

REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES 2024/25

Executive Summary

It is the Council's policy to review its discretionary fees and charges at least once a year.

Schedules of proposed charges for 2024/25 are attached at Appendix 1 (Communities), Appendix 2 (Place), Appendix 3 (Corporate Resources) and Appendix 4 (Rhoda McGaw Theatre).

In view of the Council's financial position Service Managers have also been asked to identify any areas where charges could be increased from 1 January 2024. These proposals are attached at Appendix 5 (Communities), Appendix 6 (Place) and Appendix 7 (Corporate Resources). Only the sheets which include proposed changes are attached, and the proposed new charges are highlighted.

Increases are proposed which will move the service towards full cost recovery wherever possible.

Charges for Leisure Services are being investigated as part of the public consultation and will be dealt with by the Leisure Partnership Board separately. The Leisure Partnership Board on 14th November 2023 will however review inflation increases for the current year.

The Car Parking day tariff structure will be considered once the Parking Study is complete in December, and put forward in a future committee report (February 2024) for Member consideration.

Recommendations

The Executive is requested to:

RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL That

- (i) **the discretionary fees and charges for 2024/25, as set out in Appendices 1 – 4 of the report, be approved;**
- (ii) **the proposed increases in discretionary fees and charges from 1st January 2024, as set out in Appendices 5 – 7 of the report, be approved; and**
- (iii) **to move the waste service to a cost neutral position as soon as possible, any of the proposed 2024/25 increases for Bulky Waste and Waste Receptacles set out in Appendix 2 to the report that can be implemented quickly should be introduced at the earliest practical date following approval by Council.**

Reasons for Decision

Reason: The regular review of discretionary charges ensures that the Council maintains its income base and generates additional resources for the provision of services.

The item(s) above will need to be dealt with by way of a recommendation to Council.

Review of Fees and Charges 2024/25

Background Papers: None.

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Date Published: 10 November 2023

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 In accordance with Council Policy, fees and charges which are at the discretion of the Council are reviewed at least annually.
- 1.2 The fees and charges for 2023/24 were approved by the Council on 1 December 2022 and the forecast income were incorporated in the budget approved by the Council on 23 February 2023.
- 1.3 As was the case when the 2023/24 fees and charges were agreed, service areas have been asked to look at ways of increasing income through increased activity, revised charging or new charging opportunities. This process has been considered alongside the Council’s Fit for the Future efficiency programme and has focussed particularly on those areas where charges are below comparable rates and where the cost of providing the services is not recovered.
- 1.4 Schedules of proposed charges for 2024/25 are attached at Appendix 1 (Communities), Appendix 2 (Place), Appendix 3 (Corporate Resources) and Appendix 4 (Rhoda McGaw Theatre).
- 1.5 In view of the Council’s financial position Service Managers have also been asked to identify any areas where charges could be increased from 1 January 2024 to maximise income without generating an administrative burden which outweighs the potential income benefits.
- 1.6 Schedules of proposed revised charges for 2023/24 are attached at Appendix 5 (Communities), Appendix 6 (Place) and Appendix 7 (Corporate Resources).
- 1.7 The Council’s “Strategy for Applying and Setting Fees and Charges for Services” sets out a broad and transparent approach to setting fees and charges. All charges are reviewed against this strategy and charges will be set in line with the framework outlined.
- 1.8 As part of the most recent Medium Term Financial Strategy published in July 2023 a set of Guiding Principles were adopted. The principles that apply to Fees and Charges are:

No.	Guiding Principles
1	Fees & Charges will be reviewed annually and adjusted for inflation, comparability, and competitiveness.
2	As a compassionate Council, in setting charges, the impact on vulnerable groups will be considered carefully.
11	Given the financial position of the Council and the need to maintain key statutory services the Council will seek to maximise receipts from all funding streams including Council Tax and income over the period of the MTFS.

- 1.9 A commentary on any specific service issues arising from the review follows. The name of the relevant Officer contact has also been provided.

2.0 Communities

Centres for the Community (Steve May)

- 2.1 The future of the Community Centres is subject to current resident consultation and engagement with the recommendations being made in the New Year. If the facilities are retained as is, the proposed fees and charges are recommended to be increased by 10% including halls, training rooms and health and wellbeing spaces if the facilities are retained as is. Hair salons charges will match the fees at Hale End Court and Brockhill.

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- 2.2 Work is continuing to lease spaces to community providers delivering services that support the Council's Health and Wellbeing Priorities. Current explorations include a second maternity assessment room at Parkview in Sheerwater, the new café that has now launched at Moorcroft, and wider conversations with the GP and NW Health Alliance to extend their work in Knaphill utilising space at The Vyne. A new café provider is also being sought for St Marys.
- 2.3 Day services for elderly residents is subject to consultation with the existing customers and their families. Once the consultation has concluded, recommendations will be made to introduce charges. See 2.30.
- 2.4 The Lakeview Community Centre in Goldsworth Park is funded through the Housing Revenue Account. It is currently in the process of being leased to a tenant who is already using the facility regularly and will continue to run the Centre for local community benefit. This will support the community in Lakeview whilst increasing income for the Council through the new tenancy agreement.

Careline (James Montgomery-Heffernan)

- 2.5 Careline is the Council's essential community alarm service to vulnerable residents within the Borough. Residents living in our Independent Living Schemes have a Careline alarm and linked smoke detector and pay for this service via their rent account.
- 2.6 Clients living in the community opt to have the service as a means of safety to call for assistance in the event of an emergency. In Woking, there are currently 2 rates of weekly rental charges. Clients are eligible for the lower rate if they are in receipt of means tested benefits. 2023/24 charges are as follows:

Type	Cost Per Week	Number of Clients
Alarm – Full Rate	£5.95	785
Alarm – Lower Rate	£5.04	214
Ownfone	£5.94	3
Total:		1,002

- 2.7 The table below outlines current charges across other district and borough councils in Surrey. These prices are normally increased annually each April.

