

Agenda Item	
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## Report to Cabinet



Date of Meeting	23 <sup>rd</sup> November 2021
Portfolio	Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate
Report Author	Julie Murphy
Public/Private Document	Public

## Discretionary Fees & Charges 2022/23

### Executive Summary

- 1.1 Discretionary Fees and Charges are reviewed on an annual basis. At Cabinet 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021 a 2% general increase in Discretionary Fees and Charges for 2022/23 was agreed for planning purposes, subject to exemptions to be agreed.
- 1.2 This report details the proposed Discretionary Fees and Charges for 2022/23 as a basis for consultation, and details those charges proposed to be exempt from the general 2% increase.

### Recommendation

- 2.1 Cabinet approves the updated Discretionary Fees and Charges for 2022/23, as a basis for consultation.
- 2.2 Cabinet approves the charges exempt from the general 2% increase, as set out in paragraph 4.3.
- 2.3 Cabinet approve the introduction of the new charge for the webcasting of funeral services as detailed in section 4.4 for consultation.

### Reason for Recommendation

- 3.1 The fees and charges in this report have been proposed by each Directorate, taking into account the 2% general uplift in Discretionary Fees and Charges agreed at Cabinet on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021.
- 3.2 It is recommended not to apply a 2% increase to the fees and charges detailed in paragraph 4.3.

## Key Points for Consideration

- 4.1 The Authority carries out an annual review of discretionary fees and charges as part of the budget setting process. It is a requirement of this process that Cabinet agrees an appropriate general level of increase. For the 2022/23 financial year Cabinet 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021 approved a general increase of 2%, as a basis for consultation.
- 4.2 In most cases charges have been rounded to the nearest pound. The amended proposed fee levels for the 2022/23 financial year, which take into account rounding, are included in Appendix 1.
- 4.3 After consultation with Directorates, it is requested that the 2% increase not be applied to the following areas:

**Car Parking** – Budget Pressure funding has been provided to the service in previous financial years. Increasing the charges is likely to bring further financial pressure to the service.

**Taxi Licences** – Taxi licensing must operate by law on a cost recovery basis. Work is ongoing to develop GM common minimum licensing standards. This GM work includes a standardised methodology for fee setting. It is proposed to hold the fees until the methodology has been finalised and then a full review of Rochdale’s fees will be undertaken in line with the GM standardised approach.

**Land Charges** – Based on Greater Manchester benchmarking, there is a risk that increasing the cost of search fees will create future budget pressures as the service will be outside of the market pricing.

**Liability Orders** – In line with Government guidance, current charges cover the cost incurred. A further increase is not recommended.

**Music Service Charges** – Based on a benchmarking exercise, charges are set to reflect the competitive private tuition market, and therefore maximise potential income streams.

**Food Hygiene Charges** – Charges amended to ensure consistency with other Greater Manchester authorities.

**Careline/Support@Home** – These Adult Care charges will be set based on actual costs and the number of service users in receipt of the service. This will be reported to Cabinet in a separate paper in February prior to Budget Council.

**Town Hall Meeting Rooms** – All charges are suspended until the completion of the restoration works.

**Bulky Waste Collection** – Cabinet 25<sup>th</sup> August 2020 approved a reduction in charges in order to reduce fly tipping. A separate report will be submitted

to Cabinet detailing the options for charging for bulky household waste from 2022/23 onwards.

**Wheeled Bins** - Cabinet 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021 approved that the charge to developers would be set at £25. Bins will be supplied free of charge to householders.

**Sponsorship Signs** – The budget has already been increased in line with previous savings proposals.

**Car Boot Sales** – Charges held in order to maintain usage levels.

**Traffic Regulation Orders: Temporary Carnivals, fetes and similar events** - Charges to non-profit / non-commercial organisations to be held at current level.

4.4 It is proposed that a new charge is introduced for the webcasting of funeral services now restrictions on the number of mourners who can attend a funeral service have been lifted. The proposed charge is £30. The council has to pay a licence fee of £20 per webcast. This cost is currently met from the existing bereavement services budget. It is not a requirement for mourners to webcast the service but an option. During the pandemic around two thirds of services opted for a webcast but this may reduce now restrictions on numbers have been lifted. This proposal is forecast to generate £10k.

4.5 **Alternatives Considered**

The alternative is not to review or increase our fees and charges. This would potentially reduce the income available to the Council and make it more difficult to achieve a balanced budget.

<b>Costs and Budget Summary</b>
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5.1 A full list of all proposed fees and charges for 2022/23 is included in Appendix 1.

5.2 Taking into account the exceptions mentioned in 4.3, the proposal to increase charges in line with inflation is forecast to generate a further c. £80k contribution per annum towards running costs.

<b>Risk and Policy Implications</b>
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6.1 Each Directorate has reviewed its charges against relevant legislation to ensure that all transactions remain compliant with the relevant statutes governing Local Authority activities.

<b>Consultation</b>
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7.1 All Directorates engage in the production of the proposed charges identified within this report. The Leadership Team, Cabinet Member for Finance, and the opposition Portfolio Holder for Finance have been informed of the

proposed charges for 2022/23. This report will be submitted to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021.

<b>Background Papers</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>
8.	
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