

Subject:	Fees and Charges 2015/16		
Date of Meeting:	20 January 2015		
Report of:	Executive Director, Environment Development & Housing		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Steven Bedford	Tel: 29-3047
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to set out the proposed 2015/16 fees and charges for the service areas covered by the Environment, Transport and Sustainability Committee in accordance with corporate regulations and policy.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Committee approves the proposed fees and charges for 2015/16 as set out within the report and its appendices.

3. CONTEXT / BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Council's Corporate Fees and Charges Policy requires that all fees and charges are reviewed at least annually and should normally be increased by either: the standard rate of inflation, statutory increases, or actual increases in the costs of providing the service.
- 3.2 The Budget Update and Process 2015/16 report approved at Policy and Resources Committee in July 2014 specified the assumption of a standard inflation increase to fees and charges of 2.0% with the exception of parking charges. The council's Standard Financial Procedures states that service committees will receive a report from Executive Directors on fees and charges variations above or below the corporately applied rate of inflation.
- 3.3 It is not always possible when amending fees and charges to increase by the exact inflation figure due to rounding. Therefore some fees and charges are rounded for ease of payment and administration.

City Infrastructure

- 3.4 Allotments
It is proposed to increase fees and charges by the standard rate of inflation. A schedule of fees and charges is included at Appendix 1.
- 3.5 City Parks

The principle of charging for dedicated benches and trees is to recover the costs to the council of running the service. It is proposed to increase these fees and charges by the standard rate of inflation. A schedule of fees and charges is included at Appendix 1.

3.6 Sports Bookings

Sports Bookings have historically been set at a rate to reflect the councils health and wellbeing objectives. It is recognised that most sports bookings do not recover the cost of provision. It is proposed to increase the charges for sports bookings by the standard inflation rate. A schedule of fees and charges is included at Appendix 1.

3.7 Flyering Licenses

Flyering licences fees are set at a rate that is reasonably considered to allow appropriate regulation and minimisation of flyering activity, and also to partly recover the cost of work required to clear litter generated from flyering activity. It is proposed to increase the charges for flyering licenses by the standard inflation rate. A schedule of fees and charges is included at Appendix 1.

3.8 Preston Park and East Brighton Park Parking

Car parking charges at Preston Park and East Brighton Park were introduced to manage the level of parking activity. Any surplus generated from parking income is ring fenced to fund improvement works at the parks. It is proposed to maintain fees at the current level as it is considered that the current fees meet to rationale of managing parking.

Planning and Building Control

3.9 Building Control

Building Control charges seek to achieve full cost recovery of carrying out the building regulations chargeable services as specified in the Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulation 2010. It is proposed to increase charges by the corporate inflation rate in order to ensure that cost recovery continues to be maintained.

3.10 Development Control

Development Control fees and charges are set by central government. Fees were last increased in November 2012 by 15% and it is expected that there will be no fee increases during the 2015-16 financial year.

The Development Control service is planning to introduce a charge for its pre-application service in the 2015-16 financial year. The Local Planning Authority is able to charge for this service to recover costs only. A report will be presented to committee for agreement to implement these fees at a later date.

Public Protection

3.11 Environmental Health

It is proposed to increase the non-statutory fees and charges in line with the corporate rate of inflation with the following exceptions. A schedule of fees and charges is included at Appendix 2.

- The Pest Control services intends to introduce new charges for a Wildlife Advice Service and Pest Control Self Help Kits. This is proposed to increase income generated by the service as part of a five year business plan to make the service more financially viable. The proposed charges are in line with the corporate fees and charges policy and have been set at a rate that is reasonably expected to recover costs.
- It is proposed to increase the charge for rats and mice residential visits by 44% to £75. Charges for this service have previously been kept below market rates. The proposed increase has been compared to public and private sector comparators and set at a rate that is reasonably expected to optimise total income.

3.12 Trading Standards

It is proposed to increase the non-statutory fees and charges in line with the corporate rate of inflation. A schedule of fees and charges is included at Appendix 2.