District and Borough	Weekly Charge 2023/24
Woking	£5.95 (Full Rate) / £5.04 (Lower Rate)
Spelthorne	£4.89 / £5.61 (Digital)
Waverley	£4.55 / £5.77 (Digital)
Surrey Heath	£4.90 / £6.23 (Digital)
Mole Valley	£4.89 / £5.61 (Digital)
Elmbridge	£3.93 / £5.77 (Digital)
Guildford	£4.90 / £5.61 (Digital)
Runnymede	£4.90 / £6.23 (Digital)

Digital Switchover

- 2.8 The national digital switchover is currently taking place and due to conclude in 2025. This means that the old analogue lines will be switched off in favour of a new digital service via a broadband router. This has implications for the Careline community alarm service as current equipment that plugs into a client's traditional telephone line may not be compatible. It is

unclear at this stage if the existing equipment will remain compatible with the new digital infrastructure.

- 2.9 The future is a digital hub run via an in-built SIM card that incurs an annual subscription after the first two years. Costs for equipment and SIM charges will be charged to clients, however consideration will need to be made for the initial upfront capital cost for purchasing new equipment. The cost of a new digital hub is around £255 with an annual SIM card subscription cost of £36 per year after the second year. Costs that are charged to clients cover the cost of the service over a 5-year period. The initial upfront cost needs to be considered to invest in new equipment. A proportion of income generated needs to be factored into future budgets to cover additional costs for annual SIM card charges.
- 2.10 The income received from fees and charges is not sufficient to cover all the cost of the digital switchover required. The Disabled Facilities Grant (external funding from the Government) allows for equipment to be purchased under capital costs and this grant could be used subject to funding and waiting lists if insufficient income is generated from Careline clients. This approach is being considered by most D&Bs.

Rental charges

- 2.11 Woking is the only Council in Surrey to offer a reduced rental charge for clients in receipt of means tested benefits. The Fees and Charges report for 2022/23 agreed a gradual increase in the lower rate of Careline charges to bring everyone up to the one rate over time.
- 2.12 This report recommends that the lower rate be withdrawn, with all clients being moved to the full rate from 1st April 2024.
- 2.13 This will represent an increase for 214 clients who will need to pay £1.21 per week extra compared to someone already paying the full rate who will see an increase of £0.30 per week.
- 2.14 Moving forward the Careline service would offer three different type of service offering a range of products to suit a client’s needs and budgets:

Ownfone – This device is seen as a basic package that can be used to call for assistance should the client face an emergency. The device acts as a mobile phone and therefore does need charging regularly. This device cannot have additional sensors such as a smoke detector attached to it.

Standard Alarm – This is the standard alarm that plugs into the traditional analogue alarm. This device can have additional sensors programmed to it however its future is uncertain due to the digital upgrade.

Digital hub – This is a new product and would become a new charge. The digital hub runs from a SIM card installed within the alarm and allows for remote reprogramming, remote fault reporting and diagnostics. This alarm can also have additional sensors reprogrammed to help residents live independently including smoke detectors.

- 2.15 The table below recommends the charging from January 2024 and April 2024.

Recommended charges from January 2024 and April 2024			
Service Type	January 24	April 24	Total Increase
Ownfone	No change	£6.24 – 0.30p increase	5%
Standard Alarm	No change	£6.84 – 0.89p increase	15%
Digital Hub (New Charge)	£6.54	£7.17 – 0.63p increase	10%

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This gives clients an option to retain a certain level of service based on their financial circumstances allowing them to remain independent in their home and reducing costs to other services. Increasing the Ownfone charge anything above 10% makes it more costly than the digital hub. The introduction of the digital hub charge will bring charges in line with other districts and boroughs.

- 2.16 This recommendation produces an income of £356,391 for the Careline service. Once staffing costs and expenditure for new digital equipment are taken into account, it is predicted the Careline service charges will cover the costs of the service. This is based on all clients paying for a standard alarm as it is currently unclear what service clients will opt for but it is likely that the digital hub will become most popular as the standard alarm is likely to be phased out due to compatibility.

New Home Smart Technology Offer (James Montgomery-Heffernan)

- 2.17 This autumn the Health and Wellbeing team will be offering residents the ability to purchase new technology like Ring doorbell, Alexa, smart lightbulbs and switches to help them remain independent at home. The items will be installed by existing staff where residents are unable to purchase themselves and have no family or friends to help. The charge per item will cover the purchase cost plus staff time and a management fee.
- 2.18 Offering Smart Home Technology to residents has the potential to improve independence for vulnerable residents and those with additional mobility needs and compliments Woking's existing Telecare offer by assisting residents with home security, medication reminders, fall avoidance and promoting general wellbeing.
- 2.19 This offer will allow WBC to better support and safeguard vulnerable residents, while also generating revenue to fund the service. The offer is tenure neutral and all users will be charged irrelevant of their benefit status.
- 2.20 The table below indicates the terms of leasing the equipment and recommended charges. There will be no additional increase in April 2024 for this service.

The below table summarises an example of equipment costs and repayment options to be approved.

