

## **REPORT FOR INFORMATION**

**Committee:** Resources and Governance Overview and Scrutiny  
**Date:** 19 June 2008  
**Subject:** Pest Control Charges  
**Report of:** Head of Environmental Services

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### **Purpose of Report**

To advise Members of the reasons for the key decision to increase pest control treatment charges from £17 to £20 per treatment for public health pests which includes mice, cockroaches, bedbugs and fleas, and to increase charges for non public health pests as follows:

- Wasps from £36 to £45
- Garden ants from £36 to £40
- Squirrels from £46 to £95
- Other pests from £17 to £45

### **Recommendations**

Members are requested to note the report.

### **Financial Consequences for the Revenue Budget**

Approximately £34,322 additional income will be raised from the increased treatment charges in the remaining 9 months of this financial year. The figure is an approximation as it is dependent on the demand for the service. A maximum of £34k will be used to fund proactive public health pest control work subject to the performance of the budget.

### **Financial Consequences for the Capital Budget**

None

### **Contact Officers**

|                 |  |               |
|-----------------|--|---------------|
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**Background Documents**

None

**Wards Affected**

All

**Implications for**

|                            |                                   |                           |                          |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b><u>Anti Poverty</u></b> | <b><u>Equal Opportunities</u></b> | <b><u>Environment</u></b> | <b><u>Employment</u></b> |
| Yes                        | No                                | No                        | No                       |

Maintaining an affordable charging regime for pest control treatments will ensure that public health is protected for all, regardless of income.

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The key decision to increase charges for the Council's Pest Control Services has been called in for consideration by the Resources and Governance Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 1.2 The key decision is to increase pest control charges as follows: public health pests which includes mice, cockroaches, bedbugs and fleas be increased from £17 to £20 per treatment, and non public health pests to be increased as follows:
  - Wasps from £36 to £45.
  - Garden ants from £36 to £40
  - Squirrels from £46 to £95
  - Other pests from £17 to £45

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 The pest control service carries out a comprehensive range of treatments aimed at protecting the health of residents and visitors to the city. Treatments range from the control of pests considered to be of public health significance – rats, mice, cockroaches, bedbugs and fleas to the control of seasonal pests such as garden ants, wasps, bees, beetles, silverfish, slugs, snails, spiders, earwigs, crickets, etc which, although can be considered a nuisance, are of no public health significance.
- 2.2 Legislation requires owners and/or occupiers of premises to take action to control pest infestations in buildings or on land in their ownership. The principal legislation is as follows:
  - The Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 section 4 which requires owners and occupiers to take action to control rats and mice on their property,
  - Public Health Act 1936 Section 83 (as amended), deals with verminous premises. – e.g. infestations of cockroaches, bedbugs etc.
  - Environmental Protection Act 1990 gives further provision for dealing with pests, which may be prejudicial to health or a nuisance.
  - Housing Act 2004 (Housing Health & Safety Rating System) gives provision for an improvement or prohibition notice to be served on landlords e.g. private sector housing, to rid the premises of pests.
- 2.3 Whilst the above legislation provides the local authority with necessary enforcement powers to require householders and landowners to control pest on their land and property there is no statutory duty for the City Council to provide a pest control treatment service other than for premises and land in the ownership of the City Council. However, recognising the potential risk to public health that many rodent and insect pest infestations

may pose, together with the complexity of the treatments regimes, the City Council has historically provided an in-house pest control service.

### **3.0 Demand for Service**

3.1 In the domestic sector during the last financial year (2007/08) the pest control service received a total of 11,257 requests for pest control services resulting in a total of 30,868 service visits being carried out. This includes the initial visit and revisits, depending on the pest type, needed to ensure the pest problem is eradicated.

3.2 Statistics relating to the number of service requests received, by pest species, and the total number of visits in 2007/08 needed to eradicate the pest are detailed in Appendix 1.

### **4.0 Charges**

4.1 All treatments carried out by the pest control service in domestic premises, with the exception of rats, are chargeable. Rather than offering a non chargeable service it is considered necessary to set an affordable charge as this encourages the householder to:

- be at home when the pest technician calls, so avoiding expensive "no access" visits
- maintain standards within their property and follow advice given to prevent a re-infestation

4.2 Treatment charges for the control of public health pests – rats, mice, cockroaches fleas and bedbugs for owner occupiers have traditionally been carried out at heavily subsidised rates. This is currently £17 inclusive of VAT and, other than inflationary increases, has not increased since 2003.

