**STOCKPORT COUNCIL'S CHARGING PRINCIPLES**

* Fees and charges will be linked to the Authority’s priorities, outcomes and values and our statutory obligations
* We will strive to keep customers at the heart of what we do; charging decisions will balance the need to remain financially viable with our ambition to remain citizen/customer focussed
* All income generated will be reinvested to support the work of the authority and protect front line services and reducing the cost of service delivery is paramount
* Decisions to implement new charging protocols will be implemented consistently across all services with senior level oversight to ensure that the cumulative impact of changes are understood and the focus remains on reducing operating costs
* The impact of changing a charging protocol for a particular service will be taken into consideration when making a decision to subsidise service delivery
* We will routinely implement an annual review of costs based on inflationary indicators through delegated authority to officers
* The approval of other increases in cost will be formalised and may differ depending on the nature of the service and the proposed increase in cost. Some delegated authority may still apply in clearly defined scenarios
* We will implement a standardised approach to refunds, where full refunds are only offered where there has been no significant financial outlay at the point of request and there is a reasonable expectation that the time allocated to deliver the service can be re-allocated
* Payment in advance of service delivery through improved digital channels will be our default cost recovery model. The ability to pay by cheque and/or postal order will be withdrawn; where applicable, robust debt recovery processes shall be implemented
* Where appropriate and where we have a financial viable model, which is competitive in terms of cost and/or quality we will take steps to increase the Council’s market share whilst also being mindful of the impact this may have on the local economy