

Title: Revision to fees for markets in 2024
Lead Officer: Charlotte Sully (01926 456222)
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Billiald
Wards of the District directly affected: All

Approvals required	Date	Name
Portfolio Holder	12/3/24	Councillor Billiald
Finance	12/3/24	Andrew Rollins
Legal Services		
Chief Executive	12/3/24	Chris Elliott
Director of Climate Change	12/3/24	Dave Barber
Head of Service(s)	12/3/24	Philip Clarke
Section 151 Officer	12/3/24	Andrew Rollins
Monitoring Officer	12/3/24	Graham Leach
Leadership Co-ordination Group	23/3/24	
Final decision by this Committee or rec to another Cttee / Council?	Recommendation to: Council on 17 April 2024	
Contrary to Policy / Budget framework?	No	
Does this report contain exempt info/Confidential? If so, which paragraph(s)?	No	
Does this report relate to a key decision (referred to in the Cabinet Forward Plan)?	No	
Accessibility Checked?	Yes	

Summary

This report proposes some revisions to the approved fees for markets for 2024 which were approved by Council in November 2023.

Recommendation(s)

- (1) That Cabinet recommends to Council the revised schedule of fees for markets for 2024 across Warwick District as set out in table 1 below.
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1 Reasons for the Recommendation

- 1.1 Members will recall that Council approved the fees and charges for 2024/25 on 15th November 2023 and that unless stated otherwise, these became operational from 1st January 2024.
- 1.2 The Council's markets contractor, CJ's Events, has raised concerns relating to the increase in fees that was agreed at that time in relation to markets. There is evidence that in some instances, there has been a decline in footfall at some of the markets and CJ's Events considers that traders would struggle to absorb the proposed increases. In particular, the Kenilworth market is currently experiencing challenges, with low footfall in the market location, and this is impacting on support for the market.
- 1.3 CJ's Events has also pointed out that two of the district's regular markets, the Autumn and Christmas markets that take place in Leamington, are not on the approved schedule of fees and charges. There is currently therefore no agreed 2024 fee for these markets. Unlike the other markets, these markets are doing very well and CJ's Events is of the view that a more significant fee increase (above the rate applied to other markets) could be justified. CJ's Events has proposed a fee increase which would still enable these markets to be competitive alongside other similar markets such as in Stratford-upon-Avon.
- 1.4 Table 1 below shows the approved fees together with proposals for revised / additional fees that is now being proposed in this report.

Table 1: Existing a proposed market fees

Market	Charge 23-24	Charges 24/25 as approved (Nov 23).	REVISED proposed charge 24-25	Proposed % increase of REVISED charges
Warwick Market	£42.00	£46.00	£44.00	4.7%
Leamington Market	£48.00	£53.00	£50.00	4.2%
Leamington Covent Garden Market	£48.00	£53.00	£50.00	4.2%
Leamington and Warwick	£42.00	£46.00	£44.00	4.7%

Market	Charge 23-24	Charges 24/25 as approved (Nov 23).	REVISED proposed charge 24-25	Proposed % increase of REVISED charges
Kenilworth Market	£33.00	£35.00	£33.00	0%
Leamington Autumn	£55.00	No fee listed.	£65.00	18.2%
Leamington Christmas	£80.00	No fee listed.	£90.00	12.5%

- 1.5 The above proposed revised fees all have the support of CJ's Events. They are considered to be realistic in terms of being affordable to traders and therefore able to support our local markets whilst still maximizing council income from these.
- 1.6 The Autumn and Christmas markets are the largest and most profitable markets across the range that take place in the district. It is estimated that the higher fee increases for these seasonal markets will more than offset the potential reduction in income from the remaining markets. There will therefore be no estimated reduction in income if these fees are applied, and indeed evidence is that there will be a small increase in overall fees. There is therefore expected to be no overall impact on the Council's budget position arising from these changes.
- 1.7 Moreover, it is considered that by reducing the increase in fees to a more manageable level for local stall holders, this is likely to best ensure the success of these markets, thereby maintaining an income stream for the Council which would otherwise be lost if stall holders were to withdraw from supporting the markets altogether.

