

## **North Somerset Council Decision**

**Decision Of: Executive Member for Children, Young People, Lifelong Learning and Skills**  
**With Advice From: Director of Children's Services**  
**Directorate: Children's Services**



**DECISION NO: CY97 (2022/23 scheme)**

**SUBJECT: Fees and Charges Uplifts 2023/24 – Music Services and Nurseries**

**KEY DECISION: NO**

**REASON:** Not a material financial or service impact on communities in multiple wards.

### **BACKGROUND:**

Fees and charges represent an important source of income, providing finance to assist in achieving the Council's broad objectives. Some of our fees and charges are effectively set by legislation, but many are locally determined.

Income derived from charging will be used to offset the costs of providing the service being charged for, including support service costs. In setting an appropriate level of fees and charges, managers also take into account their client groups and corporate objectives.

The proposed increases in fees and charges detailed in this report are necessary to meet increased costs and budgetary pressures to which the Council is subject and will ensure that the contribution made by fees and charges to the Council's overall income budget is maintained. Full details of the proposed fees and charges for 2023-24 are set out at Appendix 1 and a summary is provided below.

The new charges have been set in accordance with the revised principles and guidance in relation to the setting of fees and charges approved by the Executive in February 2016.

Directors are empowered to make decisions to increase fees and charges up to and including increases of 5% and Executive Members are empowered to make decision to increase fees and charges up to and including increase of 10%.

### **DECISION:**

To approve the 2023/4 fees and charges as set out in the report and in Appendix 1.

## **DETAILS AND REASONS:**

### **Music Services (increases to apply from September 2023)**

#### Musical Instrument Hire

Instrument hire charges fall into five categories depending upon the purchase cost and ongoing maintenance of particular instruments. To encourage young people to learn instruments the hire fee is kept low to minimise the barrier of instrument costs. As the stock of instruments ages and suffers increasing wear and tear, we do need to generate more income to cover maintenance and repair costs to keep the instruments usable and in circulation. Fee increases range from 5.7% to 8.4%.

#### North Somerset Centre for Young Musicians Membership Fees

Fees for ensemble membership are kept as low as possible to ensure accessibility. The increase in rates offset increased teacher and venue costs.

Fee increases range from 7.1% to 9.1%. Teachers' salary, national insurance and pension increases must be recouped fully through fees. Additional increases are in response to changes in the pattern of demand resulting from Covid. Demand for lessons has reduced, as a result of discontinuity of activity in schools (for which parents are charged) and our inability to recruit new students in the normal way. As a result, teachers are having to teach in more schools, which increases up travel costs.

In line with expectations from our funders (DfE) the Council has a remission of fees (for low income families) policy.

#### Instrumental Lessons

Historically we have traded directly with schools. However, in response to school demand and good business practice, we now offer schools the option of us billing parents directly. The charges are based on a teacher cost of c. £40 per hour. 4 different charge bands allow parents to choose a service they can afford and aligns with the type of lessons offered via the school billing method (ie, no significant change to parents).

### **Nursery Fees (1 April 2023)**

At the Council's nurseries, there are a mix of government funded and private fee-paying parents. Charges only apply to all children under 3 years old not claiming funding, and to children over 3, who are paying for hours outside of the funded hours offered. Increases range from 4.3% to 4.8% to reflect cost inflation in the service.

### **OPTIONS CONSIDERED:**

The proposed fee increases described above are necessary to ensure that current levels of services are maintained. The alternative would be to cut services. Fee increases are undertaken only after due process and deliberations at Management and Executive levels. As part of this process all options are considered and discussed. The changes are considered appropriate to reflect increasing costs / cost recovery.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

The Medium Term Financial Plan includes an increase in budgeted income for 2023/24 to reflect inflation. The proposed revision of fees and charges is designed to meet this income target. There are risks associated with the revised fees where those service users who are impacted are the most vulnerable in community. Unrecoverable non-payment could increase the levels of debts held by the Council.

