

6 December 2018		ITEM: 7
Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview & Scrutiny Committee		
Fees & Charges Pricing Strategy 2019/20		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key	
Accountable Assistant Director of Service: Andy Millard - Assistant Director Planning and Growth Darren Spring – Assistant Director Street Scene and Leisure Les Billingham - Assistant Director - Adult's Social Care		
Accountable Directors: Julie Rogers - Director of Environment and Highways Steve Cox - Corporate Director - Place Roger Harris – Corporate Director - Adults, Housing and Health		
This report is public		

Executive Summary

This report specifically sets out the charges in relation to services within the remit of this Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Charges will take effect from the 1 April 2019 unless otherwise stated. In preparing the proposed fees and charges, Directorates have worked within the charging framework and commercial principles set out in Section Three of the report.

Further director delegated authority will be sought via Cabinet to allow Fees and Charges to be varied within financial year in response to commercial requirements.

The full list of proposed charges is detailed in Appendix 1, and the proposed deletion of current fees and charges are detailed in Appendix 2.

1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the revised fees, including those no longer applicable; and comment on the proposals currently being considered within the remit of this committee.**
- 1.2 That Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee note that director delegated authority will be sought via Cabinet to allow Fees & Charges to be varied within a financial year in response to commercial requirements.**

2 Background

2.1 The paper describes the fees and charges approach for the services within the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee remit for 2019/20 and will set a platform for certain pricing principles moving forward into future financial years.

2.2 The paper provides narrative for the Cleaner, Greener and Safer areas:

- Arboricultural
- Outdoor Sports and the Commercial Hire of Open Spaces
- Allotments
- Domestic Waste
- Commercial Waste
- Burials and Memorials
- Environmental Enforcement and Abandoned Vehicles
- Registrars
- Theater
- Libraries
- Public Protection

2.3 The fees & charges that are proposed are underpinned in some instances by a detailed sales and marketing plans for each area. This will ensure delivery of the income targets for 2019/20, for ease these are summarised below for Cleaner, Greener and Safer covering all fees and charges income codes.

2.4 Cleaner, Greener and Safer Figures

Service	Last Year Outturn 17/18	Revised Budget 18/19	Forecast Outturn 18/19	Proposed Budget 19/20
Cleaner, Greener and Safer services	(2,118,376)	(1,976,568)	(2,334,267)	(2,399,364)

2.5 Individual Service Streams

Service	Last Year Outturn 17/18	Revised Budget 18/19	Forecast Outturn 18/19*	Proposed Budget 19/20
Arboricultural Team	(31,291)	(33,000)	(28,829)	(33,000)
Burials & Cemeteries	(308,210)	(305,032)	(308,210)	(308,000)
Country Parks	(72,100)	(74,845)	(68,467)	(74,845)
General Parks and Open Spaces	(1,557)	(702)	(2,758)	(2,758)
Street Cleansing	(34,194)	(56,991)	(53,457)	(56,991)
Waste Collection	(57,658)	(17,796)	(22,781)	(22,000)
Environmental Enforcement	(196,429)	(183,142)	(396,560)	(396,560)
Libraries	(66,046)	(87,173)	(59,675)	(97,173)
Licensing	(332,411)	(309,987)	(319,467)	(309,987)

Registrars	(245,940)	(266,024)	(266,024)	(270,024)
Public Protection	(113,554)	(12,251)	(99,395)	(99,000)
Theatre	(658,986)	(629,625)	(708,644)	(729,026)
CGS Total	(2,118,376)	(1,976,568)	(2,334,267)	(2,399,364)

Note – Forecasted Outturn position is as of August 2018.

3 Thurrock Charging Policy

3.1 The strategic ambition for Thurrock is to adopt a policy on fees and charges that are aligned to the wider commercial strategy and ensure that all discretionary services cost recover.

3.2 Furthermore, for future years, while reviewing charges, services will also consider the level of demand for the service, the market dynamics and how the charging policy helps to meet other service objectives.

