



Portfolio Holder Report

The portfolio holder will make a decision on this item after seven days have elapsed (including the date of publication).

Report of:	Portfolio Holder	Date of publication
Marianne Hesketh, Director of Communities, Mark Billington, Director of Environment, Clare James, Director of Finance and Governance, Sarah Palmer, Director of Transformation and Change	Councillor Lynne Bowen, Leisure, Health and Community Engagement Portfolio Holder, Councillor Roger Berry, Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio Holder, Councillor Peter Le Marinell, Planning Policy and Economic Development Portfolio Holder, Councillor Lesley McKay, Resources Portfolio Holder, Councillor Simon Bridge, Street Scene, Parks and Open Spaces Portfolio Holder	29 November 2024

Review of Fees and Charges 2025/26

Key decision: Yes

1. Purpose of report

1.1 To present the annual review of fees and charges and propose changes for the 2025/26 financial year.

2. Council priorities

2.1 Deliver high quality, value for money services that meet the needs of our customers.

3. Recommendation

3.1 That the proposed fees and charges, as set out in Appendix 1, for the 2025/26 financial year be approved and implemented from 1 April 2025 unless an immediate or other change is indicated.

4. Background

- 4.1** Income from fees and charges represent an important source of funds to the council and enable it to provide a wider range of services across the borough that it would otherwise be able to do.
- 4.2** Where councils charge for services, users pay directly for some or all of the cost of the service they use. Where no charges are made, or where charges do not recover the full costs of providing a service, council tax payers subsidise users (see appendix 3 for main chargeable subsidised services).
- 4.3** Currently the council charges for a range of services, the income from which provides a significant contribution to the council's revenue budget. Decision on whether to charge (and the amount to charge) are not always within the control of the council. Where fees and charges apply to statutory services these are often set nationally, for example, some planning and licensing fees.
- 4.4** Where they are controlled locally however it is important that the implications of the charging decisions being taken are fully understood and that the appropriate information is available to make informed decisions.
- 4.5** The council has a fees and charges policy (see appendix 2), which forms part of the council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). The aims of the policy are to provide a consistent framework for the review of the council's current fees and charges as well as guidance to introducing new charges. The policy introduces some key principles of which two principles are not always achievable simultaneously:
- Fees and charges should be set to assist the council in achieving its council priorities. Services must raise income wherever there is a duty to do so, and should raise income wherever there is a power to do so, unless the introduction of a charge would prohibit the achievement of specific corporate and service objectives.
 - In line with legislation, fees and charges should be set to recover full costs including overheads. Where the service user is subsidised by taxpayer this should be transparent.
- 4.6** The level of income generated by fees and charges, and in particular projected increases which the council can influence, form a key part of the council's financial planning and is therefore reflected in the MTFP. It has been assumed that additional income generated during 2025/26 will be offset by similar increases in costs. However, where a specific policy decision has already been taken in relation to future levels of charging, this has been reflected in the plan,
- 4.7** The council has not imposed a blanket 'one size fits all' approach, although as a minimum it is expected that discretionary fees and charges will normally increase with September's CPI each year. This

indicator is chosen as it is consistent with central government’s approach to uplifting many of their funding streams and normally provides a suitable proxy where changes in total cost are more incremental. In September 2024 this was 1.7%. In the main, the normal process for approving changes to fees and charges happens once a year, with changes being applied from the following 1 April. If changes are being applied earlier this will be made clear in the report.

5. Key issues and proposals

Appendix 1 details all current and proposed changes to fees and charges by portfolio. The next section of the report highlights any proposed changes to the fees and charges which either fall outside of either statutory charges set externally, or cost recovery at CPI increase and explains the reasons for them. In some instances, after increasing the previous year’s fees by the CPI uplift, roundings have been applied to the nearest whole pound to ease cash handling. The effect of this has meant that for some of the fees and charges there will be no 2025/26 increase. They have not been included in the below section and are to be annually reviewed to ensure inflationary increases are cyclically maintained.

