

<b>Report of:</b>	Executive Member for Environment, Finance and Governance Director of Environment and Community Services
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<b>Submitted to:</b>	Executive
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<b>Date:</b>	10 May 2022
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<b>Title:</b>	Proposed Service Delivery Model and associated Subsidised Charges for Residential Pest Control
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<b>Report for:</b>	Decision
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<b>Status:</b>	Public
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<b>Strategic priority:</b>	Physical environment
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<b>Key decision:</b>	Yes
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<b>Why:</b>	Decision(s) will have a significant impact in two or more wards
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<b>Urgent:</b>	No
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<b>Why:</b>	
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### Executive summary

This report requests that Executive approves the proposed service delivery model and associated subsidised charges for a residential Pest Control Service.

This is in response to the allocation of £90,000 at the Full Council meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2022 specifically for a subsidised residential pest control service.

It is proposed that an operational team be established in order to implement the service and that a subsidised fee is set at £15 per visit which is in line with other Local Authority charging and approx. 50% less than private sector.

It is also proposed that the £15 fee is paid prior to any home visit

## Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to ask Executive to approve the proposed service delivery model and associated subsidised charges for residential pest control.

## Background and relevant information

2. A report was submitted to the Scrutiny Panel meeting on 23 February 2021 outlining that Scrutiny Panel recommended a number of actions for further consideration, including the possibility of introducing a low cost Pest Control Service to residential properties and whether this would provide an additional income stream to the service area.
3. As a consequence of changing climate and milder winters there has been an increase in rodent activity both nationally and locally increasing the need for Pest Control across Middlesbrough. Coupled with this has been the impact of the Covid 19 restrictions which has led to more people being at home, generating more waste and spending more time in their gardens putting up bird feeders, both of these factors have caused an increase in rodent activity within domestic properties.
4. Currently Middlesbrough Council's Pest Control service is not offered to domestic properties as this was suspended in 2018 due to resource issues. However, we currently carry out commercial work alongside treating Council buildings and open spaces.
5. The table below indicates the income generated when the Council did offer a domestic pest control service:

Year	Domestic Pest Control Income
17/18 (2016 visits)	£32,628.81 (Average of £16.18 per visit)

6. A cost analysis of Tees valley Council's and private businesses has been undertaken as per the table below:

Council	Free Service	Chargeable Service	Charge
Stockton Council	Rats and mice	Wasps, Fleas, Bed Bugs, Cockroaches	£35 + vat per visit
Darlington Council	Rats and mice	Wasps, Fleas, Bed Bugs, Cockroaches	£70.20 + vat per visit
Redcar & Cleveland Council		Rats/Mice Insects	£83 (up to 2 visits)
Hartlepool Council	Rats (if in house)	External rats Mice	£40 £80 (up to 4 visits)

Pest Control contractor		The average cost of Pest control is usually between £95 and £200, with the average quote at around £150.	£150 per treatment (average)
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7. At Full Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2022, £90,000 was allocated to providing a subsidised residential pest control service in Middlesbrough. This will fund additional resources to ensure that current service levels do not drop and that we can offer a subsidised chargeable residential service which is reliable. The income from the service along with the £90,000 budget allocation would make it self-sustainable based on the number of visits in 2017/18 which is when the Council last provided a residential service.
8. The proposed charge for residential pest control in Middlesbrough is £15 per visit regardless of what type of pest is being treated. Whilst some local authorities have a free service for rats and mice inside the home, they still charge up to £40+ per visit for these pests in gardens and other outside areas.
9. The £15 per visit proposed in this report would be for any residential pest control visit wither inside the home or in the outside boundary of the residential property. Therefore the overall cost for members of the public will be lower than neighbouring authorities and significantly lower than that of private contractors.
10. The number of visits per treatment varies, depending on the pest problem. In most cases up to 4 treatments will be required to treat Rats/Mice. This would equate to an average cost per treatment of £60. This is well below the range of treatments offered by the private sector.
11. Whilst it takes on average 4 treatments to eliminate some pests it may be necessary to conduct more visits in some cases. Any subsequent visits would continue to be conducted at a cost of £15 per visit.
12. In order to ensure that the service is delivered efficiently and effectively it is proposed that payment must be made prior to each visit. Payment can be made online or via alternative electronic means. This will reduce the need for staff to chase payment and will free up time to attend more home visits.
13. Given that Thirteen Housing currently offer a pest control service for their residents it is proposed that the Council's subsidised residential service is not offered to Thirteen Tenants or other social registered landlords.
14. The Service will continue to provide suggestions on good housekeeping and waste minimisation to prevent the occurrence of rodents such as residents unwittingly feeding rats as a result of wishing to feed birds, through the following channels:
  - Love Middlesbrough Magazine
  - Council Website
  - Intranet
  - Advertising in community hubs/libraries/council buildings
  - Social Media

## **What decision(s) are being recommended?**

That the Executive:

15. Approve the proposed service delivery model and associated subsidised charges for residential pest control:
  - a) A chargeable residential pest control service is reintroduced as per the staffing proposal
  - b) A subsidised charge for pest control is set at £15 per visit which is comparable with neighbouring LA and approx. 50% lower than some external providers. This will not apply to people who are in properties of social registered landlords.
  - c) That payment must be made prior to each visit.
  - d) That the charges be reviewed in 12 months to assess demand and sustainability of the service.

## **Rationale for the recommended decision(s)**

16. A chargeable residential pest control service is reintroduced due to increased demand for the service and the fact that the budget has been allocated via the budget setting process at Full Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2022.
17. Due to the allocation of £90,000 budget that was approved at Full Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2022 this allows the Council to provide a subsidised service with charges set at £15 per visit in order to ensure that the service is deliverable and sustainable.
18. That payment must be made prior to each visit to reduce the potential of bad debt

## **Other potential decision(s) and why these have not been recommended**

19. The option to do nothing is not recommended as this issues was agreed as a priority at the Full Council budget setting meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2022 and funding was allocated to this service.

## **Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)**

20. Approving the proposed management arrangements and fees will enable the service to be established and for the priority to be addressed.
21. Approving the recommendation to set the fees at £15 per visit will ensure that the service is sustainable

## ***Legal***

22. There are no legal implications.

## ***Strategic priorities and risks***

23. Strategic priority: To improve the physical environment and to make Middlesbrough an attractive place to live, work and visit.

24. Risk: A reduction in requests will generate less income, resulting in a budget pressure, as a consequence of the income not recovering the costs of providing the service.

### ***Human Rights, Equality and Data Protection***

25. An Impact Assessment has been carried out and there are no initial concerns.

### ***Financial***

26. £90,000 was allocated from the MTFP as part of the 2022/23 Budget Setting Process.

### **Actions to be taken to implement the recommended decision(s)**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
Recruit the new posts	Jamie Wood	July 2022
Set up payment process both online	Dale Metcalfe	July 2022
Implement service	Marion Walker	July 2022

### **Appendices**

<b>1</b>	Equality impact assessment – Chargeable Pest Control April 2022
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### **Background papers**

<b>Body</b>	<b>Report title</b>	<b>Date</b>
Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel	Report – Pest Control	23 <sup>rd</sup> February 2021

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