

<b>Fees &amp; Charges 2026/27</b>	
<b>Executive Summary</b>	This report recommends the fees and charges for the financial year 2026-27 that will come into effect from 1 April 2026.
<b>Options considered.</b>	Alternatives for the individual service fees and charges proposed have been considered by service managers as part of the process of creating this report.
<b>Consultation(s)</b>	Portfolio Holder Assistant Director Finance & Assets/Deputy S151 Officer Director of Resources/S151 Officer Budget Managers
<b>Recommendations</b>	That Full council approves: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The fees and charges from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026 as included in Appendix A.</li> <li>• That delegated authority be given to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and relevant Directors/Assistant Director to agree the fees and charges not included within Appendix A as required (outlined within the report).</li> </ul>
<b>Reasons for recommendations</b>	To approve the Council's proposed fees and charges for 2026/27.
<b>Background papers</b>	Fees & Charges 2025/26 report (Full Council – 19 <sup>th</sup> February 2025)

<b>Wards affected</b>	All
<b>Cabinet member(s)</b>	Cllr Lucy Shires
<b>Contact Officer</b>	James Moore, Technical Accountant, <a href="mailto:James.Moore@north-norfolk.gov.uk">James.Moore@north-norfolk.gov.uk</a>

<b>Links to key documents:</b>	
Corporate Plan:	This report helps to ensure that the Council is financially sound by setting charges for external services, adequately reimbursing the costs of delivering the Council's services and generating extra income where appropriate.
Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	This report includes opportunities that service managers have identified to generate extra income from within their current operations.
Council Policies & Strategies	N/A

<b>Corporate Governance:</b>	
Is this a key decision	Yes
Has the public interest test been applied	Not an exempt item
Details of any previous decision(s) on this matter	Current approvals on Fees & Charges 2025/26 report (Full Council – 19 <sup>th</sup> February 2025)

## **1. Purpose of the report**

- 1.1 This report sets out the proposed fees and charges for the 2026/27 financial year, scheduled to take effect from 1 April 2026.
- 1.2 To also agree that delegated authority be given to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and relevant Director/Assistant Director to agree the fees and charges not included within Appendix A as required.

## **2. Introduction & Background**

- 2.1 The setting of the fees and charges for the next financial year forms part of the annual budget setting process. The reasons for presenting the fees and charges for approval ahead of the detailed budget report is to provide enough time for the service areas to make changes/issue notification letters to the public before the beginning of the new financial year.
- 2.2 This earlier setting also allows opportunity for income budgets to be updated and included in the new financial year's budget report, along with any forecasted impact in future year's budget projections.

## **3. Fees & Charges 2026/27**

- 3.1 The Finance Team has circulated proposed fees and charges for 2026/27, which have been reviewed by lead budget managers to support the annual budget-setting process. The starting point for the review is an overall increase of 3.8%, reflecting the CPI inflation rate at the outset of the process. However, this baseline has been adjusted where appropriate to take account of wider economic conditions, market factors, and service-specific considerations. Appendix A sets out the detailed proposed charges to take effect from 1 April 2026 – The average increase across all fees and charges proposed for 2026/27 represent an increase of 3.6% on the fees and charges for 2025/26, which falls slightly below the current CPI inflation rate.
- 3.2 The proposed increases in fees are due to one of the following reasons:
  - Inflationary increases which reflect the inflation increases in costs to provide the service.
  - Increases which are set by a higher authority (typically central government) for example, planning fees and election charges. These are known as statutory fees.

- Increases in fees which must be set on a cost recovery basis for example, land charges, building control and the majority of our locally set licencing fees.

### **3.3 Elections**

These fees related to the delivery of elections and disclosure of information from the register of electors. These are all statutory (set by central government). There have been no changes from the 2025/26 fees.

### **3.4 Communications**

These fees relate to filming costs when external bodies request the use of a Council asset (such as the Cromer Pier).

These have been reviewed and increased where demand has been higher. Fees are charged based on the size of the filming activity (number of cast/crew). An additional fee is imposed if the operation requests exclusive use of a Council asset for filming.

