

Fees and charges - price increases greater than 5 per cent

Over recent years, the increase in housing coupled with a steady rise in the amount of waste produced has imposed increasing demands on the service. This has been evident in customer demand for the bulky waste collection service and the provision of wheeled bins

It has been a number of years since these service areas have been reviewed and there is an opportunity to revise the service offer and the charges applied. The council has undertaken a transformation review of customer processes across the Waste Service, which has included bulky waste collections and the delivery of new and replacement wheeled bins. As part of this review, both services are due for a service charge review as part of the adoption of revised fees and charges for 2022/23.

Bulky Waste - The bulky waste service is provided to support the removal of household waste that does not fit in the wheeled bin provided. The collection service for household items is statutory but the service charges are discretionary. A discount is available for service users in receipt of council tax reduction (one collection per year). There are around 2,000 bulky collections on average per year, with a total of about 8,000 items. On average, the majority of collections are under five items, although we do receive collection requests involving more. The service is operated from the West Suffolk Operational Hub.

The service charge is considered 'cheap' compared to other options available to residents. This can disincentive residents to look for alternative options. The service is convenient as it removes the personal need to transport the items to the Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) or charitable organisations. Operational capacity is fixed (vehicle and 2-person crew), with a weekly collection schedule based on district-wide postcodes. As demand for the service increases, other waste and street scene services such as bin delivery and street cleansing are impacted as staff are diverted onto the bulky waste collection service. Demand is inelastic. Therefore, charging more will not necessarily increase overall income as it may reduce demand. This will be subject to the amount charged. The statutory service operates at a deficit.

Other options to residents include: a) Retailers offer take back schemes for old appliances, household goods on delivery of the replacement item. The arrangements differ subject to the item and retailer. This may not always be the cheapest option, but it is the most convenient because the removal typically occurs at the same time as the delivery / installation of the replacement item. b) The HWRCs enable residents to dispose of household items free of charge, albeit transport to the sites is the responsibility of the resident. This option also enables items to be donated for reuse. c) Other waste operators and dealers in second-hand furniture/bric-a-brac offer house clearances and waste removal services for a charge. d) Charitable organisations are willing to accept reusable goods that they can pass on and residents can sell goods on social media websites or donate to family members and friends.

Refuse Collection - The council has around £4,000,000 worth of bins in place across the district. This is a valuable resource that, if it is to operate efficiently, requires careful management by the council and residents. The replacement of missing, stolen or damaged bins is a drain on resources. The council is spending an increasing amount each year purchasing and delivering wheeled bins to domestic households in the district. Whilst for a number of years the council has charged housing developers for the provision of bins to newly constructed houses, the number of replacement bins supplied by the council is significant. These costs are becoming increasingly difficult to sustain, especially in the current financial climate. Due to the international shortage of the plastic feedstock used in bin manufacturing, there has been an increase in the unit cost of bins (from around £18 per bin to £21) and an increase in the lead time for delivery – up to 14 weeks.

Over the three-year period from 2017 to 2019, 15,923 bins were supplied costing over £300,000:

o 5,102 were to replace broken or damaged bins – the largest proportion.

o 3,479 were to replace missing bins.

o 4,073 were for new properties, lost in the back of the refuse freighter, bin exchanges, new traders and for new subscribers to the Garden Waste Collection Scheme.

Many Council charge for replacement bins in certain circumstances, currently it is just West Suffolk and Ipswich in Suffolk that don't charge. Councils report seeing a marked reduction in the number of bins they have subsequently had to order following the introduction of charging. For noting, the council is able in law to charge for the provision of wheeled bins and direct what can be put in the bin. Residents are also required to use the wheeled bins provided and cannot opt out, unless their household is excluded from the requirement.

There are a number of risks that the service will need to manage and work through with the proposal, these include:

- One of the main issues will involve 'bin rustling'. Residents understandably get very angry if their bin goes missing and they are expected to pay for its replacement. They will often suspect a neighbour who might have stolen a bin to avoid paying for a replacement themselves. This can have a cascading effect in some neighbourhoods.

- Bins emptied at communal collection points can be problematic where residents may select the bin in best condition at the end of the day and where bins are only loosely 'tied' to specific properties.

- For noting, mandatory numbering of bins by residents would help prevent this but it wouldn't completely avoid it.

