

## Central Bedfordshire Council

EXECUTIVE

10 October 2017

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### **Fees and Charges 2018**

Report of Cllr Richard Wenham, Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources ([richard.wenham@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:richard.wenham@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk))

Advising Officers: Charles Warboys, Director of Resources ([charles.warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:charles.warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk))

#### **This report relates to a non-Key Decision**

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This report requests approval of the revised Central Bedfordshire Council Charging Policy and proposes the Fees & Charges pricing schedule for January 2018.

#### **Recommendations:-**

**The Executive is asked to consider and recommend to Council for approval:**

- 1. the revised Central Bedfordshire Council Charging Policy (Appendix A);**
- 2. the pricing schedule for January 2018 Fees & Charges (Appendices B – J); and**
- 3. the new Fees and Charges that are proposed to be introduced for 2018 (Appendix K).**

#### **Fees & Charges Background**

1. Fees & Charges (F&C) are subject to an annual review and any proposed increases to prices are subject to Council approval.
2. Fees & Charges price changes are due for implementation on the 1 January each year for most services, although some remain at 1 April (for example services to Schools/Academies, most of Adult Social Care and Housing) or as advised for statutory services.
3. In order to achieve a 1 January 2018 implementation date, the F&C will need to be presented to September 2017 Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee, the October 2017 Executive and the November 2017 Council meeting.

## **Overview & Scrutiny (OSC)**

4. The report was considered at the Corporate Resources OSC meeting of the 21 September 2017 and comments from the OSC will be tabled at the Executive meeting.
5. The F&C Policy states that:
  - All fees and charges will be reviewed annually and adjusted as necessary in line with this policy. The Director of Resources will provide services with guidance each year as to the general inflation rate that may be applied.
  - All F&C should be reviewed on a more fundamental basis at least every 3 years, where it will be necessary to examine all the factors set out below in accordance with good practice guidance i.e. the CIPFA Practical Guide for Local Authorities on Income Generation (Fully revised 2015). This is so that Members may make informed choices on any revised level of charge to be set.
  - The result of such review should be included in the annual F&C report in that year in order that the Council is able to ensure that charges are fair appropriate and comparable to local alternatives. This should include an accompanying financial statement to demonstrate that, taking one year with another, the income from charges does not exceed the cost of provision. The review should include an equalities impact assessment.
6. In May 2017 the Office for Budget Responsibility and the Bank of England advised that the UK inflation measured by the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) remained at 2.3%. The Director of Resources has advised that the inflation rate to be applied in line with the Corporate Budget Strategy is 2.3%. Where there have been significant variations from this advisory level these have been identified below in paragraphs 10 to 24.

## **Pricing for 2018**

7. The review of prices proposed for 2018 reflects three pricing options:
  - Prices remain at their 2017 level either because they are in line with other providers (Local Authorities) or because there is insufficient data available to support a price change or they reflect the current cost of provision.
  - Prices increased with inflation (2.3%).
  - Prices increased by more than inflation if there is sufficient information to justify an increase.
8. Some statutory charges have been left at the 2017 rate and will be revised once the authority has been advised of the rates applicable for 2018.
9. With the exception of Social Care and Housing, the implementation date of the price changes for 2018 is the 1st January 2018 wherever possible.

## **Adult Social Care and Housing**

10. The majority of F&C for Adult Social Care (ASC) and all related to Housing are due for implementation from April 2018. Prices for fees and charges related to ACS which will be implemented from January 2018 are shown at Appendix B – Adult Social Care January 2018. Charges for Deferred Payment Agreement exclude VAT.

## **Community Services**

11. Proposed prices for fees and charges related to Community Services are shown at:  
Appendix C – Community Services January 2018 Discretionary  
Appendix D – Community Services January 2018 Statutory.
12. Licences for Animal Boarding Establishments have been expanded to be proportionate to the number of animals accommodated. As proposed by the service area, the licence fee for performing animals has been increased to £110.00 from £35.40 in 2017 this is to reflect cost recovery for this provision.
13. If an individual is already registered with another local authority for the purposes of skin piercing or tattooing they can pay the reduced fee, as long as they are a member of an accredited body. In addition it is proposed that the fee for any other person looking to register themselves for these activities from the same establishment be reduced to £110 from £149 in 2017. Licences for poisons have been removed as they no longer exist.
14. Car parking charges were increased in 2016 and there is no proposed increase for 2018. The Council continues to invest in improving the technology and customer experience of our busiest car-parks which will see new ticketing machines and a move to 'pay on exit' rather than customers having to estimate how much parking time they need to pay for. This will also see greater enforcement capacity being released in order to manage on-street parking more effectively, helping compensate for the loss of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cars.
15. Room hire charges in Libraries have not been increased by the proposed inflationary rate of 2.3% as benchmarking has shown that the Library Service is not particularly competitive. There is, for example, a risk of losing Flitwick Library room bookings to Flitwick Village Hall, which has much better facilities and car parking than Flitwick Library. The service area will carry out a full review of these charges next year.
16. Theatre hire charges have been updated to reflect the commercial rate. Charges will increase by 1/3 of the community rate. Some of the charges have also been removed as they are no longer relevant. The service carried out research to ensure that there is no reduction in income; in some circumstances the new charges will allow the service to increase the income marginally without resulting in hire charges being unreasonable.

## **Regeneration and Business Services**

17. Proposed prices for fees and charges related to Regeneration and Business Services are shown at:  
Appendix E – Building Control January 2018  
Appendix F – Planning January 2018  
Appendix G – Pre-Application Advice for Building and Minerals & Waste January 18 Non-Statutory.
18. Building Control and Building Pre-Application Advice charges remain at the same rate as in 2017. These charges will be fully reviewed following a restructure within the Directorate.
19. Compliance monitoring fees (charges associated with monitoring obligations contained in agreements and undertakings) will be removed and from 2018 these fees will be negotiated on a case by case basis. All charges for Minerals & Waste are subject to VAT and therefore the proposed charges have been increased by the inflationary rate of 2.3% and now include VAT.

## **Resources**

20. Proposed fees and charges related to Resources are shown at:  
Appendix H – Resources (including Registration Service) January 18 Discretionary  
Appendix I – Resources (including Registration Service) January 18 Statutory.
21. Charges for the hire of ceremony rooms for marriage and civil partnerships have been revised. The increase for 2018 will include 2.3% plus an additional £30 to recover the full cost of providing the service.
22. Charges for Nationality Checking and European Passport Services have not been increased by 2.3%; however for 2018 these charges will include VAT (previously not included). Proposed charges have been reviewed against neighbouring authorities and also reflect the actual costs of providing the services.
23. Proposed charges for photocopying which are applicable to all services (unless specified) are shown at Appendix J – Resources Photocopying - non Statutory.

## **New fees and charges for 2018**

24. New proposed fees and charges for 2018 along with a recommended price are shown at Appendix K – New fees & charges for 2018.

**Appendices:**

Appendix A – Central Bedfordshire Council Charging Policy

Appendix B – Adult Social Care January 2018

Appendix C – Community Services January 2018 Discretionary

Appendix D – Community Services January 2018 Statutory

Appendix E – Building Control January 2018 Statutory

Appendix F – Planning January 2018 Statutory

Appendix G – Pre-Application Advice for Building and Minerals & Waste January 18 Statutory

Appendix H – Resources (including Registration Service) January 18 Discretionary

Appendix I – Resources (including Registration Service) January 18 Statutory

Appendix J – Resources Photocopying - non Statutory

Appendix K – New fees & charges January 2018