

Report To:	CABINET
Date:	29TH JANUARY 2024
Heading:	PROPOSED FEES AND CHARGES 2024/25
Executive Lead Member:	EXECUTIVE LEAD MEMBER FOR FINANCE, REVENUES AND BENEFITS – CLLR RACHEL MADDEN
Ward/s:	ALL
Key Decision:	YES
Subject to Call-In:	YES

Purpose of Report

Each year the Council reviews its Fees and Charges as part of setting its Annual Budget. In doing so it considers levels of service demand, inflation and how Fees and Charges in Ashfield compare with neighbouring Councils. Increases contribute to closing the funding gap (the planned expenditure for the year less the resources available to fund that expenditure).

All fees and charges discussed in the report are contained within the Council's Fees and Charges booklet (Appendix 1 to this report).

Recommendation(s)

Cabinet is asked to agree the Fees & Charges for 2024/25 (Appendix 1) with all applicable increases taking effect as soon as practically possible after 1 April 2024.

Reasons for Recommendation(s)

Additional income generated will help towards meeting the inflationary costs of service provision, as well as contributing towards the Council's saving targets and continuing to support the financing of a range of services to Ashfield residents and businesses. In addition, an annual review of Fees and Charges is part of sound financial management practice and a requirement of the Council's Financial Regulations.

Alternative Options Considered

Where applicable, alternative options and prices have been considered prior to formulating the recommendations in this report.

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with sound financial practice, it is a requirement to undertake an annual review of Fees and Charges. This exercise is carried out as part of the budget process each year.

APPROACH

Managers have been asked to consider and propose revised Fees and Charges taking into account the following factors:

- i) Market conditions;
- ii) Market benchmarking;
- iii) Increases in costs incurred by the Council in delivering the service – including the current significant inflationary costs of pay, energy and fuel;
- iv) Any enhancement to service provision including funding investment;
- v) Charges levied by the private sector where applicable;
- vi) Restrictions due to any contractual arrangement or legislation.

Some Fees and Charges are set by the Government. As the Council is unable to amend these, they are excluded from the review.

Detailed Information

Whilst inflationary pressures have eased in recent months, they are still impacting on the cost of service delivery. Where possible, in setting the proposed fees and charges for 2024/25, we have tried to minimise the pass on of inflationary costs to the services we charge for.

Set out below are those services where it is proposed that fees and charges are frozen and where fees and charges are proposed to increase.

Car Parking - There are no increases proposed to Car Parking fees (apart from a 5% increase for Parking Permits), and where 2 hour free parking is in place across the District this will remain for 2024/25. The Council will again commit to providing free car parking in December to support our local businesses and the local economy.

Selective Licensing and Houses of Multiple Occupation - Selective Licensing fees were approved by Cabinet for the duration of the scheme and so should not be changed. It is proposed to increase pre Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) visits and HMO Licences by 5%, to ensure that we recover costs within parameters of the guidance.

Licensing - It is proposed that Hackney Carriage, Private Hire and Operators Licensing fees & charges will also be frozen at 2023/24 rates. This is in accordance with ensuring that there is appropriate compliance with legislation governing the ring fenced use of Taxi licensing income reserves. All other licences are to increase by 5%.

Garden Waste – It is proposed that the fees for 2024/25 are £35 for the first bin, and £20 for each additional bin to reflect increased costs of service delivery.

Legal Fees - It is proposed that Legal Fees will remain at the same levels as 2023/24, as this is believed to be the maximum that can be achieved. Information requests are subject to legislation, and increases are not permitted.

Pest Control - It is proposed to freeze Domestic charges at 2023/24 levels, but increase Commercial charges by 5%, so as to cover the costs of service delivery, whilst remaining competitive with private sector providers, and addressing cost of living concerns.

Cemeteries - Fees and charges (apart from those that are usually waived), are planned to increase by between 7% and 10% to cover increased costs of service delivery.

Markets - It is proposed to increase Market fees and charges by 5%, however, charges for stalls in the Indoor Markets range in price, based on floor space, and are negotiated individually so as to maximise take up.

Implications

Corporate Plan:

Income from Fees and Charges helps to contribute to the costs of service delivery to ensure sustainable service delivery to the Council's residents, businesses and wider customers.

Legal:

Fees and charges are set taking into account any legislatively prescribed fees. [RLD 19/01/2024]

Finance: [PH 10/01/2024]

Budget Area	Implication
General Fund – Revenue Budget	The impact of the revised fees and charges will be reflected in the update to the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the Budgets set for 2024/25.
General Fund – Capital Programme	N/A
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	The impact of the revised fees and charges will be reflected in the update to the HRA Business Plan and the HRA Budgets set for 2024/25.
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	N/A

Risk:

Risk	Mitigation
Potential reduction in demand	Where Fees and Charges have increased there is a possibility of an adverse impact on demand. Any proposed increases are deemed reasonable and the

	potential impact on demand has been considered when determining the proposed revised fees. Performance against 2024/25 budgeted Fees and Charges income targets will be monitored throughout the year with variations to budget being reported to SLT and Cabinet.
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Human Resources:

No direct HR implications.

Environmental/Sustainability

No direct Environmental / Sustainability issues arising from this report.

Equalities:

There are no direct equalities implications arising from the report.

Other Implications:

None

Reason(s) for Urgency

Not applicable

Reason(s) for Exemption

Not applicable

Background Papers

None

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