

Hikes to charges for council services to be considered

Fees for services from cremations to car parking across Edinburgh are set to go up substantially, according to new plans set to be considered by city councillors.

A full list of all council services and their costs, has been included as part of the Labour administration's budget proposals.

And they see almost all services rising by some amount, with most costs going up by around 5%, broadly seen as in line with inflation.

While many of the charges are ones that will have little impact on most residents, others will have huge implications for almost everyone living and working in the city.

These include proposals to again increase parking charge and parking permit costs, while the Labour group are proposing a council tax increase of 8% – with other parties suggesting the council tax increase should be as much as 10%.

Parking permits in the city are also set to go up, as are parking charges.

Resident permits could go up in price between 3% and 6% across the city, while visitor permits will increase as much as 17%.

Meanwhile, on-street parking rates could soar, with some

places set for an increase of 15% – meaning some charges could be as high as £9 per hour.

Housing costs and homeless temporary accommodation charges are set to rise by up to 7%.

One of the few areas where prices could go down is are day care costs, with the cost for Jewel House set to fall 0.43% to £1639 per week, and the cost for Ferrylee to drop 1.65% to £1785 per week. However the cost at Marionville, Inchview, Royston, North Merhiston and Castlegreen will all increase, between 3% and 5.86%.

Community alarm costs will rise 5%, as will washing and drying charges in sheltered housing.

Residential stays at outdoor centres including Benmore and Lagganlia will increase by around 5%.

Colour photocopies at council libraries are set to go up a whopping 18% to 65p per page, while black and white printing will go up 20% to 30p a page.

Room hires at council venues across the city could also go up, with the charge to book the conservatory at Saughton Park going up 20% to £30/hour.

And at the City Chambers, the cost of hiring some of the complex's biggest rooms will go up 11.76% on weekdays, up to £95 an hour or £600 a day, while hiring the Council Chamber will cost £1300 per day – a rise of 4%.

The cost of getting married will rise, with registrars fees are set to increase the cost of conducting a civil ceremony out-with the registrar office will cost £495 Monday to Friday (an increase of 4.21%), £650 on Saturday (an increase of 4.84%) and £675 of Sundays and public holidays – and increased of 5.47%.

And the cost of dying sadly also looks set to rise – budget

proposals suggest increasing the price of an adult weekday cremation with a full service to £947, a 4.99% increase. One without a service would climb to £586, a 5.08% jump.

A Saturday cremation would climb to £1,121, a 4.96% increase, while a Sunday service will cost £1,237, a 5.01% increase.

Cremations for children will not carry a charge.

Burials, however, are set for even steeper increases, as the cost of a Sunday burial would climb to £2,042 – a 5.01% bump. A Saturday service would run slightly less, costing £1,838 – still a 5.03% jump.

A weekday interment would cost less, at £1,457 – an increase of 4.97%.

The most expensive funerary option would be a Sunday double interment, costing £2,816 – a climb of 5% exactly.

The Church Hill Theatre, Assembly Rooms, Ross Theatre and the Usher Hall are all set to see hire charges increase by around 5%. Standard hire of the Ross Bandstand for example, will go up 5.01% to £5135 per day.

And if you fancy going even bigger and hiring Princes Street Gardens for a large event, that will set you back £3,630 per day, an increase of 5.07%.

The costs for hiring room at venues such as the Museum of Edinburgh, the Writers Museum Lauriston Castle and the City Arts Centre are set to rise by around 5%, while chargers for taking private groups to museums are also set to rise.

Admission charges for the Nelson Monument on Calton Hill and the Scott Monument in Princes Street Garden are to rise by up to 9%. At the Nelson Monument, costs will be: Adult Admission Charge £7 (3.70%); Concession Admission £6 (9.09%) Child Admission Charge £6 (9.09%) Family ticket for two adults and two children (child 5-15 / no under 5's permitted) £22

(4.76%);

And at the Scott Monument they will be: Adult Admission Charge £9 (5.88%); Concession Admission Charge £7 (7.69%); Child Admission Charge £7 (7.69%); Family ticket for two adults and two children (child 5-15 / no under 5's permitted) £26 (4%)

Event charges at other city parks will also go up. For the Meadows & Bruntsfield Links, Calton Hill, Inverleith Park, Leith Links, Saughton Park and Lauriston Castle, a small event hire will cost £550 per day, an increase of 4.76%, while for a large event it will cost £885 per day, a 5.36% increase.

At Sighthill Park, Gyle Park, Roseburn Park, Victoria Park and Pilrig Park, the cost for a small event per day would be £330 (4.76%), while a large event would be £550 (4.76%).

For the green fingered of Edinburgh, there's no good news either – the cost of a permit to have the garden waste bin emptied will rise by 12.50% to £45.

Allotment rentals are going up, with a half-plot per year set to cost £85 (4.94% increase) – unless you are elderly, a student or unemployed, in which case the cost of a half plot per year is £42 (a rise of 5%).

Grass cutting garden aid is expected to rise 5.4% to £189 per year for anything up to 100 square metres, £252 per year for up to 200 square metres and £449 per year for up to 1000 square metres (a rise of 4.93%).

Hedge trimming garden aid costs will also go up, with a hedge of up to 1.8m high and 600 square metres costing £295, a rise of 5.03%.

School meal costs are set to increase, with primary school meals to cost £2.65 (6%), nursery per meal £3.65 (5.80%) and other school meals to cost £3.65 for one course – a rise of 7.35%. And School milk costs are set to rise by 4% – to 24p.

Costs are also going up at the City Chambers, where Corkage Charges for wine, champagne, prosecco or cava will go up to £8.50 per bottle, a small rise of 0.59%, while corkage charges for lager or beer will go to £1.50 per bottle/can – a rise of 7.14%

The cost of a coffee will go up 5.08% to £3.10 (or £4.30 if you want a biscuit with it) while the catering team will see the cost of Tunnock's Tea Cakes and Tunnock's Caramel Logs rise to £1.20 (a 4.35% increase).

And prices at the city chambers bar are also rising, with a can of Irn Bru set to cost £3.10 (a 12.73% increase), a 250ml glass of wine set to cost £6 (a rise of 3.45%) and a bottle of Baron D'Arignac French Sparkling wine to cost £36.50 (a rise of 5.34%)

The proposed price hikes come as councillors prepare to work out a budget for the next year.

Not enough income is expected to come from a proposed 8% council tax increase and grant funding to fund councillors spending priorities.

If approved, most of the price increases would take effect from 1 April, however some of the parking permit hikes would take effect from the end date on existing permits.

By Joe Sullivan Local Democracy Reporter