

REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES 2019-20

Executive Summary

It is the Council's policy to review its discretionary fees and charges at least once a year.

Schedules of proposed charges for 2019/20 are attached at Appendix 1 (People), Appendix 2 (Place) and Appendix 3 (Us).

Recommendations

The Executive is requested to:

RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL That

the discretionary fees and charges, as set out in Appendices 1 – 3 of the report, be approved.

Reasons for Decision

Reason: The regular review of discretionary charges ensures that the Council maintains its income base and generates additional resources for the provision of services.

The item above will need to be dealt with by way of a recommendation to Council.

Background Papers:	None.
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Review of Fees and Charges 2019-20

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 In accordance with Council policy, fees and charges which are at the discretion of the Council are reviewed at least annually.
- 1.2 The fees and charges for 2018/19 were approved by the Council on 7 December 2017 and the forecast yields were incorporated in the budget approved by the Council on 8 February 2018.
- 1.3 As was the case when the 2018/19 fees and charges were agreed, business areas have been asked to look at ways of increasing yield through increased activity, revised charging or new charging opportunities.
- 1.4 Schedules of proposed charges for 2019/20 are attached at Appendix 1 (People), Appendix 2 (Place) and Appendix 3 (Us).
- 1.5 The Council's "Strategy for Applying and Setting Fees and Charges for Services" sets out a broad and transparent approach to setting fees and charges. All charges are reviewed against this strategy and charges will be set in line with the framework outlined.
- 1.6 A commentary on any specific service issues arising from the review follows. The name of the relevant Officer contact has also been provided.

2.0 People

Woking Community Transport (WCT) (Stephen Petford) (Appendix 1: Page 2)

- 2.1 The Council's strategic positioning on charges for Centre Transport is that it endeavours to at least match the same increases applied to Dial-A-Ride charges (albeit that Centre Charges are at a lower base charge). It is proposed to increase the return journey cost for Centres Transport by 20p (£5.20 to £5.40 return) and to tie such increase in with the implementation date that WCT adopt - i.e. 1 June 2019 as opposed to 1 April 2019.

Centres for the Community (Stephen Petford) (Appendix 1: Page 30)

- 2.2 The simplified pricing structure that was introduced 3 years ago is still received by hirers and staff alike in a positive manner and therefore remains unchanged going forward. Benchmarking of hire charges for like type venues has been undertaken again this year with proposed fees and charges only being uplifted where it is considered that the market can bear the increase without adversely affecting levels of activity. Across all centres hires have dropped by an average of 20-25% in 2018/19 for various reasons such as customers losing their funding or finding alternative venues due to price point (e.g. SCC hires of Moorcroft have reduced). This is likely to be the same in this financial year.
- 2.3 During last year Lakeview Community Centre opened and after discussion with Lakeview Community Action Group (LCAG), the Council was invited to oversee the management and operation of the Centre. Whilst the building is currently being used by a number of regular hirers as well as one-off hirers, there is still much to be done to maximise the use of the centre for the benefit of the local community. It is therefore proposed that charges not be increased at this time.

Community Meals Service (Stephen Petford) (Appendix 1: Page 48)

Meals on Wheels

- 2.4 The approach from last year to alter the price such that irrespective of what day of the week one accessed the service you would pay the same rate, has been well received by service

users and referrers alike. The service continues to grow with increased marketing and promotion and with proposed charging levels remaining at the same level for next year (taking into account benchmarking comparisons), it is anticipated that yield will increase by year end by at least 20%. Other opportunities to expand the service offer will be considered throughout the year.

Tea Time Meals

- 2.5 Following a benchmarking exercise with other Surrey District and Boroughs it is clear that take-up of this type of service is very price sensitive. Whilst demand for our service continues to grow, it is considered that we are at an optimum price-point currently and therefore no change to the charges is proposed.

Breakfast Meals

- 2.6 Since this service has been launched in August 2018 there has been a slow uptake. The price point of £1.00 is considered to be correct and consistent with benchmarking with other boroughs and so no increase is proposed.

Community Centre Meals

- 2.7 The take-up of Centre Meals has decreased recently due to a number of reasons, not least due to a lack of referrals from partners. It is also recognised that in some of the Community Centres the meal offer is not necessarily what the customer now expects. It is proposed to keep the prices at the same level whilst a review of the offer is undertaken to reflect customer expectation.