~~The bin charge will help reduce a number of issues such as residents having multiple bins, enforce ownership to look after bins~~

It is proposed that a new charge is introduced to residents for the replacement of wheeled bins (black and blue bins). The charge is proposed to be £30 per bin from 1 April 2022 in circumstances where the bin is lost, stolen or damaged.

There will be no direct charge to residents in the following circumstances:

i. It is a new property and the developer has already purchased the bins. This charge is in place currently.

ii. Where the crew report that the bin fell into the back of the refuse freighter or the bin was damaged during emptying e.g. the lid was caught and damaged.

Due to the increase in the unit cost of bins, it is proposed to increase the charge to developers from £42 to £60 for a black and blue bin

Service Area - Operations	Fee/Charge Description	Current Fee/Charge Amount	New Fee/Charge Amount	Increase	% Increase	Cost Recovery?
Bulky Waste	Collection of bulky waste 1-5 items	£32.00	£45.00	£13.00	41%	Yes
Bulky Waste	Collection of bulky waste 1-5 items discount rate (Council Tax reduction)	£16.00	£22.50	£6.50	41%	Yes
Bulky Waste	Collection of bulky waste 6-10 items (in addition to above)	£46.50	£90.00	£43.50	94%	Yes
Bulky Waste	Collection of bulky waste 11-15 items		£135.00			
Refuse Collection	Replacement Bin Cost - replacement of wheeled bins (black and blue bins) to		£30 + VAT	£30 + VAT	100%	Yes
Refuse Collection	New Bins Cost	£42 +VAT	£60 +VAT	£18 + VAT	43%	Yes

Service Area - Parks	Fee/Charge Description	Current Fee/Charge Amount	New Fee/Charge Amount	Increase	% Increase	Cost Recovery?
The setting of fees and charges for activities and facilities in West Suffolk's parks and open spaces are reviewed on an annual basis from a cost recovery perspective in terms of time and resource required to deliver the service. An annual review of fees and charges is an integral part of the annual service planning cycle and the anticipated income forms part of the councils base budget.						
Parks Service	Tennis - Abbey Gardens	£2.08 per court per hour	£5.00	£2.20	79%	Yes
Parks Service	Ranger Time - Supporting Events	£21.00	£30.00	£9.00	43%	Yes
Parks Service	Changing Room Hire / Toilet Facilities	£21.00 per hour	£23.19	£2.19	10%	Yes
Parks Service	Hire of Space for Funfairs and Circuses - Oakes Road, Recreation Ground, George Lambton Playing Fields	£27.00 per non-operating day	£35.00	£8.00	30%	Yes
Parks Service	Fishing permit for 12 months - adult	£10.83	£12.50	£1.67	15%	Yes
Parks Service	Fishing permit for 12 months - junior	£5.42	£6.25	£0.83	15%	Yes
Parks Service	Commercial Public Events (Non Ticketed) - up to 500 people	£500.00	£774.00	£274.00	55%	Yes
Parks Service	Commercial Public Events (Non Ticketed) - 501-1000 people	£750.00	£1,032.00	£282.00	38%	Yes
Parks Service	Commercial Public Events (Non Ticketed) - 1001-5000 people	£1,000.00	£1,548.00	£548.00	55%	Yes
Parks Service	Commercial Public Events (Non Ticketed) - 1001-5000 people	£1,100.00	£2,064.00	£964.00	88%	Yes
Parks Service	Commercial Public Events (Non Ticketed) - over 5000 people	£1,200.00	£3,096.00	£1,896.00	158%	Yes
Parks Service	Commercial Public Events (Ticketed)	£1 per ticket sold	£1.50	£0.50	50%	Yes
Service Area - Heritage	Fee/Charge Description	Current Fee/Charge Amount	New Fee/Charge Amount	Increase	% Increase	Cost Recovery?
The entrance fees for West Suffolk Councils heritage attractions have not been changed since 2019. The increases included here factor in the inflation incurred on costs in that time, benchmarking against other attractions and also the alignment of pricing across the two sites.						
Heritage Services	Entrance fees to West Stow					
Heritage Services	Day ticket - Adult	£5.00	£6.00	£1.00	20%	Yes
Heritage Services	Day ticket - Concessions	£4.00	£5.00	£1.00	25%	Yes
Heritage Services	Day ticket - Children	£3.00	£4.00	£1.00	33%	Yes
Heritage Services	Day ticket - Family	£16.00	£19.00	£3.00	19%	Yes
Heritage Services	Annual ticket - Adult	£12.00	£14.00	£2.00	17%	Yes
Heritage Services	Annual ticket - Concessions	£8.00	£12.00	£4.00	50%	Yes
Heritage Services	Annual ticket - Children	£6.00	£8.00	£2.00	33%	Yes
Heritage Services	Annual ticket - Family	£40.00	£42.00	£2.00	5%	Yes
Heritage Services	Entrance fees to Moyse's Hall					
Heritage Services	Day ticket - Adult	£5.00	£6.00	£1.00	20%	Yes
Heritage Services	Day ticket - Concession	£3.00	£5.00	£2.00	67%	Yes
Heritage Services	Day ticket - Children	£3.00	£4.00	£1.00	33%	Yes
Heritage Services	Day ticket - Family	£15.00	£19.00	£4.00	27%	Yes
Heritage Services	Annual ticket - Adult	£12.00	£14.00	£2.00	17%	Yes
Heritage Services	Annual ticket - Concessions	£8.00	£12.00	£4.00	50%	Yes
Heritage Services	Annual ticket - Children	£6.00	£8.00	£2.00	33%	Yes
Heritage Services	Annual ticket - Family	£40.00	£42.00	£2.00	5%	Yes

