

APPENDIX 3

FEES AND CHARGES 2020/21

REPORT SUMMARY

This report sets out the fees and charges proposed for Council services for the year 2020/21. As required by best practice, all of the fees and charges of the Authority have been reviewed by Business Units and Business Support staff with a view to maximising income resources within statutory constraints. Wirral meets its statutory requirements by maintaining and publishing a comprehensive Directory of its Fees and Charges each year.

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 It is a statutory requirement for the council to publish a fees and charges directory.
- 1.2 Some areas, particularly those that face competition from the private sector, such as leisure and building control set their prices at different times. Agreeing to delegate authority to the Director of Finance and Investment and relevant directors ensures that council fees and charges can respond quickly to changes in the commercial climate.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 No other options considered. Not delegating authority to the Director of Finance and Investment and other relevant directors would result in a delay to the publication of the fees and charges directory. This is a statutory requirement and must be published by the 1st April 2020. Not delegating authority to the Director of Finance and Investment and other relevant directors would also result in a slower response from the council to adapt to changes in the market and could have a negative effect on income generation.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

REVIEW OF CHARGES FOR 2020/21

- 3.1 Wirral receives income to pay for its services from a number of different sources including:
 - Grants from central government
 - Grants from other public bodies
 - Council Tax and Business Rates
 - Fees and Charges
- 3.2 Wirral provides a wide range of services; some free to users and some charged for. The income from the charged-for services is a key source of funding to support services and generates over £50 million per year. Charges are set with the framework of the Medium Term Financial Strategy, the charging policy and legal requirements.
- 3.3 Many fees and charges for statutory services are set subject to national guidelines. There may be circumstances where the charge is set to manage demand or deter certain behaviour, such as fines. The remaining charges for services are discretionary in nature, covering a wide range of services such as Pest Control and Leisure Centres.

The Budget proposals include recommendations for fees and charges for 2020/21, following a review process by all service managers.

- 3.4 A comprehensive Directory of Fees and Charges containing a description of the charge, VAT status and the level of charges in 2020/21 is held on the Council website and updated annually.
- 3.6 In setting charges for 2020/21, the Council seeks to cover the full cost of providing services where it is possible to do so in line with the Council's service priorities.
- 3.7 To enable changes to be implemented as soon as possible to maximise income generation, delegated authority is requested for the relevant Director in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder and Director of Finance and Investment (Section 151 Officer) to vary existing fees and charges. Whilst there is an annual review as part of the budget setting process this delegated authority enables a more timely response to changes in the commercial climate and maximises the benefit to the Council financial position.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The income from fees and charges is an integral part of the council budget.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 It is a legal requirement to publish a schedule of fees and charges.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 No adverse implications for Staffing, ICT and Assets.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 Whilst income budgets for fees and charges are set with regard to the status of the charges as statutory or discretionary, the achievement of income targets can be influenced by many factors including the local economic situation. The effect of these factors can be mitigated by maintaining a constant review of charges and amending budgets where required to reflect what is achievable.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 All budget holders with fees and charges income have been consulted and have provided their updated fees and charges list for 2020/21.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Increases in fees and charges may impact upon certain groups such as those on lower incomes. Policies to offer discounts or apply means tests will help to mitigate these impacts. The implications of specific charges will be addressed by the relevant Directors when implementing any changes.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no environment and climate implications of this report.