5.1 Leisure, Health and Community Engagement Portfolio

Fee and Charge	Pricing Change	Proposal overview
Pest Control – Rodent control	No change	We currently have an agreement in place with Lancaster City Council to deliver pest control (rodent) service on our behalf therefore fees and charges will be updated to mirror Lancaster CC, when available.
Pest Control – Commercial contracts	No change	A review is pending regarding the ongoing provision of the commercial contracts and sale of pest control products.
Pest Control – Products	No change	
Pest Control – Commercial fly catching equipment	Withdraw	Owing to staff capacity, it is proposed to withdraw the provision of the commercial fly catching equipment. The current forecast to subsidise this service in 2024/25 is £70,100 including capital charges and support service recharges (£35,450 excluding capital charges and support service recharges). The subsidy at 2023/24 outturn was £40,088 (£8,440 excluding capital charges and support service recharges).
Food Safety – Food hygiene booklets	Withdraw	To take effect once existing stock levels have been used. Booklets can now be bought from other suppliers.

Marine Hall – Advertising banners	Withdraw	To be replaced with new marketing packages (Light, Plus and Premium).
Marine Hall – Marketing packages (Light, Plus and Premium)	New – to start with immediate effect following approval	<p>The Light package is free of charge and offers basic advertisement, leaflet distribution and box office ticket sales.</p> <p>The Plus package is £180 and also includes a set number of social media posts, digital screen advertising and E-News releases.</p> <p>The Premium package is £360 and includes the services offered in the Plus package but with additional social media engagement and additional event listings, inclusion on the council’s website (internal and external) and in council publications and press releases, plus reserved banner space on notice boards (excluding printing costs).</p> <p>Any in house printing or additional costs that are required are to be on a cost recovery basis.</p> <p>The new fees have been benchmarked against similar offerings from theatres across the country of a similar size and position as Marine Hall.</p> <p>These fees are to then increase by September’s CPI from 1 April 2025.</p>
Marine Hall – Miscellaneous charges	No change	These are to be reviewed by the incoming manager along with the pricing structure for shows.
Marine Hall - Trade exhibitions (excluding festival stalls)	No change	To be reviewed by the incoming manager.
Marine Hall – Festival stalls	Increase of £5 – to start with immediate effect following approval	The 2024/25 fees are to increase by £5 each for the 5ft stall, 10ft stall and the 3x3m.
Marine Hall – Wedding and event hire charges	See appendix 1 for full list of proposed changes	Changes to these fees and charges are proposed following a review by the theatre’s consultant. This has included both consultation and benchmarking of similar celebration event fees as well as changes to the structure.

		<p>These fees are to then increase by September's CPI from 1 April 2025 (rounded to the nearest whole pound).</p>
<p>Mount Pavilion – Wedding and event hire charges</p>	<p>See appendix 1 for full list of proposed changes</p>	<p>Changes to these fees and charges are proposed following a review by the theatre's consultant. This has included both consultation and benchmarking of similar celebration event fees as well as changes to the structure.</p> <p>These fees are to then increase by September's CPI from 1 April 2025 (rounded to the nearest whole pound).</p>
<p>Mount Pavilion – Community and commercial hire</p>	<p>Withdraw hourly rate with immediate effect following approval</p>	<p>Existing charges include a fixed fee or hourly rate. The proposal is to withdraw the hourly rate, keeping just the fixed fee which will be increased by September's CPI from 1 April 2025 (rounded to the nearest whole pound).</p> <p>This is based on wanting to simplify the pricing structure and give a standard minimum package which should cover most hires.</p>
<p>Mount Pavilion – Funeral gathering / anniversary celebration for children's party</p>	<p>Increase charges from a minimum fee of £200 to a minimum £400 price on application depending on the hirer's requirements.</p>	<p>The proposed increase follows benchmarking of similar venues where parties can be held and reflects two Marine Hall staff attending throughout plus additional time required for setting up and cleaning up. These fees are to then increase by September's CPI from 1 April 2025 (rounded to the nearest whole pound).</p>
<p>Mount Pavilion- Lodge Meeting Room</p>	<p>Withdrawn</p>	<p>This asset is now leased to a third party.</p>
<p>Countryside Walks – Full date</p>	<p>Increase by £1</p>	<p>It is proposed to increase the full day walks fee by £1 to £6 as these fees have not increased since the 2022/23 fees and charges were uplifted by fifty pence. Owing to cash handling, these fees are to remain at the nearest whole pound. The fees are set to be inclusive for all ages and abilities and to act as a contribution towards the running costs of events</p>

Outdoor amenity sites	No changes	Any changes to the fees and charges to be considered as part of future service reviews.
Health and wellbeing	No changes	Increases to be applied periodically to aid cash handling rounding / change issues.

