has certainly contributed to this reduction. However, this has resulted in a similar reduction to kennelling charges, which offsets the reduction in income, as well as providing a better service to customers. The following table shows how the Council's cost compare against other local Authorities. There will be no change to the fees for 2017/18.

	<b>Ashfield 2017/18</b>	<b>Mansfield 2017/18</b>	<b>Bassetla w 2016/17</b>
<b>1 Day</b>	<b>£60.00</b>	<b>£77.00</b>	<b>£51.50</b>
<b>2 Days</b>	<b>£70.00</b>	<b>£77.00</b>	<b>£60.50</b>
<b>3 Days</b>	<b>£85.00</b>	<b>£77.00</b>	<b>£69.50</b>
<b>4 Days</b>	<b>£95.00</b>	<b>£77.00</b>	<b>£78.50</b>
<b>5 Days</b>	<b>£110.00</b>	<b>£77.00</b>	<b>£87.50</b>
<b>6 Days</b>	<b>£120.00</b>	<b>£77.00</b>	<b>£96.50</b>
<b>7 Days</b>	<b>£130.00</b>	<b>£77.00</b>	<b>£105.50</b>

### **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. The fee is line with that charged by neighbouring authorities so there are no proposals to change the early payment fee at this point.

### **Allotments**

The Council manages and maintains 18 allotment sites which consist of approximately 860 plots, mainly in the urban areas of Kirkby, Sutton and Hucknall.

The Council is committed to providing facilities for healthy outdoor living combined with activities that bring together communities and organisations to improve public health and community relations. The use, provision and maintenance of allotments form an important part of this policy.

For 2017/18 an increase of 2% is to be added to the cost of allotment plots this is expected to generate additional income of £1,000.

**Recommendation – It is recommended that prices for 2017/18 to be increased by 2%. This is expected to generate additional income of £1,000.**

## Cemeteries

Current cemetery fees and charges have been reviewed and increased in line with neighbouring authorities. A comparator table of these fees for 2016/17 has been shown below. It should be noted that Ashfield's charges will remain some of the cheapest in the County.

Ashfield Proposed	Ashfield 2016 Current	Mansfield 2016 Current	Gedling 2016 Current	Broxtowe 2016 Current	Bassetlaw 2016 Current	Notts City 2016 Current
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### INTERMENT FEES

	Ashfield Proposed	Ashfield 2016 Current	Mansfield 2016 Current	Gedling 2016 Current	Broxtowe 2016 Current	Bassetlaw 2016 Current	Notts City 2016 Current
Stillborn and up to 1 month old	F.O.C	F.O.C	Stillborn F.O.C. 50 (up to 2 yrs)	F.O.C.	F.O.C.	F.O.C.	F.O.C.
Child over 1 month to 8 yrs (Childs Sec only)	F.O.C	F.O.C	100 (2-16 yrs)	F.O.C. (1 month- 12 years)	under 15 yrs F.O.C.	up to 12 yrs 135	up to 15 yrs 71
Adult depth for one	500	450	N/A	N/A	645	535	580
Adult depth for two	550	495	555	N/A	700	590	580
Adult depth for three	620	555	N/A	552 (coffin) 804 (casket)	770	640	580
Cremated Remains	170	150	170	174	175	220	144
Cremated Remains - scattering	60	60	56	123	36		110

### PURCHASE OF EXCLUSIVE RIGHT OF BURIAL

	Ashfield Proposed	Ashfield 2016 Current	Mansfield 2016 Current	Gedling 2016 Current	Broxtowe 2016 Current	Bassetlaw 2016 Current	Notts City 2016 Current
Purchase for	75 yrs	75 yrs	50 yrs	50 yrs	99 yrs	99 yrs	99 yrs
Adult grave	740	660	1270	804	625	800 170 up to - 1 month	1,274
Child's grave (Childs Section Only)	180	175	F.O.C.	804	625	195 1 month - 12 yrs	F.O.C.
Cremated Remains Area	400	350	710	664	195	430	1274
Chapel use	150	100	100	106	92	90	252
<b>NON RESIDENTS</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>100% + approx</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

### MEMORIALS

	Ashfield Proposed	Ashfield 2016 Current	Mansfield 2016 Current	Gedling 2016 Current	Broxtowe 2016 Current	Bassetlaw 2016 Current	Notts City 2016 Current
Headstone	180	160	110	314	176	165	280
Add Inscription	70	65	45	83	36	75	108
8" x 8" Vase	80	75	45	314	55	N/A	N/A
Memorial tree	100	75	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

**Recommendation – It is recommended that the price changes for 2017/18 be adopted, this will bring charges in line with neighbouring authorities as detailed in the 2017/18 fees and charges booklet appended to this report be approved. This is expected to generate a further £10k compared to 2016/17.**

## MOT tests

The price is currently £40 for a class 4 test, £45 for a class 7 test and £10 for a retest. These prices are comparable with local competition and it is therefore not intended to increase them. The service is being actively publicised and a number of improvements have been made to enhance the customer experience.

