

## ***Overview and Scrutiny Review Matrix***

**Review Topic: Fees and Charges**

**Timescale**  
**Start: TBC**  
**Finish: TBC**

### **Review Rationale:**

At its meeting on 25 January 2022, OSMC agreed to set up a Task and Finish Group to consider further options in relation to charging for West Berkshire Council's services and the potential to increase levels of income.

The OSMC report highlighted the following as the recommended areas of focus for the Task and Finish Group:

- a. New proposals on planning income
- b. Leisure strategy and fees and income arising from this
- c. Other opportunities for commercial charging in the Place Directorate

Some considerations of this review may be:

- a. What are the current fees and charges and how have they been determined?
- b. What are the statutory constraints that affect the setting of individual fees and charges, and what scope is there to vary fees and charges from existing levels?
- c. How do West Berkshire's fees and charges and associated revenues compare to other equivalent local authorities?
- d. Are there any services that West Berkshire Council does not charge for, or does not currently provide?
- e. How do the levels of fees and charges affect demand for discretionary services and what are the likely impacts in terms of achievement of Council Strategy priorities?
- f. What do residents / services users think about current fees and charges in terms of their affordability and value for money?
- g. What is the appropriate balance between affordability and revenue generation?
- h. Are differentiated fees and charges appropriate for particular service user groups in order to address issues of access, affordability and equity?
- i. How have historic increases in fees and charges taken account of inflation, and which measure of inflation is most appropriate when determining increases?

## Terms of Reference:

The Task and Finish Group will:

- **Part 1:** New Proposals on Planning Income

*Consider opportunities for new / increased fees and charges associated with all aspects of the Planning Service including, but not limited to: planning enquiries; pre-planning advice; planning applications; discharge of conditions; and S106 agreement legal fees.*

- **Part 2:** Leisure Strategy Fees and Charges

*Review the existing fees and charges associated with services provided through the West Berkshire Leisure Contract and the potential to charge for additional services required to deliver the new Leisure Strategy.*

- **Part 3:** Other opportunities for commercial charging

*Identify additional opportunities to charge for services provided by the Place and People Directorates:*

- *Development & Regulation*
- *Communities & Wellbeing*
- *Environment*

*Also, consider whether there are opportunities to charge for services provided in the Resources Directorate*

Members will collate their findings which will then form the basis of a report to be considered by Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission.

### Review Membership:

Councillor Jeff Brooks  
Councillor Biyi Oloko  
TBC

**Chairman:** Councillor Tony Linden

**Vice-Chairman:** TBC

**Scrutiny Officer:** Gordon Oliver

### Information Required:

Current WBC fees and charges  
Current fees and charges of comparator authorities / competitors  
Historic fees and charges  
Trends in demand / service usage  
Residents survey data  
Inflation calculation methodology  
Current rationale / strategy for fee changes

**Documents/Evidence:**

Residents Survey outcome report (2020 and 2021)  
Quarterly reporting for relevant service areas

**Witnesses:** *(Who/Why?)*

Finance Manager  
Service Director – Development & Regulation  
Team Leader Development Control

Service Director – Communities & Wellbeing  
Interim Consultant (Leisure)  
Sports & Leisure Manager

Service Director – Environment  
Waste Manager  
Environment Delivery Manager  
Countryside Manager  
Asset Manager  
Network Manager  
Transport Services Manager

Other Service Directors and Officers as the Task Group considers appropriate

**Measures Available**

Suite of data sets as outlined above

**Desired Outcomes:**

A report with a clear set of recommendations on potential changes to fees and charges and a clear strategy for managing future increases.