

Fees & Charges 2019/20

Final Decision-Maker	Heritage, Culture & Leisure Committee
Lead Head of Service/Lead Director	Mark Green, Director of Finance & Business Improvement
Lead Officer and Report Author	Ellie Dunnet, Head of Finance
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

This report sets out the proposed fees and charges for 2019/20 for the services within the remit of this committee. Fees and charges determined by the council are reviewed annually, and this forms part of the budget setting process.

The committee is invited to consider the appropriateness of the proposals for charges which are set at the council's discretion.

Charges which are determined centrally have been included in Appendix 1 for information.

This report makes the following recommendations to Heritage, Culture & Leisure Committee

1. That the proposed discretionary fees and charges set out in Appendix A to this report are agreed.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Policy & Resources Committee	23 January 2019
Heritage, Culture & Leisure Committee	29 January 2019

Fees & Charges 2019/20

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The council is able to recover the costs of providing discretionary services through making a charge to service users. A charging policy is in place for charges which are set at the council's discretion and this seeks to ensure that:
- a) Fees and charges are reviewed regularly, and that this review covers existing charges as well services for which there is potential to charge in the future.
 - b) Budget managers are equipped with guidance on the factors which should be considered when reviewing charges.
 - c) Charges are fair, transparent and understandable, and a consistent and sensible approach is taken to setting the criteria for applying concessions or discounted charges.
 - d) Decisions regarding fees and charges are based on relevant and accurate information regarding the service and the impact of any proposed changes to the charge is fully understood.
- 1.2 The policy covers fees and charges that are set at the discretion of the council and does not apply to services where the council is prohibited from charging, e.g. the collection of household waste. Charges currently determined by central government, e.g. planning application fees, are also outside the scope of the policy. However, consideration of any known changes to such fees and charges and any consequence to the medium term financial strategy are included in this report for information.
- 1.3 Managers are asked to consider the following factors when reviewing fees and charges:
- a) The council's strategic plan and values, and how charge supports these;
 - b) The use of subsidies and concessions targeted at certain user groups or to facilitate access to a service;
 - c) The actual or potential impact of competition in terms of price or quality;
 - d) Trends in user demand including an estimate of the effect of price changes on customers;
 - e) Customer survey results;
 - f) Impact on users, both directly and on delivering the council's objectives;

- g) Financial constraints including inflationary pressure and service budgets;
- h) The implications of developments such as investment made in a service;
- i) The corporate impact on other service areas of council wide pressures to increase fees and charges;
- j) Alternative charging structures that could be more effective;
- k) Proposals for targeting promotions during the year and the evaluation of any that took place in previous periods.

Discretionary Charges for 2019/20

- 1.4 Charges for services which fall within the remit of this committee have been reviewed by budget managers in line with the policy, as part of the development of the medium term financial strategy for 2019/20 onwards. The detailed results of the review carried out this year are set out in Appendix A and the approval of the committee is sought to the amended fees and charges for 2019/20 as set out in that appendix.
- 1.5 Table 1 below summarises the 2017/18 outturn and 2018/19 estimate for income from the discretionary fees and charges which fall within the remit of this committee. Please note that the table only reflects changes relating to fees and charges and does not include other budget proposals which may impact these service areas.
- 1.6 The overall increase in income if these changes are agreed and implemented as planned is expected to be £20,00 which amounts to a 1.22% increase in the overall budgeted income figure for this committee for the current financial year.

Service Area	2017-18 Outturn	2018-19 Estimate	Proposed change in income	2019-20 Estimate
	£	£	£	£
Museum	56,088	64,100	0	64,100
Parks and Open Spaces	38,370	60,040	0	60,040
Cemetery	163,473	138,280	0	138,280
Crematorium	1,284,816	1,230,710	20,000	1,250,710
Market	148,410	139,840	0	139,840
Total income from fees set by the Council	1,691,157	1,632,970	20,000	1,652,970

Table 1: Discretionary Fees & Charges Summary (HCL)

- 1.7 A number of proposed changes to these fees are detailed within Appendix A and summarised below:

Museum – no changes are being proposed to the existing fees in order to encourage take up of the services on offer.

