

# Taunton Deane Borough Council Fees and Charges 2018/19

## Housing Service Charges

### Background

The service charges are charges made to housing tenants for services that they use. These charges are set locally each year and are in addition to rent charges which are set by government policy.

### Legal Authority

It is proposed to increase housing (non-rent) fees and charges by applying Retail Price Index (RPI) inflation as at September 2017. This is in accordance with the 30 year Housing Business Plan. The September 2017 RPI figure is not released until the 17<sup>th</sup> October 2017 so this paper has been prepared using the August 2017 RPI figure (2.7%). The August RPI figure is for indicative purposes only and once the September RPI figure is published the report will be adjusted so that the correct figures are reported to Corporate Scrutiny 16<sup>th</sup> November 2017.

The following are exceptions to the rule that service charges are uplifted by September 2017 RPI:

- ❖ Grounds maintenance charge. Following consultation, it is recommended that there is an increase in the service charge for the grounds maintenance service from the current 81 p per week to £1.84 per week from April 2018. This increase has been approved by the Tenants Forum on the 12<sup>th</sup> of September 2017. The Tenant Services Management Board on the 25<sup>th</sup> of September and the Supported Housing Development Group on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of October 2017. The increase will ensure that the service is properly funded and enable the Council to provide a new improved specification which reflects the wishes of tenants.
- ❖ Charges for properties not on mains sewer will be increased in line with Wessex Water increases for 2018-19 once known. Wessex Water rates for sewer standing charge per annum and poundage charges are used in the system calculation. In 2017-18 these are £7 unmetered sewerage standing charge and £1.5679 poundage charge, Wessex Water will publish new charges in February 2018 (available on their website).
- ❖ Last year it was proposed that licence fee charges for Temporary Accommodation properties were brought in line with the Local Housing Allowance ordinary rate. As per the previous year we propose to set the licence fee in line with the permitted Local Housing Allowance ordinary rate (90% of the 2011 Local Housing Allowance is payable as towards the daily licence fee in temporary accommodation units).
- ❖ For clarity, separate to the licence fee, the temporary Accommodation Units do attract service charges, higher rates are charged for those properties without key meters and the lower rates are charged for those

with key meters. The service charges will be increased by RPI. Although the licence fee remains at permitted local housing allowance level.

- ❖ Weekly garage rent is higher for private tenants. Last year Tenants Services Management Board wished garage rental for private tenants to increase to £10, this was not achievable in one increase therefore this year private garage rent will increase from £9.34 to £10 inc VAT per week (approximately 7% increase, double RPI). Council tenants rent will increase by RPI only.
- ❖ Feedback during last year's report was that tenants preferred charges to be rounded to whole numbers. Charges for guest rooms and meeting halls have therefore had RPI applied and been rounded. Guest rooms rounded to nearest 50p and meeting halls to nearest 10p.
- Council housing rents will be set early in the New Year in line with government guidance.
- Local Authorities have certain limited freedoms to charge for discretionary services under the Local Government Act 2003.
- Contractually and through section 10 of the Housing Act 1985 (as amended by Local Govt & Housing Act 1989) Taunton Deane Borough Council are permitted to make the charges detailed below.

## Charges

- Displayed below is the table of fees and charges, comparing 2017 /18 to 2018/19 indicative prices (RPI of 2.7% has been used for indicative purposes).

<b>Housing Service Charges</b>	<b>Actual 2017/8</b>	<b>% increase</b>	<b>Estimated 2018/19</b>
<b>Service Charges (VAT not applicable) – Per Week</b>			
Communal areas	£0.61	RPI	£0.63
Grounds maintenance	£0.81	Reviewed	£1.84
Heating charge (Broomfield House only)	£4.87	RPI	£5.00
Laundry charge (Broomfield House only)	£1.48	RPI	£1.52
<b>Combined Service Charges (VAT not applicable) – Per Week</b>			
Sheltered Housing	£11.15	RPI	£11.45
Extra Care Housing Service Charge	£20.90	RPI	£21.46
<b>Garage Rents - Per Week</b>			
Council tenants (VAT not applicable)	£5.94	RPI	£6.10
Private tenants and Owner Occupiers (exc. VAT)	£7.78	Approx. 7%	£8.33
Private tenants and Owner Occupiers (inc. VAT)	£9.34	Approx. 7%	£10.00
<b>Hire Charges for Sheltered Scheme Meeting Halls (ex VAT)</b>			
First hour	£10.00	RPI	£10.30
Each half hour thereafter	£5.00	RPI	£5.10
6 hours plus	£60.00	RPI	£61.60
Total charge for residents in a scheme and community organisations	£13.80	RPI	£14.20
<b>Hire Charges for Sheltered Scheme Guest Rooms (ex VAT) Taunfied, Middleway, Hope Corner Lane, Kilkenny and Lodge (darby Way?? Others not used)</b>			
No. of nights per person -1 <sup>st</sup> night per person per night	£20.00	RPI	£20.50
No. of nights per person -2	£30.00	RPI	£31.00
No. of nights per person -3	£40.00	RPI	£41.00
No. of nights per person -4	£50.00	RPI	£51.50
No. of nights per person -5	£60.00	RPI	£62.00
No. of nights per person -6	£70.00	RPI	£72.00
No. of nights per person -7	£80.00	RPI	£82.00