4.3 Table 1 shows the projected requests for service by pest type in the current financial year and the additional income that would be achieved in a full year with the proposed increased charges. The projected service requests for wasps and garden ants are significantly higher than last year. This is due to last year's unseasonal weather, which suppressed the numbers of these pests. This year's projected figures have been adjusted to reflect expected averages of these pest types.

**Table 1**

| <b>Service</b>                                      | <b>Projected Requests 08/09</b> | <b>Current Charge inc VAT<br/>£</b> | <b>Proposed Charge inc VAT<br/>£</b> | <b>Gross Increase<br/>£</b> | <b>Net Increase after VAT<br/>£</b> | <b>Total Increase in Income<br/>£</b> |
|---|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Wasp  | 1615                            | £36.00                              | £45.00                               | £9.00                       | £7.66                               | £12,370                               |
| Garden Ants   | 1084                            | £36.00                              | £40.00                               | £4.00                       | £3.40                               | £3,690                                |
| Fleas*  | 324                             | £17.00                              | £20.00                               | £3.00                       | £2.55                               | £827                                  |
| Cockroaches*  | 830                             | £17.00                              | £20.00                               | £3.00                       | £2.55                               | £2,119                                |
| Bedbugs*  | 142                             | £17.00                              | £20.00                               | £3.00                       | £2.55                               | £363                                  |
| Squirrels   | 149                             | £46.00                              | £95.00                               | £49.00                      | £41.70                              | £6,214                                |
| Mice*   | 3490                            | £17.00                              | £20.00                               | £3.00                       | £2.55                               | £8,911                                |
| Rats*   | foc                             |                                     |                                      |                             |                                     |                                       |
| Other Pests   | 719                             | £17.00                              | £45.00                               | £28.00                      | £23.83                              | £17,134                               |
| <b>Additional Revenue in Full Year</b>              |                                 |                                     |                                      |                             |                                     | <b>£51,627</b>                        |
| Income 08/09 with a Price Increase effective 1/7/08 |                                 |                                     |                                      |                             |                                     | £38,720                               |
| Less Standard Inflation Increase of 2.25%           |                                 |                                     |                                      |                             |                                     | £4,399                                |
| Additional Income to Fund Proactive Health Work     |                                 |                                     |                                      |                             |                                     | <u>£34,322</u>                        |

\* *public health pests*

- 4.4 It is recognised that treatments for public health pests must be maintained at an affordable level if residents are to be encouraged to control pests at their premises and public health is to be protected. The proposed £20 charge is considered a reasonable, affordable increase, particularly when compared to the costs that would be incurred by the householder if they purchased the treatment privately. For example, a privately purchased mouse treatment would cost, on average, £106 for every three visits whereas in Manchester we propose charging £20 to eradicate the problem, irrespective of the number of visits needed.
- 4.5 The actual cost of carrying out treatments is significantly higher than the charges currently levied. For example the actual cost of carrying out treatment for an infestation of mice is £85.92, and for cockroaches is £90.48. The cost of carrying out this heavily subsidised service had previously been offset against the income generated from commercial contracts. The income from commercial contracts also enabled programmed proactive public health work to be undertaken. However the commercial contracts market is extremely competitive and the anticipated level of income from this source has not been sustained over the years.
- 4.6 As noted in Para 2.3, there is no statutory requirement to provide pest control services for treating non public health pests. The charges currently made for treating non public health pests are also heavily subsidised. It is not possible to maintain this level of subsidy without having a knock-on

effect in terms of the proactive public health work, which the pest control service aims to deliver. It is therefore proposed that charges for non public health pests e.g. seasonal pests which, although can be a nuisance have no public health impact, should be increased to a level closer to the true costs of providing this service.

4.7 As can be seen in Appendix 2, the charges for treating public health pests and non public health pests in Manchester compare very favourably with the charges in all but one of the core cities. The proposed charges are also significantly lower than all charges made by the core cities, other than for squirrels. However the actual cost to Manchester's pest control service of removing a squirrel infestation averages £135, which is significantly higher than the proposed charge for this service. Two of the core cities don't offer a service at all for removing squirrel infestations.

4.8 Also shown in Appendix 2 is that proposed charges for all pest treatments are still significantly lower than they would cost if purchased from a private pest control contractor.