However, the fees given are only indicative as the Communications team reserve the right to individually assess large scale filming operations to ensure that no cost will be incurred by the taxpayer for any private filming. There have been no changes from the 2025/26 fees.

### **3.5 Customer Services & ICT**

The Customer Services team only provide one direct service that comes with a cost, foreign pension verifications. This is a statutory service which the Council is required to provide.

The Council provides external photocopying services to Parish Councils, Local Businesses, and not-for-profit organisations upon request. This service currently generates around £4k a year for the Council in addition to the normal reprographics function.

These fees have been reviewed by the service manager to ensure that the Council is charging at a rate that brings income whilst keeping the service affordable for its customers. Costs for large plot printing (A2 and above) have been increased for 2026/27 to recover the rising resourcing costs to produce larger documents. Fees for smaller plot printing (A3 and A4) have not been increased to keep these smaller prints affordable. Printing fees are set by the Council at its own discretion.

### **3.6 Leisure**

The car parking fees at Holt Country Park are proposed to be kept at £2.50 per day to avoid deterring tourism to the area.

The Holt Country Park team have continued to sell firewood in the local area by advertising at the park/on social media whenever required forestry works have resulted in tree felling. This fee is set by the Council at its own discretion and increases by 2.9% after rounding.

School visit fees have also been increased above the rate of inflation to ensure that the service is recharging for staff costs. This service is primarily aimed at helping schools as opposed to generating a profit, but the increased fee will prevent this service running at a cost to the Council.

The Council facilitates open-air market days at Sheringham (held on Saturday) and Cromer (held on Friday) all year round, with an additional day on Wednesday's during the Spring/Summer months at Sheringham. These fees are set by the Council at its own discretion with the aim to charge a competitive rate, ensuring the Council generates income whilst attracting tourists to two popular areas in the district. These fees have been increased by inflation.

The parking permits for markets have also been increased by inflation to ensure the Council is recovering its costs for running events.

### **3.7 Legal**

The Council offers multiple legal services as outlined in Appendix A, a set fee is not declared for these services and customers are charged depending on the skill level of Solicitor required to handle the case. The legal team operates on a cost-recovery basis and does generate a net surplus to the Council.

### **3.8 Environmental Health**

The Environmental Health team have undertaken a benchmarking exercise to identify areas where existing fees may be set below appropriate cost-recovery levels. Fees determined from the team's internal operation (admin fees etc.) have also been reviewed to make sure charges accurately reflect the costs to deliver services. These have been increased by the rate of inflation to ensure adequate cost recovery.

Waste collection fees are not published in this report. This is because the full costs to the Council to deliver these services are not known in advance. To ensure that the service can operate in a financially effective manner, the setting of these fees is requested to be done separately under delegated powers by the Director of Resources/S151 officer, once the service areas are more certain of future costs. This is a statutory service of the Council that it must operate.

Environmental charges that have been increased above the rate of inflation following the benchmarking exercise have been summarised below:

Garden bin collection fees have been increased above the rate of inflation for 2026/27. This is a discretionary service that the Council does not have to provide but generates a good portion of income. During internal review it was realised charges are lower than other local authorities and so are being increased to meet the average charge for the area and generate more income for the Council. There is still a higher charge for non-direct debit arrangements to account for the extra administration fee to arrange billing.

Commercial services are a statutory function of the Council. The fee is determined on a full cost recover basis, so has been increased either by/above the rate of inflation to match the cost in service delivery. Larger fees have been benchmarked with other local authorities resulting in larger increases for the forthcoming financial year.

Private water supply charges are a statutory function of the Council. The fee is determined on a cost recover basis. All fees have been increased by the rate of inflation which has allowed for appropriate cost recovery.

Housing Act Notices and HMO licences fees are a statutory function of the Council. Fees have all been increased above the rate of inflation as the statutory limits have increased.

Environmental Protection fees and Fixed Penalty Notice fees are a statutory function of the Council. Fees have mainly remained the same as there has been no increase in the statutory limits.

A Taxi Licensing model has been undertaken by the team to assess if taxi fees are appropriate and following cost-recovery legislation. This review has led to changes across all taxi licencing fees.

Most other licencing fees are a statutory function of the Council. Fees have remained the same as there has been no increase in the statutory limits. The Council is currently charging at the highest fee allowed.

