

## **NORTH DEVON COUNCIL**

### **POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE: 9<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2023**

#### **MINUTE EXTRACT OF THE STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 6<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2023 IN RESPECT OF ITEM 7 ON THE POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE AGENDA**

#### **92 REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES 2023/24**

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive (circulated previously) regarding the review of Charges and Fees for 2023/24 together with Minute Extract of Strategy and Resources on 6th February 2023.

The Finance Manager highlighted the following:

- The charges for the provision of services were reviewed annually in the context of policy guidance within the Medium Term Financial Strategy, and the recommended levels of increase to produce a target income level.
- This year the guidance was to increase fees and charges by 5%, although some fees were set by statute and these would be set nationally. Other variations to the 5% increase were set out in paragraphs 4.3 to 4.9 of the report. Even though inflation was currently running much higher than the 5% increase the Council had tried to be prudent and fair in the fees charged and the impact this had on customers.
- Full Council approved, at the January 2023 meeting, that Building Control Services fees should be raised by an average of 8% and rounded to the nearest pound, this was to ensure the revenue income recoups the actual cost of providing the service. The already approved fees were shown within the table of charges at Appendix B.
- Land Charges fees had 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 as shown at Appendix D.
- There was one change to the Environmental Health fees, as the majority of these were set by Statute or set to recover costs. The only change was the introduction of a £110 fee (+VAT) for Food Business Operator requested Food Hygiene revisit as shown at Appendix E.
- After a discussion with the Crematorium Manager, a correction was required on the table of fees as shown at Appendix F. The correction was to the following: "Fees to purchase the exclusive right of burial for 30 years which include the right to erect a memorial" the Columns "Fee" and cost to a North Devon resident were both £0.
- Pannier Market – Due to the refurbishment works underway in the Pannier Market this financial year as part of the Future High Streets Fund project and the inevitable disruption to the operation of the market, the proposal was to not increase the charges for traders for 2023/24 year as shown at Appendix H.
- Bulky Waste – To increase the fees as follows:

- Up to 2 items £23.00 (27.78% increase).
  - Up to 3 items £31.00 (19.23% increase).
  - Up to 4 items £38.00 (15.15% increase).
- The above increases bring North Devon Council prices in line with neighbouring authorities and allowed for the recommended 5% increase for 2023-24 as detailed at Appendix I.
  - Full Council approved at its November 2022 meeting to increase the Garden Waste charge for 2023-24 to £55 per bin. A revised costing of providing the service, taking into account current year and estimated inflation for 2023-24 was indicating that the service cost was now in the region of around £56-£58 per bin for those customers that subscribe. This level of charge was similar to the charges made by other Devon councils as detailed in Appendix J.
  - Dog Waste – A strategic decision had been made to keep the Dog waste charges the same as 2023-23 pending a review of the pricing structures moving forwards as detailed at Appendix L.
  - The net revenue changes from the above charges were estimated to produce £183,000 of additional income, which had been included within the draft 2023/24 revenue budget.

In response regarding the increase in Building Control fees. The Accountancy Services Manager advised that this was to cover the recruitment costs associated with the vacant Building Control posts, whereby the Council had offered a 10% market supplement as part of the employment package in order to attract applications to the various posts within the service.

The Committee thanked the Finance Manager and the team for not increasing the Pannier Market trader fees and the dog waste charges.

RESOLVED, that the decisions and recommendations of the Strategy and Resources Committee be endorsed.