



REPORT TO: SPECIAL MORAY COUNCIL ON 24 JANUARY 2024

SUBJECT: CHARGING FOR SERVICES

BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND FINANCE)

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To ask Council to approve revised charges for Council services for 2024/25.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Council in terms of Section III (B) (1) and (48) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to financial policy and the setting of charges.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that Committee:

- (i) **approves the charges for Council services for 2024/25 set out in paragraphs 3.5 to 3.13; and**
- (ii) **notes the list of charges including those uplifted by the default of 5.7% and those outwith the control of the Council .**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The current Charging for Services Policy was approved by Council on 12 December 2023 (paragraph 7 of the draft Minute refers). Under the policy, an annual revision of charges is required. In order to preserve the Council's financial position, charges within the control of this council are generally inflated annually and Council at the same meeting agreed that the default increase for 2024/25 would be 5.7%.
- 3.2 The Charging for Services Policy assumes a default position of full cost recovery, recognising that there will be exceptions to that rule. In cases where the Council offers a service where there are alternative service providers then market conditions should be taken into account. In other instances benchmarking with other local authorities may be a good test of reasonableness. There may be policy reasons for charging at less than full cost recovery for some services. However, charging for services is an important tool when considering the Council's overall budget and the Council's Short to Medium term Financial Strategy, which was approved by

Council on 27 September 2023, includes maximising income as a priority to minimise the needs to reduce service levels.

- 3.3 Not all charges are within the Council's control. Some charges levied by the Council for services provided are set by statute, some are limited by statute and some have the method of calculation prescribed by statute – these are included in the list of charges for Council services for the sake of completeness.
- 3.4 The reason behind any recommended charges for 2024/25 not recommended to be increased by 5.7% (with rounding up or down if appropriate), where these are within the Council's control, are discussed on a section-by-section basis below. A full list of charges is provided in the separate Information Report on Charging for Services published with the meeting agenda.
- 3.5 **A: Corporate / cross departmental**
There are no charges within the control of the Council not proposed to be increase by 5.7%, apart from charges for photocopying, which were increased last year and are proposed to be frozen for 2024/25. Such small charges are impractical to increase by inflation annually.

Charges at A6(ii) for licences under the Civic Government (Scotland) Act and various other miscellaneous prices of legislation have been increased by 5.7% as an interim measure but these are subject to review by the Licencing Committee and the results of this review will be reported later in the year, which may result in amendment to these charges.

- 3.6 **B: Social Care Services**
Moray Council delivers social care in partnership with NHS Grampian through Moray Integration Joint Board (MIJB). The ability to set charges is a function of the Council and not of MIJB. However, as in previous years the Council has requested MIJB to make recommendations regarding the level of charges, so that a holistic view can be taken of charges for social care and their relation to service issues, and in the spirit of partnership working. The charges included in section B relating to services carried out for MIJB are inflated by 5.7% as recommended by MIJB officers. Contributions towards social care services, which are generally means tested (as opposed to charges which are flat rate) fall within the remit of MIJB. The contributions policy is planned to be reviewed and further review of charges may take place as a consequence of this.
- 3.7 **C: Leisure facilities**
- C1 – Fit Life. Discussions are taking place with Moray Leisure Ltd on increase of charges for Fit Life and these will be reported to Council when discussions have concluded In addition to this a new charge is proposed – Visitor membership. Visitor membership would be for a minimum of 14 days and is aimed at short term workers, holidaymakers, students etc. The cost is based on a 14 day programmed membership card. Visitor membership excludes attendance at swimming lessons. Prices of £28 for an individual and £30 for a family are recommended.

- C3a – Fitness rooms. No increase is proposed for the £25 fee for induction (this is free to Fit Life members). The discounted rate of £3.75 for exercise referrals is proposed to be removed.

3.8 D: Libraries and Information Services

- D1d – replacement card. Recommended increase from £1 to £1.50.
- D1g – microfilm/fiche – recommended increase charge from 90p to £2.50. Rounding has been applied to the default increase.

3.9 E: Education

- E3 – school meals. Previous experience is that a 10p increase is too high as usage drops off (5.7% would be a 14p increase) and so an increase in the cost of a primary school meal from £2.40 to £2.45 is recommended.

3.10 F: Economic Growth and Development Services

- F1 – Pest control. This service will cease from 1 April 2024 following staff saving proposals approved by Council.
Two new charges are proposed: F4y compliance / withdrawal of an enforcement notice £250 and F4z pre application advice for householder developments £100. It is also proposed that sponsored street names be charged a negotiated fee.
- F5b – an above inflation increase for copy documents is proposed: from £33 to £75 for a Planning Decisions Notice or Building Warrants and Certificate of Completion and from £23 to £50 for a Search Retrieval where no reference is given. A new charge is proposed for extra plans and documents - £10 per item for documents of 10 pages or less, £20 per item for documents over 10 pages. These increases reflect officer time involved and difficulty of retrieving archived documents. The charge for microfiche copies is proposed to be withdrawn as no longer required.

