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**REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE ON 12 FEBRUARY 2019**

**SUBJECT: CHARGING FOR SERVICES**

**BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR (CORPORATE SERVICES)**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 To ask the Committee to approve revised charges for council services, apart from those which have been agreed as budget savings or which will be considered as part of the budget savings to be discussed when the budget for 2019/20 is set.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee 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 the Committee approves the charges for Council services for 2019/20 set out in APPENDIX 1.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The current Charging for Services Policy was approved by this committee on 24 October 2017 (paragraph 6 of the 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. This committee on 2 October 2018 approved a default uplift for inflation of 3% for 2019/20 (paragraph 4 of the Minute refers).
- 3.2 An inflation increase cannot be applied to all charges. 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 indicated in Appendix 1 and are included for the sake of completeness.

- are impractical to increase by inflation on a year-on-year basis, typically small charges and those collected by coin-in-the-slot machines where the cost of re-calibrating the machines outweighs any increased income which would be generated.

3.3 Where charges within the council's control are not proposed to be increased by 3% the reasons are discussed on a section-by-section basis below.

#### 3.4 **A: Corporate Services / cross departmental services**

3.4.1 Above inflation charges are proposed for the use of the marriage room and for surcharges for marriages on Saturdays and in approved venues (A12, A13). In the opinion of the Registrar service these increases will be acceptable. The most significant uplift proposed is for the surcharge for weddings outwith the Registrar's office where an increase from £178 to £250 is proposed, to bring Moray's charge in line with the charge levied by other local authorities. It is also proposed that a single surcharge is levied irrespective of the weekday of the ceremony and the type of location therefore A14 and A15 are proposed to be deleted.

3.4.2 Photocopying charges (A18) are proposed to be left with no inflation increase, due to the minimal impact of these charges.

#### 3.5 **B: Social Care Services**

3.5.1 The committee on 2 October 2018 agreed to request Moray Integration Joint Board (MIJB) to recommend charges for the services which the council carries out for MIJB. MIJB at its meeting on 29 November 2018 agreed to recommend the charges set out in section B of **APPENDIX 1**, with the exception of Moray Training, which does not fall within the remit of MIJB. It is proposed that Moray Training charges are increased by 3% (B15).

#### 3.6 **C: Leisure Facilities**

3.6.1 The level of charges for the council's leisure facilities is the subject of a budget saving proposal. Council at its meeting on 12 December 2018 (paragraph of the Minute refers) agreed that a more commercial approach would be taken to the Council's leisure services. This includes the level of charges levied and so no proposals are brought forward in this report.

#### 3.7 **D: Library and Information Services**

3.7.1 The smaller charges (D1a – D1g) for library services are reviewed periodically and the last review was for 2017/18. Consequently, no increase is proposed for 2019/20, apart from a minor increase in the item price for the sale of withdrawn non-fiction publications, CDs and videos. All other charges are proposed to be increased by 3%.

### **3.8 E: Education**

- 3.8.1 Charges for instrumental instruction will be proposed as a budget saving and consequently no revised charges are recommended in this report.
- 3.8.2 Fees for sports coaching will be subsumed under the commercialisation approach.
- 3.8.3 As previously reported to this committee on 24 October 2017, the increase in the cost of school meals in 2017/18 resulted in a downturn in uptake. The uptake of school meals has not risen to its pre- August 2017 levels. The loss on income from reduction in uptake increases the subsidy per school meal borne by the council. It is not proposed to increase the charge for school meals in 2019/20.

### **3.9 F: Development Services**

- 3.9.1 New legislation on water sampling for private water supplies were reported to this committee on 7 August 2018 (paragraph of the Minute refers). That report recommended that the new charges under the legislation were increased by 5% above inflation until full cost recovery is achieved. Accordingly an 8% increase above the charges approved in August are recommended.
- 3.9.2 It is proposed that the charge for export certificates (F1g) is again increased by 10% to bring them nearer to the national average charge.
- 3.9.3 The cost of producing Cooksafe books and Butchersafe book has been significantly reduced and it is proposed to pass this saving onto purchasers, reducing the cost per book from £14.50 to £5. It is planned to discontinue the supply of Butchersafe books once current stocks are used up.
- 3.9.4 It is proposed to increase the fee for a property history check (F4d) from £31.26 to £60 to cover costs.
- 3.9.5 Charges for pre-application planning advice (F4l – F4o) were introduced in November 2017. Following a year of implementation the have been reviewed and it is proposed that the fee for pre-application advice for major development proposals is increased from £1,250 to £1,500 and the development enquiry fee increased from £50 to £60 but that the fees for pre-application advice on local development proposals and single houses in the town and countryside are held at £500 and £150 respectively.
- 3.9.6 As part of the budget proposals it is proposed to increase fees for copy documents provided by Building Standards / Development Management. These are included (F5b) for completeness.

