

## **Report to Cabinet**

**Subject:** Fees and Charges 2026/27

**Date:** 11 December 2025

**Author:** Chief Finance Officer

**Wards Affected:** All

### **Purpose**

To determine the level of fees and charges for 2026/27 in accordance with the Corporate Charging Policy.

### **Key Decision**

This is not a key decision, because whilst the proposals will have an impact on all wards in the borough, they do not have a financial impact that is above the threshold of £0.5m determined by Council for decisions to be regarded as a key decision.

### **Recommendation(s)**

#### **THAT:**

- 1) Members approve the individual fees and charges as set out in the Fees and Charges schedule 2026/27 appended to the report.
- 2) The level of any new charges, concessions or discounts to be applied to any new or amended charges be delegated to the relevant Assistant Director in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer.

## 1 Background

- 1.1 Fees and charges provide an important income stream for the Council. It is imperative therefore that all fees and charges are based on a rational approach and set in accordance with an adopted Corporate Charging Policy which requires the Council to take into account the underlying economic climate when considering fees and charges. As reported to Council on 4 March 2026, there is still an unidentified budget gap of £3.3m, and it is important that fees and charges keep pace with inflation to ensure that this gap does not widen. It is against this backdrop that the level of fees and charges have been proposed within this report.
- 1.2 The Council's budget 2026/27 and Medium-Term Financial Plan report (Council 4 March 2026) set out an annual overall target for discretionary income inflation of 5% for each of the financial years between 2025 and 2030, however since this was set inflation has slowed therefore an income inflation rate of 3.5% is proposed in line with pay award and current inflation levels.

For 2026/27, this equates to £130,100 as shown in the table below. Actual increases per charge have been determined at service level and are dependent upon the costs of the service and legal powers to recover or exceed costs.

<b>Portfolio</b>	<b>Discretionary Income £</b>	<b>3.5% increase £</b>
Lifestyles, Health and Wellbeing	(2,805,700)	(98,200)
Public Protection	(4,400)	(200)
Environmental Services	(651,900)	(22,800)
Climate Change and Natural Habitat	(95,200)	(3,300)
Sustainable Growth and Economy	(2,300)	(100)
Corporate Resources and Performance	(158,300)	(5,500)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(3,717,800)</b>	<b>(130,100)</b>

- 1.3 Some of the services operated by the Council are not included in the general fee increase due either to the sensitivity of demand to price changes e.g. leisure DNA memberships or being operated on a commercial basis and therefore required to breakeven e.g. building control. The levels of fees which are set in these areas are considered separately and the base budget amended to ensure appropriate fees are set. Some fees for statutory services e.g. development control are determined by central government and any changes are reflected in the base budget.

- 1.4 When determining fees and charges for discretionary services, it is best practice to adopt a Corporate Charging Policy. This policy sets out the scope and basis for charging; its aims and objectives; statutory powers for charging and trading; the process and frequency for reviewing the charges; and the governance arrangements.
- 1.5 The Policy forms the basis of all fees and charges set within the Council. It establishes clear principles for charging and integrates charging into service management linking with corporate objectives. It incorporates the concepts of 'Standard Charges', 'Concessionary Charges', 'Discounts', and 'Market Intelligence'.
- 1.6 The Standard Charge applies to all users and is set at a level to maximise take-up and income targets, and wherever possible, to cover or exceed the full cost of providing the service in question.
- 1.7 Entitlement to concessions is designed to reduce barriers to participation and promote equality amongst users. Members must decide which services will be eligible for concessions and the appropriate concession rate that will apply to the Standard Charge, and balance this with the need to generate income.

As part of the Corporate Charging Policy, the council is looking to align its concessionary charges and over the course of 2026/27 work will be undertaken to ensure concessionary discount is constantly applied across all services

- 1.8 For any new or amended charges within the year, and/or those which require a concession or discount to be applied, this is to be determined by the relevant Assistant Director in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer.
- 1.9 The Corporate Charging Policy sets out that each service area should have a written charging strategy in place, and that this is reviewed every three years as a minimum. This year, an annual review of all fees and charges has been undertaken as part of the budget setting process.
- 1.10 To meet with the requirements of the Corporate Charging Policy, the fees and charges, both statutory (prescribed by Government) and discretionary (locally set), are provided in the Cabinet Fees and Charges Schedule 2026/27 at Appendix 1. Where concessions and discounts apply, the charges have been set in accordance with the recommended levels within this report. This approach provides the Council with a transparent means of meeting its equality and diversity requirements in the provision of local services. Further details on the larger income generating areas are provided in the following paragraphs of the report.

- 1.11 Leisure Centres – Visitor numbers and income, particularly around swimming lessons, continues to grow, despite the existing facilities being past their best. Every effort is being made to maintain income at its current levels, and the Council has recently announced ambitious plans for a new Leisure and Wellbeing Centre at Carlton.