5.2 Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio

Car Parking – Off street (pay and display, season tickets, resident parking permits)	See appendix 1 for full list of proposed changes	Priced to promote tourism, township and business sustainability. The main pay and display fees earned the council £500,917 in 2023/24 and are currently forecast to generate £485,000 in 2024/25. The pay and display fees are to increase between 8.57% to 20% and this reflects that these fees have not increased since 2019/20. No other increases are proposed.
Car Parking Off Street – Motorhome Overnight Parking at Fleetwood Central Car Park	Increase by £2.50 from 1 January 2025	It is proposed to increase the overnight parking fees by £2.50 to £7.50. This increase is to reflect the additional sluice facilities provided at this car park. The motorhome pay and display fees earned the council £22,112 in 2023/24 and are currently forecast to generate £15,000 in 2024/25.
Housing – Cost of raising an invoice	Withdraw	It is proposed to remove the line for the cost of raising an invoice should be expected that a sundry debtor is raised as standard practice.
Housing – Care and Repair Handyperson Service Charge	No Changes	It is proposed to keep the £10 a job charge to encourage more residents to engage work through the council.

5.3 Planning Policy and Economic Development Portfolio

Fees and charges within the responsibility of the Planning Policy and Economic Development Portfolio include development control, building control, estates and economic development.

The majority of the Building Control fees are set in accordance with the Building Regulations Act 2010, allowing authorities to fix their own charges based on full cost recovery. The relevant Assistant Director has the delegated authority to amend these fees as necessary. Similarly, all tenancy matters up to an annual sum of £25,000, including market rents are delegated to the relevant Assistant Director. The fees for submitting planning applications required by legislation are set nationally. These were last updated on 6 December 2023. However, the Town and Country Planning (Fees for Applications, Deemed Applications, Requests and Site Visits) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2023 introduced an automatic, annual increase. This will increase planning fees annually, on 1 April each year, starting on 1 April 2025. All planning

fees will be increased by the rate of inflation, as measured by the consumer prices index from the preceding September. The increase will be capped at 10%, even if the inflation rate is higher. The fees will not be changed if there is negative inflation (deflation). The schedule of new fees is to be published in advance of April each year, from April 2025.

Building Control	Increases over and above Sept. 2024 CPI See appendix 1 for full list of proposed changes	Following an overall review of the Building Control staffing structure and fees in accordance with CIPFA Local Authority Building Control Guidance and Building Regulation 2010, it is proposed to restructure and streamline the Building Control fees, effective from 1 April 2025. The increase is generally between 7% and 17% for existing similar fees and is in line with other local authority building control teams (whilst the council has determined individual fees by benchmarking against other local authorities. The Regularisation and Reversion Charges (now shown separately for clarity) are set to increase between 17% - 63% reflecting additional cost of work involved). The council must maintain balanced cost recovery, making sure predicted income will cover costs. Whilst it is difficult to determine exact charges levied by competitors, anecdotal evidence suggests local authority building control charges remain lower than those of the private sector (registered building control approvers).
Estates – Filming	Increases over and above Sept. 2024 CPI	It is proposed to bring these more in line with neighbouring authorities in incremental steps. The permit to film (commercial and film companies) is to increase by 47.06% from £102 to £150. The licence to film (students and registered charities) is to increase by 47.06% from £51 to £75. Late notice fees are to increase by 30.72% from £153 to £200. The licence to use a drone is to increase by £50 from £100 to £150.
Estates MOT Test Centre	Increases over and above Sept. 2024 CPI	It is proposed to increase the MOT Test Centre charges to be in line with other MOT suppliers with the exception of the £5 charged for the standalone testing of taxi meters and the release following a stop notice issued during operating hours. The standard vehicle compliance test (MOT), and retest charges are to increase by 11.1% from £45 to £50. The

		release following a council or Police issued stop notice (at weekends or over bank holidays) is to increase by 10% from £50 to £55. The vehicle compliance test carried out on a Saturday morning fee is to increase by 2.88% from £85 to £90. Finally, the local taxi licensing checks for temporary replacement vehicles fee is to increase by 16.67% from £30 to £35.
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5.4 Resources Portfolio

Local Land Charges	No Changes	There are no proposed changes to the current fees as they are to be reviewed as part of the service review following the migration to HM Land Registry during 2025.
Room Hire Civic Centre	No Changes	There are no changes planned for the room hire charges at the Civic Centre to encourage regular repeat bookings. Likewise for Civil Ceremonies no changes are planned as comparable to other similar local authority venues.

