

Blaby District Council

Cabinet Executive

Date of Meeting	20 February 2023
Title of Report	Schedule of Charges 2023/24 This is a Key Decision and is on the Forward Plan.
Lead Member	Cllr. Maggie Wright - Finance, People & Performance (Deputy Leader)
Report Author	Accountancy Services Manager
Corporate Priority	Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

1. What is this report about?

- 1.1 This report lays out the proposed fees and charges for the financial year commencing 1st April 2023.

2. Recommendation(s) to Cabinet Executive

- 2.1 That the Schedule of Charges for 2023/24, appearing at Appendix A, is approved.

3. Reason for Decisions Recommended

- 3.1 To ensure that the fees and charges for 2023/24 are formally set and approved.

4. Matters to consider

4.1 Background

The Council charges customers, businesses, individuals, and other organisations for an array of services that it delivers.

As part of the annual budget setting cycle Service Managers, in conjunction with the Finance team, have undertaken a full review of fees and charges to ensure that, where permissible, they are set at a level that achieves cost recovery as a minimum.

There are certain charges that are set at a national level, so the Council is unable to influence the amount levied. Another factor to be considered is where charges are more prone to market influences and to set them at too high a level would lead to a reduction in demand. These matters have been considered when determining the fees and charges set out in Appendix A.

This full review aligns with the Council's Commercial Strategy to achieve full cost recovery where possible and is in response to cost increases over the last financial year due to a mix of reasons, including spiralling inflation due, the impact of Brexit, the conflict in Ukraine, and the continuing effects of the Covid pandemic. The Council will continue to look for further opportunities to provide income generating services over the coming year.

4.2 Proposals

The complete Schedule of Charges for 2023/24 is attached at Appendix A. Members attention is drawn to the following charges in particular:

Domestic Garden Waste

As per the decision made at the Cabinet Executive meeting of 16th January 2023 charges for domestic garden waste have been left unchanged, however there will be three fewer collections in the winter period reflecting the reduced demand during this time

Bulky Item Collections

Increases range from 6.5% to 20% (£3 to £5) depending upon the number of items to be collected.

Food Hygiene Inspections

The food hygiene rating scheme has been in operation at Blaby District Council since 2007 issuing food businesses with a rating following their routine mandatory food inspection. In 2017 the Food Standards Agency introduced the power for local authorities to charge for a requested rescore visit to try and improve their Food Hygiene Rating score if they wish. Blaby District Council introduced the charging policy from 2017 at a cost of £150 per request for a rescore and this has not been reviewed since its introduction. The new proposed rate is £200 per request for rescore which includes a revised officer hourly rate and a more accurate representation of the time taken to process of revisiting and issuing a rescore.

Land Charges

A new CON29 search fee for commercial properties will be introduced from 1st April 2023.

Leisure Centres

Our Leisure Centre Operators are proposing an increase to their fees and charges on average by around 8% in recognition of rising operational costs of the business. All the proposed increases are in line with the contract which provides for a price increase in line with CPI, plus 3%, and are also comparable with other Leicestershire providers.

4.3 Relevant Consultations

The Service Managers have been consulted and fully engaged in the calculation of these charges and fees.

4.4 Significant Issues

Care has been taken to ensure that, wherever possible the charges are calculated so that they recover the full cost of delivering the service. Thus, each charge will be made up of two elements: the establishment cost of delivery and, where appropriate, an element of overhead recovery.

The final charge has been assessed for reasonableness by comparing it; with similar charges levied by neighbouring authorities, the previous charge to ensure that the increase is not unacceptable or punitive and with regard to any likely fall in demand for the service following the increase in the charge.

4.5 Future Amendments to the Schedule of Charges

The Constitution grants delegated authority to the Executive Director (Section 151 Officer) to amend fees and charges, where necessary, during the financial year.

5. What will it cost and are there opportunities for savings?

5.1 Not applicable

6. What are the risks and how can they be reduced?

6.1

Current Risk	Actions to reduce the risks
The greatest risk is that the increase in a charge will significantly affect the take up of that service.	The elasticity of the demand for the service has been considered for each charge to avoid unnecessary loss of income.

7. Other options considered

7.1 Not to review the fees and charges. However, it is considered appropriate that, where possible, charges should be set at a level necessary to achieve full cost recovery

8. Environmental impact

8.1 In preparing this report the author has considered the impact on the environment and there are no areas of concern.

9. Other significant issues

9.1 In preparing this report, the author has considered issues related to Human Rights, Legal Matters, Human Resources, Equalities, Public Health Inequalities, and Climate Local and there are no areas of concern.

10. Appendix

10.1 Appendix A – Schedule of Charges 2023/24

11. Background paper(s)

11.1 None

12. Report author's contact details

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