

Report to the Executive for Decision
13 January 2025

Portfolio:	Policy and Resources
Subject:	General Fund Fees & Charges 2025/26
Report of:	Assistant Director (Finance and ICT)
Corporate Priorities:	Responsive, Inclusive and Innovative Council

Purpose:

This report provides an update and proposals for the Council's fees and charges for the financial year 2025/26.

Executive summary:

This report gives the Executive the opportunity to consider the Council's fees and charges for 2025/26 including approving increases in existing charges and consider new charges where applicable.

Recommendation/Recommended Option:

It is recommended that the Executive:

- (a) approves the General Fund fees and charges for 2025/26 as set out at Appendix A to this report;
- (b) notes the fees and charges that will be reviewed by the Licencing and Regulatory Affairs and Planning Committees;
- (c) approves the proposed Operational Fees and Charges for Solent Airport at Appendix B to this report;
- (d) agrees that delegated authority is given to the Director of Planning and Regeneration following consultation with the Executive Member for Policy and Resources, to adjust the Operational Fees and Charges in place at Solent Airfield within the financial year, if and when necessary; and
- (e) agrees that the rate of short-term licenses at Solent Airport be determined on an individual basis by the Head of Asset Management, supported by benchmarking of the fees charged with similar sites, where possible, and the results shared with the Executive Member for Policy and Resources.

Reason:

The proposed fees and charges will continue to support delivery of the Council's services and contribute to the budget setting process for 2025/26.

Cost of proposals:

There are no costs to the proposals.

Appendices:

A: Published Fees and Charges 2025/26

B: Proposed Solent Airport Operational Fees and Charges 2025/26 (Confidential)*

** Commercially exempt from publication under Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972*

It is not in the public interest to publish this information at this time. The approved Solent Airport Operational Fees and Charges for 2025/26 will be published in April 2025 on the RCA website. Publishing the proposed Solent Airport Operational Fees and Charges for 2025/26 prior to April 2025 would not be in the public interest as these Fees and Charges remain commercially sensitive until the date of publication. Disclosure of any details prior to the publication of the approved Solent Airport Operational Fees and Charges for 2025/26 in April 2025 may result in a commercial disadvantage to the Council by revealing commercially sensitive information in a competitive market economy.

Background papers: None

Reference papers:

Report to Executive 8 January 2024 – Fees and Charges 2024/25

Report to Executive 3 June 2024 – Electric Vehicle Charging Tariff for Fareham Live Car Park

Report to Executive 13 January 2025 – Trade Waste Services Review

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Executive Briefing Paper

Date:	13 January 2025
Subject:	General Fund Fees and Charges 2025/26
Briefing by:	Assistant Director (Finance & ICT)
Portfolio:	Policy and Resources

INTRODUCTION

1. The Council levies Fees and Charges for a number of services it provides. This is an important source of funding for Council services and therefore contributes to the budget setting process. As Government funding continues to reduce, Councils are expected to adopt a more commercial approach to their fees and charges income streams and focus on at least cost recovery where appropriate.
2. This report therefore provides an update following the latest annual review of the Council's fee and charges and makes proposals for increasing current charges and also implementing new charges where opportunities have been identified. The table below sets out the full extent of the Council's fees and charges and highlights which are covered by this report:

FBC Published Fees and Charges	Appendix A	Covered by this report with the following exceptions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licensing Fees will be reviewed by the Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Committee in January • Planning Fees will be reviewed by the Planning Committee in January
Confidential Fees and Charges (commercially sensitive)		
A. Trade Waste		Covered by the Trade Waste Services report to this January Executive meeting
B. Housing Rent and Service Charges (HRA)		An update of these for 2025/26 will be as an Appendix to the Housing Revenue Account report to the Executive in February
C. Housing Careline Charges (General Fund)		An update of these for 2025/26 will be as an Appendix to the Housing Revenue Account report to the Executive in February
D. Building Control		The Building Control hourly rate is regularly reviewed by the Building Control Partnership Panel. An increased rate is due to be implemented in January 2025.
E. Solent Airport Fees and Charges	Appendix B	Covered by this report

BUDGET SETTING PRINCIPLES

1. The budget setting principles are detailed in the Council's Medium-Term Finance Strategy and the one proposed relating to fees and charges has been updated as shown below:
 - Fees and charges to be increased to cover any increase in costs and achieve a realistic increase in income, *and recovery of costs*, wherever possible. Every effort should be made to identify new sources of income to help fund the provision of council services. The proposed charges should be considered alongside those for similar services in neighbouring authorities and, where appropriate, the charges levied by private sector providers.
2. A detailed review of fees and charges has been carried out in light of the inflation trends for the year. The current rate of inflation as at October 2024 is 2.3% and many of the charges have been increased to reflect this and the increased cost to running the council services. Generally, the charges are rounded to be kept at whole pounds.

CHANGES PROPOSED FOR 2025/26

3. There have been a number of changes to fees and charges. In most cases, an increase is proposed in line with the policy and reflects the current level of inflation. The full list of these proposed charges is given in Appendix A.
4. The following paragraphs detail changes, or otherwise, of the more significant ones.

