
Subject:	FEES AND CHARGES 2025/26
Meeting and Date:	Cabinet - 3 February 2025
Report of:	Helen Lamb, Head of Finance and Investment
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Stacey Blair, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance, Climate Change and Environment
Decision Type:	Executive Key Decision
Classification:	Unrestricted

Purpose of the report: This report has been prepared to obtain formal approval for the levels of fees and charges (F&Cs) for the financial year 2025/26. These F&Cs have been included in the preparatory work on the draft budget for 2025/26 and require approval.

Recommendations: It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Approves the Fees and Charges (F&Cs) for 2025/26 as set out in Appendices 1.1 to 2.14 (except for the s.106 Monitoring Fee which has been approved by the Planning Committee)¹.
2. Agrees that any F&Cs will be adjusted by Strategic Directors, in consultation with the Portfolio Holders, to comply with any subsequently received government guidelines (when they are received) and any other minor changes without being the subject of a further report unless they are materially different from current charges or have a material impact on the level of income.
3. Agrees that the Transport and Parking Services Manager, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community and Corporate Property, be authorised to take all necessary legal and procedural processes to give effect to agreed recommendations as set out in Appendix 5A & 5B, including the giving of notices and the making or amendment of any orders under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and also, the making of arrangements with the Dover Harbour Board pursuant to section 33(4) Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.
4. Approves the general principle that fees are set at an appropriate inclusive level, irrespective of VAT status, and that the VAT element within the overall fee level is then determined.
5. Delegates the setting of fees and charges at the Council's venues (including, but not limited to, Kearsney Café and Maison Dieu) to the Head of Place and Growth in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community and Corporate Property.
6. Notes the fees and charges approved separately by Licensing and Regulatory Committees set out in Appendices 3.1 to 4.2.

¹ Appendices 1.1 to 1.4 have been reviewed & noted by the Planning Committee which also approved the s.106 Monitoring Fee.

1. **Summary**

- 1.1 The Council's constitution specifies that F&Cs shall be reviewed annually. To meet this requirement, the Strategic Directors have been asked to review the F&Cs within their areas of responsibility (see checklist of issues to consider – Appendix 1) and to produce recommended levels for 2025/26. The fees and charges are tabulated in the further Appendices for consideration and/or approval by Members.

2. **Introduction and Background**

- 2.1 The level of Member approval required is dependent upon the types of F&Cs raised. To obtain appropriate approval, the following reports have been prepared:

- **Licensing Committee**

Report to the meeting on 16th October 2024 of all F&Cs to be set by the Licensing Committee.

- **Regulatory Committee**

Report to the meeting on 10th December 2024 of all F&Cs to be set by the Regulatory Committee.

- **Planning Committee**

Report (for information) to the meeting on 21st November 2024 of all F&Cs relevant to the Planning Committee.

- **Cabinet**

Report to the meeting on 3 February 2025 of all F&Cs but seeking specific approval of those F&Cs set by Cabinet.

- 2.2 Members are reminded that a framework of broad guidelines to be considered in formulating proposals for F&Cs is in place. This includes a checklist which has been circulated to all Service Directors and to all officers considering F&Cs so that a rigorous and consistent approach is taken. A copy is attached at Appendix 1.

- 2.3 As in previous years, to assist Members, the data on F&Cs has been tabulated into a standard format that has been used for Appendices 1.1 to 4.2.

- 2.4 The main points to note are set out below.

Detail and Narrative

These give a summary of the type of service being provided.

Set by Government

This indicates whether a charge is statutory or not. If a charge is statutory then it is effectively set by Government and although formal Member approval is still sought, there is little or no scope to make changes.

2024/25 Charge Inc VAT

The charge has been provided inclusive of VAT for two reasons. Firstly, it shows what the customer will pay and is therefore more meaningful.

Secondly, charges for some services, car parking for example, which are not simply a direct recovery of costs, are set at a level, inclusive of VAT, having regard to relevant considerations including market level, where appropriate. The VAT is therefore a deduction from the amount of charge retained by DDC and is not a key factor in determining the appropriate charge. Members are asked to approve this approach.

2025/26 Proposed Charge Inc VAT

This is the recommended charge for 2025/26, and the estimated income will, subject to Members' approval, be included in the 2025/26 budget.

