

DECISION MAKER Director Housing & Safer Communities	DATE 29/01/2025
TITLE H&SC Fees and Charges (2025/26)	WARD (S) All
CHIEF OFFICER Director Housing & Safer Communities	CABINET MEMBER Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness & Neighbourhoods Cabinet Member for Community Safety & Enforcement
DECISION CLASSIFICATION <i>Key</i> <i>Subject to Call-In</i> <i>Non-exempt</i>	IS THE FINAL DECISION ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THIS REPORT TO BE MADE AT THIS MEETING? Yes

I. Decision required

This report makes the following recommendations to the decision-maker:

1.1. Agree the proposed fees and charges for the financial year 2025/26 as set out in Appendix I of this report, in accordance with the Leader's Scheme of Delegation.

1.2. To note that the charges will apply from 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026, where possible.

Agreed / Not Agreed

Signed.....

Date:

Jamie Carswell Director Housing & Safer Communities

2. Links to Our Greenwich missions

2.1 This report concerns the setting of Fees & Charges for 2025/26 and therefore affects the revenue position of the Council. Therefore it relates to the delivery of all of the missions:

- People's health supports them in living their best life
- People will not experience discrimination
- Those in financial need can access the right support, advice and opportunities to improve their situation
- Children and young people can reach their full potential
- Everyone in Greenwich is safer, and feels safer
- People in Greenwich have access to a safe and secure home that meets their needs
- It is easier, safer and greener to move around the borough and the rest of London
- Development delivers positive change to an area for existing and new communities
- Neighbourhoods are vibrant, safe and attractive with community services that meet the needs of local residents
- Greenwich plays an active role in tackling the climate crisis and improving environmental sustainability, in line with our commitment of being carbon neutral by 2030
- Everyone has the opportunity to secure a good job
- Town centres, high streets and shopping parades are vibrant, prosperous, well-maintained places that meet the needs of local people
- Our economy attracts new high value businesses whilst strengthening its foundations
- The voluntary, community and socially motivated sectors in Greenwich are strengthened and able to provide more support to the most in need
- Our Council is better at listening to communities, and communities feel they are heard
- We develop networks with communities, key partners and businesses to meet need and address challenges together
- We design our services around the needs of our residents
- Our Council is an adaptive organisation, enabling it to navigate the increasing number of challenges it faces while remaining financially sustainable

- Our Council works in the most efficient and effective ways possible
- Our Council is a great place to work, with a diverse workforce who have the right skills and are motivated and empowered to deliver

3. Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 3.1 To allow the Directorate to increase the fees and charges for the various services it provides, ensuring that the fees charged from 1st April 2025 reflect the inflationary changes over the last year and still represent full cost recovery for the authority.

4. Introduction and Background

- 4.1 The Leader's General Scheme of Delegation of Executive Functions provides for Chief Officers to "agree an increase in fees and charges in line with or below inflation or where an increase provides for recovery of the Council's costs".
- 4.2 The schedule provided in Appendix I of this report sets out the proposed fees and charges for 2025-26. The schedule includes the previous year's charge (where applicable).
- 4.3 In reviewing the charges, officers have considered whether the charges ensure full cost recovery. Some benchmarking has been undertaken to confirm that fees and charges are appropriate.
- 4.4 An inflationary adjustment of 1.7% has been applied to fees and charges, with consideration whether an above inflationary increase is required to ensure full cost recovery. Statutory charges and external charges that are outside the departments control are shown.
- 4.5 The charges shown in Appendix I will apply from 1st April 2025.

5. Available Options

Option I

- 5.1 Do not increase fees and charges and continue with the rates currently being charged.

Option 2

- 5.2 To increase fees and charges for 2025/26 as set out in Appendix 1, applying an inflationary uplift of 1.7% to all charges, unless a higher increase can be justified to ensure full cost recovery, or is included within the Council MTFS.

Option 3

- 5.3 Agree an alternative approach to updating the Fees and Charges schedule.

6. Preferred Option

- 6.1 Option 2 - to apply an inflationary uplift of 1.7% to all fees and charges, with a higher increase applied where necessary to ensure full cost recovery or is included in the Council MTFS.

7. Reasons for Recommendations

- 7.1 To ensure that the fees charged reflect the inflationary changes over the last year, and that the charges still represent full cost recovery.

