

**Health and Strategic Housing  
Fees & Charges 2010/11  
19 January 2010**

**Report of Corporate Director (Community Services)**

<b>PURPOSE OF REPORT</b>			
This report has been prepared as part of the 2010/11 estimate procedure and sets out options for increasing the level of fees and charges.			
<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Non-Key Decision</b>	<b>Referral from Cabinet Member</b>
<b>Date Included in Forward Plan</b>	November 2009		
This report is public.			

**RECOMMENDATIONS OF COUNCILLOR KERR**

- (1) That Cabinet decides whether the Health & Strategic Housing fees in Appendix 1 should be increased by either 0.75%, 2% or 4% with the exception of the fees for rats, mice and fleas.
- (2) That the fees for rats and mice are retained at £25.00 with a reduction to £12.50 for customers in receipt of Council Tax and/or Housing Benefit.
- (3) That the fee for fleas and wasps be increased to bring them in line with fees for other insects, but retaining the 50% discount for flea treatments for those in receipt of Council Tax and/or Housing Benefit.
- (4) That the authority to set contract prices for pest control contracts is delegated to the Head of Health & Strategic Housing to enable current market conditions to be taken into account and allow for negotiation of contract prices. (Subject to financial services agreement to the methodology for setting contract prices).
- (5) That registered charities are charged the domestic rate fee for treatment visits up to 1 hour and then charged the commercial hourly rate thereafter (per visit).
- (6) That a fee be introduced for the return of stray dogs to owners from the dog warden service prior to dogs being taken to kennels.

- (7) That the cemeteries fees and charges for the Neptune Baby and Young Child Memorial Garden are not increased except for the Exclusive Right of Burial fee which is 50% of the adult fee.
- (8) That the cemetery fees and charges for the cremated remains memorial vaults are not increased in order to encourage demand.
- (9) That the suggested increases for walled brick vaults are approved to more accurately reflect the actual cost to the council of providing this service.

## 1.0 Introduction

Fees and charges for Health & Strategic Housing Services are reviewed every year and Members set fee levels as part of the budget process.

## 2.0 Proposal Details

- 2.1 Appendix 1 details the current charges and the options for increases. The charges are rounded to the nearest 25p.
- 2.2 Pest control fees

### *Rodents*

It is suggested that fees for rats and mice be retained at £25.00 (still maintaining the reduction of 50% to £12.50 for those in receipt of Council Tax and/or Housing Benefit).

This is recommended for the following reasons:

- a) The charges for rats and mice were previously £20.00 (with a reduction for those in receipt of Council Tax and/or Housing Benefit) from 2006/07 to 2008/09.
- b) Officers feel any further increase in the current financial climate could result in residents being deterred from requesting rats and mice pest control treatments which could then lead to an escalation of pest problems in the district which the council could end up being involved in through its enforcement role, or because pests have spread to our own land. By this point, solving the problem is more difficult, costly and labour intensive.
- (c) A detailed benchmarking exercise has just been carried out with both Lancashire and CIPFA group authorities. The results show that Lancaster's pest control service offers exceptional value for money with the key findings being:
  - Revenue income being the highest amongst the responding authorities;
  - The net cost of the service being significantly lower than average and four times lower than the 3 other responding authorities in Lancashire.
  - Significantly less staff than other authorities per 100 km<sup>2</sup>.
  - Our fees and charges are very similar to those made by other authorities that charge for this service.
- (d) Officers have investigated increasing fees to try and align with the actual cost of the treatments. However, recent evidence from a Cumbrian authority has shown that when they increased fees for pest control to £50.00, there was a massive reduction in uptake and income targets suffered.

### *Insects*

Currently the Council has 3 different fees for fleas, wasps and other insects. To simplify the charging structure for both customers and administration, it is proposed to have one common fee for each of these insects. It is proposed to retain the 50% discount for flea treatments for those on council tax and/or housing benefit.