Statutory Fees

5. Many of the charges that are used by the council will be statutory charges and as such the council has no control over the setting of these charges.
6. The majority of **Planning charges** are statutory fees. The current fees were set in December 2023 and were subject to an automatic annual inflation increase, as measured by the Consumer Prices Index from the preceding September. The Government have, however, also been talking about implementing a new fee structure to reflect their plans to streamline and bolster the planning process for housing. Details and timing of this change are awaited.
7. It has been noted that the Fixed Penalty Notice charges for litter and fouling (**Clean and Tidy Borough**) are also set in legislation and these have changed. The fees have therefore been updated to reflect this and the new fees.

Discretionary Charges where No increase is Proposed

8. **Town Centre car parking** charges have not been increased since October 2010 and there is no proposal to increase them for 2025/26 as it is again likely to impact on service users when there is already reduced use of car parking facilities in the town centre.
9. It has been agreed that there will be a review of town centre parking charges as part of the Town Centre Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan in 2025.

New or Increasing Charges

10. The proposed changes to **Beach Hut charges** would be an increase of 5% over the current charge and reflects a similar increase for the previous 4 years.
11. In the **Housing group**, an above inflation increase (9.4%) is proposed for the Guest Room Charges at Sheltered Accommodation, as the charges are low given the quality of the accommodation and charges elsewhere.
12. In the **Licensing Fees group**, the Discretionary Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licences charges have been increased above inflation as these charges were not increased in 2024/25. The “Other” charges in this group have been changed from Actual cost to the Council to a fixed rate charge, to be reviewed annually, in line with other fees and charges.
13. In the **Parking Charges** group a new Electric Vehicle Charging Tariff has been introduced for the Electric Vehicle Charge Points in the new Fareham Live Car Park. The tariff shown in Appendix A reflects the pricing strategy approved by the Executive in June 2024. Due to price volatility, the Executive agreed that delegated authority be given to the Director of Planning and Regeneration in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, to adjust the charging tariff in line with the agreed pricing strategy, if and when necessary.
14. There are 3 proposed changes In the **Public Protection** group:
 - the Private Sector Housing Act 2004 Enforcement Notices charge has been changed from Actual cost to the Council up to and including service of Notice to a fixed rate charge, to be reviewed annually, in line with other fees and charges.
 - the Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupancy fees have been split between a Fee on Application and a Fee on Grant, due to a requirement to charge for the application and grant separately. These fees have been aligned with other local authorities within the Environment Health Partnership.
 - A new charge has been added for requests for a revisit for a food safety inspection.

Removed Charges

15. In the **Clean and Tidy Borough** area the Shopping Trolley Collection charge has been removed as the Council does not levy this charge.
16. In the **Housing** area the Wash Cards charges have been removed as the Wash Cards have been phased out in Sheltered Accommodation.

Solent Airport Daedalus Operational Fees and Charges 2025/26

17. Appendix B contains the key proposed operational fees for approval. These fees are planned for implementation at Solent Airport commencing 1 April 2025. They have been proposed by the Airfield Operator based on benchmarking against comparable sites.
18. There are elements of the Council’s operations which are delivered by third parties within a commercial environment. Examples include Fareham Live and the two Leisure Centres. The operators have a certain level of autonomy to alter fees in response to exogenous factors:

- a. Fareham Live operator has complete autonomy for ticket prices for mainstream shows, which are heavily dictated by the industry.
 - b. Fareham Live operator has complete autonomy for ticket prices for community events but must be able to demonstrate to officers that it has used a proportional approach for example with benchmarking.
 - c. The operator of the leisure centres has complete autonomy to raise fees by up to CPI+3% each year.
 - d. If the leisure centre operator wishes to raise fees above this rate, they must present a case, for example with benchmarking. The decision to agree or decline rests with the Assistant Director (Democracy) following consultation with the Executive Member for Leisure and Community.
19. Many operators of airfields have autonomy to adapt their pricing structure in relation to market pressure and competition. Solent Airport is currently constrained as it is unable to react in a timely fashion to market forces.
 20. Given the stages needed for approval, benchmarking for Solent Airport fees commences in August. This is 8 months before they are implemented, and those fees remain active until the end of March the following year, 20 months after the benchmarking began.
 21. Therefore, delegated authority is now sought so that the Director of Planning and Regeneration, following consultation with the Executive Member for Policy and Resources, can agree changes to the Operational Fees and Charges in place at Solent Airfield within the next financial year.
 22. The contract with the current operator expires 31 March 2026, and there is an active procurement exercise in progress. The approach to fees to be implemented from April 2026 will be incorporated into the contract award approval process.

Daedalus Site short-term licence fees

23. There is growing interest from third parties who wish to take on a short-term licence at Solent Airport in order to host an event.
24. Solent Airport is a community asset, and the Council is keen to accommodate such events where viable and is of the view that these events should at least cover all costs the Council incurs in facilitating them. This should include the value of officer time.
25. Given the likely range of possible events in terms of size, dates, impact on officer time, impact on airfield operations, and impact on the Safety Advisory Group, it will only be possible to grant such licenses on a case-by-case basis.
26. It is therefore proposed that the rate of these short-term licenses be determined on an individual basis by the Head of Asset Management.
27. Benchmarking of the fees charged with similar sites, where possible, will be carried out and the results shared with the Executive Member for Policy and Resources.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

28. Fees and charges generate just under £10 million of income for the council so it is important that the charges are reviewed regularly to ensure they still cover the Council's costs, where possible, whilst providing value for money for users of the services.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS/CARBON IMPACT ASSESSMENT

29. The subject matter of this report is not anticipated to have an impact on the Council's carbon footprint, nor is it expected to have a detrimental or beneficial impact to the wider environment.

Enquiries:

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