

# Chief Executive's Fees & Charges Proposals – 2012/13

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The main report highlights that in building the base budget the starting point is that fees and charges should increase by a minimum of 4.5%. 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.
- 1.2.1 Within the Chief Executive's Directorate the main services and functions to which fees and charges apply are detailed in the specific proposals section below.

## 2. Specific Proposals

### Registration Services

- 2.1 Registration fees are largely controlled by statute. A benchmarking exercise has been undertaken of fees charged by seven neighbouring authorities. The results of this indicated that West Berkshire should increase certain fees.

### Electoral Services

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

### Land Charges

- 2.3 There has been increasing private sector competition in the area of Land Charges in recent years. As a result of this competition (the private sector is able to charge less for searches than the local authority) the Council has progressively lost market share and income. 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 2012/13 the fee structure has been reviewed to continue compliance with the cost recovery model. This requires an uplift of 4.5%. In addition the statutory fee for personal searches has been revoked by HM Government this will result in further increased competition from the private sector, as personal search companies will be able to offer even more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.

### Legal Fees

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

<b>Description</b>	<b>Current Fee 2011/12</b>	<b>Proposed Fee 2012/13</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Registration</b>			
Decommissioned room fees:			
Mon-Thu	n/a	£90	
Fri		£120	
Sat am		£140	
Sat pm		£200	
Sun		£300	
Ceremonies at approved premises (Mon-Thu)	£300	£315	All increases rounded to the nearest £5 pounds.
Ceremonies at approved premises (Fri)	£300	£335	
Ceremonies at approved premises (Sat)	£350	£365	
Ceremonies at approved premises (Sun and Bank Holidays)	£400	£420	
Approved Premises Licence (more than one room)	£1775	£1850	
Approved Premises (one room)	£1605	£1675	
Approved Premises (addition of additional room to existing licence)	£305	£500	Fire cost £150, EH £200 plus advert and room visits
Celebratory Services –Baby Naming/Affirmation of vows - Shaw House			
Mon to Fri	£155	£160	
Sat	£185	£195	
Sun	£185	£260	
Celebratory Services – Baby Naming/Affirmation of vows-At Approved Premises			
Mon to Fri	£185	£195	
Sat	£210	£220	
Sun	£265	£275	

<b>Description</b>	<b>Current Fee 2011/12</b>	<b>Proposed Fee 2012/13</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Private Citizenship ceremony Mon to Fri Sat	£100 £100	£100 £100	Cannot justify increase based on the time involved
<b>Nationality Checking</b>			
Single application	£50	£55	£20 extra charged for Saturday appointments
Joint application	£70	£75	As above
Minor	£18	£20	As above
<b>Elections</b>			
All fees are statutory			No change.
<b>Local Land Charges</b>			
LLC1	£55	£57	
Con29 PT1	£33	£35	
Con29 PT11	£17	£18	
Additional Questions	£33	£35	
Con29 additional parcel	£22	£23	
LLC1 additional parcel	£40	£42	
Personal search	£0	£0	Statutory fee removed
Personal search additional parcel	£0	£0	Statutory fee removed
<b>Legal</b>			

Description	Current Fee 2011/12	Proposed Fee 2012/13	Notes
<b>Hourly charging costs:</b>			
<b>Managers</b>	£115	£120	
<b>Team Leader</b>	£110	£115	
<b>Solicitor</b>	£105	£110	
<b>Legal Executive / Senior Legal Assistant</b>	£95	£100	
This covers salary, employers' costs and other support charges – rent, office space, photocopying, postage, etc.			
<b>Social Care Training</b>			

- 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	£38.00	£22.00
Anyone else	£69	£38
Social Care Trainer Hire to Private, Voluntary & Independent social care providers, partners & accredited organisation	£128	No half day rate
Social Care Trainer Hire to anyone else	£319	No half day rate
Hire of training room & equipment for Private, Voluntary & Independent social	£69	£38

care providers, partners & accredited organisation		
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