

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

TO: Babergh Cabinet	REPORT NUMBER: BCa/22/39
FROM: Councillor David Busby, Cabinet Member for Finance, Assets and Investments	DATE OF MEETING: 9 January 2023
OFFICER: Melissa Evans, Director - Corporate Resources	KEY DECISION REF NO. CAB387

FEES AND CHARGES 2023/24

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report presents the 2023/24 proposed fees and charges for a range of services provided by the Council, including charges for services governed by statute and charges for discretionary services.
- 1.2 The approved fees and charges will be built into the draft budget for 2023/24.

2. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The options that have been considered are:
 - a) To review and approve the proposed changes to the fees and charges for the forthcoming financial year (recommended) or,
 - b) To make no change, leave them at the current year's level

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That, the proposed Fees and Charges for 2023/24 as shown in Appendix A, be approved.

REASON FOR DECISION

To ensure that the Council achieves sufficient income and thereby reduces the subsidy on non-essential services which may compromise the Councils ability to fund statutory services.

4. KEY INFORMATION

Introduction

- 4.1 Fees and charges are an important source of income to the Council, enabling important services to be sustained and provided. In 2023/24 Babergh's fees and charges are budgeted at £4.074m, which is 11% of the Councils gross expenditure. In order to sustain the delivery of services in the future this revenue is essential.
- 4.2 One of the key themes in the medium-term financial strategy is income generation and to achieve a robust financial strategy. With reducing Government funding, the

stability and growth in the Councils fees and charges is a major part of delivering this strategy.

4.3 The Council provides a wide range of services for which it has the ability to make a charge – either under statutory powers (set by the Government) or discretionary (set by the Council). Fees and charges fall into three categories:

4.4 **Statutory prohibition on charging:** Local authorities must provide such services free of charge at the point of service. Generally, these are services which the authority has a duty to provide.

4.5 **Statutory charges:** Charges are set nationally, and local authorities have little or no opportunity to control such charges. These charges can still contribute to the financial position of the Authority. Income cannot be assumed to increase in line with other fees and charges.

4.6 **Discretionary charges:** Local authorities can make their own decisions on setting such charges. Generally, these are services that an authority can provide but is not required to provide.

5. PROPOSED FEES AND CHARGES 2023/24

5.1 This report sets out the proposed fees and charges for 2023/24 for a range of services provided by the Council. The Council regularly reviews and revises its rates for fees and charges so that either all or a proportion of the cost-of-service provision can be met and built into the Revenue Budget accordingly.

5.2 The fees and charges set out in this report have been built into the Draft General Fund Budget 2023/24.

5.3 It should be noted that if the increases in charges are too high, income levels may drop due to customer resistance and affordability for the customer. Usage and uptake of services needs to continue at optimum levels to support funding of increasing service costs, including administration and contract uplifts where applicable. Failure to achieve sufficient income and thereby reduce subsidy on non-essential services may compromise the Councils ability to fund statutory services and savings may need to be made elsewhere in the budget to mitigate a loss of income.

5.4 The charges set out are inclusive of value added tax (VAT) at the current rate, where appropriate.

5.5 The total income from the proposed fees and charges for 2023/24 is £4.074m compared to £4.109m in 2022/23, a decrease of £35k or 1%. A detailed breakdown by service area can be found in Appendix B.

5.6 Service Managers have reviewed the fees and charges for their relevant areas and are confident that where changes are proposed these are reasonable increases in terms of benchmarking against others. The proposed detailed schedule of fees and charges for 2023/24 is shown in Appendix A.

5.7 The proposed changes for 2023/24 are summarised in the tables below:

5.8 Statutory Charges

Statutory charges that have seen an increase from 2022/23 can be broken down as follows:

Detail	Fee 2022/23	Fee 2023/24	Increase	
Licensing				
Charges for inspections:				
Food export certificate	£85.00	£93.50	£8.50	10.0%
Destruction of surrendered food certificate	£146.00	£168.85	£22.85	15.6%
Food Hygiene Rating (FHRS) rescore visits	£108.00	£180.00	£72.00	66.7%
Animal welfare:				
Dangerous Wild Animal Licence - New	£315.00	£496.00	£181.00	57.4%
Dangerous Wild Animal Licence – Renewal	NEW	£310.00	-	-
Zoos:				
Zoo licence Application – notice of intention	£535.00	£589.00	£54.00	10.1%
Zoo licence – New (duration of 4 years)	£535.00	£930.00	£395.00	73.8%
Skin piercing:				
Registration for skin piercing (tattooing, electrolysis, ear piercing etc)				
For new person or premises	£170.00	£187.00	£17.00	10.0%
For additional practitioners at existing premises	£120.00	£133.00	£13.00	10.8%
For existing practitioners moving into new unregistered premises	£120.00	£133.00	£13.00	10.8%
Scrap metal dealers:				
Collector NEW	£422.00	£464.00	£42.00	10.0%
Site NEW	£684.00	£752.00	£68.00	10.0%
Site RENEW	£606.00	£752.00	£146.00	24.1%
Private water supplies:				
Sampling	£75.00	£83.00	£8.00	10.1%
Investigation of problems with PWS	£52 per hour	£57 per hour	£5.00 per hour	
Administration	£52 per hour	£57 per hour	£5.00 per hour	
Building Control				
Property Name Change (per request)	£100.00	£110.00	£10.00	10.0%
New Developments:				
1 plot	£103.00	£110.00	£7.00	6.8%
2-5 plots	£206.00	£215.00	£9.00	4.7%
6-10 plots	£309.00	£325.00	£16.00	5.2%
11-20 plots	£515.00	£540.00	£25.00	4.8%
21-50 plots	£1,030.00	£1,080.00	£50.00	4.8%
51-100 plots	£1,545.00	Quotation	-	-
101+ plots	£10 per plot + £1,545	Quotation	-	-
Green environment				
Bins:				
Litter Bins	£37.13	£39.73	£2.60	7.0%
Dog Bins	£43.49	£46.53	£3.04	7.0%

