



**Clackmannanshire  
Council**

[www.clacksweb.org.uk](http://www.clacksweb.org.uk)

### **Charging Policy**

**This policy sets out Clackmannanshire's policy regarding service fees and charges for services.**

#### Introduction

Clackmannanshire Council has a statutory duty to provide certain services to the public. There are no charges for these services except where charges are set by statute. (e.g. planning applications, building control) or legislation (e.g. licensing)

The Council provides other, discretionary services, some of which are provided at a cost to the customer. Others have, historically, been provided free of charge.

#### Principles

- 1: The Council must provide services which are defined as a statutory duty
- 2: The Council may also choose to provide discretionary services, depending on the identified needs of the population of Clackmannanshire.
- 3: The Council will agree the charges for each discretionary service provided as part of the budget process each year.
- 4: The Council will benchmark the charges it makes against other Scottish Councils to ensure charges and fees are neither too high or too low.
- 5: Services should identify and recover the full cost of providing discretionary services to ensure that such costs are covered by the charges made.
- 6: The Council will consult with the public and identified stakeholders when significant changes to existing charges and fees are being considered.

- 7: The Council can choose to provide services through a third party supplier or provider. Any such arrangement should be procured through the agreed procurement arrangements and in compliance with Contract Standing Orders.
- 8: The ability of those in receipt of services to pay proposed rates should be considered as a factor when proposals for increased charges are being compiled.
- 9: The cost of invoicing and recovering income due should be taken into account when considering charges and fees for services. Charges of less than £20 will cost the Council more to process than the income generated. This figure will reduce as more transactions are carried out electronically.
- 10: Where possible, the Council should be encouraging customers to pay invoices electronically or through on-line facilities.

### Summary

The Council should seek to ensure best value for all residents of Clackmannanshire.

Statutory services will be provided free of charge to residents of Clackmannanshire, except where statute or legislation levies a charge.

Discretionary services will be provided at a reasonable cost.

Charges and fees will be reviewed on an annual basis as part of the budget setting process.

## **Income and Charging 2014/15**

### **Rationale for changes in 2014/15**

The annual review of the Council's Income and Charging Policy has taken place as part of the budget challenge process during the period from June to December 2013. All aspects of the Council's income and expenditure were taken into account including comparison with other Councils, discussion with services and consideration of service proposals to introduce a service charge or increase charges in some areas.

Discussions and consultation with elected members, service management teams and other stakeholder groups were carried out in December 2013.

### **Charges for 2014 - 2015**

A general increase in fees and charges of 2.5% is proposed. This is based on RPI of 2.6% as at September 2013 less 0.1%. This increase is reflected in Appendix E1.

An exercise has also been carried out to bring all charges to a rounded figure rather than odd pence. This has resulted in some charges remaining the same with others either increasing or decreasing. The effect of rounding is shown in the column next to the effect of the 2.5% increase.

Some charges will be applied depending on an assessment of individual financial circumstances. These are identified within the comments column.

Where charges have been introduced for the first time, this is identified in Appendix E1.

Some fees are set by statute and cannot be increased by the Council. Where this is the case, the Council charges the maximum allowed. Two sets of charges are dependent on Stirling Council, therefore the final charges for these services will not be confirmed until Stirling Council has set its budget, probably in February 2014.

### **General Comments**

Any services provided by Clackmannanshire Council should be for residents of Clackmannanshire only. Residents are provided with a card that is proof of residency. All services should check evidence of residency to ensure that the service is being provided for Clackmannanshire residents. A charge should be made for non-residents using Clackmannanshire services. (eg waste disposal, dog bags)

The Council will promote the use of its website and the option to down load documents. This will reduce costs associated with printing, administration and

postage and also reduce the number of calls to the Council releasing efficiencies.

Commercial waste collection is currently charged in arrears. Consideration should be given to a policy change to payment in advance. There are advantages in this approach in reducing debt and the cost of debt recovery. Debt recovery costs include time spent in legal services, revenues and in court - usually for relatively small claims (less than £400)

Areas where other Scottish Councils can earn significant income are not available to Clackmannanshire. The larger Councils charge for location filming for TV and the film industry, wedding venues and photography and theatres. Clackmannanshire has limited opportunities for this type of high income generation.

A full charging register is now available and is published on the Council's website. This register will be updated with the new charges for 2014/15 once the Council's budget is set.

### Summary

The charges set out in Appendix E1 will be those charged for fees and services from April 2014 to March 2015.

A further review of fees and charges will take place as part of the budget challenge process for 2015/16.

Appendix E1 - Charging register 2014/15 with proposals for increased charges and suggested introduction of charges identified.