

Summary of the changes made to the User Fees and Charges

The User Fees and Charges 2021/22 schedule is where you can find all fees and charges (not rates) that Council is authorised to set as a result of various pieces of legislation that it works under.

Legislation prescribes specific, and sometimes different, requirements in terms of the process required to set fees and charges. When making a change to any of our fees and charges we take these legislative requirements into consideration and use the appropriate process.

Council sought feedback on the Schedule of User Fees and Charges at the same time it undertook consultation on the Long-term Plan 2021-2031 Consultation Document. Updates to our user fees and charges schedule will be occurring annually to respond to real time and legislative changes, and to ensure that charges do not become outdated.

Central Government reform has placed the general rate under significant pressure. It has forced us to review where our costs are coming from and how best to fund these as fairly as we can across our ratepayers. Broad amendments and updates to the user fees and charges for the 2021/22 year have been made to ensure that those who benefit or use our services are those that pay for them.

A summary of the changes, and why these have been made, can be found in the tables below.

New fees proposed

Section	What's new?	Why?
Section 36(1) Fixed minimum charges for the processing of resource consents including variations and certificates of compliance.	<p>Instead of requiring a deposit to be lodged with a new consent application, it is proposed that a schedule of fees be introduced for the various consent activities "Initial Fixed Minimum fees."</p> <p>Initial fixed application fees are based on the average cost of processing the application using the new standardised officer rate of \$160 per hour + GST.</p> <p>Any staff time, or costs, exceeding the minimum fixed fee will be charged to the applicant.</p> <p>Application fees can be found at Section 3.3.</p>	<p>This approach is common practice across many other regional Councils. It ensures that the majority of the fee is paid at the time of lodging the consent. Any additional staff time not covered by the fixed fee can also be recovered. (for example, if the application is notified, goes to a hearing etc.). This approach provides a more consistent cashflow to Council as currently a consent may have work undertaken on it then remain on hold for a period of time awaiting affected party approval. For some consents the delay in finalising it can be substantial</p>
Fixed small to medium scale mining monitoring fee. Includes coal mining, alluvial gold mining, quarries and black sand mining.	<p>The monitoring of mining activities will be managed the same as the dairy inspections and charged a set fee. This fee will cover an estimated four hours of officer time at the standardised officer rate of \$160 per hour + GST. The monitoring fee for these activities will be \$640 plus GST.</p>	<p>On average, a site inspection takes approximately 4 hours depending on the location. This includes preparation time, travel time, time on site, vehicle usage and follow up administration processes. A set fee will provide consent holders with a consistent approach across sectors.</p>

Section	What's new?	Why?
Fixed large scale mining monitoring fee. Includes coal mining, alluvial gold mining and quarries.	Similar to the monitoring fee for fixed small to medium scale mining activities, the monitoring of mining activities for larger scale operations will be a charged a set fee. Due to the greater complexity of the site the fee will cover 6 hours of officer time at the standardised officer rate of \$160 per hour + GST. The monitoring fee for these activities will be \$960 + GST.	Larger sites often hold a number of consents which creates complexity around the monitoring of it, increased preparation time and follow up enquiries and correspondence. A set fee will provide consent holders with a consistent approach across sectors.
Forestry operations monitoring	The monitoring of forestry operations will be managed the same as dairy inspections and charged a set fee. This fee will cover an estimated four hours of officer time at the standardised officer rate of \$160 per hour + GST. The monitoring fee for these activities will be \$640 + GST.	On average, a site inspection takes approximately 4 hours depending on the location. This includes preparation time, travel time, time on site, vehicle usage and follow up administration processes. A set fee will provide consent holders with a consistent approach across sectors.
Fixed annual monitoring fee for consented water takes	A set fee for maintaining a monitoring programme for those that hold resource consents for the consumptive taking of water greater than 5 litres per second. The annual monitoring fee for this activity will be \$100 per annum + GST per consent.	New water take measurement and reporting regulations require Councils to have systems in place to monitor and record water take information submitted by consent holders. This will require new IT systems to be implemented to hold this information and officer time to monitor.
Maritime Activities Marine Tier 1 Oil Transfer Sites (Maritime Transport Act 1994)	Approval of Tier 1 site marine oil spill contingency plans, and any subsequent amendments will be charged at the standardised officer rate of \$160 + GST per hour as opposed to a set fee. Inspection of Tier 1 sites will be charged at the standardised officer rate of \$160 + GST per hour as opposed to a set fee.	These activities are not currently charged for. Inspections are required for Greymouth, Westport and Jackson Bay ports.
Building Act 2004 Land Information Memoranda	A set fee for a LIM will be charged at \$320 + GST.	There has not been a standard fee set for this activity. This activity is likely to take approximately two hours of officer time.
Meeting room hire charges	Set fees for hire of Council meeting rooms are as follows (excl GST): Council Chambers - Hourly rate \$40 - Half day (4 hours) \$150 - Full day (8.00am – 4.30pm) \$250 - After hours rate – per hour \$50	There has not been a standard fee for external organisations wanting to use Council facilities before. This fee covers the cost of using the room as well as the IT capabilities.

