

Economy and Environment Directorate Fees and Charges Proposals 2018/19

1. Introduction

1.1 The starting point for the base budget for the 2018/19 budget build is that Fees and Charges should increase in order to maximise income accepting that:

- Fees and charges can have a direct impact on usage and take up;
- In some circumstances the Council is providing services in direct competition to the private sector. Where this is the case, price is likely to have a direct link with demand and it is important that the Council does not price itself out of the market. In some areas benchmarking has taken place to ensure West Berkshire can compete with other authorities.
- Raising fees and charges can in some instances work against the Council's social inclusion agenda by effectively discriminating against those who are less able to pay.
- For some services there is a clear expectation that fees and charges will reflect the costs incurred in providing the service; the Council may be subject to legal challenge if increases in fees and charges cannot be justified.
- Where a 10% increase in Fees and Charges was identified in the Financial Challenge Review

1.2 Within the Environment Directorate fees and charges deliver an annual income of approximately £8,704k (2017/18 original budget).

2. Development and Planning

The income budget for Development and Planning was set at £1,481k for 2017/18. Areas of income generation are as follows:

2.1 Housing

The rental costs of temporary accommodation, secure tenancies, Gypsy and Traveller accommodation owned or let by West Berkshire Council, will

be increased in line with the Local Housing Allowance, Do It Yourself Shared Ownership (DIYSO) will be increased according to the lease terms. The Council is not a registered provider and therefore the national rent formula is not applicable.

Rents for new temporary accommodation assets will be set at Local Housing Allowance rates for the relevant sized property.

- 2.1.1** The Council also charge for homeless households placed in Bed and Breakfast accommodation. Households will need to claim Housing Benefit, or will be charged up to the amount Housing Benefit would pay, if they were eligible, in addition households will need to pay the ineligible charges detailed in appendix H3.
- 2.1.2** The Council may also charge applicants who are placed in emergency bed provision at Two Saints Hostel. Applicants are unable to claim Housing Benefit when placed in an emergency bed. A charge of £1 a night may be made for E-bed provision for people who are not employed and £5 a night for people who are in part-time or full-time employment.
- 2.1.3** In some instances, the Council provides transport to temporary accommodation for households who have no other means of getting to that accommodation. The cost of providing the transport will be recharged, in full to the client.
- 2.1.4** The Council can assist with providing removals and/or storage for homeless applicants. The full cost of providing this service will be recharged to the client.
- 2.1.5** The Council can assist with securing cattery or kennel provision for homeless applicants in temporary accommodation, as pets are not permitted in temporary accommodation. The full cost of providing this service will be recharged to the client.
- 2.1.6** The Council provides repairs and maintenance to a small supply of temporary accommodation, including an out-of-hours service. In the event that a tenant or licensee uses the emergency service for a non-emergency repair, or fails to attend an appointment for a contractor to attend to a repair, a charge of £30 will be made to cover the call-out. Where repairs arise as a result of neglect or damage caused by the tenant or licensee, or a member of their household, or a visitor to their home, the full cost of the repair will be recharged to the tenant or licensee.
- 2.1.7** Supporting People Services will be charged at the actual cost of the service received.

2.2 Development Control

2.2.1 Fees for planning applications are set centrally by the DCLG.

3 Transport and Countryside

The original budget for income from fees and charges for the Transport and Countryside Service in 2017/18 was £5,100k. Fees and charges have been reviewed in order to generate additional income wherever possible. Fees and charges are generated from the following areas:

3.1 Car Park Charges

There were several changes to Car Parking tariffs in 2017. There is no proposal to increase fees in 2018/19.

3.2 Licence Fees, Permits and Other Charges

Fees are charged for a range of services e.g. where Highway Authority approval is required to place items or to work on the public highway. These include vehicular crossings, skips, scaffolds, table and chairs on the highway, issuing permits for and inspecting utility operations, temporary or permanent traffic regulation orders.

3.3 Highways Development Control Fees

Fees are charged to developers for design checking, supervision and inspection of new roads under construction and off site highway improvements.

3.4 Charges to Householders for Sewage Treatment

Approximately 150 properties, mainly in rural areas, are connected to small sewage treatment plants. These are the responsibility of West Berkshire Council to maintain, having previously been the ownership of Newbury District Council from when the housing stock was transferred to Sovereign Housing Association. The householders pay a fee to the Council which contributes to the maintenance costs.

3.5 Hire of sports facilities

Sports facilities at Henwick Worthy, Holy Brook, Northcroft, Moorside and The Diamond at Greenham. It is proposed to increase the charges for use of our sports facilities by 3% in 2018/19.

3.6 Waste

Fees include bulky household collection, provision of additional wheelie bins for garden waste collection.

The Waste Service is proposing increasing its current charges in line with inflation. There is a further proposal to introduce a charge for the collection of garden waste in 2018.

4 Public Protection and Culture

The original budget for 2018/19 for income from fees and charges for Public Protection and Culture was £2,122k. Income is generated from the following areas:

4.1 Public Protection Partnership

The Public Protection Partnership Fees and Charges currently cover West Berkshire and Wokingham with Bracknell currently having separate fees and charges, this situation is to be addressed in 2018/19 so that all members of the Partnership will be charging the same fees.

The Fees and Charges for this service include weights and measures, licences for petroleum, taxi licensing, temporary events, premises, food safety etc.

4.2 Culture

Fees and charges fall into four main areas: Leisure, Shaw House hire fees, heritage and tourism services and libraries.

4.3 Leisure

The leisure centres are managed by Parkwood Leisure. The actual level of charge is set in accordance with Parkwood's own marketing policies. Taking account of the Council's objectives for the residents' leisure card the Council agrees the maximum fee that can be charged for admission. Increases in Parkwood's prices are agreed in December for January implementation and they have no impact on the Council's budget.

4.4 Shaw House

The highest priority is to develop a sustainable income stream by marketing Shaw House to the business, public and community sectors as a venue for hire for meetings, conferences, training, civic occasions, celebrations and other events and activities. To this end there is no proposal to increase hire charges in 2018/19.

4.5 Heritage

The West Berkshire Historic Environment Record (HER) is a public record used by many enquirers for a variety of purposes: decision-making, planning, conservation, research, education and personal interest. Information is currently provided to all by the HER officer, and a charge is made for commercial enquiries to cover the costs of staff time; there is no charge for the data itself. There is no charge for reasonable enquiries from the public.

4.6 Libraries

Charges are made for the hire of DVDs, games CDs etc. together with reference and research enquiries, vocal scores, book group and request services.

4.7 Registration Services

Registration fees are largely controlled by statute. Regular benchmarking exercises are undertaken in order to ensure our charges are commensurate with the other Berkshire authorities.