

**EXTRACT (INSOFAR AS IT AFFECTS THE PEST CONTROL SERVICE) FROM  
REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP ON FEES AND CHARGES  
TO SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 7 JULY 2009**

**Services and charges**

- 1 The Council's fees and charges are set out in the budget book, a copy of which is sent to every councillor.
- 2 The information obtained for the working group shows that charges are broadly in line with those of our neighbours. However, the following table highlights some key issues that have come out of the review. The working group considers these should be referred to the relevant Committees for attention and appropriate action:

<b>Service</b>	<b>Current position/Comments</b>	<b>Views of the working group</b>
Pest control	Differing charges for the various services. It is not clear what the rationale is for the level of charging.	The Council should have a corporate framework for setting charges.
Rats in domestic premises	No charge at present – decision of the Community Committee in January 2008. Among other councils there is a mix of no charge and charges, but discounts for those on benefits.	The question of charging should be reviewed – as part of the work of the group set up recently to review the pest control service. The working group believes that charges should be made unless there is a sound reason not to do so.
Squirrels	Charge - £62 per hour. New charge introduced 2008/09. Some consultees suggested that squirrels can be harmful to some asthma sufferers.	The group questions the need for an hourly charge and believes that a fixed charge is a simpler approach.

**Concessions**

In terms of concessions, the review found that, whilst there are concessions for some services, there is no rationale behind them. The percentage discount varies from one service to another and the terminology for qualification is not consistent.

- 3 The working group favours a standard level of discount and suggests 50% discount for those on state benefits. This is the terminology used by some neighbouring authorities.
- 4 The working group also questions the need for concessions for over 65s, who are not necessarily those in most financial need.