



Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	Cabinet - 6 February 2023
Subject	2023/24 FEES AND CHARGES
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Cllr Mike Evemy, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance Email: <a href="mailto:Mike.Evemy@cotswold.gov.uk">Mike.Evemy@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
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Summary/Purpose	The purpose of this report is to present a revised schedule of fees and charges for 2023/24. The report also describes the rationale for the revised charges compared to current charges for 2022/23. Revised charges are presented at Annex A alongside current charges for 2022/23.
Annexes	Annex A – Schedule of Fees and Charges
Recommendation(s)	<i>That Cabinet resolves to:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>1. Endorse the rationale for revising fees and charges as set out in the report;</i></li><li><i>2. Approves the implementation of revised fees and charges for 2023/24 as detailed in Annex A from 1 April 2023; and</i></li><li><i>3. Approves the proposal set out at paragraphs 2.4 to 2.6 in relation to Pest Control services</i></li></ol>
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Delivering our services to the highest standards</li><li>• Helping residents and communities access the support they need for good health and wellbeing</li><li>• Supporting businesses to grow in a green, sustainable manner, and to provide high value jobs</li></ul>
Key Decision	YES



Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	<p>The Fees and Charges schedule for 2023/24 has been developed in consultation with the Council's statutory officers, Publica management, Ubico management, and members of the Cabinet. Consultation has been carried out with members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Audit Committee and with the District's residents, businesses and community organisations.</p>



## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present a revised schedule of fees and charges for 2023/24. The report also describes the rationale for the revised charges compared to current charges for 2022/23. Revised charges are presented at Annex A alongside current charges for 2022/23.
- 1.2 With effect from 1 April 2023, it is recommended that most charges are increased by 10% to keep pace with general price inflation and ensure that chargeable services continue to raise additional revenue so as not to place further pressure on the 2023/24 revenue budget.
- 1.3 All proposed charges disclosed in this report are rounded to the nearest 50p, £1, or £5 as appropriate. All charges are also inclusive of VAT where applicable to show the actual price to be paid by the service user.

## 2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1 Apart from a small number of exceptions, it is recommended that the following services increase fees and charges by 10% with effect from 1 April 2023. Some individual charges will be slightly higher or lower than 10% due to rounding (see paragraph 1.3):
  - Waste and Recycling;
  - Local Land Charges;
  - Legal and Estates (Property Transactions);
  - Licensing;
  - Food Health and Safety;
  - Private Water Supply Testing.
- 2.2 Exceptions to the above are as follows:
  - Garden Waste Annual Subscription – a £10 increase is recommended to ensure the service is priced to fully recover costs;
  - Food Hygiene Training – A price freeze is recommended to encourage enrolment and participation;
  - DEFRA Export Health Certificates – A new charge will be introduced to recover the cost of preparing and issuing these certificates.



**2.3** The following services are either freezing charges at 2022/23 levels or proposing an alternative to a 10% increase.

- Planning Pre-Application and other Discretionary Fees – A new tariff structure is recommended which has been developed by benchmarking against similar charges levied elsewhere;
- Building Control – Charges are frozen at 2022/23 levels to ensure compliance with Government regulations for the determination of Building Control fees;
- Street Naming – Recommended charges have been determined by benchmarking against similar charges levied elsewhere;
- Animal Warden – The tariff structure has been simplified and updated to ensure that Kennelling and Veterinary fees are fully recovered from service users. Administrative charges have also been revised to try and fully recover all ancillary service costs;
- Cemeteries - Recommended charges have been determined by benchmarking against similar charges levied elsewhere;
- Car Parking – Following consideration of the feedback received from district residents through the budget consultation process, it is recommended that pay and stay prices remain frozen at 2022/23 levels. Similarly, Sunday parking will continue to be free of charge at most district controlled car parks. The cost of car park season tickets has, however, been reviewed in order to manage demand at over-subscribed car parks and to align charges with pay and stay prices. Full details are included in a separate report disclosed elsewhere on the agenda;
- Public Conveniences – It is recommended that fees are increased to 40p at all chargeable sites. Facilities where no charge is levied will continue to be free of charge pending the outcome of a future service review to determine whether to introduce cash and card payment facilities at more sites across the District. Full details are included in a separate report disclosed elsewhere on the agenda.

