

## NORTH DEVON COUNCIL

### POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE: 12<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2024

#### MINUTE EXTRACT OF THE STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 5<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2024 IN RESPECT OF ITEM 7(A) ON THE POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE AGENDA

#### **89. REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES 2024-25**

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 2024-25.

The Finance Manager highlighted the following:

- The change in fees charged for services provided by the Council was in line with the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 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 sections 4.3 to 4.11 of the report,
- Building Control fees had been raised by an average of 6.7% and rounded to the nearest pound, this was to ensure that revenue income recouped the actual cost of providing the service and were competitive in the sector. Details of this could be seen in Appendix B of the report.
- Land Charges fees had been set to recoup the cost of providing the service, the recommended fees for the land charges service was estimated to recover all the costs and break even, as detailed at Appendix D of the report.
- There were two changes to the Environmental Health fees, as the majority of these were set by statute or set to recover costs. The introduction of a fee for “Film Classification Certificate” and variation to the “Export Health Certificate” fee to ensure the cost of providing the service is fully recovered, as detailed at Appendix E of the report.
- Pannier Market (Venue hire) – Following the recent refurbishment and new facilities within the Pannier Market the Council now offered an enhanced look and feel to the market and had varied the prices to reflect the venue offer, the revised prices were now in line with other similar venues, as detailed in Appendix H (b) Venue of the report.
- Bulky Waste Collections – To increase the fees as follows: as detailed in Appendix I of the report.
  - Up to 2 items £30.00 (30.43% increase)
  - Up to 3 items £38.00 (22.58% increase)
  - Up to 4 items £45.00 (18.42% increase)

- The proposed increases above brought the Council's charges in line with our neighbouring authorities.
- Garden Waste – Increase in fee of £5, this level of charge was similar to the charges made by other Devon councils and ensured the cost of providing the service was recovered by the income as seen at Appendix J of the report.
- Estates Event Licence fee – The licence for both charity and Commercial events on the Council's land had been set to recover the cost of administering the licence fee, as detailed in Appendix M of the report.
- Estates Contractors Works licence - This was a new fee for 2024-25 and was set to recover the cost of administering the new licence fee, details could be seen in Appendix N of the report.
- Modification of S106 agreements - This was a new fee for 2024-25 and was set to recover the cost of administering the new licence fee, as detailed in Appendix O of the report.
- The net revenue changes from the above charges were estimated to produce £221,000 of additional income, which had been included within the draft 2024/25 revenue budget for consideration.

In response to a question on what the statute increases in charges were, the Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive advised that the Council Tax referendum principle for District Councils was set at 3% or £5, whichever is higher. Other fees such as Planning were set nationally. Licensing fees had to cover the cost of providing the service, breaking even over a 3-year period.

#### RECOMMENDED:

- (a) That Council approved a 5% increase in fees for 2024/25 financial year, for the following services: (some rounded)
- (I) Allotments as detailed at Appendix A
  - (II) Trade Waste as detailed at Appendix C
  - (III) Cemetery fees as detailed at Appendix F
  - (IV) Sports pitches as detailed at Appendix G
  - (V) Pannier Market as detailed at Appendix H
  - (VI) Pre-application Planning fees as detailed at Appendix K
  - (VII) Dog Waste as detailed at Appendix L

That the remaining fees be varied by, the elements outlined in sections 4.3 to 4.11 of the report.