



Budget - Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 13 January 2026

Report of Councillor Ashley Baxter,
Leader of the Council and Cabinet
Member for Finance, HR and Economic
Development

Fees and Charges Proposals for 2026/27

Report Author

David Scott, Assistant Director of Finance and Deputy s151 Officer

 david.scott@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To present the draft fees and charges proposals for 2026/27.

Recommendations

The Budget – Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- Consider the fees and charges proposals for 2026/27 as set out at Appendix A and provide feedback.
- Endorse the update charging policy as set out in Appendix C

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication? No

What are the relevant corporate priorities? All

Which wards are impacted? All Wards

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 The financial implications of the proposals are incorporated into the draft budget for 2026/27. Any changes to the proposed fees and charges as set out in the report will have an impact on the proposed Budget Framework which is scheduled to be presented to Council for approval on 29 January 2026.

Completed by: Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 Any legal implications associated with this report are referenced in the body of the report.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 Fees and charges are a key element of the Council's funding. They generate approximately £8.5m towards the delivery costs for specific services. In order to ensure a consistent and transparent approach to fee setting, the principles and criteria set out in the Charging Policy have been applied.
- 2.2 The Committee is invited to review and comment on the draft proposals which will be presented to Cabinet for consideration on 15th January 2026.

3. FEES AND CHARGES PROPOSALS

- 3.1 The Council makes charges for a wide range of services. These charges are either discretionary (set by the Council) or under statutory powers (set by the Government). Further definitions of the two main categories of charge are defined below:
 - Discretionary – These are charges local authorities can set independently. When setting discretionary fees and charges, the Council's approach should be clear and in line with the principles set out in the Charging Policy.

- Statutory – These charges are set by central government; therefore it cannot be assumed that they will change annually in line with other fees and charges set by the Council. Nevertheless, the income received from statutory charges contributes to the overall financial position of the Council.

Discretionary Charges

3.2 The proposals for fees and charges for 2026/27 aim to ensure the increase in charges contributes towards the costs of delivering services. A summary of the proposed increases is outlined in **Table 1** below and a detailed breakdown is shown at **Appendix A**:

Table 1 – Summary Fees and Charges Proposals

HEADING	PROPOSAL FOR 2026/27	INCORPORATION OF POLICY PRINCIPLES
Arts Centres	Changes to charges are based on competitive pricing against alternative local options	Cost recovery or market comparisons
Bus Stations	0%	Subsidised – no increase is proposed to encourage bus operators to make use of the bus stations for passengers
Car parking charges	0%	Tariff changes were introduced in January 2025 and will be subject to a post implementation review in February 2026.
Markets	0% Charges waived for Bourne during 26/27 while Town Hall works are underway	Subsidised
Waste Services	£1.50 increase for first green waste bin and 50p increase for subsequent bins	Cost Recovery
Pre-planning advice and street naming and numbering charges	Increase by up to 4%	Cost Recovery

Environmental Health	Full cost recovery analysis has resulted in some charges being reduced	Cost Recovery
Cemetery	Increase by 5%	Cost Recovery
Leisure Centres	LeisureSK Ltd may increase charges to an upper limit of 3%.	Market analysis to be undertaken with other competitors will be used to set fee levels.
Licensing	Full cost recovery analysis undertaken	Cost Recovery
Street Trading	New Charge	Benchmarking undertaken with other local authorities
Community rooms & guest rooms (HRA)	Increase by 3.8%	This is in line with CPI for rent setting as part of the HRA but a review of facilities underway and report recommending options expected during 2026/27 which may alter the charges in year.

Arts Centres

3.3. These charges have been benchmarked against alternative local options to ensure costs are recovered wherever possible and that process are set competitive where appropriate.

Bus Stations

3.4. It is proposed that there is no increase in the bus operator departure charges for 2026/27. This is to encourage bus operators to use the bus stations for travelling passengers.

Car Parking

3.5. Car parking charges for all Council operated pay and display car parks were reviewed during 2024, leading to the introduction of the current charges on 20 January 2025. It was agreed to review the impact of the new tariffs after a 6-month period. The results of this will be considered by the Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee in February 2026. No changes are therefore proposed at this time.

