

FEES AND CHARGES 2026/27

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| Head of Service: | Cagdas Canbolat, Director of Corporate Services and Section 151 Officer (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 2026/27 Appendix 2 – Trade Refuse & Recycling Charges 2026/27 (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 2026.

Recommendation (s)

The Committee is asked to:

- (1) Agree the fees and charges for 2026/27 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 2026/27.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Council will meet to agree the budget, including estimates of income and expenditure on 10 February 2026. 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 2025 included an overall increase in revenue discretionary fees and charges of CPI + 1% subject to Committee approvals.
- 2.3 The CPI rate for September 2025 was 3.8%, therefore budget managers have been asked to increase discretionary fees and charges by 4.8% for 2026/27.
- 2.4 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 resulting in an improved budget position.
- 2.5 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".
- 2.6 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.
- 2.7 Members should refer to the revenue budget report on this agenda for an overview of the Committee's budget position.
- 2.8 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 2026/27 are set out at Appendices 1 and 2 to this report. 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:

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- 3.2 Work requiring search of records fee has been decreased by 24% in order to be consistent with Regulation of The Freedom of Information and Data Protection Regulations 2004. A new delegated charge of £84 per hour is to be implemented to cover the fee for supplying of information relating to potentially contaminated land. Although both of these services are rarely requested, the setting of fees and charges in this respect is prudent.
- 3.3 Stray dogs fees and charges and Street Trading licences/consents have not been increased as the existing charges are at the limit of cost recovery.

Car parks

- 3.4 Car park tariffs will stay at the 2025/26 level with the exception of permits which will be increased by 4.8%. Car Park Working Group considered price increases for 2026/27 but the consensus view was that prices were at the limit of what was deemed acceptable and further increases may result in reduced volumes which would impact income.
- 3.5 There is a separate paper on the agenda of this committee which considers the introduction of Sunday charges for Hook Road car park.
- 3.6 Given the lack of increase in the majority of fees for parking, and the current forecast for parking income for 2025/26, the budget target of £134,000 has been decreased by £100,000. The remaining target of £34,000 is expected to be met by a small increase in volume as a result of new shops opening in the Ashley Centre in the spring and from the increase to permits.

Cemeteries

- 3.7 Cemetery fees and charges have been reviewed to ensure the Council consistently provides a 50% discount for residents. In some instances, this has resulted in increases for non-residents of over 10%. The proposed fees remain commercially competitive. In addition, Epsom & Ewell Borough Council retains a market advantage by offering Interments on a Saturday which many Councils do not.
- 3.8 Fees and charges for children under the age of 18, are excluded from the above price structure and it is proposed to charge a flat fee only for residents and non-residents. Fees for children under 18 are claimed directly from the Government's Children's Funeral fund. Where a child is over the age of 12 and requires an adult size grave, the resident fee will apply. New fees have been added in Appendix 1 to reflect this.
- 3.9 A new fee is proposed for graves for children under the age of 12 in the New Lawn section. This is a newly established section of the cemetery designed for baby and child burials up to a depth of 4ft. The flat fee is reclaimed from the Government's Children's Funeral Fund. The lawn section previously used for baby and child burials is now fully occupied.

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- 3.10 Hire of chapel fees were introduced in 2024/25 and were set at a low level initially. These were increased by 20% in 2025/26. Benchmarking has now been undertaken, which indicates that the current fee remains comparatively low. It is therefore proposed to increase the fee by 17% which is considered commercially competitive and is not expected to result in a reduction in income. This will be kept under review.
- 3.11 While the majority of cemetery fees have increased in line with the latest MTFS assumptions, a structural adjustment has been made to reduce the overall cemetery income budgets by £70,000. This reflects a long-time decline in demand for burial services, partly due to increased uptake of cremation. It also reflects the loss of income from the sale of graves for future use, a practice which ceased in January 2025.

Sports Pitches

- 3.12 Tennis subscription prices for 2026/27 have been kept the same as in 2025/26 to continually encourage higher uptake.
- 3.13 A new charge for hiring the tennis courts for netball has been introduced to cover the necessary set up/take down time by staff before and after a match (approximately two hours in total). This is in addition to the hourly court cost to hire.
- 3.14 The fees and charges for the Court Recreation Ground Astro Turf Multicage have been reviewed following the introduction of a new automated gate entry and online booking system. This system has modernised how the facility is accessed and managed, improving security, preventing unauthorised use and removing the need for staff presence at each session. It also enables greater flexibility, including early morning and evening bookings. The revised charges reflect the costs of installing, operating and maintaining the system while ensuring the facility remains accessible and financially sustainable.
- 3.15 The updated pricing structure better aligns charges with demand by clearly distinguishing between peak and off-peak periods, helping to manage pressure at busy times and encourage greater use during quieter hours. Discounted rates for block bookings support regular use by clubs and improves income stability, while early bird off-peak rates make better use of under-utilised morning periods. A discounted off-peak rate for borough schools has been retained during term time, ensuring continued affordable access for local schools while protecting availability for wider community use.

Local nature Reserves

- 3.16 Prices have not been increased for walks to encourage uptake.

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Waste Collection

- 3.17 Garden waste income was 5% under budget in 2024/25 and the downward trend has continued in 2025/26. To reinvigorate demand for the service, it is proposed to freeze garden waste charges for 2026/27, which would form the basis of a publicity campaign in the spring. Benchmarking against other Surrey districts shows that for 2025/26 Epsom & Ewell had the third highest charge, therefore by keeping the fees for 2026/27 at current levels seeks to bring these charges in line with the Surrey average.
- 3.18 It may be noted that while the income budget has been lowered by £125,000, the MTFS had assumed an increase of £27,000 in garden waste income so the net decrease compared with 2025/26 is £98,000.
- 3.19 Trade Waste charges have also been held at the 2025/26 prices as competition in this area has seen a drop in customer numbers. To address this drop, there has been a structural reduction to the trade waste income budget, partially offset by a corresponding reduction in the expenditure budget for waste disposal, resulting in a net reduction of £60,000.

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.

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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 2026/27 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.

| | Target Increase in Income Budget (3%) £'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 |
|------------------------------------|--|---|---|--|
| | a | b | c | (=b+c-a) |
| Car Parks | 134 | 21 | 13 | (100) |
| Refuse Collection | 48 | 2 | (139) | (185) |
| Markets | 4 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| Cemetery | 17 | 17 | (70) | (70) |
| Countryside, Parks and Open Spaces | 8 | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 211 | 48 | (192) | (355) |

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- 5.6 Structural changes have been implemented to reduce income budgets to ensure they are achievable. These reductions total £355,000 and will add to the existing budget pressures for 2026/27, however this has been balanced against the need to present realistic income budgets. This has been taken into account in the budget to be presented to Council next month.
- 5.7 Overall, the effect of increased charges of £48,000, combined with the structural income budget reductions of £355,000 means the Environment Committee income budgets for 2026/27 £144,00 lower than the figure set by the MTFS of £211,000.
- 5.8 A breakdown of the 2026/27 budget can be found in the budget report included on this agenda.
- 5.9 **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.
- 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.
- 7.6 **Local Government Reorganisation Implications:** None for 2026/27. Going forward, it is expected that under the new East Surrey Unitary Council, all fees and charges will be sustainable and fair.

8 Background papers

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

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Previous reports:

[Budget targets report -October 2025](#)

Other papers:

- Revenue Budget 2026/27 report – on this agenda.