

## NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL DECISION



**DECISION OF:** COUNCILLOR HANNAH YOUNG. THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT.

**WITH ADVICE FROM:** DIRECTOR OF PLACE

**DECISION NO:** 23/24 DP 476

**SUBJECT:** Place Directorate Fees and Charges 2024-25

**KEY DECISION:** YES

**REASON:** The decision affects services across North Somerset.

### BACKGROUND:

Fees and charges represent an important source of income, providing funding to assist in achieving the Council's objectives. Some of our fees and charges are effectively set by legislation but many are locally determined.

Income derived from charging will be used to offset the costs of providing the service being charged for, including support service costs. In setting an appropriate level of fees and charges, managers also take into account their client groups and corporate objectives

### DECISION:

In accordance with the Council's constitution, this decision seeks approval for the proposed increases to fees and charges detailed below that are over 5% and up to 10% or are estimated to generate additional annual revenue income of £100,000 to £300,000.

<b>Service being charged</b>	<b>2023/24 charge</b>	<b>2024/25 charge</b>	<b>% increase</b>	<b>Is this a new charge? (Y/N)</b>
<b>Highways Engineering</b>				
Stage 1 Road safety audit. Audit Scheme over £250K - Quotation (per hr)	49.00	53.50	9%	No
Stage 1 Road safety audit. Review of external audit. Scheme over £250K - Quotation (per hr)	49.00	53.50	9%	No
Stage 1 Road safety audit. Participation in external audit. Any scheme size (per hr)	49.00	53.50	9%	No
Stage 2 Road safety audit. Audit Scheme over £250K - Quotation (per hr)	49.00	53.50	9%	No

Stage 2 Road safety audit. Review of external audit. Scheme £250K - Quotation (per hr)	49.00	53.50	9%	No
Stage 2 Road safety audit. Participation in external audit. Any scheme size (per hr)	49.00	53.50	9%	No
Stage 3 Road safety audit. Audit Scheme over £250K - Quotation (per hr)	49.00	53.50	9%	No
Stage 3 Road safety audit. Review of external audit. Scheme £250K - Quotation (per hr)	49.00	53.50	9%	No
Stage 3 Road safety audit. Participation in external audit. Any scheme size (per hr)	49.00	53.50	9%	No
Stage 4 Road safety audit. Any scheme size - Quotation (per hr)	49.00	53.50	9%	No
<b>Home to School Transport</b>				
Vacant Seat Payment Scheme: Per pupil, per academic year (terms and conditions apply)	£728.00	£779.00	7%	No
<b>Written response to enquiries on highways or public rights of way records (VAT exempt)</b>				
Including supplying A4 plan	£26.60	£28.73	8%	No
Additional information (per question)	£15.40	£16.63	8%	No

## **REASONS:**

- Raising revenue from charges for services is an important element in the overall financing of Council services and activities and helps to deliver service and strategic objectives.
- Consideration is therefore given, on a regular basis, to the scope for raising revenue through charges for services and to reviewing the appropriateness and adequacy of the levels of charges being proposed or actually in force.
- Services are generally given an increase in their income targets each year in accordance with agreed budget principles. This will be achieved through a combination of increases to fees and charges, increased use, and through rental and sales income where appropriate. Where information is available, changes to fees and charges will take account of changing circumstances and patterns of service use as well as known and predicted changes to service costs.
- There is a general policy presumption that the levels of fees and charges should rise, each year, in line with the rate of inflation. Accordingly, the charges proposed in each service area should be sufficient to meet the additional fees and charges income reflected in the final draft budget, which is detailed in an annual report to the Executive.
- The following represents the range of factors, which service managers need to take into account when setting fees and charges:-
  - Charges determined by primary or secondary legislation
  - Service costs, including inflation
  - Service supply and demand
  - Market conditions
  - Benchmarking with other authorities and other providers
  - Full cost recovery for services provided
  - Affordability

## **OPTIONS CONSIDERED:**

Service Managers considered alternative pricing within the guidance / framework as described above.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

There is a general policy presumption that the levels of fees and charges should rise, each year, in line with the rate of inflation. Accordingly, the charges proposed in each service area should be sufficient to meet the additional fees and charges income reflected in the final draft budget, which is detailed in an annual report to the Executive.

## **LEGAL POWERS AND IMPLICATIONS**

Trading and charging for services has been a feature of local government for a considerable time. Specific powers to charge for services are contained in a variety of local government statutes. The Local Authorities (Goods and Services) Act 1970, the Local Government Act 2003 and the Localism Act 2011 empower councils to charge for discretionary services on a cost recovery basis

## **CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

NA

### **CONSULTATION**

The changes are in accordance with the Council's policy guidance and principles and, as such, no consultation has been undertaken. The revised fees and charges will be published on the Council's website

### **RISK MANAGEMENT**

In some cases, increases in fees and charges can be a disincentive to the take up services.

No material risks have been identified in this respect.

### **EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

Have you undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment? No

### **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

The contribution made by charging for council services supports other strategic objectives of the council.

### **APPENDICES**

Appendix A – List of fees and charges

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Report to Executive 12 April 2016 – 2016/17 Fees and Charges Schedule

<http://apps.n-somerset.gov.uk/cairo/docs/doc27320.pdf>

16/17 DE 302 Development and Environment Fees and Charges 2017/2018 – Flexible Pricing Policy

SIGNATORIES:

DECISION MAKER(S):

Signed:  Executive Member for Highways and Transport

Date: 20 March 2024

WITH ADVICE FROM:

Signed:  Director of Place

Date: 20 March 2024