		Total Equipment Value			
		£1-£150	£151-£300	£301-£450	£451+
Repayment Period	3 months	£50 or less	£100 or less	£150 or less	£150+
	12 months	£12.50 or less	£25 or less	£37.50 or less	£37.50+
	24 months	N/A	£12.50 or less	£18.75 or less	£18.75+
	36 months	N/A	N/A	£12.50 or less	£12.50+
Example Equipment		3 bulb basic smart lights kit+ Install @£108.00= £9.00 p/m for 12 months	Smart Home Voice Assistant(screen)+ Video Doorbell+ Install @£251.97= £10.49 p/m for 36 months	Smart Home Assistant(screen)+Video Doorbell+ 3 bulb advanced smart lights kit+ Install @£359.96= £10.00 p/m for 36 months	

- 2.21 The above prices include an hourly charge for the handyperson which is currently £48 per hour. After paying for equipment users will own it with no further costs paid to the Council.

Brockhill and Hale End Court Extra Care (James Montgomery-Heffernan)

Guest Flat

- 2.22 Brockhill has a guest room available for relatives and friends of tenants to rent when they visit Brockhill residents. In April 2023 the charge increased from £40 per night to £50 per night. Most visitors stay in the guest flat for one night only in order to visit a relative when they live far away. Due to capital repair issues at Brockhill the flat has not been let this year. It is recommended that the charge should not be increased in April 2024.

Hair Salon

- 2.23 The hair salon can be hired by an external hairdresser to benefit the tenants of Brockhill and Hale End Court extra care schemes, and any day visitors.
- 2.24 In April 2023 the hire charge increased from £45 to £50 per day or £25 to £30 per half day. The actual charges for the haircut, wash, perm etc. are determined by the hairdresser providing the service but it is considerably cheaper than a High Street hairdresser. Due to the room rental increase on the hair salon at Brockhill the resident hairdresser left as it was no longer financially viable for them.
- 2.25 The Hale End Court hairdresser has taken over the Brockhill hair salon but only visits once a fortnight compared to weekly.
- 2.26 The current charges for the salons in the Community Centres (from April 2023) are £22.00 for a half day and £38.00 for a full day. The future of hairdressing at The Vyne and St Marys Community Centre is subject to current consultation and the future of the centres.
- 2.27 It is recommended that from April 2024 the hair saloon charges at Community Centres (if continued) and extra care are aligned and be made consistent.
- 2.28 It is recommended all hair salons in all our venues will charge:
- Whole Day: £50.00 from April 2024
 - 4 hours / Half Day: £30.00 from April 2024

- 2.29 This reflects no increase at extra care schemes as we have already seen a loss in service provided for vulnerable residents where some residents are unable to leave the scheme due to mobility issues.

Private Hire of rooms – Extra Care

- 2.30 In April 2023 a new charge of £15 per hour was introduced for hire rooms at Brockhill and Hale End Court as one offs exclusively for parties, wakes etc. Since this charge was introduced, there has been no bookings. It is therefore proposed to keep the charge at £15 with a review of marketing the usage of the facility.

Day Care

- 2.31 As part of the Council's wider resident consultation and engagement exercise current clients have been asked about the relocation of daycare facilities at The Vyne and St Mary's Community Centre to Brockhill and Hale End Court Extra Care schemes who already offer day care services.
- 2.32 In order to cover the costs of this service which has previously been provided free of charge, so totally subsidised, it is recommended that a charge is introduced of £20 per user per day

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from January 2024 which includes the Community Meals cost of a two course lunch and drink reported below.

- 2.33 This is considerably cheaper than day care competitors in Woking whose fees range from £48 - £75 per day but they do cater for higher needs and do include transport.
- 2.34 Day care users will be capped at 15 per scheme per day to ensure users are well supported and to comply with health and safety. A waiting list will be implemented giving preference to those residents waiting to be offered accommodation in the relevant extra care scheme. This means that there is significant reduction in places for day care across the Borough.
- 2.35 The day care charge would not include the cost of transportation which is currently undertaken by Woking Community Transport.

Introduction of Meals Charge linked to the Tenancy

- 2.36 The recommendation to introduce this new charge linked to any new tenants in extra care from January 2024 is in order to recover the costs of the meals service so that the service can be retained.
- 2.37 Currently tenants that move into Brockhill and Hale End Court can choose which days (if any) they use the onsite meals service Monday – Friday (excluding public holidays) which means it is difficult to predict income and cover expenditure and overheads for the Community Meals team.
- 2.38 Other social landlords providing extra care either do not provide any catering or if they do, they apply a weekly charge to the rent account with a proportion of this charge being housing benefit or universal credit eligible, if applicable.
- 2.39 Meals provision at extra care can only be maintained if the income covers the cost of the service. In order to do this, guaranteed income is required and an increase in charges. Alternatively, the lunch provision will cease and tenants would have to rely on Community meals being delivered.
- 2.40 It is recommended to implement a charge for all new residents who move in from January 2024 of £39.60 per week (£7.92 recommended cost for meal Monday to Friday). At the weekend, the tenants would be able to have Community Meals delivered to their home.
- 2.41 A resident in receipt of full Housing Benefit/Universal Credit will receive a contribution of £17.50 from HB towards the weekly meal charge and therefore need to contribute £22.10 only towards the meal cost which is a cost of £4.50 per day. This means for those in receipt of HB/UC they will receive a reduction in meals charges equivalent to £10.90 per week for 5 days service.
- 2.42 Residents who will not be home to receive their meal will be offered a packed lunch service and residents returning from hospital will be supported with additional frozen meals to compensate for the loss of meals.
- 2.43 A consultation exercise was undertaken in August 2023 with residents at both Brockhill and Hale End Court. Return results for each site were 100% for Brockhill and 49% at Hale End Court. Occupancy rates at the time of the consultation were 69% at Brockhill and 98% at Hale End Court.
- 2.44 Residents were asked if they wanted to add a meal charge to their rent account. The results were that 45% at Brockhill and 59% at Hale End Court said that they would like the meals costs to be added to their rent accounts to fund the meals service. Officers would discuss this with individuals and where agreed apply the charges to accounts as outlined above to existing tenants.

