

Cabinet 31 January 2024	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Julie Lorraine Corporate Director, Resources	Classification: Open (Unrestricted)
HRA Fees and Charges 2024-25	

Lead Member	Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living
Originating Officer(s)	John Harrison, Interim Director of Finance, Procurement and Audit
Wards affected	(All Wards);
Key Decision?	Yes
Reason for Key Decision	Financial threshold
Forward Plan Notice Published	2 November 2023
Exempt information	Not applicable
Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome	All strategic plan priorities

Executive Summary

This report details the proposed changes to fees and charges for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the financial year 2024-25.

Previously HRA fees and charges we set by Tower Hamlets Homes.

Recommendations:

The Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Approve the proposed HRA fees and charges for 2024-25 as detailed in Appendix 1.

1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 Fees and charges are reviewed annually as part of the Council's budget setting process. This ensures that they are set at the appropriate level for the prevailing economic conditions and represent good practice in terms of the Council's aim to provide value for money.

2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Whilst the changes to existing and the introduction of new fees and charges recommended in this report follow have been reviewed, other alternatives can be adopted by Members if they so wish. The financial impact of any alternatives will need to be reflected in the HRA business plan.

3 DETAILS OF THE REPORT

3.1 BACKGROUND

- 3.1.1 There are 24 fees & charges for approval at Appendix 1. These relate to areas not covered by service charges as they are specific to individuals rather than general services.
- 3.2.1 Charges reflect benchmarking activity and cost of provision. In prior years this were set by Tower Hamlets Homes.

4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Equality Act 2010 requires the Council, in the exercise of its functions to have due regard to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 4.2 Fees and charges are reviewed annually as part of the Council's budget setting process. This ensures that they are set at the appropriate level for the prevailing economic conditions and represents good practice in terms of the Council's aim to provide value for money.
- 4.3 A full Equality Impact Analysis will need to be carried out where screening indicates one is required to determine if there are any disproportionate impacts on persons who share a protected characteristic, and where appropriate, identify and take actions to mitigate against the potential impact.

5 OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:
- Best Value Implications,
 - Consultations,
 - Environmental (including air quality),
 - Risk Management,
 - Crime Reduction,
 - Safeguarding.
 - Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.

5.2 None.

6 COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

6.1 The HRA has undertaken a review of their fees and charges as part of the annual budget setting process. These are included in the HRA business plan.

7 COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

7.1 Local Authorities have certain limited freedoms to charge for discretionary services under the Local Government Act 2003. As the HRA is ring fenced there is a need to maximise income for discretionary activities requested by owner-occupiers and residents which is not directly related to the statutory housing functions in order to avoid disadvantaging tenants. The costs of administering such activities should be covered by the fees charges so that they are not subsidised by the HRA.

7.2 There are no major legal implications arising from this report as these fees and charges relate to discretionary services or charges and do not relate to matters which are controlled by statute.

7.3 In carrying out its functions, the Council must comply with the public sector equality duty set out in section 149 Equality Act 2010. This requires it to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful conduct under the Equality Act 2010, to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. This duty extends to all decision making including the setting of fees and charges and is reflected at paragraph 4 of the report.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- NONE.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – HRA Fees and Charges

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012

- NONE.

Officer contact details for documents:

Chris Leslie (Head of Strategic & Corporate Finance)

Marysia Kupczyk (Head of Finance – HRA)