

Board/Committee:	Policy and Organisation Board
Date of meeting:	Wednesday, 29 November 2023
Title:	Fees and Charges
Author:	Borough Treasurer
Status:	For Approval

Purpose

To consider and approve the amended fees & charges contained in this report and appendix.

Recommendation

It is recommended that:

The Council approves the fees and charges referred to in the report and appendix for implementation from 1 January 2024 or as soon as practically possible thereafter, unless stated otherwise.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Fees and charges were last reviewed and updated at the Council meeting in December 2022.
- 1.2 A further review of the Council's fees and charges was approved at that time to identify areas where they do not achieve full recovery of costs or are significantly below other local authority charges. It has not proved possible to undertake this review yet due to staff shortage, combined with pressure of work on existing staff. However, it is planned to be conducted during 2024.

2.0 Report

- 2.1 Fees and charges are an important source of revenue for the Council, which are applied to the users of a particular service. This means that it is the users of the service that fund the costs of providing the service, rather than the cost falling universally across all residents through Council Tax. Fees and charges therefore are an important mechanism which ensures that service users contribute more to the cost of those services, which are usually services of a more discretionary nature or which are used by a particular user group, rather than the burden falling on the general Council taxpayer.
- 2.2 Fees and charges have a direct relationship with the cost of services. For services to recover their costs, they will need to increase at the same rate as costs rise otherwise there would be a real cut in funding to the Council. The core measure of inflation is the Consumer Price

Index (CPI), which has run above 10% for much of the past year.

- 2.3 This fees and charges review has been undertaken as part of the budget process for 2024/25. The proposed fees and charges are set out in the appendix to this report. The majority of Council charges for 2024 have been increased by 10% to reflect the very high levels of inflation experienced over the past year, rounded to an appropriate amount where applicable, though a small number have not been raised or have been raised by a different percentage for specific reasons. The total effect of the changes would be an increase in income estimated at £158,000 which, as previously mentioned, should be broadly equivalent to the increase in the cost of providing those services. A large part of the increase is derived from uplift of parking charges.
- 2.4 In some circumstances, fees and charges are statutory and these have been uplifted in accordance with regulation.
- 2.6 Significant contributions would result from increases in the following charges:

Car Parks	£99,000
Parking Permits	£12,000
Cemetery Fees	£9,000
Private Hire / Hackney Carriage	£9,000
Bulky Refuse / Special Collections	£7,000
Allotments	£4,000
Pest Control	£4,000
Beach Hut Rental	£4,000
Land Charges	£3,000
Football / Rugby / Cricket	£3,000

- 2.7 It is proposed to introduce two new charges – a drug test for private hire / hackney carriage drivers charged at £40, and a range of concession-rate charges for pest control to discourage the current high level of missed appointments. Neither will result in significant income for the Council.

3.0 Risk Assessment

- 3.1 There is a risk to future service provision and the delivery of capital programme projects if the Council does not seek to maintain an appropriate level of income by reviewing its fees and charges.

4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 Fees and Charges have been reviewed and the draft amended schedule is appended to this report.

Financial Implications	As set out in the report
Legal Implications	The Council has power to charge for the services set out in this report.
Crime and Disorder	N/A
Equality and Diversity	N/A
Service Improvement Plan	N/A
Corporate Plan:	N/A
Risk Assessment:	Section 3 of the report
Background papers:	N/A
Appendix	Draft Fees and Charges booklet
Lead Officer	Chris Ward