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Your reference:

Our reference: SM/fisher

Date: 26 February 2010

(Sent via email to [fisherdw@hotmail.com](mailto:fisherdw@hotmail.com))

Mr D Fisher

Cabinet Member for Climate Change  
and the Local Environment and  
Councillor for Broomhill Ward

Town Hall  
Sheffield  
S1 2HH

Dear Mr Fisher

Thank you for your recent email regarding the removal of the free rat control service to householders. I note your concern about the potential impact of introducing a charge and can assure you that this has not been proposed without careful consideration.

The council has had to make some difficult decisions in order to deliver a balanced budget in a time of general economic recession and it was felt that the pest control services provided by the council should be charged to those who are most able to afford them. Treatments for rats in domestic premises will continue to be provided free of charge to those in receipt of certain means-tested benefits and in fact the full charge still represents good value when compared to comparable services available from private sector pest control operators.

In addition, we will be working closely with Sheffield Homes and other "Registered Social Landlords" to look at ways in which they may be able to subsidise their tenants who do not qualify for the free service.

A charge for treating bed bugs will also be introduced but again, although not free, it will be heavily discounted to those in receipt of qualifying benefits.

Since the 2008 report the incidence of rats has levelled off with the number of complaints being received remaining stable albeit at a high level compared to pre 2008 figures. We fully expect the demand for the service to fall following the introduction of the charge but we will be monitoring the situation very carefully over the coming months to assess how this will impact on problems with rats across the city.



26 February 2010

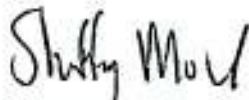
Reports of rats in public and communal areas will continue to be investigated and solutions proposed through working with local community groups and Community Assemblies as happens now. Recurring problems with rats will also be investigated and should owners or occupiers of land not take action to address rat problems on their property then ultimately the council has the legal powers to enforce this obligation.

I appreciate that once a charge is introduced, even for a proportion of our customers that this will distort the reporting figures but at best our information on reported rats can only provide an estimate of the trends in the rat population and will not represent an accurate figure. However, I do understand your concerns and can confirm that we will review the actual impacts on a regular basis and respond positively in order to ensure that potential risks to public health are minimised.

I hope this answers your queries but if you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards.

Yours sincerely



**Councillor Shaffaq Mohammed**  
**CABINET MEMBER**

cc: Mr N Wilkinson – Environment and Regulatory Services