



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 |
|---|---|---------------------|
| Garry Payne, Chief Executive, Mark Billington, Corporate Director Environment, Marianne Hesketh, Corporate Director Communities, Clare James, Corporate Director Resources and Section 151 Officer | Councillor Alan Vincent, Resources Portfolio Holder, Councillor Michael Vincent, Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder, Councillor Roger Berry, Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio Holder, Councillor Lynne Bowen, Leisure, Health and Community Engagement Portfolio Holder, Councillor Simon Bridge, Street Scene, Parks and Open Spaces Portfolio Holder | 5 December 2019 |

Review of Fees and Charges 2020/21

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To confirm the proposed fees and charges for the 2020/21 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 2020/21 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 16 October 2019.

- 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. All staff have received commercialisation training to improve their skills and build on 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.

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). It is proposed to maintain all fees at current levels.

Public health pest control treatments in apartment blocks are notoriously challenging. To encourage treatment and incentivise appropriate reporting, This report seeks to amend the current Scheme of Delegation to allow

Directors to discount fees and charges in limited circumstances in consultation with the relevant Head of Service. This delegation already exists for some Directors and the Senior Solicitor but it is considered appropriate to apply this consistently.

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. Although not previously included in the Fees and Charges document, for completeness these are now included.

5.1.2 Food Safety Services

It is proposed to introduce charges for 'Safer Food Better Business' packs following withdrawal of funding from central government. The 'Safer Food Better Business' pack (which consists of a ring bound food safety management system) at £12 and a 'Safer Food Better Business Diary' at £3 to reflect the cost of purchasing these packs online.

To reflect inflationary increases, the Food Export Certificate charge will increase from £55 to £56, with additional copies increasing from £5 to £5.15.

Ship Sanitation Certificates, in terms of gross tonnage fees, are set nationally and fees are set to change across the majority of categories as per the attached Appendix 1. It is also proposed to delete the line for the category up to 3,000 tonnes.

The full copy of the Public Food Register will increase 3% from £1,288 to £1,325. 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 attract a £32 per hour charge (inclusive of admin, travel time and time on site) plus 52p per mile mileage allowance. Laboratory costs will also be chargeable on a cost recovery basis. This compares with the current scheme which charges £31 per hour up to a maximum of £500 for risk assessments (the first hour of which is free), whilst current private water supply sampling will be charged at cost plus £50 admin fee.

5.1.3 Contaminated Land

It is proposed to charge £50 per half hour for the first hour of each contaminated land enquiry. This follows feedback indicating the majority of cases were conducted in less than half an hour and the existing £100 charge for the first hour was considered high.

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

Fees and charges are proposed to remain at the same level for Marine Hall.

The sole change to proposed fees and charges at Thornton Little Theatre is for advertising banner space on the building (two weeks) where it is recommended that the price increases from £40 to £50.

5.1.6 Cemeteries

In 2018/19 the cemetery service generated a small deficit (£16,107) and the current approach is to aim to run the service on a break-even basis. Therefore it is proposed to increase the majority of fees by approximately 1%, with the following exceptions:

- It is proposed to delete the line for any etched or coloured illustration, photo plaque, ornamentation or design works etc. other than the normal inscription on any memorial as this is no longer required;
- Following the introduction of the Children's Funeral Fund (CFF) for England, it is proposed that the lines for 'child stillborn' or 'child under one month' and 'child between one month and under seven years' are abolished. The CFF will allow authorities to submit a claim based on cost recovery. Claims will be made via the gov.uk website.

5.1.7 Marsh Mill

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

5.1.8 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.

5.1.9 Outdoor Amenity Charges

New fees for bowling were introduced in February 2016 after consultation with bowling clubs and no increase is proposed this year.

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 Housing Renovation Grants.

5.2.1 Car Parking

Residents' car parking permit fees will change in 2020/21 to a biennial fee of £25. The new permit will allow residents to park for up to three hours parking on long stay car parks, an increase on the current two hour limit.

Existing Permits purchased within the financial years 2018/19 and 2019/20 will be exchanged for a new permit at nil cost to the resident provided they are returned within the first twelve months' operation of the new scheme. Beyond this the new fee would apply.

The number of Blue Badge parking spaces will be increased owing to the extension of the criteria for the scheme. From April 2020 car park fees and charges will be applicable to all blue badge spaces but the new Residents Parking Permit will be available for use by Blue Badge Holders to park within designated spaces on both long stay and the short stay car park at Rough Lea Road, Cleveleys. This flexibility will only apply to Blue Badge Holders. No other permits will be usable on short stay car parks as per the current scheme.

5.2.2 Housing

It is proposed to increase enforcement notices, Houses in Multiple Occupation licences and UK entry visa housing inspection report charges by CPI. No changes are proposed in relation to the care and repair handyperson service in 2020/21.

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. Fees for written advice only in full form have been reduced from £510 to £350 to reflect the level of resources used and the cost of providing the service and also to encourage further requests for written advice as at present most requests are for meetings. Fees for proposals in outline form have also been lowered from £510 to £300 to reflect the reduced time required to assess such proposals and to encourage additional requests.

A new fee of £25 has been introduced to deal with requests for confirmation as to whether Permitted Development rights have been removed as at present this service is not paid for but does take up officer time.

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

Some fee levels have changed to reflect different levels of resources required to deal with requests. Meeting follow-up fees have changed from specific, prescribed, levels based upon the development type and category to a generic charge of half the fee paid for the initial meeting.