<b>Temporary Accommodation (rent per day, VAT not applicable)</b>	<b>Gross Daily Licence Fee &amp; Service Charge 2017/18</b>	<b>Licence Fee Per Day 2018/19</b>	<b>Daily Service Charge 2018/19</b>	<b>Gross Charge Per Day 2018/19</b>
40 Humphreys Road (2 bedroom)	£17.24	£16.31	£0.96	£17.27
1 Gay Street (2 bedroom)	£17.24	£16.31	£0.96	£17.27
<b>Outer Circle</b>				
96 Outer Circle	£17.24	£16.31	£0.96	£17.27
113 and 113a (studios)	£13.75	£13.05	£0.72	£13.77
115 (3 bedroom)	£23.76	£19.28	£4.60	£23.88
115a (3 bedroom - metered)	£20.45	£19.28	£1.20	£20.48
119 (studio)	£16.71	£13.05	£3.76	£16.81
119a (studio - metered)	£13.75	£13.05	£0.72	£13.77
<b>Snedden Grove</b>				
Unit 1 (2 bedroom)	£17.24	£16.31	£0.96	£17.27
Unit 2 (2 bedroom)	£17.24	£16.31	£0.96	£17.27
Unit 3 (2 bedroom)	£17.24	£16.31	£0.96	£17.27
Unit 4 (3 bedroom)	£20.45	£19.28	£1.20	£20.48
Unit 5 (3 bedroom)	£20.45	£19.28	£1.20	£20.48
Unit 6 (2 bedroom)	£17.24	£16.31	£0.96	£17.27
Unit 7 (3 bedroom)	£20.45	£19.28	£1.20	£20.48
Unit 8 (2 bedroom)	£17.24	£16.31	£0.96	£17.27
<b>Wheatley Crescent (4 studios)</b>				
30 (1 bedroom)	£13.75	£13.05	£0.72	£13.77
32 (1 bedroom)	£13.75	£13.05	£0.72	£13.77
34 (1 bedroom)	£13.75	£13.05	£0.72	£13.77
36 (1 bedroom)	£13.75	£13.05	£0.72	£13.77
<b>Howard Road (Magna)</b>				
43a (1 bedroom)	£13.05	£13.05	£0.00	£13.05
43b (1 bedroom)	£13.05	£13.05	£0.00	£13.05
43c (1 bedroom)	£13.05	£13.05	£0.00	£13.05
43d (1 bedroom)	£13.05	£13.05	£0.00	£13.05

### Discounts

Discounts do not apply to service charges.

## **Budget Impacts**

In accordance with the 30 year Housing Business Plan, it is proposed to increase housing (non rent) fees and charges by applying Retail Price Index (RPI) inflation as at September 2017 (August RPI of 2.7% has been used until September figure is published) with the following exceptions:

- Grounds Maintenance Charge
- Water rates and non mains sewerage rates
- Temporary accommodation licence fee
- Private garage rental

The increase in charges will increase income by an estimated £325k TBC. This can be broken down by an increase in service charge income of £24k and an increase in ground maintenance charge of £301k.

## **Equality Impact Assessment**

An Equality Impact Assessment form has been completed and Housing Services will continue to provide a number of initiatives to enable service users to manage their finances and maximise their income.

## **Recommendation**

Tenant Services Management Board has been invited to comment on the proposed fees during their meeting 16<sup>th</sup> October 2017.

# Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council Equality Impact Assessment Form and Action Plan

1. Name of policy, procedure, decision or service being analysed:

**Housing Services Fees and Charges 2018/19**

2. What is the reason for completing this EIA? Please tick.

New policy/service  
Change of policy/service  
New/change of budget  
Service review

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

3. Sources of information used in this analysis:  
(E.g. demographic data, research from websites, consultations, equality monitoring data, customer feedback)

Grounds Maintenance charges have been subject to specific consultation exercises.

Fees and charges generally, there will be consultation with Tenant Services Management Board 16<sup>th</sup> October 2017.

4. Identify the potential effect of this action on each of the groups below.  
Please refer to the equality analysis guidance.

Protected Group	Comments	Actions
Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and Belief, Sex, Sexual Orientation	<i>The proposed fees and charges increases will apply to all services users and as such no potential discrimination amongst the protected groups has been identified. Those on low income will be particularly disadvantaged.</i>	<p><i>Processes are in place to ensure early intervention in cases of rent, service charge, leasehold service charge arrears.</i></p> <p><i>To help support service users on low incomes Housing Services will continue to provide a number of initiatives to enable service users to manage their finances and maximise their income:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• Publish clear information on all the fees and charges that will help service users to manage their own finances;</i></li> <li><i>• Signpost service users to a relevant benefit agency to help ensure they are maximising their income to meet their living costs;</i></li> </ul>

## Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council Equality Impact Assessment Form and Action Plan

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Take action to raise the awareness of accessing benefits; and</i></li> <li>• <i>Provide the opportunity to access direct support for service users in checking they are in receipt of benefits they are entitled to claim.</i></li> </ul>
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5. Details of person completing this form:

Name: Shari Hallett	Service Area: Housing and Communities
Email: s.hallett@tauntondeane.gov.uk	Telephone: 01823 219425

6. Details of person responsible for signing off this EIA:

Name: Stephen Boland	Signature:
Designation: Housing Services Lead	Date:

7. Review date/timeline of this EIA:

<p>The proposed increase in fees and charges will be applicable from April 2018. The review of this EIA will take place on 8 October 2018</p>
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8. Comments/Observations relating to this analysis:

<p>The proposed fees and charges increases will apply to all services users and as such no potential discrimination amongst the protected groups has been identified.</p> <p>To help support service users on low incomes Housing and Community Services will continue to provide a number of initiatives to enable service users to manage their finances and maximise their income:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish clear information on all the fees and charges which helps service users to manage their own finances;</li> <li>• Signpost service users to a relevant benefit agency to help ensure they are maximising their income to meet their living costs;</li> <li>• Take action to raise the awareness of accessing a range of welfare benefits; and</li> <li>• Provide the opportunity to access direct support for service users in checking they are in receipt of the welfare benefits they are entitled to claim.</li> </ul>
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