

FEES AND CHARGES 2021-22

Meeting	Cabinet, 19 November 2020
Report Author	Tim Willis, Deputy Chief Executive and S151 Officer
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Robert Yates, Cabinet Member for Finance, Administration & Community Wealth Building
Status	For Recommendation
Classification:	Unrestricted
Key Decision	Budget and Policy Framework
Ward:	All

Executive Summary:

A review of fees and charges has now been completed as part of the 2021-22 budget setting process. The proposed fees and charges are expected to generate additional income of around £200K, which represents an average increase of 2.0%. This excludes items such as Selective Licensing, On Street Parking and specific growth items covered elsewhere in the budget.

Recommendation(s):

1. That Cabinet consider and make comment on the proposed 2021-22 fees and charges schedule, as listed in Annex 1;
2. That Cabinet recommend the proposed 2021-22 fees and charges to Full Council for approval

Corporate Implications

Financial and Value for Money

The financial implications have been reflected within the body of the report. However were members to decide to reject any of the proposals, then additional savings of the same value would be required to deliver a balanced budget.

Legal

Section 151 of the 1972 Local Government Act requires a suitably qualified named officer to keep control of the council's finances. For this council, it is the Deputy Chief Executive (S151 Officer), and this report is helping to carry out that function.

The power to charge for discretionary services is not available to local authorities if there is a statutory duty to provide the service or if there is a specific power to charge for it or if there is a prohibition on charging.

The Localism Act 2011 provides local authorities with a general power of competence that confers on them the power to charge for services but again subject to conditions/limitations similar to those noted above.

Any decision made by the council must give due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

Corporate

Corporate priorities can only be delivered with robust finances and this report gives Members the opportunity to review the council's proposed fees and charges for 2020-21 as part of the budget setting process.

Equality Act 2010 & Public Sector Equality Duty

Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to the aims of the Duty at the time the decision is taken. The aims of the Duty are: (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it, and (iii) foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Protected characteristics: age, sex, disability, race, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief and pregnancy & maternity. Only aim (i) of the Duty applies to Marriage & civil partnership.

An analysis of the impacts fees and charges might have to the statutory equality duties encouraged Thanet District Council to take a proportionate approach to fees and charges. EIAs tailored the necessary mitigations and exceptions, for example.

The council is satisfied that, in all the circumstances, the Schedule of 2020-21 fees and charges, those subject to an EIA, are lawful for the purposes of the public sector equality duties in the Equality Act 2010.

The council recognises that EIAs are not an end in themselves. They are, of course, a way of showing that due regard has been paid to the general duties; but the council will continue, all-the-time, engaging with the equality considerations, accepting comments and opinions from stakeholders and maintain a positive relationship with the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

This report relates to the following corporate priorities: -

- *Growth*

- *Environment*
- *Communities*

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1. This report seeks Cabinet approval to set the fees and charges for 2021-22. Fees and charges have historically been agreed early in the budget cycle so that they can be built into individual service estimates. This covering report summarises the main points, with the details being provided in Annex 1.

2. Budget Strategy

- 2.1. As reported within the Budget Strategy elsewhere on this Cabinet Agenda, the approach to setting fees and charges for 2021-22 will be as follows:
 - The default position will be to increase all fees and charges by at least 2% and all fees and charges income budgets by 2%. The only exceptions to this will be:
 - Where individual charges cannot rise by 2%, e.g. individual car parking charges, but the service (in this example, parking) will still need to generate at least 2% increase overall.
 - Where a service is being fundamentally reviewed as part of a review of its fees and charges income shortfall.
 - It assumed all services (e.g. building control) that identified a significant projected shortfall last year and this year, will take action to eliminate the shortfall. This might be by increasing charges by more than 2% if the market will tolerate it; or by restructuring charges; or by fundamentally reviewing the service. This will enable the overall budget strategy to presume no additional burden from historic income shortfalls.
- 2.2. It is anticipated that this will generate approximately £200k of income.

3. Implications

- 3.1. A rigorous examination of all the council's fees and charges was undertaken by the service managers and officers from Financial Services, using techniques such as benchmarking and other in-depth reviews.
- 3.2. Service managers also completed Equality Impact Assessments as per the requirement of the Public Sector Equality Duty and hence informed their design of the service and price. Annex 1 to this report sets out the proposed level of fees and charges for 2020-21 in respect of services provided by the council.

3.3. The major changes proposed to fees and charges 2021-22 can be summarised in table 1:

Table 1 – Summary of major changes

2021-22 Fees & Charges		Major Changes		
Ref	Type of Fees & Charges	New Fees	Deleted Fees	Increased Fees
1.	Car Parks – Off Street	✓	▪	✓
2.	Car Parks – On Street	✓	▪	✓
4.	Crematorium	✓	▪	✓
5.	Cemeteries	▪	▪	✓
7.	Refuse - Bulky	▪	▪	✓
8.	Green Waste	▪	▪	✓
18.	B'stairs & M'gate Harbour	▪	▪	✓
19.	Ramsgate Harbour/Port	✓	▪	✓
20.	Environmental Health Services	✓	▪	▪
24.	Licensing	✓		
29.	Corporate Marketing (Filming)	✓	✓	▪
38.	Legal Services	✓	✓	✓

Note: A tick shows that there has been a change. A blank means no change.

3.4. Changes to bring to Member's attention:

- **Car Parks** - The Residents Parking Permit scheme to be extended to include Margate Old Town and Ramsgate Harbour. New seasonal parking at Barnes Car Park, Westbrook. Introduction of annual Business License to park at rear of council offices.
- **Crematorium** - New Crematorium fees have been introduced as agreed by Cabinet in October 2020.
- **Ramsgate Port & Harbour** - New charge for Inner Marina berth holders only, to berth in Outer Marina for Ramsgate Week only. New fee for caravan storage at the Port.
- **Environmental Health Services** - Vehicle alarm nuisance - fee to disable alarm, tow and storage of vehicle.
- **Corporate Marketing** - Current charges schedule deleted and replaced with a revised pricing structure.
- **Legal Services** - Current charges schedule deleted and replaced with a revised pricing structure.
- **Licensing** - A 10% discount to be applied to the licence fee for Electric and Hybrid Taxis. This is consistent with the reduction that is applied to Wheelchair Accessible Taxis (10%). New fees associated with Animal licences.

4. Options

4.1. Cabinet accepts the fees and charges submitted and recommends the proposed fees and charges to Council for Decision.

- 4.2. Cabinet does not accept the fees and charges as submitted and proposes changes for the 2021-22 schedule. Cabinet to notify officers of any changes required. If there are changes to those recommended that result in reduced income, then this will create a shortfall in the budget that will need to be funded from another source.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1. If Cabinet accepts the recommendations then these proposals will be considered by Council on 10 December 2020.

Contact Officer: *Chris Blundell, Director of Finance and Deputy s151 Officer*
Reporting to: *Tim Willis, Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer*

Annex List

Annex 1: Fees and Charges Schedule 2021-22

Corporate Consultation

Finance: *N/A*

Legal: Tim Howes Corporate Director of Governance