

# **Taunton Deane Borough Council**

## **Tenant Services Management Board – 14<sup>th</sup> November 2016**

### **Housing and Community Services Fees and Charges 2017/18**

#### **Report of the Interim Business Support Lead – Jan Errington**

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Terry Beale)

#### **1. Executive Summary**

This report sets out the proposed fees and charges for Housing and Community Services in 2017/18.

The Tenant Services Management Board is invited to comment on the proposed fees and charges before Corporate Scrutiny considers them on the 17th November 2016.

#### **2. Recommendations**

The Tenant Services Management Board is invited to comment on the proposed fees and charges for 2017/18 as set out in this report.

#### **3. Background**

The housing service charges its service users for services that they use. These charges are set locally each year.

#### **4. Proposed fees and charges increases for 2017/18**

It is proposed to increase fees and charges by applying Retail Price Index (RPI) inflation as at September 2016 (September 2016 RPI inflation was 2%) as set out in Appendix A.

Council housing rents will be set early in the New Year.

#### **5. Finance comments**

This is a finance report and there are no further comments.

**6. Legal comments**

There are no legal implications of this report.

**7. Links to corporate aims**

There are no specific links to corporate aims within this report. Fees and Charges are directly relevant to the HRA Business Plan

**8. Environmental implications**

There are no environmental implications of this report.

**9. Community safety implications**

There are no community safety implications of this report.

**10. Equalities impact**

An equality impact assessment is set out in Appendix B.

**11. Risk management**

There are no risk management issues associated with this report..

**12. Partnership implications**

There are no partnership implications of this report.

**Appendices**

Appendix A – Fees and Charges

Appendix B - Equality Impact Assessment

**Contact:** Jan Errington – Interim Business Support Lead and Project Manager  
Extension 2843  
e-mail: [j.errington@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:j.errington@tauntondeane.gov.uk)

### Housing Service Charges 2017/18

#### 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 2016 (2%). This is in accordance with the 30 year Housing Business Plan.
- The following are exceptions:
  - Charges for properties not on mains sewer will be increased in line with Wessex Water increases, once known (Wessex Water rates for sewer standing charge per annum and poundage charges are used in the system calculation).
  - Extra Care Housing was reviewed in 2016-17 in advance of recommissioning of the care and support service. A new service delivery model was agreed. Consequently the Extra Care Housing service charge was reviewed in line with the new model and actual costs. Tenants were consulted in 2015 on the delivery model and 2016 on the service charge. The recommended charges were supported by the Tenant Services Management Board, Community Scrutiny and the Executive Portfolio Holder in April 2016.
- It is proposed that charges for Temporary Accommodation properties are frozen at Howard Way (Magna).
- It is proposed that all Temporary Accommodation fees are increased to the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) ordinary rate. This is not the maximum we can charge as the LHA which has a more generous formula for temporary accommodation; however it will cover our 17/18 budgeted costs. It is proposed that a discretionary subsidy is provided by the HRA for future working residents who would be disadvantaged by the increase to avoid hardship. Application will be made for Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) for single under 35's in relation to the single room rate.
- Guest rooms are running at a loss therefore it is proposed that the charges are adjusted to cover costs with a simplified price structure. Costs include cleaning and room prep, washing of bed linen, heat and light, water. The proposed price does not include the replacement or depreciation costs for furniture and mattresses or maintenance costs. The price is favourable compared to budget hotel rates, however the guest room facilities are very basic.

- Meeting halls charges are low and it is proposed that these are simplified with a view to further review before 2018. A standard charge of £10 per hour is proposed for non-sheltered tenants and community organisations. It is proposed to increase the charge to the nearest 10p for sheltered tenants and community organisations. The proposed charges continue to represent good value to our tenants and the local community and compare favourably with other local community hall facilities.
- Current garage charges are low. It is proposed to increase garage charges for private customers by 5%.
- 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 2016 /17 to 2017/18 prices with RPI at 2%.

