

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director (Finance) and S151 Officer (Introduced by Executive Member (Resources))	Executive Cabinet	23 rd January 2025

2025/26 Fees and Charges Update and Proposed Changes

Is this report confidential?	No
Is this decision key?	Yes
Savings or expenditure amounting to greater than £100,000	Significant impact on 2 or more council wards

Purpose of the report

1. This report sets out the current position around fees and charges and makes proposals for changes for 2025/26. Increases will be implemented from 1st April 2025, or the most suitable date thereafter.

Recommendations to Executive Cabinet

2. To note the current levels of individual budgeted fees and charges, and the issues specific to these.
3. To approve an uplift in the Strawberry Fields service charge of £1 per square foot to better reflect the current costs incurred at the site, as detailed at point 31.
4. To approve an increase in Leisure fees and charges of 1.7% in line with September CPI (rounded up to nearest 5p) as per point 26.
5. To approve an uplift in the rents of all Council owned housing (including Extra Care properties, but excluding Cotswold House) of 2.7%. This is the approach agreed by Executive Cabinet in July 2022 of increasing these rents by CPI plus 1%, with CPI based on the published rate for September each year. Service charges were not increased in 2024/25 but a review of the costs incurred has resulted in a recommendation to increase these by £2.60 per week from 2025/26.
6. To approve an increase in the rent charged at Cotswold House of 2.7%, plus an increase in service charge of 0.96% and an increase in personal charge of 4.39% as detailed in point 30.

7. To approve an increase in garden waste collection charges of £2.50 as per point 33.
8. To approve the changes in Astley Hall fees and charges as per point 34.
9. To approve an increase in Legal Charges as per point 32.
10. To approve a general increase of up to 1.7% in the fees for 2025/26 (limited to the services listed in Table 3 of Appendix 1) based on the rate of CPI in September 2024. An increase in costs may necessitate an increase in excess of 1.7% where these relate directly to the cost of products e.g tea / coffee charges. These will be limited to a maximum increase of £1 per unit.
11. To approve an increase in Market fees of 10% for Covered Market, Cabins and Permanent Street traders as per point 35. A £5 increase is proposed for temporary street traders.
12. To approve increases and changes to car parking charges as per point 36. The proposals around Hallgate and Yarrow to be approved in principle subject to further consideration of any potential displacement of vehicles and action required.
13. To approve the basis for new charging in relation to Biodiversity Net Gain and S.106 Monitoring fee as per point 37.
14. To approve an increase in cemetery fees as per point 38.
15. To approve the full list of fees and charges for upload onto the Council website.

Reasons for recommendations

16. To ensure that fees and charges are set at appropriate levels and are publicly available.

Other options considered and rejected

17. No other options considered as we are required to review fees and charges each year.

Executive summary

18. This report sets out the key fees and charges budgets and the income generated from each. It also sets out an estimate of the financial impact in 2025/26 of the proposals made, if they were to be adopted.

Corporate priorities

19. The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

Housing where residents can live well	A green and sustainable borough
An enterprising economy with vibrant local centres in urban and rural areas	Healthy, safe and engaged communities

Background to the report

20. The Council generates significant income from various fees and charges. The majority of these charges are either set nationally (Table 1) or determined on an individual basis by the Council (Table 4).

Fees and Charges Position

21. **Appendix 1** details the key fees and charges budgets across a number of categories. It should be noted however, that the tables are not exhaustive or exclusive (i.e. some fees and charges fall into more than one category) but they give an indication of the core fees covered.
22. **Table 1** provides details of those charges over which the Council has no control in setting the amount that can be charged. The largest of these relates to Planning Application fees. Whilst the fee is not within local control, it is the volume of applications which can significantly impact upon this budget and the income generated, along with the size of the applications made. General Planning Fees increased with effect from 6th December 2023 by 25%, and by 35% for major developments. It has been usual for Planning Fees to rise every few years rather than annually, but the new regulations provide for an annual indexation increase. However alongside these increases there are new requirements in force, for example a reduction in fee must be given if an application is not processed within given timescales; this may impact upon the level of income achieved against the budgets set.
23. **Table 2** illustrates the specific fees and charges that generate an income of greater than £50k for the Council. The largest of these relate to the Council's major projects at Market Walk, Strawberry Fields, Strawberry Meadows, Tatton Gardens, Primrose Gardens, Cotswold House and other projects (including the rental of Logistics House). Outside of these charges, the biggest income streams relate to garden waste, car parking and building control.
24. **Table 3** shows the fees and charges that have generally been increased by a given percentage, or through an inflationary uplift, as opposed to being subject to a full, formal review. The increases across these have varied, but it is proposed to apply a maximum general increase to these of 1.7%, which is consistent with the rate of CPI in September 2024. This change equates to a forecast increase in revenue of £7k, based on current levels of volume/demand.
25. **Table 4** illustrates the more significant areas which impact upon the amount of income generated through changes in charges. An update on these charges is below:
 - **Other Investment Rentals and Leases** – these are negotiated on a case-by-case basis to ensure maximum financial benefit to the Council and to reflect commercial rates. Income has remained largely stable across these categories as this mostly relates to the lease income from Logistics House.
 - **Strawberry Fields, Strawberry Meadows and Market Walk** – again, lease charges are negotiated on a case-by-case basis.
26. Following an Executive Member Decision in June 2024 it was agreed to enter into an 'agency' model with Chorley Leisure Limited. The main impact of this change was that **Leisure income** became collectable by the Council and the level of charges must now