2 Alternative Options

- 2.1 There are two alternative options. One would be not to support any change to the previously agreed fees for 2024/5. For the reasons set out above, this would not be supported. It is anticipated that the current approved fee structure will have a damaging impact on the current markets in some cases, and would likely see an overall decline in the number of stalls. This would have an immediate negative impact on the Council's budget position, affect the businesses of stall holders and harm the long-term viability of the market to support local communities. This option would also fail to capitalise on an opportunity to increase the fees on seasonal markets.
- 2.2 A second alternative option would be to support the principle of imposing revised fees but vary the amount from that shown in table 1 above. Again, this option is not supported. The proposed revised fees have been put forward in consultation with CJ's Events and are considered to strike an appropriate balance between supporting local market stall holders, ensuring that the price of market stalls remains viable and protecting the Council's financial position.

3 Legal Implications

- 3.1 There are no legal implications contained within the recommendations of this report.

4 Financial Services

- 4.1 Within the savings proposals agreed by Council in December 2020, a target of 15% was agreed in respect of additional income generated from discretionary fees and charges for 2023/24, reverting back to 10% increase from 2024/25 onwards. Consequently, Budget Managers were tasked with seeking to achieve this increase, with the exception of some fees and charges, where legislation and other factors may make it unviable. This is intended to contribute towards the savings that the Council needs to make in its overall Financial Strategy.
- 4.2 In 2023, the total level of income from markets was £61,503. If the fees for 2024 (as agreed in November 2023) were applied based on the number of stalls in 2023, the income for 2024 would be £63,374. Under the proposed revised fee structure, we would expect to see an income in 2024 of approximately £66,256.

5 Corporate Strategy

- 5.1 Warwick District Council has adopted a Corporate Strategy which sets three strategic aims for the organisation. Each proposed decision should set out how the report contributes to the delivery of these strategic aims. If it does not contribute to these aims or has a negative effect on them the report should explain why that is the case.
- 5.2 Delivering valued, sustainable services – Setting an appropriate and sustainable fee structure for markets across the district is most likely to maximise the level of fee income that the Council can reasonably generate from these activities. This can best support efforts to ensure that there are the resources to continue to enable residents to receive excellent high-quality services, that are responsive and accessible to local needs.
- 5.3 Low cost, low carbon energy across the district – Supporting local markets will allow people to increase the extent to which they can shop locally and support their local town centres, thereby reducing their need to travel and their energy consumption.
- 5.4 Creating vibrant, safe and healthy communities of the future – supporting local markets will support communities, local businesses and the district's town centres.

6 Environmental/Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 There is no change in environmental / climate change implications proposed by this report. The purpose of this report is to sustain and support existing markets across the district. As noted above, supporting local markets will allow people to shop locally, reduce their need to travel and support their local town centres. This will have a positive impact in terms of the environment / climate change.

7 Analysis of the effects on Equality

- 7.1 There are not anticipated to be any equality issues arising from this report.

8 Data Protection

- 8.1 Not applicable.

9 Health and Wellbeing

- 9.1 Not applicable.

10 Risk Assessment

- 10.1 Increasing prices could deter usage where the take up of any service is discretionary. Customers may choose to use the service less frequently or use an alternative supplier where one is available.
- 10.2 There is a risk that if market fees and charges are not set at an appropriate level, this will deter market traders from supporting markets, and this will in turn reduce the appeal and the sustainability of local markets. There is also a risk that if the Council does not generate anticipated levels of income from market fees and charges, this will have a wider impact on budgets and the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 10.3 The level of fees that is being proposed is designed to mitigate these risk as set out elsewhere in this report.
- 10.4 This risk is being managed by the Business Support & Events Team. As part of the Change Programme, there will be a further review of fees and charges, including those for markets. This will consider whether a further change in market fees should be supported for 2025/26. In the meantime, these revised fees for 2024/25 allow for markets to continue and flourish in the district.

Background papers:

Fees and Charges 2023/24 (Cabinet 02 November 2023 – Item 4) to Council 15 November 2023

Supporting documents:

WDC Code of Financial Practice.