

SEVENOAKS JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD – 11 MARCH 2008

FEES AND CHARGES FOR 2008/09

Report of the: Director of Kent Highway Services

Status: For Consideration

Portfolio Holder Cllr James London

Head of Service Director of Kent Highway Services – Mr Geoff Harrison-Mee

Recommendation: It be RESOLVED that: The proposed Fees & Charges for 2008/09 as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 will be recommended to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways & Waste for implementation with effect from 1 April 2008.

Background

- 1 A report by the Director of Kent Highway Services to the Highways Advisory Board on the 8th January 2008

Introduction

- 2 This report seeks approval of revised fees and charges for 2008/09 in respect of a wide range of services provided by Kent Highway Services. The Local Government Act 2003 (Section 93) provides the power for charging for discretionary services but also stipulates that local authorities may only cover their reasonable costs in providing such services. This year the changes have been reviewed in the light of fees and charges made by other counties. This annual report is prepared earlier than last year to allow more notice to be given of planned increases prior to April 2008. The estimated total income for 2007/8 is £2.9m. This is mainly comprised of energy charges, highway searches and development related fees (£1.7m) and RASWA charges (£1.1m).
- 3 The main source of income is from developers who are required to pay S38 or S278 fees relating to supervision of new estate road construction and in some cases commuted sums for future maintenance of new highway infrastructure.
- 4 The New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 [RASWA] and subsequent regulations determines charges for sample inspections, defects, licences, etc. The Road Safety team also provides a range of services, including cycle and minibus driver training for which a charge is made either to individuals or other departments and organisations.

Item No. 11

- 5 For most other fees and charges, where there is no specific evidence that the cost of processing and monitoring applications has changed significantly, increases of approx 3% are proposed which reflects the expected increase in staff costs and overheads. In most cases these are rounded up to the nearest £1.00 but an attempt has also been made to standardise charges for similar services. The proposed new fees and charges for 2008/09 are set out in the Appendices. However some other charges which are statutory and for which there is no local discretion have not been included.

Highway Definitions, Land Charges, Information and searches (Appendix 1)

- 6 Following a review of Highway Definitions, Land Charges, searches and information it is recommended that charges are increased by 3% in line with the anticipated rise in staff and administration costs. Following a review of Freedom of Information Act requirements the charge of 10p per sheet for photocopying will remain unchanged although separate fees will now be applied for larger sized sheets or colour copies. The £10 minimum charge will be removed.

Developer Funded Highway Schemes [Appendix 1 & 2]

- 7 The main source of developer fees is the standard charge of 8% of the estimated works value for the supervision of new estate road construction under S38 of the Highways Act 1980. This charge is in line with that charged by other local authorities and is currently adequate to offset supervision costs. There are also charges for supervision and fixed consultancy fees for advice to developers re alterations to the existing highway under S278 of the Highways Act.
- 8 In addition commuted sums are sought wherever there is an ongoing maintenance cost relating directly to new infrastructure [e.g. for maintaining new traffic signals or inspecting structures]. The DfT in conjunction with leading Local Authorities, the Home Builders Federation and URS (lighting) are currently conducting a review of the approach to commuted sums in England and Wales. This is due to be complete during 2008/9. KCC will be providing input to the process at the working group stage. In the light of this review it is proposed to reconsider KCC's own commuted sum policy and amend it where appropriate during 2009/10. The current level of commuted sums and S278 charges is to be increased by 3% in line with the anticipated rise in staff and administration costs.

Skips and Scaffolding (Appendix 1)

- 9 The skip/scaffolding/hoarding/materials licence fees cover the administration costs in the issuing of licences for placing of these items on the highway. The income generated is used to offset divisional costs in overseeing the safe positioning of them on the highway including enforcement action where necessary. The current charge is £15 per week. Skips are placed on the highway for no longer than is absolutely necessary. The permit is recharged via the skip companies. An increase to £16 is proposed for the current year. There are no changes proposed for vehicle crossings as these are determined by RASWA regulations but an increase of £5 on the administration fee is recommended. A separate licence is being considered for scaffolding/hoarding in future, possibly with a higher fee. Consultation with local Kent scaffolding companies will be carried out prior to a recommendation being made to the board.

Road Safety [Appendix 1]

- 10 Cyclist training is offered to Year 6 children through their primary school. Currently the Road Safety team provides cycle training for around 7,000 children per annum; approximately 43% of the total year group across the county. It is proposed to increase the cyclist training fee (currently £15 from September 2007) to £16 (from September 2008) in line with the anticipated rise in staff and administration costs and the academic year.
- 11 The National Driver Improvement Scheme (NDIS) and Speed Awareness course (SAC) are administered by the Road Safety team as the service provider for Kent Police. These schemes must be totally self-financing; no excess income can be generated for KCC. A small fee increase is recommended for the NDIS to ensure that the costs of running the scheme can continue to be met without the need for a subsidy. As the partners 'set-up' costs for the SAC have now been repaid and the level of the current fee is considered a deterrent for some drivers attending the course it is proposed to reduce this fee from the existing £115 to £95.
- 12 The Road Safety team provides minibus driver courses and reassessment [every 3 years] for KCC drivers. A small increase to the fee is proposed in line with wage cost increases. It is recommended that these fees are increased to £113 and £31 respectively.

Item No. 11

- 13 The Road Safety team provides monitoring and training functions for the School Crossing Patrol service managed by Education & Libraries Directorate. This is arranged through a Service Level Agreement (SLA). The current level of SLA income covers existing costs and so the charge for this remains unchanged
- 14 'Theatres in Education' is a valuable activity that delivers key road safety messages to students in an innovative and exciting way. Annually the Road Safety team organises performances for year 12/13 students with a focus on driving issues including anti-drink drive and anti-drug drive. The team subsidises this for participating schools which allows greater coverage within the available budget. It is recommended that the proportion of the subsidy (50%) should remain at the current level.

Conclusion

- 15 Subject to the views of the Board the proposed Fees & Charges for 2008/09 as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 will be recommended to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways & Waste for implementation with effect from 1 April 2008.

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Director of Kent Highway Services Mr Geoff Harrison-Mee