

## Portfolio Holder Report

The portfolio holder will make a decision on this item after seven days have elapsed (including the date of publication).

Report of:	Portfolio Holder	Date of publication
Mark Billington, Corporate Director Environment, Marianne Hesketh, Corporate Director Communities, Clare James, Corporate Director Resources	Cllr Alan Vincent, Resources Portfolio Holder, Cllr Michael Vincent, Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder, Cllr Roger Berry, Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio Holder, Cllr Lynne Bowen, Leisure, Health and Community Engagement Portfolio Holder, Cllr Simon Bridge, Street Scene, Parks and Open Spaces Portfolio Holder	December 2020

### Review of Fees and Charges 2021/22

#### 1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To confirm the proposed fees and charges for the 2021/22 financial year.

#### 2. Outcomes

- 2.1 Increase in income generation to support the Council's Budget.
- 2.2 Maximise commercial opportunities, improve the return from all our assets, whether that be buildings or land, and deliver efficiencies.

#### 3. Recommendation

- 3.1 That the proposed fees and charges, as set out in Appendix 1, for the financial year 2021/22 be approved.

#### 4. Background

- 4.1 The Cabinet last formally considered its charging policy, as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan, at its meeting on 18 November 2020.

- 4.2** Charging for local services makes a significant contribution to council finances, and can be used to influence individuals' choices and to bring benefits to local communities. Charges can be set to encourage or discourage people to use services and through concessions to pursue local objectives. Note that all fees and charges within this report are stated exclusive of VAT.
- 4.3** A briefing entitled 'Income from Charging' was issued by the Audit Commission in September 2013 which used data from the value for money profiles and presented a high level analysis of councils' income from charging and the contribution it makes to service spending and allowed comparisons to other councils of the same type and changes over time. The data was the subject of a value for money review undertaken as part of the Overview and Scrutiny work programme and was considered at the meeting 15 December 2014.
- 4.4** The level of income generated by fees and charges and in particular projected increases which the council can influence, form a key part of the council's financial planning and is therefore reflected in the Medium Term Financial Plan.
- 4.5** As a result of the long period of austerity and reduced levels of central government funding there is an increased emphasis on income generation and working towards sustainable services. When it was introduced, all staff received commercialisation training to improve their skills as part of the 'work smart' Financial Discipline and Commercial Awareness goal within the Council's Narrative Statement. This broadening of the traditional mindset in local authorities is essential to improve our financial sustainability and continue to provide value for money services.
- 4.6** The Covid-19 pandemic has affected the ability of the council to deliver some of its activities for which fees and charges are levied. This report outlines proposals for 2021/22 fees and charges based on the assumption that these services will be provided during 2021/22.

## **5. Key issues and proposals**

### **5.1 Leisure, Health and Community Engagement Portfolio**

The main venues within the Leisure, Health and Community Engagement portfolio that generate substantial levels of fee income are the Marine Hall, Thornton Little Theatre and Cemeteries. Fee income is also included from Pest Control, Food Safety Services, Private Water Supplies and Licensing, countryside general, Wyre Estuary Country Park, Rossall Point and outdoor amenities (including bowling at King Georges Playing Field).

#### **5.1.1 Pest Control**

In the past, the pest control service has been subsidised. However since 2015/16 small surpluses have been achieved after excluding support

service costs. This trend was reversed in 2018/19 when a small deficit was delivered at outturn (£2,020) and the 2019/20 outturn saw a further small deficit (£3,277). It is proposed to apply an inflationary uplift to fees based on September 2020 CPI (0.5%).

### Environmental Permitting

Environmental permitting fees are set by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and are statutory. Such fees are essentially a legal framework for controlling pollution from prescribed businesses, for example on painting premises. There are no changes for 2021/22.

#### **5.1.2** Food and Water Safety Services

It is proposed to increase Food Export Certificate charges in line with inflation, based on September CPI.

Ship Sanitation Certificates, in terms of gross tonnage fees, are set nationally and are due to be published in February 2021.

The full copy of the Public Food Register will increase by CPI. However, we don't normally sell any copies of this publication.

It is proposed that private water supply risk assessments and monitoring, in accordance with the 2008 Regulations, together with private water supply sampling and investigation costs will all be uplifted by inflation.

#### **5.1.3** Contaminated Land

There are no changes proposed to contaminated land charges for 2021/22.

#### **5.1.4** Licensing

Amendments to fees and charges for licensing are the responsibility of the Licensing Committee and are considered in a separate report.

#### **5.1.5** Marine Hall and Thornton Little Theatre

There are very few changes proposed to 2021/22 Fees and Charges for Marine Hall. Non-commercial charges/community rates are proposed to increase from £1,250 to £1,300 for a full day and evening, whilst evening only fees are proposed to increase from £750 to £800.

