

Revenue - Council Policy

Effective Date	1 July 2023
Policy Owner	Finance
Link to Corporate Plan	Sustainable Organisation
Review Date	June 2024
Related Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Local Government Act 2009</i> • <i>Local Government Regulation 2012</i>
Related Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revenue Statement, and • Debt Collection Policy

Policy Version	Approval Date	Adopted/Approved
1	21/06/2023	Special Meeting of Council - Adopt 2023/24 Budget - 21 June 2023

This policy may not be current as Council regularly reviews and updates its policies. The latest controlled version can be found in the policies section of Council's intranet or Website.

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1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Revenue Policy is to state:

1. the principles used by Council for:
 - a. levying rates and charges,
 - b. granting concessions for rates and charges,
 - c. recovering overdue rates and charges,
 - d. cost recovery methods, and;
 - e. implementing commercial fees for activities that Council may undertake which are not core services of Council.
2. the purpose for concessions that Council intends to grant; and
3. the extent to which physical and social infrastructure costs for a new development are to be funded by charges for the development.

2. SCOPE

Section 104(5)(c)(iii) of the *Local Government Act 2009*, requires Council to have a system of financial management that includes a revenue policy. Section 193 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* requires Council to review its revenue policy annually in sufficient time to allow it to adopt for the next financial year an annual budget that is consistent with the policy. This policy will be used in developing Council's annual budget and to guide the development of the Revenue Statement for the 2023-24 financial year.

3. POLICY

3.1. Levying rates and charges

Council levies rates and charges to fund the provision of specific services to our community. When adopting its annual budget, Council will set the rates and charges at a level that will provide for both current and future community requirements. It is acknowledged that individual users of a commodity or service cannot always be identified. For this reason, there is a need for specific user charges to be supplemented by other general revenue sources.

Setting rates and charges

Council will endeavour to:

- a) apply a *user-pays* approach in determining its rates and charges;
- b) distribute equitably the financial burden of the imposts, and
- c) to the extent possible, minimise the impact of rating and charging on the efficiency of the local economy.

Council will also have regard to the principles of:

- a) **transparency** through clearly articulating the bases and criteria for setting the rates and charges;
- b) **Efficiency** by implementing a rating regime that is straightforward and inexpensive to administer;
- c) **equity** by endeavouring to ensure the consistent application of lawful rating and charging principles, without bias. In this regard the system will take into account all relevant considerations, and disregard irrelevancies including perceived personal wealth of individual ratepayers or ratepayer classes; and
- d) **flexibility** through taking account of and where possible being responsive to changes in the local economy, due to extraordinary circumstances that may prevail at a point in time and/or the impact that different industries may have on the Region's infrastructure.

Levying rates and charges

In levying rates and charges, Council will apply the principles of:

- a) **clarity** by making it clear what is Council's and each ratepayer's responsibility under the rating system
- b) **efficiency** by ensuring the levying and recovery system is straightforward and inexpensive to administer
- c) **regularity** by timing rates and charges levies to assist with the smooth running of the local economy and to minimise the impact on individual ratepayers, and
- d) **fairness** by providing flexible payment arrangements for ratepayers with a diminished capacity to pay.



3.2. Concessions for rates and charges

Council outlines the concessions that may apply to rates and charges in its Revenue Statement. Other concession requests will be assessed on their individual merits. In considering the application of concessions, Council will be guided by the principles of:

- a) **fairness** by endeavoring to accommodate the different levels of capacity to pay within the local community;
- b) **consistency** by treating all ratepayers with similar circumstances in the same manner;
- c) **transparency** by clearly articulating the qualification criteria for concessions, and
- d) **flexibility** by endeavoring, where possible, to be responsive to the impacts of local economic issues.

3.3. Recovery of overdue rates and charges

The non-payment of rates and charges by some ratepayers places an unfair burden on other ratepayers who meet their financial and legal obligations in full. To minimise this burden, Council will diligently exercise its rate recovery powers under Chapter 4, Part 12 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*. Council's Debt Collection Policy outlines the administrative process that will be used to collect overdue rates and charges. Council will charge interest on all overdue rates and charges. It will be guided by the principles of:

- a) **transparency** by clearly articulating the obligations of ratepayers and the processes Council adopts in assisting them to meet their financial obligations;
- b) **efficiency** by ensuring its processes for recovering outstanding rates and charges are clear, simple to administer, and cost-effective;
- c) **consistency** by according similar treatment to ratepayers with similar financial circumstances, and
- d) **flexibility** by endeavoring, where possible, to be responsive to the impacts of changes in the local economy.

3.4. Cost recovery fees

Section 97 of the *Local Government Act 2009* allows Council to set cost recovery fees.

Council recognises the equity of applying the user-pays principle to setting its fees and charges regime. In applying this principle, Council will ensure that the fees and charges applied are not inconsistent with Council's social, economic and environmental goals. This is considered to be the most equitable and effective revenue approach, and is founded on the basis that Council's rating base cannot subsidise the specific users or clients of Council's regulatory products and services.

In setting each cost recovery fee, Council will ensure that the fee does not exceed the cost to Council of providing the service or taking the action to which the fee applies.

3.5. Funding of physical and social infrastructure

Council requires developers to make reasonable and relevant contributions towards the cost of physical and social infrastructure required to support their contribute to the cost of infrastructure needed to support their developments. The charges are detailed in Council's adopted *Infrastructure Charges Resolution* in effect at the time the application is lodged with Council.

These charges are intended to be based on normal anticipated growth rates. Where a new development is of sufficient magnitude to accelerate the growth rate of a specific community within the region, it may be necessary to bring forward physical and social infrastructure projects to support the development. Where this occurs, Council expects developers to meet sufficient costs so that the availability of facilities is not adversely affected, and so that existing ratepayers are not burdened with the cost of providing the additional infrastructure.

3.6. Commercial fees and other charges

Section 262(3)(c) of the *Local Government Act 2009* empowers Council to charge for a service or facility it supplies other than a service or facility for which a cost recovery fee may be fixed.

Council will impose a commercial fee where it provides a commercial service to a party that can choose to avail themselves of the service or facility. The nature, level, and standard of the service is considered by Council in setting the commercial fee. Council may set the charge with the aim of generating revenue.

A user-pays principle is considered where Council provides the service in competition with the private sector.