## 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. The Trade Waste prices for 2017/18 have been set, including a charge for a recycling service. As Trade Waste charges are commercially sensitive these will be excluded from the report.

### Special Collections (Bulky /domestic items)

A new fee of £17.50 for collections of fridge freezers is to be introduced. The current fee for any other bulky waste collection remains unchanged from 2016/17 at £12.50 for the first item and £6.50 each for all subsequent items. This was previously £6.25 in 2016/17.

### Garden waste

The garden waste collection service is currently free as part of the revisions to the residual waste collection service. A process to determine the fee when it is re-introduced in 2018 will be completed prior to the re-introduction of a fee.

### Parks and Outdoor Recreation charges

The prices were reviewed in 2016/17 line with neighbouring authorities in and those provided by competitors. The charges for 2017/18 are to remain unchanged from 2016/17.

The income budget for Parks and Outdoor Recreation is expected to increase in 2017/18 due to an expected increase in usage of these facilities.

### DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE DIRECTORATE

Council Tax and Business Rates court costs for summons and liability orders. If a charge payer does not pay their Council Tax or Business Rates despite an issue of a final notice, the next stage of recovery is Magistrates' Court action to summons and seek a liability order so that further recovery action can be taken.

Councils are allowed to add their costs to this process which is recoverable from the charge payer. There are no plans to increase these costs in 2017/18. The comparison of the costs neighbouring authorities below demonstrates that the Council's costs are in line with those of others.

Authority	COUNCIL TAX			NDR		
	SUMMONS	L.O.	TOTAL	SUMMONS	L.O.	TOTAL
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Mansfield	70.00		70.00	70.00		70.00
Nottingham City	50.00	20.00	70.00	50.00	20.00	70.00
East Lindsey	67.00	5.00	72.00	77.00	5.00	82.00
South Kesteven	72.50		72.50	72.50		72.50
South Holland	69.00	5.00	74.00	80.00	5.00	85.00
Boston	75.00		75.00	85.00		85.00
Broxtowe	75.00		75.00	75.00		75.00
Lincoln City	50.00	25.00	75.00	60.00	25.00	85.00
North Kesteven	50.00	25.00	75.00	60.00	25.00	85.00
West Lindsey	50.00	25.00	75.00	60.00	25.00	85.00
Rushcliffe	77.00		77.00	100.00		100.00
Ashfield	80.00		80.00	80.00		80.00
Gedling	55.00	25.00	80.00	55.00	25.00	80.00
Bassetlaw	80.00		80.00	100.00		100.00
Newark & Sherwood	80.00		80.00	80.00		80.00



### **Mansfield and District Joint Crematorium Committee**

The above Joint Committee 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 Council has budgeted to receive £305k in 2017/18. The proposed basic cremation fee for 2017/18 is £653.50. The equivalent fees charged by the Crematorium's closest neighbours are Sherwood Forest (£849 in 2016/17), Bramcote (£615 in 2016/17) and Nottingham (Wilford) (£545 in 2016/17).

### **ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE DIRECTORATE**

There will be no change in 2017/18 for S106 agreement fees. These will remain at the current levels of £750 - £1000 per agreement. The fees relating to providing copies of Electoral Registers are statutory and therefore there is no scope to revise.

### **Implications**

#### **Corporate Plan:**

An increase in income assists in funding objectives within the Corporate Plan.

#### **Legal:**

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

#### **Finance:**

This report is effective from 01/04/2017 and has the following financial implications:

<b>Budget Area</b>	<b>Implication</b>
General Fund – Revenue Budget	There is expected to be an increase in income of £11k for 2017/18 as result of the changes to Fees and Charges.
General Fund – Capital Programme	No Financial Implications.
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	No Financial Implications.
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	No Financial Implications.

**Human Resources / Equality and Diversity:**

There are no implications in respect of HR & Equality & Diversity issues.

**Other Implications:**

None

**Reason(s) for Urgency (if applicable):**

N/A

**Background Papers**

Appendix 1 – Fees & Charges changes (compared to 2016/17)  
Appendix 2 – Fees & Charges Booklet

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