This would mean the fee for flea treatment would increase from £25.00 to £36.25 and the charge for wasps from £35.25 to £36.25. (if an increase of 0.75% is approved) Whilst this appears a substantial increase for flea treatments, officers have investigated other authorities' charges who appear to charge around £35.00 or more for flea treatments. Officers are confident that the proposed increase is fair and reasonable for flea treatments as these treatments are often in excess of 1.5 hours per property and can involve repeat visits. Whilst the increase in charge doesn't cover the cost to the council of undertaking the treatment, a higher fee is likely to dissuade residents from taking up the service. It is estimated this will raise additional income of £600.

The fee options for fleas, wasps and other insects would then be subject to inflation in line with all other fees and charges included within Appendix 1.

### *Contract fees*

Approximately 35% of the pest control income comes from contracts with businesses, community organisations and village halls. In the past the service manager has set the prices for contract work each year based on the actual number of visits required for the contract and the commercial hourly rate. It is proposed to improve on this methodology for calculation of contract prices (in conjunction with financial services) to ensure that the council is charging the right fee for contract work. Delegation is sought to allow the Head of Service to authorise contract fees.

### *Registered charities*

Request for treatments are sometimes received from registered charities and there has been confusion about whether the fee should be the domestic fee or the business rate. It has been custom and practice generally to charge the domestic fee but, to regularise this, the following is proposed:

	<b>Per Visit</b>
Registered charities (on production of charitable status registration number)	Domestic rate for visits up to 1 hour. Business hourly rate thereafter

### *Dog Warden Service – return of stray dog fee*

When stray dogs are collected from the district, the arrangement is for them to be taken to the kennels that the council has a contract with for this service. A fee is chargeable to the owners for the return of their dogs. Occasionally, an owner will contact the dog warden service to reclaim their dog before the wardens have taken them to the kennels. However, by this time the dog wardens have incurred administration time and investigation time in trying to trace the owner. It is proposed to introduce a fee of £35.00 for the return of dogs prior to kennelling, made up of £25.00 statutory prescribed fee and £10.00 for the detention and administration fee. Charging this fee should act as a deterrent to owners who allow their dogs to stray. Officers are aware that other councils charge for this service. It is estimated this will raise additional income of £400

## 2.3 Cemetery Fees

### *Brick Vaults*

It is proposed to significantly increase the fee for the construction of brick vaults as the fee set for 2009/10 does not meet the current costs of construction based on the cost charged by the Council's RMS section following the last vault request in August 2009.

In order to recover the costs of construction and the cemeteries team costs of excavation, removal of soil off site and ancillary materials, it is proposed to increase the cost of a walled vault as follows:-

	Cost 2009/10	Proposed 2010/11
For one person	£ 951.75 +VAT	£1,800.00+VAT
For two persons	£1,586.00 +VAT	£2,500.00+VAT

### *Neptune Baby and Young Child Memorial Garden*

This new area has only been available since August 2009 when new fees and charges were approved by Cabinet. The memorial options have been purchased by the Council and the current fees and charges reflect the cost of construction and memorial options provided. Therefore, it is proposed not to increase the fees and charges for 2010/11 for this sensitive area except for the Exclusive Right of Burial (EROB) which is to be 50% of the adult fee (Cabinet min. 123(4) of 20 January 2009 refers).

### *Cremated Remains Vault Area*

This small garden of remembrance area was created in June 2009 as a pilot but to date there has been no demand and therefore it is proposed that the charges for this facility are not increased.

## **3.0 Options and Options Analysis**

### 3.1 Options to Members include:

- a) To approve either the 0.75%, 2% or 4% increase in fees for Health & Strategic Housing's fees and charges.
- b) To approve a different % increase.
- c) To retain the fees for rats and mice at £25.00 (with a reduction to £12.50 for customers in receipt of Council Tax and/or Housing Benefit).
- d) To increase the fees for rats and mice in line with the other increases or a different amount.
- e) To increase the fees for fleas and wasps to bring them in line with other insects (but retaining the 50% discount for flea treatments for those in receipt of Council Tax and/or Housing Benefit).
- f) Not to increase the fees for fleas and wasps by this amount and to increase them in line with the other increases or a different amount.

