



Moray Council

Tuesday, 12 December 2023

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a Special Meeting of **Moray Council** is to be held at **Council Chambers, Council Office, High Street, Elgin, IV30 1BX** on **Tuesday, 12 December 2023** at **11:00** or immediately following **Special Meeting of Economic Development and Infrastructure Services Committee** whichever is the earlier.

BUSINESS

1. **Sederunt**
2. **Declaration of Group Decisions and Members Interests ***
3. **Resolution**

Consider, and if so decide, adopt the following resolution:
"That under Section 50A (4) and (5) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, the public and media representatives be excluded from the meeting for Items 6 - 8 of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information of the class described in the relevant Paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act."
4. **Recommended Allowances for Kinship and Foster Carers** **5 - 10**

Report by Chief Officer, Health and Social Care Moray
5. **Charging for Services** **11 - 22**

Report by Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance)

Item(s) which the Committee may wish to consider with the Press and Public excluded

6. **Short to Medium Term Financial Plan [Para 1]**
 - 1. Information relating to staffing matters;
7. **Moray Education Early Learning and Childcare - Sustainable Rate Methodologies [Para 9]**
 - 9. Information on terms proposed or to be proposed by or to the Authority;
8. **Buckie Harbour [Para 6 8 and 9]**
 - 6. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person(s);
 - 8 & 9. Information on proposed terms and/or expenditure to be incurred by the Authority;

Watching the Meeting

You can watch the webcast live by going to:

http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_43661.html

Webcasts are available to view for 1 year following the meeting.

You can also attend the meeting in person, if you wish to do so, please come to the High Street entrance door and a member of staff will be let into the building.

Any person wishing to attend the meeting should contact customer services on 01343 563217 prior to the meeting as the number of attendees is restricted due to the recent Covid pandemic

**You can however watch the webcast of the meeting by going to :
http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_43661.html**

GUIDANCE NOTES

- * **Declaration of Group Decisions and Members Interests** - The Chair of the meeting shall seek declarations from any individual or political group at the beginning of a meeting whether any prior decision has been reached on how the individual or members of the group will vote on any item(s) of business on the Agenda, and if so on which item(s). A prior decision shall be one that the individual or the group deems to be mandatory on the individual or the group members such that the individual or the group members will be subject to sanctions should they not vote in accordance with the prior decision. Any such prior decisions will be recorded in the Minute of the meeting.

MORAY COUNCIL

Moray Council

SEDERUNT

Councillor Kathleen Robertson (Chair)
Councillor Donald Gatt (Depute Chair)

Councillor James Allan (Member)
Councillor Peter Bloomfield (Member)
Councillor Neil Cameron (Member)
Councillor Tracy Colyer (Member)
Councillor Theresa Coull (Member)
Councillor John Cowe (Member)
Councillor John Divers (Member)
Councillor Amber Dunbar (Member)
Councillor Jérémie Fernandes (Member)
Councillor David Gordon (Member)
Councillor Juli Harris (Member)
Councillor Sandy Keith (Member)
Councillor Scott Lawrence (Member)
Councillor Graham Leadbitter (Member)
Councillor Marc Macrae (Member)
Councillor Paul McBain (Member)
Councillor Neil McLennan (Member)
Councillor Shona Morrison (Member)
Councillor Bridget Mustard (Member)
Councillor Derek Ross (Member)
Councillor John Stuart (Member)
Councillor Draeyk Van Der Horn (Member)
Councillor Sonya Warren (Member)
Councillor Ben Williams (Member)

Clerk Name:	Tracey Sutherland
Clerk Telephone:	07971 879268
Clerk Email:	committee.services@moray.gov.uk



REPORT TO: MORAY COUNCIL ON 12 DECEMBER 2023

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDED ALLOWANCES FOR KINSHIP AND FOSTER CARERS

BY: CHIEF OFFICER, HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE MORAY

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Moray Council of the recommended allowances for kinship and foster carers.
- 1.2 This report was presented to the Moray Integration Joint Board Clinical and Care Governance Committee on 30 November 2023. The decision of the Committee was to endorse the proposal and recommend to the Council to adopt the proposal for 2023/24. The Council retain the risk around the budget position for 2023/24 for these services as part of the delegation arrangements in place.
- 1.3 This report is submitted to Council in terms of Section III (B) (1) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the consideration of financial and budgetary policy of the Council.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Council:

