

REPORT TO	ON
CABINET	21 JUNE 2017



Jan 2017

TITLE	PORTFOLIO	AUTHOR	Agenda item No.
BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION: PEST CONTROL FEES AND CHARGES	PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY & WELLBEING	MARK GAFFNEY DIRECTOR	

Is this report a KEY DECISION (i.e. more than £75,000 or impacting on more than 2 Borough wards?)	Yes
Is this report on the Cabinet Forward Plan ?	Yes
Is the request outside the policy and budgetary framework and therefore subject to confirmation at full Council?	No

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To seek approval to implement a chargeable pest control service for the treatment of rats and mice. This will support the delivery of the £150,000 Business Transformation (BT) target contained in the approved 2017/18 budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The target is allocated against the Neighbourhoods, Environmental Health and Assets directorate.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That Cabinet approves the introduction of pest control charges for rat and mice treatments as outlined in the report.

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

The report relates to the following corporate priorities

Clean, green and safe	√	Strong and healthy communities	√
Strong South Ribble in the heart of prosperous Lancashire		Efficient, effective and exceptional council	√

4. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

The approved budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2017/18 includes a Business Transformation (BT) target of £150,000 to be delivered in the current year.

Whilst the majority of the target will be achieved through staffing savings, an element is proposed to be achieved through the introduction of charges for the treatment of rats and mice. These are

the only pest control treatments that the Council offers which are not currently chargeable. The majority of other Lancashire councils charge for these treatments.

5. PROPOSALS, RATIONALE AND DETAIL

5.1 The approved 2017/18 budget includes a Business Transformation (BT) target of £150,000 to be delivered in the current year. The target is allocated against the Neighbourhoods, Environmental Health and Assets directorate.

5.2 The majority of the £150,000 target is subject to proposals to be achieved through staffing related savings which is not the subject of this report. However, circa £20,000 of the total efficiency proposals has been allocated against increased pest control income through introducing charges for rat and mice treatments.

5.3 Local Authorities have a statutory responsibility to offer a pest control service but do not have to provide the service directly or free of charge. It is therefore for each Local Authority to decide how the service should be offered and whether the service should be chargeable.

5.4 All of the pest control treatments offered by the Council are chargeable except for the treatment of rats and mice which is currently a free service. The majority of other Lancashire councils charge for all pest control treatments including rats and mice with charges ranging from £24 to £60.

5.5 It is proposed that charges are introduced for rat and mice treatments in line with the majority of other Lancashire councils. The average treatment requires three visits for which it is proposed that the customer will pay a total of £41 which includes VAT. Any further visits will incur an additional charge. However, a number of customers only require one visit to receive advice which prompts changes in behaviour which can resolve the issue. There is a risk that the full £41 charge may not encourage these customers to take the service. To ensure that these customers are retained it is therefore proposed that the £41 charge is broken down into £20 for the first visit and then should the treatment require the further two visits the remaining £21 is charged. Compared to private sector charges the above proposals represent good value for money.

5.6 The above charges based on the estimated number of "jobs" will achieve the required circa £20,000 additional pest control income identified in the Business Transformation efficiency proposals. Should the proposals be implemented in July the part year income will be circa £15,000. It is anticipated that the number of "jobs" will reduce as a result of charging for the service which has been factored into the above projections.

5.7 Currently the pest control service carries out a small amount of work for businesses. It is proposed that any spare capacity in the pest control team created from these proposals is invested into expanding the service further into businesses to seek additional income.

5.8 Should the proposals in this report be approved it is proposed that a review is undertaken in approximately 12 months' time of the charges and also the impact and success of the change in direction of the service.

6. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The alternative is to not introduce charges for the treatment of rats and mice and to not consider expanding the service to generate further income. However, this does not support the approach that the Council needs to take to meet its future challenges and in particular delivering against the MTFS.

7. WIDER IMPLICATIONS AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTATION

7.1 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The proposals in this report contribute towards meeting the £150,000 BT target included in the 2017/18 budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

7.2 Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

The introduction of these charges is in line with one of the 2017/2018 MTFS key objectives to increase income levels.

Due to uncertainty around the potential impact of charging on the take-up of the service, a prudent approach has been taken in relation to the number of treatments forecast and the charges have been set at a level which is considered to compare favourably with the private sector, whilst still making a significant contribution to the cost of providing the pest control service.

As outlined in the report, there may be opportunities in the team for further income generation as a result of this proposal. In addition, as with other Council fees and charges, there will be a review of the charges to assess the impact and ensure that income levels are maximised.

7.3 Comments of the Monitoring Officer

Under the provisions of section 2 of the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 Local Authorities have a statutory duty to keep their district free of rats and mice so far as is reasonably practicable.

They have powers to carry out inspections and enforce owner/occupiers of land to comply with their legal duties in this regard.

<p>Other implications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Risk• Equality• HR	<p>Should the proposals in this report not be adopted there is a risk of not delivering against the target set out in the MTFS.</p> <p>An Equality Impact Assessment is in place for the Environmental Health service. This will be updated to reflect this policy and include consideration of safeguarding matters with no issues anticipated.</p> <p>There are no HR issues as a result of this report.</p>
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9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

2017/18 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy.