

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Report of Corporate Management Team

to
Cabinet

on
13 February 2018

Report prepared by: Ian Ambrose
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Agend
Item No

Fees & Charges 2018/19
All Scrutiny Committees
Executive Councillor: Councillor John Lamb
A Part 1 Public Agenda Item

1 Purpose of Report

To consider the detailed fees and charges for services in 2018/19 included in the budget proposals for 2018/19.

2 Recommendation

Cabinet are asked to recommend to Council

- 2.1 The proposed fees & charges for each Department as contained within the body of this report and the appendices.

3 Background

- 3.1 Income from fees and charges are an important part of the Council's overall financial strategy and assist in the overall balancing of the budget. Clearly the scope to increase fees or charges is determined by a number of factors, of which the most important are: strategic desirability, government direction, elasticity of demand for services, and impact on service users. There is no prescribed increase in individual fees and charges, although the medium term financial strategy assumes a 2% increase in net income collected (yield) from general price increases. Some proposed savings are also predicated on discreet increases over and above the assumed 2% increase in yield, restructuring existing charges or new charges, and have been included within the schedules.

3.2 Members are asked to note

- 3.2.1 Allotments – in setting fees and charges for 2017/18, Council agreed proposals for increase in allotment charges to take effect for 2018/19, given the year-long notice period required before any increase can be made. Those pre-agreed increases will now be put into charge
- 3.2.2 Culture – new charges have been introduced for educational services and room hire at the Forum. Some redundant fees have also been removed.
- 3.2.3 Regulatory – a number of new charges are introduced for various licence renewals, amendments, variations and replacements.
- 3.2.4 Car Parking – there has been a rationalisation of time bands and season ticket options in seafront and central car parks. The proposals have been adjusted following consultation and feedback to retain the one hour payment band at Tylers and York Road car parks, and the one-hour winter payment time band at Seaways car park. The proposed extension of Eastern Esplanade on street parking charges has also been withdrawn.
- 3.2.5 Planning – the majority of planning fees are set by statute. The Government has confirmed its intention to increase these fees by 20% as from 17 January 2018.
- 3.2.6 General – the schedules show both the proposed monetary and percentage increase for each charge. Where a new charge is proposed, this is flagged accordingly.

3.3 Where fees are subject to VAT, the rate of 20% has been incorporated into these proposals.

3.4 In addition some charges made by the Council are set by statute and therefore they are not at the discretion of the Council; these are clearly marked in the attached charges.

4 Proposals for 2018/19

4.1 Proposals for fees and charges for 2018/19 are set out in the Appendices to this report.

Appendix 1 – Department for People

Appendix 2 – Department for Place

Appendix 3 – Department of the Chief Executive

5 Other Options

No other options were considered. This report merely brings together the proposals for fees and charges, be they statutory or discretionary.

6 Reasons for Recommendations

Part of the process of maintaining a balanced budget includes a requirement to consider the contribution that fees and charges make towards that aim. This report is in fulfilment of that requirement.

7 Corporate Implications

7.1 Contribution to Council's Vision & Critical Priorities

The budget strategy is an integral part of the Council's Corporate Service and Resources Planning Framework.

7.2 Financial Implications

As set out in the body of the report. In addition the additional income yield has been factored into the proposed 2018/19 budget.

7.3 Legal Implications

None at this stage

7.4 People Implications

None at this stage

7.5 Property Implications

None at this stage

7.6 Consultation

The proposals contained in this report have been considered by the Scrutiny Committees and the Business and Voluntary Sector consultation meeting.

- Following an announcement by the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Waste and Regulatory Services of a partial reinstatement of the one hour payment band in certain car parks, Place Scrutiny Committee sought clarification and explanation of the removal of the one hour payment band in the remaining town centre car parks. The Committee also asked that Cabinet reconsider the extension of car parking charges along Eastern Esplanade, and the pricing and availability of certain parking permits.
- People Scrutiny sought clarification on the level of transport charges for adults social care and the impact of the policy on children for home to school transport
- Policy and Resources Scrutiny made no observations
- Business and Voluntary Sector raised concerns about the loss of the one hour band and impact on the High Street

Wherever required public consultation will commence in time to ensure that the new fee structures can be in place for the start of the new financial year.

7.7 Equalities Impact Assessment

None at this stage

7.8 Risk Assessment

The key risks are:

Elasticity of demand for some services may mean that increases in fees & charges lead to a fall in income collected.

Some residents/service users may not be able to afford increases, so that the impact may fall disproportionately on those on low incomes.

Assumptions about increases for those items that are not set by the Council may not be correct.

7.9 Value for Money

In order to deliver value for money it is essential that the Council gets the right balance between charging for services and funding services from Council Tax.

7.10 Community Safety Implications

None at this stage

7.11 Environmental Impact

None at this stage

8 Background Papers

None

9 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Department for People

Appendix 2 – Department for Place

Appendix 3 – Department of the Chief Executive