2025/26 Total Expected Income ex VAT

This gives a broad indication as to how much income DDC is expected to receive and has been included to provide Members with a sense of the relative importance of individual charges or group of similar charges. The more significant income streams (generating over £3k) have been highlighted in **bold** type.

In some cases, the level of use is very low, or infrequent, or the service has only recently been introduced and so no level of income has been included.

Comments

This provides Members with a brief explanation for the change. In some instances, guidance is still awaited from Government as to the basis upon which F&Cs should be set. In these cases, it has not always been possible to confirm a fee level and Members' approval is sought to enable officers to adopt such fees at or close to government directed levels without a further report.

3. **New and Amended Fees and Charges**

- 3.1 An allowance for increase in inflation was applied across most areas – the amount of increase was decided considering several factors specific to each area and after consultation within each team.

While most of the fees and charges remain consistent to previous years, the following new charges and significant changes have been introduced. The following key has been used in the appendices.

- Green – This is a new fee and/or charge to be approved.
- Yellow – This identifies a fee change greater than 10%
- Blue – This identifies the proposal to remove a fee and/or charge.

The following key changes have been included in the appendices:

3.2 Parking Charges - Appendices 5A & 5B

The parking charges are normally subject to a separate report. However, as the hourly rates for parking are proposed to be retained at the 2024/25 levels for 2025/26, they have been included in this report at Appendices 5A and 5B for approval.

The main changes included are:

- Increases in the minimum charge for DDC car parks and on-street parking as detailed at Appendix 5A to reflect the current rates of charging.
- Increases in permit charges as highlighted to reflect the on-going inflationary pressures associated with the costs of managing and maintaining the schemes.
- Charges for bay suspensions for events split to recognise different charging for commercial and non-profit events to support community events across the district.
- Increase in charges for hotelier books of daily permits to recognise the increases in parking charges and the extension of hours from 4pm - 8am to 4pm – 10am.
- Admin fee introduced for refunds of permits to reflect some of the costs to the Council.

- Introduction of daily guest permits for B&Bs/guest houses to enable parking in permit areas.

A public engagement process and parking strategy review are currently underway and will be presented to Cabinet during the 2025/26 financial year as appropriate.

3.3 Planning Applications – Appendix 1.2

Regulations have been laid in parliament and if approved, will result in an increase to the householder and section 73 application fees, due to come into force on 1 April.

3.4 Planning Policy - Appendix 1.4

Line 11 – New charge for requests to confirm historic S106 compliance.

Line 12 – New charge for Biodiversity Net Gain and/or Habitat Management Monitoring Fees based on Ecologist day rate (including overheads) of £682.50.

Line 13 – New charge for Habitat Bank Applications based on Ecologist day rate as above.

Line 14 - Access and use of Dover and Deal Transport Model, charges dependent upon proposals.

Line 15 – New charge to purchase printed copies of Planning Policy Documents - £50 for addresses in Dover District, £70 for addresses outside Dover District. These charges are currently on our web pages, but not already listed.

3.5 Deal Pier & Foreshores - Appendix 2.2a

Line 31 – Deal Pier private Hire, fees increased by 20% to support cost recovery.

Line 36 - Proposal to adjust Walmer hut pricing so that they are in line with St Margarets and consistent across the district equating to a percentage uplift of 10%.

Line 37 - Proposal to adjust Kingsdown Beach Hut provision and pricing so that the charges are consistent across the district.

Line 41 - Beach plot provision has been removed and replaced with DDC Beach Hut ownership, see line 37.

3.6 Port Health - Appendix 2.3

Line 50 - Ship Sanitation Certificate - Fees will be notified via the Association of Port Health Authorities (APHA) in November 2024.

Line 85 – Organic Import Admin Fee - Removed as no longer required.

Lines 92 to 107 - Trade in Animals and Related Products Regulations - Fees and charges for products of animal origin are being removed from this year's fees and charges pending clarification from the new Government regarding official border control checks at the Short Straits.

Line 108 – Admin fee removed as no longer required.

3.7 Environmental Services - Appendix 2.4b

Line 126 – Dog Microchipping Fee - Removed as service no longer provided.

Line 133 – Private Water Supplies Analysis - Removed as no longer required, replaced with lines 127, 131 & 132

3.8 Dover Museum - Appendix 2.5

Lines 165 & 167 – Cost of preparing and sending images / stills - Removed.