Weekly Street Markets

- 3.6 It is recognised that the weekly markets in Bourne, Grantham and Stamford are an integral element of the economic vibrancy of each town. Recovery and rejuvenation of the markets is well underway following the implementation of the Market Action Plan.
- 3.7 In order to consolidate this recovery (particularly at Grantham), it is recommended that charges are not increased in 2026/27. For Bourne, it is proposed to waive charges during 2026/27 during restoration of Bourne Town Hall takes place because these works are likely to be disruptive. Suspending the charge should encourage traders to continue to operate during this period.

Waste Services

- 3.8 The current charges and proposed increased charges in respect of bulky waste and green waste charges are shown in **Table 2 below**: These have been increased in order to maintain the principle of cost recovery for delivery of these services.

Table 2 – Proposed Bulky Waste and Green Waste Charges

	2025/26 Current	2026/27 Proposed
Bulk household items – first item	£21	£22
-each additional item	£11	£12
Provision of Green Bin (all new or additional bins)	£29	£30
Delivery of bins	£14	£15
Annual Collection Charge (first bin)	£53	£54.50
Annual Collection Charge (each subsequent bin)	£44	£44.50

In respect of annual collection charges, the waste policy is currently being updated and will be presented to Environment OSC in January 2026. One of the proposed amendments is to change the frequency of the green waste collections during the winter period. To reflect this proposed change to the number of collections it proposed that the annual collection increase is £1.50 on the first bin and 50p on subsequent bins.

Licencing

- 3.9 Taxi Licence charges have been reviewed in line with a new proposed Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy. It is proposed to implement these new charges with effect from 1 February 2026.
- 3.10 A new Street Trading Permit charge linked to the refreshed Street Trading Policy is proposed for 2026/27. The refreshed policy is due to be presented to the Cabinet in March 2026 and subject to the decision a new charge may be introduced.

Discretionary Planning Charges

- 3.11 In line with the Charging Policy various fees including Pre-Planning Advice and Street Name and Numbering have been increased in line with inflationary service cost pressures. These have been calculated at 4%, to maintain the principle of cost recovery. However, there are others which, after undertaking a review of current processes have resulted in some charge reductions.

Environmental Health

- 3.12 As part of the budget setting process a review of the Environmental Health fees has been undertaken. The outcome of this has resulted in proposals for some charges to be reduced, and others increased, to ensure they accurately reflect the cost of undertaking each service.

Cemetery

- 3.13 Charges have been increased by 5% to ensure cost recovery for this service.

Leisure Centres

- 3.14 The Council is able to set an upper limits for leisure centre charges. These are proposed to be increased by 3% for 2026/27. LeisureSK Ltd can increase up to that limit and undertake market analysis with other competitors when setting their fee levels.

Service charges

- 3.15 In line with previous years these charges have been increased by CPI in line with the HRA rent setting process at 3.8%. However, a review of facilities and usage of service charges in sheltered housing schemes is currently being undertaken and a report recommending options is expected to be presented to Members during 2026/27. This will cover communal rooms, guest rooms and laundry charges. Once the review is finalised an updated schedule of charges maybe proposed accordingly.

3.16 Full details of the proposed discretionary fees and charges for 2026/27 are shown at Appendix A.

Regulatory Charges

3.17 Details of the regulatory fees and charges for 2026/27 are shown at Appendix B.

3.18 Planning charges are expected to be increased by Government in line with CPI (Consumer Price Index) as at September 2025 (which was 3.8%). Formal confirmation of any increase is expected by March 2026.

3.19 Statutory Licencing charges have remained unchanged for several years and there have been no announcements regarding any proposed increases. It is therefore expected these charges will remain as outlined in **Appendix B** for 2026/27.

Charging Policy

3.20 The setting of fees and charges is incorporated within the medium-term financial planning and budget setting process. An integral purpose of fee setting is to meet specific objectives and priorities of the Corporate Plan. The Charging Policy sets out an overall policy framework to support and practical guide in the approach to the setting of fees and charges.

3.21 Following an internal audit recommendation the Policy has been reviewed and updated which is attached at Appendix C.

4. Reasons for the Recommendations

4.1 Fees and charges are an integral part of the budget setting process and are reviewed annually.

5 Consultation

5.1 The Budget - Joint OSC offers an opportunity for members to consider the Fees and Charges proposals for 2026/27 and to make any recommendations with respect to the information set out in the report.

6 Appendices

6.1 Appendix A – Proposed Discretionary Fees and Charges 2026/27

6.2 Appendix B – Statutory Fees and Charges 2026/27

6.3 Appendix C – Charging Policy