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- 2.45 As part of the consultation discussions were had about increasing the cost of the meals service for residents remaining on an ad hoc booking service to cover the cost to deliver this type of service.
- 2.46 For tenants who wish to have a meal at Extra Care on an ad hoc basis and for day care visitors, it is recommended to increase the cost of the meals service from £6.60 to £9.00 from January 2024. This still offers value for money for a two course meal with refreshments. This increase would help secure the offer of meals provision continuing at Brockhill and Hale End Court, which is a discretionary service that currently makes a loss.

Extra Care Charge

- 2.47 Currently residents at Brockhill pay £13.57 per week towards the support they receive at extra care and residents at Hale End Court pay £18.27 per week. This charge contributes towards staff cost which includes social and wellbeing activities and community alarms. This charge is not housing benefit or universal credit eligible. It is proposed to increase the charges from 1st April by 10% to £14.93 for Brockhill and £20.10 for Hale End Court.

Introduction of Tenancy Sustainment Charge

- 2.48 Tenants living at Brockhill and Hale End Court are assisted by a dedicated support team based at both schemes. Currently the tenants do not pay for this support. The recommendation to introduce this new charge is to recover cost of the service.
- 2.49 The 2022/23 fees and charges report saw the introduction of a tenancy sustainment charge within the Independent Living Service that covers tenants living in our sheltered accommodation. This covered the staffing cost to deliver the service that was previously subsidised with the charge being housing benefit or universal credit eligible. The charge for sheltered accommodation introduced in April 2023 was £15.59 pw for weekly visits.
- 2.50 It is now recommended to introduce the equivalent charge at Brockhill and Hale End Court which would equate to £22.40 per resident per week from April 2024. This cost can be covered for those in receipt of Housing Benefit.
- 2.51 The Extra Care Charge and Tenancy Sustainment Charge will cover the full cost of running the service.
- 2.52 Summary of Charges
- 2.53 The table below summarises the change in Extra Care as outlined above.

Service Name	Current Charge	Recommendations
Guest Flat	£50	£50 – No change
Salon	Full Day £50 Half Day £30	Full Day £50 – No change Half Day £30 – No change Community centre charges become the same if retained
Private room hire	£15 per hour	£15 per hour – No change

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Day Care – New Charge	No current charge	£20 per day including 2 course meal – New Charge from January 2024
Compulsory Meal Charge – New Charge for new tenants	No current charge	£39.60 per week covering Monday – Friday – New Charge from January 2024
Daily Meal Charge Extra Care Residents - Ad Hoc Bookings	£6.60 per day	£9 – Revised Charge from January 2024
Extra Care Charge	Brockhill – £13.57 per week Hale End Court £18.27 per week	Brockhill – £14.93 per week - Revised Charge Hale End Court £20.10 per week - Revised Charge
Tenancy Sustainment Charge – New Charge	No current charge	£22.40 per week - New Charge

Homelink (Helen Kempzell)

- 2.54 Homelink provides a mandatory service as our Housing Improvement Agency that manages our disabled adaptation Disabled Facilities Grants. Homelink is part of the NW Surrey Home Improvement Agency (HIA) Hub with Spelthorne, Runnymede and Surrey Heath BC's. Woking takes the lead role designed to provide a more consistent approach across the area and to provide efficiencies and savings in service provision.
- 2.55 Homelink and all NW Surrey Councils charge a management fee to carry out major disabled adaptations at 15% of the cost of the disabled adaptation works. Any increase reduces the amount available to spend on the actual disabled adaptations. The amount of funding available for disabled works has already reduced due to the cuts in the Housing Investment Programme, which enabled discretionary disabled adaptations that sit outside the remit of the Disabled Facility Grant legislation.
- 2.56 It is recommended that the 15% management charge should not be increased in either January 2024 or April 2024.

Handyperson Service (Helen Kempzell)

- 2.57 Homelink manages the Handyperson service for the four boroughs. The proposed Handyperson charges will apply across all boroughs. Any income generated will benefit Woking and goes back into the running of the Handyperson service.
- 2.58 The majority of the work carried out by the Handyperson service is preventative and to assist hospital discharge enabling residents to remain safe, secure and independent in their homes for as long as possible. The volume of this work is increasing due to the aging population, the effect of the pandemic and our growing ties with Adult Social Care, Health through the Alliance Integrated Care Partnership.
- 2.59 There is no charge to the residents for this work as it is covered by grants. The Handyperson Service is part funded by the Better Care Fund and the SCC grant for 2023/24 remained the same as the previous year.

DIY Handyperson Service (Helen Kempsell)

- 2.60 As most time available is dedicated to health and safety work, especially to assist hospital discharge, the actual time available for chargeable DIY work is diminishing. But there is still a growing need for such a paid for DIY service where a resident wants a simple job like putting up shelves, curtain poles etc which are often too small a job for private contractors to be interested and they have no family/friends to help. There is also trust in our service which is why our clients are willing to wait for us to complete jobs as these DIY jobs are not our priority.
- 2.61 The proposed increase in DIY Handyperson charges is recommended to increase the ability of the service to remain self-financing, cover the increased cost of fuel and materials and provide resilience in the current uncertain price climate, whilst at the same time ensuring that the service is accessible for older, disabled or vulnerable residents.
- 2.62 The proposed hourly charges for our traditional Homelink customers (elderly, disabled or vulnerable) are for labour, unlike a private contractor we do not charge a separate call out fee. The cost of any materials purchased is also charged to the customer.
- 2.63 The recommended increases are:

