

Breakdown of Fees and Charges by Service Area

1 Background/Information

- 1.1 The fees and charges proposed in Appendix A have been driven by the key factors as outlined below by Service Area.

2 Safer Communities, Leisure & Environment

2.1 Leisure Centres

- 2.1.1 Fees and charges at the Leisure Centres that WDC can influence are now limited to a list of Core Charges. These can be seen in Appendix C. The contract stipulates that they will be increased by up to the June RPI figure in the following year.

2.2 Recreation and Sport

- 2.2.1 Football pitch fees and charges have been increased following last year's freeze to bring in line to market value.

2.3 Tennis

- 2.3.1 Post Covid, the Tennis provision has progressed through a procurement exercise and has secured an operator. This is now in place and will provide income to support future refurbishment and maintenance of the courts, which will be ring fenced for this purpose.

2.4 Edmondscote Athletics Track

- 2.4.1 Edmondscote Athletics Track was transferred to Everyone Active (EA) in November 2023. Fees and charges are agreed with the Sports and Leisure Team as this will now be included in the agreement with EA for future years.

2.5 Licensing and Registration

- 2.5.1 The Council is responsible for issuing a wide range of licences, permits and registrations related to premises, various occupations, and activities. Licensing fees and charges need to be costed individually and in line with legislative restrictions, for example some fees are set by Central Government, some are capped, and others are locally calculated. Licensing fees are not intended, or permitted, to generate income for the council and should be calculated to enable the cost of initial applications to be separated from those costs associated with the ongoing administration of a scheme. This is because this latter element cannot be charged to unsuccessful licence applicants. (Income from these charges are also ring-fenced accounts and income should be shown separately). Income from these areas have been removed from the main report and is shown as a separate item, along with other ring-fenced and reserve accounts.

3 Customer and Digital Services

3.1 Street naming and numbering

3.1.1 Budget forecast shows modest growth for the forthcoming year due to the following factors ...

1) Housebuilding which is the main source of income has increased slightly in 2024, but is still down from its 2023 peak. According to the ONS, in Q1 of 2024, there was an 11% increase in housebuilding activity but this was still 41% less than the year previous. Any future increase in house building and completion is expected to be small.

2) Market analysis from PWC indicates only modest growth of 3.6% in housing completions by 2025 and similar growth in 2026. Their analysis cites increased borrowing costs, geopolitical instability and the cost of living crisis for slowing building completions.

3) Interest rates are expected to remain relatively high. The British Chamber of Commerce estimates that interest rates will be around 4.35% in 2025, which is lower than current levels, but still significantly higher than in the previous decade. This may continue to impact on house buying due to increased mortgage costs.

4) The new government has made housebuilding a priority, but to date there are no solid plans identifying how this will be achieved.

5) We have no new planning applications that would create a significant uplift in the number of properties being developed, with impacts on a similar scale to those approved in previous years.

4 Housing

4.1 HMO Licensing

4.1.1 An additional licensing scheme was introduced from 18 January 2024 as part of a strategy to bring all HMO's within the district up to a minimum standard, capturing 800 (57%) of the 1400 HMO's that previously did not require a licence under the mandatory licencing scheme. As the designations last for 5 years, income received to date has been apportioned across the 5 year period, with a smaller amount of additional new licences assumed for future years. The new licences have received a 10% increase.

4.1.2 Mandatory HMO licence fees did not increase last year as the Service sought to align the Additional Licensing fees with those for Mandatory Licensing. Therefore to remain in alignment these have also been increased by 10%.

5 Housing Revenue Account

5.1 Warwick Response - Lifeline and other charges

5.1.1 The income generated from the Warwick Response Fees and Charges is credited to the Housing Revenue Account, from where the costs of this service are met. Details of the charges are shown in Appendix A.

5.1.2 Prices have been set to ensure that the service is competitively placed in the market when benchmarked, with prices increasing broadly by up to 10%. Commercial Gov proposed some opportunities to ensure that the services

offered, while remaining competitive, were appropriately priced. Some of these increases are above the 10% standard in order to get pricing to the benchmarked level and ensure costs of delivering the service are being recovered. Other charges have seen smaller increases, or no increase at all, to remain market competitive.

6 Neighbourhood and Assets

6.1 Interment and Cremation fees

6.1.1 Funerals for children (can be claimed back from The Children's Funeral Fund for England. The fees have been amended to indicate that an adult is a person aged 18 and above (previously 17), and a child is a person aged between stillborn (from the 24th week of pregnancy) until they would have reached the age of 18.

6.1.2 ONS stats for England released 25 September show a significant drop in the death rate, this week 14.1% fewer people than expected died. This has been the case for all but 3 weeks this year - weekly statistics show between 2% and 17% fewer deaths taking place. This national trend is borne out in the number of burials and cremations taking place this year, comparing to previous year's performance and ONS data it would be prudent to anticipate a loss of income similar to the reduction in numbers of deaths registered across exclusive rights, interment and cremation fee services.