<b>Housing Service Charges</b>				<b>Estimated</b>
		<b>2016/17</b>		<b>2017/18</b>
<b>Service Charges (VAT not applicable)</b>				
Communal areas		£0.60		£0.61
Grounds maintenance		£0.79		£0.81
Heating charge (Broomfield House only)		£4.77		£4.87
Laundry charge (Broomfield House only)		£1.45		£1.48
<b>Combined Service Charges (VAT not applicable)</b>				
Specialised (Extra Care) Sheltered Housing		£50.06		*£26.34
Sheltered Housing		£15.36		£15.86
<p>Notes: Piper Lifeline charges included in the Sheltered Housing combined charge are proposed to increase are proposed to be set at £4.71 in 2017 including 22p for set up and replacement costs plus the cost charged by the Deane Helpline. Piper Lifeline remains subsidised by the HRA for tenants eligible for Housing Benefit</p> <p>*The Extra Care Housing (ECH) charge has been reviewed in line with the new service delivery model following consultation with tenants from and actual costs. The combined ECH charge includes a hard wired Piperline charge with inflationary increase at 5.44. The hardwired piper line alarm system in ECH is enhanced upgraded system. ECH will no longer include the support charge element which will be set by Somerset County Council and collected by a new care and support provider from April 2017.</p>				
<b>Garage Rents</b>				
Council tenants (VAT not applicable)		£5.82		£5.94
Private tenants and Owner Occupiers (exc. VAT)		£7.07		£7.42
Private tenants and Owner Occupiers (inc. VAT)		£8.48		£8.91
<b>Hire Charges for Sheltered Scheme Meeting Halls (ex VAT)</b>				
First hour		£10.28		£10.00
Each half hour thereafter		£4.13		£5.00
6 hours plus		£52.11		£60.00
Total charge for residents in a scheme and community organisations		£13.51		£13.80
<b>Provision of Meals at Kilkenny Court (Extra Care)</b>		N/A		N/A
Cost per meal. This is no longer applicable to TDBC as the new meal provider charges tenants directly for meals.				
<b>Hire Charges for Sheltered Scheme Guest Rooms (ex VAT)</b>				
No. of nights per person -1 <sup>st</sup> night		£11.39		£20.00
No. of nights per person -2		£18.24		£30.00
No. of nights per person -3		£25.10		£40.00
No. of nights per person -4		£31.95		£50.00
No. of nights per person -5		£38.81		£60.00
No. of nights per person -6		£45.66		£70.00
No. of nights per person -7		£52.52		£80.00

	<b>Gross Charge Per Day 2016/17</b>	<b>Daily Fee 2017/18</b>	<b>Daily Service Charge 2017/18</b>	<b>Gross Charge Per Day 2017/18</b>
<b>Hostels (rent per day, VAT not applicable)</b>				
40 Humphreys Road (2 bedroom)	£9.89	£17.26	£0.93	£18.19
1 Gay Street (2 bedroom)	£9.89	£17.26	£0.93	£18.19
<b>Outer Circle</b>				
113 and 113a (studios - metered)	£8.33	£13.15	£0.70	£13.85
115 (3 bedroom)	£14.34	£20.81	£4.48	£25.29
115a (3 bedroom - metered)	£11.10	£20.81	£1.17	£21.98
119 (2 bedroom)	£11.23	£17.26	£3.66	£20.92
119a (2 bedroom - metered)	£8.33	£17.26	£0.70	£17.96
<b>Snedden Grove</b>				
Unit 1 (2 bedroom)	£9.89	£17.26	£0.93	£18.19
Unit 2 (2 bedroom)	£9.14	£17.26	£0.93	£18.19
Unit 3 (2 bedroom)	£9.14	£17.26	£0.93	£18.19
Unit 4 (3 bedroom)	£11.92	£20.81	£1.17	£21.98
Unit 5 (3 bedroom)	£11.92	£20.81	£1.17	£21.98
Unit 6 (2 bedroom)	£9.89	£17.26	£0.93	£18.19
Unit 7 (3 bedroom)	£11.92	£20.81	£1.17	£21.98
Unit 8 (2 bedroom)	£9.89	£17.26	£0.93	£18.19
<b>Wheatley Crescent (4 studios)</b>				
30 (1 bedroom)	£8.33	£13.15	£0.70	£13.85
32 (1 bedroom)	£8.33	£13.15	£0.70	£13.85
34 (1 bedroom)	£8.33	£13.15	£0.70	£13.85
36 (1 bedroom)	£8.33	£13.15	£0.70	£13.85
<b>Howard Road (Magna)</b>				
43a (1 bedroom)	21.79			21.79
43b (1 bedroom)	21.79			21.79
43c (1 bedroom)	21.79			21.79
43d (1 bedroom)	21.79			21.79