	DIY hourly charge including VAT April 23	DIY hourly charge including VAT Jan 24	DIY hourly charge including VAT April 24
Routine DIY	£45	No change	£48
Minor Electrical Work	£60	No change	£64
Minor Plumbing Work	£50	No change	£52
Assisting voluntary organisations	£55	No change	£55

Pop In Service (James Montgomery-Heffernan)

- 2.64 The Independent Living Pop In Service was introduced as an additional service for our most vulnerable, elderly and disabled residents of the Borough based on the resident's individual needs and not where they live. This service is tenure neutral.
- 2.65 The service was aimed to support any resident of the Borough to live independently at home as long as possible in a safe and secure environment. The tenure neutral service being based on the individual needs which may change over time and will be flexible to cover short periods i.e. hospital discharge, illness or bereavement or when family/carers go on holiday. It provides an hour visit by an Independent Support Officer but does not include any personal care, cleaning or gardening.
- 2.66 The charge increased to £25.00 per hour from April 2023. It is recommended that this is not increased further as the charge has already resulted in little take up.

Community Meals Service (Ashley Harden-Boyle)

- 2.67 The Community Meals Service comprises of two elements - Community Meals Delivery Service and Lunch and café provision in The Vyne and extra care schemes (Brockhill and Hale End Court).

Community Meals Delivery Service (Ashley Harden-Boyle)

- 2.68 Community Meals is a discretionary service and receives only £28,709.93 per annum funding from Surrey County Council via a Service Level Agreement. The predicted deficit for the meals delivery service for 2023/24 is expected to be approximately £31,500. The recommendations

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in this report are in order to safeguard the service for our most vulnerable residents. Given the Council's financial situation, it is essential the service moves towards a self-funding position for 2024/25. The proposed increase in fees and charges is an essential component in achieving this. The service can only be retained if it covers its costs.

- 2.69 Community meals currently delivers 1,136 meals a week and finished 2022/23 with a decline in numbers of 14.2% vs 2021/22 with a regular 207 clients. The menu offer has been adapted over the past 12 months and will continue to change to offer variety and flexibility to cater for all health needs.
- 2.70 Community Meals now has a varied client base with an increase in clients with complex support needs due to mental health, alcohol, or drug related issues. The Community Meals Service is more than a meal. By regular and often daily contact with our most vulnerable and isolated residents our staff can monitor their client's health and condition of the home and make the necessary referrals to other services and agencies to get involved when needed. Many of our clients have no family or visitors other than the Meals Delivery Officer, who might be the only person they see, therefore reducing isolation and relieving pressures on other services.
- 2.71 Most client's properties are entered by keysafe and lunch is plated up and presented to the client as they have severe mobility issues. The charge for a meal must therefore remain affordable and cost should not be a barrier to our most vulnerable residents. A recent survey of clients showed that 27% of properties have to be entered by keysafe as the client is unable to walk to the front door and carry the food. A further 35% of clients are bed or chair bound and our team have to completely plate up the meal, get a drink and cutlery. This shows the level of vulnerability of our clients. Frozen meals are now being delivered alongside the hot lunch service to ensure client's needs are met and charged the same rate as the hot lunch service. This means we can deliver meals to clients who may have to attend appointments or would prefer to cook the meals themselves later in the day. The service is flexible and adaptable to meet the needs of the client.
- 2.72 The cost in relation to food and resources needed to maintain the service has increased annually. There are still price uncertainties due to how the cost of living, fuel and food prices will impact and potentially cause additional price increases. Apetito is the contracted food supplier and their % price increases over the past two years are shown below:

Apetito Price increase	
Year	Meal increase
2023	8.0%
2022	9.8%
2021	2.3%

- 2.73 The Apetito 8.0% price increase in Dec 2022 (notified every six months) effectively wiped out the price increase agreed by the Council last year and did not enable the deficit to be reduced as much as planned.
- 2.74 The Council's current two course lunch and frozen charge of £5.81 is competitive and is still not the highest across Surrey, with Mole Valley and Waverley offering a service at a higher price. All District and Boroughs use the same supplier for the meals.

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2.75 The April 2023/24 charges from some Surrey district and boroughs are:

Council	Lunch		Breakfast	Tea
	Weekday Price	Weekend Price	Price	Price
Epsom and Ewell	£5.60	£5.60	n/a	£3.10
Mole Valley	£6.00	£6.10	£1.60	£3.55
Elmbridge	£5.60	£5.70	£1.60	£3.55
Runnymede	£4.60	£5.20	n/a	£3.00
Surrey Heath	£4.40	£5.35	n/a	£2.80
Guildford	£4.50	£4.50	n/a	n/a
Spelthorne	£4.00	£4.00	n/a	n/a
Tandridge	no service	no service	no service	no service
Woking	£5.81	£5.91	£1.45	£2.90
Reigate and Banstead	no service	no service	no service	no service
Waverley	£7.00	£7.00	n/a	£3.50

2.76 From April 2023, the Council introduced an additional 10p weekend charge for a main lunch meal recognising weekend salary costs are higher. The past two years have been exceptional. The pandemic did initially increase the number of clients, but the number of residents receiving lunches has fallen slightly as shown in the table below. Traditionally there is a seasonal increase in take up in Autumn and Winter.

2.77 Considerable efficiencies have recently taken place, both in processes and staffing, and further changes are planned to further reduce the deficit. The past few years have been challenging for the meals delivery service. Although the pandemic saw a large increase in clients there were associated additional staffing, vehicle, food and fuel costs. Now with the “cost of living crisis” again food costs, fuel and increased staffing costs are making an impact on the viability of the service. There is uncertainty on client numbers going forward, but a marketing campaign and promotional offers are planned for this winter to increase up take.