Marine Café/Waterfront Room/Wyre Bar hire fees and charges are proposed to increase from £45 to £50, to cover costs.

Food Festival and Christmas Market charges are proposed to increase slightly to cover costs and anticipated demand, from £40 to £42; £80 to £83; £100 to £105; £110 to £115 depending on the size of the stall.

Main Hall ceremony fees are proposed to increase from £350 to £400 (weekdays) and from £650 to £700 (Saturdays).

Similarly, there are few proposed changes for Thornton Little Theatre.

Non-commercial charges/community rates are proposed to increase from £280 to £300 for all day and evening hires. The additional hourly rate will increase from £40 to £50.

Ceremony only wedding prices are proposed to increase from £350 to £400 and £650 to £700 for weekday and Saturdays respectively.

**5.1.6** Mount Pavilion

Ceremony only wedding prices are proposed to increase from £350 to £400 and from £650 to £700 for weekday and Saturdays respectively at Mount Pavilion.

Community hire for up to four hours is £100 or £25 per hour for a minimum of two hours, whilst commercial rates are £150 for up to 4 hours or £40 per hour for a minimum of two hours.

Funeral/anniversary or children's party hire, at a minimum of two hours, is charged from £150 or on application.

**5.1.7** Cemeteries

In 2019/20 the cemetery service generated a deficit (£73,548) and the current approach is to aim to run the service on a break-even basis. It is proposed to increase the majority of fees by approximately 1%, except for columbaria where there is no change to encourage their use rather than ground plots.

**5.1.8** Marsh Mill

No increases are proposed to the minimal fees currently being levied.

**5.1.9** Countryside/Wyre Estuary Country Park/ Rossall Point

It is proposed to maintain fees at the current level to encourage use of the areas, attendance at events and continued participation in walks and talks.

**5.1.10** Outdoor Amenity Charges

No increase is proposed this year. A review of fees for bowling is proposed in 2021/22.

**5.2** **Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio Holder**

The main service within the Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety portfolio that generates a substantial level of fee income is car parking. This portfolio also includes income from Disabled Facilities Grants.

**5.2.1** Car Parking

A new line has been added to cover the cost of replacing residents' parking permits (£12).

No further changes to 2021/22 fees and charges are proposed.

### **5.2.2 Housing**

It is proposed to apply CPI uplifts across Housing services for 2021/22.

The care and repair service handyperson charge is proposed to increase from £10 to £30 to reflect an increased revenue contribution to the service.

### **5.3 Planning and Economic Development Portfolio**

The three main service areas within the Planning and Economic Development Portfolio that generate substantial levels of fee income are Planning, Building Control and Fleetwood Market.

The majority of the Building Control Fees are set in accordance with the Building Regulations Act 2010 allowing authorities to fix their own charges based on full cost recovery. The Head of Built Environment has the delegated authority to amend these fees as necessary. Similarly, all tenancy matters up to an annual sum of £25,000, including market rents are delegated to the Head of Built Environment. The fees for submitting planning applications required by legislation are set nationally and the current statutory fees came into force 17 January 2018.

#### **5.3.1 Development Control**

The majority of discretionary income relates to pre-application discussion fees which need to be high enough to maintain a reasonable level of income and low enough to encourage applicants to come forward and seek such pre-application meetings. It also helps that the fee structure is easy to understand and comprises of rounded figures.

It is not considered that the fees need to be raised in line with CPI at this time in order to encourage further use of this service.

#### **5.3.2 Building Control**

Further to the increase in fees and charges made in 2020/21, it is not considered necessary to make any changes for 2021/22.

Building Regulations charges are not proposed to increase for 2021/22. The cost of Building Control service as detailed in the Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulations 2010 require fees to be calculated on full cost recovery for its fee earning element (plan checking, site inspections, building notices, reversion and regularisation) to achieve an objective of breaking even 'as nearly as possible', based on the principle of taking one year with another. Due to fluctuating demands on the building control service, the 2010 Regulations establish the concept of balancing income and costs over a reasonable period of time (rolling period of three to five years).

The broad charging principles outlined in the 2010 Charges Regulations give freedom to local authorities to decide whether to set fixed charges or adopt individually assessed charges, either way to ensure accurate

recovery of costs. It is suggested that fixed charges operate for standard small work and that individual quotations be provided for larger projects. These charges are calculated by relating the hourly rate to the time spent carrying out the chargeable function.

### **5.3.3 Markets**

Indoor market rents are reviewed every three years and delegated to the Head of Built Environment.

It is recommended to reduce outdoor market fees at Cleveleys from £26 to £15 for 3 metres linear frontage following a trial period.

At Fleetwood Market, outdoor kiosks are proposed to be charged at £70 per week for single units and £100 per week for double units as an introductory offer.

The new Market House Studio charges were considered as part of a separate report earlier in the year.

