

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 – Committee Fees and Charges 2024/25 Appendix 2 – Car Park Fees 2024/25 Appendix 3 – Trade Refuse & Recycling Charges 2024/25 (Part II paper – para 3 of Sch 12A; exempt from publication)

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 2024/25 as set out at Appendices 1, 2, and 3.**

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 To agree the fees and charges for the Environment 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, the policy committees are asked to recommend fees and charges covering the services for which they are responsible.

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- 2.2 The current economic climate creates uncertainty and difficulties for budget setting. To this end, the budget guidelines agreed by Strategy and Resources in July 2023 included an overall increase in revenue discretionary fees and charges of 6%. The guidelines also anticipate that additional income may be generated to contribute to the required savings target.
- 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 presented to this Committee for approval.
- 2.5 When preparing budget 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.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 The proposed fees and charges for 2024/25 are set out at Appendices 1, 2 and 3 to this report. The main variations in fees and charges for each service area outside the range of an increase between 6% and 10% are set out below:

Car Parks

- 3.1.1 The Car Park Member Working Group met to discuss car park fees and charges for 2024/25. The Group identified increases that would meet the Council's overall 6% target increase.

- 3.1.2 The key changes proposed are:

- a) an increase in the up to 1 and up to 2 hour stays in the Ashley Centre car park. The up to 1 hour fee has not increased for four years and by bringing the up to 2 hour closer to the up to 3 hour it may encourage longer dwell time in the Centre and surrounding establishments;

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- b) removal of the up to 2 hour tariff in Hook Road car park. This will promote its use as a long stay car park. A discount of £1.50 will still apply to Rainbow Leisure Centre users who will be required to pay £2 for a stay up to 3 hours. Removal of this two hour tariff may encourage dwell time in the Centre following a leisure activity;
- c) an increase in the up to 1 hour rate in Depot Road/Upper High Street and to the all day rates in these car parks as well as Hook Road and West Hill;
- d) a general increase in the tariffs in the Ewell Car Parks;
- e) an increase of 50p to the Sunday tariffs in Epsom and in Ewell;
- f) a change in the maximum evening fee to £10 in Epsom and £5 in Ewell. Visitors will continue to pay the standard hourly rate in the evening up to this maximum fee. In Bourne Hall the current evening rate of £1 will be maintained in order to support the commercial sustainability of the venue however an overnight parking fee at the new £5 rate will apply;
- g) an increase of approximately 7% in car park permit prices;
- h) these changes outlined in appendix 1 are expected to generate additional income in the region of £285k.

3.1.3 The in-year budget monitoring of car parks has identified that parking volumes have still not fully recovered in all borough car parks. The table in section 5.1 shows how this has been taken into account for the purposes of setting the income budget for 2024/25.

Refuse Collection

- 3.1.4 Trade Waste fees are considered commercially sensitive and therefore set out in a separate Appendix 3 which is exempt from publication. The fees have been increased by 6% across the board.
- 3.1.5 Bulky waste fees have been increased by approximately 5%. Any higher increase was deemed potentially commercially unviable due to competition from skip hire.
- 3.1.6 Garden waste fee increases have been limited to 2% for 2024/25 to ensure the perceived value of the service. Additional income is anticipated through increased volumes of subscriptions.

4 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

4.1 Equality Impact Assessment

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4.1.1 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.

4.1.2 The current economic crisis has resulted in some instances in reduced revenue from fees and charges.

4.2 Crime & Disorder

4.2.1 None for the purposes of this report.

4.3 Safeguarding

4.3.1 None for the purposes of this report.

4.4 Dependencies

4.4.1 None for the purposes of this report.

4.5 Other

4.5.1 None for the purposes of this report.

5 Financial Implications

5.1 The impact of the proposed fees and charges for services in 2024/25 is set out below:

	Increase in income budget target	Total increase or (decrease) due to changes in tariffs	Variation resulting from changes to volumes	Variation between target and total change
	a	b	c	(=b+c-a)
	£,000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Car Parks	231	285	(48)	6
Refuse Collection	86	33	79	26
Markets	7	0	7	0
Cemetery	19	19	0	0
Countryside, Parks and Open Spaces	15	15	1	1

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Allotments	2	2	0	0
Total	360	354	39	33

- 5.2 The proposed charges will generate an additional estimated income of £393k. This has been taken into account in the budget to be presented to Council next month.
- 5.3 Overall, the effect of increased charges, combined with the anticipated change in volumes is that Environment Committee income budgets are higher than the targeted budgeted income from fees and charges by £33k.
- 5.4 The revised level of income has been included in the medium-term financial strategy to contribute towards a balanced budget over the next four years. A breakdown of the 2024/25 budget can be found in the budget report included on this agenda.
- 5.5 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** All financial implications are included within this report.

6 Legal Implications

- 6.1 If implemented, changes to parking charges should be made via an Amendment Order to the Council's on and off-street parking Traffic Regulation Orders, using the procedures set out in the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.
- 6.2 There are no specific issues arising from this report, but the Council's resources will need to be applied to ensure that it fulfils its statutory obligations and delivers its policy on equalities.
- 6.3 **Legal Officer's comments:** The legal implications are included within 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:** None for the purposes of this report.
- 7.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** None for the purposes of this report.

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7.5 **Partnerships:** None for the purposes of this report.

8 Background papers

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

Previous reports:

- Budget Targets Report - October 2023

Other papers:

- Revenue Budget 2024/25 report – on this agenda.