



**Report to: Income Generation Sub-Committee, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2022**

**Report of: Head of Finance**

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**Subject: PROPOSED FEES AND CHARGES 2022/23**

**1. Recommendation**

**1.1 That the Sub-Committee review the proposed schedule of Fees and Charges for 2022/23 and recommend its approval to the Policy and Resources Committee on 8 February 2022 for ultimate approval by Full Council on 22 February 2022.**

**2. Background**

2.1 The Council issues an annual schedule of the Fees and Charges levied by each of its services.

2.2 The existing charges have been reviewed by the relevant service and adjusted to reflect changes in the cost of providing the service. Where appropriate and feasible, a comparison has also been made to the amount charged by local competitors to ensure that the Council is providing a service which is competitively priced and represents good value.

2.3 A separate report regarding Leisure Fees and Charges was submitted to the Communities Committee meeting of 3 November 2021, followed by the Income Generation Sub Committee meeting of 10 November 2021 as the business cycle for these charges requires changes from 1 January, rather than 1 April. Council approved the proposed changes on 30 November 2021.

**3. Preferred Option**

3.1 The proposed schedule of Fees and Charges is set out in **Appendix 1**, which shows the existing and proposed charge with the consequent increase or decrease as a value and as a percentage. Owing to commercial sensitivity the proposed Fees and Charges for Trade Waste, Building Control and some Licensing charges are classed as exempt items and are shown at **Appendix 2**. (*note – Trade Waste charges are outstanding at present pending the publication of the new cost of waste disposal which is expected in January. It should be available for the final report to Policy and Resources Committee in February*).

3.2 The review of the Fees and Charges has been carried out with an assumption that inflation is at 2%. The publication of the CPI for November showed an annual increase of 4.6%.

- 3.3 The basis of the review is for the full cost recovery of the service and a market analysis of prices charged by other providers. Any change will be to the next most appropriate price point rather than by a specific percentage.
- 3.4 The following Fees and Charges are proposed to increase by an average of 2% and in some specific cases, individual fees by a greater amount, as follows:
- Football pitch hire
  - Burials, cremations and memorials
  - Fishing permits
  - Development Management pre application fees
  - Guildhall room hire and weddings
  - Garden waste collection
  - Street naming and numbering
  - Archaeology
  - HMO licences/enforcement administration
  - Weddings both at Commandery and Guildhall
  - Land charges
  - High hedges
- 3.5 The following Fees and Charges have been maintained at the same level as 2021/22:
- Regulatory Services licencing
  - Sales of the Electoral Register
  - Housing - City Life lettings
  - Bulky Waste collection
  - Car parking and traffic management charges
  - PCN's
  - Environmental Enforcement fixed penalties
  - Housing – civil penalty charges set by policy and statute
  - Court Fees for Council Tax and NNDR
- 3.6 Fees for planning applications are set nationally and they have not been increased since the 20% increase on 17 January 2018 except for pre application fees which will increase by 2%.
- 3.7 Building Control fees have been increased by 2.5% by the shared service to cover the pay increase and other additional increased costs. These are detailed in the exempt **Appendix 2**.
- 3.8 Allotments charges have increased by 3.1% as agreed with the Allotment Forum.
- 3.9 The tennis court hire at Gheluvelt Park is under Freedom Leisure management and the related court fees therefore form part of their Fees and Charges which are approved in the autumn, see para 2.3.
- 3.10 The room hire charge for the buildings at Gheluvelt Park and Cripplegate park have been maintained at the 2021/22 level to encourage usage from the currently low level.
- 3.11 In Regulatory Services the fees and charges proposed for Vehicle and Operator Licences were subject to consultation and consideration of objections by the Licencing Committee on 13 December 2021.

- 3.12 The charges for the Museum and Art Gallery and Commandery were reviewed and approved by the Joint Museums Services Committee at the meeting on 17 September 2021. The key points are;
- the wedding packages at the Commandery have increased by an average 3% in line with the Guildhall;
  - the charge for Worcester residents at the Commandery have increased for individuals by £1.50 and for families by £6.00 with new added benefits.
- 3.13 Garden Waste collection charges are proposed to increase by £1.50, which is 2.4%, to £64.00.
- 3.14 The charges for Bulky Waste are maintained at the 2021/22 level. The income from this service has increased during the pandemic and the nil increase is intended to ensure the service remains competitive.
- 3.15 Bereavement service charges are to be increased by an average 2%. The memorials options have been extended to include the provision of stepping stones in the natural burial area and the addition of further recorded media options that are now available from the service provider.
- 3.16 No increase in the council's car parking and traffic management charges are proposed for 2022/23.

#### **4. Alternative Options Considered**

- 4.1 The alternative option is to not change the existing schedule of Fees and Charges. However, this would result in potentially not achieving full cost recovery in some services and for the services to cease to be competitive in the market.

#### **5. Implications**

##### **5.1 Financial and Budgetary Implications**

The financial impact of the changes proposed is an increase in budgeted income of £0.05m which is reflected in the MTFP for 22/23 and is only a 0.5% increase on total income of £8.5m. This is due to the single largest revenue stream, car parking being subject to a nil increase. There are several other revenue streams with fees that are statutory and are also nil increases e.g. planning applications and gaming licences. By contrast the Council's expenditure is increasing by a greater amount. Employment costs represent over 50% of total expenditure and are projected to increase by 2% per annum. The net effect of expenditure rising faster than income is the increasing deficit in the MTFP.

##### **5.2 Legal and Governance Implications**

None

##### **5.3 Risk Implications**

The risk of losing income from increased fees and charges has been mitigated by a review of market conditions to ensure the proposed change is appropriate.

##### **5.4 Corporate/Policy Implications**

None

5.5 Equality Implications

As part of the reviewing the various Fees and Charges, each Service has considered the equality implications of the proposed changes included in this report.

5.6 Human Resources Implications

None

5.7 Health and Safety Implications

None

5.8 Social, Environmental and Economic implications

Proposed increases in fees are in line with inflation and therefore should have zero impact in respect of maintaining access to services. In specific cases the reasons for changes outside of an inflation increase are given and the social, environmental and economic implications have been considered as part of the decision to propose the changes.

**Ward(s):**

**All**

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**Background Papers:**

**None**