

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

<b>TO:</b>	<b>POLICY COMMITTEE</b>		
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>24 SEPTEMBER 2018</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM:</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>CORPORATE REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES</b>		
<b>LEAD COUNCILLOR:</b>	<b>CLLR BROCK</b>	<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	<b>LEADERSHIP</b>
<b>SERVICE:</b>	<b>CLLR LOVELOCK</b>	<b>WARDS</b>	<b>BOROUGHWIDE</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>TEL:</b>	<b>87106</b>
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	<b>BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER</b>		

#### 1. PURPOSE OF BRIEFING NOTE AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 A mid-year review of fees and charges has been completed for implementation 1<sup>st</sup> October. The review sought to engage all Council services that collect fee income, specifying a consistent corporate approach to the review of fees to ensure the cost of service provision is fully considered and income is maximised to enable cost recovery. This approach is in keeping with the Council's constitution and forms an integral part of the budget setting process.
- 1.2 This report sets out the results of this review for Policy Committee consideration and approval. A Fees and Charges Schedule detailing all revised fee proposals is attached as appendix 1, commentary on the approach of each service is attached as appendix 2.
- 1.3 Appendices:
- 1) Schedule of revised fees by service area.
  - 2) Commentary on the approach of each service proposing to amend fees.
  - 3) Fee review guidance note.

#### 2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 To note the content of the report and to approve the revised fees set out in appendix 1 for implementation from the 1<sup>st</sup> October.

#### 3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The review of fees and charges is required by the Council's constitution and forms part of the Council's annual budget setting process.

3.2 Generating and maximising income is essential to the continued delivery of non-statutory services in the face of economic austerity and cuts to central Government grant.

#### 4. PROPOSAL BACKGROUND

4.1 The review of fees and charges forms an integral part of the Council's overall budget setting process as it assists with the delivery of budget saving targets. The exercise sought to engage the full breadth of Council services and directed all participants to consider the review of their fees in a corporately consistent manner. Instruction documents are attached as appendix 3/3a.

4.2 Services have reviewed their fees and charges in compliance with corporate guidance and legislation. Many statutory service fees and charges are set by Central Government. Non-statutory fees and charges are informed and set according to market conditions and affordability to customers/residents.

4.3 It should be noted that the Council conducted a robust review of its fees and charges for the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018. Many services are provided under a service level agreement that does not permit the review of fee mid-year. As the 1<sup>st</sup> April review sought to maximise income opportunities, the scope for further increase mid-year has been limited.

4.4 Where appropriate, fees are set to maximise the contribution from income towards the cost of service delivery, and where necessary, concessionary rates continue to be offered to those who need/benefit from a subsidised service.

4.5 **Future Reviews:** Whilst the formal bi-annual review of fees and charges provides for specific corporate focus, services are actively encouraged to identify opportunities for maximising income between review periods and to progress these through the appropriate approvals process.

#### 5. PROPOSAL

5.1 To implement the revised set of fees & charges outlined in Appendix 1 from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018.

#### 6. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS:

6.1 The proposal directly contributes to the following objective of the Council's Corporate Plan:

- Remaining financially sustainable to deliver service priorities

#### 7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

7.1 Services will each raise awareness of revised fees & charges with their clients as is custom and practice or required by statute.

## 8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

- 8.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must consider whether the decision will or could have a differential impact on: racial groups; gender; people with disabilities; people of a particular sexual orientation; people due to their age; people due to their religious belief. Approval of the decisions to carry out any of the improvement work will not have a differential impact on any of the above.
- 8.2 As referenced in 4.4, no amendment is proposed to any of the Council's concessionary discount rates, with 25% discount continuing to be provided in respect of bulky waste collections.
- 8.3 It is not considered that that an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is relevant to the decision.

## 9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

- 9.1 Services have reviewed their fees and charges in compliance with respective guidance and legislation. Many statutory service fees and charges are set by Central Government. Non-statutory fees and charges are informed and set according to market conditions and affordability to customers/residents.

## 10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

- 10.1 The table below summarises the predicted additional income generated by the proposed fees and charges for the period 1st October 2018 - 31st March 2019.

	Service area	Directorate	Forecast Value	Not accounted for in MTFP
1.1	Legal services	CSS	£ -	£ -
1.2	Learning & Workforce Development	CSS	£ -	£ -
2.1	CAT - Childrens Centre, Sure Start Whitley / West - Lodge	DCEEHS	£ 2,263.47	£ -
2.2	School Admission Service	DCEEHS	£ 891.00	£ 891.00
3.1	Private Sector Housing	DENS	£ -	£ -
3.2	Reading Museum	DENS	£ 45.00	£ -
3.3	Licensing	DENS	£ 2,407.00	£ -
3.4	Trading Standards	DENS	£ 12.00	£ -
3.5	Streetcare Services	DENS	£ 3,390.90	£ -
3.6	Emergency planning	DENS	£ -	£ -
3.7	Libraries	DENS	£ 290.00	£ -
3.8	Environmental protection/nuisance	DENS	£ -	£ -
3.9	Planning	DENS	£ 2,265.00	£ 2,265.00
3.10	Reading Play	DENS	£ 3,463.67	£ -
3.11	Parks	DENS	£ -	£ -
		Sub Total	£ 15,028.04	£ 3,156.00

- 10.2 As illustrated by the above table, the corporate review of fees and charges will deliver £15k more income than the current fees, £11.8k of this figure is required to meet existing income targets, leaving £3.2k of income not currently accounted for in the Council's MTFP as a contribution to the delivery of required corporate savings targets.