

Committee: **Council**

Date of Meeting: **9th March, 2022**

Report Subject: **Corporate Fees & Charges 2022/2023**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor N. Daniels
Leader/Executive Member –
Corporate Services**

Report Submitted by: **Rhian Hayden – Chief Officer
Resources**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance & Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	10/2/22						09/03/22	

1. **Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is for Members to approve the fees & charges to be applied for the 2022/2023 financial year, including the core fees & charges to be operated by the Aneurin Leisure Trust.

2. **Scope and Background**

- 2.1 The Income Policy was agreed by Council in May 2014 and included the following:

- Relevant legislation which allows councils to generate a range of fees and charges and that income is a budget and funding tool;
- The range of areas in scope;
- Key principles such as the rationale for charging, ability to charge, service cost recovery, subsidies and concessions, trading, income collection, debt management and income management;
- A decision tree for deciding whether to charge;
- Detailed principles;
- Creation of a Fees & Charges Register; and
- Income management which included the creation of a fees and charges register.

- 2.2 The Bridging the Gap Programme includes a Strategic Business Review on Fees & Charges to ensure that the Council is maximising its income by ensuring fees and charges are set at a level that covers the costs of delivering the goods and services it provides where appropriate.

- 2.3 The current Fees and Charges register has been reviewed to:

- Ensure all fees & charges included on the register are relevant for 2022/2023
- Reflect changes in local and national policy and charges
- Reflect the assumptions included within the Medium Term Financial Strategy where appropriate.

2.4 The Covid-19 pandemic continues to have an impact on the fees & charges collected during the current financial year, however there has been some recovery compared to the previous financial year when some services were closed. Welsh Government has continued to provide funding to mitigate the loss of income for 2021/2022, but funding is not anticipated to continue into 2022/2023.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

To include Recommendation(s) / Endorsement by other groups, e.g. CMT/Committees/Other groups)

3.1 **Option 1 (Preferred Option)**

3.1.1 1. Members of the Council consider and approve the register of Fees & Charges for 2022/2023 attached at Appendix 1, and the core price increases relating to Aneurin Leisure Trust attached at Appendix 2.

2. Members approve delegated power and responsibility to the Director of Social Services for setting the fees and charges for 2022/2023 relating to the provision of external social care.

3.2 **Option 2**

3.2.1 1. Members of the Council consider and do not approve the Fees & Charges Register for 2022/2023 and core price increases for Aneurin Leisure Trust, and propose alternative fee increases.

2. Members do not approve the delegation to the Director of Social Services for setting the fees and charges for 2022/2023 relating to the provision of external social care.

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 This report supports the Corporate Plan outcome “an ambitious and innovative Council delivering the quality services we know matter to our communities”

4.2 Income from Fees & Charges contributes funding (approx.8%) towards delivering Council priorities and supports the Councils’ financial resilience.

5. Implications Against Each Option

5.1 Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)

5.1.1 The Medium Term Financial Strategy and the 2022/2023 draft estimates assumes:

- an inflationary uplift of 2% per annum for those income budgets where no cost pressure is identified
- cash flat budget where income is not achieving the estimate and a cost pressure has been identified.

5.1.2 The proposed 2022/2023 register of Fees & Charges is attached at Appendix 1. The register includes the charge for 2021/2022 financial year, and identifies whether the proposed fee increase equates to:

(A) 2% - This uplift is proposed for a range of fees including:

- Social Services including non-residential, residential, respite care and telecare charges
- Grounds & Playing fields
- Highways fees
- Trade Waste
- Bulky Waste Collection
- Cemeteries
- General Office Room Hire (a number of charges have been removed as a consequence of rooms no longer being available for rental due to the relocation of the Democratic Hub)
- Meals on Wheels

(B) No fee increase is proposed and this includes:

- Markets – to encourage new market operator/traders to take up stalls
- Regulated Fees
- Social Services (variable) – These fees are currently under negotiation with Providers to reflect the appropriate increase to cover the additional cost of the Real Living Wage, increase in NI Contributions, energy costs etc. However, the delay in receiving the full guidance on the implementation of the real living wage has created difficulty with these negotiations.

(C) Other – This proposal is whereby the fee increase exceeds 2% and this includes:

- Monitoring Fees for Lifeline Pendant - £5 (87.9%) increase due to an additional charge for Sim cards for the digital unit.
- Registrars fees including weddings & ceremonies – the increases range from 2% to 2.8% due to rounding to the nearest pound.

