

From: **David Brazier, Cabinet Member – Transport & Environment**
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To: **Environment, Highways & Waste Cabinet Committee - 21 January 2014**

Decision No: **14/00006**

Subject: **Fees & Charges for Highways & Transportation 2014/15**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Past Pathway of Paper: First submission

Future Pathway of Paper: Cabinet Committee for consideration and publication on the KCC website

Electoral Division: Whole County

Summary:

This paper details the review of fees & charges for Highways & Transportation 2014/15, these include;

- Highway service fees
- Highway development fees
- Charges for technical information
- Provision of training services

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Committee is asked to comment on and note the proposed adjustment of existing fees and charges, and the introduction of a charge for pre-application advice, as set out in Appendices 1 and 2.

1. Introduction

This report details a number of adjustments to the Fees & Charges for the services provided by Highways & Transportation. KCC recovers its reasonable costs supplying certain services; this prevents the Authority subsidising external organisations who then re-charge clients.

Service fees & charges are reviewed annually, they were held for three years during the economic downturn. In June 2012 a small increase was approved, this was effective for 18 months.

Officers have undertaken a review of charges to determine whether;

- costs are being recovered
- how they compare with fees charged by other Highway Authorities
- services are charged by other Authorities but not by KCC

The effective date for agreed changes to fees and charges is April 2014; it is proposed to increase fees in line with the 2013 retail price index of 3%, unless fees are not covering reasonable costs. To retain fees and charges at current levels will result in respective services being subsidised to the detriment of core frontline operations.

A copy of the full schedule of Fees & Charges is attached as Appendix 1, this details Highway service fees, Developer fees, charges for technical information and the provision of training services.

It is further proposed to cover the cost of providing pre-application planning advice; with this justification detailed in Appendix 2.

2. Financial Implications

2.1 Revenue expenditure budgets for front line services would not be placed under undue increasing pressure as KCC would recover costs for providing legitimate chargeable services. There is no Capital impact.

3. Bold Steps for Kent and Policy Framework

3.1 Helping the Kent economy grow through the provision of services to Developers and Businesses

Putting the citizen in control through maximising financial resource for the delivery of frontline services

To tackle disadvantage through the delivery of preventative training for road casualty reduction

3.2 This proposed decision does not relate to a specific plan or strategy set out in the Council's Policy Framework beyond those linked above to the Strategic Statement (Bold Steps for Kent)

4. The Report

Highway service fees

H&T makes charges for a range of services provided to a variety of utilities, consultants, businesses and to a lesser extent, members of the public. To reflect the cost of providing these services, it is recommended to increase fees by up to 3% - rounded down to the whole pound.

Inspection fees are agreed nationally through the New Roads and Street Works Act; these are noted in Appendix 1 for information.

A review of charges made by other Highway Authorities, shows that Kent has fallen behind in certain fees charged, this is as a consequence of holding fees for the three years between 2009 – 12.

Some exceptions are noted below;

- Emergency and Planned road closure fees
- Cranes utilising the Highway
- Placing hoarding, skips and scaffolding on the Highway

Highway developer fees

Most Highway Authorities charge developers for supervision of highway works as a percentage of the estimated scheme costs, typically these are between 8.5% - 10.5%. It is proposed to raise these from 8% to 10%.

Section 278 fees that cover the project management, design checks and site audit inspections of improvement schemes range from 7.5% - 12% - it is proposed to raise these from 9% to 10% of the construction works plus 3% of the balance of the scheme above £499k – the compares with fees charged nationally.

Upon review, KCC is not charging in line with other Authorities for Developer pre-application consultation and advice. With increased business and residential development, it is recommended that officer time for this advice service is chargeable; the background is detailed in Appendix 2.

Access to technical information

It is proposed to increase these charges for Developers, Consultants and the Legal profession by up to 3%.

The exception to the above is to increase charges for the services provided by the Highway Definition team who provide highway boundary and other associated information to the Legal profession. As this is highly labour intensive, it is proposed to increase these charges to reflect the true cost of the service in line with other Authorities.

Provision of training services

National driver alertness and speed awareness courses, these fees are set in accordance with Association of Chief Police Officers guidelines. As KCC is the training service provider the £5 increase is noted for information only.

Bike-ability Cycle Training for schools from £15 to £10; this follows KCC securing a contribution from Government, over three years, this will enable H&T deliver this training at the existing cost.

For other KCC training delivered by H&T personnel, it is proposed to increase fees by up to 3%.

5. Conclusions

A review of charges made by other Highway Authorities, shows that Kent has fallen behind in certain fees charged, this is as a consequence of holding fees for the three years between 2009 – 12.

As the economy starts to recover there is increased Officer time in providing services and advice to businesses, such as Developers, Utilities, Consultants and Legal establishments. To retain fees and charges at current levels will result in respective services being subsidised to the detriment of core frontline operations.

A revised schedule of the Fees & Charges will be published on the KCC website, subject to approval for all highway charges, the amended rates will apply from 1st April 2014 and will be further reviewed each financial year.

6. Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Committee is asked to comment on and note the proposed adjustment of existing fees and charges, and the introduction of a charge for pre-application advice, as set out in Appendices 1 and 2.

7. Background Documents

Appendix 1 - Highways & Transportation – Fees and charges for 2014/15

Appendix 2 - Developer fees and charges 2014 – 15 background

8. Contact details

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