A new DNA Health Membership which is £30 per month has been introduced for customers joining our health schemes (cardiac rehab, stroke, Parkinsons etc). It's a more cost effective way for customers to access these sessions. We want health customers to commit to their wellbeing journey and so are offering them access to a DNA monthly membership to support their recovery

- 1.12 Car Parking – the Council has maintained free two-hour parking in its town and local centres for many years now with the aim of encouraging visitors and shoppers to the borough.
- 1.12 Gedling Country Park – Car Parking – the Council introduced a £2 all day charge from 1 April 2025 and the council has decided to freeze this charge for 2026-27 however proposing to increase the annual permit to £100, which equates to £0.27 per day for frequent users of the park's facilities.
- 1.13 Cemeteries – The Council currently operates two primary cemetery sites, being Redhill and Carlton. The Redhill site is approaching full capacity and although income will continue to flow, it is expected that it will start to reduce. The Council has a priority to the residents within the borough therefore has decided to increase the premium for out-of-area residents by 25% to 125% of standard resident fees.
- 1.14 Waste Collection – Separate fees and charges are set for the Council's garden waste scheme, bulky items collection, and trade waste. These services have been subject to increased costs over the last few years and are undergoing a full review of the business case for each area, with prices set accordingly. Garden Waste fees are proposed to not increase for 2026/27.
- 1.15 Steet Cleansing – A new charge has been added for the removal of fly tipping on private land. Due to the wide ranging nature of what may be fly tipped, a standard fees is not appropriate therefore removals will be priced per application.
- 1.16 Recreational Grounds – The Council has a number of outdoor sports pitches for hire including Bowls, Cricket and Football. The prices increases will relate to the 2026-27 seasons to avoid any mid-season increases.

The Tennis courts at Conway Recreation ground opened at the start of 2025-26, it is proposed to freeze the fees for 2026-27 pending a review of participation at the site.

The fees for Allotments (Private Associations) are being reviewed in line with inflation.

- 1.17 Not all discretionary fees and charges fall under the remit of Cabinet and must be approved by other Committees of the Council. These are:

Environment & Licensing Committee – general licences e.g. pavement licences, massage and treatment licences; registrations e.g. tattoo and ear-piercing premises; animal activity licences e.g. dog breeding; and taxi licensing.

Licensing Act Committee – those that fall under the Gambling Act 2005 e.g. casinos, bingo, adult gaming centres, family entertainment centres, betting premises.

## **2 Proposal**

- 2.1 It is proposed that:

1. Members approve the individual fees and charges as set out in the Fees and Charges schedule 2026/27 appended to the report.
2. The level of any new charges, concessions or discounts to be applied to any new or amended charges be delegated to the relevant Assistant Director in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer.

## **3 Alternative Options**

- 3.1 Not to adopt the Corporate Charging Policy and its underlying principles and set fees and charges for 2026/27 on the previous basis, being signed off by individual Portfolio Holders. This is not advised as there is a risk of lack consistency in approach to fee setting.

## **4 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 The fees and charges have been set in accordance with the new Corporate Charging Policy. Wherever possible a minimum 3.5% increase has been applied to all locally set fees and charges, to reflect inflation. There are, however, a number of service areas where this is not feasible, and these have been detailed within the report.
- 4.2 Individual service income levels will be calculated as part of the annual budget setting process. Some areas will generate additional income whilst some may reduce or stay the same.
- 4.3 General economic factors can have a significant impact on the amount of fees and charges generated. Any significant variances during 2026/27 will be reported

within the quarterly monitoring reports to Cabinet.

## **5 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 The Council has a statutory duty to ensure that it uses its resources efficiently and effectively when delivering services. It is important that the appropriate balance be achieved between the cost of providing the service and the contribution towards that service by the users together with the community impact.
- 5.2 The Fees and Charges Schedule 2026/27 separately identifies the legal powers for each fee and charge.

## **6 Equalities Implications**

- 6.1 The report has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment, which has concluded that there are no adverse impacts. This shows that charges reflect the specific needs of the client as and when appropriate.

## **7 Carbon Reduction/Environmental Sustainability Implications**

- 7.1 The report has been subject to a Carbon Impact Assessment, which has concluded that there are no adverse impacts.

## **8 Appendices**

- 8.1 Appendix 1: Cabinet Fees and Charges Schedule 2026/27
- 8.2 Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment
- 8.3 Appendix 3: Carbon Impact Assessment

## **9 Background Papers**

- 9.1 Previous Portfolio Holder delegated decisions for service fees and charges.
- 9.2 Benchmarking data.

## **10 Reasons for Recommendations**

- 10.1 When setting fees and charges, attention needs to be paid to the level those fees are set at. They need to support the underlying principles of the Corporate Charging Policy, but with an aim to secure maximum income levels for the Council. Pitching the fee and charge at the correct level is vital. Too high and it may encourage people to find an alternative service provider meaning the Council could lose income, too low and the Council would not be recovering its costs.

**Statutory Officer approval**

**Approved by:**

**Date:**

**On behalf of the Chief Financial Officer**

**Approved by:**

**Date:**

**On behalf of the Monitoring Officer**