## 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 2016 (2%) with the following exceptions:

- Guest rooms
- Meeting halls
- Extra Care Housing Service charges
- Temporary Accommodation fee and service charge
- Water rates and non mains sewerage rates

The increase in charges will increase income by an estimated £63k.

## **Equality Impact Assessment**

An Equality Impact Assessment form has been completed to cover the remodelled service charge in Extra Care Housing and Temporary Accommodation and the service charge increase by 2% RPI (September 2016) in Sheltered Housing.

## **Recommendation**

Tenant Services Management Board are invited to comment on the proposed fees during their meeting 14<sup>th</sup> November 2016.

## Equality Impact Assessment Form and Action Plan

Expand boxes as required. Guidance notes are stored - TDBC link:

<http://portal/sites/policyPerf/strategyandpartnerships/equality/Equality%20Impact%20Assessment%20GuidanceTemplate/Forms/AllItems.aspx> WSC 'W' drive: W:\Equalities\EIA TEMPLATE

<p><i>"I shall try to explain what "due regard" means and how the courts interpret it. The courts have made it clear that having due regard is <b>more than having a cursory glance</b> at a document before arriving at a preconceived conclusion. Due regard requires public authorities, in formulating a policy, to give equality considerations the weight which is <b>proportionate in the circumstances</b>, given the potential impact of the policy on equality. It is not a question of box-ticking; it requires the equality impact to be <b>considered rigorously and with an open mind.</b>"<sup>1</sup></i></p>			
Officer completing EIA form:	Job Title:	Team/Service:	
Jan Errington	Interim Business Support Lead And Project Manager	Housing and Communities Business Support Team	
Why are you completing the impact assessment? <i>Please ✓ as appropriate</i>			
Proposed new policy or service	Change to policy or service	New or Change to Budget	Service review
		✓ Fees and Charges annual increase (non rent service charges)	
1 Description of policy, service or decision being impact assessed:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposal to increase fees and charges from April 2017 for Housing and Community Services as detailed in the attached report.</li> <li>• The proposed increase to fees and charges will ensure sufficient financial resources are in place to deliver the services. The increases cover the following:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Garages</li> <li>- Sheltered and Extra Care Housing meeting halls</li> <li>- Sheltered and Extra Care Housing guest rooms</li> <li>- General Needs Housing service charges</li> <li>- Extra Care Housing</li> <li>- Sheltered Housing</li> <li>- Temporary Accommodation</li> </ul> </li> </ul>			

<sup>1</sup> Baroness Thornton, March 2010

## Equality Impact Assessment Form and Action Plan

Expand boxes as required. Guidance notes are stored - TDBC link:

<http://portal/sites/policyPerf/strategyandpartnerships/equality/Equality%20Impact%20Assessment%20GuidanceTemplate/Forms/AllItems.aspx> WSC 'W' drive: W:\Equalities\EIA TEMPLATE

### **Proposed Extra Care Housing Service Charge Increase**

Extra Care Housing (ECH) is specialist housing for those who may be frail or disabled with long-term care and support needs. In line with the changes to the service delivery model approved in April 2016 we are proposing a revision of the Extra Care service charge to be implemented in April 2017 in line with the new service delivery model and actual costs.