Careline (Julie Meme) (Appendix 1: Page 46)

- 2.8 Having undertaken a review of the private market and competitors our charges remain higher, but a more holistic service is provided benefiting the residents with access to all People services. The number of private competitors eg Age UK, Saga, Boots are increasing annually. It is becoming evident that Woking residents are shopping around the market with greater use of internet searching. It is therefore proposed to limit the weekly increase in charge by 7p to £4.27 per week charge.
- 2.9 Even with this increase our charges remain competitive in relation to neighbouring local authorities and are still one of the lowest priced services in Surrey.
- 2.10 Historically Woking has recognised the importance of retaining the subsidised lower charge for those residents in receipt of means tested benefits. Woking is the only Council in Surrey to offer this subsidy. It is proposed to increase this charge by 35p per week to £3.15 per week charge.
- 2.11 Careline offers a number of specialist services e.g. bed, gas and medication dispensers for which the pricing has been agreed with Surrey local authorities to provide a consistent charging policy.
- 2.12 Increasingly residents are not choosing to have a land line in their property. In these cases Careline is provided through a roaming GSM Sim. This option incurs additional capital cost for the equipment plus an additional on going rental charge for the Sim card. To reflect the increased costs it is proposed to increase this charge by 3p per week.
- 2.13 With the removal of the SCC Supported Housing Grant and the changes to the Housing Allocation Policy the charging for NVH tenants is being reconsidered. It is proposed that Careline should be a tenure neutral service with all residents receiving the same service at the same cost. NVH tenants will have the ability to choose whether they receive telecare

services on individual need and not determined on which property they move to. At the same time increasing numbers of NVH tenants are now being provided with individual dispersed care alarms rather than hard wired alarms built into the schemes.

- 2.14 From 1 April 2019 it is recommended that Careline provide a tenure neutral service. This means that New Vision Homes tenants Careline charge will increase from £2.50 per week to the £3.15 or £4.25 recommended above.

Homelink (Julie Meme) (Appendix 1: Page 45)

- 2.15 Homelink is now part of the NW Surrey Home Improvement Agency (HIA) Hub with Spelthorne and Runnymede BC. Woking takes the leading role in the hub which is designed to provide a more consistent approach across the area and to provide efficiencies and savings in service provision.
- 2.16 Homelink now operates the handyperson service for all three boroughs. The proposed handyperson charges will apply across the hub. Any income generated will benefit Woking. However, increasingly the work of the handyperson service is to assist hospital discharge and enable residents to remain safely and securely in their homes as long as possible for which there is no hourly charge. This work is funded by a SCC capital grant and an HIA revenue grant. As this work increases especially with our stronger ties with NHS and Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) the actual amount of time available for the paid DIY service will decrease.
- 2.17 The handyperson service is part funded by SCC grant. The level of handyperson grant being protected in 2019/20 as part of the new Home from Hospital service called Homesafe Plus.
- 2.18 The NW Surrey HIA Hub has agreed to maintain the management fee to carryout major disabled adaptations at 15% of the adaptation cost. Any increase would decrease the budget available for adaptations which is already insufficient to meet demand.

Woking Interpreting and Translation Service (WITS) (Sylvie Marshall) (Appendix 1: Page 42)

- 2.19 This service was integrated into the Council in 2017/18 and therefore this is the first year that a schedule of charges has been presented as part of this report.

3.0 Place

Environmental Services (Geoff McManus)

Waste and Recycling and Garden Waste (Appendix 2: Page 59)

- 3.1 There are no proposals to increase the charges during 2019/20.

Provision of Temporary additional refuse bins

- 3.2 Woking is one of four Authorities in Surrey that has entered a Joint Contract with Amey for the delivery of its waste collection services. The Joint Contract has now been mobilised in all areas, with all Authorities paying the Service Provider the same costs for services. However, many policies and charges remain slightly different in each area, principally as a legacy of previous arrangements. Over time, the intention is to transition to a common set of policies and charges, which will deliver consistency and allow for common publicity and administration across the partnership area.
- 3.3 A change to the current policy is proposed for the provision of additional wheeled refuse bins to residents. Additional refuse wheeled bins are provided to residents that meet certain criteria e.g. households with two children in nappies, households with six or more adults,

when a householder has a medical condition which results in excess waste being produced. The criteria used to assess eligibility for the provision of additional refuse bins has been aligned across the contract area. On average for Woking, 15 applications a month for additional refuse capacity are approved.

