

# ENVIRONMENT CABINET MEMBER MEETING

## Agenda Item 93

Brighton & Hove City Council

**Subject:** Fees and Charges 2010/11  
**Date of Meeting:** 26 January 2010  
**Report of:** Director of Environment  
**Contact Officer:** Name: Patrick Rice Tel: 29-1268  
E-mail: patrick.rice@brighton-hove.gov.uk  
**Key Decision:** No  
**Wards Affected:** All

### FOR GENERAL RELEASE

#### 1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

1.1 This report sets out the proposed fees and charges for 2010/11.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 That the Cabinet Member agree the proposed fees and charges for 2010/11.

#### 3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

3.1 The Budget Process Report 2010/11 agreed at Cabinet in July 2009, specified that Fees and Charges are assumed to increase by a standard inflation rate each year, which is 2% for 2010/11.

3.2 In general the Fees and Charges proposed in this report reflect the requirement for a 2% increase. It is not always possible when amending a fee to increase it by exactly 2% each year. For example, the minimum increase that can be applied to a £1 parking fee tariff is 10% (10p) due to the minimum coinage requirements of the ticket machines. The proposed fee increases are detailed in Appendix 1. Building Control Fees are all increasing by 2% and are listed in Appendices 2 – 4.

3.3 There are two areas where fees have been specifically increased above the 2% inflationary requirement to support the Environment directorate budget strategy; these are parking and pest control fees. Allotment fees are also proposed to increase above the rate of inflation to fund improvements in the service. These fee increases are explained in more detail below.

#### **Parking Fees (Contribution to budget strategy £0.318m)**

3.4 The changes proposed to parking tariffs aim to meet the corporate inflation target of 2%, make life as simple and as easy as possible for customers (avoiding the need for lots of change), whilst still generating an additional return to support the directorate budget strategy.

- 3.5 Overall, 60% of parking tariff bands are either frozen or reduced, for example, 2-hour tariffs in the north central area have been reduced by over 3%. Many tariff bands have not been increased for a significant period including the majority of short stay tariffs. In a few cases, these have now been rounded up, generally to the nearest 10p to reflect inflation over a number of years (not just one). Seafront short and long stay tariff bands have increased, whilst the most popular 3 and 4-hour bands remain frozen.
- 3.6 Increases are counter balanced by reduced tariffs planned in outer seafront areas; lower winter tariffs in Madeira Drive; cheaper short-term and evening parking at Regency Square; a 45% reduction in long-term parking at Black Rock Car Park aiming to encourage parking outside the central zone; and all-day coach parking in Madeira Drive reduced by 25%. Local traders are supported by a freeze on business permits; a reduction in the cost of trader permits; and a 10% reduction of the most popular 4-hour band at Trafalgar Street Car Park.

### **Pest Control Fees (Contribution to budget strategy £0.020m)**

- 3.7 It is proposed to add 2% uplift to all Pest Control functions except domestic rats and to add a new proposed nominal fee of £20 per rat treatment. The council currently receives around 1,600 rat complaints per year. It is estimated this measure would generate £0.020 million. We currently don't charge for rat treatments as it is considered a public health measure but it isn't strictly required as a council duty. Under prevention of damage by pests legislation duties are: inspecting district, keeping council land free of rats and mice, requiring owners to keep land free of rats and mice. However, Environmental Health will still be able to offer the following services to all residents including those on low income:
- Advice on non-professional treatment
  - Investigation of rats originating elsewhere
  - Drainage investigation and notices to repair
  - Refuse removal and nuisance abatement notices
- 3.8 Charging a fee will reduce non-productive service requests. Local private companies charge in the region of £70 - £200 depending on professionalism and numbers of visits.

### **Allotments**

- 3.9 In response to an increase in demand for allotments Cityparks has been working to bring more plots in to use, including rigorous plot inspections, splitting plots as they become available and improving administration processes. In partnership with Brighton & Hove Allotment Federation it is proposed that to further improve the allotment service rents are increased to £32.20 and the resulting increase in funding is ring fenced to improvements to the allotment service as agreed with the Brighton & Hove Allotment Federation. The improvement will be an expanded maintenance team dedicated to allotments to undertake additional allotment inspections, work with community and voluntary groups, undertake clearance works and repairs more speedily.
- 3.10 The additional funding of £0.026 million will allow 2 staff, tools and equipment and a vehicle for these tasks.

#### **4. CONSULTATION**

4.1 No specific consultation was undertaken in relation to this report.

#### **5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

##### Financial Implications:

5.1 The financial implications are covered in the main body of the report.

##### Legal Implications:

5.2 EU Services Directive requires non-discriminatory, justified, proportionate, clear, objective, public, transparent and accessible process for setting of fees. Fees charged for establishing a service falling within the scope of the Directive cannot be set artificially high to deter specific service sectors.

*Lawyer Consulted:*

*Rebecca Sidell*

*Date: 04/01/10*

##### Equalities Implications:

5.3 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out on the pest control fees and the following recommended actions will be in place:

- Self help advice will be available on the councils website and via contact staff/pest control staff.
- Environmental Health will continue to follow up rat infestations and serve Prevention by Damage by pest act notices on households to clear land from rats and notices requiring refuse that is prejudicial to health to be removed.
- Charges will be kept below market rates to make the service affordable for those on low or fixed incomes.
- The charges will comply with the Councils Policy on Fee & Charges.

##### Sustainability Implications:

5.4 There are no direct sustainability implications arising from this report.

##### Crime & Disorder Implications:

5.5 There are no direct crime & disorder implications arising from this report.

##### Risk & Opportunity Management Implications:

5.6 There are no direct risk or opportunity management implications arising from this report.

##### Corporate / Citywide Implications:

5.7 The Council's financial position impacts on levels of Council Tax and service levels and therefore has citywide implications.

**6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):**

6.1 Not applicable.

**7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

7.1 Not applicable.

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

**Appendices:**

1. Proposed Fees & Charges 2010/11
2. Proposed Building Control Fees – Schedule 1
3. Proposed Building Control Fees – Schedule 2
4. Proposed Building Control Fees – Schedule 3

**Documents in Members' Rooms**

None

**Background Documents**

None