

Teignbridge District Council

Executive

7th October 2024

Part i

Pest control fees review

Purpose of Report

To consider the proposal to charge a fee for the provision of a pest control service for rats and mice control and to agree the fee.

Recommendation(s)

The Executive RESOLVES to:

- (1) Charge a fee for the provision of a pest control service for rats and mice control and
- (2) The fee is £72 per service request with a 50% reduction for those on Council Tax Reduction.

Financial Implications

See section 3 for proposed charges and revenue savings generated.

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Legal Implications

These are as set out in the report.

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Risk Assessment

See section 4.3 in the report.

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Environmental/ Climate Change Implications

See section 4.4 in the report.

David Eaton

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Committee

Date of meeting

Report Author

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Executive Member

Cllr Peter Williams
Executive Member for Recycling, Household Waste and Environmental Health

Appendices

Appendix 1 Demand Analysis
Appendix 2 Customer Satisfaction Survey Results
Appendix 3 Benchmarking Analysis

1. Background

The Council has provided a free of charge pest control service for the control of rats and mice in domestic properties for over 15 years. Prior to this the Council operated an in-house pest control service.

The Council has specific duties under the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 to take steps to ensure that the district is reasonably free from rats and mice and to:

- From time to time carry out inspections.
- Destroy rats and mice on land the Council owns or occupies.
- Enforce duties of owners and occupiers to keep other land free from rats and mice.

By providing a pest control service this has discharged the Council's duties under the Act.

As part of the overall review of Council statutory responsibilities and exploring opportunities for income generation, a review of the pest control service has been undertaken. This report sets out the details of the review and the options for charging for this service.

2. Customer demand survey and Benchmarking

A customer survey was undertaken of the users of the current free pest control service for rats and mice between June 2023 and December 2023.

Overall satisfaction with the service was high with 79% satisfied with the service and only 13% dissatisfied. 40% of those surveyed said that they would treat the problem themselves if there was no free service and 10% said they would do nothing. Based on this data the financial modelling for the proposed fees has used a 50% reduction in service demand.

Benchmarking has been undertaken with the local authorities within the CIPFA Family Group. This showed that six authorities make no provision for a pest control service and rely on the private contractors to deal with the demand.

There is no data on the impact of this decision on the authority's resources. Of the remaining authorities they charge for the provision of the service with a range of fees from £48 to £165 per service request. Five of the authorities offer a discount fee for those on a qualifying benefit. The current market price for a local private pest control contractor to undertake a minimum of two visits ranges between £120 and £144.

A procurement exercise has been undertaken and evaluated. The successful company has been notified and will provide the service at a fixed price with the new contract due to start on the 1st November 2024.

3. Proposed fees

The Local Government Act 2003 gives a general power for local authorities to charge for discretionary services. Therefore, officers have explored the various charging options for this service.

The demand for pest control services is dictated by several factors out of the control of the authority. The weather has a significant impact on the population of rats and mice as does the ability of residents to afford a service. Therefore, the

calculations used by officers have assumed a 50% reduction in current service demand to calculate the proposed fees.

The table below sets out a range of fees and the impact on the budget provision.

Proposed Standard Fee inc VAT	Reduction for CTR inc VAT	Net Income generated	TDC Contribution per year	Revenue saving based on 23/24 revenue budget
£96	£48	£36,600	£600	£29,900
£84	£42	£32,025	£5,175	£25,325
£72	£36	£27,450	£9,750	£20,750
£60	£30	£22,875	£14,325	£16,175
£48	£24	£18,300	£18,900	£11,600

4. Implications, Risk Management and Climate Change Impact

4.1 Financial

The Council currently has a revenue budget provision of £30,500 for the financial year 2024/25. The contract has been procured at a fixed price of £37,200 for two years with an optional 1-year extension. This allows the Council to closely monitor the demand and proposed fees to mitigate the risk of the council having an additional revenue budget pressure. The cost and fee will be reviewed periodically, and adjustments made during the contract period.

4.2 Legal

The Council has a legal responsibility to deal with rats and mice in the district and to take enforcement action if required. The provision of a pest control service is not a legal requirement but an effective method of discharging the duty.

4.3 Risks

The proposed charges for pest control would generate income but the demands for the service are influenced by factors which cannot always be controlled and there is a low risk that the income will not cover costs.

Charging for the service will lead to some residents trying to self-treat the problem in their property. This could lead to infestations that are not adequately controlled and increase the demand on the Council to undertake an investigation and enforcement activity.

4.4 Environmental/Climate Change Impact

Rodent infestations have a detrimental impact on the environment and an impact on the health and wellbeing of residents. The use of chemicals is regulated to ensure they are used safely, legally and effectively.

5. Alternative Options

The benchmarking survey identified that some authorities do not provide any service. The current free service has been processed mapped and this year to date 70% of the requests come via our website forms directly to the contractor with no handling by Teignbridge staff. The Environmental Protection team deal with over 100 service requests where rat infestations are not being dealt with by the owner of the property or land and cannot be referred to the Contractor. This requires an investigation and if necessary, the serving of statutory notices to ensure that our duties under the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 are met. If the Council was to cease the service provision this would increase the demand on the Council with no additional capacity. There would be an increased demand on the Customer Support team dealing with enquires and entering the case details into the system. There would also be an increased demand on the Environmental Protection Team to deal with those residents who wouldn't take any action and could create larger infestations that are untreated and impact more residents.