### **LEGAL POWERS AND IMPLICATIONS**

Various legal powers allow the Council to make a charge for certain services. Charging decisions are fettered by a complex series of statutes and regulations. Services fall into five main categories for charging purposes. These categories are set out in the table below.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<b>No charge permitted</b>	Service assessment for community care
<b>Charges or charging scheme set by government – little or no local input</b>	Client contributions for social services residential provision
<b>Charging scheme set locally but must be in accordance with government prescribed principles</b>	Client contributions for social services non-residential provision
<b>Charge set locally, but essentially income cannot exceed the cost of providing a service</b>	Charge for a discretionary service with no other charging rules Charge for a service provided using the general power of competence

### **CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

None identified

### **CONSULTATION**

A general uplift of 1.25% on the council's income budgets has been reflected as a savings proposal within the medium term financial plan since January 2020 and, as such, has been subject to review, scrutiny and consultation by a wide range of internal and external stakeholders. The uplifts contained here are consistent with the Council's fees and charges policy.

**RISK MANAGEMENT**

There are risks associated with the revised fees where service users who are impacted are the most vulnerable in community. Unrecoverable non-payment would increase the levels of debts held by the Council.

**EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

Have you undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment? Yes / No  
Over-arching EIA included within MTFP budget report. Because of the extent of the increases (none more than 5%), no material disproportionate impacts have been identified.

**CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

No, other than those identified above

**APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Proposed Changes to Fees and Charges

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Revenue Budget & Medium Term Financial Planning reports - Executive Jan and Feb 2022.  
Fees and Charges Policy – Executive February 2016.

SIGNATORIES:

DECISION MAKER(S):



Signed:

Title: Executive Member for Children, Young People, Lifelong Learning and Skills

Date: 09.2.23

WITH ADVICE FROM



Signed:

Title: Director of Children’s Services

Date: 09.02.23

**Footnote: Details of changes made and agreed by the decision taker since publication of the proposed (pre-signed) decision notice, if applicable:**



## APPENDIX 1 – Proposed Fees and Charges 2023/4

<b>Music Service (changes to apply from 1 September 2023)</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24 proposed</b>	<b>Increase</b>
Musical Instrument Hire Category 1 (4 months)	£18.45	£20.00	8.4%
Musical Instrument Hire Category 2 (4 months)	£26.50	£28.00	5.7%
Musical Instrument Hire Category 3 (4 months)	£28.75	£31.00	7.8%
Musical Instrument Hire Category 4 (4 months)	£36.50	£39.00	6.8%
Musical Instrument Hire Category 5 (4 month)	£41.00	£44.00	7.3%
NSCYM Junior membership fee (9 sessions)	£50.50	£55.00	8.9%
NSCYM Senior membership fee (9 sessions)	£56.00	£61.00	8.9%
NSCYM Pop & Rick School (9 sessions)	£49.50	£54.00	9.1%
Jazz Orchestra membership fee (9 sessions)	£39.00	£42.00	7.7%
NSCYM all other groups membership (9 sessions)	£28.00	£30.00	7.1%
Instrumental Lessons – Group Lesson x 10	£67.00	£72.00	7.5%
Instrumental Lessons – Paired Lesson x 10	£100.00	£107.50	7.5%
Instrumental Lessons – Individual 20 mins x 10	£134.00	£144.00	7.5%
Instrumental Lessons – Individual 30 mins x 10	£200.00	£215.00	7.5%

<b>Council Nurseries (Hourly Rates)</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24 proposed</b>	<b>Increase</b>
Early Birds Nursery 0 – 2	£6.60	£6.90	4.5%
Early Birds Nursery 2 – 3+	£6.40	£6.70	4.7%
Little Waves Community Nursery 0 – 2	£7.50	£7.80	4.0%
Little Waves Community Nursery 2 – 3	£6.20	£6.50	4.8%
Little Waves Community Nursery 3+	£5.80	£6.05	4.3%
Ashcombe Children’s Centre Nursery 2 – 3	£6.20	£6.50	4.8%
Ashcombe Children’s Centre Nursery 3+	£5.80	£6.05	4.3%