

NORTH DEVON COUNCIL

POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE: 10TH FEBRUARY 2022

MINUTE EXTRACT OF STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 7TH FEBRUARY 2022 IN RESPECT OF ITEM 7 ON THE POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE AGENDA

105. REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES FOR SERVICES 2022/23

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive (circulated previously) regarding the review of fees and charges for services 2022/23. Strategy and Resources Committee - 7 February 2022.

The Accountancy Services Manager highlighted the following:

- This year the guidance was to increase some fees and charges by 2%, although some fees were set by statute and these would be set nationally. Other variations to the 2% increase were set out in paragraphs 4.3 to 4.8 of the report. Even though inflation was currently running much higher than the 2% increase officers have tried to be prudent and fair in the fees that were charged and the impact this had on our customers.
- Building Control fees have been raised by an average of 3% and rounded to the nearest pound, this was to ensure they were competitive in the sector of the market and also that the income recouped the cost of providing the service (detailed in Appendix B of the report).
- Land Charges fees have been set to recoup the cost of providing the service, without changing the current fees the land charges service was still budgeted to recover all the costs and break even (detailed in Appendix D of the report).
- There was one change to the Environment Health fees, as the majority of these were set by statute or set to recover costs, which was the introduction of a £10 fee for taxi and private hire driver safeguarding training (detailed in Appendix E of the report).
- Although it was proposed that the Pannier Market fees be increased by 2% it was proposed to make the charge inclusive of VAT, which enabled the Council to recover the VAT on the planned capital works required for the Pannier Market as part of the Future High Streets Project, which was due to start in 2022/23. Other than the 2% inflationary increase there is no other change to the traders as the loss of income in relation to the VAT change would fall with the Council and this income reduction had been built into the 2022/23 draft budget (detailed in Appendix H of the report).
 - Bulky Waste – it was proposed to increase the fees as follows:
 - o Up to 2 items £18.00 (5.88% increase)
 - o Up to 3 items £26.00 (4% increase)
 - o Up to 4 items £33.00 (3.13% increase)
- It was proposed to increase the Garden Waste charge by £5 to £45.
- The net changes in the charges were expected to result in £104,000 of additional income which has been included within the draft 2022/23 budget.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Director of Resources advised the following:

- It was anticipated that the proposed 2% increase on Pannier Market fees would result in an additional £3,500 income. The Chief Executive had recently taken an urgent decision to reduce the Pannier Market fees and it would be proposed that officers could be delegated authority to take this decision again in the future. If the decision was made not to increase the fees, the financial impact could be managed within the existing budget.
- The proposed increase to the Garden Waste charge was to cover the current cost of providing the service which was around £47 cost per household and that the costs of the service were then being paid for by the users. Currently approximately 19,000 households subscribed to the service which had increased over the past 12 months. Neighbouring Authorities were charging a similar fee and Torridge District Council was proposing to increase their fees to £50 in the 2023/24 year. The proposed increase would bring the fee in line with other neighbouring Councils. If the fee was not increased, this would have a £98,000 financial impact on the Council. In 2017, the fee was £36 and the cost of the service was being subsidised. This fee was not increased for 4 years, therefore there were a number of years where the fee was under inflated.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Chief Executive advised the following:

- That an urgent decision had been recently been made to reduce the Pannier Market fees for up to a maximum four month period. It was proposed that a report would be presented at the Annual Council meeting as part of the review of the Constitution requesting that power be delegated to officers to take this decision ongoing.
- The Government had undertaken consultation a number of months ago on green waste services provided by Local Authorities. The results of the consultation had not yet been received.

RECOMMENDED:

(a) That there be a 2% increase in fees for 2022/23 financial year, for the following services:

- a. Allotments – Appendix A
- b. Trade Waste – Appendix C
- c. Cemetery fees – Appendix F
- d. Sports pitches – Appendix G
- e. Pre-application Planning fees – Appendix K

(b) That there be a 0% increase in fees for 2022/23 financial year, for the following service: a. Pannier Market Charges – Appendix H

(c) That the remaining fees be varied by the elements outlined in section 4.3 to 4.8 of the report.