

Bath & North East Somerset Council		
DECISION MAKER:	Cllr Matt McCabe, Cabinet Member for Built Environment and Sustainable Development	
DECISION DATE:	On or after 9th December 2023	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E3478
TITLE:	Housing Services Charging Policy 2023	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report:		
Appendix 1: Housing Services Charging Policy 2023		

1 THE ISSUE

1.1 Housing Services provide statutory and non-statutory services where reasonable costs can be recovered. The Housing Services Charging Policy, the most recent version of which was adopted in 2020, details which services are subject to a charge and how the charges will be calculated and recovered. This policy has been updated and includes revised charges.

2 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That the Housing Services Charging Policy, attached in Appendix 1, is adopted.

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 3.1 Housing Services currently charge fees to recover the reasonable costs of providing a number of housing enabling, enforcement, licensing, housing register and homelessness services.
- 3.2 The statutory charging regime for HMO licensing precludes the Council making a surplus and as such is designed to recover the cost of administering the scheme. Similarly, the other charges have been set at recovering some, or all, of our expenditure, rather than attempting to make a surplus.
- 3.3 The charges are set to recover reasonable costs and therefore the impact of the revised charges is budget neutral.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The legislative framework to support the Charging Policy is contained in the following Acts of parliament:
 - a) Housing Act 2004 – power to recover costs associated with the administration of HMO licensing and housing conditions enforcement activity;
 - b) Housing Act 1996 - power to establish Nomination Agreements and the recovery of costs associated with the provision of temporary accommodation;
 - c) Local Government Act 2003 – general power to charge for discretionary services.

5 THE REPORT

- 5.1 Housing Services currently charge fees which aim to recover the costs of providing a number of enabling, enforcement, licensing, housing register and homelessness services. These costs have increased.
- 5.2 The fees include: charges to private landlords for administering the HMO license schemes; providing discretionary property inspections, fees to housing developers for work associated with the delivery of affordable housing and to housing associations for marketing vacant homes.
- 5.3 The current fees for these services are detailed in the Housing Services Charging Policy 2020. Following a review of the cost of providing services it is proposed to make the following significant changes together with more minor changes to reflect the increased cost of providing these services:
 - Increase the charge to Registered Providers for the marketing of affordable housing to £90 per unit (up from £70 in 2018).
 - Revised HMO licencing fee structure which includes an increased standard fee of £995 (up from £795) but with a discount available for on-line applications and renewals.
 - Enabling the delivery of affordable housing to increase to £570 per unit (up from £550).

6 RATIONALE

6.1 The rationale of the uplifted charges is supported by the following principles. Firstly, that it is either a statutory requirement or reasonable to make the charge. Secondly, that the costs are set at recovering some, or all, of our expenditure associated with the activity which have increased, rather than generating a surplus. Finally, that the charges are articulated in a policy that is clear, accurate and freely available.

7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

7.1 None

8 CONSULTATION

8.1 The HMO licensing fee was considered as part of the consultation on the proposal for the current discretionary additional HMO licensing scheme. The revised fee proposed represents an increase from the original. Informal consultation takes place with Registered Providers with whom we work in partnership to deliver and market affordable housing to be confident that the revised charges for these services are reasonable.

8.2 Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer have had opportunity to review & input into this report.

9 RISK MANAGEMENT

9.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance. The Equalities Impact Assessment relating to the previous Charging Policy (2014) has also been reviewed and no significant adverse impacts were identified.

Contact person	Graham Sabourn, Head of Housing (01225 477949)
Background papers	None
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	