

Report to Cabinet



Date of Meeting	10 th February 2022
Portfolio	Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate
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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 on 27th 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. Following consultation, no changes have been made to the original proposals, and this report details the proposed Discretionary Fees and Charges for 2022/23 and details those charges proposed to be exempt from the general 2% increase.

Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet approves the updated Discretionary Fees and Charges for 2022/23, following consultation.
- 2.2 Cabinet approves the charges exempt from the general 2% increase, as set out in paragraph 4.3.
- 2.3 Cabinet approves the new charge for webcasting of funerals as detailed at paragraph 4.5.

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 as agreed at Cabinet on 27th July 2021.
- 3.2 It is recommended not to apply a 2% increase to the fees and charges detailed in paragraph 4.4.

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 Elected Members agree an appropriate general level of increase. For the 2022/23 financial year, Cabinet on 27th 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 at 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.

Adult Care fees - Charges to rise by more than 2% as a move towards these services being self-financing, but without compromising Service Users ability to pay.

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

Wheeled Bins - Cabinet 31st 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 **Bulky Waste Collection** – Cabinet 25th January 2022 agreed that 2 free collections of bulky household waste would be available to each household per year, with any additional collections charged at £11 for up to 3 items and £2.50 for any further items.

4.5 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.

4.6 **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.

Costs and Budget Summary

- 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 shown in paragraphs 4.3 and 4.4, the proposal to increase charges in line with inflation is forecast to generate £80k per annum, this being included within the provisional 2022/23 budget.

Risk and Policy Implications

- 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.

Consultation

- 7.1 All Directorates engage in the production of the proposed charges identified within this report. The Leadership Team, Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate, opposition Portfolio holder for Finance and Corporate, and Overview and Scrutiny Committee have been informed of the proposed charges for 2022/23. Following consultation, no changes have been made to the original proposals.

Background Papers

Place of Inspection

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