

REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES 2025/26

Item FRP 24/22 referred from Finance, Regeneration and Property Advisory Board of 19 November 2024

The joint report of the Director of Finance and Transformation and Director of Central Services set out proposed fees and charges for 2025/26 for the provision of services in respect of legal costs, photocopying charges, street name and numbering, land charges, Tonbridge Castle, events on open spaces, billboards and banners and Council Tax and Business Rate court costs with effect from 1 April 2025.

In bringing forward the charging proposals for 2025/26 consideration had been given to a range of factors, including the Borough Council's overall financial and market positions, trading patterns, the current rate of inflation and customer feedback. A set of guiding principles for the setting of fees and charges had also been taken into account and were summarised in 4.2 of the report.

Particular reference was made to the Borough Council's significant and challenging financial position and as it was becoming increasingly difficult to achieve further expenditure savings to meet the targets in the Savings and Transformation Strategy it was essential that opportunities to maximise income were taken.

Due regard was given to the overall financial position and potential impacts on the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and on the grounds of ensuring adequate cost recovery in providing street name and numbering, Cllr Clokey proposed that fees and charges for 2025/26 should be rounded up to the nearest £10. This was seconded by Cllr Brown and supported by the Committee.

In respect of Tonbridge Castle, it was clarified that the repair works to the roof had been rescheduled to early 2025 to lessen the impact on external events over the Christmas/New Year period as the Castle would be enveloped with scaffolding during the repair period.

***RECOMMENDED:** That

- (1) the proposed charges for legal costs, as set out in 5 of the report, be approved with effect from 1 April 2025;
- (2) the current photocopying charges of £0.10 (inclusive of VAT) for each page of the same document or additional copies of the same page plus postage as appropriate, as set out in 5.2 of the report, be retained;
- (3) the Fee Schedule for Street Naming and Numbering, as set out in 5.3 of the report, be rounded up to nearest £10 and adopted with effect from 1 April 2025;
- (4) the proposed scale of fees for local land charges searches and enquiries, as set out in 5.4 of the report, be adopted with effect from 1 April 2025;

- (5) the proposed fees and charges for 2025/26 related to Tonbridge Castle, as set out in 5.5 of the report, be approved with effect from 1 April 2025;
- (6) the proposed fees and charges for 2025/26 related to Open Spaces, as set out in 5.6 of the report, be approved;
- (7) authority be delegated to the Director of Central Services and Deputy Chief Executive to negotiate fees for individual commercial events on Council-owned land;
- (8) the proposed fees and charges for 2025/26 related to Billboards and Banners, as set out in 5.9 of the report, be approved; and
- (9) the amount of costs charged in 2025/26 to recover unpaid council tax and business rates debts remain at the 2024/25 levels, as set out in 5.10 of the report.

***Recommended to Cabinet**