Service Area - Licensing	Fee/Charge Description	Current Fee/Charge Amount	New Fee/Charge Amount	Increase	% Increase	Cost Recovery?
<p>West Suffolk Council has been providing Endorsement for Export (EfE) to businesses for many years, for which we levy a cost-recovery fee. The Commercial Environmental Health team process approximately 70 EfE's per month.</p> <p>The fee was previously reviewed in 2015-16 when it was increased from £19 to £39 per EfE issued. West Suffolk Council needs to demonstrate that the fees it charges for EfE have been set in accordance with best practice, so as to recover its allowable costs in providing this discretionary service.</p> <p>The tasks associated with the new EfE processing were identified and amount of time spent per EfE calculated based on real-time monitoring of tasks by an Environmental Health Officer.</p>						
Food Safety	Endorsement for Export - hard copy	£39.00	£63.00	£24.00	62%	Yes
<p>The fees had a light touch review in 2019 when single council was introduced and were last fully reviewed in 2014. The current annual income is £15,000. The aim of this review has been to ensure that the Council recovers the costs associated with processing animal licensing applications. This has included splitting the fees between new and renewal applications.</p>						
Animal Licensing	Animal Boarding/Day Care Application Fee	£147.17	£200.26	£53.09	36%	Yes
Animal Licensing	Pet Shops Application Fee	£186.17	£218.46	£32.29	17%	Yes
Animal Licensing	Keeping Animals for Exhibition Application	£134.17	£182.05	£47.88	36%	Yes
Animal Licensing	Breeding and Riding Application Fee	£186.17	£218.46	£32.29	17%	Yes
<p>The skin piercing application process is being reviewed in its entirety. The West Suffolk byelaws have been updated and the Commercial Environmental Health team will be updating their database information held as part of the review project. The council receive approximately 15 skin piercing applications, both new and variation, per year.</p> <p>The fees for skin piercing registration (acupuncture, tattooing, ear piercing and electrolysis) were last uplifted in 2014. The council needs to review and uplift these fees to ensure that they accurately cover the costs involved in processing applications.</p>						
Skin Piercing	Skin Piercing premises initial registration	£185.00	£271.00	£86.00	46%	Yes
Skin Piercing	Skin Piercing practitioner initial registration	£185.00	£181.00	-£4.00	-2%	Yes
Skin Piercing	Skin Piercing registration variation	£90.00	£203.00	£113.00	126%	Yes
<p>Price Increase of Less than 5% but of Public Interest</p>						
Service Area - Garden Waste	Fee/Charge Description	Current Fee/Charge Amount	New Fee/Charge Amount	Increase	% Increase	Cost Recovery?
<p>The Garden Waste (Brown Bin) subscription fees are planned to increase by £2 in June 2022. This increase is to cover the increasing costs of supplying the services and is also benchmarked across other Garden Waste services supplied across Suffolk (East Suffolk £45 pa, Babergh £55 pa, Mid Suffolk £52.50 pa)</p>						
Garden Waste	Annual subscription for garden waste	£43.00	£45.00	£2.00	4.7%	Yes