- 3.4 However, there are different policies in place with regards to the ownership and charges applied across the partnership area. Currently, in Woking once eligibility has been determined, the householder is asked to pay £45 for the bin (£30 for a used bin). Once delivered, the bin is owned permanently by the householder. Bins are provided free of charge if provided on medical grounds.
- 3.5 It is proposed that additional refuse bins shall be provided to eligible households on temporary loan, instead of on a permanent basis, and reviewed bi-annually so they can be recalled when the household no longer meets the criteria. This will ensure that waste capacity is contained, and excess residual waste disposal is not encouraged. It is proposed that a charge of £15 is made for provision of the bin which covers the cost of delivery, as well as future removal and cleaning. Households requiring an additional refuse bin for medical reasons will be loaned the container free of charge.
- 3.6 The recommendation is that on approval of a written request, householders are provided a temporary additional refuse wheeled bin for £15. The charge will be waived for applications made on medical grounds. Eligibility will be reviewed every 2 years.

Car Parks (Geoff McManus) (Appendix 2: Page 84)

- 3.7 It is anticipated that ongoing Town Centre development and temporarily decreased car parking capacity will increase pressure upon available Town Centre parking. Consideration of an uplift of 10p per hour and an increase in the daily tariff to £12 per day is proposed from 1 October 2019 and a slight reduction of 7% to reflect current and anticipated activity, which would have the combined effect of serving to manage demand and assist with the continued investment in Town Centre car parking facilities.
- 3.8 With the temporary removal of the Red Shoppers car park it is anticipated that the majority of season ticket and daily parking activity will be accommodated within other Town Centre car parks.

Controlled Parking Zones (Geoff McManus) (Appendix 2: Page 89)

- 3.9 There are no charging proposals for 2019/2020. However, it is proposed to increase the controlled parking period from 6pm to 10pm each day in the central Zone 1 of the Woking Controlled Parking Zone effective from 1 April 2019. This matter was agreed by Woking Joint Committee.

Skin Piercing – Additional Guest Artist Fee (Geoff McManus) (Appendix 2: Page 69)

- 3.10 Environmental Health Officers have identified a trend of Tattoo Parlours in the Borough inviting 'guest artists' to operate from their premises for short periods, normally between a week and month. We have found on a number of occasions that these guest artists have not registered with the Council as required by the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 sections 14 - 17. The Act requires that any person practicing tattooing, acupuncture, electrolysis and/or ear piercing in the Borough must first register with the Council as an operator; this is to ensure hygiene practices are in place that will minimise the risk of the transmission of blood borne viruses and skin infections. When asked why these guest artists had not registered, the premises owners have told Officers that they feel that the £130 registration fee is too high for such a short period. Other Local Authorities have introduced a lower guest artist fee with the aim of encouraging operators to register, even if they will only be operating in the Borough for short periods. It is proposed that a Guest Artist

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Fee of £40.00 be introduced for those who can provide proof that they are already registered as an Operator with another Local Authority, will be operating from a premises in the Borough that is already registered with the Council and that they will be operating in the Borough for no longer than a period of 30 consecutive days. For those wishing to operate in the Borough for longer than 30 days the standard operator fee of £130 applies.

Animal Licensing (Geoff McManus) (Appendix 2: Page 69)

- 3.11 The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 came into force on 1 October 2018. This legislation consolidates a number of existing Acts which require the licensing and registration of various animal activities, including; animal boarding, animal breeding, pet shops and horse riding establishments. It will also introduce a requirement to register establishments providing day care for dogs and for performing animals (the latter activity currently regulated by Surrey County Council). The 2018 Regulations, amongst other things, sets out how a person may apply to the local authority for a licence and sets out matters in respect of which a local authority must be satisfied when considering the granting or renewing of a licence. It provides for a local authority to charge fees to cover the costs it incurs in performing this function, considering a licence holder's compliance with these Regulations, enforcement and administration. It allows licenses to be granted for periods of 1, 2 or 3 years (for individual business considered rated by the authority to be medium or low risk). The existing fees for animal licensing therefore need to be reviewed, and are proposed as follows;

Higher tier = Selling of animals as pets, hiring of horses, dog breeding, kennels, catteries and the keeping or training of animals for performance.

