

Cabinet

26 February 2020



Title	Fees and Charges Report 2020/21		
Purpose of the report	To make a Key Decision		
Report Author	Laurence Woolven (Chief Accountant)		
Cabinet Member	Councillor Tony Harman	Confidential	No
Corporate Priority	Financial Sustainability		
Recommendations	Cabinet is asked to consider and approve the charges as set out in Appendix A.		
Reason for Recommendation	Fees & Charges are an important source of income for the authority each year and are a key importance in balancing the budget.		

1. Key issues

- 1.1 In the current challenging economic climate, the Council has to perform a balancing act between maximising additional income that can be generated through fees and charges, and setting fee levels which are sustainable and will not adversely impact on overall income levels. The Council also needs to be mindful of the impact on residents and the local business community.
- 1.2 Additional income of £116k is estimated to be generated for 2020/21 from increasing fees and charges.
- 1.3 The total potential income therefore from rents, fees and charges and grant income, excluding housing benefit grant income, to be incorporated into the 2020/21 budget will be approximately £4.4m.
- 1.4 More than a third of the Council's total income, excluding housing benefit grant income, is generated through fees and charges, rents and grants. This therefore is of key importance in balancing the budget.

2. Options analysis and proposal

- 2.1 The detailed schedule of proposed fees and charges effective from 1 April 2020 is shown in the 2020/21 fees and charges document.
- 2.2 The inflation rate as at December 2019 is 2.2% (RPI). For 2020/21, the Council's fees and charges have been reviewed in the context of inflation and other factors, and revised with a range of changes. Some fees have been amended to reflect the maximum level it is perceived that the market can currently stand, a few have been reduced for consistency, while some fees have not been increased from 2019/20 rates.

- 2.3 All fees and charges were reviewed in 2019/20 by Group Heads in the context of the services concerned and in terms of reasonability of the fee being set.
- 2.4 For 2020/21, as with previous years, Group Heads have been asked to revisit the overall budgeted income estimates, compare them with other authorities' charges and then base revisions on the income seen in 2019/20 to date in order to reassess the likely full-year income position.
- 2.5 In respect of the economic climate, all areas are being monitored through the 2019/20 budget monitoring process to assess the actual income compared to budgets. Management team receive a monthly report on the major income areas highlighting the current position against that for the previous year.
- 2.6 With the exception of Staines town centre tariffs, car parking charges remain broadly at 2019/20 rates. This reflects the Council's desire to help local retailers and the business community.
- 2.7 It should be noted that in exceptional circumstances discounted pricing may be considered where an activity supports a strategic priority of the Council to the benefit of a particular community group.
- 2.8 The Council is continuing to look at services to ensure that all areas make charges for services provided where appropriate. In this way, users of such services are charged for those services, and Council Tax payers are not subsidising those services.

3. Financial implications

- 3.1 As in the body of the report.

4. Other considerations

- 4.1 There are none.

5. Timetable for implementation

- 5.1 The fees and charges proposed are to be implemented from 1 April 2020.

Background papers: None

Appendices: A