- i) **endorse the adoption of the proposals regarding the recommended allowances for kinship and foster carers;**
- ii) **agree to delegate to the Head of Service for Children and Families and Justice Social Work to take the necessary steps to implement the SRA, to back date any payments made from 1 April 2023 that have been below the SRA and to ensure that local rates continue to be reviewed as required to ensure all carers continue to receive at least the Scottish Recommended Allowance; and**
- iii) **agreed that the annual review of payable allowances is transparent and that local rates remain appropriately aligned with the SRA. This will include a review of the current Council structure of allowances payable to eligible kinship and foster carers.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Following the National Review of Care Allowances in September 2018, work has taken place between COSLA officers and Scottish Government to determine a Scottish Recommended Allowance (SRA) for kinship and foster carers, and 'Keeping the Promise' for Scotland's care experienced young people.
- 3.2 Further to this work, COSLA considered and approved a report in August 2023 supporting the introduction of a Scottish Recommended Allowance for kinship and foster carers across all local authority areas.
- 3.3 Allowances are currently provided by all local authorities to eligible carers. However, this is decided at a local level and so varies across Scotland. The introduction of the Scottish Recommended Allowance provides a recommended allowance that all local authorities must pay as a minimum, although they can also choose to pay more. This minimum level will be kept under review at a national level.
- 3.4 Where local authorities are already paying above the national minimum allowance, it is expected that this will continue so that eligible kinship or foster carers currently in receipt of the allowance will not be worse off because of this commitment.
- 3.5 The SRA is intended to cover the cost of supporting a child such as clothing, food, after school activities etc. Although the policy of providing such allowances to foster and kinship carers is not new, and are provided by all local authorities, having a minimum national allowance is a new policy.
- 3.6 The Promise, and its Plan 2021-24 make it clear that providing financial support to kinship and foster carers is a key element to ensuring that caregivers are best equipped to support and nurture the children and young people they are looking after.
- 3.7 The Scottish Government has developed SRA rates based on independent analysis carried out by Fraser of Allander Institute in 2018 on the cost of supporting a child, uprated on a similar basis as has been used for other payments to households, but also taking account of affordability and deliverability.
- 3.8 The Scottish Government has identified £16m funding to fund the introduction of the SRA from 2023/24. It has been modelled using current local authority expenditure on children in kinship and foster care, including 'informal' kinship care expenditure, and the most up to date data from the Children's Social Work Statistics 2021/22.
- 3.9 Like many local authorities, the Council currently use four age ranges (as shown in the table below) to differentiate the payment of allowances. The SRA uses three, effectively combining the 5-10 and 11-15 age ranges into one standard age bracket. When compared to the SRA, the rates in Moray are lower across the 0-10 and 16+ age range but higher for the 11-15 age range.

Our current local rates compared to the SRA rates are outlined below:

Age	Current Moray Rates	Age	Scottish Recommended Allowance
Age 0-4	£142.86	Age 0-4	£168.31
Age 5-10	£162.73	Age 5-10	£195.81
Age 11-15	£202.58	Age 11-15	£195.81
Age 16+	£246.44	Age 16+	£268.41

3.10 The % comparison of the SRA in relation to current local rates is as follows:

Age	% comparison
Age 0-4	17.8% increase
Age 5-10	20.3% increase
Age 11-15	3.3% decrease
Age 16+	8.9% increase

3.11 To improve transparency of our local allowance framework, we propose reviewing our current allowance structure, with a view to aligning the local age ranges with the nationally applied ranges within the SRA. Any future proposals will continue to ensure no detriment where local allowances are already above the SRA. Specifically, it is proposed to maintain the current rate for 11-15 irrespective of this being above the SRA rate. This is in line with the recommendations from COSLA and the Scottish Government.

3.12 The additional cost of backdating eligible kinship and fostering allowances for those age groups where our local rate is currently lower than the SRA levels will be £133,900.06 for the full year 2023/24.

3.13 The £16m funding from the Scottish Government to support the implementation of the SRA is for the full 2023/24 financial year, as payments are expected to be backdated to 1 April 2023, and paid to eligible kinship and foster carers in a way determined by the local authority which best supports families.

3.14 The Council has been notified that it has been provided with £261,570.21 from the Scottish Government which provides sufficient provision for the additional costs of £133,900.06 for 2023/24.

