



Report to: Income Generation Sub-Committee, 15th January 2019

Report of: Head of Finance

Subject: FEES AND CHARGES 2019/20

1. Recommendation

1.1 That the Sub-Committee review the proposed schedule of Fees and Charges for 2019/20 and recommend its approval to the Policy and Resources Committee on 5th February 2019 for ultimate approval by Full Council on 19th February 2019.

2. Background

2.1 The Council issues an annual schedule of the Fees and Charges levied by each of its services.

2.2 The existing charges have been reviewed by the relevant service and adjusted to reflect changes in the cost of providing the service. Where appropriate and feasible, a comparison has also been made to the amount charged by local competitors to ensure that the Council is providing a service which is competitively priced and represents good value.

2.3 A separate report regarding Leisure fees and Charges was submitted to the Policy and Resources Committee meeting of 11 December 2018 as the business cycle for these charges requires changes from 1 January, rather than 1 April. The Policy and Resources Committee approved the changes proposed.

3. Preferred Option

3.1 The proposed schedule of Fees and Charges is set out in **Appendix 1**, which shows the existing and proposed charge with the consequent increase or decrease as a value and as a percentage. Owing to commercial sensitivity the proposed Fees and Charges for Trade Waste and Building Control are classed as exempt items and are shown at **Appendix 2**. (*note – Trade Waste charges are outstanding at present pending the publication of the new cost of waste disposal which is expected in January. It should be available for the final report to Policy and Resources Committee in February*).

3.2 The review of the Fees and Charges has been carried out with an assumption that inflation remains at 2.0-3.0%. The publication of the latest CPI on 14th November showed an annual increase of 2.2%.

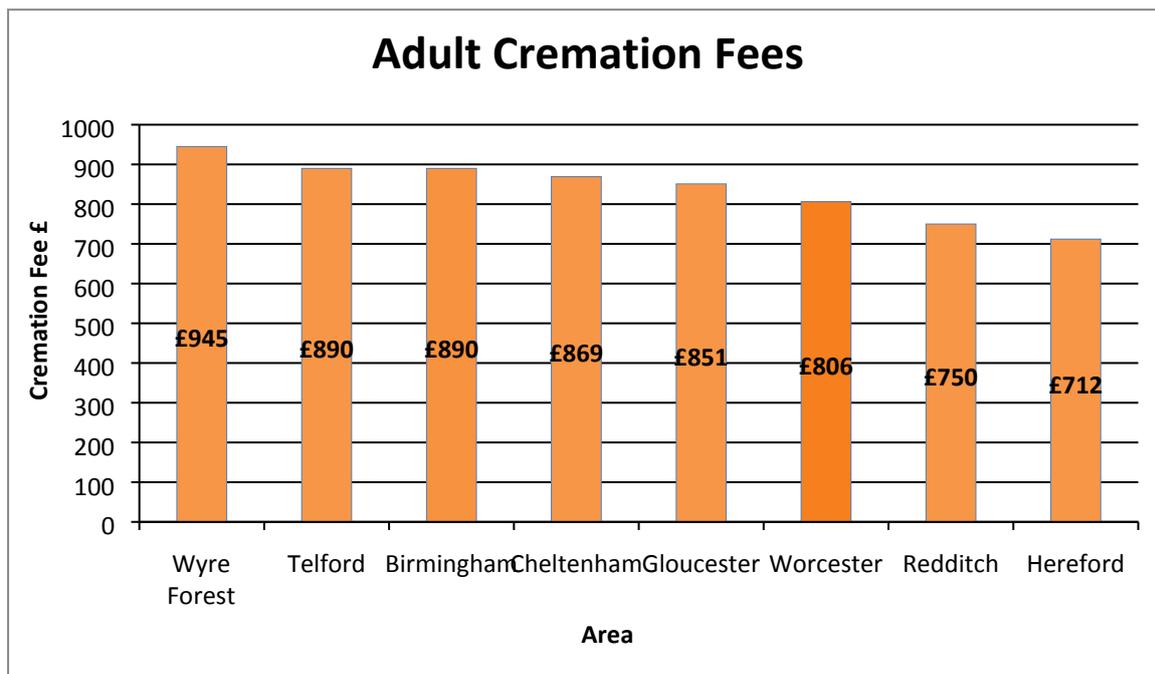
3.3 The basis of the review is for the full cost recovery of the service and a market analysis of prices charged by other providers. Any change will be to the next most appropriate price point rather than by a specific percentage.

