

The Vale of Glamorgan Council

Cabinet Meeting: 26 March, 2018

Joint Report of the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and Transport and the Cabinet Member for Social Care Health and Leisure

Neighbourhood Services and Transport - Proposed Fees and Charges for 2018/2019

Purpose of the Report

1. To propose changes in service charges for functions managed by Neighbourhood Services and Engineering & Transportation for the financial year 2018/19.

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet approve the proposals for Neighbourhood Services, Engineering & Transportation and Porthkerry Cemetery fees/charges and required policy/process changes as set out in this report and the associated appendices.
2. That Cabinet approve the removal of concessions to the fees charged for the collection of Bulky Waste, to take effect from 1st May 2018.
3. That the report be referred to Scrutiny Committee (Environment and Regeneration) for consideration.

Reasons for the Recommendations

1. To obtain Cabinet's approval of the charging and fees proposed for 2018/2019.
2. To agree the removal of concessions for Bulky Waste Collections, the timing of which reflects the reporting process and the role of Scrutiny in that process.
3. To allow the charges and fees proposed to be considered.

Background

2. In October 2017, Cabinet approved the Income Generation and Commercial Opportunities Strategy. The Strategy sets out that as public funding becomes increasingly constrained and under more intense scrutiny, greater emphasis has to be placed upon self-generated income and developing and presenting products and services that will resonate with paying customers. The Strategy is based around a series of strategic objectives, with associated policy principles. These objectives and

principles are intended to ensure the consistent consideration and implication of income generation proposals.

3. The Council delivers a number of chargeable services through the Directorate of Environment and Housing Services. These charges are set on an annual basis and this report sets out proposals for changes to fees and charges (with associated policy/process changes) for the departments of Neighbourhood Services and Engineering & Transportation. This Service Area is required to make significant financial savings in 2018/19 of approximately £827k. This is in addition to the sustained period of budget reductions delivered over a number of years. As revenue budgets have reduced, income from fees and charges becomes ever more important as a way of sustaining priority services. The department has a wide range of income sources that feed into its operational budgets and these include Welsh Government grants, income from external works, civil parking enforcement fines, lease income and a number of fees that are levied to the public and the commercial sector. The projected income for the department for 2018/19 is £8.8m with approximately £1.3m of this income coming from the fees and charges detailed within this report.
4. As part of the action plan to deliver the Income Generation and Commercial Opportunities Strategy, a review of all existing fees and charges is underway. At times of financial pressure, there may be a temptation to propose high fee increases. However, this would not necessarily guarantee a commensurate income increase across all areas, as patronage of certain services could reduce. As advised in previous fees and charges reports, this is of particular concern with outdoor sports and services used by more vulnerable sectors of our community. These considerations are consistent with the Income Strategy and have informed the proposals contained in this report.
5. This report sets out the proposed fees and charges for the range of services offered by Neighbourhood Services and Engineering & Transportation. Specific details are provided within the body of the report for Cabinet's consideration where there are significant changes to the fees and charges or associated policy/processes involved. The remaining fees and charges are detailed in the appendices which show the current and proposed level of charges. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken as part of the review of fees and charges and can be found in [Appendix 4](#).

Relevant Issues and Options

6. The proposed charges for services for 2018/19 are set out in the appendices as follows:
[Appendix 1](#) Neighbourhood Services
[Appendix 2](#) Engineering and Transportation
[Appendix 3](#) Porthkerry Cemetery
7. To ensure that current charges reflect inflationary pressures, it is proposed to uplift the majority of service fees by the amounts contained within the attached appendices. Charges from Barry Town Council proposed for Porthkerry Cemetery reflect the current arrangements at Merthyr Dyfan Cemetery.
8. A number of charges are also proposed to be increased to better reflect the actual costs of service provision in a move towards full cost recovery which is one of the objectives of the Income Generation & Commercial Opportunities Strategy and to

generate additional revenue where this is appropriate and the analysis of demand suggests it is possible to do so. In some instances, this requires changes to the policy/processes involved and these are detailed below.

Neighbourhood Services (Appendix 1)

9. The majority of charges for Neighbourhood Services are proposed to increase in line with inflation (or slightly more reflecting take up of services and the cost of delivery).
10. The following describe changes to fees/charges and associated policy/processes where an alternative approach has been followed.