### **Temporary Accommodation Fee Increase**

Temporary Accommodation is specialist accommodation for statutorily homeless individuals and families. The government recognises the higher cost of providing temporary accommodation to councils reflecting this in the local housing allowances. It is proposed that all Temporary Accommodation fees are increased to the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) ordinary rate. This is not the maximum we can charge as the LHA which has a more generous formula for temporary accommodation; however it will cover our 17/18 budgeted costs.

### **Sheltered Housing Service Charge**

Sheltered Housing provides a base line service with additional support as and when needed for vulnerable tenants over 60 years of age.

2 People who could be affected, with particular regard to the legally defined protected characteristics<sup>2</sup>:

*All proposed fees and Charges increases could affect the following groups:*

**Proposed Extra Care Service Charge increase affects specifically:-** Age; Disability;

Tenants of ECH are mainly frail elderly (over 60 years of age with currently over 57% of tenants are aged 75 and above). All ECH tenants will varying degrees of disability and/or care/support requirements. Most have significant health challenges with increasingly complex physical health needs and/or significant mental health needs. ECH also supports younger tenants with significant physical and/or mental health needs or disabilities. Currently 20% of tenants are under 60 years of age.

<sup>2</sup> For protected characteristics, please visit:

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/private-and-public-sector-guidance/guidance-all/protected-characteristics>

## Equality Impact Assessment Form and Action Plan

Expand boxes as required. Guidance notes are stored - TDBC link:

<http://portal/sites/policyPerf/strategyandpartnerships/equality/Equality%20Impact%20Assessment%20GuidanceTemplate/Forms/AllItems.aspx> WSC 'W' drive: W:\Equalities\EIA TEMPLATE

### **Proposed Temporary Accommodation Service Fee Increase affects specifically: Age**

The council's temporary accommodation predominantly houses couples and families the majority of whom are eligible for full or part Housing Benefit. In the last 12 months 1 household was working representing 2% of Temporary Accommodation residents and there were 5 single under 35 year olds representing 9% of residents. To avoid any disadvantage to low paid working tenants not entitled to Housing Benefit and to single under 35's who would be caught by the single bedroom rate for under 35s the following measures are proposed that:

- The HRA funds a discretionary subsidy for future working residents who would be disadvantaged by the increase to avoid hardship.
- Application will be made for Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) for single under 35's in relation to the single room rate.

### **Proposed Sheltered Housing Increase affects specifically: age, disability**

3 People and Service Area who are delivering the policy/service/decision:

Housing and Communities

- Housing Services
- Area teams
- Supported Housing team
- Temporary Accommodation and Lettings team
- Business Support Income team

4 Evidence used to assess impact: *Please attached documents where appropriate.*

### **General Needs, Temporary Accommodation and Sheltered Housing Service Engagement**

Formal discussion on the proposed fees and charges to be held with the Tenant Services Management Board at its meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> November 2016.

## Equality Impact Assessment Form and Action Plan

Expand boxes as required. Guidance notes are stored - TDBC link:

<http://portal/sites/policyPerf/strategyandpartnerships/equality/Equality%20Impact%20Assessment%20GuidanceTemplate/Forms/AllItems.aspx> WSC 'W' drive: W:\Equalities\EIA TEMPLATE

### Extra Care Housing (ECH) Service Change and Service Charge Review Engagement:

- Tenants were consulted in August 2015, February 2016 and June 2016 with additional on-site engagement opportunities throughout this period
- Feedback received from TDBC's Tenant Forum on 20 August 2015 and 08 September 2015.
- Feedback received from TDBC's Tenant Services Management Board members at their meetings held on the 14 September 2015, 13 October 2015, 18 April 2016
- Feedback received from the Supported Housing Development Group have been informed and consulted monthly. The group considered the appraisal recommendation on 06 October 2015 and have been consulted monthly subsequently including the meeting on 05.04.16.

