

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Environment and Transport
Date:	14 November 2017
Title:	Review of Economy, Transport and Environment Service Charges
Report From:	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

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1. Executive Summary

1.1 This report seeks delegated authority for the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment (ETE) to:

- a) Revise the rate of charges made for Economy, Transport, and Environment services to a level that enables the County Council to recover the full costs of provision;
- b) Implement a charge for some services currently provided free of charge, to a level that enables the County Council to fully recover the costs of provision;
- c) Implement new chargeable services, complementary to existing services, at rates that enable the County Council to recover the full costs of provision;
- d) Approve a phased approach on individual price revisions where it is felt that a single transition to full cost recovery would be inappropriate;
- e) Implement any policy changes as a result of revised charges.

2. Contextual information

2.1 Initial results of the recent Shaping Hampshire consultation indicate that residents would prefer Hampshire County Council to close the gap in its budget through the revision of charges for services over cost-saving or council tax measures. This was the preferred option for 67% of respondents.

2.2 The County Council is required to save £19.005million from its Economy, Transport, and Environment budget as part of the current transformation programme. Given the indicative conclusions of the Shaping Hampshire consultation, a review of the prices for chargeable services is proposed, as well as the development of new chargeable, value-adding services, to help protect and maintain core Economy, Transport and Environment service provision.

- 2.3 Detailed analysis has shown that for many Economy, Transport and Environment services, the service charge made does not fully recover the cost incurred for provision.
- 2.4 This conclusion was supported through a benchmarking exercise which showed that other local authorities are often charging for the same services at a significantly higher rate, acknowledging that other local authorities will have varying cost structures.
- 2.5 In addition, there is potential to introduce a number of new, value-adding Economy, Transport, and Environment services, for which a service charge could be made.
- 2.6 It should be noted that the majority of services that will be reviewed are services Hampshire County Council provides for other organisations, such as developers, solicitors and utility companies.
- 2.7 The proposal is to revise service charges up to an amount which reflects the full cost of providing that service, and introduce new services through the Transformation programme to 2019 period. Where it is felt that a single transition to the fully cost reflective price is inappropriate, a phased approach will be taken. Any service charges made will be in accordance with legislation.
- 2.8 For reasons of business efficiency, it is recommended that the Executive Member for Environment and Transport delegates authority to the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment to authorise service price revisions and the implementation of new, complementary services within prevailing County Council guidelines.

3 Scope of Service Charges

- 3.1 The services under consideration for revised charges, or introduction on a chargeable basis, will predominantly be those provided to Utility Companies and professional organisations engaged in development. These tend to be charges made for services accessed on a one-off basis, rather than provided on an ongoing or contractual basis to service users. These include such services as licensing to replace and retain apparatus in the highway, the provision of "H" bar markings across private accesses to prevent use by the general public for parking purposes, and expedited highways searches detailing the extent of the public highway in specific locations to interested Legal Practices.

4 Future direction

- 4.1 It is expected that the first set of price revisions will take place in January 2018, with further sets of price revisions, capturing a wider set of services, taking place through 2018/2019.
- 4.2 After the initial review, on an ongoing basis service charges will be reviewed to ensure the charge continues to reflect the cost of providing that service.

5 Recommendations

5.1 That authority is delegated to the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment, in consultation with the Executive Member for Environment and Transport, to:

- a) Revise the rate of charges made for Economy, Transport, and Environment services to a level that enables the County Council to recover the full costs of provision;
- b) Implement a charge for some services currently provided free of charge, to a level that enables the County Council to fully recover the costs of provision;
- c) Implement new chargeable services, complementary to existing services, at rates that enable the County Council to recover the full costs of provision;
- d) Approve a phased approach on individual price revisions where it is felt that a single transition to full cost recovery would be inappropriate;
- e) Implement any policy changes as a result of revised charges.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Strategic Plan**

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	Yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	Yes

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

Document

Location

None

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equality Duty

- 1.1 The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
 - Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- a) The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- c) Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

1.2 Equalities Impact Assessment:

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out and can be viewed in full [here](#).

The findings of this assessment were that the proposals would have a generally neutral impact, with the possibility of low impacts in some cases on residents less able to pay, and on those with disabilities requiring access to potentially affected services. Mitigation measures will be considered in certain cases as possible and appropriate.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

- 2.1. None specified.

3. Climate Change:

- a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

N/A

- b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

N/A