

REPORT TO EXECUTIVE



DATE	17 January 2024
PORTFOLIO	Resources & Performance Management
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Fees & Charges Tariff 2024/25

PURPOSE

1. To inform Members of the Council’s proposed fees and charges from 1 April 2024. Proposals of an increase of 3% are being presented in the report for members to consider.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Executive approve and recommend to Full Council to approve the:

2. proposed tariff of fees & charges from 1 April 2024 with an increase of 3% as outlined in Appendix 1 attached, with a range of exceptions as outlined in the report.
3. authorisation to the Director of Resources, in consultation with the relevant Head of Service, to determine any new charges or changes to existing charges relating to the preparation and approval of the 2024/25 revenue budget.
4. authorisation to Executive Portfolio Members to amend fees & charges periodically in their own area with the agreement of the Director of Resources.
5. authorisation to the Director of Economy and Development, in consultation with the Executive Member for Resources and Performance Management and the Director of Resources, to adjust fees and charges in relation to the Markets service from time to time to reflect current trading conditions and the overall position of the market.
6. Council’s Commercial Strategy as included in Appendix 2.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

7. To set the Council's fees and charges from 1 April 2024 and assist in finalising the 2024/25 budget process.
8. To carry out an annual review of the Council's Commercial Strategy.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

9. Included in the Revenue Budget 2024/27 report presented to this Committee at their meeting 20/09/2023 it was proposed to increase fees and charges by 3% from 1st April 2024 due to the current high levels of inflation. As at September 2023 CPI inflation was at 6.7%. It is appreciated that it is not palatable to increase fees and charges by this rate, therefore an increase of 3% is proposed to help fund the increasing costs of the provision of services.
10. In line with the Council's Commercial Strategy, Heads of Service were asked to:
 - a) ensure that no charge has been omitted and the schedule is complete,
 - b) confirm increases at an overall 3% for the service (excluding areas where either no increase is proposed or where they are set statutorily),
 - c) confirm that the fees and corresponding VAT rates are correct,
 - d) confirm the date of the fee increase,
 - e) give notification of any potential new areas for the introduction of fees and charges within their service area and of the proposed level of such fees and charges from 1 April 2024,
 - f) make suggestions/proposals as to where income can be found in future to help alleviate the Council's budget pressures as identified in the Medium Term Financial Strategy, and
 - g) identify where services are being provided at a subsidy and where fees and charges should be increased by more than 3% in order to maintain the viability of service provision.
11. A summary of the key points of the proposed fees and charges are:
12. Local Land Charges
There will be no increase to Local Land Charges fees as demand for the service is low and an increase to the current charge may reduce demand further. No increase to the fees and charges levels will result in approximately £2k income foregone.
13. Garden Waste Collection Charges
There will be no increase to the Green Waste Collection charge. The charge was increased from £35 to £40 with effect from 1st April 2023 which saw the number of subscriptions decrease by over 3%. It is felt that a further increase in the price will erode the customer base further. The current fee charged by two of our closest neighbours ranges from £33 to £41. No increase to the fees and charges levels will result in approximately £11k income foregone based on the current customer base.

14. Pre-Planning Application Fees

There will be no increase to Pre-Planning Application Fees due to a review of the charges in October 2023 resulting in a substantial increase following a benchmarking exercise comparing fees across other Lancashire authorities.

15. Car Parking

There will be no increase to pay and display and contract parking fees. Pay and display charges contract parking fees were last increased in 2023/24 and an increase in 2024/25 would deviate from the current strategy to increase charges every 2 years. No increase to the fees and charges levels will result in approximately £69k income foregone.

16. Commercial Waste

Commercial waste charge per bin lift will increase by an average 5% across each bin size (240 litre – 1100 litre bin). Container costs will increase by 3%.

The cost of 'General Waste Sack - Roll 25 Sacks' will be reduced from £54.90 to £50.00. These customers are low in number, and a slight reduction will have minimal impact on total income however it is felt that the reduced price will allow us to support smaller businesses to meet their waste duty of care.

There will be no increase to the 'Recycling Annual Contract - Weekly Collections' fee.

The above will result in an average increase of 4% across the service which will generate approximately £16k additional income.

17. Fixed Penalty Notices

There will be no increase to Fixed Penalty Notices with the exception of Littering which will increase by 25%. Additional income generated will be minimal however the increase in the FPN charge may act as a deterrent to potential offenders.

18. Licensing fees

Licensing fees are to be increased by 3%, where the charge is not statutory. The increase will result in approximately £3k additional income.

19. Taxi Licensing

Taxi Licensing fees are set by Licensing Committee and are to be considered at their meeting in November 2023. Should taxi licences fees require formal consultation, this could lead to a slight delay in implementation.

20. Towneley Hall

As members will be aware, due to building works at Towneley Hall as part of the restoration of the Hall the admission fee was reduced by 50% in 2023/24 for the period October 2022 to January 2025. It was also agreed that charges for the hire of rooms were to be suspended during the period October 2022 to January 2025 as the rooms will be closed due to the restoration of the Hall.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND BUDGET PROVISION

21. An increase of 3% is in line with the proposals included in the Revenue Budget 2024-27 report which was presented to and approved by this Committee at their meeting 20th September 2023.
22. The assumed increase in income from the proposed changes to the fees and charges tariff presented in this report is approximately £104k in 2024/25.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

23. None directly as a consequence of this report.

DETAILS OF CONSULTATION

24. None.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

25. None.

FURTHER INFORMATION

PLEASE CONTACT:

Amy Johnson – Finance Manager