- g) To delegate authority to set contract prices for pest control contracts to the Head of Health & Strategic Housing to enable current market conditions to be taken into account and allow for negotiation of contract prices. (Subject to financial services agreement to the methodology for setting contract prices).
- h) Not to approve the delegation.
- i) To approve the suggested charges for registered charities.
- j) Not to approve the suggested charges for registered charities.
- k) To approve the introduction of a fee for the return of stray dogs from the dog warden service prior to dogs being taken to kennels.
- l) Not to approve the introduction of a fee for the return of stray dogs from the dog warden service prior to dogs being taken to kennels.
- m) To approve an increase in the Exclusive Right of Burial only for the Neptune Baby & Young Child Memorial Garden.
- n) To approve an increase in fees as well as the Exclusive Right of Burial for the Neptune Baby & Young Child Memorial Garden.
- o) To approve no increase for the fees for cremated remains memorial vaults.
- p) To approve a % increase for fees for cremated remains memorial vaults.
- q) To increase the charges for walled bricked vaults as suggested or by a different amount.

#### **4.0 Officer Preferred Options**

4.1 The officer preferred options are:

- a) 0.75% increase to keep the increase in charges to a minimum to support residents at a time of recession and also, c), e), g), i), k), m), o) and q) for the reasons set out in the report. The suggested increases and new fees would enable a slight increase in income for the council, whilst retaining fair and reasonable fees for the services offered.

#### **RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK**

Fees and charges form an integral part of the budget setting process, which in turn relates to the Council's priorities.

#### **CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT (including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)**

Large increases in fees can disadvantage those residents least able to pay. However any of the proposed increases are considered to be fair and reasonable and in the case of pest control fees are less expensive than most commercial companies charge.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The 2010/11 draft budget includes an inflationary increase of 0.75% in respect of fees and charges. The proposed fees are detailed in Appendix 1 and can be summarised as follows:-

	<b>Draft Budget 0.75%</b>	<b>Inflation Increase 2.00%</b>	<b>Inflation Increase 4.00%</b>
<b>Fee Charging Area</b>	£	£	£
Cemeteries	1,500	2,900	7,500
Pest Control	400	700	1,900
Private Housing	100	100	300
Public Health/ Port Health	0	100	200
Total	2,000	3,800	9,900

In addition to the above inflationary increases, the report sets out a number of changes to current fee structures which have not been included in the above table.

### **Pest Control Service**

It is proposed to abolish differential charging in respect of fleas, wasps, and other insects and introduce a single charge. It is anticipated that this will generate recurring additional income of £600.

### **Dog Warden Service**

The introduction of a fee for stray dog collection prior to kennelling would generate an additional £400.

### **Cemeteries**

The recommendations above for cemeteries outlines retaining the fees for the Young Child Memorial Garden and Cremated remain vaults at current levels along with increasing the fees for Brick Vaults. The effect on income is not quantifiable as the take up of the service offered for the young child memorial garden and the cremated remains vault area is unknown, as the service is new to the Lancaster district. For these reasons currently income targets have not been built into the base budget for 2010/11 and no adjustments will be required.

This is reiterated when the service for brick vaults is offered. Due to the ad-hoc nature of this service income targets are not built in to base budget. It is therefore proposed that any income be received during the year will be highlighted as part of the corporate financial monitoring process reported during the year

All other fees increases for cemeteries are in line with inflation and have been included within the draft budget.

Should members approve a different percentage than the options in the report, the impact on the base budget will be unknown until new financial implications are assessed based on the new percentage proposed.

**SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments to add.

**LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Legal have been consulted and have no comments to make

**MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Fees & Charges 2009/10 report to Cabinet  
20 January 2009.

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**HEALTH AND STRATEGIC HOUSING****FEES AND CHARGES FOR THE YEAR 2010/11****CEMETERY CHARGES**

	2009/10 Current Fee	2010/11 Proposed Fee @ 0.75%	2010/11 Proposed Fee @ 2%	2010/11 Proposed Fee @ 4%
<b>Exclusive Right of Burial:</b>				
i) For the exclusive right of burial for a period of 75 years from the date of purchase, of a single earthen grave, walled grave or vault	612.50	617.00	624.75	637.00
ii) Exclusive right of burial in a woodland area - 1 space	268.75	270.75	274.25	279.50
iii) Exclusive right of Burial in Baby area	50% of adult fee	50% of adult fee	50% of adult fee	50% of adult fee
Transfer of Grave Deed	Legal Costs	Legal Costs	Legal Costs	Legal Costs
Duplicate Grave Deed	79.00	79.50	80.50	82.25
Searches – hourly rate	35.50	35.75	36.25	37.00
<b>Interment Charges</b>				
(a) For the interment in a grave or woodland site either where the exclusive right of burial <b>HAS</b> or <b>HAS NOT</b> been granted:-				
i) of the body of a child whose age at the time of death exceeded one year but did not exceed 16 years.	162.25	163.25	165.50	168.75
ii) of the body of a person whose age at the time of death exceeded 16 years.	547.50	551.50	558.50	569.50
iii) interment of cremated remains	131.25	132.25	133.75	136.50
iv) interment of cremated remains under headstone	200.00	201.50	204.00	208.00
(b) There is no charge for the interment or burial of cremated remains of a non-viable foetus, the body of a still-born child or a child whose age at the time of death did not exceed one year.				
<b>Scattering of Cremated Remains</b>	34.25	34.50	35.00	35.50
<b>Use of Cemetery Chapel</b>	89.75	90.50	91.50	93.50



	2009/10 Current Fee	2010/11 Proposed Fee @ 0.75%	2010/11 Proposed Fee @ 2%	2010/11 Proposed Fee @ 4%
<b>Walled Graves &amp; Vaults:</b>				
For one person	951.75*	1800.00*	1800.00*	1800.00*
For two persons	1586.00*	2500.00*	2500.00*	2500.00*
For opening and resealing vault	318.75*	321.25	325.25	331.50
<b>Garden of Remembrance Memorials</b>				
(a) Aluminium Plaque – Carnforth	108.75*	109.50*	111.00*	113.00*
(b) Bronze plaque – Price on Application				
©Torrisholme, Scotforth, Skerton, Hale Carr, Carnforth				
<b>Old Style:</b>				
i) Granite memorial incorporating flower vase and inscription up to 3 lines	456.75*	460.25*	466.00*	475.00*
ii) Each additional line (up to 6 in total)	44.00*	44.50*	45.00*	45.75*
iii) Carriage fee for returning memorials for additional inscription	41.25*	41.50*	42.00*	43.00*
<b>New Style:</b>				
i) Granite memorial incorporating flower vase and full inscription	484.25*	488.00*	494.00*	503.50*
ii) Deed of grant fee	32.25	32.50	33.00	33.50
iii) New inscription	96.75*	97.50*	98.75*	100.50*
iv) Motif	10.75*	10.75*	11.00**	11.25*
<b>Vault Memorial</b>				
i) Granite memorial for up to 4 plastic urns, including first interment and flower vase (25 year lease)	630.00*	634.75*	642.50*	655.25*
ii) Back to back vault for up to 2 plastic urns including first interment inscription, flower vase for a 25yr lease	500.00*	503.75*	510.00*	520.00*
iii) Additional inscribed plaque for second interment	145.00*	146.00*	148.00*	150.75*
iv) Renewal of lease period	125.00	126.00	127.50	130.00
<b>* = PLUS VAT</b>				

