



Fees and Charges 2024/25

Report by Saty Kaur, Chief Officer Corporate Solutions

Report for Decision

1 Recommendations

Council are asked to:

- Agree to the officer recommendations for new, revised and frozen charges as outlined within the report; and
- Note the final agreed fees and charges register will be published on the Council's website.

2 Purpose of Report/Executive Summary

This report provides Council with the proposed fees and charges table for 2024/25 for consideration and approval.

Date Tuesday 30 January 2024

Report Contact:

Saty Kaur, Chief Officer Corporate Solutions

Saty.Kaur@midlothian.gov.uk

3 Main Report

- 3.1** Fees and charges are reviewed annually and presented to Council as part of annual budget setting. The proposed fees and charges table for 2024/25 can be found [online](#) for review. Some charges are statutory, and these are noted on the register. As and when the statutory bodies issue the revised charges these will be actioned for these fees. Other charges are subject to inflationary uplifts (as requested by Council in 2023/24) and are noted on the register.
- 3.2** Below is a summary of where discretionary charges have been reviewed and has resulted in officer recommendations to introduce new charges, changes from the review and charges that remain frozen, and the rationale for these recommendations.

New charges proposed to be introduced

Building Standards – introduction of fees for non-statutory services

- 3.3** At its meeting of 21 February 2023, Council agreed to the introduction of fees for Building Standards for non-statutory duties. Within the fees and charges register for 2024/25, these now include:
- Application for Midlothian Council's acceptance of sports ground capacity less than 5,000 spectators – Non-Designated Sports Ground. For a sports ground that **has not** had confirmation previously from Midlothian Council (£189.00)
 - Application for Midlothian Council's acceptance of sports ground capacity less than 5,000 spectators – Non-Designated Sports Ground. Applies to year 1 of 3-yearly confirmation cycle for a sports ground that has had confirmation previously from Midlothian Council (£126.00)
 - Application for Midlothian Council's acceptance of sports ground capacity less than 5,000 spectators – Non-Designated Sports Ground. Applies to years 2 and 3 of 3-yearly confirmation cycle for a sports ground that has had confirmation previously from Midlothian Council (£63.00)

Council is asked to note that the other charges in relation to Building Standards are statutory. Scottish Government wrote to Councils on 9 February 2024 to advise on the changes to fee levels and associated discounts for Certification of Design and Construction. A number of changes are being introduced to the building standards system through the work of the Building Standards Futures Board Programme. The increase in fees is part of a planned 3-year model to increase fees annually, dependent on the outcome from monitoring, reporting, and auditing of the application of increased building warrant fee income at local authority level in support of increased verification service capacity and will be subject to Ministerial approval. These changes will take effect from 1 April 2024.

Waste – Bulky uplifts – new costs

- 3.4** The current charging structure for bulky uplifts has been reviewed and a new set of charges proposed in line with other local authorities after benchmarking carried out with neighbouring authorities and the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) group.

Due to the additional costs associated with the collection and disposal of waste upholstered domestic seating (WUDS) containing Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) i.e. sofas, armchairs, upholstered dining chairs as well as beanbags and footstools, Waste & Recycling Services propose amending the current charging structure for kerbside bulky waste collections to cover these costs.

It is proposed that from 1 April 2024, the charge for bulky waste collections of upholstered seating would be dependent on the individual item/s that are required to be uplifted. This will be based on the cost for both collection (size/weight and staff time required) and the additional disposal charge.

As the wood or metal in the frame or legs of POPs waste (sofas etc) can no longer be extracted for recycling, and crushing of POPs waste must be undertaken in a negative pressure environment to prevent release of particles to the environment, the disposal cost for upholstered seating is higher than for other bulky waste items.

The existing bulky waste uplift charge (2023/24) is £27 for up to seven items. Fridges and freezers are individually charged at £27 per appliance. This charge was initially introduced to cover the cost of “de-gassing” these appliances.

It is proposed that the existing charges change as follows:

- £27.00 for **up to seven items** with rise to £30 for **up to six items** – the equivalent of £5 per item
- Fixed fee of £40 for larger/heavier items such as range cookers, exercise machines or pianos will rise to £60 per item
- £27.00 charge for fridge/freezer per item is raised to £30.00 item.