2.78 In April 2023, the meals delivery van contract ended. A procurement exercise resulted in a more cost-effective model of delivery with more environmentally friendly electric cars delivering via hot boxes. Current evaluations of this new service model have provided a saving of £18,000 per annum.

2.79 It is recommended to increase the costs of all meals by 20% in January 24 with no further increase in April 2024. This will reduce the deficit and start moving towards the Community Meals Service covering its costs and enable the service to be retained. Different models of delivery will continue to be considered with partners if the service cannot cover its costs.

2.80 This will result in potential increased income of £30,000.

The recommended increase would result in the actual charges being:

Meal Type	Current Price	January 24 increase	Increase per meal
2 course lunch	£5.81	£6.98	£1.17
Weekend two course lunch	£5.91	£7.09	£1.18
Tea time offer	£2.90	£3.32	.42p
Breakfast offer	£1.45	£1.58	.13p

Lunch and Café Provision at Community Centres (Ashley Harden-Boyle)

- 2.81 Historically the Community Meals Team provided food in all community centre dining rooms and cafes. This model has changed in order to reduce costs and discussions are ongoing with the voluntary/private sector to transfer the responsibility of all the kitchens and cafes in the Community Centres to them, making further cost savings to the community meals service and expanding the offer for residents. This model has already proved successful, with the transfer of St Marys kitchen and café to Freshstart CIC in September 2022 and Moorcroft to Dramatize from June 2023. Discussions are underway with partners considering taking on The Vyne café and now at St Marys where the current provider has served notice wef 24 December.
- 2.82 Since the pandemic, clients requiring meals at the centres have not returned in the same numbers. This, plus food and fuel costs have made taking on the cafes uncertain for the voluntary sector.
- 2.83 Running the kitchen at The Vyne does not cover its costs. Community Meals can no longer carry this loss as a discretionary service. This was a service considered through the financial Gateway process and Fit for the Future recommendations. It is proposed that the Community Meals service will cease from 1 April 2024 from The Vyne so no increase in fees is required. Currently discussions are being held with private providers to fill the gap in service.

Leisure (Steve May)

- 2.84 Fees and charges for Leisure Services are being reviewed as part of the overall decisions in the budget and options for the Pool in the Park – there will be a further report to members on these options. The Leisure Partnership Board on 14th November 2023 will however review inflation increases for the current year.

3.0 Place

Street naming and numbering (Tracey Haskins)

- 3.1 Street naming and numbering (SNN) is a statutory responsibility managed by Woking Borough Council. The management and administration of addressing in the Borough prevents the duplication of property names and numbers. The Borough Council works with GeoPlace, Royal Mail, Surrey County Council, property owners, property developers and councillors to make sure suitable names and number sequencing are chosen for existing properties, new properties and new streets, in line with local and national policies. These are also entered into the National address database and are circulated to other organisations including the emergency services.
- 3.2 The Council's maintenance of the Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG), which feeds daily into the National LPG, ensures emergency services can find the properties quickly, post is delivered efficiently, delivery companies can provide a reliable service and service provider records are up to date and accurate. As a Participating Authority of the legally binding national Data Co-operation Agreement, the Council must work with relevant others to uphold the highest standards of address and street data accuracy.
- 3.3 Along with other local authorities, the Council exceeds this statutory expected minimum service of providing solely a street/property naming service, by delivering additional discretionary street naming and numbering services, for which charging was introduced in April 2023. These chargeable services include:
- Naming and numbering new properties, including conversions.
 - Making alterations to the name or numbering of new developments after the initial naming and numbering has been undertaken.
 - Notifying relevant third-party organisations of new or changes to official addresses.

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- Providing confirmation of new or altered official addresses.
- Resolving challenges to existing official naming/numbering schemes in the LLPG.
- Recording of confirmed information in the LLPG.

3.4 At a time of rising service delivery costs, in the context of a need for discretionary services to be self-funding as far as possible, plus similar increases in fees already being implemented by most other local authorities in the county and nationally, it is appropriate for Woking Borough Council to increase fees for Woking's street naming and numbering services. Experience of charging since April has also highlighted the opportunity to further refine charges to better reflect not only service costs but also a fuller range of the services offered.

3.5 Fees are proposed to be increased from 1 January 2024 and, in some cases will be updated further from 1 April 2024, as set out below. The purposes are to:

- Gather a fair income to cover the costs of providing the addressing service, whilst not making a profit (in accordance with relevant legislation) and recognising service users are obliged to address properties through the relevant local authority for the location, hence this is a non-competitive charging environment.
- Seek greater parity with the fees charged by other local authorities for the same/ equivalent services, as some of Woking's current charges are relatively low in comparison, whilst avoiding negative impacts to infrequent service users such as householders and small-scale developers (e.g. those seeking a single house name change or a small infill or conversion).

