

Meeting of:	CABINET
Date of Meeting:	14 MAY 2024
Report Title:	FEES AND CHARGES POLICY
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CHIEF OFFICER – FINANCE, HOUSING AND CHANGE
Responsible Officer:	DEBORAH EXTON DEPUTY HEAD OF FINANCE
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no impact on the policy framework and procedure rules.
Executive Summary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The latest Fees and Charges Policy was approved by Cabinet in October 2021. • This report provides an updated Policy to reflect changes in approach to the setting of fees and charges since this date, notably the flexibility around the timing of fees and charges increases, and the Council’s commitment as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to recover the cost of services via fees and charges where it is able to do so.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Cabinet for an updated Fees and Charges Policy.

2. Background

- 2.1 On 19 October 2021 Cabinet approved a revised Fees and Charges Policy to ensure a consistent approach was being adopted across the Council with regard to the setting of fees and charges, including sections on how and when fees and charges would be set, the method to be used for increasing fees and charges, and processes to follow where it was proposed not to increase fees and charges. Alongside this would be an annual publication on the Council’s webpages outlining all of the Council’s fees and charges for the coming year.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 Since 2021 the Council’s financial position has become more challenging, and this

was set out in detail in the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-25 to 2027-28, which was approved by Council on 28 February 2024.

3.2 As part of the budget setting process for the years ahead the Council committed to the following principle:

- *The Council will seek to recover the cost of services via fees and charges where it is able to do so.*

As such all services were encouraged to aim for full cost recovery, except where there was a conscious decision not to, consistent with Council priorities.

3.3 The level of inflation has fluctuated widely during the last financial year, with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) changing from 10.1% in March 2023 to 3.2% in March 2024. As a result of these large changes in CPI the Council may need to be more flexible in terms of the dates and frequency with which it reviews its fees and charges, rather than a standard annual review.

3.4 As a result of this more flexible approach to full cost recovery, the Fees and Charges Policy has been updated and a tracked changes version attached at **Appendix A**, with a clean version attached at **Appendix B**.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. This report is an overarching charging policy, therefore it is not necessary to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment in the production of this report. Individual service managers will be required to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment if they propose changes to their individual, service specific, charging proposals.

4.2 The overarching policy does require service managers to consider areas where services should be subsidised, including concessions for target groups.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

5.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.

6. Climate Change Implications

6.1 There are no climate change implications arising from this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 There are no safeguarding or corporate parent implications arising from this report.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 This policy clarifies the important role that charging and income generation has in supporting the Medium Term Financial Strategy going forward.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 It is recommended that Cabinet approves the updated Fees and Charges Policy at **Appendix B.**

Background documents

None