### **5.3.4 Estates**

There are no changes proposed to fees and charges for 2021/22.

### **5.3.5 Wyred Up**

The price of a ticket for the Wyre Business Awards is not proposed to increase from the current charge of £50 although it is to be noted that owing to the pandemic no decision on whether the event will take place in 2021 has yet been made.

## **5.4 Resources Portfolio**

### **5.4.1 MOT Test Centre**

It is proposed to maintain fees at the current level to further embed this new service. During 2019/20, there were 317 MOT customers against a target of 400.

### **5.4.2 Legal Fees**

The authority to determine charges for the recovery of legal costs is delegated to the Corporate Director Resources. It is proposed to increase all fees by CPI.

### **5.4.3 Land Charges**

The determination of fees and charges for Local Land Charges is delegated to the Corporate Director Resources. The council is required to ensure that over a three year period, the total income from charges does not exceed the total costs of granting access to property records. No changes are proposed at this stage.

### **5.4.4 Civic Centre Room Hire**

It is proposed to maintain fees at the current levels with the aim of increasing the number of bookings.

**5.4.5 Street Naming and Numbering**

It is proposed to maintain fees at the current level as they continue to be representative of the administration involved.

**5.4.6 Data Protection**

The Fee for Subject Access Requests has been removed as charging is not permitted in most cases under the newly introduced General Data Protection Regulations. However, where the request is manifestly unfounded or excessive a “reasonable fee” for the administrative costs of complying with the request may be levied.

If an individual requests further copies of their data following a request then a reasonable fee may be charged. This must be based on the administrative costs of providing further copies.

**5.5 Street Scene and Parks and Open Spaces Portfolio**

The main services within this portfolio are waste management, public conveniences, the dog warden service, parks and open spaces and playing fields.

**5.5.1 Public Conveniences**

It is proposed to maintain fees and charges at existing levels for 2021/22.

**5.5.2 Dog Welfare**

No change to stray dogs fees is proposed.

**5.5.3 Domestic Refuse – Bulky Items**

Further to a review of fees and charges made last year, it is not proposed to make any changes to fees for bulky household waste item collections.

**5.5.4 Green Waste**

It is proposed to remove the £5 discount for those paying by direct debit. One year subscription fees for green waste collection are proposed to be £35 regardless of payment method in 2021/22. Additional green bin charges will increase to £30 from 2021/22.

**5.5.5 Provision of Standard Suite of Waste Recycling Containers-New Properties/ Replacement Containers**

In line with the recent Portfolio Holder report, charges to replace individual stolen/missing/damaged bins have been removed. The council reserves the right to charge for misuse or where replacement bins are requested on a more frequent basis than every 7 years.

**5.5.6 Street Cleansing**

There are no changes proposed for ad hoc private work and grounds maintenance private work, which continue to be charged on a cost recovery plus basis. No other changes are proposed.

**5.5.7 Parks and Open Spaces**

It is proposed to maintain the fees for the Memorial Park Pavilion at current levels to encourage use. No other changes are proposed.

### 5.5.8 Leisure Development

It is proposed to increase all fees and charges by CPI.

### 5.6 **Overview and Scrutiny**

Initial proposals for amendments or increases to fees and charges have been reviewed and discussed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on 23 November 2020 with their recommendations being reported to Portfolio Holders and amendments included within this report.

### **Delegated functions**

- 6.1 The matters referred to in this report are considered under the following executive function delegated to each Portfolio Holder (as set out in Part 3 of the Council's Constitution): "To determine charges or fees for any relevant services operated within the Portfolio".

<b>Financial and legal implications</b>	
Finance	The financial implications of the fees and charges will be reflected in the Revenue Estimates which will be considered by Cabinet at their meeting 17 February 2021.
Legal	There are no significant legal implications arising from the proposals in this report.

### **Other risks/implications: checklist**

If there are significant implications arising from this report on any issues marked with a ✓ below, the report author will have consulted with the appropriate specialist officers on those implications and addressed them in the body of the report. There are no significant implications arising directly from this report, for those issues marked with a x.

<b>risks/implications</b>	<b>✓ / x</b>
community safety	x
equality and diversity	x
sustainability	✓
health and safety	x

<b>risks/implications</b>	<b>✓ / x</b>
asset management	✓
climate change	x
ICT	x
data protection	x

### **Processing Personal Data**

In addition to considering data protection along with the other risks/ implications, the report author will need to decide if a 'privacy impact assessment (PIA)' is also required. If the decision(s) recommended in this report will result in the collection and processing of personal data for the first time (i.e. purchase of a new system, a new working arrangement with a third party) a PIA will need to have been completed and

signed off by Data Protection Officer before the decision is taken in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

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<b>List of background papers:</b>		
name of document	date	where available for inspection
None		

**List of appendices**

Appendix 1– Proposed fees and charges for the 2021/22 financial year

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