6.1.3 Memorial and other income will not necessarily reflect the current years trends as these items are more frequently ordered after the funeral has taken place, and in the case of cemeteries other this mainly relates to Exclusive Rights being inherited and is more often many years later. We are in an increasingly competitive marketplace and in recent years have seen our numbers of funerals decline due to new crematoria in Rugby and more recently The Vale Crematorium at Evesham.

6.1.4 The main competition for Woodland burial is from the private sector. Commercial Gov's benchmarking review indicated that there was little scope to increase prices on this service if we wish to remain competitive. Very few woodland burials take place each year, to ensure that this finite asset will be available for longer and thus continue to provide income when the other cemeteries are full.

6.1.5 Modest increases to most other Crematorium fees are proposed as they are low usage and mainly designed to ensure management of time schedules.

6.1.6 Direct cremation increase by 10% - the single deciding factor for this type of funeral is price and there is intense competition. We have seen that some Coventry Funeral Directors are travelling to Oakley Wood as we are cheaper than Canley, however it is also known that one of our local funeral directors is going to Waseley Hill because their head office negotiated a contract with the Westerly group, and it is known that local Dignity branches are using the crematorium owned by themselves.

6.1.7 Some memorials and other ancillary items are often provided by funeral directors; therefore these prices need to be kept competitive. Where some

types of memorials have less take-up, these prices are being held to encourage more sales.

6.1.8 Standard cremation fees are proposed to increase by 9.5%. The Council is currently the most expensive local authority in the Warwickshire and West Midlands area for this service. However it is forecast that the increase will not impact on demand driven by competitive factors. Cremation fees are subject to scrutiny from the Competition and Marketing Authority, therefore the Council ensures that the fees are not excessive and are necessary to support the cost of delivering the services.

6.1.9 Approximately 10% of business was predicted to be lost to Rainsbrook crematorium when it opened this was somewhat disguised by increasing population and more recently the pandemic. In addition to this, competition from recently opened crematorium in Evesham has impacted the number of cremations taking place.

6.1.10 Income details (exclusive of surcharge premium) for both the Cemeteries and Crematorium for, 2024/25 & 2025/26 are shown below. (The Burial Rights and Interments Surcharge is not included in the figures below.)

	Original 2024/25 £ '000	Forecast 2024/25 £ '000	Proposed 2025/26 £ '000
Cemeteries	481	397	443
Crematorium	1,930	1,573	1,680
Total	2,411	1,970	2,123

6.2 Car Parking

6.2.1 The table below shows a summary for car park income:

Income Summary: (Net of V.A.T)	Actual 2023/24 £ '000	Original Budget 2024/25 £ '000	Forecast 2024/25 £ '000	Proposed 2025/26 £ '000
Car Parking	3,401	3,644	3,741	4,115
Season Tickets	245	240	240	297
Excess Charges	173	125	250	278
Other Income	7	9	9	3
Total	3,826	4,018	4,240	4,693

6.2.2 For 2024/25 car park income levels YTD have exceeded the original forecast, driven by increased demand. In addition, PCN income continues to remain high, a trend that has been in place since the parking service underwent an alignment in July 2023, with increased parking enforcement.

6.2.3 The car parks have operational costs and require maintenance on an ongoing basis to ensure they remain safe and operational. Reviews of our asset base will continue to be carried out to ensure demand is being met across the District.

6.2.4 Parking Services have in recent years introduced new ways to pay for parking, including by phone. There are some small costs associated with these initiatives but they have reduced the cash collection cost. The initiative is not just about

income but also designed to encourage people to shop and stay in WDC's Town Centres, allowing flexibility to increase duration without returning to the car park. The Parking Service aim to expand on these payment options in the future and have expressed an interest in a government backed national pay by mobile service to enable a broader list of app payment suppliers that should drive competitive convenience fee pricing for our service.

