

Report to: **Overview and Scrutiny Panel**  
Date: **17 October 2019**  
Title: **Review of Fees and Charges for 2020/21**  
Portfolio Area: **Support Services – Cllr H Bastone**  
Wards Affected: **All**  
Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Date next steps can be taken: **Council Meeting on 19 December 2019**

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#### **Recommendations:**

**That the Panel RECOMMEND that the Executive RECOMMEND to Council that:**

- 1. it approves the proposed fees and charges set out for Parks, Open Spaces and Outdoor Sports in Appendix A.**
- 2. it approves the proposed Environmental Health charges in Appendix B.**
- 3. it approves the proposed unchanged fees and charges set out for Development Management in Appendix C.**
- 4. delegated authority is given to the Director of Place and Enterprise in consultation with the Portfolio holder, to set the Lower Ferry fees to take account of market conditions including competitor charges.**
- 5. it approves that charges be introduced for the use of the existing electric charging points at Follaton House.**
- 6. delegated authority is given to the Commissioning Manager for Waste along with the CoP Lead for Waste in consultation with the Portfolio holder, to set the Commercial Waste charges, once the review is complete as set out in paragraph 3.14.**
- 7. it approves the changes to Boat Storage Charges set out in paragraph 3.15.**
- 8. it approves the introduction of Proof of Life charges with immediate effect, once approval from Members has been received as set out in paragraph 3.16.**

9. it approves the changes to S257 Footpath Diversion Orders charges with immediate effect, once approval from Members has been received as set out in paragraph 3.17.
10. delegated authority is given to the Section 151 Officer and the Portfolio Holder to set the Local Land Charges as appropriate for cost recovery.

## 1. Executive summary

- 1.1 This report sets out proposals for any changes to fees and charges for all services for 2020/21.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 The Council has the power to levy fees and charges for various services and functions it undertakes. Some of these fees are set by statute while for others the Council can make "reasonable" charges for the services it provides. The undertaking of regular reviews of charges allows, where possible, for the Council to recover the cost of officers' time in providing the service.

## 3. Outcomes/outputs

### **Parks, Open Spaces, Outdoor Sport and Recreation**

- 3.1 For most charges, the proposal is to increase fees by around 3-4% to reflect inflation and the rising costs to the Council of providing these services as shown in Appendix A. This is unlikely to generate significant additional income for 2020/21.

### **Environmental Health Charges**

- 3.2 Appendix B sets out proposals for Environmental Health Charges for 2020/21.
- 3.3 Environmental Health charges were reviewed for 2016/17 to ensure that the Council charges were consistent across SHDC and WDBC and complied with the legislation in terms of the maximum charge being full cost recovery. The charges were changed to reflect this requirement and the review of charges for 2020/21 reflects the full cost recovery concept and the proposals are as follows.
- 3.4 New animal licensing regulations were introduced in October 2018. This year's (2019-20) fees were based on estimates of the times to be taken for the various requirements of the new regulations. In practice these turned out to be slight underestimates, so additional staff time has been allocated this year, also staff costs

have risen due to the pay award. All costs have been calculated by assessing staff time taken for all licensing work divided according to pay scale and adding other relevant costs. The proposed costs are in line with those of other Devon Local Authorities.

- 3.5 The setting of fees for the issuing of licences for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles, as well as Private Hire operators is governed by the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, this requires that where the fee set is proposed to be greater than £25 the Council must advertise these changes for a period of 28 days, and publish a notice in the local newspaper. Due to the cost of the advertisement of fees it is not economically beneficial to the local authority to increase these fees by inflation each year. Fees for these licences will be reviewed on a 3 yearly basis to ensure that the Council is not subsidising the delivery of the service substantially. Therefore, no increases are proposed for 2020/21.
- 3.6 A new charge of £300 is being introduced in response to new legislation whereby tenants are able to request that a Local Council carries out an inspection of the rented property to support a civil action taken against a landlord. In addition, a charge of £41 per hour will be levied if attendance at court is necessary.
- 3.7 In the event of a serious private water supply sampling failure, a new fee of £100 will be charged for the officer time required to investigate further.
- 3.8 Following a review of charges for the granting and renewal of zoo licenses, increases are proposed to reflect the time spent by officers in processing applications and inspecting premises.
- 3.9 In terms of additional income, the changes to existing Environmental Health and Licensing charges shouldn't have a significant impact since most charges are remaining the same and those that are increasing are based on cost recovery rather than income generation.
- 3.10 We currently charge £60 for a Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) which covers the cost of an enhanced check and administration fees. The cost to us from central government is set to decrease by £4 and so the proposal is to pass this saving on to our customers and charge £56 for the service instead. This action will be cost neutral to the Council.

### **Development Management**

- 3.11 Substantial changes were made to many of the Development Management fees and charges in 2019/20. It is considered that these figures represent fair and appropriate amounts to charge for 2020/21 and so the proposal is to freeze charges at their current

levels for 2020/21 and then review once again when setting fees for 2021/22. A breakdown of these fees can be found at Appendix C to this report.

### **Lower Ferry, Dartmouth**

- 3.12 It is requested that responsibility for setting Lower Ferry charges is delegated to the Director of Place and Enterprise in consultation with the Portfolio Holder. This will provide assurance that the charges are set to reflect the competitive environment in which the ferry operates.