New charges proposed are:

- 2 seater sofa (per item) (size up to 180cm in length) - £30.00
- 3 seater sofa (per item) (size over 180cm in length) - £40.00
- corner sofa (per item) - £50.00
- other large domestic appliance (per item) - £30.00
- Mattress, divan bed, Armchair (up to 2 items) - £30.00

Short term lets licensing – new charges proposed

- 3.5** Two new charges are proposed for secondary letting:
- Additional charge (per additional room/guest): greater than 12 bedrooms or greater than 24 guests - £55.00
 - Additional charge (per additional room/guest): greater than 12 bedrooms or greater than 24 guests - Fee to consider material change - £33.00

Two new charges are proposed for home sharing/home letting:

- Additional charge (per additional room/guest): greater than 4 bedrooms or greater than 9 guests - £55.00
- Additional charge (per additional room/guest): greater than 4 bedrooms or greater than 9 guests - Fee to consider material change - £33.00

Review of existing charges

Parks and Greenspace – review and uplift of existing charges

- 3.6** A review of events charges for events that occur in the Council's Parks and Greenspaces has taken place in 2023/24. Benchmarking has been undertaken and it is proposed to increase charges between 10 – 100% for activities in this service area. The proposed new prices will bring Midlothian in line with neighbouring authorities.

It is also proposed to reduce the charges for ranger led activities to a schedule that is more streamlined and standardised.

Permits – review and uplift of existing charges levied at developers

- 3.7** A review of permit charges has been carried out in 2023/24. With the exception of footway crossing permits and access protection marking, all other permits are mainly aimed at developers and/or commercial businesses.

Benchmarking was undertaken with neighbouring authorities. From a sample of permits benchmarked, Midlothian sit above average in comparison to its neighbouring authorities for Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders (TTROs), skip permits, cabin, scaffolding. Edinburgh charges are higher than Midlothian whilst East Lothian and Scottish Borders are lower.

In comparison against the LGBF group, charges for skip permits, cabin, scaffolding are either in line with these authorities or just below average with the exception of TTROs where Midlothian is above average.

Due to the different scale of charges for excavations it is not possible to carry out a direct comparison. However, charges are similar to those charged by other authorities.

It is proposed to increase charges to align with Edinburgh Council's permit charges and range from a 10% increase to 250% for some permit requests.

Dalkeith Car Parking Charges – proposed increase of charges

- 3.8** It is proposed to increase these for St Andrew St and North Wynd:
- Up to two hours – was £1.00. Proposed new charge is £1.50
 - 3 hours – was £2.00. Proposed new charge is £3.00
 - 4 hours – was £4.00. Proposed new charge is £5.00
 - 10 hours – was £10.00. Proposed new charge is £12.00

Charges for car parking have remained static since introduction (North Wynd July 2011 and St Andrew St February 2012). Benchmarking was carried out with neighbouring authorities and the LGBF group where data was available. Except for Edinburgh Council, increasing charges would put Midlothian above all other authorities.

Pest Control – review and uplift of existing charges and new charges

- 3.9** Council, at its meeting of 21 March 2023 agreed to pest control treatments within domestic tenancies to be funded through the Housing Revenue Account.

It should be noted there have been no increases to pest control charges since 2020/21. Pest control charging structure has been reviewed in 2023/24 and new charges proposed now cover the cost of providing the service. This results in an increase in charging from -1% to 195%.

Two new charges are:

- Rats/ mice - additional visits (should the initial treatment programme requires to be extended beyond 3 visits to site) (cost per visit) - £40.00
- Survey of residential garden area regards rodents (this does not include a treatment plan) - £40.00

Zoo licences

- 3.10** All zoos that are open to the public, with or without charge, on seven or more days in a twelve-month period need a licence from their local authority to operate. A zoo is defined as any establishment where animals of wild species are exhibited to the public. Circuses and pet shops are excluded from this definition.

The Zoo Licensing Act 1981 sets out different timetables for new licence over a 4yr period and thereafter renewals over a 6yr period.

Benchmarking carried out with other authorities show that Midlothian are significantly undercharging for Zoo or Small Zoo licences. Charges reviewed and increased to cover the cost of providing the service, which has resulted in increases ranging from 12% to 850%:

- Application for grant or renewal of Zoo licence (4-year term) – currently £80.00, proposed new charge £760.00
- Application for grant or renewal of "small zoo" licence (4-year term) - currently £80.00, proposed new charge £445.00

- Significant alteration of a Zoo licence – currently £80, proposed new charge £90.00
- Transfer of a Zoo licence – currently £73.00, proposed new charge £90.00

Environmental Health – review and uplift of existing charges and new charges

3.11 Benchmarking carried out with neighbouring authorities show Midlothian are undercharging for animal licensing and stray dog fees. Charges increased to an average charge across those authorities:

- Licence fees for animal boarding - commercial boarding – current fee £140.00, proposed new fee £250.00
- Breeding of animals (dogs, cats or rabbits) – current fee £140.00, proposed new fee £250.00
- Pet shops – current fee £140.00, proposed new fee £250.00
- Stray dogs - Regulatory fee to be paid by the person claiming to be the owner (additional to all expenses) – **new charge** of £25.00 is proposed under the Environmental Protection (stray dogs) Regulations 1992, reg 2.
- Stray dogs collected on days 1-3 – current fee £17.00, proposed new fee £36.00
- Stray dogs collected after day 3 would rise to £17.00 plus £7.00 day thereafter

