

Resources Fees & Charges Proposals – 2014/15

1. Introduction

1.1 One of the starting points in building the base budget is that fees and charges should increase by a minimum of 2.7%. In reality, however, officers seek to look at every opportunity to maximise income accepting that:

- Fees and charges can have a direct impact on usage and take up of services;
- In some circumstances the Council is providing services in direct competition to the private sector. Where this is the case, price is likely to have a direct link with demand and it is important that the Council does not 'price itself out of the market';
- Raising fees and charges can in some instances work against the Council's social inclusion agenda by effectively discriminating against those who are less able to pay;
- For some services there is a clear expectation that fees and charges will reflect the costs incurred in providing the service. The Council may open itself to legal challenge if the increases it makes cannot be justified.

1.2 Within the Resources Directorate the main services and functions to which fees and charges apply are detailed in the specific proposals section below.

2. Specific Proposals

2.1 Registration Services

Registration fees are largely controlled by statute. In 2011 a bench marking exercise took place in order to ensure our charges were commensurate with the other Berkshire authorities.

2.2 Electoral Services

These charges are statutory, set by Government and the Council has no discretion to vary.

2.3 Land Charges

There has been increasing private sector competition in the area of Land Charges in recent years. As a result of this competition the Council has improved its performance. However, it should be noted that any improvement in turnaround times has to be offered to the private sector as well.

From 1st July 2007 a new fee structure was introduced to comply with new legislation, which requires the Council to only recover cost incurred in service delivery. For 2014/15 the fee structure has been reviewed to continue compliance with the cost recovery model. This requires an uplift of 2.7%. In addition, the statutory fee for personal searches has been revoked by HM Government this will result in further increased competition from the private sector, as personal search companies will be able to offer even more competitive pricing.

2.4 **Legal Fees**

It is proposed to increase the Council's Legal charges for third party work to bring the charges in line with other Berkshire Authorities.

Description	Current Fee 2013/14	Proposed Fee 2014/15	Notes
Registration			
Decommissioned room fees:			
Mon-Thu	£100	£110	
Fri	£130	£140	
Sat am	£150	£160	
Sat pm	£210	£220	
Sun	£310	£320	
Ceremonies at approved premises (Mon-Thu)	£330	£340	All increases rounded to the nearest £10
Ceremonies at approved premises (Fri)	£350	£360	
Ceremonies at approved premises (Sat)	£380	£390	
Ceremonies at approved premises (Sun and Bank Holidays)	£440	£450	
Approved Premises Licence (more than one room)	£1900	£1950	
Approved Premises (one room)	£1720	£1770	
Celebratory Services –Baby Naming/Affirmation of vows - Shaw House			
Mon to Fri	£170	£180	
Sat	£200	£210	
Sun	£270	£280	
Celebratory Services – Baby Naming/Affirmation of vows-at Approved Premises			
Mon to Fri	£200	£210	
Sat	£230	£240	
Sun	£290	£300	
Private Citizenship ceremony			Cannot justify increase based on the time involved
Mon to Fri	£100	£100	
Sat	£100	£100	

Description	Current Fee 2013/14	Proposed Fee 2014/15	Notes
Nationality Checking			
Single application	£55	£60	£20 extra charged for Saturday appointments
Joint application	£75	£90	As above
Minor	£20	£25	As above
Elections			
All fees are statutory			No change.
Local Land Charges			
LLC1	£59	£61	
Con29 PT1	£36	£37	
Con29 PT11	£19	£20	
Additional Questions	£36	£37	
Con29 additional parcel	£24	£25	
LLC1 additional parcel	£43	£44	
Personal search	£0	£0	Statutory fee removed
Personal search additional parcel	£0	£0	Statutory fee removed
Legal			
Hourly charging costs:			
Managers	£123	£130	
Team Leader	£118	£125	
Solicitor	£113	£120	
Legal Executive / Senior Legal Assistant	£103	£110	
Trainee Solicitors		£95 (new)	
This covers salary, employers' costs and other support charges – rent, office space, photocopying, postage, etc.			

Social Care Training

2.5 The Government provides funding for care sector training and we use this funding to deliver a comprehensive joint training programme for staff and people working in the private and voluntary care sector. Anyone can access training and charges represent the average costs, for example for a place on a course. The grant funding enables charges to local and accredited social care providers to be subsidised, hence the lower rate fee. Charging is essential to make the funding go further and ensure people book on courses and turn up. We have applied an increase to our charges to recognise increasing costs.

The Department of Health requires Councils to work closely with its partners on joint training and to facilitate improved standards of care through training initiatives; therefore some joint training will have the same charges as the partners involved and will sit outside this charging policy.

	Full Day	Half Day
Adult & Children's Social Care Staff at WBC	Funded	Funded
Private, Voluntary & Independent social care providers, partners & accredited organisation & Direct Payments service users	£39.00	£25.70
Anyone else	£70.90	£39
Social Care Trainer Hire to Private, Voluntary & Independent social care providers, partners & accredited organisation	£133.50	No half day rate
Social Care Trainer Hire to anyone else	£336.90	No half day rate
Hire of training room & equipment for Private, Voluntary & Independent social care providers, partners & accredited organisation	£72.90	No half day rate