



North Devon Council

Report Date: Strategy and Resources Committee: 6th February 2023

Topic: Review of Fees and Charges for services 2023/24

Report by: Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The following report sets out the framework for the review of charges for the Authority's services for the financial year 2023/24.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Strategy and Resources recommends to Council a 5% increase in fees for 2023/24 financial year, for the following services:

- Allotments – Appendix A
- Trade Waste – Appendix C
- Cemetery fees – Appendix F
- Sports pitches – Appendix G
- Pre-application Planning fees – Appendix K

2.2 Strategy and Resources recommends to Council to vary the remaining fees by the elements outlined in section 4.3 to 4.10.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1. The change in fees charged for services provided by the Council is in line with the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

3.2. Some fees are set by statute and these will be set nationally.

4. REPORT

4.1. The charges for the provision of services are reviewed annually in the context of policy guidance within the Medium Term Financial Strategy, and the recommended levels of increase to produce a target income level.

4.2. This year the guidance was to increase fees and charges by 5%, although some fees are set by statute and these will be set nationally. Other variations to the 5% increase are set out in 4.3 to 4.9. Even though inflation is currently running much higher than the 5% increase we have tried to be prudent and fair in the fees we charge and the impact this has on our customers.

4.3. Full Council approved at the January 2023 meeting that Building Control fees should be raised by an average of 8% and rounded to the nearest pound, this is to ensure the revenue income recoups the actual cost of providing the service – The already approved fees are shown within the table of charges within Appendix B.

- 4.4. Land Charges fees have been set to recoup the cost of providing the service, without changing the current fees the land charges service is still budgeted to recover all the costs and break even. – Appendix D.
- 4.5. There is one change to the Environment Health fees, as the majority of these are set by statute or set to recover costs. The only change is the introduction of a £110 fee (+VAT) for Food Business Operator requested Food Hygiene revisit. – Appendix E.
- 4.6. Cemetery Fees – In addition to the 5% uplift, we changed the fee charged for “Purchasing the right of burial for a child’s grave” to zero. This will enable the Council to claim the full fees from Government and moves this change in line with the Crematorium.
- 4.7. Pannier Market – Due to the current refurbishment works taking place in the Pannier Market this financial year as part of the Future High Streets Fund project and the inevitable disruption to the operation of the market, the proposal is to not increase the charges for traders this year. – Appendix H.
- 4.8. Bulky Waste – To increase the fees as follows: - Appendix I.
- Up to 2 items £23.00 (27.78% increase)
 - Up to 3 items £31.00 (19.23% increase)
 - Up to 4 items £38.00 (15.15% increase)

This increases above brings our prices in line with our neighbouring authorities and allows for the recommended 5% increase for 2023-24.

- 4.9. Full Council approved at its November 2022 meeting to increase the Garden Waste charge for 2023-24 to £55 per bin. A revised costing of providing the service, taking into account current year and estimated inflation for 2023-24 is indicating that the service cost is now in the region of around £56-£58 per bin for those customers that subscribe. This level of charge is similar to the charges made by other Devon councils.. - Appendix J.
- 4.10. Dog Waste – A strategic decision has been made to keep the Dog waste charges the same as 2023-23 pending a review of the pricing structures moving forwards. – Appendix L

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. The net revenue changes from the above charges are estimated to produce £183,000 of additional income which has been included within the draft 2023/24 revenue budget.

6. EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

- 6.1. There are no equality implications anticipated as a result of this report. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS



7.1 There are not any environmental implications anticipated as a result of this report, the purpose of this report is to set the budgeted fee income increase for 2023-24.

8. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

8.1 The increases in fees included in the report contribute to the on-going financial security of the Council by increasing the revenue budget. Which also contributes to the delivery of the Council's corporate objectives.

9. CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

9.1. Part 3, Annexe 1 para 1(d)

9.2. Delegated power

10. STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

10.1. This report contains no confidential information or exempt information under the provisions of Schedule 12A of 1972 Act.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1. None.

12. STATEMENT OF INTERNAL ADVICE

12.1. The author (below) confirms that advice has been taken from all appropriate Councillors and Officers: Author Tony Rumble, Finance Manager; Date 25th January 2023.