

Annual Review of Charges – Special Services

Report of the Treasurer

For further information about this report please contact Keith Dixon, Treasurer, on 01743 260202.

1 Purpose of Report

To present proposed increases in charges made for special services.

2 Recommendations

The Fire Authority is asked to approve that the proposed charges for special services be applied from 1 April 2007.

3 Background

Charging for special services is currently permitted by Orders issued under Section 19 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. These Orders simply replicate the permissions that were previously available under the Fire Services Act 1947, but Section 19 would permit an extension of charging powers, subject to appropriate consultation.

To date, therefore, the Fire Authority has kept a watching brief, ensuring that its charging tariff was updated to meet inflation each year. Members were, however, aware of impending guidance from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and, in approving inflationary increases to charges in February 2006, acknowledged that these would be reviewed once that guidance had been issued.

4 Consultation on Charging Order

The DCLG issued a consultation document, "Limited Consultation Exercise on Extension to Charging Order by Fire and Rescue Authorities", in late 2006. The primary purpose of this consultation is to gauge the interest among Fire and Rescue Authorities for extending current charging regimes, prior to committing resources to a full consultation.



The Fire Authority's response to the consultation was presented to the Strategy and Resources Committee in January, and stated that there is no great enthusiasm to extend charging into controversial areas. Officers are, however, keen that the Fire Authority's tariff can measure itself against other authorities and justify its Income Generation Policy to the public, auditors and other interested parties.

A draft guidance note has also been issued, and comments are sought on this, with the view of publishing a final document in 2007. The main concerns of the note are around the issue of not making a profit, and it also looks at areas, such as advertising, use of masts etc.

5 The Fire Authority's Current Charges

The Fire Authority agreed to review its charges in detail once more information became available from DCLG. With the exception of the draft guidance note, little has been issued to assist with the annual review of charges.

A review of our current tariff of charges has been undertaken by officers, in terms of the relevance and justification of current charges. A number of amendments have been proposed, and both the existing and the new tariffs are attached to this report. In terms of annual increase, charges have been increased by the July 2006 pay award of 2.7%.

Work is ongoing on the review of charging tariffs within the region, and charges cannot be proposed until this work is complete.

6 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report other than those discussed within the report

7 Legal Comment

The Fire Authority has the power to impose special charges only in certain circumstances.

8 Equality Impact Assessment

Officers have considered the Service's Brigade Order on Equality Impact Assessments (Personnel 5 Part 2) and have decided that there are no discriminatory practices or differential impacts upon specific groups arising from this report. An Initial Equality Impact Assessment has not, therefore, been completed.



9 Appendices

Appendix A	Revised Special Service Charges from April 2006
Appendix B	Revised Special Service Charges from April 2007

10 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.

Implications of all of the following have been considered and, where they are significant (i.e. marked with an asterisk), the implications are detailed within the report itself.

Balanced Score Card		Integrated Risk Management Planning	
Business Continuity Planning		Legal	*
Capacity		Member Involvement	
Civil Contingencies Act		National Framework	
Comprehensive Performance Assessment		Operational Assurance	
Efficiency Savings		Retained	
Environmental		Risk and Insurance	
Financial	*	Staff	
Fire Control/Fire Link		Strategic Planning	
Information Communications and Technology		West Midlands Regional Management Board	
Freedom of Information / Data Protection / Environmental Information		Equality Impact Assessment	*



Revised Special Service Charges From 1 April 2006 (excluding VAT)

		Recommended Charges 1 April 2006
(i)	Personnel	
	Charge per person (irrespective of rank) per hour	£41.00 per hour
(ii)	Appliances and Vehicles	
	a) Normal Pumping Appliances	£197.00 per hour with crew
	b) Major Appliance, Aerial Ladder Platform, Heavy Pumping Unit	£262.00 per hour with crew
	c) Turntable Ladder	£158.00 per hour with crew
	d) Special Appliances, Light Pumping Unit, Pods, Boat and Utility Vehicles	£66.00 per hour with crew
(iii)	Other Charges	
	a) Copy of Official Document Fire Report (FDR1)	£47.00
	b) Copy of Fire Investigation Report – charge based on one officer for 10 hours	£231.00
	c) Copy of Means of Escape Certificate	Cost is based on time spent preparing the Certificate – minimum charge £47.00 as in (iii) a) above
	d) Search of Files	£27.00 per hour + cost of documents
	e) Copy of Fire Regulations*	£6.00
	f) Interview (Fire Assessors)	£52.00

Explanatory Notes

Part of an hour counts as a complete hour.

* Where a request falls under the Freedom of Information Act charges will be made in accordance with that Act.



Revised Special Service Charges From 1 April 2007 (excluding VAT)

	Present Charges set 1 April 2006	Recommended Charges 1 April 2007
(i)	Appliances and Vehicles	
	a) Normal Pumping Appliances £197.00 per hour	£202.00 per hour with crew
	b) Major Appliance, i.e. Aerial Ladder Platform, Heavy Pumping Unit (includes pumping appliance) £262.00 per hour	£269.00 per hour with crew
	c) Other Special Appliances, i.e. Light Pumping Unit, Pods, Boat, Ford Rangers and Incident Command Unit £66.00 per hour	£68.00 per hour with crew
(ii)	Other Charges	
	a) Copy of Official Document Fire Report (FDR1) £47.00	£48.00
	b) Copy of Fire Investigation Report – charge based on one Officer for 10 hours £231.00	£237.00
	c) Copy of Means of Escape Certificate £47.00	Cost is based on time spent preparing the Certificate – minimum charge £48.00 as in (ii) a) above
	d) Search of Files* £27.00 per hour + cost of documents	£27.50 per hour + cost of documents
	e) Copy of Fire Regulations* £6.00	£6.25
	f) Interview (Fire Assessors) £52.00	£53.00

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