

GENERAL PURPOSES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE - 14 JANUARY 2022

FEES AND CHARGES FOR 2022-2023 - LICENSING SERVICE

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 That Members agree the recommended fees for the financial year 2022/23 as set out in Appendix A

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 As part of the annual review of budgets, decisions are required to agree any non-statutory fees and charges for the forthcoming financial year

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council has a statutory responsibility for the administration and enforcement of a wide range of licences, registrations and permits. Many of these schemes allow the Council to charge a fee, payable by an applicant for a licence, permit or registration, in order to cover the costs of the administration of those licence types.
- 3.2 The key principle for setting Licensing fees, is that they should be reasonable and relate to the costs of performing the function, including staffing, administration, testing, inspections, hearings, regulation and appeals.
- 3.3 The basis in setting these fees is generally to ensure cost recovery, or as close to it as possible. Legal cases over the years have confirmed that licensing fees may not be used to generate a profit for councils and that fees should be reviewed regularly to ensure that neither a significant surplus nor deficit is created.
- 3.4 Fees are set under the Licensing Act 2003 and the Gambling Act 2005 and the Council has no discretion in amending these. Gambling premises licence fees are capped and permit and lottery fees are fixed amounts. The fee regimes for both have not been revised since the implementation of both Acts in 2005 and 2007 respectively.
- 3.5 However, the Council is able to set fees for a number of other licence types; Taxis (drivers, vehicles and operators), Animal Welfare (boarding breeding, riding and pet shops), Piercing (tattoo, acupuncture and skin piercing) and Pleasure boats (boatmen and vessels), residential caravan sites and scrap metal dealers (site and collectors).

4. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

- 4.1 The setting of discretionary fees for Licensing is not a Portfolio Holder decision and fees and charges must be formally approved by the Council's General Purposes and Licensing Committee before they may be implemented. In addition, any proposed increase to taxi licensing fees must be advertised and consulted on.
- 4.2 The Coronavirus/Covid 19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the economy and businesses in the New Forest have been affected by a reduction in trade and loss of income. Whilst the Licensing Service was unable to provide refunds or reductions in fees over the past 18 months, it has worked with the businesses to assist them in continuing to operate as far as possible.

4.3 There are no proposed changes to the taxi and private hire fees at this current time due to a comprehensive review taking place of the taxi licensing policy in 2022. This will take into account new statutory guidance, the fee structure, public safety and best practice and will be consulted on with Members, the trade, the public and all other relevant organisations.

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Discretionary fees have been increased in line with inflation and will take effect from 1 April 2022.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Any financial implications have been reported for budgetary control and as part of the financial plan.

7. CRIME & DISORDER, ENVIRONMENTAL, EQUALITY & DIVERSITY AND DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS

7.1 None

8. APPENDICES

Appendix A. Proposed fees for 2022/23

For further information contact:

Joanne McClay
Service Manager
Environmental and Regulation
Email: joanne.mcclay@nfdc.gov.uk

Background Papers:

None