Beach Huts

11. The price of renting beach huts is proposed to increase at a rate higher than inflation to reflect the continued and strong demand for these facilities. It is considered that should these fees be increased as recommended, demand will not be negatively impacted and result in an overall reduction in income. This is consistent with the policy principle contained within the Income Generation and Commercial Opportunities Strategy which states that "services that have the ability to achieve or exceed full cost recovery on a consistent basis are encouraged to operate more commercially in order to reduce dependence on core funding". As such, in addition to the changes to charges for beach huts, work will continue to explore other ways of utilising this asset to generate revenue, for example through sponsorship and some commercial use as appropriate. Further proposals will be developed for Cabinet's consideration in due course.

Allotments

12. Cabinet endorsed the Allotments Strategy in March 2012. This strategy set out the aim of working towards achieving full cost recovery for operating these facilities over time. This is also a policy principle contained in the Council's Income Generation and Commercial Opportunities Strategy which states "the Council will work towards achieving full cost recovery unless it is determined there are legal, strategic, well-being, or contractual reasons for not doing so". No legal, strategic or contractual reasons have been identified for not moving towards full cost recovery in this area. Allotments provide an opportunity for allotment holders to improve their well-being through exercise and the production of food. In order to balance the well-being benefits of allotments with the costs to the Council of operating these sites, it is recommended that the price for allotments will increase over time towards full cost recovery and other means of delivery will also be explored. Further proposals will be developed for Cabinet's consideration in due course.

Filming & Dedications

13. A review of fees for filming and dedication schemes has taken place across the Authority as a whole as part of the Income Generation and Commercial Opportunities Programme. This review has led to the creation of a consistent set of fees and charges and terms and conditions for both Filming and Dedication schemes. Details of these fees are outlined in appendix 1.
14. Cabinet will note the discretion given to the relevant Chief Officer to negotiate on the guide prices for filming.

Bulky Waste

15. It is proposed that these charges remain the same as current levels, but that any concessions are removed from 1st April 2018 as the service is not generating sufficient income to cover its costs.

16. The Council's bulky item collection service currently costs £15 per three items, with additional items charged at £5 each up to a maximum of two items. Charges for the service were introduced in April 2015 and as a result demand for the service decreased by 54%.
17. Currently concessionary rates are offered to those wishing to book a household bulky waste collection. Concessions are currently offered to those in receipt of the following benefits; State Pension, Housing Benefit, Disability Living Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance, Pension Credit, Income Support, P.I.P, Job Seeker's Allowance and Guaranteed Pension Credits. For those who are eligible, two free collections are offered in any one year. In 2016/17, 62% of all bulky waste collections were eligible for a concession.
18. It is proposed that concessionary rates are removed for the collection of household bulky waste collections, which will ensure the true cost of this non-statutory service can be recovered in line with the Council's Income Generation and Commercial Opportunities Strategy. Should Cabinet approve this proposal, a decrease in demand for the service would be expected. It is considered appropriate to forecast that this reduction would be at least consistent with the 54% decrease experienced when charges were first introduced in 2015. This will enable the service to be delivered with reduced waiting times and the level of resources required will be closely monitored to ensure they match the demand for the service. It is acknowledged that there is a risk that instances of flytipping may increase. However, no notable increases were experienced in 2015 when charges were introduced, but this situation will continue to be closely monitored.

Recycling containers

19. It is proposed that the cost of recycling containers will remain the same at present. Cabinet will note the planned public consultation exercise for April and May 2018 to inform future collection arrangements. It is anticipated that the consultation may provide information regarding the current recycling containers offered by the Council and as such, further proposals may be forthcoming with associated charges.

Leisure Services

20. The charges for Leisure Services have also increased in line with the recommended percentage increase. However, additional work will be carried out during 2018/19 which will be subject of a further report to Cabinet recommending a different charging approach in the future, particularly where a facility is primarily used by one club or organisation.

Permits for Items on the Highway

21. The Council currently levies a charge for permits to place skips, containers, scaffolding and hoarding on the highway. These permits are currently provided for a duration of one month and it is proposed to reduce this to a period of two weeks. This is consistent with the practice of neighbouring authorities and is intended to reduce the time that highway space is used for these purposes. In addition, for all permits (with the exception of skips) it is proposed that a commercial rate will be introduced at a higher rate than for residents. The relevant proposed fees for these permits are detailed in Appendix 1.