5.9 Discretionary Charges

Discretionary charges that have seen an increase from 2022/23 can be broken down as follows:

Detail	Fee 2022/23	Fee 2023/24	Increase	
Green environment				
Household Waste:				
Bulky Item Collections	£45.00	£49.50	£4.50	10.0%
Garden Waste Collection NEW	£62.00	£69.00	£7.00	11.3%
Garden Waste Collection RENEW	£57.00	£59.00	£2.00	3.5%
Larger Bins	£37.50	£41.25	£3.75	10.0%
Replacement Missing Bins	£37.50	£41.25	£3.75	10.0%
Additional Waste Sacks – clear recycling	£0.10	£0.12	£0.02	20.0%
Additional Waste Sacks - orange	£0.70	£0.84	£0.14	20.0%
New Set of Bins	£63.00	£69.00	£6.00	9.5%
High hedges:				
High Hedges 2.00 - 3.99 Metres Tall	£350.00	£12.00 per linear metre	-	-
High Hedges 4.00 - 5.99 Metres Tall		£24.00 per linear Metre	-	-
Planning				
Copies of Microfiche from Storetec	£15.00	£25.00	£10.00	66.7%
History search (1-4 dwellings)	£54.00	£60.00	£6.00	11.1%
History search (over 4 dwellings)	£75.00	£80.00	£5.00	6.7%
Public Path Orders				
Public rights of way	£60.68 per hour	£68.15 per hour	£7.47 per hour	12.3%

6. LINKS TO JOINT CORPORATE PLAN

6.1 Ensuring that the Council makes best use of its resources is what underpins the ability to achieve the 6 corporate strategic priorities set out in the Corporate Plan, and ensuring the Council has a robust financial strategy. One of the key themes in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy is increasing the Councils income.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The increase in fees and charges income will either have been included in the Draft General Fund budget 2023/24 as a saving or be used to offset the operational costs of the service, for example, the inflationary increases in running costs.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Local authorities have a variety of powers to charge for specific statutory services set out in statute.

8.2 The Local Government Act 2003 also provides a power to trade and a power to charge for discretionary services, the latter on a cost recovery basis. The power to charge for discretionary services is not available to local authorities if there is a

statutory duty to provide the service or if there is a specific power to charge for it or if there is a prohibition on charging.

- 8.3 Additionally, the Localism Act 2011 provides local authorities with a general power of competence that confers on them the power to charge for services but again subject to conditions/limitations similar to those noted above.
- 8.4 Where authorities have a duty to provide a statutory service free of charge to a certain standard, no charge can be made for delivery to that standard, however delivery beyond that point may constitute a discretionary service for which a charge could be made.
- 8.5 All items/services listed in the appendices are pursuant to a power to provide the relevant service whether it is provided because of a statutory obligation to do so, or on a discretionary basis where the authority is not obliged to provide the service but can choose to do so. In relation to the latter, an authority charging for such services would do so on a cost recovery basis, pursuant to the Local Government Act 2003/Localism Act 2011.

9. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 9.1 This report is most closely linked with the Councils' Significant Risk No.4 – We may be unable to react in a timely and effective way to financial demands. Other key risks are set out below:

Key Risk Description	Likelihood 1-4	Impact 1-4	Key Mitigation Measures	Risk Register and Reference
If the increases proposed adversely affect demand for the service, the Council may suffer a loss of income and will not recover the costs of providing the service.	Unlikely (2)	Noticeable (2)	Fees and charges will be monitored as part of monthly budget monitoring in conjunction with SLT and Corporate Managers	005 Finance, Commissioning and Procurement Operational Risk Register – 005

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 The relevant Portfolio Holders and Councillors have been consulted on any significant areas of increase or change to fee and charges. The need for wider consultation when increasing fees and charges is reviewed by each Corporate Manager and relevant Director, none of the proposed increases in this report have resulted in a need for wider consultation.

11. EQUALITY ANALYSIS

- 11.1 An equality impact assessment will be undertaken by each Director for any significant changes within these fee and charges proposals.

12. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 The use of fees and charges can influence behaviour that will in turn have a positive impact on the environment. Corporate Managers will consider this impact as part of their service strategies.

13. APPENDICES

Title	Location
Appendix A - Fees and charges schedule 2023/24	Attached
Appendix B – Fees and charges by service 2023/24 compared to 2022/23	Attached

14. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Draft General Fund Budget 2023/24 and four-year outlook