3.3 When considering the pricing strategy for 2019/20 some key questions were considered:

- Where can we apply a tiered/premium pricing structure
- How sensitive are customers to price (are there areas where a price freeze is relevant)
- What new charges might we want to introduce for this financial year
- How do our charges compare with neighboring boroughs
- How do our charges compare to neighboring boroughs and private sector competitors (particularly in those instances where customers have choice)
- How can we influence channel shift
- Can we set charges to recover costs
- What do our competitors charges
- How sensitive is demand to price
- Statutory services may have discretionary elements that we can influence
- Do we take deposits, charge cancellation fees, charge an admin fee for duplicate services (e.g. lost certificates.)

3.4 For Cleaner, Greener and Safer a number of different methods to tier their charges are used depending on the service area:

- **Burials** – tier charges between internment of ashes versus remains; and then further for ashes which are within a grave (part 1) or memorial garden (part 2) location.
- **Parks and Open Spaces** – charges are tiered based on the type of activity and then further by number of bookings.
- **Thameside** – tier hire of space charges based on organisation type, size of area, and time.
- **Licensing** – provide a range of license types, but tier charges where possible i.e. based on number of people for events, or number of years the license is for, renewal or new license.
- **Heritage** – provides historical and education talks with charges tiered by

location, and whether it is a new or existing subject matter talk.

3.5 The key following changes have occurred for 2019/20 fees and charges:

- **Outdoor Sports and open spaces** have increased fees and charges in line with inflation
- **Allotments** - fees and charges are unchanged for 2019/20
- **Domestic Waste** - fees and charges are unchanged for 2019/20
- **Commercial Waste** - fees and charges are provided upon request, as they depend on client specific considerations, i.e. bin size, frequency etc
- **Burials and Memorials** - fees and charges have been increased generally, in line with inflation and actual costs. Other changes have also been introduced to better manage the council limited resources:
 - Plot reservation initial periods have been reduced to 50 years
 - Plot reservation is capped to two plots, at time of an interment only
- **Environmental Enforcement** – fees and charges are set by legislation, with Council charging the maximum permitted, in line with policy.
- **Registrars** - fees and charges have (with the exception of deposits) been increased in line with neighbouring areas and to ensure full cost recovery.
- **Theatre** - fees and charges have a number of changes with:
 - Existing Hire of spaces increased by inflationary index
 - New space hire charges for all ancillary areas (e.g. gallery)
 - New charges for ticket production, for hirers own box office use.
 - New charges for hire of theatre equipment (e.g. snow machines)
- **Libraries** - fees and charges are generally unchanged, with the following exceptions:
 - DVD & CD fees and charges are reduced to reflect legacy technology.
 - Catalogue Requests fees and charges increased significantly to reflect actual costs of service provision.
 - New Bulk photocopying fees and charges introduced to support local businesses, researchers and residents.
 - New Visa service is introduced for immigration processing checks.
 - Hire of library spaces fees and charges have been expanded to cover hire within-hours and out-of-hours.
- **Public Protection** - licensing fees and charges are set through the licensing committee and remain unchanged for 2019/20. Other Public Protection fees and charges remain unchanged for 2019/20 with the exception of Weight and Measures and Trading Standards advice, both of which have increased.
- **Public Protection** – Control of Major Accidents and Hazards Regulations charges are unchanged having been introduced in 2018/19 under delegated authority.
- **Heritage Service** – will provide a range of talks and education sessions at schools, Thurrock Museum and Coalhouse Fort, from 2019/20.

4 Proposals and Issues

4.1 The fees and charges for each service area have been considered and the main considerations are set out below.

- 4.2 A council wide target of £8.912m has been proposed within the MTFS for additional income generation in respect of fees and charges income for 2019/20. This represents a 7.5% increase on the 18/19 income generation target and takes into consideration actual performance during 18/19.
- 4.3 For Cleaner, Greener and Safer Services the increase equates to a target of £2.399m to be secured through a blend of demand increase from residents and businesses, and an increase in fees and charges for 2019/20.
- 4.4 To allow the Council services to better respond to changes in the commercial environment for fees and charges; delegated authority will be sought through Cabinet to permit the Director of the Service Area jointly with the Director of Commercial Services to vary service charges within financial year due to commercial considerations.
- This will allow service areas, providing services on a traded basis to vary their fees and charges to reflect commercial and operational considerations that impact the cost recoverability calculations.
 - Any changes to Fees and Charges due to commercial considerations will require the consultation with, and agreement of, the relevant Portfolio Holder.
- 4.5 Unless indicated otherwise, fees and charges for 2019/20 will increase in line with RPI (retail price index) forecast for 2019/20 of circa 2.9% (subject to rounding).

