



LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL

Grounds and Environmental Services Committee

Date: 9th September 2019

Title: Review of fees and charges for all Pavilion hire, use of parks and cemetery fees from 1st April 2020.

Purpose of the Report: To provide Members with a set of proposals to increase fees for the range of services Council provides for the financial year 2020/2021 under the responsibility of the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee.

Contact Officer: Ian Haynes – Head of Grounds and Environmental Services

Corporate Objective/s		LLTC Three Year Plan – Aim 3. “To provide great public open spaces, varied opportunities for sport and leisure and to exceed expectations in delivering cemetery and allotment services”
Implications:		
Financial	√	Subsidy reduction
Human Resources		None
Operational/Service delivery		None
Procedural/Legal	√	None
Risk/Health and Safety		None

1. RECOMMENDATION/S

Should members be minded, the proposals in respect of pricing for the financial year 2020-2021 are:

- 1.1 To Endorse all fees & charges for Cemeteries be increased by the September 2019 Retail Price Index (RPI) plus 1% (and rounded up to the nearest 50p before VAT)
- 1.2 To Endorse all fees and charges for all pitch hire be increased by the September 2019 Retail Price Index (RPI) plus 1% (and rounded up to the nearest 50p before VAT) However, this is delayed until the 31st July 2020 to avoid a midseason increase.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Leighton-Linslade Town Council provides a number of services that it levies a charge for. These charges are regularly reviewed and adhere to the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.
- 2.2 Fees & Charges are reviewed on an annual basis to ensure Council;
 - Has the ability to meet corporate and service objectives;
 - Has a way to manage demand through either encouraging or discouraging the use of services and/or the patterns of use of services;
 - Provides clarity regarding why different charges are set for different user groups e.g. through the use of discounts/concessions;
 - Has an agreed set of fees and charges that will make an important and significant contribution to achieving the Council's financial objectives.
- 2.3 Fees and charges represent an important source of income to the Council. There are a number of potential conflicts between raising income by increasing charges and promoting the use of the facilities Council provides particularly by vulnerable groups on a low income. The appropriate fee structure will, therefore, depend on the overall intention for that service area. The Council is responsible for managing public funds in a proper manner and should set its charges at appropriate levels.

3. CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 By not setting relevant, suitable and sustainable fees and charges there is a possibility that the burden of funding some service areas will fall on the Council Tax payer. The Council is empowered by relevant legislation to make charges for its services.
- 3.2 Council's fees & charges mainly relate to discretionary services where Council has full control. However, there may be circumstances in the future when Council may wish to exercise some control over fees & charges that are related to services which are delivered on behalf of the Council by a partner.
- 3.3 When reviewing fees & charges, Members may wish to consider whether it should be providing the service? Most services provided will not recover their full costs so really Committee is reviewing the level of subsidy being allocated

to that service and set fees & charges at a level that will still enable access but reduce subsidy provision.

- 3.4 Members may choose to provide some services at no charge to some or all potential users. However, Members must take into consideration the risk it exposes itself to when deciding to deliver a particular service under these criteria as well as the benefit that it may provide the community.
- 3.5 Charges should be simple to understand and to administer. They should be easy to access via the website and available in hard copy on request.
- 3.6 If possible, reasonable notice should be given when implementing any increases. Normally increases will be agreed as part of the Council's budgetary process and revised charges will then be publicised as part of that process.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 It is Officer's opinion that the proposed charges do not increase Council's charges excessively but do ensure that the amount of subsidy required for those chargeable services begins to reduce.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 In some cases certain services should aim to cost neutral in the future which will mean more realistic and market sensitive rates need to be applied.