
EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON 15 NOVEMBER 2018

HWSP.71/18 BUDGET 2019/20 – 2020/21

(b) Review of Charges 2019/20

The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources presented the Review of Charges reports informing the Panel that there was a 3% increase on the overall level of income in line with the Corporate Charging Policy.

Community Services

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted report CS.31/18 which set out the proposed fees and charges for 2019/18 relating to those services falling within the Community Services Directorate.

The charges highlighted within the report would result in an anticipated level of income of £2,903,300 against the MTFP target of £2,903,300 which represented the income target being met. Details of the proposed charges in relation to those areas within the Panel's remits: Old Fire Station; allotments; use of parks; sports pitches; Talkin Tarn; Bereavement Services; Waste Services and Garage charges, were contained within the report.

The Executive had on 12 November 2018 (EX.100/18) received the report and decided:

"That the Executive:

1. Had reviewed the proposed charges as set out in the body of Report CS.31/18 and relevant appendices with effect from 1 April 2019, noting the impact those would have on income generation as detailed within the report.
2. Made the report of proposed charges available to relevant Scrutiny Panels for their review and comment."

The Deputy Chief Executive noted it was proposed that Room Hire Charges at the Old Fire Station were to remain at their 2018/19 rates, in order to further encourage use of the facility. The proposed increase in charges relating to stray dogs was due to the service now being more costly for the Council to provide.

In considering the report, Members raised the following questions or comments:

- Did the Council receive payment for the processing its recyclates?

The Deputy Chief Executive responded that the Council received recycling credits for the recycling material it sent for processing.

The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources drew the Panel's attention to page 36 of the Budget Book which provided a summary of income from services within the Directorate and advised that all were expected to meet their MTFP targets with the exception of those identified in the Income and Budget Monitoring Shortfalls.

- How would Officers deal with a case where the charge for the stray dog service had been applied, but the resident was unable to pay the fee?

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that in such cases front line Officers were able to request management support to address the issue, on a case by case basis.

- Was the proposed removal of the extended hours charging policy at The Sands Centre car park intended for the duration of the works to the facility, or was it to be permanently removed?

The Deputy Chief Executive responded that the matter fell within the remit of the Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel, who would consider the matter as part of their scrutiny of the Budget proposals.

The car park was well used, were the development of The Sands Centre to be approved, a compound would be installed in the car park which would potentially create issues regarding the provision of spaces. However, there were a number of potential mechanisms which the Council may employ to mitigate against the loss of spaces.

The Deputy Chief Executive noted that it had been custom to detail on the agenda of the individual Scrutiny Panels, the areas within the numerous budget reports which were within the remit of a particular Panel. In his view, the scrutiny of all budget reports by all three Scrutiny Panels was likely to be very time consuming and had the potential to cause issues such as conflicting resolutions. He suggested that Members stick to considering items within the remit of their Panel.

Governance and Regulatory Services

The Corporate Director of Governance and Regulatory Service submitted report GD.72/18 which detailed the proposed fees and charges for areas falling within the responsibility of the Governance and Regulatory Services Directorate.

The report set out the proposed charges relative to Environmental Health and Housing; Homeless, Prevention and Accommodation Services; and Legal Services, and the Corporate Director noted that all the increases proposed were in-line with the Council approved, Corporate Charging Policy.

The introduction of the proposed charges was forecast to generate income of £874,200 in 2019/20 as summarised in the table at paragraph 5.10.1 of the report.

The Executive had on 12 November 2018 (EX.101/18) received the report and decided:

“That the Executive agreed for consultation the charges as detailed within Report GD.72/18 and accompanying Appendices, with effect from 1 April 2019; noting the impact those would have on income generation as detailed within the report.”

The Chairman asked whether the Council owned properties for the purpose of housing people experiencing homelessness.

The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources confirmed that the Council did own a number of such properties through the Hostel Share Scheme.

RESOLVED – 1) That having considered the items within the budget relevant to its remit, and put questions to Officers, the Panel was satisfied with the recommendations put forward.