5 Arboricultural

- 5.1 The service area is currently being reviewed and at present there is limited commercial operational scope, although an income target is shown this is offset through savings from vacant posts.

6 Outdoor Sports and the Commercial Hire of Open Spaces

- 6.1 The strategic objective for charging for use of the outdoor sports facilities is to provide quality services that are competitively priced to encourage optimum use and consequently maximise income levels while at the same time reducing net subsidy.
- 6.2 The sports offer is currently heavily subsidised, with the income received from the letting of sports facilities recovering significantly less than the cost of delivering the service. User expectations are high and the service is being challenged to maintain and in some cases improve the service offer. The service area will be reviewed during 2018-19 to understand fully the financial position and to develop options for improving its financial position.
- 6.3 The outdoor sports service offer is periodically reviewed, and fees and charges have been increased for 2019/20 in line with indexation. Fees and Charges remain comparable with those of comparator boroughs.

- 6.4 The structure of the fees and charges has been expanded to correctly reflect VAT for those charges that qualify. This was not previously shown as separate lines within the fees and charges.

7 Allotments

- 7.1 Thurrock Council currently provides two Allotment Sites with all other sites in the borough being self-managed by community groups. The fees and charges in this report reflect Council Managed Allotments only.
- 7.2 The income received from allotments contributes towards the ongoing running costs that they incur. Taking into account the management costs and the income received Allotments are currently cost neutral.
- 7.3 Allotment charges will remain unchanged for 2019/20.

8 Domestic Waste Charges

- 8.1 The collection of Domestic Waste is provided free of charge. Legislation makes a number of exceptions to this; Waste Collection Authorities can charge for the collection of bulky items and for replacement waste receptacles where appropriate. The Council currently charges for both bulky waste collections and replacement waste receptacles, the charges for both have been reviewed as part of this process and remain unchanged.
- 8.2 The strategic objective for charging for non-statutory waste services is to cover the cost of providing the service, so far as is practicable; taking account of the need to protect the street scene, residential amenity and to provide residents with an affordable responsible avenue to dispose of their waste. In support of this campaigns are being developed to promote responsible waste disposal.
- 8.3 In order to encourage residents to responsibly dispose of their waste the charge for bulky waste collections will remain unchanged for 2019/20. The collection of these materials incurs a net expense to the council however the decision has been taken not to increase charges to prevent any increase in fly-tipping.
- 8.4 The charges for the issuing of replacement Refuse and Recycling Bins where lost or damaged are also remaining unchanged for 2019/20. A review of the current costs to the Council will be undertaken for replacement bins to ensure cost recovery.
- 8.5 An additional charge was introduced in 2018/19 to cover the cost of supplying eurobins to flatted complexes for new developments and remains unchanged for 2019/20.

9 Commercial Waste

- 9.1 The Commercial Waste Service offer waste collection and disposal services to businesses and organisations within Thurrock who do not qualify for a domestic collection under the Controlled Waste Regulations 2012. The service offer a

wide range of collection sizes across residual waste, composting and recycling disposal methods in order to meet needs of small, medium and large businesses across the borough.

- 9.2 Currently the service is projected to deliver on its current income target for 2018/19, and charges remain unchanged for 2019/20. Trade waste charges are shown for information but are Price-On-Asking (POA), as they are commercially sensitivity.
- 9.3 Commercial Waste charges are set in line with the volume and frequency of collections that a customer requires and at a rate that will best support the delivery of our income targets. Due to the significant market penetration achieved in recent years the income level generated is not expected to increase materially for 2019/20.