Lower tier = Day care for dogs and home boarding for dogs.

Proposed fees						
	New application	Renewal	Enforcement (payable following grant of new licence or renewal)	Re-rating (where requested by licence holder)	Transfer variation	Copy of licence or licence conditions
Higher tier	£198.00	£174.00	£99.00	£131.00	£50.00	£15.00
Lower tier	£188.00	£123.00	£99.00			
additional activity (each)	Greatest applicable tier fee plus £22.50 per additional licensable activity					

- 3.12 Adoption of Ordinary Watercourse Byelaws (Geoff McManus) (Appendix 2: Page 70)

- 3.13 On the 19 October 2017 Council Meeting the Adoption of Ordinary Watercourse Byelaws paper was resolved. As part of the Adoption of Ordinary Watercourse Byelaws a fee is payable by applicants for watercourse consent.

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- 3.14 The Land Drainage Act 1991 (LDA) determines the fee in accordance with a “prescribed charging scheme”. Currently, the fee for applications for consent is £50 per structure. We would expect between 5 – 10 applications each year.

Tree Strategy and Tree Policies documents (Geoff McManus) (Appendix 2: Page 58)

- 3.15 The new Tree Strategy and Tree Management Policies documents, were adopted by Council on 18 October 2018, and will be published online in November 2018. A charge for hard copy documents of £20 for the Tree Strategy and £25 for Tree Management Policies is proposed to apply from their publication. Soft copies will be available to download free of charge from the Council’s website.

Fishing Permits (Tracey Haskins) (Appendix 2: Page 66)

- 3.16 The Goldsworth Park Angling Club continues to provide management services at both Goldsworth Park Lake and Brookwood Ponds with positive feedback from users. In consultation with the Angling Club it is proposed that there is no increase in charges for 2019/20 as arrangements continue to work well.

4.0 Us

Local Land Charges (David Ripley) (Appendix 3: Page 96)

- 4.1 It is proposed to increase charges as shown in Appendix 3 (Us) in accordance with the increase in fees levied by Surrey County Council.
- 4.2 Some Con 29 Part 1 searches are submitted as requests under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 i.e. under the “Freedom of Information” regime. The fee for dealing with these requests (calculated in accordance with the statutory provisions) is £175.00

5.0 Implications

Financial

- 5.1 The changes in fees and charges considered in this report are summarised in the following table:

	Budget 2018/19 £'000	Estimated Yield 2019/20 £'000	Change in Yield	
			£'000	%
People	£912,982	£1,040,928	£127,946	14.0%
Place	£9,931,378	£9,938,894	£7,516	0.1%
Us	£496,932	£500,232	£3,300	0.7%
Total	£11,341,292	£11,480,054	£138,762	1.2%

- 5.2 Not all of the fees and charges income in the table above will directly affect the overall position in the Council’s General Fund budget also on this agenda.

Human Resource/Training and Development

- 5.3 This review forms part of the annual work plan of staff in the Council’s Business Areas. No specific training and development issues have arisen as a result of the review.

Community Safety

- 5.4 There are no Community Safety implications as a result of this report.

Risk Management

- 5.5 Where there is a risk that the levels of income proposed by this review will not be achieved, this will be identified in the 2019/20 budget reports and monitored during the year in the Green Book.

Sustainability

- 5.6 There are no sustainability implications in the report.

Equalities

- 5.7 There are no equalities implications in the report.

Safeguarding

- 5.8 There are no specific safeguarding implications as a result of this report.

6.0 Consultations

- 6.1 Consultation has been undertaken with Woking Community Transport on the proposed rates and implementation date.
- 6.2 Consultation has been undertaken with Freedom Leisure and the Leisure Partnership Board on the 'core' and 'non-core' charges for the Leisure Management Contract.
- 6.3 The Goldsworth Park Angling Club has been consulted on the proposed charges for Fishing.

REPORT ENDS