

**Breakdown of Fees and Charges by Service Area****1 Background/Information**

- 1.1 The fees and charges proposed in Appendix A have been driven by the key factors as outlined below by Service Area.

**2 Community Protection**

## 2.1 Licensing and Registration

- 2.1.1 The Council is responsible for issuing a wide range of licences, permits and registrations related to premises, various occupations, and activities. Licensing fees and charges need to be costed individually and in line with legislative restrictions, for example some fees are set by Central Government, some are capped, and others are locally calculated. Licensing fees are not intended, or permitted, to generate income for the council and should be calculated to enable the cost of initial applications to be separated from those costs associated with the ongoing administration of a scheme. This is because this latter element cannot be charged to unsuccessful licence applicants. (Income from these charges are also ring-fenced accounts and income should be shown separately). Income from these areas have been removed from the main report and is shown as a separate item, along with other ring-fenced and reserve accounts.

## 2.2 HMO Licensing

- 2.2.1 An additional licensing scheme was introduced from 18 January 2024 as part of a strategy to bring all HMO's within the district up to a minimum standard, capturing 800 (57%) of the 1400 HMO's that previously did not require a licence under the mandatory licencing scheme. As the designations last for 5 years, income received to date has been apportioned across the 5 year period, with a smaller amount of additional new licences assumed for future years. Note the scheme runs from 2024-2029 and the bulk of the income was in 2024/25. Scheme renewal will be a Cabinet decision.
- 2.2.2 Income predictions now uses an averaging method (which is reviewed each year) to show a more balanced view of income during the life cycle of the five year schemes, whereas previously the income was shown in the year it was derived where most income was received in the first year. An earmarked reserve has been created to smooth actual income to the year expenditure occurs.

**3 Customer and Digital Services**

## 3.1 Street naming and numbering

- 3.1.1 Budget forecast shows modest growth for the forthcoming year due to the following factors ...
- 1) Housebuilding which is the main source of income reduced in 2024 compared to 2023. ONS data shows that there was a decrease in housebuilding in Q1 of

2025 compared to the same time last year. Any future increase in house building and completion is expected to be small.

2) Market analysis from PWC indicates only modest growth of 3.6% in housing completions by 2025 and similar growth in 2026. Their analysis cites increased borrowing costs, geopolitical instability and the cost of living crisis for slowing building completions.

3) Interest rates are expected to remain relatively high. The British Chamber of Commerce estimates that interest rates will be cut to around 4% by the end of 2025, which is lower than current levels, but still significantly higher than in the previous decade. This may continue to impact on house buying due to increased mortgage costs.

4) The new government has made housebuilding a priority, but to date there are no solid plans identifying how this will be achieved.

5) We have no new planning applications that would create a significant uplift in the number of properties being developed, with impacts on a similar scale to those approved in previous years.

## **4 Neighbourhood and Assets**

### 4.1 Leisure Centres

4.1.1 Fees and charges at the Leisure Centres that WDC can influence are now limited to a list of Core Charges. These can be seen in Appendix C. The contract stipulates that they will be increased by up to the June RPI figure in the following year. In June 2025, RPI was 4.4%.

4.1.2 It should be noted that while Abbey Fields Leisure Centre is currently closed, it is expected to open in April 2026 following a complete redevelopment. The charges for the new leisure centre will be agreed closer to its opening date.

### 4.2 Tennis

4.2.1 The Tennis provision has secured an external operator and will provide income to support future refurbishment and maintenance of the courts, which will be ring fenced for this purpose.

### 4.3 Interment and Cremation fees

4.3.1 ONS stats released 3 September 2025 continue to show the death rate remains low, this week 7.8% fewer people than expected died. This national trend is borne out in the number of burials and cremations taking place this year, comparing to previous year's performance and ONS data it would be prudent to anticipate a loss of income similar to the reduction in numbers of deaths registered across exclusive rights, interment and cremation fee services.

4.3.2 Direct cremation zero increase – the single deciding factor for this type of funeral is price and there is intense competition locally and nationally from privately owned crematoria. National statistics (cost of dying report 2025) show that unattended direct cremations account for approx 20% of all deaths, however only around 3% of funerals taking place at Oakley Wood are direct cremations indicating this business is going elsewhere.

4.3.3 Modest increases to most other Crematorium fees are proposed as they are low usage and mainly designed to ensure management of time schedules.

- 4.3.4 Some memorials and other ancillary items are often provided by funeral directors; many have less take-up, the range on offer is being reviewed, delegating authority for setting prices for these items, to a decision for the portfolio holder and head of service will enable new products to be introduced on a trial basis and allow the offering to be more dynamic in addressing customers' requests.
- 4.3.5 Costs for music and media services remain delegated to the portfolio holder and head of service to enable prices from a new contract due to be procured for mobilisation in April 26 to be considered.
- 4.3.6 Approximately 10% of business was predicted to be lost to Rainsbrook crematorium when it opened this was somewhat disguised by increasing population and more recently the pandemic. In addition to this, competition from recently opened crematorium in Evesham has impacted the number of cremations taking place.
- 4.3.7 Income details (exclusive of surcharge premium) for both the Cemeteries and Crematorium for, 2025/26 & projected for 2026/27 are shown below. (The Burial Rights and Interments Surcharge is not included in the figures below.)