5.5 Street Scene, Parks and Open Spaces Portfolio

Dog Welfare – Stray dog handling fee incl. statutory levy	Increase by £10	It is proposed to increase the stray dog fees by 10%. Allowing for rounding to the nearest whole pound, this increases the fee from £99 to £109. The higher than inflation increase is to help reduce the subsidy and is in anticipation of a new contract. An increasing number of dogs are going unclaimed and as such fees will be not recouped. The current subsidy forecast, excluding client side costs, is £16,300 in 2024/25 (£16,569 in 2023/24) and excludes capital charges and support services.
Dog Welfare – Kennel fee additional charge per day	Increase by £0.65	As above. Allowing rounding to the nearest whole pound, this increases the fee from £9.35 to £10.
Waste Management – Green waste	Increase by £5	It is proposed to uplift the green waste subscription fees by £5; annual subscription from £40 to £45, additional bins from £35 to £40. Following the 18 April 2024 Green Waste Collection Service Fees and Charges Street Scene, Parks and Open Spaces Portfolio Holder report, it is proposed to continue with the

		“Early Bird” offer of a £5 reduction, but to amend the timeframe and open up the 2025/26 subscriptions from May, promoting the “Early Bird” for May and June only with the increased prices commencing 1 July. It is hoped by amending the time frame of the offer, it will encourage more people to sign up before the new service commences and reduce the work involved in chasing payment and rejecting bins.
Parks and Open Spaces – Fleetwood Memorial Park Parks and Development Officer activities	Withdraw	It is proposed to withdraw the fees for the Parks Development Officer Activities as this temporary grant funded post has now finished.

6. Alternative options considered and rejected

6.1 Alternative options have been considered throughout the fees and charges review process. However, those presented are felt to represent the best options to contribute towards the costs of providing services and to safeguard the finances of the council.

7. Delegated functions

7.1 The matters referred to in this report are considered under the following executive function delegated to each Portfolio Holder (as set out in Part 3 of the Council’s Constitution): “To determine charges or fees for any relevant service operated within the Portfolio”.

Financial, Legal/MO and Climate Change implications	
Finance	The financial implications of the fees and charges will be reflected in the 2025/26 Revenue Estimates which will be considered by Cabinet at their meeting on 12 February 2025. Those charges detailed in Appendix 1 will be implemented from 1 April 2025 unless indicated otherwise.
Legal/MO	<p>Some services the council provides are mandatory and governed by specific legislation, whilst other services provided are discretionary. Discretionary services are those which the council is permitted to provide but not required to provide.</p> <p>The council has a general power to charge a person for discretionary services under Section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003 (“LGA 2003”) and under the power of general competence found in Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 (“LA 2011”).</p>

	The overall position on charging is that the council must not charge for a service if legislation prohibits it from doing so. If legislation requires the council to provide a service and to charge for it, then we are required to do so. In the absence of specific powers or prohibition on charging services the council may use the powers in either s93 of the LGA 2003 or s1 of LA 2011 to make charges for discretionary services. The council cannot use these powers to make a profit, however, the council can include the full cost of all aspects of the service provision when calculating the fee.
Climate Change	None arising directly from the report.

Other risks/implications: checklist

If there are significant implications arising from this report on any issues marked with a ✓ below, the report author will have consulted with the appropriate specialist officers on those implications and addressed them in the body of the report. There are no significant implications arising directly from this report, for those issues marked with a x.

risks/implications	✓ / x
community safety	x
equality and diversity	✓
health and safety	x

risks/implications	✓ / x
asset management	x
ICT	x
data protection	x

Processing Personal Data

In addition to considering data protection along with the other risks/ implications, the report author will need to decide if a 'privacy impact assessment (PIA)' is also required. If the decision(s) recommended in this report will result in the collection and processing of personal data for the first time (i.e. purchase of a new system, a new working arrangement with a third party) a PIA will need to have been completed and signed off by Data Protection Officer before the decision is taken in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

report author	telephone no.	email	date
Penny Jones, Corporate Accountant	01253 887298	penny.jones@wyre.gov.uk	04/11/2024

List of background papers:		
name of document	date	where available for inspection
None		

List of appendices

Appendix 1 – Proposed Fees and Charges 2025/26

Appendix 2 – Fees and Charges Policy

Appendix 3 – Charging Policy Summary