

# Report to the Finance Resources and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee

12 December 2016

## DRAFT Scale of Fees and Charges 2017/18



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### Introduction

To provide the Committee with a further opportunity to scrutinise the draft proposals of the scale of fees and charges to apply from 1 April 2017. This is due to be considered by the Cabinet at their meeting on 18 January 2017.

### Background

At the last meeting of the Committee on 2 November 2016 members received the draft scale of fees and charges report for 2017/18. Members should refer to that report for the overall background as to how the various fees and charges are formulated.

Members raised a number of issues at the meeting and this report seeks to address them. The issues have been categorised as follows:

- Budget Information
- Further Review of Proposals
- Specific Queries

### 1. Budget Information

A request was made for details of how much income is generated from each of the main headings to help members focus on the most relevant areas.

The table below shows the actual income figures for the 2015/16 financial year together with the budgeted income figures for the 2016/17 financial year:

**Table – Fees and Charges - Income Figures**

<b>Service</b>	<b>2015/16 Actual £'000</b>	<b>2016/17 Budget £'000</b>
<b>Allotments</b>		
Allotment Rents	9	10
<b>Bus Departure</b>		
Bus Departure Charge	47	45
<b>Car Parks</b>		
Car Parking - Off Street	796	935
Car Parking - Permits	121	147
<b>Cemeteries</b>		
Burial Fees	226	240
Reservation of Burial Rights	169	180
<b>Cremations</b>		
Cremation Fees	941	990
Sales of Memorial Items	15	36
<b>Dog Wardens</b>		
Fines	7	7
<b>Elections</b>		
Supply of information	2	2
<b>Environmental Health</b>		
Pollution Control	4	7
Environmental Protection	15	24
Litter	43	40
<b>Garden Waste Recycling</b>		
Green waste sales	31	24
<b>Hire of Rooms</b>		
Room Hire	11	9
<b>Land Charges</b>		
Search Fees	220	230
<b>Leisure Charges</b>		
Pool / Hall / Room Hire	102	124
Fitness Income	947	1,045
General Swimming	224	264
Swimming Lessons	284	297
Climbing Wall	8	70
Sport Pitch / Court fees	56	70

<b>Service</b>	<b>2015/16 Actual £'000</b>	<b>2016/17 Budget £'000</b>
<b>Licences</b>		
Licences - Lotteries	2	2
Gaming Licences (Sec 34)	6	18
Temporary Event Notices	6	6
Personal Licences	4	5
Premises Licences	80	90
Licences - Regulatory	17	14
Licences - Non Regulatory	3	3
Private Hire / Hackney Carriage	309	250
<b>Markets</b>		
Market Rents	162	200
<b>MOT's</b>		
MOT's	16	20
<b>Museum</b>		
Exhibition sales	7	6
Museum Room Hire	4	3
Souvenir sales	8	7
Workshop / Training income	17	15
<b>Naming &amp; Numbering</b>		
Naming & Numbering	8	6
<b>Pest Control</b>		
Pest Control income	69	82
<b>Planning</b>		
Planning Apps Fees	419	430

## **2. Further Review of Proposals**

The Committee felt that some of the charges that were in the Council's control had not been increased enough and requested that officers undertake a further review of all the non-statutory charges for the committee to then consider at this additional meeting.

The attached Appendices show all the non-statutory charges and indicate the following for each charge:

- a.) the fee / charge for 2016/17;
- b.) the original fee / charge for 2017/18 (as submitted to the meeting of the Committee on 2 November 2016);
- c.) the proposed 2017/18 fee / charge following further review (this has been undertaken by officers in consultation with the relevant portfolio holders). Those fees where there has been a change have been highlighted in grey shading;
- d.) increase from 2016/17 to 2017/18 (ie c-a)

### **3. Specific Queries**

A number of specific queries were raised at the last meeting and the answers to these are detailed below:

#### **i.) Car Parks Enforcement Charge**

The Council already charges the maximum amount allowed by the Government and therefore cannot propose any increase. There would need to be a Commons Transport Committee recommendation with the Secretary of State for Transport supporting the proposal.

#### **ii.) Hire of Rooms**

Members will note from the table in section 1 above that there is only a small budget associated with this.

The majority of rooms are already let as detailed below:

Civic Room 1 – North Staffs Wellbeing Service (Mon – Fri all day)  
Civic Room 2 – Planning (Mon – Fri)  
Civic Room 3 – Taxi Licensing (Mon – Fri all day)  
Civic Room 4 – Available for hire (predominantly used for internal meetings)  
Civic Room 5 – North Staffs Wellbeing Service (Mon – Fri all day)  
Civic Room 6 – Available for hire (predominantly used for internal meetings)

Guildhall Room 10 – Police  
Guildhall Room 14 – Money Line (Mon and Fri all day)  
Guildhall Room 14 – Building Control (Tues and Fri 9 – 10)

Kidsgrove Room 1 – CAB (Mon AM, and Thurs PM)  
Kidsgrove Room 2 – CAB (Mon AM, and Thurs PM)  
Kidsgrove Room 3 – Social Services (All day)  
Kidsgrove Room 4 – Police (All day)  
Kidsgrove Room 5 – Generator

Committee Room 1 & 2 and Chambers Room – are available, but we have had very little interest for these rooms due to the design and layout.

In respect of promotion and marketing there are leaflets available at the Customer Service Centres. In the past flyers and e-mails have been sent to all local businesses in the Newcastle area but this did not generate any interest. As part of the drive to work closer with partners and voluntary organisations they were all e-mailed offering a free taster session. There were two interested parties but neither went on to make a booking.

#### **iii.) Pitch Hire**

An analysis of current usage and prices has shown that the Council's current pitch hire rates are towards the higher end of the price range of other providers in the locality. There is also considerable under usage with not all available pitches or slots being currently booked. Demand for senior 11-a-side football is declining and the current pitch stock has not been hired to its full capacity for a number of years.

Accordingly, it is felt that increasing prices significantly will therefore increase the risk of a further decline in bookings and may put current income levels at risk.

#### **iv.) Trade Refuse**

Collection charges are proposed to be increased in excess of inflation for 2017/18 and in some cases significantly more. This service is subject to robust market competition. A small additional increase is proposed for some business user collection charges, however, it is felt that any further additional increases at this time are likely to impact on service take-up and consequently income levels would be at risk.

#### **Question to be addressed by the Committee**

Do members have any comments to make in respect of the draft proposals of the Scale of Fees and Charges to apply from 1 April 2017?

#### **Outcomes**

That the Scrutiny Committee recommends to the Cabinet approval of the proposed Scale of Fees and Charges for 2017/18.

That any comments on the proposals are reported back to the Cabinet.

#### **Supporting Information**

Report presented to the Committee at its meeting on 2 November 2016.

#### **Relevant Portfolio Holder(s)**

Councillor Turner – Portfolio holder for Finance IT and Customer

#### **Local Ward Member (if applicable)**

All