

FEES AND CHARGES 2023/24

Head of Service:	Brendan Bradley, Head of Finance
Wards affected:	(All Wards);
Urgent Decision?(yes/no)	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	N/A
Appendices (attached):	Appendix 1 – Committee Fees and Charges 2023/24 Appendix 2 – Car Park Fees 2023/24 Appendix 3 – Trade Refuse & Recycling Charges 2023/24 (exempt from publication)

Summary

This report recommends fees and charges for which this Committee is responsible, with the new charges being effective from 1 April 2023.

Recommendation (s)

The Committee is asked, subject to the approval of the Council, to:

- (1) agree the fees and charges for 2023/24 as set out at Appendices 1, 2, and 3.**

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 To agree the fees and charges for the Environment and Safe Communities Committee for 2023/24.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Council will meet to agree the budget, including estimates of income and expenditure, on 14 February 2023. To enable the budget to be finalised, the policy committees are asked to recommend fees and charges covering the services for which they are responsible.

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- 2.2 The current economic climate creates uncertainty and difficulties for budget setting. To this end, the budget guidelines agreed by Strategy and Resources in September 2022 included an overall increase in revenue discretionary fees and charges of 6%. The guidelines also anticipate that additional income may be generated to contribute to the required savings target.
- 2.3 The fees and charges presented in this report are discretionary charges only. For discretionary charges, there is scope to generate additional income, to reduce any subsidy of the service or to contribute to an improved budget position.
- 2.4 There are a number of charges set externally that the Council has no power to alter. This restricts to Council's ability to raise additional income and therefore the fees and charges set by statute are not presented to this Committee for approval.
- 2.5 In recent years, Car parking fees for each site have generally been increased by 6% every two years, however, last year only fees for Town Hall and Hope Lodge were increased as these two car parks have the greatest user numbers/turnover of the surface car parks. In addition, as a cost saving exercise, the barriers at these car parks were removed during the financial year, and RingGo was introduced as an additional method of payment.
- 2.6 Typically, Car Park permit fees have increased by 3% each year, the proposal for 2023/24 is to increase these by 6% in line with all other increases.
- 2.7 The Building Control service is being transferred to Elmbridge Borough Council, therefore this report does not include any fees or charges for the Building Control service.
- 2.8 Due to internal changes, there are several services now reported under Environment and Community Safety committee, which will be summarised within this report.
- 2.9 When preparing budget estimates, fees and charges have been reviewed by service managers and any negative impact on demand anticipated by increased charges has been considered.
- 2.10 Members should refer to the revenue budget report on this agenda for an overview of the Committee's budget position.
- 2.11 In January 2018, to reflect changes to the Council's management structure, the Committee agreed that the Chief Finance Officer should have delegated authority to vary fees and charges for items generating income under £1,000 per annum. The Committee also agreed that this officer be permitted under delegated authority to set charges for one-off services or items not included in the fees and charges schedule.

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3 Proposals

- 3.1 In May 2022, Full Council agreed the Constitution which introduced a number of changes in committee responsibilities. Consequently, the budgetary responsibility for Parks, open spaces, countryside and allotments budgets changed from Community and Wellbeing Committee to Environment and Safe Communities Committee.
- 3.2 The constitutional changes assign responsibility for agreeing the fees and charges for Parks, open spaces, countryside and allotments to this committee. The fees and charges for this service for previous years were agreed at the January meetings of the Community and Wellbeing Committee.
- 3.3 The proposed fees and charges for 2023/24 are set out at Appendices 1, 2 and 3 to this report. The main variations in fees and charges for each service area outside the range of an increase between 6% and 10% are set out below:

3.3.1 Car Parks

The Car Park Working group met in November 2022 to discuss car park charges for 2023/24. The proposed increases were agreed to be submitted for approval by the committee and are set out in Appendix 2. A report detailing the Car Park Fees and Charges is also on this agenda and details the changes to tariffs and permits for 2023/24. Appendix 2 details all car park tariffs, including those which remain unchanged for 2023/24.

3.3.2 Refuse Collection

Trade Waste fees are considered commercially sensitive and therefore set out in a separate Appendix 3 which is exempt from publication.

Although the fees for Domestic Bulk Waste have increased for 2023/24, the income expected from the service has been reduced by £24k. This is because demand for the service has decreased since its peak during the pandemic, when demand increased substantially whilst residents spent more time in their homes. The income budget has been realigned to pre-pandemic demand levels.

3.3.3 Environmental Health

A new contract has been agreed for the Stray Dogs service. The new contractor will net off any income from the Council's charges that it has received in respect of the service. Therefore, the charges have been included in Appendix 1 for transparency.

3.3.4 Allotments (Countryside, Parks and Open Spaces)

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The exercise to identify options for savings or increased income proposed an increase in line with inflation on income from allotments, this equates to an additional £1.4k of income and explains the 10% increase on allotment fees.

4 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

4.1 Equality Impact Assessment

4.1.1 Increased fees and charges could have a negative effect on take up for some service areas. Managers have been asked to apply realistic increases to avoid this.

4.1.2 The current economic crisis has resulted in some instances in reduced revenue from fees and charges.

4.2 Crime & Disorder

4.2.1 None for the purposes of this report.

4.3 Safeguarding

4.3.1 None for the purposes of this report.

4.4 Dependencies

4.4.1 None for the purposes of this report.

4.5 Other

4.5.1 None for the purposes of this report.

5 Financial Implications

5.1 The impact of the proposed fees and charges for services in 2023/24 is set out below:

	Increase in income budget target	Total increase or (decrease) due to changes in tariffs	Variation resulting from changes to volumes	Variation between target and total change
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Car Parks	217	272	130	185*
Refuse Collection	86	81	(19)	(24)

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Markets	7	0	7	0
Cemetery	31	31	0	0
Countryside, Parks and Open Spaces	14	15	0	1
Total	355	399	117	161

*The total variation between target and total change is £223k, but £38k of income is being met from an increase in other income streams such as advertising and electric vehicle charging income.

5.2 The proposed charges will generate an additional estimated income of £516k. This has been taken into account in the budget to be presented to Council next month.

5.3 Overall, the effect of increased charges, combined with the anticipated change in volumes is that Environment & Safe Communities Committee income budgets are higher than the targeted budgeted income from fees and charges by £161k.

5.4 The revised level of income has been included in the medium-term financial strategy to contribute towards a balanced budget over the next four years. A detailed breakdown of the 2023/24 budget can be found in the budget report included on this agenda.

5.5 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** all financial implications are included within this report.

6 Legal Implications

6.1 There are no specific issues arising from this report, but the Council's resources will need to be applied to ensure that it fulfils its statutory obligations and delivers its policy on equalities.

6.2 **Legal Officer's comments:** The legal implications are included within this report.

7 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

7.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The following Key Priorities are engaged: Effective Council.

7.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is included within the current Service Delivery Plan.

7.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** none for the purposes of this report.

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7.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** none for the purposes of this report.

7.5 **Partnerships:** none for the purposes of this report.

8 Background papers

8.1 The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

Previous reports:

- Budget Targets Report - October 2022

Other papers:

- Revenue Budget 2023/24 report – on this agenda.
- Car Park Fees and Charges – on this agenda.