8. Consultation Results

- 8.1 No consultation is required and none has been carried out.

9. Next Steps: Communication and Implementation of the Decision

- 9.1 The agreed fees and charges will need to be shared with the relevant teams to ensure that the Directorates management systems and any external communications reflect the price changes, effective 1st March 2025. This includes ensuring that the Council webpages, guidance documents and forms are showing the correct figures, with these changes implemented on or before by 1st April 2025.

10. Cross-Cutting Issues and Implications

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
<p>Legal including Human Rights Act</p>	<p>The Director is asked to agree the proposed fees and charges for the financial year 2025/26 as set out in Appendix I. The proposed fees and charges are in line with inflation or on a cost recovery basis. Local Authorities (LA) have general powers under Section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003 (LGA 2003) to charge for discretionary services they provide. Discretionary services are services which LA are authorised to, but under no obligation to provide.</p> <p>The setting of fees and charges is part of the council’s budget setting process. Under the Leader’s Scheme of Delegation, the Director may agree increases to fees and charges in line with or below inflation or increases above inflation where such increases allow for the recovery of the councils’ costs. In making the decision required the Director should aim to achieve a fair balance between the interests of users of the services and the general body of Council Tax payers. Where charges are being increased the Director should bear in mind the scale and extent of the charges and may need in some cases to have regard to the cost of service provision associated with the power to charge.</p> <p>The council has no discretion in respect of statutory fees.</p>	<p><i>Azuka Onuorah Interim Director of Legal and Democratic Services 6 January 2025</i></p>
<p>Finance and other resources</p>	<p>The Director of Housing & Safer Communities is requested to agree the proposed fees and charges for the financial year 2025/26 as set out in Appendix I of this report, in accordance with the Leaders Scheme of Delegation.</p>	<p><i>Joanne Stark Head of Accounting & Business Change 06/01/25</i></p>

	<p>An inflationary adjustment of 1.7% has been applied to Fees and Charges, with consideration whether an above inflationary increase is required to ensure full cost recovery.</p> <p>Inflation will be applied to 2025-26 non-statutory fees and charges income budgets to assist in the delivery of a balanced budget for 2025/26.</p>	
Equalities	<p>The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. The report does not contribute to the Council's Equality and Equity Charter and the Council's Equity Objectives 2024-2028.</p>	<p>Jamie Carswell Director of HSC</p> <p>9.12.2024</p>
Climate change	<p>In the future it may be possible to link private rented licensing fees to the energy efficiency of the property – this will be considered when the licensing scheme is next reviewed. The other decisions recommended through this paper have little or no direct implication on climate change or the Greenwich Carbon Neutral Plan agreed by Cabinet on 18th November 2020.</p>	<p>Jamie Carswell Director of HSC</p> <p>9.12.24</p>
Risk Management	<p>The fees and charges in this report contribute to the mitigation of two risks in the Corporate Strategic Risk register.</p> <p>The licensing fees and associated enforcement regime for private rented housing will improve private rented housing conditions which is one of the mitigating actions for CORPGMT 10: Government Welfare Legislation – anti poverty strategy.</p>	<p><i>Jamie Carswell</i> <i>Director of HSC</i></p> <p>9.12.24</p>

	The income from fees and charges will support the Council's ability to deliver these services, mitigating CORPGMT II Government Welfare legislation – Impact of service income.	
Community Engagement	There has not been any specific community engagement in respect of the proposed increases however, in accordance with the Councils community engagement pledge, the next steps set out in paragraph 9 above will ensure that if increases are agreed all those affected will be aware before the new fees come into force.	<i>Jamie Carswell</i> <i>Director of HSC</i> <i>9.12.24</i>

11. Report Appendices

11.1. The following documents are to be published with and form part of the report:

- Appendix A: HSC Fees and Charges 2025/26

12. Background Papers

- None

Report Author: Joanne Stark, Head of Accounting & Business Change
 Tel No. 020 8921 8336
 Email. joanne.stark@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

Reporting to: Damon Cook, Director of Finance
 Tel No. 020 8921 3508
 Email. damon.cook@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

Chief Officer: Jamie Carswell, Director Housing & Safer Communities
 Tel No. 020 8921 8291
 Email. jamie.carswell@royalgreenwich.gov.uk