	2009/10 Current Fee	2010/11 Proposed Fee @ 0.75%	2010/11 Proposed Fee @ 2%	2010/11 Proposed Fee @ 4%
<b>The Neptune Baby and Young Child Memorial Garden</b>				
<b>Burial Options</b>				
Purchased Grave including headstone and plaque with up to 6 lines of text.	1,140.00*	1,140.00*	1,140.00*	1,140.00*
Public Grave	Free of Charge	Free of Charge	Free of Charge	Free of Charge
<b>Cremated Remains</b>				
Niche Wall Plaques including up to 4 lines of text	195.00*	195.00*	195.00*	195.00*
10 year lease for external niche wall	175.00	175.00	175.00	175.00
10 year lease for internal altar niche	350.00	350.00	350.00	350.00
Scattering of ashes	Free of Charge	Free of Charge	Free of Charge	Free of Charge
<b>Memorial Plaques</b>				
Perimeter plaque including up to 4 lines of text	195.00*	195.00*	195.00*	195.00*
10 year lease for perimeter plaque	150.00	150.00	150.00	150.00
Centre feature plaque including up to 6 lines of text	345.00*	345.00*	345.00*	345.00*
10 year lease for centre plaque	350.00	350.00	350.00	350.00
<b>Charges for Extras</b>				
Additional line of inscription	30.00*	30.00*	30.00*	30.00*
Posy holders for niche wall	10.00*	10.00*	10.00*	10.00*
Motifs	30.00*	30.00*	30.00*	30.00*
Custom Motif	P.O.A.	P.O.A.	P.O.A.	P.O.A.
Oval Ceramic Photo Plaque 5cm x 7cm (Colour)	65.00*	65.00*	65.00*	65.00*
Oval Ceramic Photo Plaque 5cm x 7cm (Black & White)	35.00*	35.00*	35.00*	35.00*

	2009/10 Current Fee	2010/11 Proposed Fee @ 0.75%	2010/11 Proposed Fee @ 2%	2010/11 Proposed Fee @ 4%
<b>Memorial Fees</b>				
A memorial not exceeding 6' (1800 mm) in height	94.50	95.25	96.50	98.25
Kerb or border stones not exceeding 2' 6" (750 mm) in height:				
(a) enclosing a space not exceeding 7' 9" (2325 mm) in length by 3' 3" (975 mm) in width	126.75	127.75	129.25	131.75
(b) enclosing a space not exceeding 7' 9" (2325 mm) in length by 7' 3" (2175 mm) in width	254.00	256.00	259.00	264.25
A tablet or footstone not exceeding 1' 6" (450 mm) by 1' (300 mm)	57.75	58.25	59.00	60.00
Additional charge for exceeding above size	36.25	36.50	37.00	37.75
An inscribed vase	31.25	31.50	32.00	32.50
Temporary marker	13.75	13.75	14.00	14.25
<b>* = PLUS VAT</b>				
<b>Lawn Sections</b>				
A memorial not exceeding 4' (1200 mm) in height, 2' 6" (750mm) in width and 1' 6" (450 mm) in depth from front to back.	94.50	95.25	96.50	98.25
<b>The charges indicated include one inscription (name)</b>				
For each additional inscription (name)	31.25	31.50	31.75	32.50
Annual registration fee for memorial mason	40.00*	40.25*	41.00*	41.50*

## DOG WARDEN SERVICE CHARGES

	2009/10 Current Fee	2010/11 Proposed Fee @ 0.75%	2010/11 Proposed Fee @ 2%	2010/11 Proposed Fee @ 4%
Kennelling charge per day	10.50	10.50	10.75	11.00
Detention Fee	8.75	8.75	9.00	9.00
Dog faeces bags	1.45/100	1.50/100	1.50/100	1.50/100
Return of stray dog from dog warden service (prior to kennelling)	35.00	35.00	35.00	35.00

## PEST CONTROL CHARGES

	2009/10 Current Fee	2010/11 Proposed Fee @ 0.75%	2010/11 Proposed Fee @ 2%	2010/11 Proposed Fee @ 4%
<b>Common Insects:</b>				
<b>Domestic Premises</b>				
- Cockroaches and bedbugs	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE
- Fleas	25.00	36.25	36.75	37.50
- Those in receipt of Housing and/or Council Tax benefits.	12.50	18.25	18.50	18.75
- All other insects (excluding wasps)	36.00	36.25	36.75	37.50
- Wasp treatment	35.25	36.25	36.75	37.50
Multiple nests at same property at one visit.	Half full price treatment	Half full price treatment	Half full price treatment	Half full price treatment
- Moles and squirrels	25.00/hr	25.25/hr	25.50/hr	26.00/hr
<b>Business Premises</b>				
- All visits (including wasps) (minimum 1 hour)	69.75*/hr	70.25* /hr	71.25* /hr	72.50* /hr
<b>Rodents:</b>				
- Domestic premises	25.00	25.25	25.50	26.00
- Those in receipt of Housing and/or Council Tax benefits.	12.50	12.50	12.75	13.00
- Business premises (minimum 1 hour)	63.75*/hr	64.25* /hr	65.00* /hr	66.25* /hr

\* = PLUS VAT

All charges inclusive of VAT where appropriate.