	<b>Original Budget 2025/26 £ '000</b>	<b>Forecast 2025/26 £ '000</b>	<b>Proposed Budget 2026/27 £ '000</b>
Cemeteries	443	474	485
Crematorium	1,678	1,683	1,729
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,121</b>	<b>2,157</b>	<b>2,214</b>

#### 4.4 Car Parking

- 4.4.1 The normal Car Parking proposed fees and charges for the forthcoming year have been removed from the general file submitted for approval.
- 4.4.2 It is proposed that submission of revised fees and charges for off-street car parks is delayed until November. This has been discussed this proposal with Portfolio lead and senior officers who have provisionally agreed it.
- 4.4.3 The rationale for the proposed delay is that the council's revised Parking Strategy is due to be submitted for Cabinet approval in late-November. This strategy will include recommendations for how we set fees and charges in our off-street car parks and it is considered preferable to delay the setting of fees and charges for the next financial year to ensure that any changes in prices are consistent with the recommendations in the strategy.

#### 4.5 Refuse Collection

- 4.5.1 Last year a forward plan was agreed outlining the volume of garden waste permits that would be purchased over the next two years and was factored into the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) agreed in February 2025.
- 4.5.2 Permit sales have dipped in 2025/26, with just over 38,000 sold to date, against the forecast of 40,000. This decline reflects local trends and may be due to the unusually dry spring and summer.

- 4.5.3 Based on sales data from the past two years (and some associated modelling work on price increases), the Head of Neighbourhood and the Portfolio Holder have agreed to revise the sales estimates for 2026/27 down to 38,500 permits at a cost of £51. This adjustment has led to a reduction in the previously projected income (£1,963,500 against a previous forecast of £2,150,000).
- 4.5.4 Officers will additionally be undertaking a review into the business case for introducing a garden waste sack collection service to operate alongside the existing garden waste bin service, where this would be complementary and may help to increase participation in the garden waste scheme. The review will include benchmarking and analysis of case studies from other local authorities that have implemented similar models, to assess operational feasibility, customer demand and financial viability. Subject to the outcome of the review demonstrating a positive business case a 'green sack' option will be considered for introduction, with findings and recommendations reported to Members.

## **5 Place, Arts and Economy**

### **5.1 Building Control**

- 5.1.1 Building Control is subject to competition from the private sector and must set charges that are competitive, otherwise they could lose customers to the private sector. The proposed charges for domestic properties are considered to be fair and balanced in the current competitive market, and in line with neighbouring Councils and recommendations from last year's Fees and Charges Report. Fees for commercial projects are evaluated on a bespoke basis, considering how many inspections will be needed, how long the project is likely to take and whether any additional professional services need to be brought in. Most fees have increased by 10% and some by a little more, to ensure the service covers its costs for fee related work, and due to proposed imminent review of salaries, as recruitment at senior level is currently unsuccessful as there are insufficient officers across the country, and their salaries have subsequently increased significantly, the service finally needs to consider retention of current staff, as officers are in high demand on the open market. The service is a ring-fenced account and income is shown separately. The service is required to break even over a 3 year period under CIPFA.

### **5.2 Development Management**

- 5.2.1 In overall terms, the number of major planning applications submitted which attract the highest fees continues to be lower than has been the case in previous years. However, with the progression of the Local Plan, there are signs that this may start to pick up and the income generated by planning applications in the current financial year is currently ahead of target, predominantly as a result of the submission of one planning application with a very substantive fee. Officers continue to monitor the position regularly in order to feed any change into the income forecast for the current and next financial year. There are likely to be opportunities for new applications aligned to the West Midlands Investment Zone in future years.
- 5.2.2 Local Land charges income is static. The regulations covering Land Charges require that it is a cost neutral service. The income received is ring fenced, and

as the income generated is already covering the cost of providing the service (any surplus is held to offset periods of under recovery), there would be no justification for any increase at this time.

5.2.3 Planning fees (apart from pre applications) are not included in this report as the fees are mandated by the government and we do not have control over them. However, the current fees do not cover the cost of delivering the service, as costs have continued to rise on an annual basis, with the key driver being the staffing resource requirement.

### 5.3 Enterprise Team

5.3.1 Projections show a drop compared to this years Budget because 26 Hamilton Terrace will be decommissioned by the end of 2025. Projections on current year have increased for Althorpe Innovation & Enterprise Centre because following an economic downturn there is now a marketing relaunch.

### 5.4 Town Hall

5.4.1 Although operational works are now complete across phase one of the Town Hall, investment in hireable spaces remains, leaving limited capacity for revenue across much of the building. The rental spaces on the ground floor, floor one, and floor two remain occupied with long-term tenants.

## 6 Housing Revenue Account

### 6.1 Warwick Response - Lifeline and other charges

6.1.1 The income generated from the Warwick Response Fees and Charges is credited to the Housing Revenue Account, from where the costs of this service are met. Details of the charges are shown in Appendix A.

6.1.2 Prices have been set to ensure that the service is competitively placed in the market when benchmarked, with prices increasing broadly between 2% - 4%. Last year Commercial Gov proposed some opportunities to ensure that the services offered, while remaining competitive, were appropriately priced. Some of these increases last year were above the 10% standard in order to get pricing to the benchmarked level and ensure costs of delivering the service are being recovered. Other charges had seen smaller increases, or no increase at all, to remain market competitive.

6.1.3 The Independent Living (Warwick Response) service is currently undergoing a review, with a Cabinet report scheduled for submission in November. Following the outcomes of that report and the implementation of any agreed recommendations, a comprehensive review of the associated fees and charges will be undertaken during the 2026/2027 financial year.