Use of sports pitches - no changes are being proposed to the existing fees in order to ensure that prices remain competitive.

Events – increases are being proposed to the charges made to hire parks. This is in order to facilitate recovery of the costs which the Council incurs in delivering this service. No increase has been proposed to the income budgets as these are not currently being met.

Bereavement Services – a number of increases have been proposed in order to meet price inflation and ensure that the costs associated with delivering these services are recovered in full. Charges made to non-residents have been increased with reference to other areas in order to manage demand.

Market – no increases have been made to the charges in this area for a number of years in order to manage the burden on market traders. For this year, a larger inflationary increase has been applied for certain services to reflect the impact of the increased costs to provide this service. There are existing pressures on the income budget in this area, so no corresponding increase to the budget is proposed.

2. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

Option 1

- 2.1 The committee could approve the recommendations as set out in the report, adopting the fees and charges as proposed in Appendix A. As these proposals have been developed in line with the council's policy on fees and charges they will create a manageable impact on service delivery whilst maximising income levels.

Option 2

- 2.2 The committee could increase the charges proposed within Appendix A. Any alternative increase may not be fully compliant with the policy, would require further consideration before implementation and may not deliver the necessary levels of income to ensure a balanced budget for 2019/20. The impact on demand for a service should also be taken into account when considering increases to charges beyond the proposed level.

Option 3

- 2.3 The committee could propose to decrease the charges proposed within Appendix A. However, this would limit the Council's ability to recover the cost of delivering discretionary services, and could result in the Council being unable to set a balanced budget for 2019/20.

3. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Option 1 as set out above is recommended as the proposed fees and charges shown within Appendix A have been developed by budget managers in line with the Council's Charging Policy. The proposed charges are considered appropriate and are expected to create a manageable impact on service delivery whilst maximising cost recovery.

4. RISK

- 4.1 The risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.
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5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 5.1 As part of this year's budget survey, residents were asked to rank the approaches to balancing the budget in order of preference. The results of the survey indicated that providing fewer discretionary services was the most preferred option, with a score of 2.25 out of 3. Increasing fees and charges scored the second highest, with 2.11 out of 3.
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6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 Fees and charges are being considered by service Committees throughout January, with an overarching report to Policy & Resources Committee on 23 January 2019.
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7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The Council's policy on charging has been developed to support corporate priorities as set out in the strategic plan.	Head of Finance
Risk Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Risk implications have been set out in section 4 of the report.	Head of Finance
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Financial implications are set out in the body of the report. If agreed, this income will be incorporated into the Council's medium term financial strategy for	Head of Finance

	2019/20 onwards.	
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing. 	Head of Finance
Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003 permits best value authorities to charge for discretionary services provided the authority has the power to provide that service and the recipient agrees to take it up on those terms. The authority has a duty to ensure that taking one financial year with another, income does not exceed the costs of providing the service. A number of the fees and charges made for services by the Council are set so as to provide the service at cost. These services are set up as trading accounts to ensure that the cost of service is clearly related to the charge made. In other cases the fee is set by statute and the Council must charge the set fee. In both cases the proposals in this report meet the Council's obligations. Where a customer defaults the fee or charge for a service must be defensible, in order to recover it through legal action. Adherence to the policy 	Legal Team

	on setting fees and charges provides some assurance that appropriate factors have been considered in setting these charges.	
Privacy and Data Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no specific privacy or data protection issues to address. 	Legal Team
Equalities	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment	Equalities and Corporate Policy Officer
Public Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No specific impact identified. 	Head of Finance
Crime and Disorder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No specific impact identified. 	Head of Finance
Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No specific impact identified. 	Head of Finance

8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix A: Proposed fees & charges 2019/20 (Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee)

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Charging Policy: <http://aluminum:9080/documents/s58019/Appendix%201%20-%20Charging%20Policy%20November%202017.pdf>