

## **Budget Efficiency Savings Proposal Pro Forma - 2014/15 (OUTWARD FACING SERVICES)**

### **1. Waste Services:**

- **Cllr Alison Smith MBE**
- **John Richardson – Head of Community Services**

### **2. Savings Proposal: Concessionary Fees and Charges – Appendix 1B – item 5**

- **Leisure, Waste and Environmental Health Services:** Change the level of discount applied to certain concessions with effect from April 2014: Bulky Waste Removal; Casual Swimming and some aspects of Pest Control.

### **3. Background**

In line with other Leicestershire authorities, it is proposed to change the level of discount applied to some concessionary fees and charges.

A report detailing a draft Corporate Charging Policy was considered and approved by Cabinet at their meeting on 23 October 2012. The proposed changes to fees and charges detailed within this report are part of the Council's management of the ongoing significant financial challenge. Increasingly, in response to the requirement to implement national policy changes and manage austere financial settlements, the Council is taking a new approach by creating more income from its activities.

Proposals will be made for changing the fees and charges in the following areas:

- Reduce the level of concession applied to bulky waste collection from 100% to 50%
- Reduce the level of concession applied to non-public health related pest control services from 100% to 50%
- Reduce the level of concession applied to the leisure link category 1 casual swimming activity from 100% to 50% (Year 1) and to 25% (Year 2). Free casual swimming will remain for children under 5 and for people with disabilities.

## **4 BULKY WASTE COLLECTION SERVICE**

### **Rationale**

- 4.1 Bulky items are defined in the Environmental Protection Act 1990 as items too big to fit in a wheeled bin or weighing more than 25kgs. The Council operates a separate chargeable collection service two days per week.
- 4.2 The charge for bulky waste collections in 2013/14 is £18.50 for between 1- 3 items collected plus £5.00 for each additional item to a maximum of 6 bulky items per household. Currently the bulky waste collection service is provided free of charge (100% concession) to those in receipt of either one or more of the following benefits: Council Tax, Housing Benefit, Income Support,

- 4.3 58% of all bulky waste collections are free collections to those in receipt of the aforementioned benefits. In 2011/12 the service generated approximately £17,000 and cost £25,500 to deliver in terms of vehicle, fuel, labour, a subsidy of £8,500.
- 4.4 The proposal is to reduce the concession to 50% to generate an income sufficient to cover the subsidy provided to the service. It is anticipated that the demand from residents in receipt of qualifying benefits will reduce if a charge is applied.
- 4.5 Out of five of the six other Leicestershire authorities that charge for bulky waste collections only North West Leicestershire apply a 100% concession for those in receipt of the aforementioned benefits.
- 4.5 This proposal also helps reduce any abuse of the scheme such as households disposing of six settees per year (ie for neighbours) and encourages waste prevention. Currently NWLDC work closely with the voluntary sector and we direct reusable waste to charity organisations such as the REACT project (Marlene Reid Centre).
- 4.6 There is a risk that flytipping will increase and this would be monitored and baselined against current data and appropriate action taken.

### **Financial Implications**

There is a current shortfall in cost recovery of approximately £8,500. A 50% concession based on current demand would generate approximately £10,638 per annum.

### **Implementation Plan**

It is proposed that the reduction in the current level of concession from 100% to 50% be implemented from 1 April 2014. The benefits of this proposal include:

- Reduced waste to landfill
- Increasing reuse through referrals to charity organisations.

## **5 PEST CONTROL TREATMENT SERVICE**

### **Rationale**

- 5.1 The Council provides a treatment service for a range of pests. The range of pests covered can be broadly grouped into two groups: public health related and non-public health related pests. Public health related pests include rats and mice with all other pests falling into the second grouping.
- 5.2 It is proposed to reduce the concessionary discount from 100% to 50% for the treatment of non public health related pests, meaning that the customer would be charged £25. All customers within the concessionary group would continue to receive a free service for rats and mice.
- 5.3 The concessionary group includes those in receipt of either one or more of the following benefits: Carer's Allowance, Council Tax, Employment and Support Allowance (Income Based), Housing Benefit, Income Support, Jobseeker's allowance (Income based), Working Tax Credit.

- 5.4 Benchmarking with 6 neighbouring local authorities identified that only 2 currently offer a free service for wasps, fleas and bedbugs. The charge paid by the concessionary group at the 4 other local authorities ranges from £24 to £48, making the proposal of £25 at the cheaper end of local service provision.

### **Financial Implications**

The income projection is based on a 50% fall in service demand from customers within the concessionary group. It is projected to generate an additional £1,770 (exclusive VAT) a year.

### **Implementation Plan**

It is proposed that the reduction in the level of concession from 100% to 50% be implemented from 1 April 2014.

The benefits of this proposal include:

- The service continues to represent value for money
- All concessionary customers would continue to receive a free service for rats and mice
- All customers will continue to receive a free telephone advice service

## **6 CASUAL SWIMMING**

### **Rationale**

- 6.1 All Leisure Link activities, with the exception of casual swimming for Leisure Link Category 1 (means tested benefits) and Category 2 (People with disabilities) offer a standard discount of 25%. The list of approved means tested benefits includes Carer's Allowance, Council Tax, Employment and Support Allowance (Income Based), Housing Benefit, Income Support, Jobseeker's allowance (Income based), Working Tax Credit.
- 6.2 Benchmarking with neighbouring local authorities identified that the majority of them offer a discount rather than free swimming for Category 1 customers. It is therefore proposed to apply a charge to this Category (keeping category 2 free) A 50% discount (£1.70) would still keep NWLDC at the cheaper end of local provision although a 25% discount (£2.60) would make the District one of the more expensive local options. It is proposed that the charging be phased in with a view to standardising the discount at 25% in year 2. It is proposed to keep Category 2 (People with disabilities) at 100% discount ie Free of charges.

### **Financial Implications**

The income projection in year 1 is based on an uptake of 50%.

### **Implementation Plan**

It is proposed that the reduction in level of concession be phased over 2 years, moving from 100% concession to 50% from 1 April 2014, to 25% from 1 January 2015 (all leisure prices are reviewed on the 1 January annually).

## **7 Equalities Impact:**

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed.