

## **Somerset Council Port and Harbour Fees and Charges**

Chair of Committee: Councillor Andy Sully

Executive Member: Councillor Federica Smith Roberts, Lead Member for Communities, Housing Revenue Account, Culture and, Equalities and Diversity

Local Members and Divisions affected: Councillor Mandy Chilcott & Councillor Andy Hadley – Minehead, Councillor Hilary Bruce & Councillor Leigh Redman - Bridgwater North & Central, Councillor Hugh Davies & Councillor Rosemary Woods – Watchet and Stogursey

Executive Director: Chris Hall,

### **1. Executive Summary**

This report is being brought to the Committee to highlight the Fees and Charges structure for 2025/26

### **2. Recommendations**

That the Committee;

- (a) note the proposed 25/26 charges; and
- (b) recommend the Fees and Charges increases for the Port of Bridgwater and Watchet and Minehead harbours set out in Appendix A of this report, to the Executive meeting on 3 February ahead of the Full Council meeting on 19 February for consideration as a part of the Council's annual budget setting process.

### **3. Reasons for Proposals**

As part of the Governance Structure for Ports and Harbours at Somerset Council Officers are required to bring the Fees and Charges through this Committee.

## **Main report and supporting information**

### **4. Background and purpose of report**

#### **Service/Fee Name: Port and Harbour Services (Port of Bridgwater and Minehead and Watchet Harbours)**

##### **Overview**

Somerset Council have port/harbour services in area North (Bridgwater) and West (Minehead and Watchet) . The Ports are different in terms of their operation/ customer base.

The Port of Bridgwater provides a port and pilotage services to commercial vessels and does not own any berths/terminals. Whereas Minehead and Watchet have no pilotage service but do own harbours at Minehead and Watchet and some berths and slipways that it uses to generate income.

### **5. Fees and Charges Harmonisation**

Due to the differences in operation between the Port of Bridgwater and Watchet and Minehead Harbours their charges relate to different activities for example:

- Port of Bridgwater charges commercial vessels for using the port and charges pilotage fees.
- Minehead and Watchet charges berthing fees and slipway fees

Part 1 of this report deals with fees and charges for the Port of Bridgwater and Part 2 deals with fees and charges for Minehead and Watchet Harbours

#### **Part - 1 Port of Bridgwater**

### **6. Background**

Port of Bridgwater is a statutory Harbour Authority and contained within both local and national legislation is the power to make charges to use the port. The Port of Bridgwater does not own terminals or berths within the port area so its fees and charges are made for commercial shipping using the port or for using the ports pilotage service.

### **7. Legal Authority**

The legal authority for charging is contained with both local and national legislation including:

- Bridgwater Navigation and Quays Act 1845
- Harbours Act 1964
- The Pilotage Act 1987

## **8. Equality Impact Assessment**

There are no proposed changes to the charging policy, therefore No Equality Impact Assessment is required.

## **9. Fees & Charges**

The proposed fees and charges for the Port of Bridgwater have been increased by a minimum of 3% to take account of inflation.

## **10. Budget Impact**

The Port budget is reliant on number of movements on one main customer, EDF. This is dependent on the number of shipping movements, linked in with the progress of the build at HPC.

The charges have only been increased in line with inflation.

## **11. Recommendation for Fees and Charges**

It is recommended that the proposed fees and charges for the Port of Bridgwater contained within the fees and charges appendix are approved.

## **Part 2 - Watchet and Minehead Harbours**

### **12. Background**

There are Council owned Harbours at Minehead and Watchet. The former is used for moorings for leisure craft and small fishing boats whilst the latter is not used for moorings at all (as there is an adjacent Marina).

The income from moorings has always been insufficient to maintain their statutory compliance.

In recent years Council have continued to invest in the Harbours at an increase cost to the taxpayer. The goal should be for the Harbours to be self-financing, however the increase in moorings fees required to achieve this would be unsustainable.

The proposed fees and charges for the Harbours have been increased by a minimum of 3% to take account of inflation.

### **13. Equality Impact Assessment**

An EIA has been completed and we do not foresee any disproportionate positive or negative impacts to protected groups.

### **14. Fees & Charges**

To increase income to cover costs all fees have gone up by between 3-4%. Some new fees have been added (paddleboards) and some have been deleted to ensure that the maximum amount of sustainable income is being generated. Summary of significant changes are:

- Including Paddleboards as part of the launch fee structure
- Some amendments to the wording, mainly the removal of per metre or part metre, for clarity

The proposed fees and charges for Watchet and Minehead Harbours are detailed in the fees and charges appendix A.

## **15. Budget Impact**

Income continues to be dependent on users of the Harbour.

## **16. Recommendation on Fees and Charges**

It is recommended to increase the fees and charges between 3%-4% for the Harbours at Minehead and Watchet as detailed in the fees and charges appendix.

## **17. Links to Council Plan and Medium-Term Financial Plan**

Increasing these charges by between 3%-4% will keep them in line with inflation and continue to support the medium-term financial plan

## **18. Other options considered**

The Council could have increased the Charges further this year. However, given that the charges brought in last year were new, they have just been increased in line with inflation.

## **19. Key considerations for the Council**

### **Scrutiny comments / recommendations:**

This report has not been considered by a Scrutiny Committee, but the Chair of Scrutiny Communities has been consulted on this report.

## **20. Consultation and feedback**

No consultation has taken place. Feedback has been received asking for greater clarity on the wording within the fees and charges document and Somerset Council has tried to accommodate this.

## **21. Financial and Risk Implications**

All Fees and Charges from April 2025 will be approved by Council as part of the Budget Papers for 2025/26. Any adjustments to the budget for additional fees received will be made as part of this paper also. The fees and charges in Appendix A, will collect a small amount of income for the Council.

There is a Risk that numbers of service users reduce over the year and the full income

is not achieved. Given the size of the budget, this is a small amount of income however, so the risk is low.

Current Risk Score:

Likelihood		Impact		Risk Score	
------------	--	--------	--	------------	--

Projected risk score if recommended actions are agreed and delivered:

Likelihood		Impact		Risk Score	
------------	--	--------	--	------------	--

## 22. Legal and Procurement Implications

The Council's Constitution, Part D11-Harbour Management Advisory Committee terms of reference, states that the Committee will review and recommend an annual budget, (including rental charges and central re-charges to the Council) and an annual schedule of charges and dues for the Harbours and these will be determined by the Executive.

The Harbour Management Advisory Committee is primarily responsible for advising the Executive in exercising the Council's functions as a harbour authority as defined in the Harbours Act 1964 and any other functions arising under any local Act and/or byelaw in respect of the operational issues in relation to harbour land of any harbours within the area of the Council not dealt with through any other mechanism.

## 23. HR / Workforce Implications

No implications.

## 24. Equalities Implications

No Equalities impact assessment needed as there are no new charges, the only change is the inflationary increase.

## 25. Community Safety Implications

No implications.

## 26. Climate Change and Sustainability Implications

There are no positive or negative impacts as a result of this Fees and Charges report. This report is covering the inflationary increase of Fees and Charges only.

## 27. Health and Safety Implications

There are no increased risks to Health and Safety because of this report.

## 28. Health and Wellbeing Implications

There are no implications to health and wellbeing in our communities as a result of this fees and charges document.

## 29. Social Value

The Fees and Charges report does not have any social impact implications.

## 30. Background Papers

None

## 31. Appendices

Appendix A – Harbours and Ports Jan 2025

<b>Report assurance</b>	<b>Officer Name</b>	<b>Date Completed</b>
Legal & Governance Implications	Scott Wooldridge / Jill Byron	14/01/2025
Finance & Procurement	Nicola Hix	15/01/2025
Workforce (*)	Dawn Bettridge	13/01/2025
Asset Management (*)	Simon Lewis	09/01/2025
Executive Director	Chris Hall	14/01/2025
Executive Lead Member	Councillor Federica Smith-Roberts	15/01/2025
<b>Consulted:</b>		
Local Division Members	Councillor Mandy Chilcott & Councillor Andy Hadley – Minehead, Councillor Hilary Bruce & Councillor Leigh Redman - Bridgwater North & Central, Councillor Hugh Davies & Councillor Rosemary Woods – Watchet and Stogursey	09/01/2025
Opposition Spokesperson	Councillor Suria Aujla	09/01/2025
Relevant Scrutiny Chair	Councillor Gwil Wren	09/01/2025