10 Burials and Memorials

- 10.1 Thurrock Council maintains 5 cemeteries providing a range of burial services and graves for cremated remains. Charges for Thurrock Residents are at the rates stated in the Fees and Charges.
- 10.2 In order to protect our limited resources Fees and Charges for non-Thurrock residents are doubled across all categories, as per previous years. This is to reflect the lack of burial space in London boroughs (with notable higher fees) and ensure that Thurrock residents retain enough capacity to meet future requirements. Additional changes have also been made as described below, to further protect these resources from encroachment and ensure availability.
- 10.3 All fees are waived for children up to the age of 16 years.
- 10.4 Burial and Memorial Fees and charges has been reviewed and the benchmarking with neighbouring Authorities has been taken into account. Fees and Charges been increased generally in line with inflation in order to recover any increased costs. The Burials Service is in the process of exploring the opportunities for a wider range of services including cremation and natural burials.
- 10.5 Internment of Ashes – Part 2 Memorial Gardens charge has been increased above inflation to take account of actual costs.
- 10.6 Plot Reservation will also be changed to reflect the limited in-borough capacity. Such that the reservation of a plot is only permitted when a burial is being undertaken to enable the relatives to reserve a single adjoining plot. For avoidance of doubt this means that a maximum of two plots can be purchased. This will enable 3 full burials plus 6 internments of ashes, per plot.
- 10.7 Plot reservation for the exclusive right of burial, will also be reduced from the current 99 years, to 50 years with the option to extend this by 10 year intervals. This is again to manage the Councils limited capacity and improve the utilization of these limited assets for the benefit of all residents.

11 Environmental Enforcement and Abandoned Vehicles

- 11.1 Environmental Enforcement issue fixed penalty notices (FPN's) for breaches of legislation. Where appropriate the alleged offender is issued with a FPN as an opportunity to discharge any liability for conviction for the alleged offence. Issuing a FPN is not always appropriate for repeat offenders or those where the severity is such that prosecution is more appropriate.
- 11.2 The minimum and maximum amount that a fixed penalty notice can be issued for is determined by offence and is set out in legislation. The Council has licence to set the amount between the legislated minimum and maximum and can offer early repayment discounts if they are so minded.
- 11.3 In line with the objectives of Clean it, Cut it Fill it and the zero tolerance approach to Environmental Crime, all Fixed Penalty Notices charges have been set at the maximum amount permissible in law, with no option for an early repayment discount.
- 11.4 The proposed 2019/20 income budget for Enforcement reflects the current levels being generated. But there is a corresponding impact on expenditure; therefore the net financial impact is netted off. This is reflected in the detailed financial analysis which informs the budget setting, which offsets income against expenditure and does not result in a budget saving.

12 Registrars

- 12.1 The Register Office provides the statutory service of registering births deaths & marriages, alongside the non-statutory service of nationality checking and citizenship ceremonies on both a group and individual basis.
- 12.2 The fees and charges set by the Council are always reviewed against neighbouring Authorities, and take full account of any statutory charge limitations.
- 12.3 Customer engagement throughout the year allows us to take into consideration local reaction and address any concerns to changes in the fees and charges.
- 12.4 Overall fees and charges have been increased in line with neighbouring areas and the commercial principal for full cost recovery; this has resulted in increases across the majority of the existing service charges.

13 Theatre Services

- 13.1 The Thameside Theatre is one of the services accommodated in the Thameside Complex. Costs have been funded through a mixture of:
- Fees for hire of the facilities
 - Traded Services - for example ticket sales, bar and kiosk merchandise
 - Council subsidy

13.2 The team has worked with the Commercial Services team and colleagues across the Council to develop a business plan which seeks to eliminate council operating subsidy, build on the reputation of the theatre and increase audience numbers. Like any trading organization, income and costs vary year to year. The annual turnover is typically £650k. In 2016/17, the theatre generated a small surplus and in 2017/18 the subsidy was only £8k.