Transport

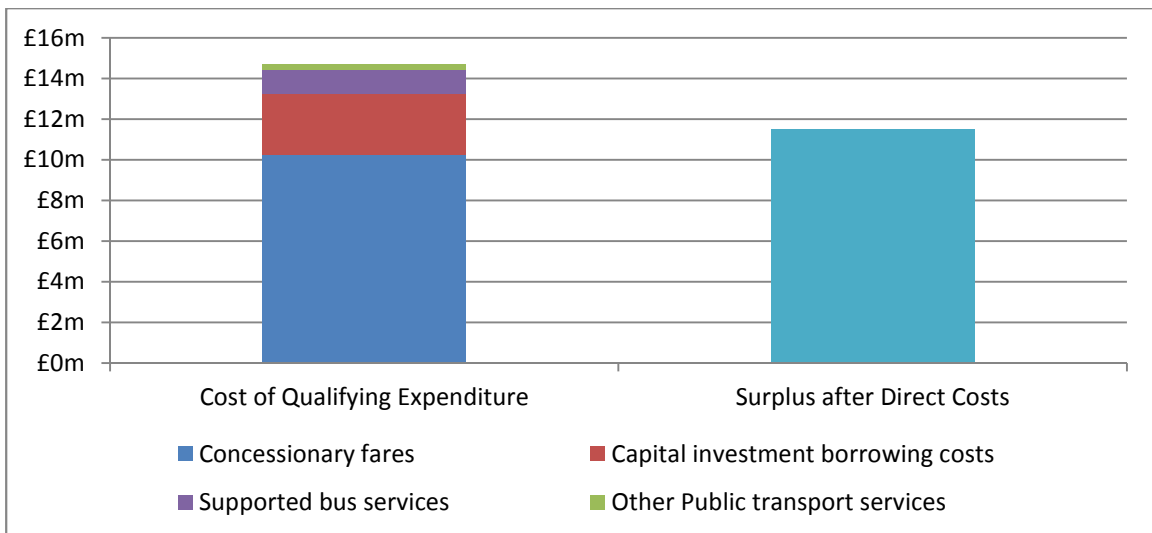
3.13 Highways

The majority fees and charges will increase in line with the corporate rate of inflation with the following exceptions. A schedule of fees and charges is included at Appendix 3.

- Parking Infrastructure lines & signs will remain at current prices as there has been no increase in cost to the team for these services.
- At Environment, Transport and Sustainability Committee in October 2014, some members asked for a review of the individual disabled bay charges of £100. Having reviewed this charge, it is not considered appropriate to reduce the fee because this would mean that the team is operating at a loss in the provision of the service. General disabled bay applications are already supported by the council. An individual disabled bay incurs extra costs because of the bespoke signage required and the additional costs of converting existing disabled bays to individual ones.

3.14 On-Street Parking

Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) of on street parking was introduced in July 2011 with the aim of reducing congestion and improving traffic management. Any surplus arising from on street parking is used to defray qualifying expenditure as governed by section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, as amended from October 2004 by section 95 of the Traffic Management Act 2004. The surplus generated from charges after direct costs contributes towards the part funding of bus subsidies, concessionary bus fares and Local Transport Plan costs. The table below shows the level of surplus generated after direct costs of £11.48m and the cost of qualifying expenditure of £14.66m in the 2013/14 financial year.



Significant work has been carried out to set parking tariffs at a level which reflects the administrations traffic management objectives, therefore changes to the tariffs will not reflect the assumed 2% standard budgetary inflation value. The proposed 2015/16 fees follow the objectives set out in the councils Local Transport Plan. A schedule of fees and charges is included at Appendix 4:

- It is proposed to increase fees in the 'high demand zone' at rates between 2.9% to 6.7% at an average of 4.2%.
- It is proposed to increase fees in the 'medium demand zone' at rates between 0.0% to 5.0% at an average of 3.0%.
- It is proposed to increase fees in the 'low demand zone' at rates between 0% and 6.7% at an average of 2.5%.
- It is proposed to increase fees for parking permits at rates between 0% and 7.7% at an average of 3.3%.

Improving air quality is a key objective in Brighton & Hove. Nationally, poor air quality reduced average life expectancy in the UK by over 6 months and is responsible for approximately 50,000 premature deaths annually. In some parts of Brighton & Hove, levels of nitrogen oxides are double European and English legal limits. As part of a range of measures to improve air quality, such as the introduction of a Low Emission Zone, parking charges in this area can help to encourage less polluting travel options and reduce emissions. In Brighton and Hove, the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment has local figures for the impact of local air quality on health:

In addition, congestion in the central area can affect the reliability of journey times and long term parking can reduce accessibility and the turnover of spaces. Parking charges can help to encourage alternative transport choices and higher turnover of spaces. Better accessibility helps to support local businesses.

Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) are set by central government and cannot be changed independent.

3.15 Off-Street Parking

As with on-street parking charges, significant work has been carried out to set parking tariffs to a level which reflects the administrations traffic management objectives, particularly to reduce congestion the city centre and promote alternative forms of transport. A schedule of fees and charges are included at Appendix 4:

- It is proposed to maintain fees at The Lanes car park with the exception of the week-day 1 hour rate where an increase of 100% of £1 to £2 is proposed. The increase of the week-day 1 hour is proposed to moderate demand in this band.
- It is proposed to increase fees at London Road car park at rates between 0.0% and 6.7% at an average of 3.3%.
- It is proposed to reduce the majority of rates at Regency Square car park between 20.0% and 53.8%. It is also proposed to introduce new weekly ticket and an annual commercial season ticket. These changes aim to promote the car park as an alternative to car parks in the very centre of Brighton and reduce congestion in the busiest area of the city. An increase to the week-day 1 hour rate is proposed from £1 to £2 to moderate demand in this band.
- It is proposed to increase fees at Trafalgar Street car park at rates between 0.0% and 100.0% at an average of 16.4%, with the exception of quarterly and annual season tickets were rate reductions of 60.0% and 40.0% are proposed. This is to reflect current demand in the car park.
- It is proposed to increase fees at other car parks at rates between 0.0% and 6.7% at an average of 3.9%

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 The proposed fees and charges in this report have been prepared in accordance with the council's fees and charges policy and form part of the proposed budget strategy. They take into account of the requirement to increase by the corporate inflation rate of 2.0% (unless otherwise stated) and consideration has been given to other factors such as statutory requirement, cost recovery and prices charged by competitor / comparator organisations.
- 4.2 A report presented to the Policy & Resources Committee on 12 June 2014 suggested considering free parking on Sundays. This was not deemed consistent with the council's policy objectives to encourage sustainable transport choices and it is therefore not recommend to proceed.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 No specific consultation was undertaken in relation to this report.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Fees and charges are considered to be an important source of income in enabling important services to be sustained and provided. A wide range of services are funded or part funded by fees and charges including those detailed in the report. The overall budget strategy aims to ensure that fees and charges are maintained or increased as a proportion of gross expenditure through identifying income generating opportunities, ensuring that charges for

discretionary services and trading accounts cover costs, and ensuring that fees and charges keep pace with price inflation and/or competitor and comparator rates.

- 6.2 Fees and charges budgets for 2015/16 are assumed to increase by a standard inflation rate of 2.0% with the exception of parking charges. The Council's Corporate Fees and Charges Policy requires that all fees and charges are reviewed at least annually and should normally be increased by either; the standard rate of inflation, statutory increase or increases in the costs of providing services.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 The fees and charges have been reviewed in line with the corporate fees and charges policy and with budget assumptions approved by Policy and Resources Committee. The expected 2015/16 budgets for fees and charges for the service areas covered by this report are set out below.

Fees and Charges Budget by Service Area	£'000
City Infrastructure	
Allotments	105
City Parks	34
Sports Bookings	215
Leafleting Licences	27
Preston Park Parking	30
Planning & Building Control	
Building Control	832
Development Control	1,141
Public Protection	
Environmental Health	946
Trading Standards	17
Transport	
Highways	539
On-Street Parking	20,714
Off-Street Parking	6,101

There will be costs associated to advertising Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) for changes to charges within the Transport service which will be met from existing revenue budgets.

Finance Officer Consulted: Steven Bedford

Date: 10/12/14

Legal Implications:

- 7.2 The council needs to establish for each of the charges imposed both the power to levy charges of that type and, where applicable, the power to set the charge at a particular level. In some cases the amount of the charges is set by Government. In other cases where a figure is not prescribed, the amount that can

be charged is in general restricted to costs recovery. Special provisions apply in the case of parking charges which are set out below. In all cases, the council must act reasonably and ensure that any statutory formalities which govern the particular charge are complied with.

- 7.3 The Council is entitled to set parking charges at levels that will enable it to meet its traffic management objectives by e.g. managing supply and demand for parking. Under section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, as amended by the Traffic Management Act 2004, the Council must keep an account of all parking income and expenditure in designated (i.e. on-street) parking spaces which are in a Civil Enforcement Area, and of their income and expenditure related to their functions as an enforcement authority. Regulations and guidance confirm that in respect of off-street parking in places, the term “income and expenditure as enforcement authorities” includes that related to the issue of PCNs. It does not, for example, include pay and display or permit/season ticket income or the direct expenditure relating to collecting that income. The use of any surplus income from civil parking enforcement is governed by section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 as amended. This allows any surplus to be used for transport and highways related projects and expenditure such as supported bus services, concessionary fares and Local Transport Plan projects.

Lawyer Consulted:

Elizabeth Culbert

Date: 10/12/14

Equalities Implications:

- 7.4 Management of fees and charges is fundamental to achievement of Council priorities. The Councils fees and charges policy aims to increase the proportion of costs met by the service user. Charges, where not set externally, are raised by corporate inflation rates unless there are legitimate anti-poverty considerations.

The Corporate Fees and Charge policy states that fees and charges reviews should have an Equalities Impact Assessment where appropriate. Where significant amendments to fees and charges have been proposed, the need for an Equalities Impact Assessment has been assessed and carried out where appropriate as part of the budget setting process. A cumulative impact assessment on fees and charges is included within the budget setting process.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.5 There are no direct sustainability implications arising from the recommendation this report.

Any Other Significant Implications:

- 7.6 There are no other significant implications arising from the recommendation in this report.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 7.7 There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from the recommendation in this report.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 7.8 There are no direct risk or opportunity implications arising from the recommendation in this report.

Public Health Implications:

- 7.9 There are no direct public health implications arising from the recommendation in this report.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 7.10 The councils financial position impacts on levels of Council tax and service levels which are considered as part of the wider budget setting process.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Proposed City Infrastructure Fees and Charges 2015-16
2. Proposed Public Protection Fees and Charges 2015-16
3. Proposed Highways Fees and Charges 2015-16
4. Proposed Parking Fees and Charges 2015-16

Documents in Members' Rooms

There are no documents in Member's Rooms.

Background Documents

There are no background documents.

