

## REPORT TO INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE 11 MARCH 2021

### FEES AND CHARGES REVIEW: PROPOSED APPROACH

#### 1 Reason for Report / Summary

This report seeks permission to amend the approach for the 2021 Review of Fees and Charges by Infrastructure Services. The proposed amendment is to bring recommendations in respect of those charges currently in need of a Committee decision to Infrastructure Services Committee in 2021, and to carry out the work of the full review (in compliance with the requirements of the Corporate Charging Framework) in 2022. This will result in the report being submitted to Committee one year later than currently planned, in January 2023.

#### 2 Recommendations

**The Committee is recommended to:**

**2.1 Agree that only prioritised fees and charges, requiring Committee decisions, are presented in the current year.**

**2.2 Agree that the formal Fees and Charges Review, covering all routine fees and charges levied by Infrastructure Services, be postponed for consideration by Committee until January 2023.**

#### 3 Purpose and Decision Making Route

3.1 The Corporate Charging Framework was agreed by Full Council on 11 February 2016 (Item 6). The Framework set the requirement for Directorates to conduct Reviews of Fees and Charges at 3 yearly intervals and also the process to be followed. Infrastructure Services conducted its first full review during 2017, reporting to Infrastructure Services Committee with initial recommendations on 5 October 2017 (Item 8), and subsequently, following a consultation exercise, on 25 January 2018 (Item 4).

3.2 The Corporate Charging Framework requires that Infrastructure Services should conduct its next Review of Fees and Charges during 2021, presenting the final review report to Infrastructure Services Committee in January 2022.

3.3 Due to the additional workload caused by Covid 19 the Service does not currently have the capacity to conduct this review in the required timeframe.

3.4 Internal Audit and Finance have been consulted about this matter and both recommended that this decision should be taken by Infrastructure Services Committee.

#### 4 Discussion

4.1 The timetable for a Review of Fees and Charges is detailed in the Corporate Charging Framework , which instructs:

*“ August\September – Full review of fees and charges undertaken by services and reported to service committee for approval to consult”*

- 4.2 In order to comply with the requirements of the Framework, the work for the previous review commenced in March 2017 and generated a considerable workload between April and September of that year for the managers of all functions providing chargeable services. The required work for the managers includes detailed provision of the following information sets:
- The reasons why a fee or charge is being set (statute, cost recovery etc.)
  - The cost of providing the service (on a unit cost basis where possible)
  - Rationale for concessions
  - Benchmarking where possible with three other organisations
  - Feedback from the consultation process
  - The implications of the proposed change on service users and other service providers
  - Implications on demand for the service
  - The method of collecting the charge.
- 4.3 In light of the additional workload demands that have recently been, and continue to be experienced, across Infrastructure Services owing to the Covid-19 response, it is considered by the Service that there is currently inadequate capacity to carry out the work required for this review. Given the uncertainty around the duration of the Pandemic and its impact upon the capacity of the Service to complete the work, consultation and report preparation prior to the start of the financial year, it is felt that the sensible course would be to delay the review of those charges not currently requiring decisions to be made, for one full year, returning to the original schedule thereafter.
- 4.4 There will be some fees and charges that require Committee decisions during the current year and those will be brought to Committee when appropriate. An example would be charges associated with new ways of working and services being delivered in association with the consequences of Brexit.

## **5 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk**

- 5.1 This report helps deliver the Strategic Priority “Economy and Enterprise” within the Pillar “Our Economy”, responsible finances.
- 5.2 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendations are agreed.

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Financial	<b>X</b>		
Staffing			<b>X</b>
Equalities			X
Fairer Scotland Duty			X
Town Centre First			X
Sustainability			X
Children & Young People’s Rights and Wellbeing			X

- 5.3 An equality impact assessment is not required because this report deals with a procedural matter which of itself does not have a differential impact on any of the protected characteristics.
- 5.4 The financial implications are that any adjustments to fees and charges levied by Infrastructure Services will be delayed by one year, with only prioritised charges being brought to Committee in 2021/22.
- 5.5 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level [Corporate Risk Register](#):
- ACORP001 – budget pressures. Continuation of current levels of fees and charges will provide mitigation.
  - ACORP003 – workforce. Taking the recommended actions will mitigate the risk of failing to manage disruption to jobs.
  - ACORP006 - reputation management (including social media) – delaying this review could mitigate the risk of negative reporting of any proposed increases in fees and charges.

## **6 Scheme of Governance**

- 6.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this and their comments are incorporated within the report and they are satisfied that the report complies with the [Scheme of Governance](#) and relevant legislation.
- 6.2 The Committee is able to consider and take a decision on this item in terms of Section F.7.1 of the [List of Committee Powers in Part 2A](#) of the Scheme of Governance as it relates to the implementation of Council policy.

**Alan Wood**  
**Director of Infrastructure Services**

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14 February 2021