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	Small meeting rooms - Hourly rate \$40 - Half day (4 hours) \$150 - Full day (8.00am – 4.30pm) \$250 - After hours rate – per hour \$50	

Amendments and changes proposed to fees and charges

Section	What's changing?	Why?
Pursuant to Section 36 of the RMA – Fixed dairy inspection fee	Increase the fixed dairy inspection fee to cover four hours of officer time at the standardised officer rate of \$160 per hour. The inspection fee for this activity will be \$640 + GST.	The current dairy inspection fee is set at \$350 + GST. On average a dairy inspection visit takes approximately four hours. This includes preparation time, travel time, time on site and follow up administration processes. The current fee only recovers two hours of officer time. This approach more fairly represents a user pays approach.
Pursuant to Section 36 of the RMA – Staff Charge out rates.	A standardised rate to cover all Council officers at \$160 + GST per hour.	<p>Currently charges are set as follows: Council Admin Officer \$90 + GST Council Officer \$125 + GST Council Senior Officer \$145 + GST Council Managers \$200 + GST</p> <p>Moving to a single rate provides applicants consistency with charging (i.e. the same hourly rate no matter which consenting officer processes the application). The Officer rate covers overheads, including mileage. The standardised rate results in an increase of \$15/hour on the current Senior Officer rate and \$35/hour on the current Officer rate. All other South Island Regional Councils charge \$145 + GST or higher (up to \$170/hour + GST.) except Otago Regional Council which charges a lesser rate for Council Officer's .</p>
Pursuant to section 36 of the RMA Annual consent holder administration fee	Annual consent holder administration fee increased to \$100 + GST per annum.	This fee is currently set at \$55 + GST per annum. Once a consent has been granted there are ongoing costs including the maintenance of computer systems, consents and compliance databases and other general administration. Other Council annual fees range from \$36 through to \$150 (Westland DC)

Section	What's changing?	Why?
		Most of the Councils with a lower fee apply additional administration fees based on maintaining monitoring programmes on various activities.
Pursuant to section 36 of the RMA Whitebait annual monitoring fee	Annual whitebait stand monitoring fee increased to \$175 + GST from 1 July 2022.	This fee is currently set at \$150 + GST per stand holder (657 stands). The monitoring of stands sometimes requires two staff to mark out stand locations prior to the season commencing. A number of the South Westland rivers have limited access and require access by helicopter, including an end of season flight to ensure all stands are removed from rivers. The fee has not been increased for six years. This increase represents a more consistent user pays approach.
Pursuant to 36 of the RMA Fixed Gravel compliance monitoring charge	For annual monitoring a change from the tiered volume fee to a flat fee of \$480 + GST irrespective of the volume of gravel extracted. and A levy of 15c/m ³ on the consented volume of gravel to be abstracted.	This charge applies to anyone holding a current consent for gravel extraction. The charge provides a more consistent user pays approach. The fee includes preparation time, travel, vehicle expenses, maintaining records and follow up correspondence. This fee has not increased for six years. The 15c/m ³ levy on the consented volume of gravel to be abstracted is to be used to fund further investigation into the state of gravel and impacts of gravel extraction in key rivers.
Pursuant to section 36 of the RMA Transfer of consents and permits to another person Transfer of whitebait consents and permits to another site, or another person	Transfer of consent or permit to another person or site to increase to \$160 + GST.	The transfer of a consent to another person currently costs \$50 + GST and the transfer of a whitebait consent or permit to another site or person costs \$100 + GST. The increase represents one hour of the officer time at the standardised officer rate of \$160 per hour + GST and is a fair reflection of the time required to undertake this work. Such work includes administration processes, updating debtor details and

Section	What's changing?	Why?
		records, as well as sending out appropriate documentation.
Charges under sections 12 and 150 Local Government Act 2002 Permitted activity rule 79 of the Land and Water Plan - assessment of onsite sewage discharges.	Non-site visit assessment of onsite sewage discharges to increase to \$250 + GST. Assessment of onsite sewage discharge, including site visit, to increase to \$480 + GST.	The current charge for the assessment without a site visit is \$125 + GST. Where a site visit is undertaken, the charge is \$250 + GST. Increases to these charges will cover the actual time spent. The new proposed fee for an assessment including a site visit includes preparation time, travel, time on site, vehicle usage and any follow up correspondence. Site assessments for this permitted activity are within the Grey District only.
Charges under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 Local government official information	First half hour will incur no charge. Every hour after the first half hour to be charged at \$160 + GST. - Photographs at cost - Printing at cost - Photocopying increased to 10c copy, or 20c per colour copy	Currently the first half hour is not charged. The hourly charge following the first half hour has been charged at: - Council Admin Officer \$90 + GST - Council Officer \$125 + GST - Council Senior Officer \$145 + GST - Council Managers \$200 + GST - Photographs at cost - Printing at cost - Photocopying at 5c copy or 20c per colour copy For minor information requests these will be able to completed at no charge. For more comprehensive information requests, applying the standardised officer rate reflects the charges applied to other activities.
Charges under section 36(3) of the Resource Management Act 1991 Application to prepare or change a policy statement or plan	Minimum estimated initial fee required for the preparation or change to a plan or policy statement is \$50,000 + GST.	Currently the fee for both of these activities is \$10,000. These costs are significantly under what the initial fee should be due to the work required.

What are the alternatives?

Council needs to consider what mechanisms are appropriate to meet the expenditure needs of the organisation. The charges outlined in this schedule represent the activities where Council has considered that the principle of user or beneficiary pays is most appropriate.

The alternative to adopting these fees and charges for the 2021/22 year was to either:

- Cover the cost of these activities through other means of income, which might have included a greater increase in rates; or
- Cease undertaking the activities that give rise to the cost, many of which the Council are required by law to carry out.