There is a new fee category for Reserved Matters applications as this was not in the fee schedule previously but we have had a significant interest from developers to discuss such proposals at pre-application stage.

5.3.2 Building Control

Increases are proposed across each of the following areas:

- Supply of non-standard data and information (including responding to Solicitor's enquiries) – from £60 per hour minimum to £70 per hour minimum;
- Building Regulations Confirmation Letter – from £50 to £58.33;
- Administration fee for withdrawing an application and charges – from £50 to £58.33;
- Reopen Archived Applications – from £50 to £58.33;
- Copy of Completion Certificates – from £16.67 to £20.83;
- Copy of Decision Notice – from £16.67 to £20.83.

Building Regulations charges have been increased across the board (for the first time in 10 years) to recover the cost of Building Control service as detailed in the Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulations 2010 which 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 maintain the outdoor market fees at Poulton and Cleveleys at current levels recognising the difficult economic climate. The exception to this is Fleetwood Market where it is proposed to increase the charge made to any trader opening a food stall four days per week between June and October from £40 to £48.

5.3.4 Estates

It is proposed to maintain funfair fees and charges for 2020/21. A new line, however, has been added to clearly distinguish between the funfairs used to support galas and those who operate at times outside gala festivities. For those funfairs operating to support the galas, the charge of £220 (for three days) is recommended to increase to £250.

It is proposed to increase filming charges by CPI, such that late notice fees will increase from £150 to £153. Administration licence fees are proposed to increase from £50 to £51 for students/registered charities and from £100 to £102 for commercial licences.

For Butts Close it is proposed that the fees for administration for assigning fees and renewal of a lease be removed with immediate effect as we are not permitted to assign a lease or renew a lease for protected tenancies. Unprotected tenancies are to be charged the new lease fee of £153, up from £150. It is proposed to increase the administration fee for early termination of lease from £200 to £204.

An increase of £1, from £60 to £61, is proposed for the administration of fees for new licences and assignment of a licence at Skippool Creek. Similarly, administration fees for drawing up allotment agreements are proposed to increase from £50 to £51.

5.3.5 Wyred Up

The price of a ticket for the Wyre Business Awards is proposed to increase from £41.67 to £50 in order to cover costs and be comparable with the prices charged at similar events elsewhere.

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 2018/19, there were 301 MOT customers against a target of 400. Options for additional promotion of the service are being explored.

5.4.2 Legal Fees

The authority to determine charges for the recovery of legal costs is delegated to the Head of Finance. It is proposed to increase all fees by September CPI (1.7%) with the exception of s106 agreements and

unilateral undertakings which will increase to £675 (currently £635) and variations of s.106s to £580 (currently £527).

5.4.3 Land Charges

The determination of fees and charges for Local Land Charges is delegated to the Head of Finance. 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

To reflect increasing costs, it is proposed to increase the charge for a radar key from £4.17 to £5.

5.5.2 Dog Welfare

No change to stray dogs’ fees is proposed.

5.5.3 Domestic Refuse – Bulky Items

The service is generally cost neutral with income covering the expenditure (in 2018/19 the service made a small net surplus of £2,776). The contract with Blackpool Council has recently been renewed. It is recommended that the service remains competitively priced so that people are encouraged to use it (and not fly tip) and as such fees are proposed to increase only marginally from £19.50 to £20.00 for up to three items and from £6.50 to £7.00 for each additional item thereafter. This is to cover third party contract price increases and still represents a highly competitive rate for the quality of service and is mid-price across the county.

5.5.4 Green Waste

Green waste subscription fees were considered separately in the Street Scene, Parks and Open Spaces Portfolio Holder report on 3 October 2019.

The sticker replacement fee charge, including administration and delivery, is proposed to increase from £5 to £6.

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

It is proposed to increase the fees payable by homeowners and developers for the standard suite including green bins from £66 to £92. The proposed fee for the standard suite excluding the green bin is £69 (up from £56 currently), for both homeowners and developers. The proposed fee increases relate to the new red lidded bin for co-mingled glass, cans and plastics. This charging approach will continue to make a clear distinction when residents do not wish to sign up to the green waste service that a green bin will not be provided. It is also proposed to increase the fee to replace individual new/stolen/missing/damaged bins to £23.

5.5.6 Street Scene

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

Further to a benchmarking exercise undertaken with the Association for Public Service Excellence, it is proposed to increase all pitch hire and playing field fees by around 5% to bring charges in line with other neighbouring authorities. This will raise the highest fee from £327 to £343.

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 2 December 2019 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".

| Financial and legal implications | |
|---|--|
| 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 12 February 2020. |
| 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.

| risks/implications | ✓ / x |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| community safety | x |
| equality and diversity | x |
| sustainability | ✓ |
| health and safety | x |

| risks/implications | ✓ / x |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| 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.

| report author | telephone no. | email | date |
|----------------|---------------|----------------------------|------------|
| Dominic Sumner | 01253 887327 | Dominic.Sumner@wyre.gov.uk | 31/10/2019 |

| List of background papers: | | |
|-----------------------------------|------|--------------------------------|
| name of document | date | where available for inspection |
| None | | |

List of appendices

Appendix 1 - Proposed fees and charges for the 2020/21 financial year

dems/ph/re/cr/19/0012ds2