13.3 A thorough review of fees and charges was undertaken for the 2017/18 financial year. Notably:

- A discount tariff was deleted
- HMRC Required that VAT charges were imposed on hiring accommodation;
- Hire charges were raised by 3%;
- The performance night staffing charge was increased by 60% to better reflect the actual cost.
- Sunday hire charges were reduced to attract more business to the theatre.

13.4 These changes were implemented in April 2017 and the impact was an increase in hire charges of up to 23% for organisations unable to reclaim VAT plus a 60% increase in the performance surcharge. Bookings are taken a year or more in advance and it was feared that the price increase would cause customer resistance. Luckily – competitor venues have undergone the same process and hires have not dropped. The Sunday hire charge decreases have been well received and the numbers of Sunday bookings have continued to increase.

13.5 As a consequence of the significant changes made to charges in 2017/2018, the on-going assessment of their impact, current performance and competitor analysis; it is proposed that charges are increased as follows in 2019/2020:

- Approx. 3% increase theatre hire (Actual increase depends on rounding figures);
- No change to performance surcharge;
- Rationalization of charges for technical equipment hire to increase use and simplify charging
- Reduction of hire charge for Thameside Two in-line with other similar venues to increase hire
- Adoption of charges for all other areas that may be rented out.
- Review of charges for foyer for functions including a reduced surcharge
- Introduction of returnable deposit for gallery use to encourage maximum usage
- Introduction of fee to produce tickets for hirers who wish to act as their own box office.

13.6 New charges may be introduced during the year as new revenue streams are developed. These will be reflected in the following year's fees and charges

report.

14 Libraries

- 14.1 Local authorities have a statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 to provide a free comprehensive and efficient library service for all.
- 14.2 The Thurrock Library Service is delivered as part of the wider Essex Contract. This means that Thurrock residents benefit from the wider stock available from across Essex, as well as support with the library management system.
- 14.3 Income from fees and charges in 2018/19 is showing a pressure of £25k. Currently the income from Library services is reactive to the behavior of library users. Many of the formats previously hired are no longer marketable such as DVD's and CD's. Furthermore, the photocopiers in libraries are in the process of being modernised to enable more use, especially in bulk copying. A Library and Community Hub strategy is being considered by Health Overview and Scrutiny in November, and Cabinet in December. The strategy commits to developing a five year investment plan, balancing council funding with commercial and partner opportunities to create a sustainable future. The consultation held summer 2018 to inform the strategy, identified a number of ideas for income generation which are currently being explored and are likely to help enable a more proactive approach to income through fees and charges to be developed.
- 14.4 The proposed fees and charges for 2018/19 have been compared to Essex and Southend Councils, and adjusted where applicable so there is some consistency for residents using the Essex libraries; Southend is no longer part of the Essex Contract. In addition, the fees and charges for libraries in 2019/20 reflect full cost recovery where there is a rationale for applying, this includes requests from other libraries outside Essex and Thurrock, as well as requests from the British Library.
- 14.5 The fee for damaged/lost items for books where no current value can be traced is rarely used. It is usually possible to find a current cost for replacement with a percentage reduction depending on how many years the item has been in stock.
- 14.6 DVD and CD hire: these items are only purchased in small numbers as these formats are being superseded by downloads and alternative technologies (i.e. streaming). And the decrease in fees reflects the market rate; for both DVD/CD and book sale items. CD-Roms are no longer used, and costs are only included for microfilm.
- 14.7 Bulk photocopying service for 50+ copies will be possible following the introduction of new photocopiers, expected in November 2018. This will encourage organisations to consider using branches for larger copying orders. New photocopiers will also address the current shortfall in income from fees. This function will require assistance from staff.

- 14.8 Premises Hire: the proposed charges will be reviewed as partnerships with the community hubs are developed. Currently the charges are divided into hire within opening hours, and hire outside of opening hours (as these require a member of staff to open and close facility). Charges reflect what we know partners are likely to be prepared to pay.
- 14.9 A new Visa service for immigration purposes is due to be introduced in Grays Central Library in November 2018, following the successful tender to run this service locally. Income from this service, along with all income from fees and charges applied and collected through the library service; will be ring-fenced to support developing future provision of services.