Gambling licence fees are still under further review and will be taken to the January licencing committee for further consideration.

There is a small amount of licencing fees (other than taxi licences which are mentioned above) where the charge can be set by the Council, albeit there is a cap on the maximum fee. This includes skin piercing premises, scrap metal dealers, adult entertainment venues and street trading consents. The fees for these venues have been reviewed and changed to ensure they are being charged at an appropriate cost-recover rate. There has been an introduction of new fees to reflect the cost differences between a new-premises licences and the renewal of an existing premises licence which was not previously taken into consideration.

### **3.9 Planning**

Planning services are a statutory function of the Council and so the fees are determined at a national level by Government legislation.

Land charges are moving to a digital national register run by HM Land Registry. As a result, local authorities will no longer be providing these services.

The Town and Country Planning (fees for applications, deemed applications, requests and site visits) 2023 regulations introduced an automatic annual increase to the nationally set planning fees. This means that increases in planning fees will be announced before April of each year by central government to allow for inflationary increases in the service. Fees have been increased to match the statutory planning fees where applicable, however some fees will not be announced until December 2025. These changes will be reported at a later date and reflected within the 2026/27 budget.

There are some discretionary planning fees which the Council can charge at its own determined rate. These are monitoring fees for S106/IL obligations, fees for High Hedges Complaints. These have been increased by the rate of inflation to ensure the Council is recovering the costs of delivering these services.

### 3.10 Estates

The fees for the professional estates services have been increased by the rate of inflation to ensure that cost are still appropriate for all charges.

For chalets and beach huts, these prices have also been increased by the rate of inflation.

### 3.11 Car Parks

Car park charges are currently under review by a separate working group to assess the appropriate level of fee increases. Considering the current economic climate, it is essential to strike an appropriate balance between generating increased revenue to support Council expenditure and maintaining affordability for users.

It has been proposed that:

- No changes to the Standard car park pricing, except 7 day car parking fees to support our inland communities.
- Fees for Resort and Coastal Car Park, and 7 day tickets are to be increased in line with inflation (3.8%).
- Season Ticket prices have been increased by inflation (3.8%).

### 3.12 External Facilities

Please note, Council facilities operated by an external contractor (for example sports centres) are excluded from this report as the Council has no discretion on the setting of these fees.

## 4. Corporate Priorities

Corporate Plan objectives are supported by the Council's allocated budgets, the Fees & Charges report will directly support the Council's budget setting 2026/27 report.

## 5. Financial and Resource Implications

Inflationary adjustments to fees and charges are necessary to offset the rising costs incurred by the Council. In the absence of such increases, the Council may be compelled to identify further efficiencies in service delivery to address budgetary shortfalls anticipated for the 2026/27 financial year and beyond.

### Comments from S151 Officer

Applying an inflationary increase mitigates the real terms loss to Council funds of below or no inflationary increase. Moreover, not keeping up with inflation makes future recovery challenging due to the greater marginal increases that would be required.

**6. Legal Implications**

Any Fee described as statutory is set at a higher than District government level. The Council does not have the power to impose a higher fee without breaking formal legislation.

**Comments from the Monitoring Officer**

*Fees and charges are set annually and are an important aspect of income to the Council and part of the budget setting process. Inflation has been considered with reference to some proposed increases. There are charges over which the Council has no discretion, being set, for example by statute, but others which may reflect the work, experience and delivery of the service.*

**7. Risks**

For services driven by demand, there exists a potential risk that actual service uptake may decline, resulting in income levels falling short of budgeted projections. To mitigate this risk during the income budgeting process, assumptions regarding anticipated income will be formulated based on the most reliable estimates, developed collaboratively by service managers and the finance team.

**8. Net Zero Target**

None as a direct consequence of this report.

**9. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion**

None as a direct consequence of this report.

**10. Community Safety issues**

None as a direct consequence of this report.

**11. Conclusion and Recommendations**

This report sets out recommendations for the fees and charges to be implemented from 1 April 2026. These proposals form an integral part of the Council's service income budgets and will be incorporated into the detailed 2026/27 budget when it is submitted for consideration and approval.