- School Meals – An increase of £0.10 per meal has been applied representing an increase of between 2.9% (staff) and 4.2% (primary pupils)
- Out of County Placements – An increase of 3.25% has been applied to cover pay award and the additional employer NI contributions.
- Estates fees – increases range from 2% to 59% including:
 - Land applications 59% (£37) per application
 - Garage rentals 20% (£20) increase for a single garage to £120 per annum
 - Garden Land rental 40% (£20) to £70 per annum
 - Grazing Land rental 20% (£20) to £120 per annum

5.1.4 The proposed fees for Licensing will be considered by the Licensing Committee and has been included in the Register for completeness. It is proposed to keep the fees at 2021/2022 level based on the National framework full cost model.

5.1.5 Aneurin Leisure Trust has submitted a list of proposed fees and charges for 2022/2023 (attached at Appendix 2) for Core Services, to be approved by Council in line with the Funding and Management agreement. The proposed increase to the majority of fees is around 3%. However, a number of fees have reduced by up to 30%, with some fees increasing by up to 36%, and this is due to standardising the junior and concession rates across the business at a set percentage of the standard fee to improve consistency moving forward.

5.2 Risk including Mitigating Actions

5.2.1 Fee increases may impact on demand and result in a decrease in income, particularly in the short term.

5.2.2 Demand and the impact on the budget will be monitored and reported as part of the Financial Reporting Framework.

5.2.3 The impact of the pandemic on the environment and on services may continue to reduce the income that the Council receives into 2022/2023 and it is anticipated that the Welsh Government Hardship fund will end on 31 March 2022.

5.2.4 Cost pressures arising from reduced income levels will be monitored and reported as part of the Financial Reporting Framework.

5.3 Legal

5.3.1 There are no direct legal implications arising out of this report. However, charging and trading for local authorities must comply with the Local Government Act 2003 and The Localism Act 2011.

5.4 **Human Resources**

5.4.1 There are no staffing implications arising out of this report.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

6.1.1 Fees and charges generate approximately £13.7m per annum in income, and contribute towards funding the cost of delivering Council services.

6.1.2 Table 1 below, provides an analysis of forecast income for 2021/2022 compared to the last 2 financial years, to assess the impact that the pandemic has had on Fees & Charges for the Council, with forecast income for 2021/2022 lower by £0.58m when compared to 2019/2020.

Table1: Analysis of Fees & Charges received between 2019/2020 and 2021/2022

Portfolio	2019/2020 Outturn £	2020/2021 Outturn £	Forecast Outturn 2021/2022 £
Financial Management	356,653	214,984	284,650
Corporate Services	703,349	629,542	644,194
Social Services	4,477,254	4,348,877	3,878,967
Environment	5,382,971	4,188,408	5,129,866
Infrastructure	890,549	734,296	963,781
Economy	1,060,137	950,040	1,105,910
Education & Leisure	1,059,261	1,040,126	1,065,135
Planning & Licensing	429,490	365,033	702,558
TOTAL INCOME REC'D	14,359,664	12,471,306	13,775,061

Excludes Hardship Funding

6.1.2 The table above shows that forecast income is still below pre pandemic levels and this is mainly due to Social Services and fees received in respect of care.

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

6.2.1 The setting of fees and charges on an annual basis is essential to maintaining economic resilience, however, these should be set at a cost that considers

full cost recovery and what local people can afford, taking into account the protected characteristics.

6.3 **Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)**

6.3.1 The review of the Fees & Charges Register has been prepared in consultation with relevant officers.

6.3.2 Services look to involve partners and citizens in consultation where possible. The impact of these charges will be reviewed throughout the year by officers, along with any issues raised by users of the services affected.

6.4 **Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)**

6.4.1 Full cost recovery will support the long term financial resilience and the ability to maintain facilities and services for the people of Blaenau Gwent.

6.5 **Preventative focus**

6.5.1 Income generation contributes funding towards delivering Council Services and investing into early intervention and prevention activities.

6.6 **Collaboration / partnership working**

6.6.1 The Council works in partnership with Aneurin Leisure Trust to deliver services to the public in support of the well-being objectives.

6.7 **Integration (across service areas)**

6.7.1 The services provided have a positive impact socially and on the health and wellbeing of those who use the facilities provided.

6.8 **EgIA(screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)**

6.8.1 The Strategic Business Review on Fees and Charges have been subject to screening.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

State how the work will be monitored e.g. through scrutiny or directorate performance management arrangements

7.1 The regular review of the corporate fees and charges register is a vital component of the Council's budget setting proposal and should be monitored and refreshed to ensure it is in line with the Council's agreed income policy and Medium Term Financial Strategy.

7.1.1 Actual Income achieved from Fees & Charges during the financial year will be monitored and reported to Corporate Leadership Team and Members as part of the Financial Reporting Framework.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

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