

Blaby District Council

Cabinet Executive

Date of Meeting	26 February 2024
Title of Report	Schedule of Charges 2024/25 This is a Key Decision and is on the Forward Plan.
Lead Member	Cllr. Maggie Wright - Finance, People & Performance (Deputy Leader)
Report Author	Accountancy Services Manager
Corporate Priority	Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

1. What is this report about?

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to recommend the proposed level of fees and charges for the financial year commencing 1st April 2024.

2. Recommendation(s) to Cabinet Executive

- 2.1 That the Schedule of Charges for 2024/25, appearing at Appendix A, is approved.

3. Reason for Decisions Recommended

- 3.1 To ensure that the fees and charges for 2024/25 are formally set and approved.

4. Matters to consider

4.1 Background

As part of the annual budget setting cycle Service Managers have been asked to undertake a review of the Councils fees and charges with a view of maximising income streams, and to ensure that, where permissible, they are set at a level that achieves cost recovery as a minimum.

There are certain charges that are set at a national level, so these fees remain unchanged. In some cases, there is less scope to increase charges due to external competition, without having a negative impact on demand.

4.2 Proposals

The complete Schedule of Charges for 2024/25 is attached at Appendix A. Members attention is drawn to the following charges in particular:

Bulky Items Collections

The collection charges for Bulky items have been reviewed and a new charging structure is proposed. The new charges are set at £30 for the collection of the 1st item and then £20 per additional item up to a maximum of 6 items. The new structure is in line with external competition.

There is potential for a review of the charges to be needed during the year due to EA rules relating to Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). These are found in upholstered domestic seating and the law requires that waste containing POPs must be incinerated and must not be re-used, recycled or landfilled. The Council has a Duty of Care to ensure that the law is complied with, and the Council already has measures in place to ensure any waste containing POP's is collected and disposed of separately to other waste collected. Should there be any changes to the cost of these collections and disposals, the fees would need to be revised to ensure full cost recovery.

Workplace Chargers

Supporting staff to switch to low carbon transport is essential for the Council to meet its net zero 2030 target. The 2022 staff survey indicated that there is a strong desire to switch to electric vehicles, following this, a project has been undertaken to introduce electric charging points at the Council Offices. A new fee has been added to the 2024/25 fees and charges schedule for Council staff, for charging private vehicles at the Council Offices. The fees are set to cover the cost of electricity and management of the scheme.

Legal Services

Legal Fees have been reviewed and revised. The fees set ensure cost recovery of Officer time to complete the works.

Licensing – Private Sector Housing

A new Licence fee has been added for 2024/25; for a HMO licence application fee that applies to property's found to be already operating as a House in multiple operation without a licence. It is an offence to be operating as a HMO without a licence, and the responsible party can be prosecuted or issued with a Civil Penalty, although the Council's Enforcement Policy is based on the principle of taking informal action prior to legal action. The fee is set to cover the investigation costs and administrative costs, and to also incentivise landlords to apply for a licence prior to meeting the threshold required to have one. This is an option that a number of other Councils have chosen to implement as a way of recovering costs and is a more proportionate response than immediate legal action.

Licensing – Hackney Carriage and Private Hire

Any changes to Taxi Operator and Vehicle Licensing fees are required to be consulted on. The consultation process for the proposed 2024/25 fees concluded in January.

Leisure Centre Fees and Charges

These are set by our leisure management operator, SLM Limited, but have not yet been released. The Schedule of Charges will be updated to include the fees and charges applicable from 1st April 2024 once they are available.

Building Control Charges Scheme

Building Control Fees are not disclosed in Appendix A for reasons of commercial sensitivity.

4.3 Relevant Consultations

The Service Managers have been consulted and fully engaged in the calculation of these charges and fees.

4.4 Future Amendments to the Schedule of Charges

The Constitution grants delegated authority to the Executive Director (Section 151 Officer) to amend fees and charges, where necessary, during the financial year.

5. What will it cost and are there opportunities for savings?

5.1 Not applicable

6. What are the risks and how can they be reduced?

6.1

Current Risk	Actions to reduce the risks
The greatest risk is that the increase in a charge will significantly affect the take up of that service.	The elasticity of the demand for the service has been considered for each charge to avoid unnecessary loss of income.

7. Other options considered

7.1 Not to review the fees and charges. However, it is considered appropriate that, where possible, charges should be set at a level necessary to achieve full cost recovery.

8. Environmental impact

8.1 In preparing this report the author has considered the impact on the environment and there are no areas of concern.

9. Other significant issues

- 9.1 In preparing this report, the author has considered issues related to Human Rights, Legal Matters, Human Resources, Equalities, Public Health Inequalities, and Climate Local and there are no areas of concern.

10. Appendix

- 10.1 Appendix A – Schedule of Charges 2024/25

11. Background paper(s)

- 11.1 None

12. Report author's contact details

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