

FEES AND CHARGES 2025/26

Head of Service:	Kevin Hanlon, Interim Chief Finance Officer
Report Author	Vanessa Newton, Senior Accountant
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 2025/26 Appendix 2 – Trade Refuse & Recycling Charges 2025/26 (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 2025.

Recommendation (s)

The Committee is asked to:

- (1) Agree the fees and charges for 2025/26 as set out at Appendices 1 and 2.

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 To agree the fees and charges for the Environment Committee for 2025/26.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Council will meet to agree the budget, including estimates of income and expenditure on 11 February 2025. 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.
- 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 2024 included an overall increase in revenue discretionary fees and charges of 6% subject to Committee approvals.

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- 2.3 The fees and charges presented for approval 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. For completeness, some statutory charges are included within the appendices and these are indicated by an "S".
- 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 2025/26 are set out at Appendices 1 and 2 to this report. There are separate papers on the agenda of this committee which consider the proposed charges for Car Parks and Cemetery burial rights and grave lease extensions. The main variations in fees and charges for each service area outside the range of an increase between 5% and 10% are set out below:

Cemeteries

- 3.2 The Hire of music facility/chapel organ fees was introduced in 2024/25 and was set too low historically. It has been increased by 20% to £300 which is commercially competitive, and we don't anticipate a fall in revenue though it will be reviewed.

Sports Pitches

- 3.3 With the introduction of the charging of tennis courts sessions for 2024/25, prices have been kept the same in 2025/26 to encourage higher uptake.
- 3.4 Netball fees are no longer to be advertised as necessary set up time by staff before and after a match (being 2hrs in total) impacts upon the service provision for tennis as same courts are used.

Local nature Reserves

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3.5 Prices have not been increased for walks to encourage uptake.

4 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

4.1 Equality Impact Assessment

4.1.1 An EIA screening assessment was conducted and did not consider the fees and charges increases in this report to specifically impact people within the protected characteristics.

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 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.

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

5 Financial Implications

5.1 The impact of the proposed fees and charges for services in 2025/26 is set out below.

5.2 The table sets out the original additional income target as per the Medium Term Financial 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.

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	Target Increase in Income Budget (6%) £'000 a	Total Increase or (Decrease) due to changes to Tariffs £'000 b	Variations resulting from changes to volumes £'000 c	Variation between Target and total change £'000 (=b+c-a)
Car Parks	255	98	129	(28)
Refuse Collection	91	91	0	0
Markets	8	0	8	0
Cemetery	34	22	0	(12)
Countryside, Parks and Open Spaces	18	18	0	0
Total	406	229	137	(40)

- 5.6 The proposed changes will generate an additional estimated income of £366k. This has been taken into account in the budget to be presented to Council next month.
- 5.7 Overall, the effect of increased charges, combined with the anticipated change in volumes is that Environment Committee income budgets are lower than the targeted budgeted income from fees and charges by £28,000. To alleviate this pressure, £28,000 expenditure efficiencies have been found within the Car Parks budget to compensate.
- 5.8 Given the difficulties in achieving the current income budget target within the Cemetery, the level of income has been reduced by £12,000. This has been offset by sundry favourable variances across the committee.
- 5.9 A breakdown of the 2025/26 budget can be found in the budget report included on this agenda.
- 5.10 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** The financial implications are set out in the body of the report.

6 Legal Implications

- 6.1 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.

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6.2 **Legal Officer's comments:** None 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:** None for the purposes of this report.

7.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** None for the purposes of this report.

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 2024](#).

Other papers:

- Revenue Budget 2025/26 report – on this agenda.