	2009/10 Current Fee	2010/11 Proposed Fee @ 0.75%	2010/11 Proposed Fee @ 2%	2010/11 Proposed Fee @ 4%
<b>Emergency Callouts:</b>				
- Weekday (outside 0800-16.30 hrs)	Standard Rate x 1.5	Standard Rate x 1.5	Standard Rate x 1.5	Standard Rate x 1.5
- Saturday	Standard Rate x 1.5	Standard Rate x 1.5	Standard Rate x 1.5	Standard Rate x 1.5
- Sunday and Bank Holidays	Standard Rate x 2	Standard Rate x 2	Standard Rate x 2	Standard Rate x 2

<b>Disclosure of Information on Health &amp; Safety matters:</b>				
- Full factual statement which may also include sketches, copy of F2508, witness statements, etc.	127.25	128.25	129.75	132.25
- Brief statement where the information may be of limited use to the recipient.	44.75	45.00	45.75	46.50
- Photographs & an administration charge	2.50 each & admin charge to be 12.50	2.50each & admin charge to be 12.50	2.50each & admin charge to be £12.75	2.50each & admin charge to be £13.00
- Photocopying	14p/sheet	14p/sheet	14p/sheet	15p/sheet

<b>Contaminated Land Information:</b>				
- Domestic enquiry	98.00*	98.75*	100.00*	102.00*
- Industrial enquiry	124.75*	125.75*	127.25*	129.75*

## PORT HEALTH CHARGES

	2009/10 Current Fee	2010/11 Proposed Fee @ 0.75%	2010/11 Proposed Fee @ 2%	2010/11 Proposed Fee @ 4%
<b>Ship Inspection Charges</b>				
<b>Gross Tonnage:</b>				
Up to 3,000	105.00	105.75	107.00	109.25
3,001-10,000	157.50	158.75	160.75	163.75
10,001-20,000	210.00	211.50	214.25	218.50
20,001-30,000	241.50	243.25	246.25	251.25
Over 30,000	315.00	317.50	321.25	327.50
<b>With the exception of:</b>				
• Vessels with the capacity to carry between 50 and 1000 persons -	315.00	317.25	321.25	327.50
• Vessels with the capacity to carry more than 1000 persons -	525.00	529.00	535.50	546.00
<b>Water Sample Charges:</b>				
Water sample as part of sanitation certificate	78.75	79.50	80.25	82.00
Water sample from Heysham Port	86.75	87.50	88.50	90.25
Water sample from Glasson Dock	99.75	100.50	101.75	103.75

## STRATEGIC HOUSING:

	2009/10 Current Fee	2010/11 Proposed Fee @ 0.75%	2010/11 Proposed Fee @ 2%	2010/11 Proposed Fee @ 4%
- Immigration Inspection Charges	56.50	57.00	57.75	58.75
- Accredited Property Scheme	52.50	53.00	53.50	54.50
- HMO Licence Fees:				
Discounted Rate (Renewal within 2 months)	420.00 (Fee per additional unit) £63.00	423.25 Fee per additional unit) £63.50	428.50 (Fee per additional unit) £64.25	436.75 (Fee per additional unit) £65.50
Basic Rate	525.00 (Fee per additional unit) £73.50	529.00 (Fee per additional unit) £74.00	535.50 (Fee per additional unit) £75.00	£546.00 (Fee per additional unit) £76.50
Admin Fee	63.00	63.50	64.25	65.50
<b>* = PLUS VAT</b>				