

EXECUTIVE – 30 NOVEMBER 2006

**FEES AND CHARGES REVIEW**

**Executive Summary**

It is the Council's policy to review its discretionary fees and charges at least once a year. The Executive resolved on 29 June 2006 that, for financial planning purposes, a minimum of 2% real term growth in discretionary fees and charges should be sought for 2007/08, i.e. a target minimum increase of 4.4% in discretionary income.

All discretionary charges have been reviewed and schedules of proposed charges for 2007/08 are attached at Appendix 1 (Economic Programme); Appendix 2 (Environmental Programme); and Appendix 3 (Social Programme).

The Finance Task Group scrutinised the draft Fees and Charges report at their meeting on the 23 October 2006 and their comments have been incorporated in the report as appropriate.

**Reasons for Decision**

The regular review of discretionary charges ensures that the Council maintains its income base and generates additional resources for the provision of services.

**Recommendations**

The Executive is requested to:

**RECOMMEND That**

- (i) with effect from 1 April 2007, a discount of 50% off the applicable car park season ticket charge be applied for vehicles with a Vehicle Certification Authority rating of A, i.e. CO2 equivalent emission of 100g/km or less;**
- (ii) the other environmental proposals outlined in paragraph 2.10 be pursued;**
- (iii) the changes in copying fees for planning documents, as detailed in Section 3 of this report, are approved and effective immediately;**
- (iv) the discretionary fees and charges, as set out in Appendices 1 to 3 to this report, be approved;**
- (v) that the charges for the sale of minutes, agendas and Town Planning Lists be discontinued with effect from 2007/08;**
- (vi) the traffic order in respect of parking charges be amended as necessary and advertised, with the Deputy Chief Executive given delegated authority in consultation with the Leader of the Executive to consider and determine any objections received and if no objections are maintained the order be made and the changes introduced;**
- (vii) the changes to the terms of issue and operation of the residents' on-street parking permit scheme, outlined in Section 2 of this report, be approved; and**
- (viii) The suggestion of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee re fee complaints about high hedges be determined.**

**This item will need to be dealt with by way of a recommendation to the Council**

**Background Papers:**

Service Area working papers.

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### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 In accordance with Council policy, fees and charges which are at the discretion of the Council are reviewed at least annually.
- 1.2 The fees and charges for 2006/07 were approved by the Council on 15 December 2005.
- 1.3 The Executive resolved on 29 June 2006 that, for financial planning purposes, a minimum of 2% real term growth in discretionary fees and charges be sought for 2007/08 i.e. a minimum increase of 4.4% in income.
- 1.4 Schedules of proposed charges for 2007/08 are attached at Appendix 1 (Economic Programme); Appendix 2 (Environmental Programme); and Appendix 3 (Social Programme).
- 1.5 A commentary on any specific service issues arising from the review follows. The name of the relevant Service Head contact has also been provided.

### 2.0 Economic Programme

#### Car Parks (Ray Lee)

- 2.1 Parking fees and charges have been reviewed this year to achieve overall revenue increases in line with the recommended minimum increase of 4.4%.
- 2.2 The opportunity has been taken to simplify the basis of town centre car park charges by the introduction of a standard hourly rate of 80p throughout all of the core charging times. This means that the fee for the minimum stay period will remain unchanged from last year and that the fee for a typical all day stay of between 6 and 11 hours will actually reduce.
- 2.3 All Woking town centre car parks will be subject to the same charging structure and the same linear rate will apply from Monday to Friday. The linear charge rate will also apply on Saturdays up to seven hours, after which a flat fee of £5.60 will apply for the rest of the stay. These charges will also apply on Bank Holidays, although no charges will continue to be made on Christmas Day.
- 2.4 Sundays are largely a normal shopping day, albeit with restricted retail opening hours, and the times when parking charges apply have been amended to reflect these, from 10.00am to 6.00pm. In addition the 80p per hour linear charging rate will apply to the first three hours of parking and thereafter a flat fee will apply. The resultant maximum Sunday parking charge will be £2.40p.
- 2.5 Currently, arrangements are in place to enable members of the Christchurch congregation attending Sunday morning services to have free parking at the Victoria Way car park. This is possible because of the Pay on Foot on Exit system that operates in this car park.
- 2.6 It is envisaged that Pay on Foot on exit will be introduced in Brewery Road car park with effect from 1 April 2007 at which time Sunday charging will be introduced in line with other town centre pay on foot on exit car parks. Until such time as Pay on Foot on Exit is introduced in Heathside Crescent car parks it would not be possible to operate a similar system for the churches near this car park. Therefore, until a Pay on Foot system is installed in Heathside Crescent car parks will remain free on Sundays.
- 2.7 Season tickets are currently sold on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis. The monthly passes are for calendar months starting on the first of each month. Annual passes start

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on 1 April each year and quarterly passes, lasting for 3 calendar months, start on 1 April, 1 July, 1 October and 1 January. This rigid structure creates a disincentive to sales of season tickets and it is proposed to allow all classes of season ticket to run for the appropriate period from the date of application.

