

GOSPORT BOROUGH COUNCIL

BOARD:	Policy & Organisation
DATE OF MEETING:	30 November 2022
TITLE:	Fees and Charges
AUTHOR:	Borough Treasurer
STATUS:	For Approval

Purpose

To consider and approve the amended fees & charges contained in this report and appendix.

Recommendation

It is recommended that:

- i) The Council approve the fees and charges referred to in the report and appendix for implementation from 1 January 2023 or as soon as practically possible thereafter unless stated otherwise
- ii) The Council undertakes a further review of its fees and charges to identify areas where the council's fees and charges:
 - a. Are at a level significantly less than the cost of providing the service (i.e. not achieving full cost recovery)
 - b. Are significantly below other local authority charges
- iii) Following the review described at recommendation ii) above, where fees and charges are found to be significantly below full cost recovery and/or other local authority charges, the Borough Treasurer be given delegated authority in consultation with the Leader of the Council to increase charges accordingly to more comparable levels

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Fees and charges were last reviewed and updated at the Council meeting in September 2021. Parking charges were amended at the Council meeting in May 2022 to provide one hour's free parking in town-centre short-stay car-parks, which was offset by increases in

long-stay parking charges.

2.0 Report

- 2.1 Fees and charges are an important source of revenue for the Council which are applied to the users of a particular service. This means that it is the users of the service that fund the costs of providing the service rather than the cost falling universally across all residents through Council Tax. Fees and charges therefore are an important mechanism which ensures that service users, which are usually services of a more discretionary nature or which are used by a particular user group, contribute more to the cost of those services rather than the burden falling on the general council taxpayer.
- 2.2 Fees and charges have a direct relationship with the cost of services. For services to recover their costs, they will need to increase at the same rate as costs rise otherwise there would be a real cut in funding to the Council. The core measure of inflation is the Consumer Price Index (CPI) which is currently tracking at 11.1%.
- 2.3 This fees and charges review has been undertaken as part of the budget process for 2023/24. The proposed fees and charges are set out in the appendix to this report. The majority of Council charges for 2023 have been increased broadly by the current rate of inflation (October CPI 11.1%), rounded to an appropriate amount where applicable, though some have been raised by a different percentage for specific reasons. The total effect of the changes would be an increase in income estimated at £336,000 which, as previously mentioned should be broadly equivalent to the increase in the cost of providing those services.
- 2.4 In some circumstances, fees and charges are statutory and these have been uplifted in accordance with regulation. There are also instances where fees and charges have been uplifted at levels above inflation for ease of administration or because previous increases have not kept pace with inflation or it is to meet a particular policy objective as explained below.
- 2.5 It is proposed to increase most short-term parking charges by approximately 20% and most long-term charges by approximately 25%, which would generate additional annual income estimated at £229,000. It is also proposed to introduce a Flexi Permit at a discount to the monthly permit as part of a trial which will provide a user with 12 stays per month.

It is proposed to increase the charge for parking permits at the Seafront and Alver Valley from £85 to £125, in line with charges of public car parks in the local vicinity, which will generate £21,000 additional income. Increases in charges for permits at other locations will result in a total increase of £25,000 in permit charges.

- 2.6 Other significant contributions would result from increases in the following charges:

Garden Waste Collection	£17,000
Cemetery Fees	£12,000
Bulky Refuse / Special Collections	£ 9,000
Land Charges	£ 9,000
Football/Rugby Income	£ 8,000
Licences and Registrations	£ 7,000
Wheeled Bin Replacements	£ 5,000
Beach Huts	£ 5,000
Allotments	£ 4,000
Planning Pre-Applications	£ 3,000

- 2.7 The fees and charges conditions for the booking of land have been amended to place the onus of proof on events' organisers to show that they are registered charities, or how their event is organised on a not-for-profit basis. The previous rules enabled organisers to state that an event was being run on a not-for-profit basis, and then provide proof after the event, with the Council reserving the discretion to disagree and require the event organiser to pay a booking fee afterwards. The rewording enables the Council to exercise its discretion based on information provided up front, rather than after the event. This is a change of emphasis, which is made not to increase revenue but to safeguard the Council's interests.

3.0 Risk Assessment

- 3.1 There is a risk to future service provision and the delivery of capital programme projects if the Council does not seek to maintain an appropriate level of income by reviewing its fees and charges.

4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 Fees and Charges have been reviewed and the draft amended schedule is appended to this report.

Financial Implications	As set out in the report
Legal Implications	The Council has power to charge for the services set out in this report.
Crime and Disorder	N/A
Equality and Diversity	N/A
Service Improvement Plan	N/A
Corporate Plan:	N/A

Risk Assessment:	Section 3 of the report
Background papers:	N/A
Appendix	Draft Fees and Charges booklet
Lead Officer	Chris Ward