ECH has additional housing management costs not associated with General Needs properties in terms of the extra time and resource needed to ensure tenancy sustainment, community development and tenant empowerment. Tenants are vulnerable and there may be issues of communication or memory loss. Social isolation is a big issue for ECH tenants and therefore tenant empowerment and ECH activities are an essential part of the service and need to be facilitated more intensively than in general needs. The proposed change to the ECH service charge seeks to capture the true cost of the additional housing management.

Reduction in additional housing management in ECH would make the service less accessible and be disadvantageous to the target client group given that the purpose of the ECH service is to help tenants live as independently as possible.

On balance we consider that the positive impact of maintaining the level of additional housing management is beneficial to the wellbeing and safety of the tenants and ECH environment.

We work closely with our tenants to understand and support their financial circumstances. We will work in partnership with the care and support Service Provider to ensure that any tenants who experience financial difficulties will be supported by the ECH officer working closely with the care and support team and referring to our Debt and Benefits Advisor, or the Money Matters team at CAB etc as needed.

## Equality Impact Assessment Form and Action Plan

Expand boxes as required. Guidance notes are stored - TDBC link:

<http://portal/sites/policyPerf/strategyandpartnerships/equality/Equality%20Impact%20Assessment%20GuidanceTemplate/Forms/AllItems.aspx> WSC 'W' drive: W:\Equalities\EIA TEMPLATE

### 5 Conclusions on impact of proposed decision or new policy/service change:

#### **Proposed Fees and Charges Increase**

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. Specific measures are proposed for single under 35's in Temporary Accommodation who would otherwise have been adversely affected. No negative equality impacts have been identified as a consequence of the proposed changes to the service charges.

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:

- Publish clear information on all the fees and charges which helps service users to manage their own finances;
- Signpost service users to a relevant benefit agency to help ensure they are maximising their income to meet their living costs;
- Take action to raise the awareness of accessing a range of welfare benefits; and
- 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

### 6 Recommendation based on findings. These need to be outlined in the attached action plan.

#### **Proposed Increase to Housing Services' Fees and Charges:**

No adverse equality impact on the protected groups.

#### **Proposed Extra Care Housing Service Charge Increase:**

There will be no adverse equality impact on the protected groups identified as a consequence of the proposed changes to extra care housing services.

Recommended that proposed changes can continue subject to approval.

**Equality Impact Assessment Form and Action Plan**

Expand boxes as required. Guidance notes are stored - TDBC link:

<http://portal/sites/policyPerf/strategyandpartnerships/equality/Equality%20Impact%20Assessment%20GuidanceTemplate/Forms/AllItems.aspx>  
 WSC 'W' drive: W:\Equalities\EIA TEMPLATE

<b>Equality Impact Assessment Action Plan</b>					
Group Affected	Action required	Expected outcome of action	Person to undertake action	Service Plan - for monitoring	Expected Completion date
Age	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Disability	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Gender Re-assignment	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Marriage and Civil Partnership	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

### Equality Impact Assessment Form and Action Plan

Expand boxes as required. Guidance notes are stored - TDBC link:

<http://portal/sites/policyPerf/strategyandpartnerships/equality/Equality%20Impact%20Assessment%20GuidanceTemplate/Forms/AllItems.aspx>  
 WSC 'W' drive: W:\Equalities\EIA TEMPLATE

Equality Impact Assessment Action Plan					
Group Affected	Action required	Expected outcome of action	Person to undertake action	Service Plan - for monitoring	Expected Completion date
Pregnancy and Maternity	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Race <sup>3</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Religion and Belief	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sex	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sexual Orientation	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rurality	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Author's Signature:	Jan Errington	Ref/Report Title:	Fees and Charges Report	Date:	24.10.16
Contact Details:	Tel: 01823 356440	Extn: 2609	Email:	j.errington@tauntondeane.gov.uk	
				EIA Version:	

<sup>3</sup> Including ethnicity, national origin, colour, nationality, gypsies and travellers.