#### Pest Control Service

- 2.4** Pest Control Services are currently provided by a sub-contractor of Ubico. The current contract is due for retendering during 2023 and initial market research suggests the cost of the contract could increase by up to 60%. If the service is re-tendered then charges to clients will have to increase by a commensurate amount in order to avoid creating a future budget pressure.
- 2.5** Although Councils have statutory responsibilities in relation to pest control, they have discretion in relation to how services are commissioned. A number of Councils no longer



offer pest control services to clients but instead signpost enquirers towards engaging their own service provider that is registered with the British Pest Control Association.

- 2.6 Given the likely increase in costs arising from re-tendering the service and given that the Council and Ubico are currently only intermediaries in arranging pest control services for clients (with all the attendant administrative and debt recovery costs), it is recommended that the Council no longer offers to arrange pest control services for clients with effect from 1 April 2023. As an alternative, the Council will instead signpost enquirers towards engaging their own service provider that is registered with the British Pest Control Association

#### Fees and Charges Limited by Statute

- 2.7 Some fees and charges are set or capped by Central Government and are therefore outside of the scope of this report. These include:
- Statutory Planning Application Fees;
  - Alcohol and Entertainment Licences;
  - Gambling Licences;
  - Pavement Licences; and
  - Charges relating to the Regulation of Pollution from Industrial Sources.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

- 3.1 This report recommends that most chargeable services increase their fees and charges with effect from 1 April 2023. As well as ensuring chargeable services continue to recover a significant proportion of their costs from sales, fees and charges income, the additional revenue that will be generated will make a significant contribution towards balancing the revenue budget for 2023/24.

### 5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The proposals set out in this report are estimated to generate an additional £449K per annum in income from sales, fees and charges of which £415K is available to support the 2023/24 revenue budget. The remainder of £34K will be retained within specific services to address underlying deficits in income yield reflected in the latest 2022/23 forecast outturn position. It is proposed that revised charges are implemented from 1 April 2023 meaning the additional revenue is fully reflected in the MTFS and Revenue Budget Estimates for 2023/24 (see reports elsewhere on the agenda).



## 6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Section 93 Local Government Act 2003 gives the local authority a power to charge for discretionary services if the recipient of the service has agreed to provision of that service. This extends to charging for enhancements to a mandatory service. The aim of the power is to recover the costs of a service. Under section 93(3), the local authority is under a duty to secure that from one financial year, the income from charges for services does not exceed the costs of provision. Under Section 93(6), the local authority must have regard to the statutory guidance “*General Power for Best Value Authorities to Charge for Discretionary Services – Guidance on the Power in the Local Government Act 2003*”.

## 7. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 The income estimates presented in this report and included within the 2023/24 revenue budget estimates (elsewhere on the agenda) are based on the fees and charges schedule included at Annex A. The estimates assume the proposed increases will not have a material adverse impact on demand. However, should demand be affected by the proposed increases, there is a risk that the proposals set out in this report will not generate income to match the estimates included within the 2023/24 revenue budget.

## 8. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.1 With regard to the proposals set out in this report (subject to approval), the Equalities Impact has been considered by Members and Officers participating in the development and decision-making process. Potential impacts on those with protected characteristics alongside other groups that experience discrimination have been given due consideration.

## 9. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no climate change or ecological emergencies implications.

## 10. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 10.1 An alternative option to that presented in this report would be to freeze all fees and charges at 2022/23 levels. However, this option is not recommended for the following reasons:
- Chargeable services would recover a smaller proportion of their costs from service income and would require additional financial support from General Fund resources;



- Alternative savings proposals would be needed to replace the income to be generated from increased charges and balance the 2023/24 revenue budget (see reports elsewhere on the agenda).

## **II. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**II.1** The following documents have been identified by the author of the report in accordance with section 100D.5(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 and are listed in accordance with section 100 D.1(a) for inspection by members of the public:

- None