3.6 The charges would increase by a minimum of 20% as follows:

Application	Current Charge (from April 2023)	New Charges (from 1 January 2024)	New Charges (from 1 April 2024)
Add/Remove/Change name of an existing or new property	£70	£84 per building	£84 per building
New Developments/ Conversions	£200 app + 1 st plot £30 plots 2-9 £25 plots 10-49 £20 plots 50+	£300 app + 1 st plot, plus £45 each plots 2-9 £40 each plots 10-24 £35 each plots 25-49 £25 each plots 50+	£350 app + 1 st plot, plus £54 each plots 2-9 £48 each plots 10-24 £42 each plots 25-49 £30 each plots 50+
Confirmation of addressing, per building	£35	£42	£50
New Street	£300	£400 from 1 January 2024	£500 from 1 January 2024
Street Name change	£450	£540 + £65 per property in the street	£648 + £78 per property in the street
Amending numbering or naming schedule after SNN confirmation	£20 per plot	£40 per plot	£48 per plot
Copies of plot to postal schedule	£35 per schedule	£42 per schedule	£42 per schedule

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Site visits	£60 first hour £20 each additional half hour	£72 first hour £24 each additional half hour	£72 first hour £24 each additional half hour
Research (historical or address data matching)	£60 first hour £20 each additional half hour	£80 first hour £30 each additional half hour	£80 first hour £30 each additional half hour
Penalty for retrospective engagement where part of a development has been signed off as complete by building control. This is in addition to any other charges.	n/a	£150 (note - relevant planning decision notices include an informative note advising the applicant to apply for SNN).	£180 (note - relevant planning decision notices include an informative note advising the applicant to apply for SNN).

- 3.7 New fees will apply to all new applications received after the relevant increase comes into effect.
- 3.8 Street naming and numbering fees are not VAT liable.
- 3.9 Based on the services provided in 2020 and 2021, an original estimate made last year was that SNN fees would contribute around £20,000 per annum income towards service delivery costs. In light of real time income receipts the current full year estimate is £18,000, recognising that applications numbers received vary with the amount, scale and pace of new developments coming forward.

Greenspaces (Tracey Haskins, Arran Henderson)

- 3.10 Greenspace charges include those for commercial and community open space hire, private hire of recreation grounds for commercial gain, use of multi-use games areas (MUGA) and those of Goldsworth Park Angling Club. These are variously VAT and non-VAT liable.
- 3.11 Where possible charges have been uplifted to assist in covering costs and/or to bring these into line with the benchmarked charges of other local authorities for equivalent hires. At the same time, the charges seek to avoid significant adverse impacts on specific user groups or inadvertently discouraging beneficial health and well-being and positive community activities in our public spaces. The charging approach for open spaces has also been simplified in light of practice elsewhere.
- 3.12 Commercial open space hire charges will increase by 20% from 1 April 2024.
- 3.13 Hire charges for community events have been updated with new definitions and revised charges proposed based on benchmarking of other local authorities. Fees for community and charity open space hires were historically waived. It is proposed to no longer do so from 1 April 2024, meaning this will effectively be a new charge for such users.
- 3.14 Private hires of recreation grounds for commercial gain includes fitness classes, which are often run by individual personal trainers or small businesses. A 10% increase in charges is planned for these from April 2024, in addition to the 10% uplift implemented in April 2023.
- 3.15 Regular hirers will be notified of the new/amended charges at the earliest opportunity following committee decision.

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- 3.16 MUGAs are freely accessible to all for casual use, however they also can be reserved for a fee, for example as a club or commercial hire. A 20% uplift in such hire rates will apply from 1 April 2024. Charges will apply to all future MUGA hires.
- 3.17 Goldsworth Park Angling Club sets out proposals for its own fees each year, ahead of the issue of new fishing licenses in April; this fee income goes to the Club. The Club has advised that there will be no change to existing charges in 2024/25. The attached schedule therefore shows these charges unchanged in both the current and next financial years.

Garden Waste Collection Subscription Charges (Mark Tabner)

- 3.18 The garden waste subscription fee had remained static for a number of years at £45 for the first bin and £30 for each additional bin with concessionary rates at 50%. This was changed on 1 April 2023 to £50 per bin for all bins (removing the concessionary rate). Our Joint Waste Collection Contract partners current full charges per bin are; Surrey Heath £55, Elmbridge £60 and Mole Valley £62 (Mole Valley charge an additional one-off £40 per bin for its loan). It is proposed that Woking increase its annual subscription charge to align more closely with its Joint Waste partners and charge £70 per bin for all bins from 1 April 2024.

Bulky Waste Collection Charges (special collections) (Mark Tabner)

- 3.19 Currently the rate is charged at £35 for the first item and £15 for each additional item with 50% concessionary rates. It is proposed to charge £42 for the first item and £25 for each additional item with concessionary rates remaining at 50%. We are required to offer this service and the costs are aimed to cover the operational costs.

Waste Receptacles (Mark Tabner)

- 3.20 It is proposed that charges apply for the provision of all waste receptacles (both sizes of two wheeled bins: 140 & 240 litre, both sizes of four wheeled bins: 660 & 1,100 litre and for indoor seven litre and outdoor 23 litre food waste caddies). The charges are set to cover the cost of the wheeled bin, administration and delivery charge.

ITEM	Proposed
	Charge
	2024/25
	(inc.VAT) £
PRESCRIBED HOUSEHOLD WASTE	
Set of indoor and outdoor caddies – non concessionary	25.00
Set of indoor and outdoor caddies - concessionary	12.50
Indoor silver food waste caddy	20.00
New Development – per additional silver food waste caddy	4.00
New Development - food 2 wheeled bin	60.00
New Development - WEEE cage	215.00
New Development - textile cage	115.00
2 Wheeled Bin (140 or 240 litre, refuse or recycling – non concessionary charge	60.00
2 Wheeled Bin (140 or 240 litre, refuse or recycling – concessionary charge	30.00
4 wheeled bin (660 or 1,100 litre, refuse/recycling)	420.00

3.21 The items to highlight from the list above are;

- The £60 charge for a two wheeled bin is for both sizes of 140 litre and 240 litre and for both refuse and recycling bins. Concessionary rates will be provided at 50%.
- The previous charge of £30 for a used two wheeled residual bin will be removed. All bins suitable for use will be charged at the £60 rate.
- Charges will be introduced for a set of food caddies, £25 for the delivery (includes a 7 litre indoor and a 23 litre outdoor caddy).
- The price for 4 wheeled bins (660 litre and 1,100 litre) increases from the current £300 per bin to £420 on 1 April 2024 (low volumes). This increase is mainly due to manufacturing cost increases. Customers can purchase from elsewhere / directly with manufacturers, but purchasing through the Council remains competitive and helps to keep control of bin standards and numbers.