be set by the Council. As a result, following consultation with Chorley Leisure company staff and the Board of Directors, it is now a Chorley Council decision on an appropriate increase in fees. Fees were reviewed by Chorley Leisure Limited relatively recently so as a result, a rise of 1.7% (rounded up to the nearest 5p) is proposed. There are some charges in relation to retail and food and beverage which may fluctuate based on supplier charging and may increase in excess of 1.7% as a result. The key fees and charges that are impacted by the 1.7% rise are below:

	Current price list 2024 - 25	CPI 1.7% increase	Cost after CPI increase	Proposed price list 25/26 (Rounded up to the nearest 5p)
Adult Swim	4.60	0.08	4.68	4.70
Junior Swim	3.25	0.06	3.31	3.35
Inflatable Swim	5.50	0.09	5.59	5.60
Badminton Court	10.00	0.17	10.17	10.20
Squash Court Hire	11.00	0.19	11.19	11.20
Adult Gym	8.00	0.14	8.14	8.15
Sports Hall Full Hall Hire	48.00	0.82	48.82	48.85
Junior Swimming Lessons per month	26.00	0.44	26.44	26.45
Instructor Led Exercise 60 mins	5.50	0.09	5.59	5.60
Main Pool Hire	103.38	1.76	105.14	105.15

27. In July 2022 Executive Cabinet agreed the principle to increase **rents at Primrose Gardens and Tatton Gardens** by the rate of CPI plus 1%, with CPI based on the rate at September each year. That mirrors the guidance from central government on Social Rents which, although not a direct equivalent to the Council's housing, is a useful barometer. It is anticipated that a 2.7% rise would result in an increase in income to the Council of approximately £29k.
28. Some tenants would see rent increases matched by an uplift in Housing Benefit. An analysis of current tenants suggests that the majority would see rises either met partially or fully by Housing Benefit.

Primrose Gardens	Full HB	Partial	0% HB	Total
No. of Residents	31	17	17	65
% of Residents	48%	26%	26%	100%

Tatton Gardens	Full HB	Partial	0% HB	Total
No. of Residents	32	6	24	62
% of Residents	52%	10%	38%	100%

29. In 2023/24 utility recharges for these properties were increased to reflect rising costs; it is not proposed to increase these further. The service charge costs are reflective of the actual charges incurred; there is no element of surplus retained by the Council. By setting fixed charges, the tenants are sheltered from fluctuations in costs on an annual basis; should charges reduce however, then these will be passed back to the tenants by way of a reduced future charge. As a result, the Council bears the risk of inflationary increases above the rates charged.
30. **Cotswold House** rents and service charges have been reviewed in 2024/25 comparing the current budget to actual costs incurred to establish a more accurate charge. The rental and service charge figures are impacted by the annual pay award, increases in repairs and maintenance costs and in subsidised laundry costs. The majority of the service charge and rent is reclaimable by tenants through Housing Benefit. The personal charge, which is non-reclaimable via Housing Benefit, is expected to increase based on the current costs incurred. The result of the proposed changes at Cotswold will be a net increase in income of around £8k to the Council.
31. It is proposed to increase the **Strawberry Fields** service charge by £1 per square foot (as per the previous year's fees and charges report) to reflect the fact that actual costs are in excess of the current charge. It has been clear since opening that the actual costs incurred are greater than the £7 per square foot initially charged to businesses (currently £9 and proposed to increase to £10 in 2025/26). Service Charges should reflect the actual cost of the building and a service charge report is produced each year to evidence this. The current service charge report for 2023/24 reflects an actual cost per square foot of £16, although this higher than anticipated due to significant repairs and maintenance required during the year. The remodelling of the internal area of the building has helped to spread more of the cost across tenants. It is hoped that in future years these rises will no longer be necessary but this will be reviewed following the 24/25 Service Charge report. The increase of £1 per square foot to the Strawberry Fields Service Charge will result in increased income of approximately £27.8k to the Council.
32. There are a number of **Legal Charges** that are applied for undertaking certain tasks. While not generating significant levels of income these charges should be reflective of actual costs and have not been increased in a number of years. An initial review has proposed the following changes:
- New Leases - Increase from £544 to £600
 - Licence to assign – Increase from £326.50 to £400
 - Footpath diversion – Increase from £1,530 to £1,700

