

NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL DECISION

DECISION OF: EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HUMAN RESOURCES, ASSET MANAGEMENT, CAPITAL PROGRAMME & TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME AND THE SECTION 151 OFFICER OF THE COUNCIL
WITH ADVICE FROM: HEAD OF CORPORATE ACCOUNTANCY
DIRECTORATE: CORPORATE SERVICES



DECISION NO: 2017/2018 – CSD153

SUBJECT: 2018/19 FEES AND CHARGES UPLIFT

KEY DECISION: YES

BACKGROUND:

Fees and charges represent an important source of income, providing finance to assist in achieving the council's broad objectives. Some of our fees and charges are effectively set by legislation but many are locally determined.

Income derived from charging will be used to offset the costs of providing the service being charged for, including support service costs. In setting an appropriate level of fees and charges, managers also take into account their client groups and corporate objectives.

A general increase of 1.25% has been applied across Corporate Services income budgets as reflected within the medium term financial planning assumptions, although further adjustments have been made in some service areas where costs have exceeded these assumptions.

The proposed increases in fees and charges are necessary to meet increased costs and budgetary pressures to which the council is subject and will ensure that the contribution made by fees and charges to the council's overall income budget is maintained. Full details of the proposed fees and charges for 2018/19 are set out at appendix A, the main elements are shown below.

Carelink:

For adult social care clients all service users are subject to a financial assessment to ensure that the actual charge levied is commensurate with their available resources. The Carelink service is a discretionary service and does result in an additional charge should clients sign up to receive the service.

The council recognises the benefits that a successful Carelink service can bring and notes that significant fee increases could be an added risk as the client group are vulnerable and ability to pay or collect is often constrained. The proposed increase for 2018/19 is 4.2%, which is in line with the RPIX inflationary cost increase for service delivery.

The risks associated with Carelink charges amendments include:

- potential negative impact on the take up of services
- increased risk of non-payment
- increase in bad debt

Local Land Charges:

Local Land Charges are proposing to revise fees in accordance with the Charges for Property Searches Regulations 2008 (CPSR). Under charging for property search guidelines Local Authorities should set fees based upon a cost recovery basis. In light of this it is proposed that Local Land Charge searches (LLC1) will increase in accordance with the Council's costs and changes on (CON29) searches for the Community Infrastructure Levy, the fee will increase by up to 9% dependent on the search to reflect increased staffing time.

Street Numbering and Naming:

The council is frequently asked to carry out additional work ancillary to its statutory function such as notifying Royal Mail and emergency services of new or amended postal addresses. This work is charged for on a cost recovery basis and this will be uplifted by 1.25% from April 2018.

Electoral Registration:

The sale of printed copies of the Register is a statutory charge, other component parts will be uplifted by 1.25% from April 2018.

DECISION: To agree the 2018/19 fees and charges as set out in Appendix A with effect from the 1st April 2018.

REASONS:

In order for the council to be able to deliver its services it needs to raise income to supplement its budget. The council is restricted in its ability to generate income by various legislation and statutory regulation. Most of the fee increases proposed in this report, are to reflect increases in general cost of living (inflation) and are set at 1.25% or RPIX.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED:

The proposed fee increases described above is necessary to ensure that current levels of services are maintained. The alternative would be to cut services. Fee increases are undertaken only after due process and deliberations at management and executive levels. As part of this process all options are considered and discussed. Once reviews have been undertaken within the council, service users are notified in writing.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Funding

The proposed revision of fees and charges will potentially generate an additional £23k in 2018/19 and the values are in line with the council's medium term financial planning assumptions.

CONSULTATION

A general uplift of 1.25% on the council's income budgets has been reflected as a savings proposal within the medium term financial plan since December 2017 and as such has been subject to review, scrutiny and consultation by a wide range of internal and external stakeholders.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Fees and charges are reviewed annually as part of Budget setting (MTFP) cycle. Fees set for 2018/19 will form part of base budget rolled forward into future years. Any adverse gaps in collection will impact on the budgets of future years and vice versa for favourable gaps.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

Have you undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment? N/A – over-arching EIA included within MTFP budget report

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

N/A – considered within the MTFP

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Revenue Budget & Medium Term Financial Planning reports - Executive Dec 2017 and February 2018

SIGNATORIES:

DECISION MAKER(S):

Signed: 

Title: Executive Member for Human Resources, Asset Management, Capital Programme and Transformation Programme

Date: 8 MARCH 2018

Signed: 

Title: Head of Finance & S151 Officer

Date: 8 MARCH 2018

