

Portfolio Holder Decision

Increasing Fees and Charges 2023-2024 within Trading Standards & Calibration Services (Environment Services)

Portfolio Holder	Portfolio Holder for Fire & Rescue and Community Safety
Date of decision	7 August 2023
	Signed 

1. Decision taken

That the Portfolio Holder for Fire & Rescue and Community Safety approves the increase in Trading Standards and Calibration Services fees and charges for 2023/2024 as set out in the report at Appendix 1.

2. Reasons for decisions

- 2.1 It is a requirement within Warwickshire County Council's Constitution that the Portfolio Holder for Fire & Rescue and Community Safety approves proposed increases to the Fees and Charges levied by Warwickshire Trading Standards (including Calibration Services), prior to them increasing.

- 2.2 It is the County Council's practice, that fees and charges are reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that they continue to offer value for money and to ensure the fees provide an adequate method of cost recovery for the Council. In calculating the fees and charges for 2023-2024 a review of the current charging structure was carried out and bench marking comparisons were made with other similar sized Local Authorities during 2022, to ensure that they are fully reflective of the full costs to the council and in line with the government and commercial sector. The findings from the review formed part of the fees and charges proposal for 2023/2024 (see Appendix 1), and It was noted that the current hourly rate calculation was comparable with those other Trading Standards Services.

- 2.3 An increase in the Trading Standards Officer hourly rate of 8.1% is proportionate and lower than the headline Consumer Prices Index (CPI) figure of 10.5% (December 2022).

3. Background information

- 3.1 The fees increase for a fully qualified Trading Standards Officer from £74.00 per hour (2022-2023) to £80.00 per hour is proportionate; an increase of 8.1%, which is lower than the headline Consumer Prices Index (CPI) rate of inflation of 10.5% (December 2022).
- 3.2 Appendix 1 to the report details the proposed fees and charges to be used by the Trading Standards and Calibration Services teams during 2023-2024.
- 3.3 The proposed fees have been rounded to the nearest twenty-five pence (25p).
- 3.4 The fees and charges structure for 2023-2024 include suitable inflationary rises, such as salary costs, additional fuel costs and other operating overheads and, followed a bench marking exercise with other similar sized Trading Standards Services, to ensure that the proposed fees were competitive.
- 3.5 Some fees (notably Petroleum Storage, Explosives Licences and Animal Feed Hygiene Approvals) are governed by legislation and cannot be changed independently. The public weighbridge fees are not increased every year to avoid inconvenience to customers caused by small coinage. This means that such fees are held over and increased periodically.
- 3.6 The new Trading Standards and Calibration Services fees and charge's structure applies for the financial year 2023/24.
- 3.7 It is usual practice for this report to be brought in advance of the financial year to which the changes apply. This has not been possible this year as the report writer did not have access to the system until recently. Subject to Portfolio Holder approval, the amended fees will be applied to work already undertaken within the financial year. Between April and July 2023, fees have been agreed on an individual basis with those parties utilising the service. Systems have been put in place, to ensure reports are submitted for consideration prior to the beginning of the next financial year.

4. Financial implications

- 4.1 The changes to the Trading Standards' Fees and Charges for 2023-2024 should allow for appropriate maintenance of income reflecting the additional costs incurred due to inflation and cost recovery.

5. Environmental implications

- 5.1 None

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Director	Scott Tompkins, Director – Environmental Services
Executive Director	Mark Ryder - Executive Director for Communities
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Crump Portfolio Holder for Fire & Rescue and Community Safety

Urgent matter?	No
Confidential or exempt?	Yes – Calibration Services fees are commercially sensitive and should never be published outside of WCC.
Is the decision contrary to the budget and policy framework?	No

List of background papers

- 1) *Appendix 1 – Fees and Charges within Trading Standards and Calibration Services entitled “Draft Trading Standards Service Fees and Charges – 2023-2024”.*

Members and officers consulted and informed

Portfolio Holder –	Councillor Crump
Corporate Board –	Mark Ryder
Legal –	Caroline Gutteridge & Nic Vine
Finance –	Andrew Felton
Procurement -	John Hopper
Equality –	Joanna Kemp
Democratic Services –	Isabelle Moorhouse
Councillors –	Clarke, Chilvers, Fradgley and Feeney
Local Member(s):	<i>Not Applicable</i>