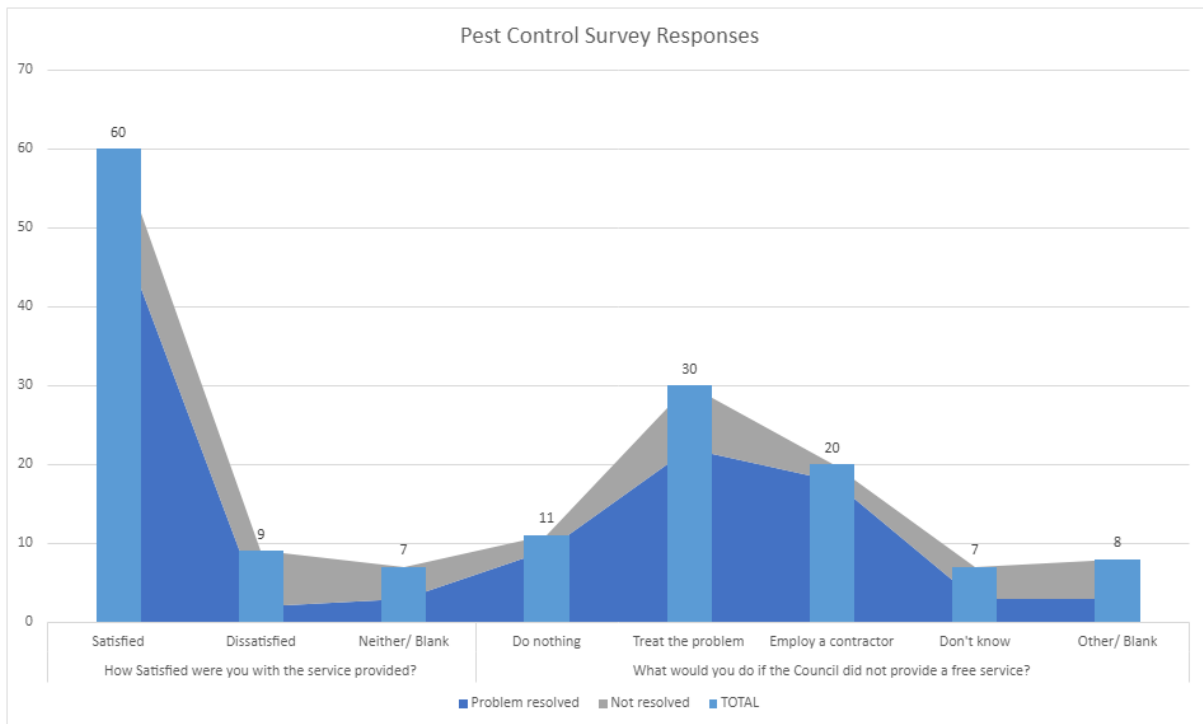
6. Conclusion

Setting a fee of £72 with a 50% reduction for those on Council Tax Reduction, will be comparable to our CIPFA Family Group, below the general private market price and continue to provide a service whilst reducing the overall cost of the service.

Appendix 1 Demand Analysis

Financial year	Rats (Contractor)	Mice (Contractor)
2020-2021	1049	70
2021-2022	1072	95
2022-2023	933	89
2023-2024	841	160

Appendix 2 Customer Satisfaction Survey Results



Appendix 3 Benchmarking Analysis

CIPFA Nearest Neighbours	Service provided?	Free?	Rats/ Mice Fee	No of visits	Discounted fee scheme?	Qualifying benefits
Fylde	No					
Mendip (now Somerset)	No					
North Devon	No					
Rochford	No					
Sedgemoor (now Somerset)	No					
Torrige	No					
Arun	Referral to preferred contractor	No	£54	Survey, treatment and follow up	50%	Guaranteed pension credit Housing Benefit Income based employment support allowance Income support Income based job seekers allowance Universal credit Tax credits on income of £15,050 or less Council Tax reduction (not single person discount)
Kings Lynn & West Norfolk	Referral to preferred contractor	No	£65	up to 3 visits	No	
Wyre	Yes	No	£48	Not stated	No	
Exeter	Yes - £25 for survey and advice plus additional costs for treatments	No	£70	Treatment	50%	income support, income based job seekers allowance, income related employment and support allowance and guaranteed pension credit

Fareham	Yes - by phone to EH Team	No	£77	up to 3 treatments	65%	Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance; Income-related Employment and Support Allowance; Income Support; Pension Credit (Guarantee); and/or Universal Credit (maximum award).
New Forest	Yes - in house	No	£165	up to 4 visits Additional visits £45	50%	defined benefits
East Devon	Yes - online firmstep form to EH Team	No	£90	up to 3 visits	50%	Employment and Support Allowance (Income Related) (ESA) Income Support Job Seekers' Allowance (JSA) Disability Allowance Personal Independence Payment (PIP) Attendance Allowance Housing Benefit Council Tax Reduction Pension Credit Guarantee Universal Credit Council Tax Reduction (this does not include single occupancy discount)
Mid Devon	Referral to preferred contractor	Yes - for benefits claimants	£77	Treatment plus follow up	Free	Income Support, Housing Benefit, Council Tax Relief, Pension Credit Guarantee or Housing Costs through Universal Credit, we can provide a maximum of 2 free mice or rat pest control treatments (4 visits) in one year

South Hams & West Devon	Yes - benefits recipients only	Yes	£0			Employment and Support Allowance (Income Related) (ESA) Income Support Job Seekers' Allowance (JSA) Disability Allowance Personal Independence Payment (PIP) Attendance Allowance Housing Benefit Council Tax Reduction Pension Credit Guarantee Universal Credit
Lewes	Yes - Rats only	Yes	£0			