



**REPORT of
INTERIM SECTION 151 OFFICER**

**to
STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
29 JANUARY 2020**

DISCRETIONARY FEES AND CHARGES 2020 / 21

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to review the fees and charges set at the discretion of the Council that generate greater than £2,000.
- 1.2 Fees and Charges that generate less than £2,000 are reviewed and set by the Interim Section 151 Officer under delegated powers.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

To the Council:

That the detailed Fees and Charges for 2020 / 21 as set out in **APPENDIX A** be agreed.

3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The proposed fees and charges for 2020 / 21 are set out in **APPENDIX A** and are based on the policy decisions recently updated and agreed by this Committee on 5 December 2019. The changes proposed take into account an inflation increase which aims to generate £94,000 in additional income from discretionary fees.
- 3.2 A meeting was recently held of the car parking stakeholder engagement group to discuss the increase in car parking. The proposals put forward were for a 10% increase across all tariffs and an increase to the evening and weekend charge. Members of the group expressed concern regarding the pressure on existing car parking spaces as it was felt there was not sufficient spaces in the Town and the possible impact of the Blackwater Trading Estate on the High Street which offers free parking. Overall the group had no objections to the increase and their preference was for 50p increase to the Sunday and evening tariff rather than changing to a seven-day charging scheme. A new charge for weekday parking at the Council offices for a maximum two hours has also been added.
- 3.3 The change in fees and charges policy relating to the removal of the discount for direct debit payments for the Green waste bin service will generate an estimated additional income of £48,000 for 2020 / 21.

- 3.4 A new charge has been set for Event land hire. The charge relates to the exclusive use of an area of Council owned park or open space. This charge is categorised to ensure all types of events can be accounted for on the basis of small, medium and large. The land hire charge categories also differentiate between charities, community organisations and commercial to ensure the service needs of the community and providers are achieved. Maldon District Council's (MDC) event team have a matrix to determine / assess what category and charge is applicable to potential hirers. Land hire for Concessions has been amended to charge for a price per operator rather than a total price dependant on size.
- 3.5 A new charge has been set for Bootcamp licences to allow for more Bootcamps within Council owned parks and open spaces. The licence benefits MDC and providers in regard to longevity of activity and is economically beneficial for all parties. The licence should ensure sustainable bootcamps through the year with consistency and better service delivery to the community.
- 3.6 A proposal for removing the current 50% discount for wharfage fees at the Hythe Quay was originally presented to 5 December 2019 meeting of this Committee. At this meeting Members asked officers to bring back options for consideration. Officers discussed the proposals with the boat operators at Hythe Quay in the light of their concerns which in the main is the short time available to them to take the proposed increase into their pricing for their services for 2020 / 21. It is recommended that from April 2020 a new baseline figure of £3,575 be introduced (which is based upon the annual figure paid in 2019 / 20 after the 50% discount plus 10% and that amount increases by a further 20% in 2021 / 22 to £4,290 and finally in 2022 / 23 increases by 20% to £5,148. The comparative is the full fee of £6,500 in 2019 / 20 which if uprated by 2% per annum indexation would by 2022 / 23 be £6,898. Therefore, the charge of £5,148 in 2022 / 23 will be discounted by £1,750 (c.25.4%). It is further recommended a gateway review is held with barge operators before introducing the 2022 / 23 increase.
- 3.7 In addition to barge mooring costs charging for cars parked on the quay was discussed with barge operators. The Council proposes aligning the cost of parking on the quay with other town centre season ticket car parks operated by the Council. The proposal is to increase the charge from £55 to £580 per annum. The increase cost recognises the premium parking location and the need to increase enforcement to prevent unauthorised parking on the quay which is a particular issue during the summer months. Recognising the scale of the increase it is proposed that in year 2020 / 21 the cost be set at £116 rising to £348 in 2021 / 22 and finally to £580 in 2022 / 23. Alternative cheaper season ticket parking in Promenade Park is available and the Council will maintain drop off and delivery parking at no charge.
- 3.8 The 2019 / 20 and 2020 / 21 budgets for income generated from these fees and charges are detailed in the following table;

Service	2019 / 20 Budget £'000	2019 / 20 Forecast £'000	2020 / 21 Budget £'000
Environmental Protection	7	9	7
Food Safety, and hygiene	2	3	2
Taxis and Private Hire Licensing	34	35	35

Service	2019 / 20 Budget £'000	2019 / 20 Forecast £'000	2020 / 21 Budget £'000
Premises Licensing	52	52	52
Animal Licensing	13	13	14
Gambling Licensing	3	3	3
Pest Control	32	32	33
Green Waste Bin Service	479	479	535
Cemeteries	135	136	138
Off Street Parking	1,084	1,082	1,236
Funfairs and Circuses	31	57	77
Parks Sports Pitches	8	6	8
River Moorings	14	14	19
River Wharfage	29	29	29
Splash Park	110	116	110
Building Control - Chargeable Services	141	141	144
Land Charges - Full Searches	122	122	124
Pre-Application Advice	44	44	44
Total	2,340	2,373	2,610

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The Discretionary Fees and Charges be updated in accordance with the agreed policies.

5. IMPACT ON STRATEGIC THEMES

- 5.1 The Discretionary Fees and Charges are a vital element of the overall sources of funding to the Council to deliver its services and achieve its goals.

- 5.2 The fees and charges are linked to the to all three Strategic Themes – Place, Community and Prosperity.

6. IMPLICATIONS

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – This has been considered when setting fees and charges policy.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – None.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk** – The actual income generated from fees and charges is subject to fluctuation due changes in demand. This risk is managed by factoring potential losses in the calculation of the minimum general fund balance used in the budget setting process.

- (iv) **Impact on resources (financial)** – Fees and charges are one of the three major sources of funding for the Council; the other two being Council Tax and retained Business Rates. The impact of the changes to fees and charges have been incorporated into the 2020 / 21 budget proposals.
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – None.
- (vi) **Impact on the Environment** – Sustainability has been considered, as far as possible when setting Fees and Charges policies.

Background Papers: None

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