

**REVIEW OF SCALE OF CHARGES 2025/26****REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER****For Information****1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform Members that the Scale of Charges have been reviewed for 2025/26, as detailed at Appendix 1, for implementation from 1 April 2025.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That Members note the Authority's Scale of Charges for 2025/26 to be implemented with effect of 1 April 2025.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 On the 1<sup>st</sup> of April each year the Authority publish the Scale of Charges for that financial year.
- 3.2 Owing to the humanitarian nature of most of the services provided by the Fire Authority and which, by statute, we are obliged to provide free of charge, there is only limited opportunity to expand the real sources of income generation.
- 3.3 Section 19 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 places constraints on Fire Authorities preventing them from levying charges for special services above the amount of full cost recovery. This would constitute unauthorised taxation. Although the Fire Authority cannot charge in excess of the full cost, it may, at its discretion, charge less than the full cost, or it may charge nothing. The Authority cannot authorise charging for the provision of its statutory duties such as extinguishing fires or protecting life and property in the event of fire.
- 3.4 Each of the discretionary services provided by the Brigade for which a charge is to be made during 2025/26 has been assessed in the interest of public safety and compliance with the Act.

**4. INCOME GENERATION STRATEGY**

- 4.1 The Brigade is continuously looking for new sources of income in accordance with recommendations made by both the External and Internal Auditors. Due to the nature of the service provided by the Fire Brigade it is difficult to identify any real sustainable new income.

- 4.2 The charges have been calculated to recover the cost of the service in accordance with current regulations.
- 4.3 A full and itemised review of our charges was conducted in 2021/22 for implementation on 1 April 2022 with future inflationary factors agreed at that time linked to CPI and NJC Pay Awards.

**5. 2025/26 REVIEW**

- 5.1 As part of the full and itemised review, the charges were clearly split between pay and non-pay elements.
- 5.2 On conclusion of the review it was agreed with the Treasurer that all non-pay elements would be increased by the latest UK CPI figure (November).
- 5.3 The 2025/26 non-pay uplift based on the November 2024 CPI figure of 3.5% has been applied.
- 5.4 The pay related elements have been uplifted as follows:-
- Grey book – current competent hourly rate with on-costs plus 4% budgeted pay award for 2025/26
  - Green book – current competent hourly rate with on-costs plus 4% budgeted pay award for 2025/26
- 5.5 The comparison between the scale of charges for 2024/25 and 2025/26 can be found at Appendix 1.

**6. THE DELEGATION SCHEME**

- 6.1 Under Section 3: Finance, of The Delegation Scheme, the CFO in consultation with the Treasurer has delegated power: 3.5 Charging for Services.

*‘To determine charges for Special Services, Instructional Courses and other services provided by the Fire Brigade or its Officers and to waive such charges wholly or in part as appropriate.’*

- 6.2 The Scale of Charges has been consulted with the Treasurer.

**7. PUBLICATION DOCUMENTATION**

- 7.1 A copy of the Scale of Charges 2025/26 document will be published on the Authority’s website by 31 March 2025.

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