

Community and Wellbeing Committee
16 January 2024

FEES AND CHARGES 2024/25

Head of Service:	Brendan Bradley, Head of Finance
Wards affected:	(All Wards);
Urgent Decision?(yes/no)	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	N/A
Appendices (attached):	Appendix 1 – Fees and Charges Schedule 2024/25

Summary

This report recommends fees and charges for which this Committee is responsible, with the new charges being effective from 1 April 2024

Recommendation (s)

The Committee is asked to:

- (1) Agree the fees and charges for the Community and Wellbeing Committee for 2024/25**

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 To agree the fees and charges for the Community and Wellbeing Committee for 2024/25

2 Background

- 2.1 The Council will meet to agree the budget, including estimates of income and expenditure, on 13 February 2024. To enable the budget to be finalised, Policy Committees are asked to recommend fees and charges covering the services for which they are responsible.
- 2.2 In July 2023, Strategy and Resources Committee agreed the budget targets and workstreams to enable the Council to work towards setting a balanced budget for 2024/25, including a target to increase fees and charges income by 6% in both 2024/25 and 2025/26.

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- 2.3 The fees and charges presented in this report are discretionary charges only. For discretionary charges there is scope to generate additional income, to reduce any subsidy of the service or to contribute to an improved budget position.
- 2.4 There are a number of charges set externally that the Council has no power to alter. This restricts the Council's ability to raise additional income and therefore the fees and charges set by statute are not present to this Committee for approval.
- 2.5 When preparing estimates, fees and charges have been reviewed by service managers and any negative impact on demand anticipated by increased charges has been considered.
- 2.6 Members should refer to the Revenue Budget report on this agenda for an overview of the Committee's budget position.
- 2.7 In January 2018, to reflect changes to the Council's management structure, the Committee agreed that the Chief Finance Officer should have delegated authority to vary fees and charges for items generating income under £1,000 per annum. The Committee also agreed that this officer be permitted under delegated authority to set charges for one off services or items not included in the fees and charges schedule.
- 2.8

3 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

3.1 Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1.1 Increased fees and charges could have a negative effect on take up for some service areas. Managers have been asked to apply realistic increases to avoid this.

3.2 Crime & Disorder

- 3.2.1 None for the purposes of this report.

3.3 Safeguarding

- 3.3.1 None for the purposes of this report.

3.4 Dependencies

- 3.4.1 None for the purposes of this report.

3.5 Other

- 3.5.1 None for the purposes of this report.

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4 Proposals

- 4.1 The proposed fees and charges for 2024/25 are set out at Appendix 1 to this report. The main variations in fees and charges for each service area outside the range of an increase between 6% to 10% are set out below:

4.1.1 Playhouse

No increases to membership fees are proposed, pending the introduction of a revised membership scheme.

Piano tuning costs can vary, and are provided by an external company, it is proposed that the fee is calculated per job rather than the current flat fee.

4.1.2 Bourne Hall

New Wedding Packages are being introduced, with varying fees depending on the number of guests. New fees have also been proposed by the team to cater for Childrens Parties, including packages for various group sizes and additional lunchboxes.

For both sets of new fees proposed above, additional advanced booking fees have been included to allow the team to take deposits for bookings made for events in 2025/26.

Due to the expansion of the café into exhibition space, it is proposed that the fees for Art Exhibitions and Gift/Craft fairs remains unchanged.

4.1.3 Community Services, Community & Wellbeing Centre

Community Alarm monthly standard charges have not been increased to ensure that the rates remain competitive.

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4.1.4 Disabled Facility Grant Fees

The Council has a statutory duty to operate a Disabled Facilities Grant Scheme, funded by Central Government. Over recent years this role has become more complex, with a broader remit than previously, involving multi agency working and a wide variety of assistance required by clients. To reflect the officer time and general administration costs incurred as a result of this work, it was agreed in 2018/19 that the Council should charge fees to the fund. These fees are charged on a cost recovery basis and for 2024/25 the charges proposed are as follows:

Mandatory Grants: These are provided to enable adaptations to allow residents access to essential facilities within and around the home.

Minimum fee charge	£450	e.g. level access showers / stair lifts
Works up to £30k	10%	
Works in excess of £30k Fees capped at maximum works the Policy permits the Council to fund	7.5%	e.g. ground floor extensions to provide downstairs wetroom/bathroom facilities
Aborted works: Pre-tender stage	£450	Works may be aborted where an applicant's level of need has changed significantly since receipt of the original Occupational Therapist's report, or where the applicant has passed away.
Post-tender stage depending on grant value Limited at £60k (or higher as Policy determines)	10%/7.5% of 70% of works	

Discretionary Grants (funded through DFG allocation)

e.g. Installation of galvanised (outdoor) handrails or measures to address thermal discomfort, e.g., replacement windows and heating.

Minimum fee charge	£300
All works	10%
Aborted works Pre-tender stage Post tender stage	£300 10% of 70% of cost of works

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Handyperson Grants

e.g., small odd jobs such as garden clearance and bathroom grab rails.
No fee applied.

5 Financial Implications

- 5.1 The impact of the proposed fees and charges for services in 2024/25 is set out below.
- 5.2 The table sets out the original additional income target as per the Medium Term Finance Strategy in the first column.
- 5.3 The second column presents additional income anticipated from the changes to tariffs proposed in the appendix to this report, on the assumption that current utilisation levels continue.
- 5.4 The third column shows changes to income budgets for fees and charges that are not related to changes to tariffs. Examples will be changes to customer numbers or where a new fee or charge has been introduced.
- 5.5 The last column sets out the difference between the budget target increase and the final income budget, which incorporates changes to both tariffs and volumes.

	Target Increase in Income Budget (6%) £'000	Total Increase or (Decrease) due to changes to Tariffs £'000	Variations resulting from changes to volumes £'000	Variation between Target and total change £'000
Community & Wellbeing Centre	10	3	-3	-10
Community Services	24	1	-15	-38
Playhouse	28	28	13	13
Bourne Hall	21	10	10	-1
Total	83	42	5	-36

- 5.6 The original target to increase fees and charges by 6%, if applied to all fees and charges would have generated an additional £83k. The charges proposed will generate an additional estimated income of £47k, meaning that Community & Wellbeing income budgets are lower than the targeted budgeted income from fees and charges for 2024/25 by £36k.
- 5.7 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** All financial implications are included within this report.

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6 Legal Implications

- 6.1 **Legal Officer's comments:** There are no direct legal implications for the purposes of this report.

7 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

- 7.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The following Key Priorities are engaged:
Effective Council
- 7.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is included within the current Service Delivery Plan.
- 7.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** No specific implications.
- 7.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** No specific implications.
- 7.5 **Partnerships:** None for the purpose of this report

8 Background papers

- 8.1 The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

Previous reports:

- 2024-25 Strategic Financial Planning (Strategy & Resources Committee 13 July 2023)

Other papers:

- Budget book 2024/25