

<b>This report is public.</b>	
<b>Fees &amp; Charges Benchmarking 2026/27</b>	
<b>Committee</b>	Budget Planning Committee
<b>Date of Committee</b>	9 December 2025
<b>Portfolio Holder presenting the report</b>	Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property and Regeneration, Councillor Lesley McLean
<b>Date Portfolio Holder agreed report</b>	26 November 2025
<b>Report of</b>	Assistant Director of Finance (S151 Officer), Michael Furness

## **Purpose of report**

This report is to provide information to the Committee on proposed Fees and Charges as compared to some other districts to feed back to the Executive as part of the 2026/27 Budget and Business Planning Process.

### **1.0 Recommendations**

The Budget Planning Committee resolves:

- 1.1 To note the benchmarking information between the council's fees and charges and those of other Oxfordshire districts.
- 1.2 To recommend any changes to the fees and charges schedule to Executive when considering the budget.

### **2.0 Introduction**

- 2.1 The Fees and Charges schedule is approved annually as part of the budget process. The council will look to increase its fees and charges in line with its planning assumptions where it has the ability to set the fee level (e.g. some fees are set nationally). Fees and charges are reviewed annually to ensure that they are reasonable and can deviate from the council's planning assumptions where appropriate.
- 2.2 The planning assumption for fees and charges in 2026/27 is an increase of at least 2% which is in line with the current levels of inflation (with the exception of car parking fees which are assumed to increase by 20p per hour).

## Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications	Commentary			
<b>Finance</b>	There are no financial implications as a result of this report. Joanne Kaye, Head of Finance, 26 November 2025			
<b>Legal</b>	<p>The Council legally has to set a balanced budget each year. Ensuring there is a robust process in place will help it to achieve that.</p> <p>Local authorities have a variety of powers to charge for specific statutory services as set out in Section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003. The 2003 Act also provides a power to trade and a power to charge for discretionary services, the latter on a cost recovery basis. The power to charge for discretionary services is not available to local authorities if there is a statutory duty to provide the service or if there is a specific power to charge for it or if there is a prohibition on charging.</p> <p>The Localism Act 2011 also provides local authorities with a general power of competence that confers on them the power to charge for services unless there is a statutory duty to provide the service or if there is a specific power to charge for it or if there is a prohibition on charging.</p> <p>Where authorities have a duty to provide a statutory service free of charge to a certain standard, no charge can be made for delivery to that standard, however delivery beyond that point may constitute a discretionary service for which a charge could be made.</p> <p>All items/services listed in the Appendix 1 are pursuant to a power to provide the relevant service whether it is provided because of a statutory obligation to do so, or on a discretionary basis where the authority is not obliged to provide the service but can choose to do so. In relation to the latter, an authority charging for such services would do so on a cost recovery basis, pursuant to the Local Government Act 2003/Localism Act 2011.</p> <p>Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director of Law and Governance and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer, 26 November 2025</p>			
<b>Risk Management</b>	<p>The Council faces significant risks given the scale of the financial challenge for 2026/27. Having a robust process in place to develop budget proposals and the associated Corporate Plan will help to mitigate these. These risks are managed as part of the operational and leadership risk register.</p> <p>Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 18 November 2025</p>			
<b>Impact Assessments</b>	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary

<b>Equality Impact</b>		X		There are no Equality, Diversity and Inclusion implications arising as a direct consequence of this report. However, as per our equalities framework, all proposals are developed in line with the Equality Act 2010.  Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 18 November 2025
<b>A</b> Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		
<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		
<b>Climate &amp; Environmental Impact</b>		X		
<b>Council Priorities</b>	All			
<b>Consultation &amp; Engagement</b>	n/a			

## Supporting Information

### 3.0 Report Details

- 3.1 Appendix 1 lists all the fees and charges uplifted by a minimum of 2%, where possible, from the 2025/26 levels. Appendix 2 provides benchmarking against other Oxfordshire councils of the fees and charges which provide the council the most significant income. Appendix 2 also provides the council's annual budgeted income from each fee or group of fees for context. This will give some indication as to the financial impact of any extra increase recommended.
- 3.2 The average fee charged has been provided in Appendix 2 and those of Cherwell's which are lower than average have been highlighted. There are 16 charges across several services where Cherwell's charge is lower than the average charged by the other districts. Other districts also employ different scale fees for their charges than Cherwell. If Cherwell were to raise the fees which are currently below average to

the average fee, an additional £0.558m could be generated (assuming no changes in demand).

- 3.3 The highest fees in a range of fees which can be directly compared has also been highlighted and reveals that Cherwell charges the most for 9. Oxford City has the most fees at the highest point at 22. If Cherwell were to match the highest fees, an additional £1.466m could be generated (assuming no changes in demand).

## **4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations**

- 4.1 Budget Planning Committee are invited to note and comment on the contents of Appendices 1 and 2 and recommend to Executive any that should be considered for an increase in excess of the planning assumption.

## **5.0 Consultation**

- 5.1 None required.

## **6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

- 6.1 No alternative options have been considered.

## **Decision Information**

<b>Key Decision</b>	N/A
<b>Subject to Call in</b>	N/A
<b>If not, why not subject to call in</b>	N/A
<b>Ward(s) Affected</b>	All

## **Document Information**

<b>Appendices</b>	
<b>Appendix 1</b>	DRAFT 2026/27 Fees and Charges Schedule
<b>Appendix 2</b>	2025/26 Fees and Charges Benchmarking
<b>Background Papers</b>	None
<b>Reference Papers</b>	None
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<b>Executive Director Approval (unless Executive Director or Statutory Officer report)</b>	Report of statutory officer, S151 Officer