Immigration certificates – revised and increased costs – Environmental Health Officers carry out an inspection of the identified residential property that will be accommodated to ensure that the house is of suitable repair and size for the current and anticipated people who will live there i.e. the house needs to meet the tolerable standard and with the additional proposed no of (usually) family members coming through immigration, will not be overcrowded. A report is prepared and issued following the inspection and this report is submitted as part of the visa application process. The uplift in costs is to cover the actual cost of the work in conducting the inspection and preparing and issuing the report: current fee £115.00, proposed new fee £150.00.

There is a separate quick turnaround fee which is effectively a 50% surcharge – this is levied in cases where fast response is being asked for. This is in response to the team finding that applicants were contacting them at the last minute requiring immediate inspection because of deadlines in the visa application process. Therefore, a fast-track immigration certificate is also listed for those required within 4 working days of request (50% surcharge on usual fee) – current fee £173.00, proposed new fee £225.00.

Although reports are necessary for the visa application process this is not considered to be statutory work.

Other change is the Food Hygiene Certificate, for premises looking for a premises licence under Section 50 of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 – current fee £108.00, proposed new fee £125.00.

Trading Standards – Weights and Measures – review and uplift of existing charges and new charges

- 3.12** New charging structure for weights fees, introduces 3 categories dependent of weight. Designed to ensure the cost to re-calibrate a weight is less than purchasing a new weight. Charges proposed are benchmarked against other authorities that provide a similar service. This results in some changes of between 10% to 42% increase and a new charge introduced:

- Weights and Measures Equipment Test Fees (weights fee) 1g - 500g – current fee £8.00, proposed new fee £10.00
- Weights and Measures Equipment Test Fees (weights fee) 1kg - 5kg – current fee £10.80, proposed new fee £12.00
- Weights and Measures Equipment Test Fees (length fee) – current fee £11.20, proposed new fee £16.00
- Weights and Measures Equipment Test Fees (weights fee) 10kg - 25kg or 1mg - 500mg – **new fee proposed** £15.00

Waste – New housing developments

- 3.13** This charge is associated with a new build house – set of bins and boxes (incl. food waste recycling). Charges include delivery, bin stickers and calendar). It is proposed to increase the charge from £104.00 to £200.00 (90% increase).

These charges are aimed at property developers only. Developers are charged for the costs of providing waste and recycling containers for new build housing. This covers the initial capital purchasing cost of the containers, delivery and administration.

As the Council makes plans to move to 'twin stream' for the collection of recycling (paper/card collected in one bin), the future cost of an additional bin has been factored into the proposed increase in charge. To note: charges have been based on the average Scotland Excel price for wheeled bins and containers at cost recovery.

Council, when it acts as a property developer, will also be subjected to these costs.

3.14 Garden Waste

In February 2023, Council agreed to uplift garden waste charges to £40/year, to take effect in year 2024/25. It is proposed to uplift this to £42 for 2025/26 year.

Council should note that as the promotion for garden waste sign commences in January of each year, any change to charges needs to be agreed in this financial year to take effect for next.

Library Services

- 3.15** Minimal changes within the library service to include an increase to laminating charges, an increase to local studies research and the removal of charging for a lost membership card (adult).

Registrars

- 3.16** Minimal uplifts to ceremony charges to bring these in line with neighbouring Local Authorities.

Street naming and numbering

- 3.17** With the exception of the charge for single developments all other charges are services aimed at property developers. Council should note that Midlothian is already one of the highest charges in this service; however, recognising that Midlothian is the fastest growing local authority in mainland Scotland, it is proposed to further increase these charges:
- Naming of a new street – current charge £360.00, proposed charge £500.00
 - Naming/Numbering of New Properties or Alterations to existing buildings: 1 property – current charge £120.00, proposed new charge £150.00
 - Naming/Numbering of New Properties or Alterations to existing buildings: 2 - 5 properties – current charge £300.00, proposed new charge £420.00
 - Naming/Numbering of New Properties or Alterations to existing buildings: 6-10 properties – current charge £420.00, proposed new charge £600.00
 - Naming/Numbering of New Properties or Alterations to existing buildings: 11-20 properties – current charge £600.00, proposed new charge £840.00
 - Naming/Numbering of New Properties or Alterations to existing buildings: 21-50 properties – current charge £900.00, proposed new charge £1260.00
 - Naming/Numbering of New Properties or Alterations to existing buildings: 51-100 properties – current charge £1200.00, proposed new charge £1680.00
 - Naming/Numbering of New Properties or Alterations to existing buildings: 101 plus properties (Plus additional £45 per plot) – current charge £1700.00, proposed new charge £2380.00
 - Allocation of a house name or renumbering/change of address – current charge £120.00, proposed new charge £150.00