33. **Garden waste** - the recommended increase of £2.50 to £40 per subscription will generate an additional £62,500 of revenue for the Council. The current charge in 2024/25 has been benchmarked against other Lancashire District and Unitary authorities as detailed below; this position could change however as all authorities review their fees and charges for 2025/26 with several already indicating a proposed increase. The recommended fee of £40 per subscription would still mean that the fee charged by Chorley Council is average/below average compared to authorities across the rest of the county.

The Council has seen an increase in subscribers from 22k in 2017/18 to 26k in 2023/24. There has been a slight reduction in 2024/25 but the income target has still largely been met. The income target and subscribers will be monitored regularly to ensure overall income generation is in line with expectations and cover the costs associated with the service provision.

Authority	Current cost for year 2024/2025
Blackburn with Darwen	£45.00
Blackpool	£45.00
Lancaster	£45.00
Rosendale***	£45.00
West Lancs	£45.00
Pendle	£41.00
Burnley**	£40.00
Preston	£40.00
Wyre	£40.00
Chorley	£37.50
Fylde	£36.00
Hyndburn	£35.00
South Ribble	£25.00
Ribble Valley	Free of charge.

**£35 for further bins

***£30 for further bins

34. The following fee changes are proposed for **Astley Hall** core charges:

Ticket	Current fees	Proposed fee for visitors, 50% off for Chorley residents
Adult single entry	£5 (£2.50 Chorley resident)	£5
Child single entry	£3 (£1.50)	£3
Family single entry (2 adults and up to 3 children)	£10 (£8)	£15
Concessions single entry	£3.75 (£1.75)	NA – under review
Adult annual pass	£12 (£5)	£15
Child annual pass	£5 (£2.50)	£9
Family annual pass	£25 (15)	£45
Concessions annual pass	£6 (£3.75)	NA – under review

For existing tour charges it is proposed to remove all current charges and replace with a single fee. Specialist guided tours will remain at £10. On all opening days other than Sunday, the entrance fee will cover a short guided tour. Sundays will be open house.

Current:

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit
Guided Tours (minimum 30 people) Up to a maximum of 40 people	per head	£10.00
Self-Guided Tours (minimum 25 people or £50)	per head	£2.00
School Tours	per head	£3.50

Proposed:

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit
Specialist guided tours for groups and coach trips (minimum 30 people) Up to a maximum of 40 people. 1 hour 20 minutes.	per head	£10.00

A similar approach will be taken for educational visits:

Current:

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit
Educational Sessions - Tudor Life (min £80)	per pupil	£3.50
Educational Sessions - The Great Plague! Health and Hygiene in the 17th Century (min £80)	per pupil	£3.50
Educational Sessions - Serving Stories (min £80)	per pupil	£3.50
Educational Sessions - A very Victorian Christmas	per pupil	£4.00
Educational Sessions - Homes a long time ago	per pupil	£3.00
Educational Sessions - Textiles: Weaving and Dyeing	per pupil	£3.00
Educational Sessions - SEN sessions (min £80)	per head	£3.00

Proposed:

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit
Educational Sessions – Range of sessions in line with the current curriculum	per pupil	£4.00

35. It is proposed to increase **market rents** by 10% to align these with associated costs. Rents have not been increased for a decade and have fallen behind rising costs. The average increase will be approximately £13 per week (inc VAT) for cabins, £5 per week for stalls and £2 for permanent street stalls. It is also proposed to increase charges for Market Traders parking from £75 to £100 per 6 months. There is also an option to have a paper permit which requires the annual charge plus £1 per day which will now rise to £2 per day.

36. There are some proposals for **car parking** changes across the borough. The current Car Parking Strategy was published in November 2022 and was the last time any changes were made to parking charges and when benchmarked with other Towns locally Chorley is currently, and (inclusive of the proposed increases) would remain cheaper than most for both short stay and long stay parking. The Council previously approved a charging rate for electric vehicles on their car parks in September 2024 at a rate of 55p per kwh. The proposals now are to change the following:

Car Parks	Old Charges	New Charges
Short stay	1 hour free £1 for 3 hours	1 hour free £2 for 3 hours
Long Stay	1 hour free £1 for 4 hours all day £3.50	1 hour free £2 for 4 hours all day £4
Portland Street	1 hour free £1 for 4 hours	1 hour free £2 for 4 hours
Flat Iron	£1 for 2 hours (max stay)	£2 for 2 hours (max stay)

Old Parking Permits	£300 for 12 months. £160 for 6 Months. £90 for 3 months.
New Parking Permits	£400 for 12 months. £220 for 6 Months. £115 for 3 months. 7 day ticket £20

Note: Proposals around Hallgate and Yarrow are subject to further investigation and discussion with Lancashire County Council and other stakeholders prior to any implementation. As such while these are agreed in principle they will not come into force until this work (to understand and mitigate any potential impacts) is concluded.