15 Public Protection

- 15.1 The objective for public protection is to ensure that the fees charged for licences cover the cost of the provision of the licensing service. In most cases licensing legislation prohibits us from making a surplus on the provision of a licence in other cases the licence fees are set nationally or capped at a certain level.
- 15.2 For other fees charged by public protection the picture varies dependent on the purpose for which the fee is charged and so where permissible in law we levy fees to maximise returns based on the costs of the provision of the service provided and market conditions.
- 15.3 Fees are reviewed annually to ensure full cost recovery is achieved whenever possible; and in line with legislation, commercial principals and where permissible, we alter fees to maximise the income contribution towards the Councils budget position.
- 15.4 Licence charges for financial year 2019/20 are outlined below:
- Alcohol & Entertainment– are unchanged, at statutory limitations
 - Gambling, including Lotteries and Amusements – are unchanged, at statutory cap.
 - Animal Feed Regulations– are unchanged, at statutory limitations
 - Explosives Regulations - are unchanged, at statutory limitations
 - Petroleum Regulations - are unchanged, at statutory limitations
- 15.5 The following license charges for financial year 2019/20 are on a full cost recovery model; there are no proposals for any changes, however any proposals for changes for these will be agreed through the Licensing Committee.
- Massage and Special Treatment
 - Hackney Carriage and Private Hire
 - Sex Establishment
 - Scrap Metal
 - Street Trading

- Animal Premises Licensing.

15.6 Public Protection charges are outlined below:

- Control of Dogs – are unchanged, due to external contractor costs
- Testing and Verification of Weighing and Measuring Equipment – have been updated and price matched against neighboring Authorities.
- Other Environmental Protection Charges – are unchanged, due to market competition
- Other Sales and Service Charges – are generally unchanged

15.7 Local Authority Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (LA-IPPC \ LAPPC) is a system which applies an integrated environmental approach to regulate certain industrial activities. Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) changes in 2017/18 meant that the methodology and structure of the charges were fully revised for 2018/19 fees and charges. DEFRA charges remain unchanged for 2019/20.

15.8 LA-IPPC involves determining the appropriate controls for industry to protect the environment through a single permitting process. This means that emissions to air, water (including discharges to sewers) and land, plus a range of other activities with an environmental impact, must be considered together.

16 Public Protection – Statutory COMAH Activities

16.1 Relate to statutory duties for inspections, exercises and/or making of recommendations to COMAH applicable sites within the borough where materials, chemicals, oil, gas or other substances are stored, transported and processed; such that they represent a major hazard and consequently fall under the Control of Major Accidents Hazards Regulations 2015 (COMAH).

16.2 These were introduced during 2018/19 under delegated authority, and under the regulations the council is permitted to recover all costs associated with performance of its duties including all overheads and associated costs.

16.3 Service delivery was internalised in 2018/19, and is delivered using a rate charge for officer time, and supporting activities.

16.4 This service may also be sold to other businesses (i.e. sites where COMAH regulations are currently not applicable) on a commercial basis and charged on an individual case basis, against an agreed scope of works to be undertaken.

17 Heritage Service

17.1 The Heritage Service will be charging fees at the Thurrock Museum and Coalhouse Fort during 2019/20. Fees will be charged for the following services:

- School visits to Coalhouse Fort and Thurrock Museum
- Talks given to other organisations
- Information education sessions

- Topic loan boxes for schools
- Research and readers tickets

17.2 School visit charges for Coalhouse Fort and Thurrock Museum are based on a class of pupils. The fee is a flat fee of £150 per class, per day (based on c.30 pupils).

This fee covers the cost of a staff members time to run the session and a freelancer to help deliver the session, so that two classes can attend on one day. This is preferred both by the schools and heritage service; and the fee has been set to take into account affordability for the local areas, affordability for schools and what other local providers also charge (including Braintree, Chelmsford, Essex and Southend). The fee set is lower than some other organisations as the Heritage service does not provide the same level of dedicated and specialised resources.