3.11 G: Waste Management, Land and Parks

- G1b – the charge for collection of bulky household refuse is proposed to be increased from £24+VAT=£28.80 to £26.67+VAT = £32 which is considered to be a reasonable market rate.
- G1g – recycling centre pass: the charge (ex VAT) is proposed to be increased from £246.88 to £300 as it is considered the market can bear this increase.
- G1n – a new charge is proposed: 10% of the weekly fee to the main contractor as a sub-contractor administration fee for Moray servicing bins as part of a national waste contract, to reflect the administration entailed in provided services as a sub-contractor to national waste collectors who don't operate directly in Moray.
- G2 – burial grounds charges are being reviewed as part of a budget savings proposal and will be reported to Council when proposals have been finalised.

- G4 – commercial events. The Admin fee for large and major events is proposed to be increased from £10 to £250 as more reflective of officer time.

3.12 H: Fleet, roads and transportation

- H2h – a new charge of £175 as approved by Council on 25/10/2023 for placement of furniture etc on a public footway.
- H3 – car parking. As approved by Council.
- H5a – an above inflation rise is proposed for the hire of vehicles, to reflect increased costs: daily charge from £50 to £55, mileage from £1.25 to £1.33 per mile.
- H5c – cost of a duplicate school bus pass is recommended to be increased from £10 to £15 as this charge has not been increased since 2018.

3.13 I: Harbours

- I1b – a new charge is proposed for cruise ships should that market develop - 50p per 7 days or part thereof per dead weight all told (DWAT), or per gross tonnage where gross tonnage exceeds DWAT.
- I1c(1) – 10% increase proposed to bring in line with neighbouring harbours. As below

	2023/24	2024/25
All CTV per day (per length, per metre or part thereof)	£3.53	£4.00
All CTV per month (per length, per metre or part thereof) non refundable	£69.51	£81.00
All CTV per annum (per length, per metre or part thereof) non refundable	£774.02	£851.00

Three new charges are proposed: trailers and vessel moving equipment £200 + VAT pa and hire of forklift and operator (subject to availability) £70 per hour, minimum 2 hours in line with neighbouring ports; Attendance of harbour staff outside of normal working hours and/or public holidays – full cost recovery..

The following increases are also proposed in line with neighbouring ports:

	2023/24	2024/25
Heavy lifting for extraordinary specialised activities, eg transformers, wind turbine parts		
50-99 tonnes – per tonne	£1.61	£1.77
100-149 tonnes – per tonne	£2.01	£2.21

150-249 tonnes – per tonne	£2.42	£2.66
Over 250 tonnes – per tonne	£2.82	£3.10
Slipway and repair pads		
Any recreational vessel using a slipway inclusive of one entry and one exit from the harbour per occasion	£16.67 + VAT	£20.83 + VAT = £25.00
Any commercial vessel using a slipway inclusive of one entry and one exit from the harbour per occasion	£25 + VAT	£ 26.67+ VAT= £32.00
Season ticket for recreational unlimited use of any Council slipway, valid for 12 months, commencing 1 April per vessel	£61.20 + VAT	£65.00 + VAT = £78.00
Season ticket for commercial unlimited use of any Council slipway, valid for 12 months, commencing 1 April per vessel	£425.00 + VAT	£499.17+ VAT= £539.00

Generally, harbours charges have been rounded up or down as appropriate.

3.13 K: Housing and Property

K4 – late payment of commercial rents. Above inflation increases are proposed to reflect the work involved. As below

	2023/24	2024/25
Initial investigation and contact with tenant and issue of correspondence pursuing payment	£50	£65
Negotiate and issue Payment Arrangement	£75	£100
Copy documents	£50	£75

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

The levying of charges for Council services is an essential component of delivering Council priorities on a sustainable basis.

(b) Policy and Legal

The current policy for charging for Council services was approved by this Council on 25 October 2023. There are no legal implications arising from this report. Some charges are set or limited by legislation.

(c) Financial implications

Increased income from charges will contribute to the Council's financial sustainability.

(d) Risk Implications

There are no risk implications arising directly from this report.

(e) Staffing Implications

There are no staffing implications arising directly from this report.

(f) Property

There are no property implications arising from this report.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

There are no equalities implications or implications for the socio-economic duty arising from this report

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

There are no implications for climate change or biodiversity arising from this report.

(i) Consultations

All services have been consulted as to recommended charges and reasons for any departures from the default increase.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 Charges within the Council's control not following the default increase of 5.7% are itemised above.

Author of Report: Lorraine Paisey, Chief Financial Officer
Background Papers:
Ref: SPMAN-1293228629-1028