



## FINANCE, ASSETS, INVESTMENTS AND RECOVERY COMMITTEE

20 DECEMBER 2023

REPORT TITLE:	Fees & Charges
REPORT OF:	Tim Willis - Director of Resources (S151)

### REPORT SUMMARY

Fees and charges made by the Council for various services are reviewed on an annual basis by the relevant Committee relating to the services provided.

Recommended amendments to the fees and charges are incorporated into the budget setting process to take effect from the following financial year.

### RECOMMENDATION

- R1. Agree to the proposed charges for 2024/25 as attached in Appendix A-D subject to the annual budget setting process.**

### SUPPORTING INFORMATION

#### 1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 To ensure that adequate resources are provided to ensure services delivered are maintained.
- 1.2 To ensure that the Council's Parking & Asset management strategy reflects current best practice and provide a robust and defensible policy framework.

#### 2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Council has a range of 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.

- 2.3 The individual charges that are being proposed are set out in Appendix A-D of this report.
- 2.4 The proposed fees are based on a calculation of the costs involved in administering the various areas of work, apart from where there is a statutory charge or where the fees are set by Government.
- 2.5 The Council, where possible, will adopt a full cost recovery of fees and charges.
- 2.6 It is proposed that all current non-statutory fees and charges are increased by inflation, which is approximately 6.7%. This is to reflect increases in costs to maintain services. However, managers can amend their fees and charges above or below this recommended percentage increase as long as the change can be justified within the supporting covering sheets to the appendix.
- 2.7 Within each appendix a covering sheet explains the following:
  - a) Objectives and rationale behind the fees and charges
  - b) The proposed change in fee
  - c) Justification for this revision
  - d) Any benchmarking undertaken to aid in informing the level of change
  - e) Whether any consultation needs to be considered.
  - f) Expected income from the proposed fees and charges.
- 2.8 The fees and charges with proposed changes are:

### **Parking**

- a) The proposed fees are based on calculating the costs required to administer and maintain car parking in the borough.
- b) The parking fees and charges are set to increase and have been rounded to the nearest pound or 50p.
- c) The Multi-Storey car park charges are proposed to remain the same as this car park provides an alternative to the oversubscribed surface car parks at Chatham Way and William Hunter Way.
- d) All car parks will continue to offer 30 minutes free parking throughout the borough.
- e) Parking on Sunday will now be free in all car parks except King Georges Playing Fields and a 3-hour parking limit at Shenfield Car

parks. This is a small gesture to support businesses on our High Streets as well as local residents.

- f) In addition, the 24-hour parking charge has been removed and the charge for parking for 6 hours or more is £7.00.
- g) The Council is investigating ways to improve the payment system currently on offer in the borough. Bringing in new technology that streamlines the experience to the user. Offering options of contactless payment, app payments but keeping cash as an option as well. In addition, the Council will look to improve and maintain the car parks themselves. The increase in fees and charges will look to financially support the investment required in the Council car parks and its technology.

### **Office accommodation**

- a) Charges for committee room hire to external bodies, have been increased by 6.7% and rounded to the nearest 10.
- b) Charges for Weddings at town hall are no longer available.

### **Design & Print Services**

- a) Charge for provision of design and print services has been increased by 6.7% and rounded to the nearest pound
- b) No change to click charges as these are based on charges the Council incurs, rounded to the nearest penny.

### **Economic Development**

- a) Not holding Brentwood Business Showcase in 2024/25 so no charges applicable.

## **3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

**Name & Title: Tim Willis, Director – Resources (Section 151 Officer)**

**Tel & Email: 01277 312500 / tim.willis@brentwood.rochford.gov.uk**

- 3.1 Financial implications are set out within the report and appendices.

## **4.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

**Name & Title: Claire Mayhew, Joint Acting Up Director - People & Governance (Monitoring Officer)**

**Tel & Email 01277 312500 / claire.mayhew@brentwood.rochford.gov.uk**

- 4.1 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.

## **5.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 5.1 There is a risk that the pricing structure reduces demand and income for the coming financial year, price rises are considered against inflation, and benchmarking of similar service where appropriate.

## **6.0 EQUALITY & HEALTH IMPLICATIONS**

**Name & Title: Kim Anderson, Corporate Manager - Communities, Leisure and Health**

**Tel & Email: 01277 312500 kim.anderson@brentwood.gov.uk**

- 6.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it make decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:
- a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act make discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful
  - b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
  - c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 6.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and 'civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).
- 6.3 The proposals in this report will not have a disproportionate adverse impact on anybody with a protected characteristic.

## **7.0 ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS**

**Name & Title: Phil Drane, Director - Place**

**Email: phil.drane@brentwood.rochford.gov.uk**

- 7.1 There are no economic implications arising from this report. Plans are in place to run the South Essex Business Expo 2024 in place of the Brentwood Business Showcase.

## **8.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

**Name & Title: Henry Muss, Sustainability Manager**

**Email: [henry.muss@brentwood.rochford.gov.uk](mailto:henry.muss@brentwood.rochford.gov.uk)**

8.1 None identified

### **REPORT AUTHOR:**

Name: Sam Wood

Title: Corporate Manager - Finance

Phone: 01277 312500

Email: [Sam.Wood@brentwood.gov.uk](mailto:Sam.Wood@brentwood.gov.uk)

### **APPENDICES**

- Appendix A: Parking
- Appendix B: Office Accommodation
- Appendix C: Design and Print
- Appendix D: Economic development

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None