

19 January 2012		ITEM 6
Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee		
2012/13 PROPOSED FEES AND CHARGES		
Portfolio Holders: All		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: No	
Accountable Head of Service: Sean Clark, Head of Corporate Finance		
Accountable Director: Martin Hone, Director of Finance & Corporate Governance		
This report is Public		
Purpose of Report: To consult the proposed 2012/13 Fees and Charges.		

1. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider the proposed fees and charges for 2012/13 set out in the Appendix to this report in the context of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and that the minutes of this meeting be reported to Cabinet on 22 February 2012.**

2. CABINET PROPOSALS

- 2.1** The report is being issued to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees for consultation as part of the budget setting exercise for financial year 2012/13. Feedback from the scrutiny exercise will be considered by Cabinet at their meeting on 22 February 2012 prior to formalising their budget recommendations to Full Council later in that month.

3 THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL FORECAST AND GOVERNMENT GRANT ANNOUNCEMENT

- 3.1** The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) highlights a reduction in government grant funding through the Revenue Support Grant and Business Rates redistribution of £3.317m in 2012/13 which is consistent with the two year settlement announced for 2011/12. In addition, inflationary cost pressures of £2.325m have also been identified. This results in a reduction in spending power of £5.642m in

overall terms when comparing the proposed 2012/13 budget to the current year.

- 3.2 The specific proposals for growth and savings for each Service were worked into business cases and were considered during the informal Star Chamber process between July and September 2011 in order to evaluate the potential impact on corporate priorities. The proposals have been considered by each of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
- 3.3 The proposed changes in fees and charges for 2012/13 are consistent with the objectives of the MTFs and will, if agreed, result in additional income of £100k in 2012/13 compared to 2011/12.
- 3.4 In preparing the schedule for 2012/13, some anomalies have been discovered between the charges formally agreed by the Cabinet and those currently in place for some specific services. The Director of Finance & Corporate Governance has been asked to look into this matter and once his investigation has been concluded he will report to Cabinet or Audit Committee if appropriate.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Regular meetings of Directors' Board, the Leadership Group and the wider Council management group have been held since the budget exercise commenced in July. There have also been meetings with the portfolio holders and the Conservative Group has been briefed. Consultation with the trade unions and staff potentially affected by the planned changes is currently taking place.

5. IMPACT ON CORPORATE POLICIES, PRIORITIES, PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 5.1 The budget should reflect the priorities set out within the corporate plan and so impact on all service provision.

6. IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Martin Hone**
Telephone and email: **01375 652152**
mhone@thurrock.gov.uk

The financial implications have been clearly set out throughout the body of the report and the implications of savings options set out in the appendices.

6.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **David Lawson**
Telephone and email: **01375 652087**
dlawson@thurrock.gov.uk

Local authorities are under an explicit duty to ensure that their financial management is adequate and effective and that they have a sound system of internal control and management of financial risk. This budget report contributes to that requirement although specific legal advice may be required on the detailed implementation of any agreed savings options.

6.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Samson DeAlyn**
Telephone and email: **01375 652472**
sdealyn@thurrock.gov.uk

This is a set of wide ranging and far reaching proposals, a significant number of which may have an impact on staff and residents. Each of these savings proposals will need to undergo an Equality Impact Assessment to identify potential adverse impacts on any groups.

As these proposals are going through the formal approval and scrutiny process, they will need the Equality Impact Assessment evidence to be presented for each item.

The Equality Act also came into force this October and this has raised the bar in terms of public sector equality duties for example a proposed requirement to consider socio-economic impact before implementing any policy. Whilst this requirement is subject to implementation at a later stage the Council needs to ensure that appropriate consideration is given to all new equality requirements in the policy and decision making process.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1** The budget plans are designed to ensure that a balanced financial position is achieved over the medium term while having regard to the Council's priorities, service delivery, service users and the wider public, staff and issues of equality.

BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARING THIS REPORT:

- Various budget working papers held in Finance & Corporate Governance Directorate

APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT:

- Appendix 1 – Budget – 2012/13 – Proposed Fees and Charges

Report Author Contact Details:

Name: Mike Jones
Telephone: 01375 652772
E-mail: mxjones@thurrock.gov.uk

