



**REPORT of
INTERIM SECTION 151 OFFICER**

**to
STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
5 DECEMBER 2019**

2020 / 21 FEES AND CHARGES POLICY

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to review the fees and charges policies that have been put forward by officers: prior to the approval of the 2020 / 21 budget and updated Medium Term Financial Strategy in January 2020.
- 1.2 The detailed schedule of Fees and Charges will be reviewed based on the policy decisions and the Committee will recommend the actual 2020 / 21 fees and charges to Council in the January cycle of meetings. The 2020 / 21 income budgets will be based on the recommended policy.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

To the Council:

That the Council considers and reviews the suggested fees and charges policies outlined in **APPENDIX A** for 2020 / 21 and adopts a set of policies for Officers to follow.

3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

3.1 Fees and Charges

3.2 Fees and charges set by the Council are one area where the Council may have the ability to generate increased resources, however each area is subject to different constraints. In looking at these policies, the following factors need to be considered:

- Corporate and service objectives / priorities;
- Seeking to make services self-financing, where there is scope to do so;
- The level of charges levied by commercial competitors and other local authorities;
- The introduction of new charges, where appropriate;
- Whether concessions in fees and charges for specific users of the service(s) would apply or where they already apply then should they continue to apply.

3.3 **Current Position**

3.3.1 The position with each policy is set out in **APPENDIX A** including any concessions being given and any financial information, comments or issues regarding the policy.

3.4 **Areas for consideration – suggested policy changes or new policy(s)**

3.4.1 Green Waste subscriptions – The proposal is for the removal of the £5 discount for all Direct Debit and web payments. This was originally offered to increase these forms of payments as part of the channel shift to more efficient forms of payments both for the customer and the Council. However, this has now become the established form of making and receiving payments.

3.4.2 River Wharfage – The proposal is for the removal of 50% discount. A 5% discount of annual berthing fee will be offered if paid in first month of the financial year, but there will be no other discounts applicable; the ‘daily fee’ for mooring only applies to vessels using the visitor’s pontoon and not Hythe Quay berths in general. Daily charges for the visitor’s pontoon up to 28 days within a 12-month period only. Other berthing areas by Officer negotiation, based upon benchmarking.

3.4.3 Section 106 (S.106) Monitoring fee - Government guidance has recently changed in relation to S.106 contributions and the use of a monitoring fee. In order to levy a fee, it is important that the charge for monitoring S.106 agreements reflects the actual cost (or as close as can be reasonably calculated) to justify the fee as a legitimate cost as opposed to a ‘universal charge’, irrespective of the monitoring and administrative burden. It is considered appropriate to ensure a monitoring fee is charged to ensure that the burden of a S.106 agreement is cost natural to the Local Authority.

3.4.4 Recreational Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) – The Council is currently consulting on a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) focused on the mitigation that is necessary to protect the wildlife of the Essex coast from the increased visitor pressure associated with new residential development in combination with other plans and projects, and how this mitigation will be funded. Mitigation measures, which are required for any residential development within the areas of the Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) that falls within a Zone of Influence, are identified in this SPD.

3.4.5 Free Parking Concession - The proposal is for the removal of free parking concession on Bank Holidays within all town centre car parks.

3.4.6 Hythe Quay Parking - The proposal is to introduce a new policy to charge for parking on the Hythe Quay.

4. **CONCLUSION**

4.1 It is essential for the Committee to consider and review and adopt a set of Fees and Charges policies and the proposals set out in section 3.3 above in order to allow sufficient time for this to be built into the 2020/21 budget setting process.

5. IMPACT ON STRATEGIC THEMES

- 5.1 The Strategic and Financial Planning process is designed to ensure the Council delivers its organisational focus on Performance and value.
- 5.2 Each of the proposals in section 3.3 above is linked to the Council's Strategic Themes.

6. IMPLICATIONS

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – The fees and charges are for discretionary services and therefore impact on service users.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – None.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk** – The implementation of the budget setting process is designed to minimise the risk of not having a robust Medium-Term Financial Strategy.
- (iv) **Impact on resources (financial)** – Fees and Charges set by the Council are a key financial resource. The Council needs to consider additional income generation as part of the set of actions to balance its annual and future revenue budget.
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – As well as financial factors, availability of staff has been considered for each of the policies in terms of implementation, monitoring and enforcement.
- (vi) **Impact on the Environment** – None.

Background Papers: None.

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