17.3 Historic and Educational talks – can be given within or outside of Council hours, examples of this are Local Historical Society, U3A groups and historical event days. The fee for new talks is a flat fee of £100, with the fee then dropping to £70 for subjects already prepared and researched. This fee had been decided to cover professional staff knowledge and time, whilst keeping the service affordable for organisations and compares favorably with other providers. Alternatively, talks carried out at Thurrock Museum will be charged at £4 per person, again this price has been decided to reflect what similar organisations charge.

17.4 Informal Education sessions – take place during school holidays to engage the local community and different age groups in the borough heritage. Sessions will be charged at £5 per child, accompanied by adult (free). This price has been decided upon based on other local organisation charges and the resource cost needed during these sessions. Further, the Museum is looking to put a monthly activity on for parents and toddlers, these will be charged at £3 per toddler in line with other Museum charges.

17.5 Topic Loan boxes gives the opportunity to bring artifacts from the Museum into the classroom. Boxes will be themed to align with curricular, and a survey of schools showed positive interest in this service. The charge for each topic box will be £20 per box, per half term, and compares favorably to other museums.

17.6 Research and Reader tickets – relates to enquires for research or other information about a specific local history project or subject. The museum does not have the resources to research this information for the public, and this will allow users to purchase a yearly readers ticket to access the archives and pay for photographs or copies of documents. The cost for a reader ticket will be £10 per person, per year. Museum volunteers will be able to access the archive for free. This compares favorably to other record officers and will be reviewed after 6 months.

18 Reasons for Recommendation

18.1 The setting of appropriate fees and charges will enable the Council to generate essential income for the funding of Council services. The approval of reviewed fees and charges will also ensure that the Council is competitive with other service providers and neighbouring councils. The ability to vary charges within financial year will enable services to more flexibly adapt to changing economic conditions.

18.2 The granting of delegated authority to vary these charges within financial year will allow the Council to better respond to commercial challenges.

19 Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

19.1 Consultations will be progressed where there is specific need. However, with regard to all other items, the proposals in this report do not affect any specific parts of the borough. Fees and charges are known to customers before they make use of the services they are purchasing.

20 Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

20.1 The changes in these fees and charges may impact the community; however it must be taken into consideration that these price rises include inflation.

21 Implications

21.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Carl Tomlinson**
Finance Manager

Additional income will be generated from increases but this is variable as it is also dependent on demand for the services. Increases to income budgets have been built into the MTFS.

21.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **David Lawson**
Assistant Director of Law & Governance and
Monitoring Officer

Fees and charges generally fall into three categories – Statutory, Regulatory and Discretionary. Statutory charges are set in statute and cannot be altered by law since the charges have been determined by Central government and all authorities will be applying the same charge.

Regulatory charges relate to services where, if the Council provides the service, it is obliged to set a fee which the Council can determine itself in accordance with a regulatory framework. Charges have to be reasonable and must be applied

across the borough.

Discretionary charges relate to services which the Council can provide if they choose to do so. This is a local policy decision. The Local Government Act 2003 gives the Council power to charge for discretionary services, with some limited exceptions. This may include charges for new and innovative services utilising the power to promote environmental, social and economic well-being under section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000. The income from charges, taking one financial year with another, must not exceed the cost of provision. A clear and justifiable framework of principles should be followed in terms of deciding when to charge and how much, and the process for reviewing charges.

A service may wish to consider whether they may utilise this power to provide a service that may benefit residents, businesses and other service users, meet the Council priorities and generate income.

Decisions on setting charges and fees are subject to the Council's decision making structures. Most charging decisions are the responsibility of Cabinet, where there are key decisions. Some fees are set by full Council.

21.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**
Community Engagement and Project
Monitoring Officer

The Council is responsible for promoting equality of opportunity in the provision of services and employment as set out in the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty. Decisions on setting charges and fees are subject to Community Equality Impact Assessment process and the Council's wider decision making structures to determine impact on protected groups and related concessions that may be available.

21.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

None applicable

22 Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

None

23 Appendices to the report

Appendix 1 – Schedule of Proposed Fees and Charges for 2019/20
Appendix 2 – Schedule of Fees and Charges no longer applicable

Report Author:

Andrew Austin

Commercial Manager