

From: Matthew Balfour Cabinet Member, Environment & Transport
Roger Wilkin, Director – Highways, Transportation & Waste

To: Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee - 13 March 2017

Subject: Fees & Charges for Highways activities 2017/18

Decision Number 17/00029

Key decision Affects more than 2 electoral divisions

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: N/A

Future Pathway of Paper: For Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division: All

Summary:

This paper details the proposed changes to fees & charges for the 2017/18 financial year for highways services where a charge is made for the provision of services.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse, or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport on the proposals to amend fees and charges for 2017/18 as attached at Appendix B. A proposed Record of Decision is attached at Appendix A.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report details a number of adjustments to the Fees & Charges for the services provided by KCC as Highway Authority. KCC recovers its reasonable costs for supplying a range of services. Service fees & charges are reviewed annually and officers have reviewed charges to determine;

- whether reasonable costs are being recovered
- how they compare with fees charged by other Highway Authorities

1.2 A copy of the full schedule of Fees & Charges is attached as Appendix B, which details Highway service fees, developer fees, charges for technical information and the provision of training services.

2. The Report

Highway service fees

- 2.1 The Highways & Transportation teams within HT&W make charges for a range of services provided to a variety of utilities, consultants, businesses and to a lesser extent, members of the public. It is proposed to increase fees in line with recent council tax increases, unless fees are not covering reasonable costs where a further increase has been proposed.
- 2.2 The Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee at their meeting on 11 March 2016 proposed a 3.98% increase to Fees and Charges as there had not been an increase for the previous financial year. The proposal for 2017/18 is a 1.99% increase in line with Council Tax increase. This meets the MTFP additional income requirement for the respective Fees and Charges contained in this report. Figures have been rounded for ease of application. The effective date for agreed changes to fees and charges is April 2017.
- 2.3 The exceptions to this increase are Inspection Fees which are published nationally by regulation through the New Roads and Street Works Act. These are noted in Appendix B for information. Also where it is has been assessed we are not already recovering our reasonable costs against a particular service provision.

New Fees and Charges

Street Lighting Attachments

- 2.4 A new fee is proposed for the checking and approval of applications to attach equipment to street lighting assets. The street lighting team has developed a robust process for ensuring that attachments are not installed on KCC assets without prior permission. The application process covers checking ownership of the asset, checking locations, ensuring the structural integrity of the asset, reviewing safety implications of installing an attachment (no distraction to road users), checking the competency of the contractor installing the attachment and checking the relevant contractor public liability insurance is in place. All attachment details are then added to the asset inventory database.
- 2.5 Permits come from many sources. Some are internal requests but majority come from Third parties such as developers, Kent Police, District, Parish and Town Councils. In the past, charging for this service has not been favoured but demand increasing, it is recommended a fee is introduced.
- 2.6 A review of the last 4 years has been undertaken and the results of new applications received each year are shown below:

| Financial Year | Total of all permit applications received | Private (non KCC), Police, Private Traffic | Admin charge only (District/City/ Borough) | Parish/ Town/Village Councils |
|----------------|---|--|--|-------------------------------|
|----------------|---|--|--|-------------------------------|

| | | | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|--------|----|----|
| | regardless of origin, | Survey | | |
| 2013 - 2014 | 192 | 95 | 64 | 33 |
| 2014 – 2015 | 211 | 158 | 23 | 30 |
| 2015 – 2016 | 283 | 178 | 51 | 54 |
| 2016 – 2017 (part year) | 259 | 176 | 38 | 45 |

Street Lighting Asset Permits

2.7 The cost of administering these permits includes Engineer and TSO time and an analysis over the last year of the average time it takes to process a new application:

| Officer | Average Time | Hourly charge rate | Total |
|---------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| Engineer | 1.5hrs | £44.07 | £66.10 |
| Technical Support Officer | 2 hrs | £13.25 | £26.50 |
| Total | | | £92.60 |

2.8 A fee of £93 per application is therefore proposed and is included in the schedule of charges contained in Appendix B.

2.9 Some applications are a repeat application. These typically involve less investigation and technical assessment and could be processed by the Technical Support Officer (TSO). It is therefore proposed that for a repeat fee application, a reduced fee could be introduced which could be charged at the average rate for the TSO of £26.50 as shown above.

National Motorway Speed Awareness Course

2.10 Highways England and the Welsh Government have embarked upon a programme of introducing 'Smart Motorways' (also known as 'Managed' or 'Controlled' motorways) across the national motorway network in England and Wales. A smart motorway uses active technology to manage the flow of traffic. The technology is controlled from a regional control centre. The control centres monitor traffic carefully and can activate and change signs and speed limits. This helps keep the traffic flowing freely.

2.11 Although the enforcements in these environments have already been taking place, offenders are being diverted to the National Speed Awareness Course. The National Driver Offender Retraining Scheme (NDORS) behavioural scientists have advised that a short course focussing specifically on variable speed limits (not those above the national limit or at static roadworks sites) is more appropriate that referral to the National Speed Awareness Course.

2.12 This course may be offered at the discretion of the local Chief Constable to those motorists, driving on motorways, who have detected exceeding the active speed limit (as electronically displayed on overhead gantries and roadside electronic signs).

2.13 Kent Police has requested that we deliver this new course as part of the package of courses that we currently deliver on their behalf. The fee for this course is currently being discussed with Kent Police but is likely to be in the region of £60 to £70.

3. Financial Implications

3.1 The increases where proposed ensure we continue to recover our reasonable costs and meet the income targets contained in the medium term financial plan for 2017/18.

4. Legal Implications

4.1 There are no legal implications to this report.

5. Equalities implications

5.1 There are no equalities implications to this report.

6. Conclusions

6.1 As the economy starts to recover there is increased officer time involved 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.

6.2 Subject to approval, a revised schedule of the Fees & Charges will be published on the KCC website in April 2017, and will be reviewed each financial year.

7. Recommendation

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse, or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport on the proposals to amend fees and charges for 2017/18 as attached at Appendix B. A proposed Record of Decision is attached at Appendix A.

8. Background Documents

- Appendix A – Record of Decision
- Appendix B Highways & Transportation – Fees and charges for 2017/18

9. Contact details

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