

# BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## REPORT TO CABINET

19 OCTOBER 2021

### REPORT OF THE INTERIM CHIEF OFFICER - FINANCE, PERFORMANCE AND CHANGE

#### FEEES AND CHARGES POLICY

#### 1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Cabinet for a revised Fees and Charges Policy.

#### 2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives / other corporate priorities

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:

1. **Supporting a successful sustainable economy** – taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focussed on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions for all people in the county borough.
2. **Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient** - taking steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services. Supporting individuals and communities to build resilience, and enable them to develop solutions to have active, healthy and independent lives.
3. **Smarter use of resources** – ensuring that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

- 2.2 The Council's ability to generate fees and charges to support its budget is a key factor in the achievement of its corporate well-being objectives. Income from fees and charges represent an important source of funds to the Council, and enable it to provide a wider range of services to the County Borough than it would otherwise be able to do so.

#### 3. Background

- 3.1 As part of the approval process for the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2016-17 to 2019-20, Council was asked to approve an Income Generation and Charging Policy which aimed to set a consistent approach across Council services and outline key principles to be applied. These included that where a decision has been taken to charge for a service, the Council will aim for full cost recovery, except where there is

a conscious decision which is consistent with council priorities, recognising that the service would then be subsidised by council tax payers. In addition, in line with the MTFs, generally charges should be increased by the increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) plus 1%.

- 3.2 During scrutiny of the MTFs 2021-22 to 2024-25, Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (COSC) recommended that:

*“the Fees and Charges policy be reviewed in 2021-22 to change it from “inflation +1%”, to just “inflation” with a view to it being implemented from the budget in 2022-23.”*

In response Cabinet agreed that, since the Income Generation and Charging Policy had been in place since 2016, that it would be thoroughly reviewed and brought back to Cabinet to decide on any changes that are needed.

#### **4. Current situation/proposal**

- 4.1 A review has recently been undertaken of the policy, and account taken of the comments raised by COSC. A revised ‘Fees and Charges Policy’ is attached at **Appendix A**.

- 4.2 The main changes to the contents of the policy are:

- a table showing charging strategy considerations (Table 2);
- the inclusion of more detail on the process for reviewing fees and charges, and the general assumptions for this (Section 7). This has been amended to:

***This means that, in general, charges should be increased by the Consumer Price Index (CPI).***

*(The appropriate CPI increase date will be that for December prior to the start of the financial year, as set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy)*

- a reference to updated Delegated Powers (paragraph 7.3).
- the process to be followed where it is not proposed to increase fees and charges (paragraphs 7.4 – 7.6).
- a section on the publication of fees and charges (Section 9).

#### **5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules**

- 5.1 There is no impact on the policy framework and procedure rules.

#### **6. Equality Act 2010 implications**

- 6.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. This report is an overarching charging policy, therefore it is not necessary to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment in the production of this report. Individual service managers will be required to undertake

an Equality Impact assessment if they propose changes to their individual, service specific, charging proposals.

6.2 The overarching policy does require service managers to consider areas where services should be subsidised, including concessions for target groups.

## **7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications**

7.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.

## **8. Financial implications**

8.1 This policy clarifies the important role that charging and income generation has in supporting the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

## **9. Recommendation**

9.1 It is recommended that Cabinet approves the updated Fees and Charges Policy at **Appendix A**.

Gill Lewis

**INTERIM CHIEF OFFICER – FINANCE, PERFORMANCE AND CHANGE**

October 2021

**Contact Officer:** Deborah Exton  
Deputy Head of Finance

**Telephone:** (01656) 643604

**E-mail:** [deborah.exton@bridgend.gov.uk](mailto:deborah.exton@bridgend.gov.uk)

**Postal Address:** Bridgend County Borough Council  
Raven's Court  
Brewery Field  
Bridgend  
CF31 4AP

**Background Documents:** None