### **Follaton House Electric Charging Points**

- 3.13 It is proposed to charge for the use of the electric charging points outside Follaton House. A report regarding the introduction of electric vehicle charging points in public car parks will be presented to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

### **Commercial Waste**

- 3.14 The pricing model for Commercial Waste charges requires consideration of budget performance, disposal charges and market factors. A large scale review is soon to commence that will determine the best way forward for the service and will include proposals for suitable fees and charges. Given the timing of this review, it is requested that the Commissioning Manager for Waste along with the CoP Lead for Waste are given delegated authority for setting Commercial Waste charges in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

### **Boat Storage**

- 3.15 Boat storage charges had stayed the same since the Harbour Authority took over the running of the lifting operations in 2010. Boat storage charges are reviewed annually and set in line with boat yards offering similar facilities for winter storage, once our lifting costs have been allowed for. The proposed fees for 2020/21 are summarised in the table below and are expected to yield approximately £2,000 of additional income:

<b>Batson Boat Park</b>	<b>2019/20 Current Fee</b>	<b>2020/21 Proposed Fee</b>
Daily Rate	£8.00	£10.00
Daily Rate – Large Space	£12.00	£15.00
Weekly Rate	£59.40	£60.00
Weekly Rate – Large Space	£89.10	£90.00
Trailer (under 4.5m) per day	£5.30	£6.00
Trailer (over 4.5m) per day	£6.40	£8.00
Trailer (under 4.5m) per week	£26.00	£36.00
Trailer (over 4.5m) per week	£32.30	£48.00

Time Zone/Area 1 (Oct to end Mar)	£55.00	£57.00
Time Zone/Area 2 (Oct to end Apr)	£78.50	£82.00
Weekly charge (only avail Dec-Feb)	£3.30/m	£3.50/m
Lift in or out	£14.00/m	£15.00/m (not less than £120)
Launch	£14.00/m	£14.00/m
Environmental levy for filtering of scrubbing water	£1.30/m	£1.50/m
Yacht cradle hire (9m and over) Zone 1 and 2	£250.00	£260.00
Or yacht cradle hire per month	£49.00/month	£50.00/month
Powerboat props hire Zone 1 and 2	£190.00	£200.00
Or powerboat props per month	£39.00/month	£40.00/month
<b>Bowcombe</b>		
Dinghy parking (per annum)	£108.32	£109.00
Dinghy parking racks (per annum)	£84.46	£88.00

### **Proof of Life**

- 3.16 British nationals in receipt of pensions from a foreign country are required to periodically confirm 'Proof of Life' to continue receipt of their pension payments. This requires completion of a form with ID and utility bills in order that the form can be validated. Within the last couple of years, GP's have introduced a fee for completing the form. This ranges from £30 - £60. As a result, Councils have now experienced an increase in the numbers of people requesting that we sign the forms for them. In the absence of a charging policy, we have continued to do this for free. While the volumes are not currently large (under 30 in the past 12 months), introducing a small fee of £25 would cover the costs of validating the forms. The proposal is to introduce these charges with immediate effect, once approval from Members has been received.

### **S257 Footpath Diversion Orders**

- 3.17 This fee relates to applications to divert a Public Right Of Way (PROW) to facilitate the delivery of a development using section 257 of the Town and Country Planning Act. The proposal is to increase the fee from £1,460 to £2,500 to reflect the actual costs of providing the service. Since there are 2-3 applications each year on average, this is likely to increase income overall by approximately £2,100 in 2020/21, with increased income in 2019/20 dependant on whether any further applications are received. The proposal is to introduce these increases with immediate effect, once approval from Members has been received.

### **Local Land Charges**

- 3.18 Local Land Charges (LLC) is a statutory service where the income raised is intended to cover the cost of providing the service, so far as it's possible to do so. Officers are in the process of determining

the actual cost of providing the service in order to ensure the appropriate fees are being charged. It is proposed that delegated authority is given to the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to agree the LLC fees for 2020/21.

#### 4. Options available and consideration of risk

4.1 The recommendations contained in this report are the actions proposed by officers of the Council in appropriate positions relating to each area. A key risk of not increasing fees where proposed is that the Council fails to raise income sufficient to cover the running of a particular service.

#### 5. Proposed Way Forward

9.1 The level of fees and charges will continue to be monitored during the year.

#### 6. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	The Council has the power to introduce, maintain and increase charges under S.19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 or as set out in specific pieces of relevant legislation.
Financial implications to include reference to value for money	Y	The estimated additional income that could be generated from the review of fees and charges for 2020/21 is £4,100. This is made up of £2,000 in relation to boat storage and £2,100 in relation to S257 Footpath Diversion Orders. Other items are expected to be either cost neutral or have a non-material impact in 2020/21.
Risk	Y	Achieving anticipated income targets in the current financial climate – regular monitoring of corporate income streams and revenue budgets ensures early identification of variances.
Supporting Corporate Strategy	Y	The Fees & Charges setting process supports all six of the Corporate Strategy Themes of Council, Homes, Enterprise, Communities, Environment and Wellbeing.
Climate Change - Carbon /	Y	None directly arising from this report, although the introduction of electric car charging stations alluded

Biodiversity Impact		to in this report should reduce carbon emissions in the District.
<i>Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications</i>		
Equality and Diversity		None directly arising from this report.
Safeguarding		None directly arising from this report.
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		None directly arising from this report.
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		None directly arising from this report.
Other implications		None directly arising from this report.

**Supporting Information**

**Appendices:**

Appendix A – 2020/21 Proposed Charges for Outdoor Recreation

Appendix B – 2020/21 Proposed Charges for Environmental Health

Appendix C – 2020/21 Proposed Charges for Development Management

**Background Papers:**

None