No changes to charges

No changes – Catering Services

- 3.18** It is proposed to freeze the following charges within Catering Services:
- School meals (Primary, Secondary and Adult Meals) - No increases proposed due to cost of living crisis. Primary 1 to 5 receive free school meals and Primary 6 and 7 will follow in future.
 - Café, Vending and Basket Service – pending review of café options which is included in the Transformation Blueprint Theme 5 Commercialisation

No changes – Bonnyrigg District Heating Scheme

- 3.19** It is not proposed to change the charges at present.

No changes – Travel and Fleet Services

- 3.20** It is proposed to freeze the charge for non-entitled travel school bus pass currently at £245.00. This will be reviewed as part of the Home to School Transport sprint contained within the Transformation Blueprint.

No changes - Health Living Services

- 3.21** Charges across all leisure services are frozen. There will be an external review of charges and memberships and, when that is completed, a full report will be brought to Council outlining any suggested changes to charges. This is part of the Transformation Blueprint.

No changes - Health and Social Care – Adult Social Care

- 3.22** Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership are currently undertaking work to review its charging policy and eligibility criteria. This will require benchmarking and need to take account of the still pending funding settlement for 2023-24 directed by the Scottish Government and agreed by Midlothian Council and NHS Lothian. Consequently, it is proposed that a further report on Social Care charges will be brought to Council at a future date.

Lifelong Learning and Employability Classes – uplift and freezes

- 3.23** No increases are proposed for Code A courses (all levels except retired rate) due to the need to increase adults with qualifications, particularly for employability purposes as well as increase uptake.

Similarly, no increases are proposed for codes C to F with the exception of rates for retired people (those who do not qualify for concessionary rate e.g. on some kind of top up benefit). Rates have been benchmarked against City of Edinburgh and still sit below their charge of £48.30 for retired code C.

In addition, it is proposed to increase cost of weekend/short courses in line with benchmarking information with City of Edinburgh and cost of delivery.

4 Report Implications (Resource, Digital and Risk)

4.1 Resource

Each service is individually responsible for implementing the recommended fees and charges. Charges are aligned to cost recovery so it is not anticipated that any additional resource will be required to implement. The approved fees and charges register will be published on the Council's website.

4.2 Digital

The Customer Service Platform project is ongoing and a key output from this is to rollout online payment processes that are available 24/7. The review of fees and charges has identified a number of areas that would benefit from an online payment option to improve the customer experience, reduce staff time processing manual payments and allow for greater visibility on income and volumes of transactions. These service areas will be added to the existing workplan and progressed through the 2024/25 financial year.

4.3 Risk

The Council is facing significant financial pressure. The report outlines the rationale for the proposed changes to fees and charges. To do nothing would present significant risk in some areas where, for example, maintaining current charges with no increase means cost recovery is not being achieved; and in other areas where to do nothing would result in a missed opportunity to generate income for the Council.

4.4 Ensuring Equalities (if required a separate IIA must be completed)

A separate IIA has been produced for the recommendations and will be revised following approval at Council to include any changes from the recommendations. Following on from this, where a change to fees and charges results in a policy change or redesign of existing process, the service area that is responsible for this will complete a more detailed IIA at the point of policy development/process redesign. The IIA is available for review in Members Library.

4.5 Additional Report Implications (See Appendix A)

See Appendix A

Appendices

Appendix A – Additional Report Implications

Appendix B – Background information/Links

APPENDIX A – Report Implications

A.1 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan

Not applicable

A.2 Key Drivers for Change

Key drivers addressed in this report:

- ☐ Holistic Working
- ☐ Hub and Spoke
- ☐ Modern
- ☐ Sustainable
- ☐ Transformational
- ☐ Preventative
- ☐ Asset-based
- ☒ Continuous Improvement
- ☐ One size fits one
- ☐ None of the above

A.3 Key Delivery Streams

Key delivery streams addressed in this report:

- ☐ One Council Working with you, for you
- ☐ Preventative and Sustainable
- ☐ Efficient and Modern
- ☐ Innovative and Ambitious
- ☒ None of the above

A.4 Delivering Best Value

Not applicable

A.5 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

All service areas listed in the fees and charges register have been consulted to inform the recommended changes.

A.6 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

Not applicable

A.7 Adopting a Preventative Approach

Not applicable

A.8 Supporting Sustainable Development

Not applicable

APPENDIX B

Register of charges 2024/25 for publication – available to review on the Council's website: [Fees and charges for 2023-24 | Fees and charges register | Midlothian Council](#)