Lines 180 to 188 – Not on 24/25 appendix, as Roman Painted House was returned to DDC management after Fees and Charges report went to Cabinet in February 2024.

3.9 Leisure Facilities - Appendix 2.6

Line 191 – Hire charge for newly created rugby pitch at Victoria Park.

Lines 203 to 205 - Suspended while the memorial benches and commemorative trees schemes are reviewed (see separate report).

Lines 226 & 227 – Contribution to maintenance - Above inflation increase proposed due to the long periods of maintenance expected.

3.10 Land Charges - Appendix 2.11

Lines 266 & 269 – Local Land Charges - Removed as service will have transferred to HM Land Registry for 2025/26.

3.11 Housing - Appendix 2.12

Line 305 – B&B Service Charges - 12% uplift proposed as there was no increase in 24/25. Additionally, the rate has been split to differentiate the charges for under/over 25-year-olds reflecting the difference in Universal Credit rates for the different age groups.

3.12 Regulatory - Appendix 4.1

Line 472 – New charge following requests for duplicates.

Lines 473 & 474 – New charge following enquiries for tattoo conventions.

Lines 475 to 489 – Various regulatory individual charges removed, fees as per lines 469 to 471 and therefore do not need to be listed separately.

Line 545 – New charge for licence renewal included.

4. **Other Fees and Charges**

The following F&Cs are not included in this report.

4.1 Housing Rents and Service Charges

Housing rents are approved by the Strategic Director (Finance & Housing) under delegated authority. They are largely prescribed by government, and the Council has no real scope to determine rent levels.

Service charges (for both tenants and long-term lease holders) are determined through the terms of leases and tenancy agreements, statutorily prescribed consultation processes and are calculated to ensure the recovery of all allowable costs. As a result, the Council has no real discretion to determine service charges differently.

4.2 Venues

It is recommended that Cabinet delegate the setting of fees and charges at the Council's venues (including, but not limited to, Kearsney Café and Maison Dieu) to the Head of Place and Growth in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community and Corporate Property.

This will provide the service with flexibility to amend pricing in line with changes in the market, supplier cost increases and other relevant factors in a timely manner. This will ensure fees and charges are set competitively and in line with market trends.

A review can then be carried out periodically to allow suitable increases to be applied and encourage growth in the business. This will encourage bookings to be taken further ahead than the current process allows.

5. **Identification of Options**

5.1 The recommended figures for consideration by Members are included in the Appendices. Members may approve these proposed figures.

5.2 Members may propose and approve alternative figures with reasons recorded for their decisions.

5.3 Those fees already approved by Licensing and Regulatory Committees are for information only.

6. **Evaluation of Options**

6.1 The recommended fees and charges consider the need to maximise income at a time of challenging budget positions, whilst also considering comparable charges at neighbouring authorities and what the market can bear.

6.2 Members should also consider the checklist of issues to consider (at Appendix 1) when reviewing the fees and charges included in the subsequent Appendices.

7. **Resource Implications**

See Appendices

8. **Climate Change and Environmental Implications**

8.1 Fees and Charges do not have any direct climate change and environmental implications.

9. **Corporate Implications**

9.1 Comment from the Strategic Director (Finance & Housing), linked to the MTFP: Accountancy has produced this report and has no further comments to add.

9.2 Comment from the Solicitor to the Council: The Solicitor to the Council has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no further comments to make.

9.3 Comment from the Equalities Officer: The Equality Officer has been consulted during the development of this report and is satisfied that the equality impact has been considered as neutral at paragraph 3.9. In discharging their duties members are required to comply with the public sector equality duty as set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149>

10. **Appendices**

Appendix 1	F&C checklist
Appendices 1.1 – 2.14	F&C for which Cabinet approval is sought
Appendices 3.1 – 3.2	F&C approved by Licensing Committee
Appendices 4.1 – 4.2	F&C approved by Regulatory Committee
Appendix 5A & 5B	Parking Charges for which Cabinet approval is sought

11. **Background Papers (Committee Meeting Date)**

Licensing Committee Report 2025-26 (16th October 2024)

Regulatory Report 2025-26 (21st November 2024)

Planning Report - Fees and Charges 2025-26 (10th December 2024)

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