3.15 The Scottish Government have committed to baselining the 2023/24 levels of support for the SRA allowances. A decision on the national mechanism for annual review and/or uprating of the SRA has yet to be taken by Scottish Ministers. It is understood that any proposal will be subject to national agreement through COSLA arrangements.

3.16 At this stage it is not possible to predict the allowances for 2024/25 and subsequent years. However, it is proposed that these allowances should be in line with those recommended by the SRA and that additional funding is made available. This is the same process currently in place for foster carer fees which are increased each year by the pay award percentage.

- 3.17 It is proposed that members of the Council endorse the COSLA agreement to implement the new Scottish Recommended Allowance for eligible kinship and foster carers across Moray.
- 3.18 It is further proposed that the Head of Service for Children and Families and Justice Social Work takes the necessary steps to implement the SRA, to back date any payments made from 1 April 2023 that have been below the SRA and to ensure that local rates continue to be reviewed as required to ensure all carers continue to receive at least the Scottish Recommended Allowance.
- 3.19 It is further proposed that the annual review of payable allowances is transparent and that local rates remain appropriately aligned with the SRA. This will include a review of the current Council structure of allowances payable to eligible kinship and foster carers. The review would be undertaken as part of preparation for 2024/25 budget setting process and would need the commitment supported through COSLA to ensure no child's allowance is reduced as a result of the SRA implementation.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

The Corporate Plan 2024 makes a commitment to improving outcomes for Moray's most vulnerable young people and families and that more children will live with their families, being cared for in strong safe, communities across Moray.

The work of Children's Services is sighted on and committed to upholding the principles of keeping The Promise and the UNCRC Incorporation Bill. It is seeking to develop its role in line with The Promise and the importance of children's rights particularly in regards to having a good childhood and to hear the voice of children, young people and their families. There are no contraventions of child's rights to consider as part of this report.

(b) Policy and Legal

Following the National Review of Care Allowances in September 2018, work has taken place between COSLA officers and Scottish Government to determine a Scottish Recommended Allowance (SRA) for kinship and foster carers, and 'Keeping the Promise' for Scotland's care experienced young people.

Further to this work, COSLA considered and approved a report in August 2023 supporting the introduction of a Scottish Recommended Allowance for kinship and foster carers across all local authority areas.

It is proposed that our annual review of payable allowances is transparent and that local rates remain appropriately aligned with the SRA.

(c) Financial implications

Members are being asked to approve the recommendations in this report on the basis that there will be no net additional costs to the Council. The additional cost of backdating eligible kinship and fostering allowances for

those age groups where our local rate is currently lower than the SRA levels will be £133,900.06 for the full year 2023/24. As noted, Scottish Government has set aside £16m nationally for the implementation of the SRA where Moray has been awarded £261,570.21 for 2023/24 which is sufficient to meet these in-year costs. On this basis, the proposal is cost neutral for Moray and the Children and Families and Justice Social Work 2023/24 revenue budget.

(d) Risk Implications

The financial risk implications and mitigations are outlined in section (c) above.

(e) Staffing Implications

There are no staffing implications.

(f) Property

There are no property implications.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

The implications for equalities/socio economic impact is that for carers in Moray the allowance that they receive will be comparable with those in other local authorities.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

There are no implications in relation to climate change and biodiversity impacts.

(i) Consultations

Chief Officer, Moray Health and Social Care, Chief Social Work Officer and Head of Service, Social Work; Head of HR, ICT and Organisational Development; Chief Financial Officer; Democratic Services Manager, Equal Opportunities Officer, Senior Solicitor, (Litigation and Social care) have been consulted in the preparation of this report and are in agreement with the content relating to their areas of responsibility.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 It is recommended that Moray Council endorse the adoption of the proposals regarding the recommended allowances for kinship and foster carers.

Author of Report: Carl Campbell, Service Manager, Children and Families and Justice Social Work

Background Papers:

Ref: SPMAN-305227695-113



REPORT TO: SPECIAL MORAY COUNCIL ON 12 DECEMBER 2023

SUBJECT: CHARGING FOR SERVICES

BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND FINANCE SERVICES)

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To ask the Council to approve the revised Charging for Services Policy and agree the default inflation increase for fees and charges for Council services for the period 2024/25 to 2026/27.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Council in terms of Section III (B) (1) and (48) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to financial policy and the setting of charges.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Council:

- (i) approves the revised Charging for Services Policy, as set out in APPENDIX 1;**
- (ii) agrees the default increase for charges for Council services for the period 2024/25 to 2026/27 is the Consumer Price Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH) plus 1% as measured for October of the year before the increase takes effect;**
- (iii) agrees that charges increased by the default increase do not require to be brought to Council for further approval;**
- (iv) requests Moray Integration Joint Board (MIJB) to recommend charges for services delivered under the aegis of MIJB ;**
- (v) notes that after charges not complying with the default increase are approved by Council a comprehensive list of all charges for Council services for the coming financial year will be published on the Council's website.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The current Charging for Services Policy was approved by Policy and Resources Committee on 24 October 2017 (paragraph 8 of the Minute refers). It is good practice to review policies periodically. A review of the policy has been carried out and changes are recommended. These are set out in **APPENDIX 1** using tracked changes.
- 3.2 Under the previous corporate Charging Policy, an annual revision of charges was required, with the default increase approved on an annual basis. In order to facilitate future planning and in line with the Income Strategy proposed by another report to this meeting of Council on Short to Medium Term Financial Planning it is now proposed that the default increase is set for the next three years. The measure used by UK Government for inflation is CPIH. An increase by inflation preserves real levels of income which the Council generates by charges for services. CPIH should therefore be the minimum increase applied. Given the need to bring the Council's budget into a sustainable position over the next two years, an increase in income in real terms would be advantageous and is in accord with the savings hierarchy and the Short to Medium Term Financial Strategy approved by Council on 27 September 2023 (paragraph 9 of the Minute refers).
- 3.3 Before applying the increase, charges should be reviewed to ensure their conformity to the Council's Charging Policy. Review and preparation of charges is a time consuming exercise. To facilitate review and preparation charges the default rate should be based on CPIH for October before the coming financial year. That rate will be published in November of each year. This is considered to be the latest rate reasonable to use.
- 3.4 An inflation increase cannot be applied to all charges. Some charges levied by the Council for services provided are:
- set by statute, some are limited by statute and some have the method of calculation prescribed by statute.
 - impractical to increase by inflation on a year-on-year basis, typically small charges and those collected by coin-in-the-slot machines where the cost of re-calibrating the machines outweighs any increased income which would be generated.
- 3.5 The income generated by charges for services is around £8 million, of which £1 million is retained by the MIJB. Based on that budget, as a rule of thumb, income might be expected to increase by £70,000 for every 1% increase in charges. This needs to be caveated however, as increasing prices only increases the income to the Council if usage of services remains buoyant.
- 3.6 It is proposed to set up a short life group of Officers as a Peer Review body to review charges across the Council as part of the review of charges for 2024/25.

- 3.7 The Council has the statutory duty of setting charges for social care services. The income generated from these charges is included within the MIJB funding envelope. As the level of charges has an impact on the income to the MIJB and a potential impact on the uptake of services it is considered appropriate that the MIJB recommend to the council what charges / contributions should be set for social care services.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Moray 2026: A Plan for the Future and Moray Corporate Plan 2015 - 2017

The levying of charges for Council services is an essential component of delivering Council priorities on a sustainable basis.

(b) Policy and Legal

If approved, the revised policy for charging for Council services will take immediate effect and be applied when setting charges for 2024/25.

There are no legal implications.

(c) Financial implications

Levying charges for services forms an important part of the Council's strategy for balancing its annual budget, by generating an amount of income from service users.

(d) Risk Implications

There are no risk implications arising directly from this report. There is always a risk that service usage drops if charges are increased.

(e) Staffing Implications

There are no staffing implications arising directly from this report.

Charges are raised and collected by departments and this is part of the normal workload. Increasing charges collected by direct debit entails additional workload for the Payments Section.

(f) Property

There are no property implications arising from this report.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

There are no equalities implications arising directly from this report.

Integrated Impact Assessments will be carried out for individual charges if assessed as required.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

There are no climate change or biodiversity impacts arising directly from this report.