- 2.8 The sale of season tickets has been adversely affected during 2006/07 because of major company re-locations out of the town. However, there has been no recorded resistance to the price of the season tickets. Therefore, the charge for each type of season ticket has been increased for 2007/08 in line with the financial objective of the fees and charges review.
- 2.9 One of the proposals of the CPZ Task Group was the creation of an "off-peak" season ticket operating from 5.00pm until 9.00am, Monday to Friday, and all day on Saturdays and Sundays at the Heathside Crescent Car Park. This season ticket would be available to residents of the Inner Area of the Woking CPZ, who would be ineligible for an on-street residents' parking pass. At an annual cost of £150 this represents an 87% saving over the equivalent hourly parking charge.
- 2.10 The Council's Climate Change Strategy seeks reductions in CO2 equivalent emissions and adaptation to Climate Change. Transport is a significant source of CO2 equivalent emissions and accordingly it is suggested, in line with work being done in respect of the Council's own fleet of vehicles, its contractors and taxis, to start to introduce environment considerations into future charging structures for parking services. It is proposed that:
- 1) Consideration be given to introducing, as soon as possible in 2007/08, a 'Car Club' service for the Town Centre to provide a pool car service for the Council and/or access to cars for Town Centre residents.
  - 2) A discount of 50% off the applicable car park season ticket be offered in respect of cars that have a Vehicle Certification Authority CO2 emission rating of A, i.e. equal to or less than 100 g/km, and that the Council over time introduce differential charging levels for season tickets based on CO2 emissions.
  - 3) As soon as market conditions permit, the Council introduce a per visit charge up to a maximum of 5p per visit, for the use of car parks to generate additional revenue to be hypothecated to invest in carbon offset schemes in the Borough.
  - 4) When peak hour vehicle movement levels in the Town Centre necessitate measures to reduce or limit peak hour travel, the Council introduce an additional peak hour arrival charge to encourage alternative arrival times and/or modal shift with any additional revenue generated being hypothecated to invest in measures to improve alternative travel arrangements.

The measures outlined in 1 and 2 above are intended to be cost neutral and will be introduced by 1 April 2007 or as soon as possible thereafter. The measures outlined at 3 and 4 are intended to generate additional revenue to be used to assist in offsetting the effects of CO2 equivalent emissions and managing peak hour traffic in the Town Centre.

### On-Street Parking (Ray Lee)

- 2.11 As the hourly charges for on-street parking were reviewed last year, the differentials between the on and off street charge for hourly parking established then have been maintained and there are no proposals to change these at this time.
- 2.12 The CPZ Task Group reviewed the terms of operation of the Residents' On-Street Parking Scheme. A proposal was made to the Executive on 27 July 2006 to revise the charges for these permits, to which a number of objections were made. As a result, a revised proposal is incorporated into this report.
- 2.13 The basic principle agreed was to establish a charging structure for Residents' Permits which began to reflect the environmental costs associated with car usage, including limiting the demand for on-street parking spaces where the supply was most restricted.
- 2.14 In the Inner Area, or Area 1, of the Woking CPZ on-street parking permits will not be available for new applicants. Instead they will be able to purchase an "off peak" season ticket for Heathside Crescent Car Park. Existing Area 1 Residents' Permits will continue to be renewed on request.
- 2.15 The current charge for an on-street permit of £10 was set in 1992 when the Woking CPZ was established. It is proposed to increase this to £15, which represents a modest equivalent rise of 2.5% per year.
- 2.16 In Areas 2 and 3, where waiting restrictions operate between 8.30am and 6.00pm from Monday to Saturday, the annual charge for a household's first vehicle permit will be £15. The charge for the second permit will rise to £50 and that for the third or subsequent permit will rise to £150.
- 2.17 In Areas 4 and 5, where waiting restrictions operate for the much shorter period of 9.30am to 11.30am from Monday to Friday, the increase in charges for permits is more moderate. The annual charge for a household's first vehicle permit will also be £15 while the second permit charge will rise to £30 and that for the third and subsequent permits will rise to £75.

### Taxi Licence Fees (Chris Fairlamb)

- 2.18 The legislation under which taxis are licensed requires fees to be set at a level that covers the Council costs in providing the service but no higher. As the 2006/07 revenue estimates for taxi licensing show a surplus it is not proposed to increase the taxi licence fees this year. It is also proposed that the vehicle transfer fee for vehicles already licensed by the Council is reduced from £100 to £50 to reflect the actual current cost of processing the application and producing the necessary vehicle plates/licences.

### Sale of copies of Minutes and Agendas (Alan Harrison)

- 2.19 The sale of copies of minutes and agendas has been gradually declining over the years. The estimated income for 2006/07 is £1,190. The main reason for this being that copies are now available free of charge on the Council's Web Site. Also copies are available free of charge at the Civic Offices. The planning pages also provide detailed information; far more than contained in the weekly planning list.
- 2.20 A second issue is the Freedom of Information Regulations which impact on the Council's ability to charge for photocopies of documents and the associated administration. In view of this it is proposed that the charges be discontinued and the public be encouraged to use the Council's Web Site.