

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO HEALTH AND HOUSING COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No 5

meeting date: 15 MARCH 2018
title: REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES 2018/19 - UPDATE
submitted by: CHIEF EXECUTIVE
principal author: HEATHER BARTON

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To seek member approval to:

- amend three proposed 2018/19 fees and charges, which had previously been approved by this Committee in October 2017, and
- agree one new 2018/19 fee.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Council's fees and charges are reviewed on an annual basis as part of the budget setting process. The 2018/19 fees and charges, for implementation from 1 April 2018 for this Committee, were approved at this Committee's meeting on 19 October 2017.

2.2 Since approval of the fees and charges, Environmental Health and Finance officers have considered other factors and become aware of further information which has led to different fee levels now being proposed for three fees. In addition, one new fee area has been identified for inclusion in the 2018/19 fees and charges listing.

2.3 The amended fees and charges proposed here still reflect the key messages from Budget Working Group for officers and Committees to bear in mind when reviewing the fees and charges, as follows:

- Any charges should look to meet the costs of providing the services being used.
- As an **absolute minimum** all fees and charges should be increased by 2%.
- Where possible comparisons should be made to the charges being made by our neighbours in Lancashire – or wider if appropriate.
- We should thoroughly review our services for areas where we are not charging – but where a charge may be made/be appropriate.
- As part of the review, we should be looking at innovative ways of charging.

3 MEMORIAL BENCH AND COMMEMORATIVE TREES FEES UPDATE

3.1 The 2018/19 fees for both Memorial Bench and Commemorative Trees, approved on 19 October 2017, were "At cost – materials plus officer time input". Since the fees were set on that basis and following further consideration, officers now propose to set fixed fee levels for both Memorial Bench and Commemorative Trees. The fixed fee levels proposed should ensure the Council still covers the costs of providing memorial benches and commemorative trees.

3.2 This approach is considered the best option for the following reasons. Firstly, it allows the Council to specify the bench and tree types to be sited in the cemetery, so they fit in with the look and feel associated with the cemetery and, with regard to

trees, fit the ground conditions. Secondly, relatives and friends of the deceased have a straight forward fee structure to select from and do not have to wait for different quotes and estimates. Thirdly, other Lancashire cemeteries have fixed fee levels.

3.3 The proposed 2018/19 fee for a Memorial Bench (inclusive of plaque) is £750. This covers the estimated costs of the Council, is in line with the memorial bench fee set by the Council already for roadside seats and is close to the average of other Lancashire cemeteries' current fees, £717.

3.4 The proposed 2018/19 fee for Commemorative Trees is £170. This is an increase of 70% from the current 2017/18 fee of £100. However, the £170 proposed fee now covers the estimated costs of the Council and is less than the average fee of two other Lancashire cemeteries' current fees, £291.

4 PRIVATE WATER SAMPLES FEES UPDATE

4.1 Under the guidance for setting private water sample fees, the Council should set fees to only cover the estimated costs it incurs.

4.2 The 2018/19 fee for Large Water Supply – Audit and Check Monitoring, approved on 19 October 2017, was set at £103. This was based on the cost of lab test fees and one hour of Environmental Health officer time. Since the fee was set we have been informed of a reduction in lab test fees. To reflect this reduction, it is now proposed that the 2018/19 Large Water Supply – Audit and Check Monitoring fee is set at £100.

4.3 In recent months, the Environmental Health team have commenced the latest round of private water supply risk assessments and sample testing. Several results have prompted re-testing and parameters set for each re-test are specific to that test and thus the lab test fees vary for each re-test. Given that, it is proposed to introduce a fee for Private Water Sample Re-test of "Cost of lab test fees plus officer time".

5 RISK ASSESSMENT

5.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications:

- Resources – Fees and charges provide a key income source for the Council. Fees and charges also provide a mechanism to target concessions, and also to charge service users directly rather than allowing the financial burden of certain service provision to fall on the council tax.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – The Local Government Acts of 2000 and 2003 extended authorities' powers to charge for discretionary services.
- Political – none.
- Reputation – Substantial increases to charges can generate adverse publicity.
- Equality and Diversity – One of the aims of the fees and charges mechanism on many services is to pass on service concession in order to increase inclusivity.

6 CONCLUSION

6.1 Amended 2018/19 fees are proposed as follows:

- Memorial Bench, £750
- Commemorative Trees, £170
- Large Water Supply – Audit and Check Monitoring, £100.

6.2 A new fee is proposed for Private Water Sample Re-test of “Cost of lab test fees plus officer time”.

6.3 The potential budget impact of the amended fees and new fee proposed above is shown in **Annex 1**.

7 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

7.1 Approve the following proposed fees and charges, for implementation from 1 April 2018, to replace the fees previously approved on 19 October 2017:

- Memorial Bench, £750
- Commemorative Trees, £170
- Large Water Supply – Audit and Check Monitoring, £100.

7.2 Approve the proposed new fee for Private Water Sample Re-test of “Cost of lab test fees plus officer time”, for implementation from 1 April 2018.

HEATHER BARTON
HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

MARSHAL SCOTT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

HH*-*/
2 March 2018

For further information please ask for Heather Barton or Andrew Cook.

BACKGROUND PAPERS – None

Health and Housing Committee – Updates to Proposed Fees and Charges 2018/19, at 15 March 2018

CLCEM - Clitheroe Cemetery

Fee Type	Fee	Ledger Code	VAT	Date of Last Change	Charge from 1st April 2017	Budgeted Income Net of VAT for 2017/18	Proposed Charges for 2018/19	Indication of Potential Income Net of VAT for 2018/19	Percentage Increase in Charge
					£	£	£	£	%
Fees for Memorials	Commemorative Trees	CLCEM/8508z	Non Vatable	24 October 2016	100.00	500.00	170.00	850.00	70%
	Memorial Bench	CLCEM/8507z	Non Vatable	New Charge	New Charge	New Charge	750.00	New Charge	N/A

ENVHT – Environmental Health Services

Fee Type	Fee	Ledger Code	VAT	Date of Last Change	Charge from 1st April 2017	Budgeted Income Net of VAT for 2017/18	Proposed Charges for 2018/19	Indication of Potential Income Net of VAT for 2018/19	Percentage Increase in Charge
					£	£	£	£	%
Water Sample Risk Assessment and Analysis	Large Water Supply - Audit & Check Monitoring**	ENVHT/8417u	Non Vatable	01 April 2017	111.00	2,410.00	100.00	2,170.00	-9.91%
	Private Water Sample Re-test		Non Vatable	New Charge	New Charge	New Charge	Cost of lab test fees plus officer time	New Charge	N/A