(i) Consultations

CMT, all Heads of Service, the Principal Accountant and the Payments Manager have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The Charging for Services Policy will assist managers in setting appropriate levels of fees and charges. It also provides for regular reviews within the overall financial planning process.**
- 5.2 A default uplift of CPIH plus 1% should protect and increase the Council's real income from charges, subject to any impact on demand.**
- 5.3 The MIJB should have a strategic role in setting charges for social care.**

Author of Report: Lorraine Paisey, Chief Financial Officer
Background Papers:
Ref: SPMAN-1293228629-991

APPENDIX 1



CHARGING FOR SERVICES POLICY

Owner of Policy	Chief Financial Officer
Author	Lorraine Paisey
Date of Review	November 2023
Date of previous version	October 2017
Policy Approved	
Next Review Date	September 2026

CONTENTS

- 1 Introduction**
- 2 Guiding Principles**
- 3 Basis of calculation**
- 4 Review of charges**

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This policy applies to **charges for** services where the Council has discretion whether to charge and how much to charge for the service.

2 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

~~1.2 In general charges should be considered where only some members of the public benefit from the service provided. This policy is based on the assumption that the service user pays and that non-users do not subsidise users through council tax. A service is subsidised where the income from that service does not meet all the costs of that service and so there is a net cost which has to be funded from council tax. The net cost represents the amount of that subsidy.~~

~~1.2 The guiding principles for charging in Moray should be **fairness, consistency and reasonableness**. This policy explains what these principles mean in terms of deciding when to charge and how much, and the process for reviewing charges.~~

2.1 The guiding principles behind the charging policy are:

- To fully recover the cost of electively used services
- To generate income from Council assets
- To maximise income from charges

2.2 There are a range of types of services delivered by the Council. Some are stand alone services where the costs of service can be clearly identified. This is not the case for all services, and income generated from assets can be ancillary to the primary purpose of the asset or can arise from the primary use of the asset. However in all cases the principle of maximising income from charge should apply.

2.3 Some of the services delivered by the Council are used at the discretion of residents, eg pest control. Typically these are stand alone services where the costs of service can be clearly identified. It is the service users' choice to take up the service. In the case of such elective services the default position should be full cost recovery. The rationale for this is that other service users or Council Tax payers should not be subsidising the cost of others' choices.

2.4 Some of the services delivered by the Council are dependent on the use of Council assets as ancillary to their primary purpose eg school lets. In the case of such services charges should be based on a minimum of recovering any marginal on-costs eg cost of electricity, additional staff costs. In addition an element of income generation should be considered as a contribution to the Council's overall costs, following the Council's savings hierarchy which prefers income generation to service cuts. Considerations in setting cost will include market rate.

- 2.5 Some of the services delivered by the Council are essentially facilitating the use of Council assets for a specific purpose, eg car parking, harbours. The cost of holding these assets should not be the basis for charging for their use, rather the charges should be set at a level which enables the asset to be maintained to a suitable standard from the income thus generated and recover any other revenue costs required to provide the service.
- 2.6 The Council will seek to maximise the income raised by any particular charge. The impact of charges on the use of services varies depending on the type of service, available competition and other factors and these need to be understood and reference made to them when recommending charges to committee.

~~2. WHEN TO CHARGE?~~

~~2.1 The Council will aim to charge for any service where it is appropriate and cost effective to do so, unless there are contrary policies, legal or contractual reasons.~~

~~2.2 In particular, charges should not be levied where:~~

- ~~• it is difficult to establish the beneficiary.~~
- ~~• charging would be inefficient – that is, where~~
- ~~•~~

2.7 Where possible all charges should be collected in advance and by digital methods (where acceptable to customer). Where not possible, the value of the charge should be considered and invoices should not be raised where the cost of administration and collection costs are greater than the charge. Where the invoice would add to any existing unpaid debt for the customer reference should be made to the Council's Sundry Debt Policy.

- ~~• charging would be counterproductive, for example, where users would switch to other services or stop using a service (unless that is the objective of the charge).~~

~~2.3 The impact of charging on individual service users and types of service user and on the achievement of the Council's priorities are key considerations and the Council will need to collect sufficient information in order to make an adequate assessment of these factors.~~

3. BASIS OF CALCULATION - HOW MUCH TO CHARGE?

- 3.1 The basic principles of charging are set out in section 2 and are the starting point for the calculation of charges.
- 3.2 The full cost of providing a service is defined as including staffing and materials costs, **any related property costs** and also an element of overheads relating to central Council functions which support that service.

- 3.3 In order to ensure that full cost recovery charges are reasonable, benchmarking exercises will be undertaken periodically with other local authorities. Integrated Impact Assessments (IIAs) will be completed if considered necessary. Active consideration should be given to completing an IIA if a significant (eg substantially above inflation) increase in charges is to be proposed.
- 3.4 For some services it may be considered appropriate to set concessionary rates for some individuals or organisations using the service.

