

AGENDA ITEM No. . 19 (C)

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

To : ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE	Subject : SEPA: Proposals for the Waste Management Charging (Scotland) Scheme, 1999
From : DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES	
Date : 10 December 1998 Ref : GB/SP	

PROPOSED DECISION

To agree with the views expressed in the report and to homologate the Department's action in sending them to SEPA by the closing deadline of 8th January, 1999.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The level of charges proposed in the draft scheme for fees and charges would result in an increase of £6,675 over those which would have been applicable this year. This sum relates to the landfill sites at Auchinlea, Dalmacoultter and Hope Park, the Recycling Centre at Auchinlea and the seven civic amenity sites throughout the area.

BACKGROUND

The Department has received a Consultation Document from the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) with regard to their proposals to increase fee charges in the year commencing 1st April, 1999.

SEPA are empowered in terms of Section 41 of the Environmental Act, 1995 to make charging schemes in respect of environmental licences. It is the regulatory body responsible for issuing Waste Management Licences for waste disposal, treatment and civic amenity sites.

In summary the Agency propose a 3% increase in respect of applications, modifications, surrenders and transfers of waste management licences and 25% in respect of subsistence charges

Based on the principle of the "polluter pays", SEPA levies fees and charges on site operators for the issue of site licences to cover the costs of regular site inspections and the taking of samples.

REPORT

Until now the Council has not paid subsistence fees as previously when the District Councils were the Regulatory Authority, a licence could not be issued to themselves, only a Resolution which had no fee. This changed in 1996 when SEPA became the regulatory body.

Following negotiation on the terms, SEPA have only recently issued the Department with site licences for the landfill sites at Auchinlea and Dalnacoulter, and the Council will incur annual subsistence fees for the first time. In anticipation of these licences being issued, monies have been allowed in the Departmental Budget for next financial year to cover these annual subsistence fees based on current levels plus inflation of 3%.

While accepting that the basis of the proposed increase is the Government's "polluter pays" policy, the proposal to increase the subsistence charges by 25% from the 1998 level is considered to be excessive. This follows last year's increase of 20% and precedes an increase of 17% proposed for the year 2000, giving a proposed increase of 75.5% over the three year period.

This opinion takes account of the severe financial constraints being placed on Local Authorities and at a point in the year when Budget proposals for the next financial year have been submitted with no provision for such a large increase.

In summary the Council could accept increases of 3% as suggested for the various items within the Consultation Paper but not the 25% increase in subsistence fees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to homologate the Department's comments contained within the Report and the action taken in submitting these comments to SEPA as representing the Council's views which had to arrive by 8th January..

M'Kenzie H. Hutton