## **5.0 Proactive Public Health Work**

5.1 In addition to the reactive treatments provided by the Pest Control service it also aims to deliver a proactive public health programme aimed at protecting the health of residents and visitors to the city. This programme relies on income generated from within the pest control service and is the main reason why the proposed increases set out in this report for public health and non public health pests are recommended. Proactive public health activity planned for the coming year will cost in the region of £34k and consists in the main of:

- i. Block Control - Whilst owner-occupiers can carry out self-help measures or engage the Council's pest control service or a private contractor to control e.g. mice infestations at their properties, complete eradication of the pest is sometimes beyond the scope of the individual. This is due to a number of factors such as immigration of the pest from adjoining properties, empty adjoining properties where rubbish may have accumulated, poor housekeeping in adjoining properties. A block control approach is required to successfully control the infestation.
- ii. Pest Monitoring - Monitoring of commercial retail food outlets to ensure they are actively controlling insect and rodent pests is extremely important in preventing and controlling infestations and ensuring food safety. This is particularly important where there are high concentrations of restaurants and food premises.
- iii. Water Course baiting programme - Baiting of watercourses in the late winter to control surface rat infestation in the initial stages before infestation becomes established.

## **6.0 Conclusion**

- 6.1 Although there is no statutory duty to provide a pest control service, the City Council recognises the public health benefits of providing an affordable and accessible pest control service.
- 6.2 The proposed treatment charges set out in this report remain heavily subsidised and are set at affordable levels for both public and non public health pests. Comparisons with charging levels in other core city authorities, private contractors and the actual costs to Manchester's Pest Control Service of providing these services demonstrate this.
- 6.3 Without the increases set out in this report there will be insufficient funding to enable the proactive programmed work to be undertaken.

## Requests by Pest Species: Domestic Initial and Revisits from April 2007 to March 2008

| Pest and Visit Type                   | Number of Service Requests |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              | Initial Visit Total | Repeat Visit Total |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------------|--------------------|
|                                       | Apr-07                     | May-07       | Jun-07       | Jul-07       | Aug-07       | Sep-07       | Oct-07       | Nov-07       | Dec-07       | Jan-08       | Feb-08       | Mar-08       |                     |                    |
| Ants Domestic Initial Visit           | 15                         | 27           | 59           | 213          | 68           | 6            |              | 1            |              | 4            | 9            | 27           | 429                 |                    |
| Ants Domestic Revisit                 | 4                          | 6            | 12           | 22           | 23           | 3            | 1            |              |              |              |              | 3            |                     | 74                 |
| Bed Bugs Domestic Initial Visit       | 18                         | 19           | 11           | 17           | 10           | 13           | 27           | 19           | 5            | 6            | 2            | 8            | 155                 |                    |
| Bed Bugs Domestic Revisit             | 2                          | 9            | 7            | 11           | 12           | 2            | 11           | 14           | 2            | 4            | 3            | 3            |                     | 80                 |
| Bees Domestic Initial Visit           | 9                          | 2            | 1            | 4            |              | 1            |              |              |              |              |              |              | 17                  |                    |
| Bees Domestic Revisit                 |                            |              | 1            |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |                     | 1                  |
| Beetles Domestic Initial Visit        | 45                         | 22           | 18           | 13           | 18           | 13           | 10           | 5            | 3            | 6            | 10           | 20           | 183                 |                    |
| Beetles Domestic Revisit              | 10                         | 3            | 3            | 7            | 11           | 6            | 6            | 1            | 2            | 2            | 7            | 5            |                     | 63                 |
| Cockroaches Domestic Initial Visit    | 117                        | 156          | 164          | 144          | 121          | 103          | 80           | 71           | 50           | 66           | 66           | 88           | 1,226               |                    |
| Cockroaches Domestic Revisit          | 128                        | 226          | 262          | 258          | 228          | 216          | 265          | 227          | 133          | 190          | 165          | 167          |                     | 2,465              |
| Fleas Domestic Initial Visit          | 14                         | 10           | 38           | 51           | 101          | 53           | 51           | 24           | 8            | 8            | 14           | 7            | 379                 |                    |
| Fleas Domestic Revisit                | 1                          | 3            | 4            | 11           | 17           | 14           | 14           | 8            | 5            | 5            | 6            | 3            |                     | 91                 |
| Flies Domestic Initial Visit          |                            | 2            | 2            |              | 1            |              | 2            |              |              | 1            |              |              | 8                   |                    |
| Mice Domestic Initial Visit           | 322                        | 362          | 261          | 310          | 320          | 384          | 423          | 394          | 274          | 485          | 416          | 353          | 4,304               |                    |
| Mice Domestic Revisit                 | 534                        | 652          | 521          | 541          | 607          | 643          | 845          | 915          | 703          | 1018         | 1060         | 973          |                     | 9,012              |
| Multiple Pests Domestic Initial Visit | 15                         | 28           | 34           | 50           | 19           | 30           | 25           | 30           | 14           | 22           | 21           | 36           | 324                 |                    |
| Multiple Pests Domestic Revisit       | 17                         | 34           | 48           | 54           | 70           | 54           | 82           | 88           | 59           | 74           | 52           | 55           |                     | 687                |
| Rabbits Domestic Initial Visit        | 1                          |              | 1            | 1            |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              | 3                   |                    |
| Rabbits Domestic Revisit              |                            |              |              |              | 3            |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |                     | 3                  |
| Rats Inside Domestic Initial Visit    | 91                         | 77           | 70           | 69           | 52           | 57           | 84           | 93           | 71           | 85           | 97           | 71           | 917                 |                    |
| Rats Inside Domestic Revisit          | 182                        | 174          | 159          | 152          | 120          | 126          | 189          | 221          | 164          | 204          | 228          | 173          |                     | 2,092              |
| Rats Outside Domestic Initial Visit   | 193                        | 212          | 175          | 167          | 163          | 129          | 140          | 104          | 78           | 99           | 122          | 119          | 1,701               |                    |
| Rats Outside Domestic Revisit         | 426                        | 508          | 450          | 468          | 428          | 335          | 399          | 316          | 226          | 246          | 293          | 269          |                     | 4,364              |
| Squirrels Domestic Initial Visit      | 5                          | 10           | 34           | 11           | 8            | 10           | 11           | 13           | 12           | 27           | 23           | 26           | 190                 |                    |
| Squirrels Domestic Revisit            | 24                         | 29           | 76           | 32           | 25           | 23           | 27           | 33           | 32           | 82           | 65           | 65           |                     | 513                |
| Wasps Domestic Initial Visit          | 31                         | 22           | 168          | 464          | 354          | 212          | 127          | 29           | 4            | 4            | 3            | 3            | 1,421               |                    |
| Wasps Domestic Revisit                |                            |              | 7            | 32           | 48           | 33           | 34           | 9            | 1            | 1            |              | 1            |                     | 166                |
|                                       |                            |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              | 11,257              | 19,611             |
| <b>Overall Result</b>                 | <b>2,204</b>               | <b>2,593</b> | <b>2,586</b> | <b>3,102</b> | <b>2,827</b> | <b>2,466</b> | <b>2,853</b> | <b>2,615</b> | <b>1,846</b> | <b>2,639</b> | <b>2,662</b> | <b>2,475</b> | <b>30,868</b>       |                    |