Other Car Parks	Proposal
Sandham Street	Permit Only (£100)
Hallgate, Astley Village	£1 for 3 hours. £3 all day 7 days a week
Ackhurst, Southport Road	£1 for 3 hours. £3 all day 7 days a week
Yarrow Park	£1 for 3 hours. £3 all day 7 days a week

There would be some initial costs to allow charges to be changed / introduced at some of the sites. This is anticipated to be in the region of £40k. The potential income generated will vary dependent on any behaviour change in relation to the new charges but could be in excess of £250k per annum.

37. New charges in relation to **Biodiversity Net Gain** and S.106 Monitoring Fees are proposed to be introduced in line with existing Section 106 charging processes. The proposed charges for S.106 were set out in the report to Executive Cabinet in November 2024. Costs for Biodiversity Net Gain will be set based upon staff hourly rates and may cover assessment, monitoring and the execution of agreements. There may also be charges in relation to discretionary advice.
38. A review of **cemetery fees** across Lancashire has been undertaken to benchmark the current fees. Chorley is currently significantly lower than this average (fees have not increased since 2020/21) and as a result it is proposed to move all fees to the average figure generating approximately £30k additional per annum. For reference numbers in relation to charging are included in the table below as an indication of scale.

23/24 Numbers	Cemetery Fees	Chorley	Lancashire Councils Average Charge	Increase £
36	Grave Purchase (Adult)	£936	£1,175	£239
54	Burials Adult (Mon-Fri)	£676	£853	£177
20	Burials of cremated remains (Mon-Fri)	£156	£319	£163
	Burial of Child under 16	No Charge	£436	No Charge
	Burial of a stillborn	No Charge	£288	No Charge
10	Burials (Saturday)	£1,014	£1,258	£244
2	Burials of cremated remains (Sat)	£234	£342	£108
	Garden of remembrance plaque	£104	£155	£51
60	Memorial - headstone (inclusive of first inscription)	£156	£204	£48
39	Memorial - additional inscriptions and refix	£47	£69	£22
0	Memorial - tablet or vase (inclusive of inscription)	£56	£115	£59
0	Memorial bench inclusive of plaque	£624	£1,185	£561
0	Burial in a burial chamber	£188	£294	£106
0	Purchase of a burial chamber	£1,318	£1,390	£72
	Construction of a timber lined grave	£156	£294	£138
9	Family ashes plot	£590	£553	-£37
36	Grave marker	£29	£29	£0
97	Certificate of burial/certificate of transfer(transfer of	£32	£52	£20
	Search fee	£32	£36	£4

Climate change and air quality

39. The work noted in this report does not impact the climate change and sustainability targets of the Council's Green Agenda and all environmental considerations are in place.

Equality and diversity

40. Impact Assessments are attached as appendix 3.

Risk

41. Where applicable these are detailed against the specific fee rises.
42. If fees and charges are not regularly reviewed, they may fall behind actual costs to the Council and create additional budget pressures.

Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

43. The financial implications are contained within this report and the supporting appendices. A Summary is shown in the table below.

Category of Fee or Charge	Additional Income
Cotswold Rent and Service Charges	(8)
Leisure Services	(36)
Strawberry Fields Service Charge	(28)
Extra Care Rent and Service Charges	(29)
Legal Charges	-
Garden Waste Collection	(63)
Astley Hall	Not Known

Market Rents	(41)
Car Parking	(250)
Cemetery Charges	(30)
General Increase of 1.7%	(6)
Total	(491)

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

44. The fees and charges detailed in the report are set at the discretion of the council. This discretion should be exercised reasonably. The evidence to support the decision is contained in the report.

Background documents

There are no background papers to this report.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Fees and Charges Tables

Appendix 2 – Detailed Fees and Charges List (to be updated following above approvals)

Appendix 3 – Impact Assessment

Report Author:	Email:	Telephone:	Date:
Russell Ashton	Russell.Ashton@chorley.gov.uk	01257 515151	04/12/24
Hema Chevli	Hemangini.Chevli@chorley.gov.uk		