

Aberdeenshire Council 2024/25 Budget – Appendix 11

FEES AND CHARGES

1. Background

- 1.1. The Council's Corporate Charging Policy and Framework was developed in 2016/17 using the principles agreed through a Scrutiny and Audit Investigation – "Charging for Services – Are you getting it right?" based on the findings of an [Audit Scotland](#) report of the same title.
- 1.2. The investigation recognised the value of fees and charges, and the significant contribution to the Councils overall income, therefore key to assisting with the balancing of the revenue budget on an annual basis. It was also acknowledged that without fees and charges, some services could not be provided.
- 1.3. The Framework was subsequently reviewed and approved by [Business Services Committee in September 2021](#), and it is the application of this framework which supports the proposed changes to charges for services for 2024/25.
- 1.4. The framework requires that all fees and charges levied by the Council must be reviewed fully every three years, and in the intervening years and inflationary increase applied. The inflationary rate that should be used is the RPI rate in September, prior to the financial year in which the charges will increase.

2. Fees and Charges for 2024/25

- 2.1. In previous years, Policy Committees were responsible with reviewing and approving fees and charges before the budget was finalised at Full Council. However, there's a shift for 2024/25 where all fees and charges are now presented to Full Council as part of the comprehensive budget setting process, rather than being reviewed solely by Policy Committees. This change acknowledges the importance of fees and charges in the (MTFS) and emphasises the necessity of addressing them concurrently with budget deliberations.
- 2.2. The revised fees and charges are appended to the end of this section. The 2024/25 budgets for fees and charges have been developed on the basis of the revised charges being agreed.

3. Education and Childrens Services – Directorate

3.1. Charging For Lets - Education

- 3.1.1. An analysis of the costs associated with the rental of various buildings across the Directorate estate identified significant variations, ranging from £20.63 to £162.10 per hour for schools and £45.46 to £187.38 per hour for sports centers. This diversity makes it challenging to establish a fair fee structure.
- 3.1.2. To guide the development of an appropriate charging scheme we've collected benchmarking data from Sport Scotland, local authorities, and rental facilities. Additionally, we've surveyed groups in Aberdeenshire who have previously rented educational spaces.
- 3.1.3. A 3.9% inflationary increase is proposed from April 1, 2024, with an implementation date of August 2024 for groups with bookings extending to the academic session's end.
- 3.1.4. Work has commenced to confirm all available facilities across Aberdeenshire using a place-based approach to concentrate activities in fewer sites where revenue can cover costs. There is also an opportunity to explore access to other sites but on a full cost recovery basis or through approved keyholder access.
- 3.1.5. Addressing a charging inconsistency, we'll apply a 20% uplift for all stand-alone bookings across Education and Children's Services lets to align with Live Life Aberdeenshire's practice.

3.2. Live Life Aberdeenshire Charges

- 3.2.1. Live Life Aberdeenshire will apply an inflationary increase of 3.9% across all fees and charges from 1 April 2024, except for new Live Life Aberdeenshire membership fees which were agreed at Communities Committee for a minimum period of 12 months from introduction, A review of ski related charges at Huntly Nordic and Alford Ski has also been undertaken, charges will increase at 3.9% rounded to 0.05p with some additional charges greater than the inflationary increase to meet cost recovery.

3.2.2. Ahead of the new 2024 season at Stonehaven Open Air pool and the re-opening of the Macduff Marine Aquarium, the service will review and increase charges above the inflationary increase under the Head of Service for Communities, Wellbeing and Partnerships delegated authority.

3.3. Instrumental Music Service

3.3.1. Instrumental Music Tuition is free.

3.3.2. Aberdeenshire Youth Music Sessions which were introduced in October 2022 will remain unchanged at £6 per session.

3.4. Catering Services

3.4.1. The average cost per meal stands at £1.13 for primary and £1.89 for secondary. However, these figures are tailored to meet the nutritional guidelines and HMI inspections rather than reflecting the actual menu costs, which can vary significantly based on the products sold.

3.4.2. Universal Free School Meals are available for students from Primary 1 to Primary 5. Presently, Aberdeenshire charges £2.65 for meals in Primary 6 and Primary 7, which ranks among the highest in Scotland. There is no change proposed to this fee for 2024/25.

3.4.3. The current cost for Academy meals, equivalent to Free School Meal value, stands at £2.85. The service proposes to implement a dynamic pricing model in Academies all products excluding Main Meals and Daily Deal, due to FSM entitlement, would be subject to market pressures and priced accordingly without referral to Committee for any charge increase.

4. Environment and Infrastructure Services – Directorate

4.1. Housing Services

4.1.1. Housing Services (including HRA and General Fund Housing) fees and charges have been considered as part of setting the HRA budget and details provided within the separate report on today's agenda.

4.2. EV charging network.

4.2.1. Infrastructure Services Committee – 26 January 2023 - has delegated authority to the Head of Environment and Sustainability to review, set and implement future tariffs for the Council. The Head of Service is not proposing an increase.

4.3. Quarries.

4.3.1. Infrastructure Services Committee – 26 January 2023 - has delegated authority to the Head of Roads to review, set and implement future fees relating to quarry activities. The proposed increase of 3.9% has been agreed by the Head of Service and reflected in the charges listed.

4.4. Sign Shop

4.4.1. Infrastructure Services Committee – 26 January 2023 - has delegated authority to the Head of Roads to review, set and implement future fees relating to the sign shop. The proposed increase of 3.9% has been agreed by the Head of Service and reflected in the charges listed.

4.5. Harbours

4.5.1. All fees and charges relating to the Harbour Service were reported and agreed by the Harbours Sub Committee on 28 March 2023. The proposed increase of 3.9% has been agreed by the Head of Service and reflected in the charges listed.

4.5.2. All other chargeable services

4.5.3. The details of the increases in all other chargeable services within the Environment and Infrastructure Services Directorate are reflected in the Appendix 11A

5. Business Services Directorate

5.1.1. A Fees and Charges review was carried out in 2022/23 and the Business Services Committee agreed all charges at its meeting on 2 March 2023. This also recognised that the Licensing fees were approved by the Licensing Sub Committee on 10 February 2023 and the Licensing Board fees and charges agreed by the Aberdeenshire Licensing Board on 22 February 2023.

The proposed increases to all Business Service these charges are reflected in Appendix 11A