Engineering and Transportation (Appendix 2)

Coastal Car Parks

22. The car parking charges within the Council's coastal car parks have not increased for several years. It is therefore proposed to increase the rate for Cars (1+ hours) and Coaches to £6.00 and £12.00 respectively to cover the cost of inflation over this period. The cost of parking for Cars (0 - 1 hours) has not been increased in a similar manner as it is considered that this will have detrimental impact on the well-being of the local community and residents who visit the Council's local car parks regularly for dog walking or other recreational activities.
23. The cost of parking for Cars (0 - 1 hours) after 4pm in the Vale's coastal car parks has also been increased to be consistent with the day time charges and reflect the popularity of the tourist areas where the individual car parks are located. The cost of parking for Cars (1+ hours) and Coaches has been discounted to 50% of the daytime costs to reflect the reduced parking time available after 4pm and provide a further incentive to encourage visitors to stay for longer and to assist in promoting local business usage.
24. The Off Season Charge Rate at the Barry Island resort car parks is proposed to be increased to bring it in line with the cost of parking after 4pm in all the Vale's coastal car parks in recognition of the fact that Barry Island is now an 'all year round' resort and the resources employed to deal with the 'out of season' activity are having to increase year on year. It should be noted that the car parking fees at the Council's car parks at Ogmore by Sea and at Southerndown are currently 'all year round' charges with no 'out of season' reductions applied.
25. The cost of parking within all the Vale's coastal car parks at Barry Island, Ogmore by Sea and at Southerndown is currently being further reviewed as part of the ongoing development by independent technical consultants of a Parking Strategy for the county. Any costs of parking identified as part of the Parking Strategy will look to achieve full cost recovery of providing the relevant parking facilities if this is not already the case.
26. With the exception of School Transport fees and charges, which are proposed to remain unchanged to encourage use of these services in line with Council policy, it is proposed that all other fees and charges in this service area are to be increased in line with inflation over the last year with the figures.

Porthkerry Cemetery (Appendix 3)

27. As in previous years, the charges proposed are those put forward by Barry Town Council who manage the Cemetery on our behalf. The rates are in line with those charged by Barry Town Council at their cemetery in Barry.

Resource Implications (Financial and Employment)

28. The fee increases outlined in this Report assist in reducing to the budgetary pressures within the Directorate. All income from fees including grant income is being reviewed by the business transformation project underway for Neighbourhood Services and Transport.

Sustainability and Climate Change Implications

29. It is necessary to review fees on an annual basis to ensure the continuation of services in light of increasing costs. This is undertaken in the context of the Well-being of Future Generations Act which requires the Council to consider five ways of working when making decisions. Thinking to the longer-term is a key consideration when setting fees and charges, to minimise the impact on the Council's ability to provide services in the future that the current budgetary pressures present. The proposals also seek to further the Council's Well-being Outcomes contained within the Corporate Plan. Fees and charges have been proposed to further these objectives, within the context of the financial cost of doing so. There are no specific climate change implications arising from the fee increases proposed.

Legal Implications (to Include Human Rights Implications)

30. Under relevant legislation the Council is permitted to charge for certain services it provides. Full details of the relevant legislation on fees and charges is contained in the Income Generation and Commercial Opportunities Strategy.

Crime and Disorder Implications

31. The provision of quality facilities and opportunities is recognised as making a significant contribution towards reducing crime and disorder particularly for young people.

Equal Opportunities Implications (to include Welsh Language issues)

32. An equal opportunities scoping assessment has been undertaken and shows that there are no unacceptable adverse effects on the protected characteristics identified by the assessment. It is also considered that the charges proposed will not preclude any sectors of the community from accessing the services provided. In particular blue badge holders will continue to be exempt from car parking charges.

Corporate/Service Objectives

33. The level of charges set for Neighbourhood Services and Transport assists us to operate within budget and provides much needed resourcing to maintain and enhance facilities. The relevant Corporate Plan is WO2 an Environmentally Responsible and Prosperous Wales.

Policy Framework and Budget

34. This is a matter for Executive decision by Cabinet.

Consultation (including Ward Member Consultation)

35. The matters raised have implications for all areas in the Vale of Glamorgan therefore no specific consultation has been undertaken.

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

36. Environment and Regeneration

Background Papers

Equality Impact Scoping Assessment for Fees and Charges 2018/19

Contact Officer

Head of Neighbourhood Services and Transport

Officers Consulted

Operational Manager - Neighbourhood Services: Operations

Operational Manager - Engineering

Operational Manager - Neighbourhood Services: Healthy Living and Performance

Directorate Accountant

Business Manager

Committee Reports

Equality Officer

Operational Manager – Performance and Policy

Responsible Officer:

Miles Punter- Director of Environment and Housing Services