

Committee(s): Policy Resources & Economic Development	Date: 2 nd February 2022
Subject: Fees and Charges	Wards Affected: All
Report of: Phoebe Barnes, Corporate Manager (Finance)	Public
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Summary

Fees and charges made by the Council for various services are reviewed on an annual basis by the relevant Committees relating to the services provided. During the municipal year Chairs of the relevant committees deferred the proposed fees and charges pending further review of the proposed charges considering the current economic climate and the increase in inflationary costs. Officers alongside chairs have reviewed and revised the fees and charges since they were deferred, and they are being brought in totality to the Policy Resources and Economic Development committee for approval. Recommended amendments to the fees and charges are incorporated into the budget setting process to take effect from the following financial year.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

R1. Agree to the proposed charges for 2022/23 as attached in Appendix A-E and recommend for approval at Ordinary Council on 23rd February 2022.

Main Report

Introduction and Background

1. The Council's has several fees and charges relating to the services it provides. As part of the budget setting process, these charges are reviewed on an annual basis. Whilst some of the fees and charges are statutory, and therefore determined through legislation., the Council must also review its charges for discretionary services to ensure that they reflect the current costs of service provision.

2. The individual charges that are being proposed are set out in Appendix A-E of this report.
3. As part of the Council's budget assumptions reported to this committee in June 2021, inflation was forecast at 1.9%. Since then, the financial climate has seen inflation raise to current highs of 5%.
4. Original Fees and Charges taken prior to this committee used 1.9% as minimum increase. Chairs felt that this increase was too low based on the financial climate and deferred the agenda item whilst officers reviewed their fees and charges and determined a suitable increase to ensure cost recovery was achievable.
5. HM Treasury Forecast as at November for CPI is tabled below, which officers used as a basis and to benchmark against.

2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
4%	2.6%	2.1%

6. As the Fees and Charges were deferred by the relevant committees, this committee is asked to review all the fees and charges for the Council broken down by the fees and charges that relate to the relevant individual committees.

Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

7. The proposed fees are based on a calculation of the costs involved in administering the various areas of work, apart from where there is statutory charge or where the fees are set by Government.
8. The Council where possible will adopt a full cost recovery of fees and charges.
9. It is proposed that all current non statutory fees and charges are increased by inflation. This is to reflect increase in costs to maintain the services. However, managers can increase fees and charges above this recommended percentage increase as long as the change can be justified within the supporting covering sheet to the appendix.
10. Within each appendix a covering sheet explains the following

- Objectives and rationale behind the fees and charges
- The proposed change in fee
- Justification for this revision
- Any benchmarking undertaken to aid in informing the level of charge
- Whether any consultation needs to be considered
- Expected income from the proposed fees and charges.

11. The fees and charges with proposed changes are:

Community & Health Committee

12. The schedules for this committee are set out within Appendix A. A summary of changes are as follows

Community Events

- Charges have been increased by 5.0% and rounded to the nearest whole number. This increase is based on the CPI inflation increase for 2022/23.
- The hot catering unit price has been increased to reflect a commercial charge to a commercial vendor.

Golf Course

- Increase proposed is 5% however realignment of some charges have been to reflect a better offering of the golf provision. This includes setting a concession for over 65's and aligning weekday and weekend charging with other local courses.

Open Spaces

- Charges have been increased by 5.0% and rounded to the nearest whole number

Food & Health Safety

- Food Hygiene Rating has increased by 1.6%
- No changes proposed to the other charges.

Environment Housing & Enforcement Committee

13. The schedules for this committee are set out within Appendix B. A summary of changes are as follows:

Cemeteries

- Charges to be increased by 5% and rounded to the nearest whole number.

Waste Management

- Majority of charges have increased by 5% and rounded to the nearest whole number.
- Garden bin hire is to increase from £55 to £60. To support the increase costs of running the service
- Hire of containers have increased above 5% to reflect the rising cost of plastic containers
- Trade waste charges are exempt attached in Appendix E. These are charges as a basis.

Environmental Health & Corporate Enforcement

- Fees have been benchmarked against other Local Authorities and charges have remained the same for non-statutory charges.
- Statutory charges are inline with recommended charges.

Housing Standard

- HMO's licenses and Housing Act Notices have been increased by 1.9% and rounded to reflect the increase in oncosts from salaries.

Street Naming & Numbering

- Charges to be increased by 5% and rounded to the nearest whole number.

Homelessness

- Accommodation providers have kept rates stable, therefore increases have been based on the market range.

HRA Estates

- Increase in costs are derived from the Axis contract which is based on 3.1%

HRA Repairs

- Some charges have been increased by 1.9%
- Other charges have been increased to reflect the cost of replacing equipment

HRA Special Services

- Small increase of 1.9% and rounded to reflect the increase in oncosts from salaries.

Planning & Licensing Committee

14. The schedules for this committee are set out within Appendix C. A summary of changes are as follows:

Land Charges

- Increase proposed is between 2% and 6% and rounded to the nearest whole number.

Licensing (including Taxis)

- No increase is proposed to the fees this year. COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the licensed businesses so no increases are proposed in order to continue to support local businesses.

Building Control

- Increase proposed is 4% and rounded to the nearest pound, increase proposed is to help maintain the high level of service provision in the Borough.

Planning Development Management

- Primary objective of the charge is cost recovery. Charges were reviewed and deemed not appropriate to increase.
- The PPA's will remain negotiable to ensure full cost recovery.