**Domestic Pest Control Charges 2008/9 (including VAT)**  
**Comparison with other Core City Authorities and Private Contractor Average Charge**

| Current Charge<br>07/08 | Proposed Charges<br>08/09 |         |       |           |           |           |                            |  |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------|-------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------------------------|--|
| Manchester              | Manchester                | Bristol | Leeds | Liverpool | Sheffield | Newcastle | Private Contractor Average |  |

| Public Health Pests: |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |      |
|----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------|
| <b>Bed bugs</b>      | £17       | £20       | £76       | £100      | No Charge | £58       | £63       | £76  |
| <b>Cockroaches</b>   | £17       | £20       | £76       | £100      | No Charge | £80       | £63       | £141 |
| <b>Fleas</b>         | £17       | £20       | £88       | £100      | No Charge | £68       | £63       | £89  |
| <b>Mice</b>          | £17       | £20       | £46       | £75       | No Charge | £58       | £41.50    | £106 |
| <b>Rats</b>          | No Charge | No Charge | No Charge | No Charge | No Charge | No Charge | No Charge | £121 |

| Non Public Health Pests: |     |     |     |      |                                       |                   |     |                    |
|--------------------------|-----|-----|-----|------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|-----|--------------------|
| <b>Ants - Garden</b>     | £36 | £40 | £76 | £50  | £52.84                                | £58               | £63 | £59                |
| <b>Bees</b>              | £36 | £45 | £76 | £50  | £52.84                                | £48               | £63 | £58                |
| <b>Beetles</b>           | £17 | £20 | £76 | £50  | No Charge                             | £58               | £63 | £100               |
| <b>Squirrels</b>         | £46 | £95 | £76 | £100 | No Service                            | No Service        | £63 | £134               |
| <b>Wasps</b>             | £36 | £40 | £76 | £50  | £52.84<br>£77.55<br>multiple<br>nests | £48<br>(per nest) | £60 | £51                |
| <b>Other Pests</b>       | £17 | £45 | £76 | £50  | No Charge                             | £58               | £63 | Depends on<br>pest |