

Report to Executive

Agenda
Item:

A.9

Meeting Date: 7th April 2015
Portfolio: Environment and Transport
Key Decision: No
Within Policy and Budget Framework YES
Public / Private Public

Title: CHANGES TO REVIEW OF CHARGES 2015/16 IN RELATION TO DOG WARDEN SERVICE
Report of: The Director of Local Environment
Report Number: LE 07/15

Purpose / Summary:

This report sets out the proposed changes to the fees and charges for 2015/16 relating to Dog Warden service falling within the Local Environment Directorate

Recommendations:

The Executive is asked to agree the charges as set out in the body of this report and relevant appendices noting the impact these will have on income generation as detailed within the report.

Tracking

Executive:	
Overview and Scrutiny:	
Council:	

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1** Each Directorate is required to notify any changes to the approved fees and charges report.
- 1.2** This report proposes changes to the dog warden fees and charges within the Local Environment Directorate. The report has been prepared in accordance with the principles approved under the Council's Corporate Charging Policy.
- 1.3** The charges, which have been amended, are detailed below.

2. CORPORATE CHARGING POLICY 2015/16 TO 2019/20

- 2.1** The Corporate Charging Policy, which is part of the Strategic Financial Framework, was approved by the Executive on 18th August 2014 and Full Council on 9th September 2014 and set out the City Council's policy for reviewing charges. The principal objective for amending the dog warden charge fits in with the objectives of the charging policy set out below.-

- Recovering the cost of service provision
- Generate Surplus Income (where permitted)
- Maintain existing service provision
- Fund service improvements or introduction of new services(s)
- Manage demand for service(s)
- Promote access to services for low-income households
- Promote equity or fairness
- Achieve wider strategic policy objectives (e.g. encouraging Green Policies)

3. DOG WARDEN SCHEME

- 3.1** The Dog Warden charges were incorporated into the 2015/16 Charging Scheme before the new Dog Warden Scheme had been completed. Thus charges and how the system would work have only just been formulated, and therefore some minor changes and additions are proposed to the charges that were initially submitted for 2015/16 which will be necessary to enable the new dog warden scheme to function efficiently.
- 3.2** For 2015 / 16 the Council has revised its processes for the collection and detention of stray dogs. The 2015/16 charge currently includes kennelling, administration costs and the £25.00 statutory fine set by the Environmental Protection (Stray Dogs) Regulations 1992. The kennelling charge is recovered for each day that the dogs are detained, up to the maximum 7 day responsibility placed on the Council.

However as the facility for claiming the stray dog is only available to the owner Monday to Friday, it is deemed reasonable to only charge, a weekend fee for the period from 4pm on a Friday to 8 am on a Monday where the owner has notified the council that he/she wishes to claim back their dog. Therefore a new weekend discretionary fee is proposed of £15.

Where a dog is claimed before it is taken to kennels, a reduced fee will be charged, and this will cover the council's costs but will not include the full administration charge or kennelling costs. It is estimated that approximately 50 dogs will be returned home before kennelling takes place. This would increase the council's income to off set the income lost by giving a discretionary week-end rate.

4. CHANGES TO DOG WARDEN CHARGES PROPOSALS 2015/16

<u>STRAY DOGS (Inclusive – VAT not applicable)</u> <u>current charges</u>		
Day 1 (£25 fine; £20 collection and administration; £15 kennelling)		£60.00
Day 2		£75.00
Day 3		£90.00
Day 4		£105.00
Day 5		£120.00
Day 6		£135.00
Day 7		£150.00
Discretionary Weekend charge for kennelling (Friday 4 pm to Monday 8am)	NEW	£15
Where dogs are returned home without being kennelled	NEW	£30

4.1 The arrangements up to 2014/15 meant that any dog owners paid fees to both animal refuge (the council's contractor) and the council and the council received £33 towards their costs which included a fine of £25. Income targets have been challenging to achieve despite the high number of stray dogs collected and kennelled as many of the dogs go uncollected by their owners and have to be rehomed.

4.2 On average over a number of years only 50% of stray dogs were claimed and paid for. This year only 175 out of 344 dogs were collected and paid the dog warden charges achieving £5,406 income up to 28Th February 2015. The income is therefore falling short of meeting the £8,100 income target.

3.1 The operation of the new service follows a different model of service delivery and there are a number of unquantified additional costs such as vet fees, operational costs and the take up of the new service by dog owners. The income target for 2015/16 has been increased in line with the MTFP and the new discretionary rates will have no negative effect on the income target of £8,400. The income target will be reviewed as part of the budget setting process for 2016/17, once the service is in operation.

5. CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 The Executive is asked to agree the changes to the charges as set out in the body of the report

6. CONTRIBUTION TO THE CARLISLE PLAN PRIORITIES

6.1 To ensure that the City Council's Corporate Charging Policy is complied with.

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**Appendices
attached to report:**

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:

- None

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS/RISKS:

Chief Executive's -

Deputy Chief Executive –

Economic Development –

Governance – The Council's Constitution requires that charges such as these are approved by the Executive.

Local Environment –

Resources - The charges outlined in this report will generate income of £8,400 in 2015/16 which is in line with the income target for the year.