



**Policy Finance and
Development**

28 October 2014

Matter for Decision

Title:

Fees and Charges 2015/16

John Dickson – Section 151 and Chief Financial Officer

Author:

1 Introduction

1.1 This report outlines the proposed scale of charges for areas covered by this Committee for the financial year 2015/16

2 Recommendations

2.1 Members approve the charges as outlined in Appendix 1

2.2 Members approve the subsidy towards other faith burials to be a maximum of £1000 with effect from 1 November 2014 to be reviewed in 2016/17 budget setting.

3 Information

3.1 The Council charges for a number of its services that are provided to the public. All fees and charges are reviewed on an annual basis as part of the budget setting process.

3.2 When setting scales of charges, the following factors are taken into consideration:

- Statutory obligations
- Policies and objectives of the Council
- Inflation and relevant indices
- Local market research and competition (where relevant)
- The impact of price changes on activity level or demand
- Changes in taxation
- Budget position and any associated gap
- The cost of providing the service

3.4 As at June 2014, the Retail Price Index (RPI), which is a measure of inflation stood at 2.6%. This has been used as a guide for Heads of Service when considering the 2015/16 increase.

3.5 Appendix 1 shows the current and next years proposed charges together with any specific explanation of the change to any individual charge. A summary of changes by service area has been provided overleaf.

3.6 Operational Services

Operational Services are the largest area where the Council charges for its services. It is important to ensure that charges for these services reflect the commercial reality of the provision and look to cover the cost of providing the service.

3.7 Cemeteries, Parks and Pavilion Hire

The principal recommended changes are as follows;

- A charge is to be introduced for the interment in a grave of a child, resident in the borough, aged between one month and 12 years. The mortality rate of children of this age in the borough is exceptionally low with only three instances recorded since 2002.
- The charge for football pitches at William Gunning Park has been removed. The pitch has been taken out of use, after health and safety complaints from other park users, due to the proximity of the pitch to the play area and pedestrian path.
- After consultation with the local bowls clubs using Council facilities, Service Delivery Committee in July 2014 agreed to delete the charge levied on other clubs' visiting bowls teams.

At the Policy Finance and Development Committee meeting on 4 February 2014 it was resolved that subject to consultation the subsidy be reduced from £2,260 for other faith burials outside the borough where the Council cannot facilitate them within the borough to £1,000. This consultation was particularly in relation to the reduction in subsidy. Relevant Other Faith groups were consulted. The only group who commented on the reduction to £1,000 was the Oadby and Wigston Muslim Association who considered that the reduction in subsidy would have a significant impact on the effected population and requested that the Council reconsider its decision. Officers have considered the request but due to pressure on all Council budgets including the ones applicable for other faith burials, do not recommend amending the reduced subsidy of £1,000 for burials outside of the borough. As of 30 September for the last six month period there is a current overspend of £3500, which relates to 8 burials. This Committee at its February 2014 meeting also resolved that this proposed arrangement be in place for no more than two years. In the meantime further work is to be carried out regarding future cemetery provision.

3.8 Refuse and Recycling

Charges are being increased in line with inflation.

3.9 Allotments

This area is being increased by an amount consistent with RPI at June 2014 with the charges applying from 30 September 2015

3.10 Brocks Hill

The Centre completely reviewed its charges for 2014/15, restructuring its room hire arrangements and putting in place significant increases to bring the Centre into line with similar establishments. As a result, it is recommended that prices are held at the same level for 2015/16.

3.11 Leisure Services

The authority contracts out its leisure services to an outside provider. Under the terms of their contract, the provider is able to submit their charges up to 3 months before the start of the financial year. At the time of writing this report, their charges are still awaited. The contractors' charges will be submitted to a subsequent meeting of this committee.

3.12 Environmental Health

Wasp nests and pest control charges have been brought into line with other local authorities. Charges for these services have been standardised across the whole population.

3.13 Housing

In 2015/16 the only above inflation increase relates to water charges at the Sheltered Schemes. This is to bring the income collected from the residents in line with the cost of water at the two sites where these are applied.

3.14 Licensing

It is proposed for 2015/16 that licences issued under the Gambling Act 2005 should be set at the statutory maximum allowed.

3.15 Corporate Services

These have been increased by RPI.

3.16 Development Control

The Planning and Building Control Sections have reviewed the charges they set, including examining the officer hours required to carry out the duties and the services they provide. There are a number of new charges this year which principally related to;

- a) The naming and numbering of streets and new housing plots. This follows the policy on the subject approved by the Policy Finance and Development Committee in April this year.
- b) Notification of demolition which takes into account the officer time spent carrying out this service

Email: Chris.Raymakers@oadby-wigston.gov.uk Tel: 0116 2567 2891

Background Papers:-

- Fees and Charges Returns

Implications	
Financial (CR)	All financial implications are detailed in the content of this report
Risk (PL)	CR1: Decreasing Financial Resources CR9: Economy
Equalities (KG)	Fees and charges proposed are across the services which the Council provides; services accessible and available to all.
Legal (KG)	Statutory increases in charges are incorporated within the proposals embodied within this report