

REPORT TO: POLICY COMMITTEE ON 5TH MARCH 2008

SUBJECT: CHARGING FOR SERVICES

BY: CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 The Council is invited to consider and approve the Council's Charges for Services, for the financial year 2008/09, in line with the Corporate Policy.
- 1.2 This Report is submitted to the Council in terms of Section II (2) of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to the approval of the Annual Estimates for Capital and Revenue Expenditure for all Services.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Council considers and approves the proposed revised charges for 2008/09 set out in APPENDICES 1 – 4.
- 2.2 It is recommended that the Council reaffirms the current policy of permitting circus lets only if the circus concerned is a member of the Association of Circus Proprietors.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Corporate Policy for Charging for Council Services was approved by Council on 9th March 2000.

4. **THE PROPOSALS**

- 4.1 Details of current charges and proposed charges for next year are attached as **APPENDICES 1 to 4** as follows:

Appendix 1	Central Services
Appendix 2	Community Services
Appendix 3	Educational Services
Appendix 4	Environmental Services

The Appendices also show details of when specific charges were last changed.

- 4.2 Apart from charges set by statute, the general assumption applied to increases is an inflationary figure of 2.5% rounded to the nearest practical increase, in line with the Corporate Policy on Charges for Council Services. Central Government measures inflation using the Consumer Price Index which is currently 2.1%. The Retail price Index currently stands at 4%. The target figure used for the budget setting process is 2.5%.
- 4.2.1 **Central Services (Appendix 1)** - It is generally proposed to increase those charges within the control of the Council by inflation. The Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 requires local authorities to charge licensing fees based on full cost recovery up to a statutory maximum. These charges require to be approved by the Licensing Board. At its meeting on 17 January the Licensing Board approved charges of 90% of the maximum charge, which meet the full costs of the Council.
- 4.2.2 **Community Services (Appendix 2)** – It is proposed to increase charges by inflation. Charges subject to financial assessment will be dependent on revised Department of Work and Pensions allowances for 2008/09. These are not currently known.
- 4.2.3 **Educational Services (Appendix 3)** - It is generally proposed to increase charges by inflation. Exceptions are itemised below.
- 4.2.4 **Leisure Services and Community Centres**
At the meeting of Council on 14 February 2008, a number of above inflation increases were approved as part of the budget setting process.
- 4.2.5 **Libraries and Information Services** - It is proposed that charges remain at the current level where the effect of inflation is minimal. Some charges remain unchanged from 1997.
- 4.2.6 **Instrumental Instruction** - It is proposed that no increase is applied, as charges in Moray are high in comparison to other Local Authorities in Scotland.
- 4.2.7 **Environmental Services (Appendix 4)** - It is generally proposed to increased charges by inflation. Exceptions are itemised below.

- 4.2.8 **Trade Waste Charges** – It is proposed that trade waste charges are increased following comparison with charges from other commercial service providers.
- 4.2.9 **Burials** – At the meeting of Council on 14 February 2008, a number of above inflation increases were approved as part of the budget setting process.
- 4.2.10 **Transportation** – It is proposed that charges are increased to cover the cost of the services provided.
- 4.1.11 **Harbours** – It is proposed that charges are increased to cover the cost of the services provided. The increase in berthing fees for leisure vessels was approved by Council on 14 February, 2008.
- 4.2.12 **Car Parks** -.The Financial Plan includes provision for increased income of £100,000 from car parking charges. This is equivalent to the cost to the Council of the costs of repairs and maintenance of car parks each year. The schedule of charges aims to generate this increase and was approved by Council on 14 February, 2008. Some charges (1 – 2 hours) remain unchanged to facilitate usage by shoppers.

5. **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

(a) Corporate Development Plan/Community Plan/Service Improvement Plan

This Report is consistent with the Corporate Development Plan commitment to Sound Management of Resources.

(b) Policy and Legal

This Report is consistent with the Council's Policy on Charges. There are no legal implications.

(c) Resources (Financial, Risks, Staffing and Property)

The Financial Plan anticipates additional income of £60,000 arising from inflationary increases to charges and increases of £360,000 from specific above inflationary increases. It is anticipated that the proposed charges will result in this target being met.

(d) Consultations

All Departments have been consulted on and are in agreement with the proposed charges for 2008/09.

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6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Proposed charges are itemised in **Appendices 1 to 4** to this Report.

Author of Report: Lorraine Paisey, Principal Accountant - Ext 3213
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