

Appendix 1: Housing Revenue Account Service Charges 2024/25

1.0 District and group heating

- 1.1 Tenants linked to a group heating scheme (older persons housing schemes) pay for heat through a service charge. Service charges paid with the rent apply to all tenants linked to a group heating scheme. Value added tax is not payable on service charges.
- 1.2 Heating charges are not eligible for Housing Benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit.
- 1.3 The cost of energy has stabilised over the past twelve months so the cost of providing heating to the older person scheme schemes has remained unchanged. It is proposed that the heating charges remain at their 2023/24 levels.

	Current charge (per week)	2024/25 charge (per week)	Increase in 2024/25 (per week)
1 bedroom	£29.70	£29.70	N/A
2 bedroom	£30.54	£30.54	N/A
3 bedroom	£31.38	£31.38	N/A

- 1.4 These figures are based on officers' best estimates of the costs for 2024/25. As with all service charges, heating charges are recalculated annually. Any changes in energy prices over the next 12 months will be reflected in the 2025/26 charges.

2.0 Garage rents and garage sites

- 2.1 Income streams from both garage rents and garage site leases currently cover expenditure and create a surplus for investing in housing management services. An increase in lease and rental charges to match the September Retail Price inflation rate is recommended. This will revise the charges as follows.

	Current charge	Revised charge	Increase in 2024/25
Garage rents	£9.05 (per week)	£9.86 (per week)	£0.81

Garage site – shale surface	£66.99 (per annum)	£72.95 (per annum)	£5.96
Garage site – asphalt	£84.28 (per annum)	£91.78 (per annum)	£7.50
Garage site – other	£92.29 (per annum)	£100.50 (per annum)	£8.21

2.2 Garage rents are not eligible for Housing Benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit.

3.0 Water charges

3.1 With the exception of some of the sheltered schemes, water charges are no longer collected on behalf of Severn Trent. For the remaining properties where charges are collected it is proposed to increase the charge from £3.70 to £3.89 per week.

3.2 Water charges are not eligible for Housing Benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit.

4.0 Garden assistance scheme

4.1 The current Garden Assistance Scheme contract was awarded to Spirepride in April 2018. In order to comply with the Equality Act 2010, the service is provided free to disabled tenants.

4.2 The cost of providing the service to any eligible disabled service users will be met from the HRA working balance. Any other service users will be charged as per the table below. The contract price will increase in April 2024 by 8.06% and it is proposed to pass this increase onto all paying clients.

	Current charge (per week)	Revised charge (per week)	Increase in 2024/25 (per week)
Grass Cut	£4.14	£4.47	£0.33
Hedge Cut	£0.80	£0.86	£0.06
Grass and hedge cut	£4.95	£5.35	£0.40

4.3 Garden Assistance Scheme charges are not eligible for Housing Benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit.

5.0 Community rooms

- 5.1 Housing Services currently manage two community rooms: Wimbourne Crescent, and Winstar Court at Newland Dale that are available for hire. Paid usage is low at each venue, with income not meeting the costs associated with the maintenance and management of these facilities.
- 5.2 The proposal is to amend the charge for the community room to a fixed price of £5.00 per hour for a minimum of two hours.

6.0 Communal staircase cleaning

- 6.1 The contract for cleaning communal staircases is carried out by in house Building Cleaning.
- 6.2 In order that the service continues to recover its costs it is proposed to increase the weekly charge to tenants by 25 pence per week from 1 April 2024, increasing the charge from £2.51 to **£2.76** per week.
- 6.3 Communal staircase cleaning charges are eligible for Housing Benefit and the housing element of Universal Credit.

7.0 Sheltered scheme service charge

- 7.1 The cost of the services covered by the sheltered scheme service charge has increased slightly. An increase of 30 pence per week from £15.59 to **£15.89 per week** is required to ensure that the charge recovers costs. The charge applies to all sheltered housing schemes and will continue to be reviewed annually.