
Licensing Fees and Charges – Supporting Information

1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 The Joint Public Protection Committee is required by the Inter-Authority Agreement that set up the Public Protection Partnership shared service to recommend a draft set of fees and charges to each of the member Councils.
- 1.2 At the meeting of the Joint Public Protection Committee in December 2017 (when it considered the 2018/19 fees and charges) a number of matters were decided. It was agreed that as a matter of principle, all fees and charges should be set on the basis of full cost recovery. In 2018/19 the rate for the service was set at £55 per hour as the basis of cost recovery. It was also agreed that there should be a move to align fees across the former Bracknell licensing regime and the former Wokingham/ West Berkshire fee structure where appropriate.
- 1.3 In July 2018 the Joint Public Protection Committee received a further report asking it to consider the basis for setting fees and charges and the application of full cost recovery. That methodology was approved by the Committee. Based on previous decisions work has been carried out by officers to align fee structures.
- 1.4 In respect of all discretionary fees and the hourly rate, an inflationary rise of 2.5% has been applied. This inflationary rise will balance the increase in cost of service provision such as the cost of living salary rise. The result is the fee, schedule set out at Annex D of this report.
- 1.5 It is noted that a significant number of fees within the licensing field are set by Government regulation and cannot therefore be changed by the Council.
- 1.6 The Committee has discretion to round the proposed fees to the nearest whole pound should they so resolve.

2. Supporting Information

- 2.1 The 2018/19 fees and charges for hackney carriage and private hire licences shows a significant disparity between the former West Berkshire and Wokingham fee structure and the Bracknell fee structure, in respect of vehicle and operator licensing.
- 2.2 Following the decisions of the Joint Public Protection Committee outlined above regarding full cost recovery, Officers have now completed a review and the proposed single fee structure for hackney carriage and private hire is included within Annex D.
- 2.3 Driver rates have remained in line with inflation and have been brought into line across the three PPP Councils. As can be seen at Annex D, these were close in any case across the three authorities.

- 2.4 Any change in fees charged for the licensing of vehicles and private hire operators are required by section 70 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 to be advertised, and any objections received must be considered by the Council. It is recommended that in the event of any objections being received, they be considered by the Chairman, who will then set those specific fees having taken account of the objections.
- 2.5 A new licensing regime covering a number of different businesses involving animals, including pet shops, animal boarding businesses, riding establishments, etc. came into force on October 1st 2018. It had been anticipated that the Regulations would include a statutory fee structure. The final Regulations in the end left it to licensing authorities to set their own fees.
- 2.6 The Regulations also brought in new competence requirements for those conducting inspections; this will clearly impact fees. The extent of this impact however is not fully known at this stage.
- 2.7 It is proposed that the fee structure in respect of these establishments for 2019/20 remains as for 2018/19 with an inflationary rise applied. A full review based on the agreed methodology and taking account of the impact of the new Regulations will be undertaken and a new fee structure will be put before Committee to consider at the time the 2020/21 budget is being considered

3. Proposals

- 3.1 That the Committee approves the proposed fees and charges and recommends to the Executive that they are adopted.
- 3.2 That the Committee uses its discretion to round the proposed fees to the nearest whole pound for the sake of clarity and for the ease of those processing payments.

4. Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1 There are certain legal provisions requiring consultation on the vehicle and operator fees and charges which will be conducted after this meeting. The remaining fees and charges will be subject to the Council's usual budget consultation process.

Background Papers:

None

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: ☐ No: ☒

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council	<input type="checkbox"/>
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position	<input type="checkbox"/>
Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months	<input type="checkbox"/>
Item is Urgent Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Report is to note only	<input type="checkbox"/>

Wards affected:

All

Officer details:

Name: Charlie Fletcher
Job Title: Licensing Officer
Tel No: 01344 352550
E-mail Address: Charlie.fletcher@westberks.gov.uk