Policy Resources & Economic Development Committee

15. The schedules for this committee are set out within Appendix D. A summary of changes are as follows:

Parking

- No change to parking fees this year pending the outcome of the car parking strategy.
- Introduction of charges at King Georges Park, an explanation of this introduction can be found at paragraph 13 within the report.

Design & Print

- Costs have been increased by costs of supplying the service and rounded to the nearest whole number.

Facilities Management

- Increase proposed is 4% and rounded to the nearest whole number.
- Wedding fees are set by Essex and have increased by up to 3.4%

Economic Development

- Sponsorship packages will look to be negotiable depending on the sponsor.

Legal

- Realigned charges that are more transparent have been introduced.
- The schedule ensures that all costs can be recovered and charged for in an open and transparent way.
- By having a schedule listing the charges applicable to legal services this should standardize the process in recovering fees and charges.

Background to KGPF parking charges

16. The Pavilion at King Georges Park is fast approaching completion along with the 'Adventure Play' and 'Splash Pad'. The Pavilion with its 'Tag Active' and 'Sensory Room' along with the Parks other free and pay and play activities will create a fantastic space for visitors. The business model that supported this development included car park revenue.
17. Whilst we appreciate that we want to encourage and not discourage visitors to the park the facilities that have been introduced need to be paid for and maintained. Parking which formed part of the business case for King Georges Pavilion Build is considered in the following paragraphs setting out charges specifically for King Georges Park as from the 1st April 2022.
18. The Council has contracted a parking specialist to bring together a parking strategy for the borough which will include a direction of travel and method of

charging which will include King Georges. However, as this work will not be complete before April 1st it is proposed to bring in an interim charging structure for the park until the new strategy and direction of travel are adopted later this year.

19. In order to keep costs to a minimum and not invest in technology until after the strategy and direction of travel are agreed the suggestion is that parking at King Georges Park will be cash and Pay By Phone. The parking will be supported by Civil Enforcement Officers whose scheduled rounds will be altered to include the car parks at King Georges.
20. Concern has been expressed over visitors to the park using local roads to park causing local issues and avoiding the parking tariffs within the park. The Council has met SEPP who enforce on the local roads around King Georges Park and will continue to enforce. Restrictions are already in place on surrounding roads, and this has so far limited use of the surrounding roads for parking. The Council's Civil Enforcement Officers and SEPP officers will continue to monitor the situation and report back any issues.
21. To assist the parking at the site the overflow car park is being improved to create better parking spaces and increase eventually the Electronic Vehicle Charging points in the borough. This overflow car park will provide an additional 217 parking spaces. Further should the park become even more busy the field near to Hartswood Splash Pad can be opened for more overflow parking.
22. In order to service the requirements of the parking at the park it will be necessary to improve the present parking infrastructure and increase the number of 'pay on display' (POD) machines and to effect repairs to an existing machine. In order to achieve this and to keep cost low we will relocate two PODs from elsewhere in the borough to King Georges Playing Fields. This will cost c. £4,000, to allow for civil engineering works and the necessary tariff changes. Additionally new tariff boards will be required, which will cost c. £1,200.
23. It is therefore recommended that the standard parking tariffs presently in operation in Council car parks across the borough should be introduced for 2022/2023. These are set out in Appendix D. Further we are recommending the residential discount card would also apply. We also propose that members of Hartswood Golf Club and the Bowls Clubs that already use and pay membership fees are not charged for parking. And lastly it is recommended that golfers who use the park and pay to park are charged a lower green fee on presentation of the parking payment ticket. The green fee will therefore be reduced by £4 per car park paying customer

Conclusion

24. The Fees and Charges exercise that has been undertaken has resulted in generating an additional £130k towards budgeted costs for 2022/23. This increase has been assumed in the Medium-term Financial Strategy 2022/23.

Reasons for Recommendation

25. Officers review fees and charges annually and this will be used to inform the 2022/23 budget setting process.

Consultation

References to Corporate Plan

26. To ensure the provision of efficient and effective services of our residents and businesses.

Implications

Financial Implications

Name/Title: Jacqueline Van Mellaerts, Director of Corporate Resources
Tel/Email: 01277 312829/jacqueline.vanmellaerts@brentwood.gov.uk

27. Financial implications are set out within the report.

Legal Implications

Name & Title: Amanda Julian, Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer
Tel & Email: 01277 312705/amanda.julian@brentwood.gov.uk

28. The Council is able under the relevant legislation to recover costs for services it provides. The Council can charge for discretionary services under the Local Government Act 2003 section 93 and the Localism Act 2011 general power of competence, and is able to review the fees and charges in line with these provisions.

Economic Implications

Name/Title: Phil Drane, Director of Strategic Planning
Tel/Email: 01277 312610/philip.drane@brentwood.gov.uk

29. It is important that the Council review fees and charges as part of the budget setting process, which identifies how corporate priorities will be delivered, including growing our economy.

Other Implications (where significant) – i.e. Health and Safety, Asset Management, Equality and Diversity, Risk Management, Section 17 – Crime & Disorder, Sustainability, ICT.

Background Papers

Appendices to this report

- Appendix A: Proposed fees and charges – Community & Health
- Appendix B: Proposed fees and charges – Environment, Housing & Enforcement
- Appendix C: Proposed fees and charges – Planning & Licencing
- Appendix D: Proposed fees and charges – Policy Resources & Economic Development
- Appendix E: Waste Management – Commercial (Exempt)