Car Park Season Ticket Charges (Mark Tabner)

- 3.22 The majority of permit fees are related to the CO₂ rating of a vehicle. Last years charging review approved the implementation of an updated CO₂ model over three years to 2025/26.
- 3.23 Officers have commissioned a Parking Study which is due to be completed by December. This study will provide the Council with specialist advice on our assets and tariff structures. It is therefore proposed that the 2024/25 pricing for remaining permits be subject to the outcome of that study.

Car Park Charges (Mark Tabner)

- 3.24 It is proposed that the Council's day tariff structure is considered once the Parking Study is complete. The study is due to be completed by December. Proposals / recommendations in the Parking Study can be put forward in a future committee report (February 2024) for Member consideration. Any changes to the tariff structure will then need to go through the statutory 21 day traffic regulation order period. This timeline should still enable changes to be implemented by 1 April 2024.

Environmental Health, Housing Standards & Licensing (including Taxi Licensing) (Emma Bourne)

- 3.25 All fees and charges in these service areas have been reviewed, and where possible, charges have been increased to assist in covering costs in providing that service and/or to bring these into line with the benchmarked charges of other local authorities within Surrey.

Building Control Fees (David Edwards)

- 3.26 Building Control operates in a financially competitive environment, the fees are allowed to change and charges are covered by The Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulations 2010, which require us to balance income against expenditure.
- 3.27 To meet this legislation and the pressure on WBC, The fees were raised by 10% in April 2023 and it is proposed to raise them by a further 10% in April 2024.
- 3.28 However, it should be noted that Building Control's day to day finances are very much effected by major projects and the economic environment. Due to the rise in interest rates and other inflationary pressures, Woking along with other Surrey boroughs are facing a static market in 2023/24.

Planning Fees (Thomas James)

- 3.29 Fees for planning applications are set by central government so there is no scope for a local planning authority to change them.
- 3.30 Fees for pre-applications discussions are discretionary and are therefore set locally by each planning authority. The Development Management team review the pre-application charges annually and bench mark against other Surrey authorities. The bench marking exercising undertaken this time shows our fees are towards the top end of the range charged by Surrey authorities and therefore, currently, there is little scope to increase them further.

4.0 Corporate Resources

Land Charges (David Ripley)

- 4.1 The national Local Land Charges (LCC) Programme will make Her Majesty's Land Register (HMLR) the sole registering authority and official search provider for LLC in accordance with the provisions of the Infrastructure Act 2015. Woking Borough Council is currently going through the migration process to transfer the data from the current LLC registry to the national digital registry and the scheduled completion date is before the start of 2024/25. LLC searches & fee setting will therefore not be carried out by the Woking Borough Council from that date. These will be carried out via the national LLC portal on the GOV.UK website, apart from some non-Surrey CC Con29 questions. Surrey CC increase their fees each year, these will be updated once notification is received.
- 4.2 The current LLC search fees have been carried forward un-changed as these will not be set by Woking Borough Council once the migration is complete. However charges retained have been increased and are reflected in the new 2024/25 fees and charges.

CCTV (David Loveless)

- 4.3 Charges for the investigation and supply of CCTV data mostly to insurance companies will increase by 20% effective 1 January 2024 and a further 5% effective 1 April 2023. The activity levels are minimal, and this has been reflected in the revised schedules.

Town Centre Management - Licensing (David Loveless)

- 4.4 Permits, Licences and Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders and Local Highway Service are operated by the Council on behalf of Surrey County Council therefore Surrey County Council set the licence charges. Income is minimal.

Property Services (David Loveless)

- 4.5 For new or renewal of Garden and Grazing Licences and Vehicular Access charges will be increased by 20% with immediate effect. Income is minimal.

5.0 Implications

Finance and Risk

5.1 The changes in fees and charges considered in this report are summarised in the following tables.

5.2 Estimated additional income in 2023/24 generated by January 1st proposed increases:

	£
Communities	46,062
Place	79,292
Corporate Resources	543
TOTAL	125,897

5.3 Estimate income in 2024/25 from price changes:

	ORIGINAL BUDGET 2023/24*	PRICE CHANGE*
	£	£
Communities	1,407,391	949,335
Place	1,804,783	447,185
Corporate Resources	276,241	40,278
TOTAL	3,488,415	1,436,798

**Above figures exclude all Car Parks income until a full review has been carried out (Paras 3.23; 3.24)*

Equalities and Human Resources

5.4 This review forms part of the annual work plan of staff in the Council's service areas. No specific training and development issues have arisen as a result of the review.

Legal

5.5 Local authorities have a variety of powers to charge for specific statutory services set out in statute. The Local Government Act 2003 also provides a power to trade and a power to charge for discretionary service. The Localism Act 2011 provides local authorities with a general power of competence that confers on them the power to charge for services.

6.0 Engagement and Consultation

6.1 Fees and charges for Leisure Services are being investigated as part of the public consultation and will be dealt with by the Leisure Partnership Board separately.

6.2 The Goldsworth Park Angling Club has been consulted on the proposed charges for Fishing. No changes are proposed to the current fees.

6.3 Consultation has taken place with Ambassadors Theatre Group in respect of the proposed charges for the Rhoda McGaw Theatre.

REPORT ENDS