### 3.10 G: Waste Management, Land and Parks

3.10.1 Trade waste charges are being reviewed by the service with accountancy support as part of a drive to make this service more commercial. It is proposed that current charges are pegged until the review is concluded. This service competes with the private sector and has been experiencing an erosion of its customer base which further increases in cost will exacerbate.

3.10.2 Burial charges form a budget saving proposal and so are not included in this report.

3.10.3 Charges for fairground and circus lets are proposed to be increased by 3%. When these charges were set for 218/19 members requested information on charges levied by other local authorities. It has proved difficult to track down this information but the following information has been provided through APSE:

Local Authority	Fairground lets 2018/19	Circus lets 2018/19
Argyll and Bute	Flat rate of £333.60 per week plus charge of £6.90 per linear metres of frontage of stalls/ units for over 49 linear metres plus charge per linear metre for food vans / stalls and charge for commercial refuse / tidy up.	
Aberdeenshire	Charges for stalls and children's ride on units based on square metre occupancy plus £7 per unit per night for caravans and bond of £1,056 per booking. Large unit (dodgems, waltzer etc) £28 per day	£232
Midlothian	Small (<10 units) £65 per day / £439 per week plus £108.90 admin fee and £887.70 surety Medium (11-20 units) £125 per day or £865.95 per week plus £108.90 admin fee and £1,775.40 surety Large (>20 units) £299 per day or £2,101 per week plus £108.90 admin fee and £2,500 surety	Small (< 1,200 m <sup>2</sup> ) £150 per day or £750 per week plus £108.90 admin and £807 surety Medium (1,201 – 1,400 m <sup>2</sup> ) £165 per day or £1,100 per week plus £108.90 admin fee and £1,614 surety Large (> 1,400 m <sup>2</sup> ) £275 per day or £1,650 per week plus £108.90 admin fee and £3,229 surety

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>Fairground lets 2018/19</b>	<b>Circus lets 2018/19</b>
East Lothian	Small (<10 stalls / units) - £65 per day Medium (11 -21 stalls / units) £121 per day Large (>21 stalls / units) £313 per day	£880 inc VAT for 5 days (minimum booking) – small circus (, 10 stands) £1,760 inc VAT for medium circus £2,400 inc VAT for 5 days – large circus (> 20 stands)
East Ayrshire	Flat rate charge (not per unit) £240 for small fair, £428 for large fair	£428
North Ayrshire	£200 per night flat rate – not per individual rides (larger amounts for events in association with festivals)	£500 per night
Perth and Kinross	£345 per day on site on North or South Inch (Perth); £142 on all other council areas.	
Scottish Borders	Small (1 – 5 units) - £112 per operating day Medium ( 6- 20 units) - £225 per operating day Large - £315 per operating day	£338 per operating day

### **3.11 H: Fleet, Roads and Transportation**

3.11.1 Fleet charges are generally proposed to be increased by inflation but some charges for MOTs are already at the statutory maximum charges

3.11.2 Car parking charges were the subject of a review in 2017/18 and no amendments to charges are proposed for 2019/20.

### **3.12 I: Harbours**

3.12.1 Both commercial and leisure charges are the subject of a budget saving proposal and so are not included in this report.

### **3.13 K: Housing and Property**

3.13.1 It is proposed that the charge for sheltered housing wardens is not increased, in line with the intended proposal for council house rents in 2019/20.

#### **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 committee on 24 October 2017. There are no legal implications arising from this report. Some charges are set or limited by legislation.

##### **(c) Financial implications**

Levying charges for services forms an important part of the Council's strategy for balancing its annual budget, by generating an amount of income from service users. The current budget for incomes from individual charges is included as a guide to the impact which these charges have on the council's financial position.

##### **(d) Risk Implications**

There are no risk implications arising directly from this report. There is always a risk that service usage drops if charges are increased. Budget managers have been asked to take this into account when recommending charges.

##### **(e) Staffing Implications**

There are no staffing implications arising directly from this report. Increasing charges collected by direct debit entails additional workload for the Payments Section.

##### **(f) Property**

There are no property implications arising from this report.

##### **(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact**

There are no equalities implications arising directly from this report. As the report does not give a comprehensive overview of the charge proposed for 2019/20 it has not been possible to give a comprehensive assessment of the potential cumulative impact of all proposed increased charges on individuals with protected characteristics. Information on the prevalence of individuals charged for more than one social care service (B1 – B11) has not been supplied.

**(h) Consultations**

All Heads of Service and the Equal Opportunities Officer have been consulted in the preparation of this report and comments incorporated..

**5. CONCLUSION**

**5.1 Generally, charges within the control of the council and not the subject of specific budget proposals are recommended to be increased by an inflationary factor.**

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Background Papers:	
Ref:	LP/LJC/