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| **REPORT TO** | **ON** |
| **CABINET** | **21 June 2018** |
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| **TITLE** | **PORTFOLIO** | **REPORT OF** |
| Temporary Suspension of Fees and Charges for domestic Rat and Mice treatments | Public Health, Leisure and Wellbeing | Director of Neighbourhoods & Development |

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| Is this report a **KEY DECISION** (i.e. more than £100,000 or impacting on more than 2 Borough wards?)  Is this report on the **Statutory Cabinet Forward Plan**?  Is the request outside the policy and budgetary framework and therefore subject to confirmation at full Council?  Is this report confidential? | **Yes**  **No**  **No**  **No** |

**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

* 1. This report seeks Members’ approval to temporarily suspend the current charges for domestic rat and mice treatments offered to the borough by the council’s Pest Control Service until the 11th July 2018 when a full Fees and Charges Report will be presented for Cabinet approval.

1. **PORTFOLIO RECOMMENDATIONS**
   1. That Cabinet agree to the temporary suspension of the fees and charges for rats and mice until the 11th July 2018 when a Fees and Charges Report will be presented to Cabinet for approval.
2. **CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

3.1 The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

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| Excellence and Financial Sustainability |  |
| Health and Wellbeing | X |
| Place |  |

Projects relating to People in the Corporate Plan:

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| People |  |

1. **BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT**
   1. On the 21st June 2017 the Cabinet decided to introduce charging for rat and mice treatments.
   2. The new fees and charges for domestic rodent treatments have applied for the last 9 months. Since the introduction of charges the Pest Control team have managed to increase their service to business customers but there has been a significant decrease in the number of treatments to residential properties.
   3. The total number of rodent treatments undertaken by the council in residential properties has reduced by 65% on the previous year’s treatments. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this is not as a result of a reduction in rodent population but due to the introduction of charges.
   4. Rodents and in particular rats can have a significant public health impact, spreading various diseases and damaging property. The summer months are particularly cause for concern with the heat causing an increase in population of rodents.
   5. Evidence from the council’s Pest Control Officers have shown that residents are now relying on DIY treatments which are less effective and increasing the amount of poison in the environment.
   6. Effective treatments require a strategic approach in an area to really control a rodent population and evidence from the council’s Pest Control Officers has shown this is not taking place due to the significant reduction in treatments.
   7. The council has a legal duty under the Prevention of Damage By Pests Act 1949 to take steps to secure as far as practicable that their district is kept free from rats and mice, and in particular to destroy rats and mice on their own land and to enforce the duties of owners and occupiers of land.
2. **PROPOSALS** 
   1. In the interest of public health the proposal is to temporarily suspend the fees and charges for domestic rodent treatments within the borough until the 11th July 2018 when a Fees and Charges report will be presented for approval at Cabinet.
3. **CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT AND OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION**
   1. No consultation has been undertaken.
4. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**
   1. Maintain the fees and charges until the 11th July 2018 when a full report can be presented to Council detailing all available options and the likely impact.
5. **Financial implications**
   1. The temporary suspension of fees and charges will have a financial impact on the services income. There is currently an income target for this service of £20,000.
6. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 The charging for the service is discretionary and the Council can alter the charges, in line with the constitution as they determine.

1. **Human Resources and Organisational Development implications**
   1. None anticipated.
2. **ICT/technology implications**
   1. None anticipated.
3. **Property and Asset Management implications**
   1. None anticipated.
4. **RISK MANAGEMENT**
   1. The suspension of fees and charges will directly impact on the projected income from the service.
   2. Those residents of the borough who have already paid for treatments may request refunds.
   3. A suspension of the fees and charges is highly likely to result in a significant increase in rodent treatment requests which may lead to a backlog for Pest Control.
5. **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPACT**
   1. The suspension applies to all domestic property in the borough and so there are no equality or diversity impacts.
6. **RELEVANT DIRECTORS RECOMMENDATIONS** 
   1. The Director recommends the suspension of fees for rodent treatment at domestic properties until the Fees and Charges paper is presented to Cabinet for approval on the 25th July.
7. **COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER**
   1. Based on the current levels of income, the estimated loss of income to the Council from residential customers will be in the region of £1,200 - £1,500 per month. There will be no reduction in costs as the Pest Control service will continue to be provided.
8. **COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER**

Please see legal implications section for full details but we would be acting within our powers if we were to proceed as suggested.

In accordance with our Constitution the Chair of Scrutiny has been spoken to and he has agreed that this item can proceed as an urgent item.

1. **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

None

**19. APPENDICES**

Jennifer Mullin

Director of Neighbourhoods & Development

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