

**Report for: Environment Policy Development
Group**

Date of Meeting: 7 November 2023

Subject: 2024/25 Fees and Charges

Cabinet Member: James Buczkowski – Cabinet Member for Finance

Responsible Officer: Andrew Jarrett – Deputy Chief Executive (S151)

Exempt: Yes – Appendix 1

which are Exempt from publication under paragraph 3, Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) as it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

Wards Affected: All

Enclosures: Appendix 1 – Env PDG Fees and Charges (Part 2)

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)

To present to Member's the proposed Fees and Charges for 2024/25 for discussion.

Recommendation(s):

That the Policy Development Group recommends to Cabinet the proposed Fees and Charges for 2024/25:

Section 2 – Report

1.0 Introduction

1.1 For the 2023/24 budget a full review and refresh of all fees and charges was undertaken by the service managers, using techniques such as benchmarking

and other in-depth reviews. The majority of charges increased, and in many cases by more than annual inflation due to fees previously being frozen during the period of the pandemic. As part of the approval, delegated power was given to increase fees annually in line with inflation, or where the market will bear it, potentially above annual inflation following a review by the relevant Policy Development Group. The additional income will help balance the annual budget.

2.0 2024/25 Review

- 2.1 During the summer the level of fees and charges have been reviewed. This is slightly earlier than in previous years to ensure that they can be built into service estimates and avoid making unnecessary cuts. This covering report summarises the main points, with the details being provided in Annex 1.
- 2.2 September's Consumer Price Index (CPI) stood at 6.7%. This is the proposed uplift value applied to the majority of fees and charges for 2024/25. Where any proposal exceeds this, the justification will be presented to the relevant PDG.
- 2.3 PDG Members are asked to consider these increases and either recommend them to Cabinet for approval in December or propose alternative rates where they do not support an inflationary uplift. If there are changes to those recommended that result in reduced income, then this will create a shortfall in the budget that will need to be funded from another source. Members are asked to recommend how that resultant shortfall could be mitigated.

3.0 Conclusion

- 3.1 If the PDG accepts the proposed uplifts, it should recommend approval by Cabinet, and the additional income generated by these proposals be reflected in the 2024/25 budget.

Financial Implications

The current budget for the General Fund shows a potential deficit of £765k, with an increasing funding deficit projected in future years. Were Members to decide to reject any of the proposals, then additional savings of the same value would be required to deliver a balanced budget.

Legal Implications

The Localism Act 2011 provides local authorities with a general power of competence that confers on them the power to charge for services unless 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.

Risk Assessment

The proposed fee uplifts are mainly inflationary. Therefore it is assumed that this will not have a material impact on the usage of that service. Any proposed uplift above inflation has been assessed by the service manager to again not materially alter the usage of the service.

Impact on Climate Change

The proposed uplifts are not deemed to negatively affect climate change.

Equalities Impact Assessment

Mid Devon District Council has statutory public sector equality duties concerned with eliminating unlawful discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations on the basis of protected characteristics such as gender, race, disability or age. These duties do not prevent the Council reducing services or charging where necessary – provided that decisions are taken in accordance with the Act. The proposed uplifts are considered to be a proportionate approach and therefore do not impact on those with protected characteristics.

Relationship to Corporate Plan

The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) sets out the financial resources available to deliver the Council's ongoing Corporate Plan priorities.

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett

Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151

Date: 24 October 2023

Statutory Officer: Maria De Leburne

Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Date: 24 October 2023

Chief Officer: Stephen Walford

Agreed by or on behalf of the Chief Executive/Corporate Director

Date: 24 October 2023

Performance and risk: Dr Stephen Carr

Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager

Date: 24 October 2023

Cabinet member notified: Yes

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

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Background papers:

- 2024/25 – 2028/29 Medium Term Financial Plan update (September Cabinet)