



**Report to: Income Generation Sub-Committee, 1<sup>st</sup> February 2023**

**Report of: Head of Finance**

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**Subject: PROPOSED FEES AND CHARGES 2023/24**

**1. Recommendation**

**1.1 That the Sub-Committee reviews the proposed schedule of Fees and Charges for 2023/24 and recommends its approval to the Policy and Resources Committee on 7 February 2023 for ultimate approval by Full Council on 21 February 2023.**

**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 The proposed Leisure Fees and Charges have been reviewed by external Leisure Consultants, who are looking at the future provision of the Leisure Service for the Council. They are included elsewhere on this agenda.

**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 February. It may 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 the average increase should be 7.5%, which is line with the pay award for 2022/23. The publication of the CPI for November showed an annual increase of 10.7%.
- 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 7.5% 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
- Land charges
- High hedges
- Regulatory Services licencing
- Bulky Waste collection
- Court Fees for Council Tax and NNDR
- Car parking and traffic management charges
- Parking dispensations and road closures
- Housing - City Life lettings

3.5 The following Fees and Charges have been maintained at the same level as 2022/23:

- Sales of the Electoral Register
- Green Space – miscellaneous
- PCN's
- Residents' parking permits
- Environmental Enforcement fixed penalties
- Regulatory Services – some are set by policy and statute
- Housing – civil penalty charges set by policy and statute

3.6 Fees for planning applications are set nationally and they have not been increased since the 20% increase on 17 January 2018. Pre application fees are set by the Council and will increase by an average of 7.5%.

3.7 Building Control fees have been increased by inflation an average 7.5% 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 7% 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 under review by the external consultants.

3.10 The room hire charge for the buildings at Gheluvelt Park and Cripplegate park are not being increased to encourage greater usage from the currently low level.

3.11 In Regulatory Services the following new charges have been introduced:

- Electric vehicle licence – nil fee for a licence but charge for administration fee
- Hackney Carriage/Private Hire – temporary vehicle fee which is 75% of first application fee
- Sex Establishments – application for the variation of the licence

- Hypnotism – application for authorisation
- Massage/Special treatments – transfer of licence fee
- Mobile Homes Act – application for a new site licence, annual fees, miscellaneous fees and enforcement charges

The decision to apply a nil fee for a licence for an electric vehicle was approved at a meeting of the Licensing and Environmental Health Committee on 12 December 2022.

3.12 In Regulatory Services the following charges have been removed;

- DVLA mandate - electric and paper copies
- Operator’s licence both new and renewal
- Knowledge test retake, disability awareness training and practical driving assessment – these are now a Worcestershire County Council charge
- Private water supply - trading certificates
- Gambling Act – existing operator charge, change of name and transitional application fee

3.13 The charges for the Museum and Art Gallery and Commandery were reviewed and approved by the Joint Museums Services Committee at the meeting on 6 October 2022. The key points are;

- the wedding packages at the Commandery have increased by an average 6% after being benchmarked to the current market;
- a new charge has been introduced at the Commandery to hire the whole garden for the evening £1,220 for 3 hours;
- the archaeology deposit fees have increased by 13% to reach the national average without undermining the archaeology unit’s planning;

3.14 Bereavement service charges are to be increased by an average 7.5%.

A new charge has been introduced for a wall mounted steel memorial tree in 2D plus engraving at £100.

3.15 The charges at the Guildhall for both room hire and weddings have been reviewed and the charges have been calculated to reflect the current costs.

Room hire on a Sunday is now being offered at the same rate as a Saturday to encourage more bookings.

A new banqueting rate has been introduced that includes Assembly room/Council chamber, kitchen, catering fee, tables/chairs, set up time and equipment.

If rooms are required for a catered event there will be an additional charge of £250 for hot food and £100 for a cold buffet.

3.16 The council’s car parking and traffic management charges are to increase by an average 9%. The specific tariff increases range from 0% on longer stays to 25% on some of the shorter stays. The opportunity has also been taken to round prices to £1.00, £2.00 etc. to achieve a clearer set of tariffs. Season tickets have also been increased by an average 10%.

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

- 4.1 The alternative option is to not the 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 £0.558m which is reflected in the MTFP for 23/24 and is only a 6.2% increase on total income from fees and charges of £9.0m. There are several revenue streams with fees that are statutory and are also nil increases e.g. planning applications and gaming licences.

##### **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.

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**Background Papers:** None