

Report To: Safe, Sustainable Communities
Committee

Date: 05 May 2009

Report By: Corporate Director Environment &
Community Protection

Report No:
ECP/SCS/MM/09/020

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Subject: Safer Communities Charges

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 To seek approval for a range of charges for works carried out by Safer Communities.

2.0 SUMMARY

2.1 Safer Communities is responsible for the enforcement of a multitude of Acts and statutory instruments covering a wide range of topics. Some of the work carried out by officers from Safer Communities involves a significant cost which may be recoverable under the relevant legislation.

2.2 Advice from internal audit together with benchmarking with adjacent authorities has identified the charges in Appendix 1 as being set at a level to allow the Council to recover a reasonable proportion of costs incurred.

2.3 This is part of a wider exercise which will involve reviewing some other charges which have changed little over the years and which do not adequately reflect the costs incurred by the Council, for example Animal Boarding Establishments Licences. It is our intention to return to committee with recommendations once a thorough benchmarking exercise has been carried out on these charges.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 That the Committee approves the charges listed in Appendix 1 for 2009/10.

4.0 Background

- 4.1 Some of the charges levied by Safer Communities for works carried out were identified by Internal Audit as being set at unrealistically low levels given the actual costs of administration and enforcement. Particular attention was drawn to charges for costs involved in the enforcement of notices served under various legislation but in particular the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 and the Environmental Protection Act 1990.
- 4.2 It is our intention to review and benchmark all discretionary charges and charges which are not set either by statute, for example explosives licence fees, or by national agreement, for example weights and measures etc.. The first batch of these is contained in Appendix 1.
- 4.3 The housing notice enforcement fees have been set following a survey of charges made in other local authorities. They have been set at a median level to reflect the actual costs of enforcement.
- 4.4 Inverclyde Council has not previously charged for repatriation certificates, provided following inspection of coffins at undertakers which are to be repatriated to the deceased's home country. A survey of other local authorities revealed that the majority were charging with £75 being both a reasonable cost in relation to that charged elsewhere and in relation to the Council's costs.
- 4.5 Maximum charges for a number of services relating to private water supplies are set in the Private Water Supplies (Scotland) Regulations 2006. Because some of these were seen as potentially excessive (e.g. up to £435 for a type A sample) a benchmarking exercise was carried out with the Ayrshire authorities to produce the charges listed in Appendix 1. These charges reflect both the costs in officer time and the analysis costs.

5.0 Implications

5.1 Finance

Finance have been consulted and are satisfied.

5.2 Legal

There are no legal implications.

6.0 Recommendations

- 6.1 That the Committee approves the charges listed in Appendix 1 for 2009/10.

Appendix 1 – List of Charges

Item	Proposed Charge	Comments
Admin Fee (Enforcement of Notices) – Works up to £100	£30	Charge recommended by internal audit. Level set following information gathering exercise.
Admin Fee (Enforcement of Notices) – Works over £100	£30 plus £10 per £100 of works up to a maximum of £250	Charge recommended by internal audit. Level set following information gathering exercise.
Repatriation Certificate	£75	Commonly charged by other local authorities. £75 is a median fee.
Private Water Supply – Sampling Visit	£70	Fee set after benchmarking exercise with Ayrshire Councils.
Private Water Supply – Check Sample	£75	Fee set after benchmarking exercise with Ayrshire Councils.
Private Water Supply – Risk Assessment	£50	Fee set after benchmarking exercise with Ayrshire Councils.
Private Water Supply – Audit Sample (Cat A) or Cat B Sample	£7.50 per unit*	Fee set after benchmarking exercise with Ayrshire Councils.

*No of units dependent on parameters sampled (up to a maximum of £118 for Cat B Samples)