Fairness

- ~~3.1 The recipient of the service must have agreed to its provision and to pay for it.~~
- ~~3.2 Fees and charges should be set at a level that is fair to users and to council tax payers. Concessions should be available to groups determined by the Council as being unable to pay the full charge or otherwise disadvantaged, or where Council policy supports a concessionary rate. Concessionary rates can be used as mitigations against negative impacts highlighted by IIAs.~~
- 3.53 In general, commercial operators should pay the full cost of any service they receive from the Council (subject to any statutory restrictions). Services received by commercial organisations should not be subsidised by other users or Council Tax payers. Where commercial operators wish to hire Council premises or other Council facilities the principle outlined in paragraph 2.4 applies and charges should be levied at what is assessed as being a reasonable commercial rate. Charging levels should take account of market demand, competition from other service providers and where appropriate comparisons with charges made by other comparable local authorities to ensure that they are reasonable and where appropriate competitive in assessing what a reasonable commercial rate might be.
- 3.4 The impact of changing pricing policies should be managed through phasing over time when the impact is high. Any significant increases in charges should be introduced over a period of time to reduce the impact on service users.
- 3.65 A firm stance should be taken on non-payers in line with the Council's Sundry Debt Policy. Other service users and Council Tax payers should not be expected to subsidise users who are evading charges for a service they receive, so service managers should ensure that the Council's debt recovery procedures are properly followed and enforced.
- ~~3.6 Current means testing for ability to pay for a specific charge is guided by legislation but this process should be considered for other charges to ensure the Council's obligations for social inclusion and inequalities for services and any charges thereon are met.~~

Consistency

~~3.7 Charges for similar services or activities should be consistent across the authority.~~

Reasonableness

~~3.10 The Council will aim to ensure an appropriate level of income from fees and charges by ensuring that charges to users reflect the full cost of the service provision, unless covered by concessions or where there are contrary policies, legal or contractual reasons. A concession is a discount given to a specific group of people, for example children, older people or claimants of income-related benefits.~~

~~3.11 If the income from a service does not meet its costs, the service is effectively being subsidised by council tax payers. Where this occurs, it should be a conscious choice, and approved by Policy and Resources Committee to ensure that this action is consistent with Council priorities.~~

~~3.12 Where charges are not made for a service or are reduced from full cost recovery level, the reasons should be reconsidered as part of the annual budget process to ensure that they remain valid and that significant income is not being foregone by the Council.~~

4. ANNUAL REVIEW PROCESS

4.1 Reviews of charges, including consideration of current charges and the potential for new charges, should be undertaken as an integral part of the **financial planning** budget process each year. **Such reviews can be annual or multi-annual.**

4.2 Appropriate consultation with service users and stakeholders will be undertaken in respect of any proposed significant changes to current charges or in relation to the introduction of significant new charges

4.34 The introduction of new charges or any variations to existing charges require approval. **Service Committees can approve new charges related to their remit at any stage during the financial year.**

4.4 The annual review process is corporate and may include the setting of a default increase percentage rate for charges within the Council's control. Any default rate will be approved either by the Corporate Committee or by Full Council. If a default rate is approved only charges where the default rate is not proposed to be used will be reported (either to Corporate Committee or to Full Council) in a report covering all such proposed departures. Reasons for the proposed departure must be clearly justified. In this annual review process any variations to charges will apply from the beginning of the financial year following approval, unless otherwise agreed.

4.6 Following the annual review of charges a comprehensive list of all charges reviewed by the Council will be published on the Council's website.

4.45 Reports prepared for members requesting decisions on significant variations to charges must include the following information:

- ~~• the aim or objective of the charge and how it links to the Council's target outcomes.~~
- current year charge, proposed charge and percentage increase.
- comparative information on charges levied by other authorities in the region or local competitors **if this is a consideration in the recommendation of the level of charge.**
- how the income will be collected, ~~including costs of collection.~~
- estimated income from the charge, estimated increase on existing income ~~and estimated costs of service provision, in comparison to budget.~~
- ~~subsidy/surplus and reason for subsidy (if there is one).~~
- ~~• analysis of the impact of the proposed charge (e.g. on target groups, usage of the service and achievement of the Council's target outcomes).~~ **IIA where appropriate**
- **Reference to any relevant policy, including multi-annual reviews of charges.**