- 3.4 The following Fees and Charges are proposed to increase by an average of 2% and in some specific cases, individual fees by a greater amount, as follows:
- Football pitch hire
 - Guildhall room hire/weddings
 - Bereavement Charges
 - Gambling licences
 - Street Trading
 - City Life lettings
 - Garden Waste collection
- 3.5 The following Fees and Charges have been maintained at the same level as 2018/19:
- Animal licence renewal
 - Bulky waste
 - Car Parking
 - Premises licences
 - Gaming and entertainment licences
 - Sales of the Electoral Register
- 3.6 Fees for planning applications are set nationally and were increased by 20% from 17 January 2018. The locally set fees for pre-applications were not increased for 2018/19 and have not been increased for 2019/20.
- 3.7 The fees charged for the sale and delivery of wood have been reduced by an average 15% in line with market conditions.
- 3.8 The Fixed Penalty Notice for litter being dropped is currently £75. Approval is sought to increase this to £100, which is the default level recommended by the Government. The maximum fine permitted by Government is £150.
- 3.9 The fees and charges proposed for Vehicle and Operator Licences are subject to consultation and consideration of objections by the Licencing Committee. The fees for Hackney carriage/private hire licences are to be reduced following removal of the vehicle test fee.
- 3.10 Fees for Mobile Traders have been increased by 35% to reflect the cost of more regular checks being necessary following an increase in the number of complaints being received from members of the public.
- 3.11 The Museum and Art Gallery charges are largely unchanged for 2019/20, apart from the fees for off-site talks and education outreach sessions which are to be increased by between 20% and 50% to recognise the additional staff time spent preparing the material and travelling to the venue.
- 3.12 The Commandery has now been open for 18 months since its refurbishment, providing the opportunity to reassess the fees and charges. The adult entrance fee is to be increased to £7.00, although there will be no increase for Worcester residents. A family ticket is also being introduced. The weddings package has been reviewed in light of customer feedback and a comparison made with other venues. This has resulted in a revision to the hire options offered to provide customers with greater choice and flexibility in their wedding arrangements. The charges are now the same for weekdays and weekend bookings.

- 3.13 The Guildhall fees for weddings and for room hire have been increased in line with inflation. Additional rooms have been made available for public hire, while weddings in January and February will now attract a 20% discount to encourage take-up at this less busy time of year.
- 3.14 Building Control charges are proposed to increase by 3% which will still leave the fees competitive compared to the average Local Authorities Building Control member.
- 3.15 Garden waste charges are to be increased by 2.6%. Following further growth in the service during 2018/19 this will continue to be a focus for marketing activity in 2019/20. The current comparison to other local councils is shown below:



- 3.16 Bereavement service charges are to be increased by an average 2%. During 2018 the Service implemented new software at the crematorium and as a result was able to offer some new options including a webcast of the services. These were introduced as a trial and income of £3.5k has been generated during the year. They are now included in the Fees and Charges for 2019/20. Adult cremation charges are to be increased by 2.0%.The current comparison to other local crematoria is as follows:



- 3.17 Car parking charges are to remain unchanged. The comparison to the non-council car parks in Worcester city centre is shown in **Appendix 3**.
- 3.18 Archaeology charges have been increased by an average 10% and the discount where no brief is supplied has been reduced from 30% to 26%.
- 3.19 The regulations on HMO licences have changed with the introduction of The Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Prescribed Description) (England) Order 2018 which replaces the 2006 order of the same name. This has necessitated a restructuring of the licence fees resulting in a reduction of the Mandatory HMO Licence fees of approximately 11% and increases of 15-20% in the licence fees for Additional HMOs.

4. Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 The alternative option is to not change the existing schedule of Fees and Charges. However this would result in potentially not achieving full cost recovery in some services and for the service to cease to be competitive in the market.

5. Implications

5.1 Financial and Budgetary Implications

The financial impact of the changes proposed is consistent with the assumptions in the draft budget for 2018/19.

5.2 Legal and Governance Implications

None

5.3 Risk Implications

The risk of losing income from increased fees and charges has been mitigated by a review of market conditions to ensure the proposed change is appropriate.

5.4 Corporate/Policy Implications

None

5.5 Equality Implications
None

5.6 Human Resources Implications
None

5.7 Health and Safety Implications
None

5.8 Social, Environmental and Economic implications
Proposed increases in fees are in line with inflation and therefore should have zero impact in respect of maintaining access to services. In specific cases the reasons for changes outside of an inflation increase are given and the social, environmental and economic implications have been considered as part of the decision to propose the changes.

Ward(s): All
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Background Papers: None