
Executive Member For Neighbourhood Services and Advisory Panel

21 January 2008

Report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services

Revenue Budget 2008/09 – Neighbourhood Services Fees and Charges

Summary

- 1 The report advises Members of the proposed fees and charges for Neighbourhood Services for the financial year 2008/09 and the anticipated increase in income which they will generate. The Annex 1 to the report sets out the detail of the individual charges.

Background

- 2 The fees and charges for Neighbourhood Services are complex and varied. Some are controlled by regulation, some by national guidelines and others by market forces or the cost of administering the service. In the Neighbourhood Services Revenue and Capital budget report elsewhere on the agenda, Members are advised of the effect on the service of budget reductions. The level of fees and charges has been set against a background of financial constraint and service reductions. Income from fees and charges is a key factor in setting budgets and totals approximately £3.9 million for the Neighbourhood Services portfolio. In ensuring a balanced budget, it is therefore essential that income is at least maintained, if not improved, and it is proposed to introduce above inflation increases in a number of areas as part of the Council's savings proposals to reduce the associated net service costs.

Consultation

3. This paper forms part of the Council's budget consultation. The other streams being undertaken include a recently held public meeting where participants sat at tables and tried to produce a balanced budget after considering growth and saving priorities, a leaflet circulated city wide with a fold-out return part, forums and a web-based process.

Options and Analysis

4. This section sets out the key elements for Members' consideration. Only those with significant income are highlighted.
5. **Bereavement Services:** It is proposed to increase the cremation fee from £536 to £563. The increase, incorporating other proposed changes and new income streams, is estimated to generate additional income in the next financial year of £71k.

6. **Environmental Health:** A broadly inflation matching increase is proposed, although some fees that are set by government are yet to be announced or are currently being consulted on for 2008/09.
7. **Trading Standards:** Most fees are determined by government or LACORS (Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services) and some are yet to be announced for 2008/09.
8. **Regulatory Services:**
 - **Discretionary Fees:** An increase of 5% is proposed to generate additional income and a proposed saving of £9k.
 - **Licensing Act 2003:** The fees are set by statute and currently there are no proposals to increase fees in 2008/09.
 - **Gambling Act 2005:** Local authorities have duties under the Act to licence premises used for gambling. The function should be self financing through the receipt of fees. Fee bands with a prescribed maximum have been set by the Secretary of State and local authorities are free to apply a cost recovery fee from within the band levels set. Full implementation of the Act came into force from September 2007.
 - **Pest Control:** It is proposed to increase pest control treatment charges above inflation generating additional income and a proposed saving of £4k. Treatment for rats in commercial situations and non rat treatments will increase by £4.00 (incl. VAT) and rat treatments in non commercial situations by £1.00 (incl. VAT). Rat treatments are free to those on income support and a discount introduced in 2006/07 to discount all non rat treatments by 50% for those on income support will continue.
9. **Taxi Licences:** Legislation permits local authorities to recover the costs of administrating the taxi licensing function through the levy of fees. At the end of 2006/07 the taxi account was in surplus by £23.5k and fees were not increased in 2007/08. The latest projection for 2007/08 is that the account will be in deficit by £1.1k at the yearend. To take account of predicted changes in volume and increased costs in 2008/09 it is proposed to increase fees by on average 5%. This will bring the account into balance by 31 March 2009.
10. **Bulky Household Collection:** An above inflation increase is proposed for bulky household waste collections and bonded asbestos collections. This reflects additional costs, including landfill tax and additional costs of dealing with the transportation and processing of bonded asbestos (since it can no longer be disposed of at Harewood Whin).

Following the introduction of the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive it is no longer possible to charge for collection of refrigeration equipment from commercial properties.

11. **Hazel Court HWRC - Trade Waste Charges:** It is proposed that trade waste that requires to be disposed of in landfill will be charged at £80 per tonne however waste that can be recycled or composted will be charged at £40 per tonne. Charges proposed also include a minimum fee for using the service, and

a minimum percentage of recyclable waste to qualify for the recycling or composting rate per tonne. The charges proposed for trade waste are increasing by more than inflation to cover additional operating costs, including landfill tax increase at £8 per tonne, site management costs in respect of dealing with trade waste, and include a savings proposal of £15k.

12. **Commercial Waste Collection Charges:** The charges proposed for commercial waste collections are increasing by more than inflation to cover additional operating costs, including landfill tax increase at £8 per tonne, and include a savings proposal of £250k.

13. **Public Conveniences:** It is not proposed to increase the charge for using public toilets at Parliament Street or Coppergate in 2008/09. There is an option for consultation within the budget report to increase the charge to use the public toilets at Union Terrace to 40 pence which will generate additional income and a proposed saving of £10k. This proposal is subject to further consultation as part of the 2008/09 budget process and therefore no increase is assumed in this report.

Corporate Priorities

14. The differential costs for the trade waste charges going through the Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC), see paragraph 12 above, is structured to encourage traders using the sites to ensure as much waste as possible is recycled. This contributes to the Corporate Priority of 'Decreasing the tonnage of biodegradable waste and recyclable products going to landfill'.

Implications

Financial Implications

15. The current income generated from Neighbourhood Services fees and charges is estimated to be £3.9 million. Broadly inflation matching increases are proposed for 2008/09 except for the cremation charges, pest control, waste collection and trade waste charges. The increases are estimated to generate additional income totalling approximately £533k including proposed savings of £377k.

Human Resources (HR)

16. There are no Human Resources implications.

Equalities

17. There are no equality implications to this report.

Legal

18. There are no legal implications to this report.

Crime and Disorder

19. There are no crime and disorder implications to this report.

Information Technology (IT)

20. There are no information technology implications to this report.

Property

21. There are no property implications to this report.

Risk Management

22. Key reporting mechanisms to Members on budget matters will continue to be through two mid-year monitoring reports and the final Revenue Outturn report for the year. These reports will also address the progress made on investments and savings included in the budgets.
23. The budget setting process always entails a degree of risk as managers attempt to assess known and uncertain future events. As with any budget the key to mitigating risk is prompt monitoring and appropriate management control. As such updated figures and revised corrective actions will be monitored via Directorate Management Teams, Corporate Management Team and the monitor reports during the year.

Recommendations

24. The Executive Member is asked to consider the fees and charges proposals for Neighbourhood Services for 2008/9 contained in this report and provide comments to be submitted to the Budget Executive on 12 February 2008.

Reason: To update the Executive Member on the proposed fees and charges for Neighbourhood Services for 2008/09.

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Report Approved Date

Specialist Implications Officer(s) None

Wards Affected: List wards or tick box to indicate all

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

See budget report as part of the agenda

Annexes

Annex 1 – Details of individual charges for Neighbourhood Services Fees and Charges