- 6.2.5 It is proposed to increase the majority of ticket fees by 10p per stay. This has the effect of reducing the impact of the price increase the longer the customer stays, with 1 hour on average seeing a 7% increase, but a 4 hour stay seeing less than a 2% increase on the equivalent charges from 2024/25.
 - 6.2.6 A change to tariffs will be introduced for longer stays. Previous there was only one tariff, classed as 'All Day'. This has now been split into two tariffs to offer choice and clarity to the customer.
 - 6.2.7 A 10 hour charge in all our long stay car parks (and 11 hours in Leamington Old Town - Park & Stride) car parks will be introduced. This charge will be the same as that previously charged for 'All Day' parking, showing support for day visitors and workers in our town centres.
 - 6.2.8 A second charge for 24 hour parking in all long stay car parks will also be introduced, and be set at £12 in all locations.
 - 6.2.9 From 2025, the Parking Service plans to introduce its new fees and charges from April each year onwards (previously this was done in January). This will allow reasonable time for statutory and legal requirements to take place. Next year it plans to formally update our Off-Street Parking Order (OSPO), with the new fees and charges. They will need to consult and seek consent from WCC to approve the new OSPO, their consent is required under section 39 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. They are our overriding Transport authority and it will be the responsibility of their Portfolio Holder for Transport and Environment. Parking would like to develop a more joined-up strategy with their WCC counterparts to work together for future parking reviews. A Section 35C notice process to inform customers of price changes has been used in recent years and this has not given WCC scope to comment. It should be noted that WCC therefore have the opportunity to object to some or all of the charges and Council need to be aware of this.
- 6.3 Refuse Collection
- 6.3.1 Last year the bulky waste collection pricing structure was changed to deliver a more attractive price range across the number of items collected. A review of the outcomes from this change, which has seen an increase in income and bookings for one item collections has now prompted further refinement of the pricing structure to make this service more attractive and competitive with other bulky waste removal services, and also support delivery of other wider benefits such as reducing the potential for fly tipping.
 - 6.3.2 Green Waste permits sales have not seen the anticipated 5% increase in sales within 2024-25. For 2024-25 a forecast for 42,000 licences being issued was set. However based on current sales it is likely to be nearer 40,000. Therefore for 2025-26 a forecast for 40,850 licences to be sold has been set, at an increased fee of £47 (from £44).

7 Place, Arts and Economy

7.1 Building Control

- 7.1.1 Building Control is subject to competition from the private sector and has to set charges that are competitive, otherwise they will lose customers to the private sector. The proposed charges for domestic properties are considered to be fair and balanced in the current competitive market, and in line with neighbouring Councils and recommendations from Fees and Charges Report. Fees for commercial projects are done on a bespoke basis, taking into account how many inspections will be needed, how long the project is likely to take and whether any additional professional services need to be brought in. Having said that, most fees have increased by 10% and some by a little more. (This is a ring-fenced account and income is shown separately).
- 7.1.2 There has been a significant drop in the number of major planning applications submitted which attract the highest fees and therefore has the largest influence on being able to achieve the income forecast set in the current and previous financial years and has been reflected in the fee projections for next financial year. There are likely to be opportunities for new applications aligned to the West Midlands Investment Zone in future years.
- 7.1.3 Local Land charges income is static. The regulations covering Land Charges require that it is a cost neutral service. The income received is ring fenced, and as the income generated is already covering the cost of providing the service (any surplus is held to offset periods of under recovery), there would be no justification for any increase at this time.
- 7.1.4 Planning fees (apart from pre applications) are not included in this report as the fees are mandated by the government and we do not have control over them. However, the current fees do not cover the cost of delivering the service, as costs have continued to rise on an annual basis, with the key driver being the staffing resource requirement. Members may be aware that there is a current government consultation underway on the way in which planning fees are set in the future.

7.2 Enterprise Team

- 7.2.1 Projections are static because previous years have included Court St Arches income. The project has never published fees and charges, as income is solely from commercial rentals so is excluded in these forecasts.

7.3 Markets

- 7.3.1 In April 2024 Warwick & Covent Garden stall fees were amended to reduce the increase for 2024/25 to 4.7%. This was a reduction from the proposed 10% increase in November 2023 following consultation with stakeholders including the council's markets contractor. As part of the consultation, it was agreed that Leamington Autumn and Christmas markets fees would be increased by 18.2% and 12.5% respectively, as these markets are performing very well.
- 7.3.2 Market fees have not been increased in 2025/26 following further consultation with the market operators, who indicated that any change would have a serious

impact on the number of stalls attending, and adversely affect the overall income projections.

7.4 Events

- 7.4.1 Two new fees have been introduced from 2025. The Council will introduce an application fee for events. This will be set at 25% of the event fee and be non-refundable. The application fee will then be subtracted from the final fee. Previously this work has been done at no charge.
- 7.4.2 As at the time of writing, so far in 2024 24 events have been booked and then subsequently cancelled. An application fee may discourage optimistic submissions and ensure that only events that are likely to take place or be viable are processed by officers.
- 7.4.3 The Council will also introduce road closure fees. These are currently processed free of charge, despite coming at a real cost to the Council through officer time. So far in 2024 44 road closures have been processed. 2 levels of fees will be introduced, determined by the size of the closure. Exemptions to charges for Remembrance or similar events will still be permitted.

7.5 Town Hall

- 7.5.1 Due to the continuing refurbishment and change of use within the Town Hall, rental income has decreased substantially. This includes the loss of long-term tenants (e.g. University of Warwick) and smaller rooms have been unavailable for hire whilst refurbishments are being completed.