

Committee(s): Housing Committee	Date: 12 December 2022
Subject: Fees & Charges	Wards Affected: All
Report of: Julian Higson – Director of Housing (Interim)	Public
Report Author/s: Name: Angela Abbott, Corporate Manager – Housing Needs & Delivery Telephone: 01277 312500 E-mail: angela.abbott@brentwood.gov.uk	For Decision

Summary

Fees and charges made by the Council for various services are reviewed on an annual basis by the relevant Committees relating to the services provided. Recommended amendments to the fees and charges are incorporated into the budget setting process to take effect from the following financial year.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

R1. Agree to the proposed charges for 2022/23 as attached in Appendix A-D, subject to the annual budget setting process.

Main Report

Introduction and Background

1. The Council has a number of fees and charges relating to the services it provides. As part of the budget setting process, these charges are reviewed on an annual basis. Whilst some of the fees and charges are statutory, and therefore determined through legislation, the Council must also review its charges for discretionary services to ensure that they reflect the current costs of service provision.
2. The individual charges that are being proposed are set out in Appendix A-K of this report

Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

3. The proposed fees are based on a calculation of the costs involved in administering the various areas of work, apart from where there is statutory charge or where the fees are set by Government.
4. The Council where possible will adopt a full cost recovery of fees and charges.
5. Due to the economic climate there has been no set minimum increase to Fees and Charges, instead services have been asked to review their fees and charges and to determine any proposed increase to ensure services remain cost recoverable to maintain the services. Managers are able to increase fees and charges as long as the change can be justified within the supporting covering sheet to the appendix.
6. Within each appendix a covering sheet explains the following
 - Objectives and rationale behind the fees and charges
 - The proposed change in fee
 - Justification for this revision
 - Any benchmarking undertaken to aid in informing the level of charge
 - Whether any consultation needs to be considered
 - Expected income from the proposed fees and charges.
7. The fees and charges with proposed changes are:

Homelessness

- Charges are to remain the same as 2022/23 prices.

HRA Estates

- Fees based on services provided by contractors have been increased in accordance with contracted inflation rates.
- Some charges have been increased by 11.1% and garage rents for Council tenants have been increased by 7%.
- Garage rents for Non-Council tenants, Commercial tenants, Leasehold tenants and Charities have increased by 11.1%.
- Non-return of gas/electric keys and cards increased by 7%

HRA Repairs

- Charges have been set based on contractor costs.

- Full Cost recovery 2023/24 - Other repairs deemed re-chargeable reflect the charging Environment and Housing Committee approved on 23rd September 2015. The purpose of this pricing mechanism was to reduce the amount the Council is subsidizing by 5% per annum until Full cost recovery is reached and encouraging tenants to be more aware and responsible for their property.

HRA Special Services

- Charges have been increased by 1.9% and rounded to the nearest pound or fifty pence.

8. Proposed changes identified are explained within each covering sheet appendix

Consultation

9. None required

References to Corporate Plan

10. To ensure the provision of efficient and effective services of our residents

Implications

Financial Implications

Name/Title: Phoebe Barnes, Director Assets and Investments

Tel/Email: 01277 312500/phoebe.barnes@brentwood.gov.uk

11. Financial implications are set out within the report and appendices

Legal Implications

Name & Title: Steve Summers, Strategic Director and Monitoring Officer

Tel & Email: 01277 312500/steve.summers@brentwood.gov.uk

12. The Council is able under the relevant legislation to recover costs for services it provides. The Council can charge for discretionary services under the Local Government Act 2003 section 93 and the Localism Act 2011 general power of competence and is able to review the fees and charges in line with these provisions.

Economic Implications

Name/Title: Phil Drane, Corporate Director (Planning and Economy)

Tel/Email: 01277 312500/philip.drane@brentwood.gov.uk

13. There are no direct economic implications as a result of setting these fees and charges. Certain services provided by the Council where fees and charges are applicable provide specific economic benefits to the borough.

Equality and Diversity Implications

**Name/Title: Kim Anderson, Corporate Manager, Community, Leisure and Health
Tel/Email: 01277 312500/kim.anderson@brentwood.gov.uk**

The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:

- a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful
- b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).

The proposals in this report will not have a disproportionate adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic.

Other Implications (where significant) – i.e. Health and Safety, Asset Management, Risk Management, Section 17 – Crime & Disorder, Sustainability, ICT.

None

Background Papers

None

Appendices to this report

- Appendix A – Proposed Fees & Charges – Homelessness
- Appendix B – Proposed Fees & Charges – HRA Estates
- Appendix C – Proposed Fees & Charges – Repairs
- Appendix D – Proposed Fees & Charges – Special Services